

Chinese national gets death sentence for cabby murder



Police at the forested area of Sembawang where the body of 58-year-old cabby Yuen Swee Hong was found after he was stabbed in April 2009.

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SINGAPORE - A 32-year-old Chinese national was found guilty on Wednesday and given the death sentence for the murder of a taxi driver two years ago.

In an attempted robbery, Wang Wenfeng had inflicted deep stab wounds on Mr Yuen Swee Hong during a struggle in the SMRT taxi, resulting in the victim bleeding to death.

According to earlier reports, the 58-year-old cabby had picked Wang outside Sun Plaza in Sembawang during the wee hours of April 11, 2009. Wang said he wanted to go to Bottle Tree Village.

While in the taxi, Wang held a fruit knife to Mr Yuen's chest and a struggle broke out.

Despite multiple versions from Wang about what happened during the tussle, Justice Lee Siu Kin said in High Court today that there was no doubt of an intention to inflict injuries which were enough to cause death, *The Straits Times* reported.

Wang, an odd-job labourer, later dumped the body in a forested area near the end of Jalan Selimang in Sembawang.

The taxi was then driven to a multi-storey car park in Canberra Link and abandoned there.

Wang also took Mr Yuen's handphone, and when the cabby's wife called, he demanded \$150,000 for her husband's safe return, although he was already dead.

Mr Yuen's decomposed body was found six days later. Wang was arrested at a travel agency in Chinatown on April 13, 2009, trying to collect a plane ticket to China.

During earlier hearings in March this year, Wang said that he had originally intended to rob a money changer, but gave up the idea as he saw a queue of taxis in front of the shop.

He later thought of a plan to rob a taxi, but being nervous and afraid, he did not flag down any cabs.

It was Mr Yuen instead who drove by and stopped to ask Wang where he wanted to go - a move which led to tragedy shortly.

adrianl@sph.com.sg