

# Unpaid cabbie pursues his fare

## Two arrested in soggy aftermath

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It started with a cab driver reporting that his young passengers skipped out on a fare. What followed was an apparent series of blunders that left one passenger climbing, wet and cold, up the side of an Isla Vista cliff.

It all began in Santa Barbara at about 3 a.m. Saturday when Tom Rhyme, a cab driver for Blue Dolphin Cab Co., picked up Das Ford Jesson, 21, and Sean Michael Burgess, 22, according to Sheriff's Department deputies.

When the cab arrived at its Isla Vista destination, the pair allegedly ditched the driver without paying the \$27.95 fare, Mr. Rhyme said.

It's a common problem in the area, especially with students, he said. "I think they do it because they think they can get away with it and they think it's fun."

Mr. Rhyme thought he had lost the fare for good, until he realized that one of the men had left a cell phone in his cab. When the phone rang later, the person on the other end claimed to be a different passenger, one who had paid. But the cabbie said he was fairly certain it was one of the pair.

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**Tom Rhyme,**

cab driver, on  
people who skip  
out on fares

They asked to meet him so they could get their phone back. When they refused a rendezvous near the Sheriff's substation, Mr. Rhyme contacted the Sheriff's Department. Deputies were waiting in the shadows, Mr. Rhyme said.

The two suspects started to turn over the money in exchange for the phone. Then the deputies emerged. They arrested Mr. Burgess on suspicion of evading a cab fare, a misdemeanor, but Mr. Jesson bolted, according to deputies.

He ran down the stairs that lead to the beach below Camino Pescadero and Del Playa Drive. He darted through the shallow, chilly water along the cliff, but became trapped by the rising tide and was battered against rocks.

Swift-water rescuers from the County Fire Department were called. But Mr. Jesson had another plan, according to Deputy Joe Parker of the Isla Vista Foot Patrol, who said the two Santa Barbara City College students had been drinking.

Mr. Jesson decided to climb up the cliffs, where others have fallen to their deaths. While climbing, he fell at least three times. Deputies say they tried to convince him to stay put so they could help him. The cliffs' lower portion is slippery, and nearer the top, the rocks are loose, said Deputy Parker.

For an hour and a half, Mr. Jesson tried to get to the top of the cliff. He ran from rock pile to rock pile, dodging waves, and finally made his way to the stairs, where waiting deputies took him into custody on suspicion of evading a cab fare and evading arrest.

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