

A photograph of a city street scene, likely in New York City, featuring several tall buildings. In the foreground, a man in a dark suit is standing with his back to the camera, looking towards a woman in a white top and dark pants who is walking. A dark limousine is partially visible in the lower right corner. The sky is a clear, light blue.

**RAUL PERALES**

# The Luxe LANE

**BEHIND CLOSED DOORS IN THE  
LIMOUSINE BUSINESS**



**RAUL PERALES**

**The Luxe  
LANE**



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LIMOUSINE BUSINESS**



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**WP LIGHTHOUSE**

In today's society, the limousine industry has dramatically changed whether it was using a two-way CB radio and writing down your reservation order in the past years. Now the limousine industry utilizes Hi-Tech electronic equipment such as and iPad a two way radio cell phone or a dash camera and other sophisticated electronic equipment in a livery company office or in a livery vehicle.



**WP LIGHTHOUSE**



My name is Raul Perales. I have been in the livery industry 15 years. What I am about to tell u relies only from my experience as a Livery Chauffeur in Chicago and it may apply to other Livery Chauffeurs in the U.S and perhaps around the world.



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The Corporate side: This side or field when chauffeuring Corporate client is very well paid. The chauffeur is given this reservation by a dispatcher or Human Resources Employee and it is titled “Dedicated Ride” or a “Road show”. The chauffeur must make multiple stops and at each stop “Wait” for the Corporate client (s). This may take several hours or sometimes all day.



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The public side: Weddings, tours, sporting events, etc.... Weddings can be very delicate reservation orders. Whether it be an immaculate vehicle or being much earlier to pick up the grooms men or the brides maids or decorating the limo or other Livery vehicle. Chauffeurs must provide patience and dedicated preparation time when handling or dealing with weddings. Tours: tours may apply somewhat like wedding, only a tour guide may guide u where to go with the tourists. Sporting Events: these reservations are very delicate. I say delicate because a chauffeur must deal with intoxicated clients. This is when a chauffeur enters the “Delicate Zone”. For example: I picked up two intoxicated male clients and proceeded to drop them off at their final destination and one of the clients states: Hey I am not paying this amount of money sir! I spoke with “John Doe” and he gave me a different amount. I then informed my dispatcher if any price amount were changed, my dispatcher said negative no amount was changed. I informed my client in the vehicle and he still rejected to pay the amount for the livery service. I again informed my dispatcher of what was going on and he said: Stay there I am calling the men in blue! In about two minutes the police came and arrested the client.



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Another sporting event was at a concert at soldier field. I pick up about six passengers in a lincoln stretch limousine. Passengers were already intoxicated. On the way to their destination in the western suburbs of Chicago, a fight abrupted inside the limo. I immediately pulled over the shoulder and lowered the period window and looked at them and the rear interior of the limo, they had broken several glassware and a female passenger was cut in her arm. I immediate called 911 and proceeded to call my dispatcher-- it was a long night for me (file police report, witnesses, etc...)

Human Resources: Chauffeur Manager, Fleet Manager, The CEO of the livery company and Payroll. The Chauffeur Manager job is to be informed about a chauffeurs professionalism and unprofessionalism. If a client has a positive compliment or a negative compliment, the chauffeur Manager is the first person to be direct connected by the reservationists. The Chauffeur Manager also informs chauffeurs by posting memos at the livery office or by emailing chauffeurs important information such as the busy season, the slow season and upcoming chauffeur meetings, etc...



**WP LIGHTHOUSE**



The CEO of a livery company: The CEO is considered like the president of a livery company. From my personal livery experience, you may never see a CEO at his or her office rarely- why? I guess because in my opinion in case of bad employee relations or bad customer relations. Why do I say this because I checked a large known auto dealership website and the President's name appears on the website but not his or hers physical image. I guess now you all know why.



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Payroll: We as human beings make financial mistakes as well as Payroll Accountants. They are sometimes off a few dollars or sometimes more.

Some might even embezzle the livery company account or bookkeeping booklets. The first livery company that I worked, the female accountant stolen or embezzled over \$250,000 dollars in a ten year period.



**WP LIGHTHOUSE**

The” IO chauffeur and the “in house” chauffeur:  
The IO chauffeur or Independent Operator chauffeur owns his or her own livery vehicle such as a lincoln town car, a limo or an SUV. they are responsible for all of their vehicle expenses such as their monthly vehicle payments gas, car washes, vehicle maintenance, yearly insurance, etc.... these types of chauffeurs make more money yearly but they have more expenses to pay. Their commission might be between 70 to 80 percent more or less. An “in house” chauffeur may not pay as much expenses as a IO chauffeur. Their commission might be between 15 to 25 percent. They drive the livery company vehicles and many of them provide all the expenses.



