

## Man gets two years for trying to rob cabbie

BY KEITH EPPS / THE FREE LANCE-STAR

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**A** man who broke a cab driver's nose during a robbery attempt last year was ordered Tuesday to serve two years in prison.

Cristiancq G. Torres, 29, had previously pleaded guilty in Fredericksburg Circuit Court to attempted robbery and unlawful wounding. Judge Gordon Willis sentenced him to a total of 10 years with all but two suspended.

According to the evidence, Torres and a man whose identity remains unknown to police took a cab from U.S. 17 in Stafford County late last May 3 to the Crestview apartment complex in the city.

They gave the driver \$50 to pay for the fare, and the driver accidentally gave the \$50 bill back while giving them change. The 43-year-old driver immediately realized his mistake and asked for the money back.

The men initially refused to give the money back, then indicated that they would. Following a brief conversation in Spanish, the unidentified man placed a large knife to the driver's side and Torres punched him in the face, breaking his nose.

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The bloodied cab driver fought back and his attackers unsuccessfully tried to get his wallet. The knife was dropped during the scuffle, and the would-be robbers ran off empty-handed.

Prosecutor Travis Bird said police eventually found an intoxicated Torres hiding on a third-floor landing at the apartments. He repeatedly said, "I'm so stupid, I'm so stupid" and told police he didn't want to be deported to Mexico because he had a baby here.

The recommended state sentencing guidelines called for a maximum penalty of two years and eight months in prison, and Bird argued that Torres deserved at least that much.

“But for the fact that he picked a victim who could fight back, this would have been a completed robbery,” Bird said.

Defense attorney David Kiyonaga argued that the unidentified second assailant was the more culpable of the two.

Bird said Torres is in the country illegally and could face deportation proceedings once his prison term is served.

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