

# Police Make Arrests in Murder of One Gay Man; Home Invasion, Robbery of Another

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By Norm Kent

As reported in the Sun-Sentinel and Miami Herald on March 26, 2001, Fort Lauderdale Police Homicide Detectives have arrested two individuals in connection with the beating death of one gay man, and the home invasion of another.

The homicide victim was Michael Sortal, the live-in warehouse manager at the Sunrise Storage and Mini Warehouse located in the city at 601 Northeast 11<sup>th</sup> Street. His body was found on March 15, his head beaten, his hands tied behind his back, and a plastic bag strapped around his head.

Charged with first-degree murder and held in the Broward County Jail without bond is Geoffrey Kennedy, 26. Taken into custody

with Kennedy was his roommate, Kevin Hoffman, 25, who was arrested and charged for his alleged part in another attempted murder the pair is accused of committing. In both instances, the targets and victims were gay men.

Stated Detective Mike Reed: "Some people target restaurants; some convenience stores. These guys clearly targeted gay men."

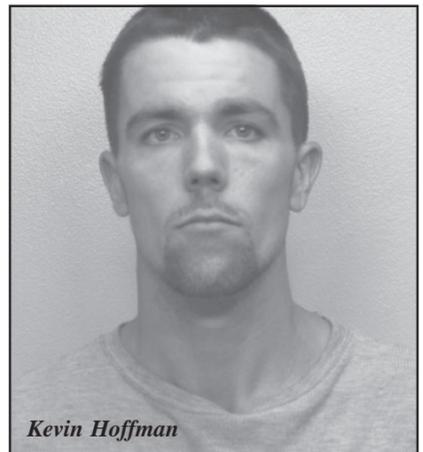
Kennedy and Hoffman were accused of the March 22 home invasion of Timothy Thorne, who barely escaped with his life. He too was beat over the head with a dumbbell, and left on the floor tied up with duct tape. Police say Thorne feigned his death, and overheard one of the suspects giving an address over the phone to a taxicab company.

Detectives investigating the Thorne robbery recalled that the very address he overheard being used was found on a slip of paper in Sortal's apartment the week before.

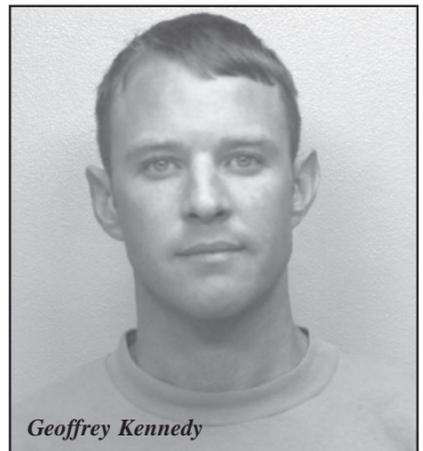
Investigating Sortal's homicide, detectives learned that he had recently met two younger men at a local gay bar, but had no clue who they were. But then Thorne, having survived his beating, gave police a detailed description of his assailants. Taken into custody, Thorne identified Kennedy and Hoffman in a photo lineup.

Thorne, who could not be reached, and has left town to recuperate, left a message on his answering machine thanking his friends and well-wishers for their kind words of support and warmth during a traumatic and difficult time. He explained that he just couldn't talk to anyone right now, but that he was very grateful for the many people that have reached out to help him.

Police report that Kennedy confessed to both the murder of Sortal and the home invasion of Thorne, during questioning, after he was read his rights. He was also charged with violating his probation on a grand theft charge in Palm Beach County.



Kevin Hoffman



Geoffrey Kennedy

## Police Sting At Dunkin' Donuts Takes Down Male Prostitutes



Undercover officers of the Fort Lauderdale Police Department have conducted a sting operation, designed to cut down on male prostitution evolving out of the Dunkin' Donuts location on Northeast 15<sup>th</sup> Avenue and Sunrise Blvd in Fort Lauderdale.

Over a period of three weeks, the tactical Street Enforcement Unit effectuated over one dozen arrests of 'tricks' and 'johns'.

In the photo above, Express Art Director Kevin Hopper caught one of the officers making an arrest. Detective Mike Reed said community complaints prompted the "continuing efforts to eradicate street crime." Dunkin Donuts, a popular late night gay cruising place, is open 24 hours.

In addition, the Express has learned that

officers from the Fort Lauderdale Police Department have been conducting an extensive sting operation on AIA, just north of Sunrise Boulevard, in the popular gay beach cruising location, just before the beginning of the condominiums.

John U. Lloyd State Park on Dania Beach has also been a law enforcement target. In less than two months, over 25 gay men have been arrested for engaging in homosexual acts. The site has always been recognized for cruising, and is even popularized on the nationally known website, *cruisingforsex.com*. State Park Rangers have been charged with the task of enforcement.

Arrestees are charged with lewd and lascivious acts, a misdemeanor under state law. Numerous defenses are available, says local attorney Russell Cormican, but they only come into play after "you have been arrested, embarrassed, humiliated, booked, and searched."

## David's Long-Lost Publisher Still Sought in Theft Case

Almost a year after he abandoned the publication David Magazine, its publisher, Gilbert Quijas, is still missing, and the Wilton Manors Police Department is not happy about it. He is now wanted on three counts of uttering forged instruments and one count of grand theft.

In February of last year Ellen Friedman, David's former National Director of Operations, filed a police report alleging that Quijas stole her purse in November 1999, removed blank checks from the back of her checkbook and cashed three of them at a Five Points check cashing store for amounts in excess of \$25,000.

Reportedly, Friedman did not report the theft immediately because of her fear of Quijas. She then went to work on her own, starting Renaissance Woman, now defunct,

and then going to work as a salesperson for Hot Spots!

Friedman told police that the bank had restored the funds to her account. Detective Danny James verified that Quijas did take and cash the checks and was making restitution to the check cashing store for paying him the money.

Friedman is listed as the victim of the theft, totaling in the thousands of dollars. Quijas reportedly utilized Friedman's funds to prop up David magazine in its final days before its demise.

Quijas has not been seen since. He was last

living on Middle River Drive with his then partner David Lee. Apparently, the case was initially stalled due to 'credible threats' that had been made to Friedman, according to Detective James



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