

# Gay Lawn Service Operator Ran Burglary Ring, Police Allege



Tom Catalino



Craig Carter



Joshua Linehan

Mutual with one of the victims' personal checks, and tried to cash them. When the bank, which had already been alerted the customers' checks were stolen, tried to delay him, he rushed out and escaped capture.

Police became suspicious of Catalino when he refused to co-operate with detectives in their apprehension of Linehan, who had been identified by one of the victims as the individual who burglarized his home. According to Detective Jack Gee, who also investigated the case for the Department, Catalino's tune changed when Linehan began burglarizing him.

"But his love for Linehan renewed his association with him," Donisi stated, "and then Mr. Catalino began allowing Linehan to burglarize homes while fencing the property he stole."

"Typically," Detective Donisi added, "the victims were gay men, and Catalino would use Linehan and Carter to do the burglaries while they were cutting lawns and knew the owners were not in."

Dealing in stolen property is a second-degree felony punishable by up to fifteen years in prison. Uttering forged instruments, i.e., passing bad or fraudulent checks is a third degree felony punishable by up to five years in jail.

Anyone who may have used the services of Catalino Lawn Service and may have been the victim of a burglary are encouraged to contact Detective Cheryl Donisi at 954-828-5212.

by Michael James

A forty four year old gay lawn service operator, who employed younger gay men as lawn cutters, has been charged with running a burglary ring that enabled his employees to rob the homes of gay men while cutting their lawns.

Tom Catalino, who frequently advertised his Wilton Manors based lawn service in local gay publications, has been charged with dealing in stolen property in two separate cases, and the Fort Lauderdale detectives, armed with three more warrants for his arrest, are encouraging him to surrender on those charges as well.

Catalino, whose last address was 905 Northeast 17<sup>th</sup> Avenue in Fort Lauderdale, has

not been located, since he first bonded out on the original charges, on February 23.

Catalino gave the police a complete statement in which he acknowledged that "his love for the younger man fueled the crime spree," according to Detective Cheryl Donisi of the FLPD, who worked on the eight month investigation.

The younger men included a Massachusetts fugitive, Joshua Linehan, who was charged with three counts of residential burglary and dealing in stolen property. He is facing extradition to Boston, where six more warrants are waiting for him. In addition, another young man, Craig Carter, currently already on probation Broward County felony charges, will be booked on

burglary charges as well.

The scheme developed by Catalino, police allege, is that after unlawfully entering the victims' homes, Linehan and others would steal checks, credit cards, and easily disposable items. The checks would then be brought to local check cashing stores to cash.

Catalino acknowledged that he would cash the checks, and give the money to Linehan, who would then use the funds to purchase crack cocaine on the street.

In addition, Catalino took the stolen items retrieved by his team and pawned them at local pawn shops, including one right next door to his apartment, American Pawn at 1715 East Sunrise Boulevard. In another instance, Linehan went into Washington

## Lauderdale Gay Bar Busted For Drug Sales

The owner and operator of Chainz Nightclub, in the gay bar Everglades, at 1932 South Federal Highway has been charged with trafficking in cocaine. He was targeted in an undercover investigation engineered by the members of the Fort Lauderdale Police Strategic Investigations Unit. The March 22 bust was pulled off when Stone, Jr. allegedly quoted a price of \$1200 to deliver 31.5 grams of cocaine.

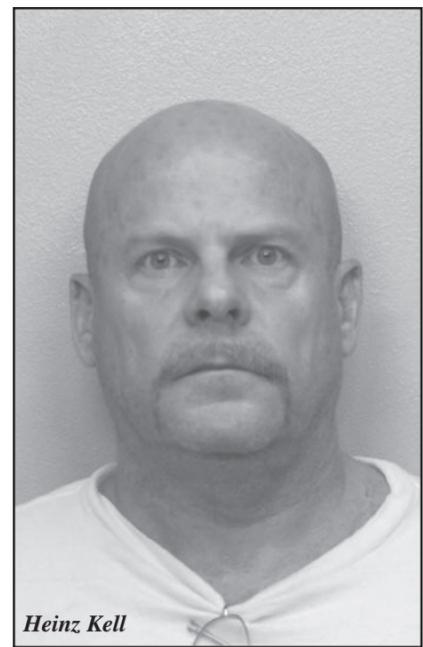
Detective John C. Liguori, of the Strategic Investigations Unit, reported that the sale followed four separate purchases within the bar over a 30 day period. Police reports filed in the case allege that on February 27, March 6, March 15 and then on March 20, 2001, Stone sold smaller amounts of cocaine to various undercover police officers, usually one to four grams.

Trafficking in cocaine is a first-degree felony, punishable by up to 25 years in the Florida State Prison. Additionally, an operator of a club who is involved in drug sales or transactions faces an immediate shutdown by the State Alcohol, Beverage, and Tobacco Agency for liquor law violations. Because of the drug transactions, ABT agents are entitled and empowered to seek an emergency order of suspension barring the future sale of alcohol at the club. At administrative proceedings, which would follow, that same agency would be empowered to revoke the club's liquor license, effectively putting it out of business.

Stone and one of his bartenders, Heinz Kell, were arrested and booked into the Broward County Jail on March 22. No court dates have as yet been set.



Sterling Stone



Heinz Kell

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