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TWO HOURS FROM DEATH

Rescuers say they reached injured man just in time



North Shore Rescue heroes return from saving a snowshoer on Mount Seymour. Tim Jones (with cup) is surrounded by rescuers who spent two nights with the victim.

STEVE BOSCH/VANCOUVER SUN

BY WENCY LEUNG
and GLENN BOHN
VANCOUVER SUN

The injured snowshoer who was finally rescued Friday afternoon after nearly 48 hours trapped on Mount Seymour was only two hours from death when the first rescuers got to him about dusk Wednesday afternoon.

"He would have been dead in two hours," said Tim Jones of North Shore Rescue, who was one of the two who first reached the 36-year-old Coquitlam man. "How he survived, I don't know."

The man, who was identified only by his first name, Chris, after he was brought safely off the mountain late Friday afternoon, had fallen down a 100-metre slope while snowshoeing

with a friend.

The other man managed to make a distress call on his cellphone after he was unable to rescue his friend, and North Shore Rescue volunteers were able to get to him and lead him off the mountain about midnight Wednesday.

In the meantime, Jones and Gord

See **HE WAS** A6

Heroes on the mountain

Seven volunteers spent the night on Mount Seymour with an injured snowshoer, who was rescued Friday after a three-day ordeal. The seven (part of a 60-volunteer effort) were:

From North Shore Rescue: **Jeff Yamold, John Blown, Bruce Moffatt, Tim Jones, Gord Ferguson.**

From Lions Bay Search and Rescue: **Doug Brown.**

From Coquitlam Search & Rescue: **Rollie Webb.**

Downtown Eastside tries to fend off world media

Prostitutes get PR coaching on eve of Pickton trial

PRELUDE TO PICKTON TRIAL

10th of 11 parts

BY RANDY SHORE
VANCOUVER SUN

Prostitution advocacy groups will team up with the Vancouver Police Department Monday for a special press briefing aimed at deterring the world's media from swarming the Downtown Eastside and exploiting sex trade workers while here to cover the trial of Robert (Willie) Pickton.

The VPD will dedicate its regular Monday press briefing to supplying local, national and

- How to prepare your children for the Pickton trial news. A4
- A look at the media tips handed to sex-trade workers. A4
- Victims, accused hurt by trend to longer trials. Editorial, C3

international media with an information kit, including stock video footage of sex trade workers in the Downtown Eastside, videotaped interviews with prostitutes, and contact information for agencies that speak for women in the sex trade.

Pickton's first trial on six counts of murder starts Monday in New Westminster. He is charged with 26 counts of murder in what has been called the Missing Women Case, because the victims were all prostitutes

'He was standing there completely disoriented and screaming'

From A1

Ferguson had been helicoptered through a haze of blowing snow to the site near Theta Lake where the injured man had fallen. They got in just as dark descended; there was no light for another flight to rescue the injured man.

All three had to hunker down for the first night of what would eventually become a two-day rescue saga, complicated by relentless snowfall that created avalanche conditions that threatened not only the injured man but also his rescuers.

When they were dropped off, Jones and Ferguson could see the man in the distance, wearing just a light jacket and snowboarding pants — clothes fit for a day trip, Jones said after the ordeal ended Friday night.

And when they got to him, the man had just one snowshoe on.

"The other foot was just a sock," Jones said. "He was severely hypothermic and he was just standing there completely disoriented and screaming."

The man also had a concussion, numerous lacerations on his head, bruises around his eyes, and fractured knuckles. In addition, it appeared he had dislocated, then relocated his shoulder.

"He was lucky. There was enough cumulative injuries it would have immobilized anyone."

Jones said he and Ferguson were able to reach the man in time to warm him up and stabilize his condition, but it would be another two days and two nights — by then involving a crack team of mountain rescue specialists — before a helicopter could get through a brief break in the bad weather to bring him out Friday. The rescue team returned the four kilometres to the Mount Seymour parking lot on foot and by snowmobile.

For Jones and Ferguson, part of a 60-person team that carried out the rescue, there was only one option when they reached the man — to stay with him as long as it took, and wait out the storm.

"It was very uncomfortable," Jones said Friday evening. "It wasn't fun at all."

The veteran North Shore Rescue specialist said both he and Ferguson were drenched from their 48 hours in the backcountry. "We started to become part of the incident. I've been on full-on rescues, but I've never considered myself part of the subject."

During their first sleepless night, the two shared a single wet sleeping bag, as they cared for the injured man.