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Bribery: Many chauffeurs whether IO or in house tend to bribe dispatchers. One chauffeur an empty plastic coffee cup on a one time a week basis, place a \$100 bill inside the coffee cup and would give it to the head dispatcher at his office. The head dispatcher would take this coffee cup to the men's rest room remove the \$100 bill and discard the coffee cup. Other chauffeurs would buy dispatchers lunch on a daily basis. Another chauffeur would buy exported cases of beer on friday nights for a certain dispatcher.



**WP LIGHTHOUSE**



Department of transportation (State level): According DOT, twelve hours is the maximum a chauffeur can drive. Some livery company are violating this law. Chauffeur Managers or Fleet Managers mandatory send weekly or monthly hourly driving statements to DOT. Dispatchers are “loopholing” the DOT. In the meantime, while chauffeurs are not filing DOT claims, the livery company is operating fine. But if a chauffeur or a human resources employee files a certain type of labor claim, look out livery companies!!!

Bullying chauffeurs: Bullying would apply to in house chauffeurs. For example, I have been driving for 12hours and I am tired, the dispatcher informs me about another pick at a certain time and I say “

I can't I am tired I have been driving for 12 hours”. The dispatcher informs the Chauffeur Manager and the Chauffeur Manager emails me and says “ You have to cover this order, we have no one to cover this order, if you don't cover this order, Mary, the accountant will not direct deposit your check! I forward this email to my attorney and he sends an email to my chauffeur Manager and the HR Accountant. That same Friday my check was direct deposited.



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### Limousine accidents and negligence:

A limousine company whose driver was involved in a fatal crash on the Jane Addams Memorial Tollway on March 25<sup>th</sup> 2016 was ordered to cease all interstate and Intrastate operations because the company poses an imminent hazard to Public Safety according to Federal authorities.



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The Wisconsin based company used unqualified and underage drivers with poor driving records, and complete disregard of the hours- of service regulations substantially increases the likelihood of death or serious harm to drivers, passengers, and the motoring public if not discontinued immediately according to an order of the US Department of Transportation federal motor Carrier safety administration release date this information to the Press.



**WP LIGHTHOUSE**

The safety administration served order to the owners of the Wisconsin based Limousine Company following an investigation into a crash that killed a 53 year old woman and injured at 6 others including her husband on March 25<sup>th</sup>. The 20 year old driver told Illinois State Police investigators he was blinded by sunlight just before the crash.



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The immediate aspect is the company is not allowed to operate said a Federal Motor Carrier safety administration spokesman. The shutdown order is based upon the companys lack of compliance with the Federal motor safety act.



**WP LIGHTHOUSE**

The Wisconsin based Limousine Company has an opportunity to appear or contest the order. The company would have to take remedial actions outline in the order.

Officials could not be reached for comment. The company's phone was disconnected.



**WP LIGHTHOUSE**

“HUSH GRATUITY”: Hush gratuity, whether a public or Corporate passenger gives the chauffeur a cash gratuity and may say to the chauffeur: “Don’t say anything back at your office” or” let’s keep this situation to ourselves.” and finally the most common phrase: “You didn’t see or hear anything. etc..”



**WP LIGHTHOUSE**

One day I had a limousine order to pick up a gentlemen near a hotel at O'Hare International Airport, while waiting for the gentlemen, a male Caucasian who appeared to be a panhandler. In my opinion this person clothing were scruffy, hair uncombed and smelled sweaty. I said to him: May I help you sir! Yes I am Mr. "John Doe" "I have a reservation with you. I am waiting for my girlfriend to come out. After a while, his girlfriend came out and she was a very attractive stewardess. I asked myself mentally, why is this beautiful stewardess with this ugly panhandler looking type of guy!! So I opened the limo door and they got inside and I said to Mr. "John Doe" "Where to sir." And he said "Just drive around but bring us back at 11:45am". So I just drove around for about two hours. While I was driving, this gentleman was "knocking boots" with this stewardess in the back of my limousine. After driving two hours, I drove back to where I picked them up. I waited outside patiently until one of them opened a door. After about ten minutes, he opened the driver rear door and handed me 2 one hundred dollar bills and says to me: 'Hey my man, you didn't see or hear anything. Thanks my man". The limousine ride was already prepaid through a credit card already back at the HR office.



**WP LIGHTHOUSE**



Another awkward situation was when I picked a gentlemen in a suburban town near Chicago. After saying goodbye to his family outside his home, he gets inside the sedan vehicle I was driving that day and as soon as we drove around the corner he makes a phone call to a “Call Girl Company.” He then tells me: “Change of plans, we’re not going to the airport, we are going to Milwaukee, Wisconsin. I will direct you. We arrived in Milwaukee, Wisconsin and we pulled up to a fancy hotel and I waited for 4 hours. After driving back to the clients home, he gave me a one hundred dollar bill and said: “Don’t say anything back in your office”.



