

Man pleads guilty to robbing cabbie

BY KEITH EPPS / THE FREE LANCE-STAR

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A man who beat up a cab driver during an attempted robbery in Fredericksburg earlier this year was convicted of two felony charges Tuesday.

Cristian G. Torres, 29, of Fredericksburg pleaded guilty in Fredericksburg Circuit Court to attempted robbery and unlawful wounding. He will face a maximum penalty of 15 years in prison when he is sentenced Feb. 11 by Judge Gordon Willis.

According to the evidence presented by prosecutor Travis Bird, Torres and an unidentified man took a cab from a business on U.S. 17 in Stafford late May 3 to the Crestview apartment complex.

The men gave the 43-year-old Virginia Cab driver \$50 to pay for the fare. In giving the men change, the cab driver accidentally gave the \$50 bill back.

The cab driver quickly realized his mistake and asked for the money back, Bird said. Torres told him, "that's your problem" and initially refused to give the money back.

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Torres then pushed the victim after he threatened to call the police. Bird said the two fares then had a brief conversation in Spanish before agreeing to pay their bill.

As they were again exchanging money, the unidentified man pulled the cab driver toward him and placed a large knife to his side. Torres punched the victim in the face, breaking his nose, then hit him several more times.

The victim was yelling for help as the unidentified man tried to get his wallet from his pocket. The bloody cab driver continued fighting back and the assailants never got the wallet. They eventually ran off empty-handed.

Police officers responded and eventually found an intoxicated Torres hiding on a third-floor landing at the complex and he was arrested. Bird said Torres repeatedly stated, “I’m so stupid, I’m so stupid” and said he didn’t want to be returned to Mexico because he had a baby. Bird said he admitted being in the cab but didn’t initially admit to the attempted robbery.

Bird said police are still trying to determine who the second assailant is.

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