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Marin City man cleared in robbery of cabbie

By Gary Klien

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A Marin City man accused of robbing a taxi driver last month was cleared of felony charges but ordered to stand trial on lesser counts.

Louis Blakemore, 34, was arrested July 19 on suspicion of punching the cabbie several times and stealing his cell phone while he was parked on Drake Avenue in Marin City. Blakemore also allegedly stole the keys to the taxi.

The district attorney's office charged Blakemore with robbery, threatening a witness, receiving stolen property, battery and theft with prior convictions. Blakemore has a criminal record dating to 1985, including convictions for vehicle theft, burglary, drug possession and a lewd act on a child.

But Judge Paul Haakenson, during a preliminary examination of the evidence, ruled there were insufficient grounds to try Blakemore on the robbery charge.

The witness threatening count was also dropped, because of some confusion between the victim and a deputy about when the cell phone was taken, said Deputy District Attorney Geoff Iida. The deputy initially thought the suspect took the phone to prevent the cabbie from calling police.

Blakemore is scheduled to go on trial Aug. 17, but his lawyer, Deputy Public Defender Michael Coffino, said he expects to resolve the case this week "for time served on the misdemeanors."

Blackmore has remained in custody since his arrest, with bail set at \$50,000.

"It was apparent from the testimony of the cab driver that no robbery or other felony took place," Coffino said. "We were fortunate in finding witnesses who would speak with us about what really happened."

Authorities said the confrontation between the two men stemmed from a financial dispute.

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