



LOCAL NEWS

LA man nearly misses flight as self-driving Waymo taxi drives around parking lot in circles

By Laurie Perez, **Dean Fioresi**

Updated on: January 5, 2025 / 6:01 PM PST / KCAL News

KCAL
NEWS

MIKE JOHNS



STARTED GOING IN CIRCLES WITH
CUSTOMER SERVICE.

KCAL
NEWS

LOS ANGELES

HEADLINES

ARRESTED ON SUSPICION OF FATAL SHOOTING 19-YEAR-OLD IN SAN BERNARDINO COU

[Play the Video](#)

A Los Angeles man nearly missed his flight back home last week, all because he says the self-driving Waymo taxi he was using to get to the airport wouldn't stop driving around a parking lot in circles.

Mike Johns was heading home from Scottsdale, Arizona last week when he hopped into a Waymo to head to a nearby airport. What happened next felt like a Disneyland ride.

"Why is this thing going in a circle? I'm getting dizzy," Johns said in a video posted on social media that has since gone viral, garnering more than two million views and interactions.

Johns says that he was trapped inside of the car as it spun around the parking lot. Not only was he unable to stop the car, but so was the customer service he was on the phone with as the spinning continued.

"It's circling around a parking lot. I've got my seatbelt on, I can't get out of the car. Has this been hacked? What's going on?" Johns says in the video.

The Waymo representative was finally able to get the car under control after a few minutes, allowing him to get to the airport just in time to catch his flight back to LA.

He says that the lack of empathy from the representative who attempted to help him, on top of the point that he's unsure if he was talking to a human or AI, are major concerns.

"Where's the empathy? Where's the human connection to this?" Johns said while speaking with CBS News Los Angeles. "It's just, again, a case of today's digital world. A half-baked product and nobody meeting the customer, the consumers, in the middle."

Johns, who ironically works in the tech industry himself, says he would love to see services like Waymo succeed, but he has no plans to hop in for a ride until he's sure that the kinks have been fixed.

In the meantime, he's still waiting for someone from Waymo to contact him in regards to his concerns, which hasn't yet happened despite how much attention his video has attracted since last week.

"Human-less, right? Human-less," he said. "That's the ghost in the shell, right?"

Upon request for comment on the matter, Waymo offered further information on the ride. They say that the delay, which happened in mid-December, lasted

just over five minutes, at which point the car drove Johns to the airport. They say that he was not charged for the trip, and that the "looping" issue has been addressed by a software update.

They also say that they have tried to reach out to Johns, leaving him a voicemail to follow-up with his story.

This news comes just days after Waymo recently made headlines in Los Angeles when someone tried to hijack one of their autonomous, all-electric Jaguars in the downtown area.