**WP LIGHTHOUSE**

I picked a couple in Chicago and drove them to an Italian restaurant in the Western Suburbs on a Saturday night. We made an extra stop in Chicago to pick up a female passenger along the way. While driving down I90 Interstate after 30 minutes, I heard moaning in the back of the limousine. So as long as they did not complaint to me on the two way speaker, they were enjoying their threesome. After driving for about 1 hour and 30 minutes in traffic, we finally arrived at the Italian restaurant. Same procedure, I waited until someone opened up a limousine door whether the passenger rear door or the driver rear door. After about ten minutes, the male passenger gets out and hands me a 50 dollar bill and says to me: “ let’s keep this situation to ourselves”.



**WP LIGHTHOUSE**

Whatever limo passengers do in the backseat with the partition window closed is their business. But if there is any drugs involve like smoking marijuana, that is considered a limo policy violation. In the month of May there are many high school proms going on and teenagers rent limos. I had a group of about eight teenagers in my limousine. While driving to the banquet hall, I smelled cigarette smoke at first but then someone started smoking a marijuana cigarette inside the limousine. I immediately called my dispatcher and explained him the situation. He told me to terminate this limousine order and have them obtain some other means of transportation to their destination. I told if I can just air out the rear interior of the limousine with fabreeze air freshner and continue driving to the destination.



**WP LIGHTHOUSE**

My dispatcher said: No!!!” Terminate this order, I don’t want a drug lawsuit in the limo companies hands”! Alright! I said. Two weeks later, the limousine company got a letter from the teenagers families attorney.



**WP LIGHTHOUSE**



Driving for fifteen years in the limousine industry has taught me valuable experiences and not so good experiences. When dealing with public or Corporate passengers always remain a positive and professional attitude. For example always open and close doors for clients unless requested not to do so by the clients. Speak when only spoken to by a client. Ask clients important questions. For example, ask a client if he or she has a preferred route to the airport from their residence before taking your own initiative route. Ask a client if the heating or air conditioning temperature in the vehicle is ok. Always remain a calm voice when a client starts to yell at you or on their cellular phone. Keep in contact with your dispatcher and inform him or her about situations you can not handle. Keep your vehicles interior and exteriors always clean. Add glass cleaner to clean your vehicles windows inside and outside as well as your windshield and rear window. Always vacuum before and after a client has utilizes a vehicle. Carry a portable vaccum in your vehicle at all times as well as cleaning supplies. Wear a clean and press business suit preferably black color. Nine out of ten corporate clients prefer a limo chauffeur in a black suit. Get proper rest or sleep whether you are comfortable sleeping 6 to 8 hours every night.



**WP LIGHTHOUSE**

Do not eat large portions of food while for breakfast, lunch, or dinner. This will cause you the chauffeur to feel sleepy or fatigue while driving short or long distance driving. Walk around while waiting at the airport, this will make you feel wide awake and alert and your legs will not feel stiff or tired. When greeting a passenger at the airport or pick up location, always follow the clients lead whether he or she raises their hand to greet you or a simple hello. Do not let the passenger carry and place luggage inside your vehicles trunk. It is the chauffeurs job to do that otherwise a passenger requests verbally they will load their luggages in the trunk of the livery vehicle. Always have bottled water and breath mints in your vehicle as well as kleenex and napkins. Also and most importantly a daily newspaper. Whether it be a Wall Street Journal or a city newspaper.



**WP LIGHTHOUSE**

Being a limo chauffeur may have stressful days such as the holidays of Thanksgiving and Christmas when families are traveling to the airports to be with loved ones in other cities or places. A chauffeur might be a few minutes late upon arrival but most clients would understand the late arrival time other clients may not understand and to them it is unacceptable. At the end of a chauffeurs day, he or she might be tired and may have learned more through mistakes a chauffeur caused or a dispatcher or Human Resources error such as the wrong pick up date or the wrong pick up location. A chauffeur can only say at the end of their day is “One more day one less day” or “The day is short but the journey is long.

*The Luxe Lane: Behind Closed Doors in the Limousine Business* opens a fascinating window into the luxury chauffeuring industry, where every ride tells a story. Through the eyes of a seasoned chauffeur, readers are drawn into an unforgettable journey filled with diverse clients, high-stakes secrets, and unexpected detours. Each chapter reveals a new adventure—from “hush gratuities” and secretive VIP requests to managing unruly passengers and high-pressure corporate rides. Behind the luxury and glamour, though, lies a gritty world of long hours, tough choices, and ethical dilemmas. Captivating and eye-opening, *The Luxe Lane* invites readers to experience the unseen drama, humor, and heart of the limousine business, where no two rides are ever the same.



Raul Perales, a professional livery chauffeur with 23 years of experience in Chicago’s limousine industry, offers a personal and captivating memoir in *The Luxe Lane: Behind Closed Doors in the Limousine Business*. Over the course of his career, Perales has chauffeured everyone from corporate executives to unpredictable passengers, encountering both the glamour and the chaos that come with the job. Through his eyes, readers get an insider’s view into the often-hidden world of luxury transportation. With humor, honesty, and unforgettable stories, Perales shares his unique journey behind the wheel, offering an authentic look at life in the driver’s seat.



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