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# Case of cutting moves again

## Lower Keys is site for trial of two in mangrove-clearing

By LISA FUSI

KEY WEST — The criminal trial of two men accused of hacking thousands of protected mangroves in and around Ocean Reef Club and Johns Pennington Coral Reef State Park has moved from the Upper Keys to the Middle Keys, then moved once more to the Lower Keys after three local judges recused themselves from the case.

Circuit Judges Luis Garcia, Ruth Becker and William Priddy removed themselves from presiding over the trial because of ethical conflicts. The case is now scheduled to be heard sometime in January before Circuit Judge Richard Payne in Key West.

John Gonsow, 54, a general partner of O.R. Golf Partners L.L.C. and Edward Sanders, 33, a contractor with Sanders Building Group, each face five charges in the massive tree-clearing discovered last March.

Both men have pleaded not guilty to the charges, which include two felonies — criminal mischief and pollution — and three misdemeanors.

Gonsow and Sanders were scheduled to stand trial two months ago, but their Miami attorneys, Robert C. Josephberg and David Mandel, were granted continuances until January.

**DEPOSITIONS**  
Defense attorneys and prosecutors planned to depose some 60 witnesses by Monday, said Dana Clay, spokeswoman for Josephberg and Mandel.

According to the Monroe state attorney's office, Garcia, a former state prosecutor, recused himself from the trial because he handled the case before his recent appointment to the bench in Hialeah.

Becker, who sits in Marathon, and Priddy, who works out of Hialeah in Key, also passed off the case but declined to say specifically why they were doing so.

"I don't want to get into the business of having to explain (reasons for recusal) on each and every case," said Priddy.

Becker said the case "seems to appear to be an ethical conflict. That's all I'm going to say."

The hacking, which a state biologist discovered while patrolling Pennington Park, involves more than three acres of mangroves, some taller than 50 feet.

The trees had apparently been chopped down to provide future home sites at Ocean Reef Club with a view of the ocean.

**12,000 TREES AXED**  
About two-thirds of the cutting occurred on Pennington grounds, the rest adjacent to Ocean Reef property. State authorities estimated that 12,000 mangrove trees were axed in the park. More than 3,000 of them were larger than 14 feet high before the cutting, and all 12,000 were chopped to an average height of six feet.

Gonsow and Sanders "are just looking forward to getting the trial over with and clearing their name and reputations," said Clay.

**BY LISA FUSI**  
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**KEY WEST** — A Key West Police officer was nearly gunned down late Thursday when a man showed a gun into the officer's abdomen while being frisked and pulled the trigger twice, only to realize that the safety lever was still in place.

According to the Key West Police Department, Detective J.R. Torres was sitting in the Burger King parking lot on Front Street around 10 p.m. Tuesday when a car pulled in and a woman yelled, "Who got the word?"

Torres saw a man seat the car back up his pants and spotted what looked like a gun hidden in his waistband. Torres then approached the man and asked him to lean over the hood of the car for a pat-down. The suspect pushed away and pulled out a .380-caliber Walther PPK handgun, Torres grabbed the man in a bear-

# THE KEYS

## MAKING A SPLASH KEYS ARTIST GETS HER CLOSE-UP



Key artist Stacey Krupa of Islamorada shows off 'Dolphin on Parade,' during a visit from CBS news correspondent Mark McClean on Wednesday during a live broadcast of 'The Early Show.'

