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## Ore. man held hostage in Mexican hospital, friends say



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by Mike Benner, KGW Staff

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PORTLAND, Ore -- Craig Leibelt and his girlfriend went to Cabo San Lucas in Mexico last week to celebrate his 28th birthday, but things went terribly wrong.

On Monday, Leibelt was swimming in the ocean when friends said a jellyfish. He must have had a bad reaction to the venom because into cardiac arrest.

Onlookers were able to swim out and rescue him.

"Lucky for him there were American firemen on the beach and they said longtime friend Steve Cooper. "For two minutes he wasn't bre

Leibelt was taken to a hospital and fell into a coma, friends said.

But officials at One World Hospital in Cabo San Lucas demanded a payment from Leibelt's girlfriend, according to Cooper.

Those demands prompted his family to fly down to Mexico immediately home in Southern Oregon.

But things went from bad to worse.

"My guess is the hospital saw a family with more money so the price went from \$10,000 to \$30,000 to \$50,000," said Cooper. "If you don't pay up to a hospital where nobody speaks English."

Leibelt's family battled the hospital for days before reaching out to the U.S. Embassy and local lawmakers for help. They eventually received the go-ahead to fly the 28-year-old to a hospital in San Diego. They arrived in California on Thursday.

But before they could leave the Leibelt family first had to pay the hospital in Mexico tens of thousands of dollars, Cooper said.

Family and friends have raised nearly \$30,000 for Leibelt's medical expenses. If you would like to help you can do so by going to [www.giveforward.com](http://www.giveforward.com).



The image shows three travel deal cards stacked vertically. Each card features a photograph of a property, a title, a subtitle, a price starting from a certain amount, and a 'Book now' button.

- Yarmouth:** Ocean Mist Beach Hotel & Suites. From \$329.
- Falmouth:** The Park View Townhouse. From \$112.38.
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