



SOUTH LAKE TAHOE POLICE DEPARTMENT  
NEWS RELEASE

Wednesday, October 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2012

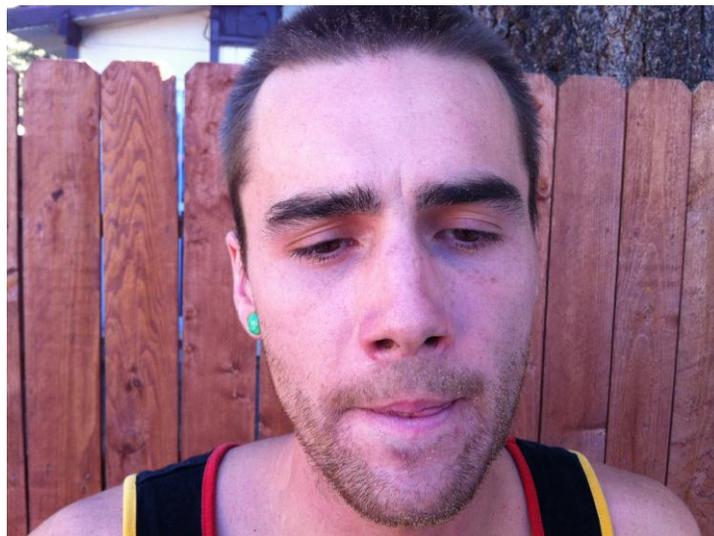
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## Drug Lab Explodes

About 3:17pm this afternoon, police and fire personnel responded to the report of a structure fire at the Forest Manor, a multi unit two story apartment complex at 3754 Forest Avenue in South Lake Tahoe. As firefighters began to extinguish flames from unit 1 downstairs, police officers assisted with the evacuation of the entire complex. Twenty three year old Berek Madden was taken from apartment #1 where he lives and placed in the back of an ambulance. He suffered third degree burns to his face, arms and upper body. His friend, twenty two year old Schuyler VanFleet was uninjured, but sustained singed hair, eyebrows and beard. No one else in the complex was injured.

Police officers questioned Schuyler VanFleet during the initial response. He said he was visiting Madden's apartment and that he lives elsewhere in South Lake Tahoe. VanFleet admitted that he had been using several cans of butane fuel to cook marijuana into a concentrated form called Hashish. VanFleet told officers that the fire started in the apartment accidentally while he was cooking the marijuana. Berek Madden was in too much pain to provide a statement at the scene. He was flown by medical helicopter to the UC Davis Medical Center burn unit.

Evidence in the apartment, along with witness reports of hearing explosions coming from inside, indicate that butane cans had actually exploded in the fire. The investigation is still preliminary at the time of this news release, with initial responders still at the scene. Fire fighters confirmed the presence of perhaps dozens of cans of butane in the apartment. Damage estimates have not yet been made. Schuyler VanFleet was arrested for unlawfully causing a fire and for operating a drug lab, both felonies. The South Lake El Dorado Narcotics Enforcement Team (SLEDNET) has taken primary investigative responsibility from this point. Criminal charges against Berek Madden may also be pending.



Schuyler VanFleet