



Written by [Mary McHugh](#) on June 14, 2010

Rafting Guide Gets Arrested for Saving Girl

Starting with the apt expression that “no good deed goes unpunished,” the Channel 9 website out of Denver, Colorado, reported the arrest of 28-year-old Ryan Snodgrass, a rafting guide in Clear Creek County, for rescuing a customer who had fallen into the water. He has the support of his boss who says he will not lose his job.

Snodgrass works for the Arkansas Valley Adventures Rafting Company. Around noon last Thursday his raft capsized while on the swollen Clear Creek. On board had been a young female customer, who was missing for over a half an hour after swimming off while Snodgrass searched for her. She was eventually located about a half mile from the original site. Snodgrass was charged with “obstructing government operations” by Sheriff Don Krueger. Said a [Denver Post](#) article: “He was told not to go in the water, and he jumped in and swam over to the victim and jeopardized the rescue operation,” said Krueger, noting that his office was deciding whether to file similar charges against another guide who was at the scene just downstream of Kermitts Roadhouse on U.S. 6.



Duke Bradford, owner of Arkansas Valley Adventures, said Snodgrass did the right thing by contacting the 13-year-old Texas girl immediately and not waiting for the county’s search and rescue team to assemble ropes, rafts, and rescuers.

“When you have someone in sight who has taken a long swim, you need to make contact immediately,” said Bradford, a 15-year rafting guide and ski patroller from Summit County. “This is just silly. Ryan Snodgrass acted entirely appropriately. These guys came to the scene late and there was a rescue in progress. They came in and took over an existing rescue. To leave a patient on the side of a river while you get your gear out of the car and set up a rescue system you read about in a book is simply not good policy.”

Sheriff Krueger asserted that since rafting company employees had lost visual contact with the victim, and that a long period had elapsed since the accident itself, the rescue therefore became the responsibility of the local government rescue officials.

But rafting company owner Bradford was not buying it. Stating that his guides were trained and certified swiftwater rescue professionals, he asserted that he would want them responding in the exact



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same way again. He told the *Denver Post*: “To jump into water and navigate a river in a swiftwater rescue is common. You get into the river and swim. You have to do it. The fact these guys don’t understand that is disturbing. Making contact immediately with your victim is essential. It’s not about who is in charge. It’s about the safety of a 13-year-old girl. You are going to do everything in your power to insure the safety of your guest, and if that means in Idaho Springs you get arrested, well I guess we’ll just get arrested.”



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