

California man trapped in Mexican hospital after bad reaction to jellyfish sting and ordered to pay \$50K for treatment

By [Snejana Farberov](#)

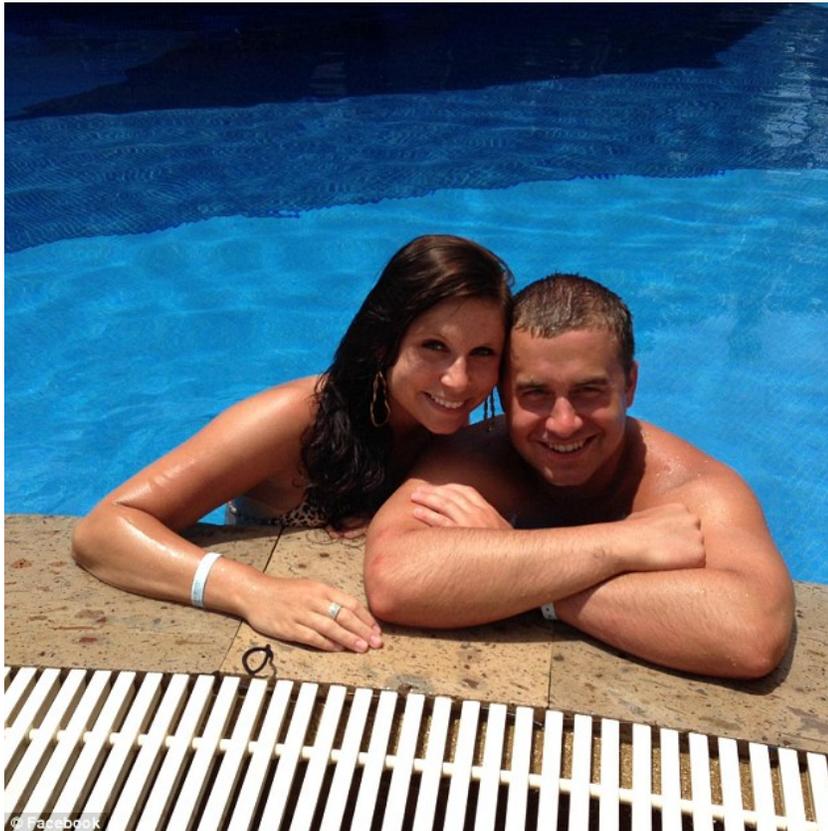
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A California man vacationing in Mexico with his girlfriend found himself captive in a local hospital after suffering a severe allergic reaction to a jellyfish sting.

The family of Craig Leibelt, 28, of San Diego, said officials at OneWorld Hospital By Saint Luke in Cabo San Lucas told them they would not allow the patient to return home unless they paid his \$50,000 bill in full.

Leibelt had spent three days hospitalized until his relatives reached out to the U.S. Embassy, where diplomats were able to secure the man's transfer to a medical center in San Diego.

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Vacation gone wrong: Craig Leibelt and his girlfriend were in Cabo San Lucas, Mexico, to celebrate his 28th birthday when he ended up in the hospital with an adverse reaction to a jellyfish sting



© One World Hospital via Facebook

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'Medical extortion': Leiblet's friends and family say officials at OneWorld Hospital in Cabo refused to work with his insurance company back in U.S. or transfer him until they paid \$50,000

According to an online fundraiser set up by Leiblet's friend, the 28-year-old Oregon native was flown back to the U.S. Wednesday.

Leiblet and his girlfriend, Monica Komperda, flew in to Cabo San Lucas this week to celebrate his 28th birthday, the station [KPTV](#) reported.

On Monday, a day after the festivities, the San Diego resident was swimming in the ocean when he was stung by a jellyfish, which caused him to go into a cardiac arrest.

The patient was taken to OneWorld Hospital in town and put on a ventilator since he was unable to breathe on his own.

According to Leiblet's friends and family, hospital staff soon informed them that they will not work with his insurance company back in the States or sign off on his transfer until the bill was paid in full.



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Serious condition: Leibelt went into a cardiac arrest after being stung in the ocean a day after his birthday



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Diplomatic solution: Officials from the U.S. Embassy eventually were able to secure Leibel's release by negotiating the hospital bill down to \$30,000

'The number went up to \$40,000, then \$50,000 last night, saying "You have to pay this amount of money or we're going to move you to a different hospital," said Leibel's friend Steve Cooper Wednesday. 'All the while, he's still in critical condition. All the while, he's still unconscious.'

American diplomats from the embassy eventually contacted the hospital and were able to lower the debt down to \$30,000.

Meanwhile, Steve Cooper had set up a GiveForward.com account to help raise money for his friend's medical expenses.

On Wednesday, another friend, Paige London, wrote on the site that Craig safely landed in San Diego, where he will continue his treatment.

Leibel's loved ones are hoping to raise \$50,000. So far, people have donated just over 60 per cent of the goal amount.



[KPTV - FOX 12](#)

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That's what you get for going to Mexihole

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[depwavid](#), Panama City Beach, United States, 1 month ago

'So here we aaaaare / In the Tijuana jail / Don't got no friends/ to go our bail. /So here we'll staaaaay / 'Cause we can't paaay. /Just send our maaaail / To the Tijuana jail!' But seriously, folks, how is this different from the old Mexican jail extortion racket immortalized in song by the Kingston Trio?

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[Galacticame](#), Marcian city, United States, 1 month ago

We treat their people for free.

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[Eileen](#), Sitting on a rainbow, United States, 1 month ago

That's what travel insurance is for! Don't leave home without it. If the hospital has spent \$50K looking after him, which is quite likely, he owes the money....

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[Conservative Belle](#), Beautiful America, United States, 1 month ago

My health coverage pays out of country as MOST US group (employer) plans do. I travel internationally several times a year and no one has ever suggested that I purchase travel health coverage. The only countries where that is typical are countries with national health coverage, such as Canada and the UK, as their plans do NOT cover out of country medical treatment.

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[Max](#), Chicago, 1 month ago

We should send Mexico the medical bills of all the illegal aliens here who are popping out kids like a broken box of Tic Tacs.

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[americanblood](#), Duluth, United States, 1 month ago

My large package of Charmin bathrooms tissue (butt wipe paper) is worth more than all of Mexico ever will be. Why visit a crapola country that treats us like this? WHY?

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[publius](#), Malibu, United States, 1 month ago

Cabo is so disgusting. Why would anyone go there?

[3/28](#) Click to rate

[loulou74](#), Chicago, United States, 1 month ago

Normally, Americans don't take out travel insurance. It's not nearly as common as in Europe. That being said, Mexico owes us trillions for all of the illegals we take of on their behalf. This man should not pay 1 dime to the hospital.

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[MarkD](#), Syracuse, 1 month ago

This man owes the hospital for his treatment. The issue with illegal aliens is a different matter entirely.

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[Katina Cooper](#), Santa Barbara, 1 month ago

They're just doing what American hospitals do. Nothing different.

[31/13](#) Click to rate

[Conservative Belle](#), Beautiful America, United States, 1 month ago

American ERs are required to treat patients by law regardless of ability to pay. Half of our broken healthcare system are illegals who go to the ER for a cold rather than a regular GP practice because the hospital cannot refuse the treatment, unlike a doctor's office and then we, the insured, pay for their unpaid bills in the form of \$10 aspirins and the like while in the hospital.

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[That Girl](#), Somewhere, United States, 1 month ago

Did he not purchase travel insurance? Number one rule when leaving the country.

[7/24](#) Click to rate

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