### COMMUNITY CALENDAR

- TODAY**
- Book discussion group meets at Marathon Library at 7 p.m. to discuss *Hanna's Daughters* by Marjorie Frawley. For details, call 743-6565.
  - Fishermen's Hospital Christmas bazaar, 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. at the hospital.
  - Upper Keys Macintosh User Group (U.K.M.U.G.) "Who Wants To Be A Macintosh?" at 7 p.m. at Key Largo Library community room. For details, call 451-4801.
- THURSDAY**
- Marathon In-Line Hockey League from 8 to 10 p.m. at Public. Cost for season is \$35. For details, call Terri at 743-7492 or Nancy at 743-4330.
  - The Nature Conservancy Greenways volunteer workday at Crocodile Lake National Wildlife Refuge 9 a.m. to noon. For details and directions, call Sherri Dueson at 288-4860.
  - Sugarloaf Sherks 12th annual Christmas Craft Show from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. at the school campus, 10th marker U.S. For details call Janetta at 745-2292, ext. 303.
  - Christmas at Lignumvitae, 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. \$10 for food fare, tour of the historic island and Matheson houses and homemade Islamorada Area State Parks, of \$5 for lawn only. Best leaves Robert's Marina, mile marker 77 on Overseas Highway. For details, call 865-5211 or 864-2440.
- FRIDAY**
- Monroe County Juvenile Justice Council meeting, 2 p.m., Marathon High School. Public and council will be advised, review and apply for grants available.
  - Lower Keys Property Owners Association general meeting 8 p.m. and potluck dinner, Lower Keys Property Owners Building on Bogie Road. Bring canned goods or other items that can be donated to the local food pantry. Everyone is welcome.
  - Telephone Pioneers of America, Coral Keys Life Member Club luncheon meeting at The Quay Restaurant, mile marker 54. Reservations call 743-4881 or Herb at 872-3998.
  - Lower Keys Chamber of Commerce Christmas dinner party 6-9 p.m. on the clubhouse grounds, mile marker 31. Cost is \$30 per person and \$7 for children under 12. For reservations call 872-2411.
  - Southernmost Nonprofits Assistance League meeting of the board at Florida Department of Children & Families, 1111 22nd St., Key West at 3:30 p.m. The public is invited.
  - Mariners Hospital Auxiliary holiday luncheon meeting at Horizon Room, Holiday Inn Resort. Social hour at 11 a.m. Reservations are required at 852-8700. For membership call Sonia at 852-8023.
  - Monroe County Estate Planning Council dinner meeting, cocktail 6 p.m., dinner at 7 p.m. at Sombrero Country Club, Marathon. Sponsor is Robert D.W. London II. Cost is \$25 per person, reservations to 802-4833.
  - San Pedro Women's Guild meeting, 1 p.m. in the conference room. A presentation will be given on Park.
  - Public work session of Monroe County Juvenile Justice Council Planning Group, 1 p.m. at PACE Center for Girls, 3300 Flagler Ave., Key West. For details call Margaret Gough at 259-3405.
  - Monroe County Juvenile Justice Circuit Planning Group work session at 1 p.m., PACE Center for Girls, 3300 Flagler Ave., Key West. The public is welcome.
  - Keys Animal Hospital pet pictures with Santa 4 to 8 p.m., 1462 Overseas Highway, Marathon. The event is free and everyone is welcome.
  - Mangor's ninth annual Red Ribbon Christmas benefit for AIDS Help Inc., 7 p.m. to midnight, 700 David St.
  - "One Belshazzar Night" Christmas musical at First Baptist Church of Key Largo, mile marker 98, 7 p.m. The event is free. Call 451-2295 for details.
- DEC. 9**
- Immanuel Lutheran Church Christmas bazaar, cake sale and rummage sale from 8 a.m. to 1 p.m., mile marker 91, 931 Ocean Dr., Tavernier. For details call 852-4773.
  - Fourth Annual Boat Key Harbor Christmas Parade at sunset. View from Boat Key Bridge, Burdine's Waterfront, or Dockside. For details call Capt. Sam Nelson at 743-4011.
  - Florida Keys Elk Lodge 1879 Christmas dinner dance, cocktails 9 p.m., dinner 7-9 p.m. and dancing at 8 p.m., mile marker 91.5. Tickets \$20 and the public is invited.
- DEC. 10**
- Key West Krillier Christmas party the night of 5-8 p.m. at Gary's Mansion, 518 S. Caroline St. Admission fee is a dry or canned cat food for the strays. For information call 259-4863.
  - San Pedro Women's Guild annual Christmas luncheon at Oki Tavernier Restaurant, mile marker 90 at 12 p.m. Reservations to 865-2744.
  - NAMI Florida Keys covered dish potluck dinner 5 p.m. at St. Paul's Episcopal Church Parish Hall, Banana Street, Key West.

# Accused molester arrested again

## Ex-camp worker faces charges of having child porn

By JENNIFER BARSON AND TED LIND

Associated Press

KEY WEST — An accused child molester Walter Charles Vogt, a former co-owner of Big Flac's playground Seacamp, was arrested again Thursday — this time by federal agents — on charges of possessing child pornography.

Details of the indictment — which was handed down last week by a federal grand jury — are slated to be released today when Vogt appears in federal magistrate court.

Agents with the U.S. Customs Service detained Vogt, 30, at the conclusion of a Key West hearing Thursday on the status of a pending state case Vogt against him on child molestation and other charges. Customs is frequently involved in child pornography cases because of the presumption that child pornography may be produced overseas. Vogt is a citizen of South Africa. The Federal Bureau of Investigation has also been investigating because possession of child pornography is a federal felony. FBI spokesman July Ornelas, said.

**ARREST CHRONOLOGY**

Vogt's fourth arrest in 10 weeks in September he was arrested twice and released on bond after being charged with seven counts of first and second molestation on a child under 18. Three boys who attended Seacamp told police Vogt repeatedly molested them. One of those boys also told police Vogt fondled him while staying his home in Massachusetts. Vogt pleaded not guilty to those charges.

He was arrested again in October after Monroe County Sheriff's investigators discovered images on his computer of sleeping young boys with their genitals exposed.

Charged with 12 counts of first and second molestation — a second-degree felony — and six counts of gross indecency with a child — a third-degree felony — Vogt was again released on bond. The allegations involved four young boys, including two named in previous molestation charges. He also pleaded not guilty to those charges.

Police in Vogt's native South Africa are also seeking to charge him with molesting a boy there.

**MORE CHARGES EXPECTED**

Monroe Assistant State Attorney Manny Madruga, who is prosecuting Vogt for the state, said Thursday he expects to add more charges as Vogt's growing roster, including the production of child pornography, a second-degree felony.

"We anticipate filing more charges based on new evidence and affidavits," Madruga said. "There could be dozens of additional charges added to what we already have."

Federal prosecutors on Thursday asked that Vogt be held without bond at the Monroe County Detention Center on Stock Island.

A judge is expected to decide today whether to allow Vogt to be released on bond on the federal charges.

"Where are you arrested? Yes," said Karl Cooke, who is representing Vogt along with Miami attorney Edward Corbett. "They keep re-arresting him. We think it's a little bit unfair."

# Officer spared when teen's handgun fails to fire

ing, but the suspect twisted his arm around behind him, shoved the gun hard into the officer's abdomen and pulled the trigger, police said. When the gun failed to fire, the suspect repositioned the gun onto Torres' hip and pulled the trigger again.

After the gun failed to fire for a second time, Torres used a maneuver called an "arm bar," flipping the man's arm halfway around, causing him to lose his grip on the gun. The would-be shooter was later identified as 18-year-old Ryan Howard of Port St. Lucie.

"There were civilians behind him and civilians behind me, and I wasn't about to put them in the middle of a gunshot," said Torres, 36.

Police said Howard was wanted in Port St. Lucie for violating probation on a marijuana charge. He was charged with attempted murder, possession of stolen property, carrying a concealed weapon, possession of cocaine and possession of drug paraphernalia.

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