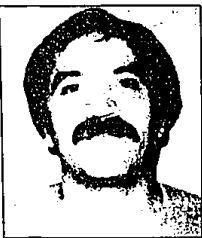


# Fugitive in drug case back in custody



Fran Nikola Sinishta  
awaits sentencing

By Bob Sklar  
staff writer

A Farmington Hills man who fled to Canada hours before being convicted of possessing about a half pound of cocaine was back in the Oakland County Jail Monday awaiting sentencing April 12.

On March 17, Fran Nikola Sinishta, 32, hoping he would be deported to his native Yugoslavia, waived his request for political asylum in Canada, said detective Darnel Krause of the Farmington Hills Police Department.

But the next day, Canadian immigration authorities deported him to the United States.

"It's Canada's policy to ship unde-

sirable aliens back to the country from which they came. And he's recognized in Canada as a U.S. citizen," Krause said.

U.S. Immigration and Naturalization Service investigator Jack Webb took custody of Sinishta Monday at the U.S.-Canada border.

After testimony from Krause Wednesday, Oakland County Circuit Judge Richard Kuhn revoked the \$1 million cash bond he set Tuesday. Assistant prosecutor Sarah Hunter had sought a high bond but later asked for bond to be revoked.

Kuhn revoked bond "in the interest of justice and the protection of society," his court clerk said.

"We felt, based on his financial status, it's very conceivable he'd be

able to come up with \$1 million, given a couple of days," Krause said.

Kuhn also granted a request by William Bufalino Jr. of 38, Glenview Shores to withdraw as defense attorney.

SINISHTA IS scheduled to go to trial on a habitual offender-third offense charge April 4.

"We have to prove he has been convicted three times of felonies," Krause said. "If we do, that would enhance his sentence."

Sinishta has two prior felony convictions in Detroit Recorders Court. He was convicted in 1975 for attempting to carry a concealed weapon on his person. In 1977, he was convicted of attempting to carry a

concealed weapon in a motor vehicle.

Windsor police arrested Sinishta without incident at a downtown Windsor motel Nov. 6. A motel receipt that U.S. customs officers found in his brother's car at the Detroit-Windsor tunnel led police to Sinishta.

The arrest came nine hours after Sinishta failed to return from a lunchbreak to his Oakland County trial for closing arguments. He was free on \$5,000 bond at the time.

Later that afternoon, an Oakland County Circuit Court jury found him guilty of possession with intent to deliver more than 50 grams of cocaine and of carrying a pistol in a motor vehicle.

Sinishta faces a sentence of 10-20 years in prison on the cocaine conviction and up to five years in prison on the weapons conviction.

JUDGE KUHN issued a felony arrest warrant when Sinishta skipped the end of his trial.

Sinishta was originally arrested March 30, 1986, when Farmington Hills police found 150 grams of cocaine, with a reported street value of \$15,000, in a suspicious car parked at Walnut Creek Apartments. Cocaine packaging material and a pistol also were found in the car, Krause said.

Although bond was only \$5,000, Sinishta had appeared at other court proceedings during the past 19 months.

Krause said Sinishta "was aware the trial wasn't going real well and probably felt he'd be convicted and would be looking at a mandatory 10-year minimum sentence."

"He probably felt he had nothing to lose by trying to leave the country," Krause said.

## Center wouldn't undercut downtown: developer

By Joanne Maliszewski  
staff writer

David Nelson says his planned shopping center on the edge of Livonia won't compete with a rejuvenated downtown Farmington.

"When we looked at our shopping center and said, 'Are we competing with it (downtown)?' we said, 'Hardly,'" Nelson of Nelson-Ross Cos. of Farmington Hills, told members of the Downtown Development Authority Wednesday morning.

Nelson-Ross developed the Village Commons shopping center on Grand River in downtown Farmington.

Nelson was given the opportunity to detail his plans for a 118,000-square-foot shopping center on the

southwest corner of Eight Mile and Farmington Road.