"I was just rubbing my feet back and forth to keep warm," Jones said.

When a second rescue attempt had to be called off Thursday because of the weather and avalanche danger, a team of five were able to get through carrying food and supplies, and camped out with Jones, Ferguson and the injured man.

They dug two snowcaves, about two metres by three metres that fit four men in each.

The injured man was tucked inside one of caves, wrapped in a hypothermic bag, similar to a sleeping bag, with a small charcoal burner attached.

The man, however, became agitated in the confined space, and at one point, the rescuers had to

sedate him.

"He was actually trying to get out of the hypothermia bag because he was claustrophobic," Jones said. "I actually sedated him to keep him [calm]."

Near-whiteout conditions and wet snow prevented an aerial rescue from taking place most of Friday, but a brief window of opportunity opened when the clouds lifted at about 3 p.m.

Rescue leader Tim Jardine said the pilot stayed just below the ceiling of clouds and found the rescue site on the east side of Mount Seymour off the Elsay Lake trail.

"We were able to have the helicopter hover, slide the stretcher in, and fly off with him," Jardine said.

The man was taken to Vancouver General Hospital.

Volunteers with North Shore Rescue and others, including Lions Bay and Coquitlam rescue groups, had spent most of Friday preparing a safe evacuation route across steep avalanche-prone slopes.

As the crow flies, it was only about four kilometres from the parking lot to the rescue site but the weather had changed since Wednesday, and the rescue route that had been mapped out still wasn't safe to use.

Some of the 60 volunteers had to be deployed along the route to ensure no one else had to be rescued. Some were avalanche technicians who used small explosive charges to free loose slabs of snow. Others were spotters who were deployed in the backcountry just north of the downhill ski runs at Mount Seymour Resort.

A steady stream of volunteers donated waist harnesses and heavy equipment-laden packs near a mobile command vehicle parked at the north end of the resort's parking lot.

North Shore Rescue spokesman Greg Miller, a volunteer with the group for more than 30 years, said he couldn't recall any rescue on North Shore mountains where explosives had to be used.

Rescuers who stayed overnight with the injured man said they had enough food, water and equipment to last a little longer.

But Jones said, if they were forced to spend yet another night on the mountain, their situation would have been critical. "We actually discussed we were in trouble, we knew we were," he said.

Rollie Webb of Coquitlam Search and Rescue, who was part of the second team that spent Thursday night with the injured man, said the rescuers were able to maintain good spirits by telling jokes to each other.

Webb said the first thing he would do when he got off the mountain would be to go to his parents' home and find his children, who were staying there as his wife was at work.

"Then I'm going to have a shower, have something to eat, and then go to bed," he said.

Jones said he and others planned to return to the rescue site today, as they had been forced to leave tens of thousands of dollars worth of equipment there Friday night.

Jones said the entire operation could have cost more than \$50,000. "It's very, very costly,"

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STEVE BOSCH PHOTOS/VANCOUVER SUN

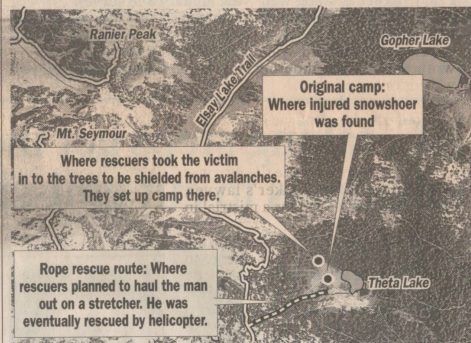
Tired rescue workers unload gear after saving the life of a snowshoer on Mount Seymour Friday. Below, rescuer Bruce Brink



heads off Mount Seymour. Snowfall and the danger of avalanches prevented the rescue teams from reaching the man earlier.

Anatomy of a rescue

North Shore Search and Rescue spent three days rescuing a 36-year-old Coquitlam man north of Mount Seymour. This is copy of a working map from North Shore Search and Rescue



Supplies and equipment brought in for the rescue

- A bulky emergency sleeping bag, which has an "octopus" of air chambers that are heated by an external charcoal unit, to 25 degrees Celsius.
- Fibreglass-base stretcher and long lines of rope to pull and control the stretcher.
- Avalanche probes and shovels, to find and dig people out.
- Ice axes, crampons.
- First-aid equipment and medicine.
- Regular sleeping bags, extra clothing.
- Stoves, white gas, cooking pots and food.

Source: North Shore Search and Rescue