

Fire at the Bridge (Perrine Bridge)

reply by email:

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Dear Twin Falls area community,

We are BASE jumpers who love and appreciate the people and leaders of Twin Falls for the way they welcome BASE jumpers to the Perrine Bridge. Perhaps even more importantly, you recognize and understand that, while we participate in an extreme sport, we are for the most part reasonably careful and deliberate about what we do; both to protect ourselves and to protect the community that supports us.

The events and actions surrounding the death of Jim Hickey on May 7, 2015 did not meet that standard. Many jumpers here and across the world are still debating whether Jim's burning-parachute stunt had any chance of success, much less a reasonable chance of success, from a 486-foot-high bridge. What we are not debating though is the utterly reckless conduct of Jim's instructor, mentor and chief enabler: Tom Aiello, the person who lit Jim's parachute on fire and allegedly lied to law enforcement about that action subsequently.

Simply put, any BASE jumper you talk to knows that if some person (jumper or not) lit 250 square feet of highly flammable material on fire in the middle of the Perrine Bridge and it resulted in another person's death, local police and prosecutors would arrest the perpetrator and charge him with reckless endangerment at minimum -- and maybe even involuntary manslaughter. We wonder why Mr. Aiello has not been so charged because his actions clearly fall within the boundaries of those two laws.

We as jumpers have always asked to be treated the same way as everyone else: give us fair access to our preferred form of recreation and also hold us to the same standards as everyone else. For years, we have told the National Park Service, not to condemn the whole sport and its practitioners for the actions of individual bad actors. For every bad behavior that occurred during the legal program in Yosemite a long time ago, there were statutes and regulations on the books to deal with it.

The same applies now to Tom Aiello: He should be charged at least with reckless endangerment -- and not because he was involved in a parachute jump, but because his actions check off pretty much every element that constitutes the crime of reckless endangerment. Equal access requires equal acceptance of responsibilities.

We know and very much appreciate that the people and leaders of Twin Falls are exercising a lot of restraint in the aftermath of Jim's death, but we as jumpers want you to know that we want you to hold Tom accountable for his actions because it's not about parachuting -- it's about being reckless and irresponsible and acting without care or concern for the welfare of the drivers on the bridge and the community of Twin Falls.

Tom Aiello must be held accountable in the same way that his NFL namesake was just held accountable.

Tom Brady is a way bigger player on a way bigger stage than Tom Aiello and they hammered him to protect the integrity of the game because nobody, no matter how big a star, is bigger than the game.

And no jumper, no matter how well-known, no matter how important his other contributions to the community may be, is bigger than that community and the relationship between BASE jumpers and the people of Twin Falls. Holding Tom accountable for his reckless actions will also send an important message to all BASE jumpers, too: Twin Falls is a very tolerant community and bridge access is essentially unfettered, but there are limits and lines that cannot be crossed.

That is why the vast majority of BASE jumpers here and throughout the world would support the prosecution of Tom Aiello not because he participated in a fatal jump but because he committed the crimes of reckless endangerment and involuntary manslaughter. We do not want the people of Twin Falls to think we will protect our own at the expense of the city and at the expense of public order.

From:<http://www.nfl.com/news/story/0ap3000000493729/article/darrelle-revis-patriots-have-a-history-of-doing>

"If I fail a drug test, then I fail a drug test. If I get a DUI, I get a DUI," Revis said. "If Tom gets caught with a DUI, it's a DUI. ... If they are saying that he did what he's done, then the suspension is the suspension. I'm not the commissioner and don't make the rules. If they want to change (the suspension) based on new information or new evidence, then OK, but it should have nothing to do with Tom being the face (of the NFL)."

If it's reckless endangerment, it's reckless endangerment and a charging decision should have nothing to do with whether or not a person is BASE Jumping or not.

Sincerely,

All the upstanding citizens who participate in the sport of BASE jumping.

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