To buttress his opinion that the planned center wouldn't hurt downtown business, Nelson used examples of road patterns and explained market studies. The Nelson-Ross shopping center is expected to be a neighborhood center, drawing customers from a football-shaped area of one-to-two miles away.

Downtown Farmington, whose customers are primarily traveling from the north, is about two miles away and out of the targeted market area. None of the proposed center's tenants do business now in Livonia or Farmington, Nelson said.

THE DDA was expected to inform Livonia officials before a scheduled

meeting Wednesday night that it recognizes the corner's current commercial zoning and the 10-year-old consent judgment on the property calling for it to be used for commercial purposes.

The DDA also is asking Livonia officials to consider that any future plans for development along the Eight Mile corridor could affect Farmington's historical downtown.

The DDA's actions Wednesday morning follow an earlier letter sent to Livonia expressing concern about the proposed shopping center. Nelson told DDA members he took exception to finding out about their concerns through the Observer newspapers. "I think I was more hurt than anything else," Nelson said.

Nelson wanted the DDA to support his project. But city manager Robert Deadman told fellow DDA members: "I don't know if your role is to support a project in somebody else's community."

Nelson-Ross' plans were halted in December when planning commissioners denied the project. The developer appealed to the city council, which agreed to send the matter to committee for further study. That meeting was Wednesday evening.

As it turns out, the commercial zone on the property is the result of a consent judgment agreed to 10 years ago. The commercial designation also is in the Livonia master land use plan.

OTHER PARCELS included in the consent judgment have been developed according to the court order. The developments include a 78-acre subdivision and a 20-acre multiple residential complex.

When Livonia planning commissioners denied the project, they referred to traffic and storm drainage problems along Eight Mile that need resolving before a shopping center is built.

Nelson told DDA members, however, that his company would help improve Eight Mile, from Farmington to Gill roads, and that there are plans for an underground storm sewer retention facility.

The planned shopping center would have a 47,000-square-foot Great Scott grocery store complete with a full pharmacy as the center's anchor. Studies show, Nelson said, that "the general draw for a grocery is about 2 1/2 miles away."

Though Nelson was definite about not competing with downtown Farmington, he wouldn't offer the same assurance for the Farmer Jack supermarket in Farmington Crossroads at Nine Mile and Farmington roads.

The rest of the shopping center would be developed for either retail stores, such as a dry cleaners and hair styling salon, Nelson said.

## clarification

Matt Sprader of Farmington Hills Harrison High School won a \$750 scholarship after competing in Eastern Michigan University's History Day March 7.

He won for his second-place finish in the 12th-grade world history competition.

## Exchange students need hosts

The Nacel Cultural Exchange is seeking 300 Michigan families to share four weeks of their summer with French and Spanish teens who want to live American style.

The Nacel program has grown in the Farmington and West Bloomfield areas during the past few years, according to organizers. Evelyn and Julian Prince, West Bloomfield Township residents, coordinate the program throughout Michigan.

There are also travel opportunities for teens, including:

- reasonably priced homestays in France, Spain, Germany and the Ivo-

ry Coast for foreign language students.

- a guided adventure through France for middle school students,
- enrichment programs in England and Ireland with classes and excursions for high school juniors and seniors.

FOR THE first time, families can host students in either July or August, sharing their homes, their families and their cultures. Speaking a foreign language is not required; all students are insured through Nacel.

"During our nine years as Michigan coordinators, we have seen Na-

cel grow into the largest exchange program," said Evelyn Prince. "Participants realize in spite of the reasonable cost, the quality of our programs remains high."

More than 1,400 different families throughout Michigan have participated in the Nacel programs, according to Prince. The group has already received more than 100 applications from students who want to go abroad this summer.

Any Farmington-area family interested in hosting a student or area students interested in traveling overseas, should contact the Princes at 628-6641.



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Photos Available