

# Detectives target Hills chop shop

By Philip Jaromo  
staff writer

Detectives from the Southwest Oakland Auto Recovery Team feel they are about to put one of the most sophisticated "chop shop" operations in the Metro Detroit area out of business.

Detective Ron Roy said police are in the process of obtaining warrants from the Oakland County prosecutor's office for the arrest of a local man who has been operating chop shops in both Wixom and Farmington Hills.

"It's definitely a sophisticated operation," said Roy. "The quality of the 're-tagging' is definitely exceptional. It's the best we've seen, and an agent with the National Automobile Theft Bureau said virtually the same thing."

Police are withholding the name of the suspect pending the issuance of warrants. Roy said police believe warrants will be issued this week.

"The pending arrest stems from a routine traffic stop by Wixom Police on July 25, according to Roy.

IN THE PROCESS of making the traffic stop, the officer noted that the vehicle carried the registration of a 1979 Mercury, even though it was obviously a much newer vehicle, and proceeded to notify the South-

west Oakland Auto Theft Team of the incident.

Roy and an agent from the National Automotive Theft Bureau subsequently investigated the impounded vehicle and noted additional discrepancies between vehicle identification records and the actual vehicle. Roy said a hidden number on the vehicle indicated that it was in fact a 1985 Mercury which had been stolen out of Novi earlier this year.

On July 28 — three days after the traffic stop — police were notified by officials of Wixom Collision that someone had broken into the storage yard during the previous night and stolen the 1985 Mercury under investigation.

THROUGH LATER investigation, police were able to develop sufficient information to obtain administrative search warrants for a residence within the Wixom city limits as well as another location in Farmington Hills.

After executing the administrative search warrants at both the Wixom and Farmington Hills sites, police obtained sufficient evidence to secure criminal search warrants for both locations.

"What we found," said Roy, "was evidence that chop shops were being operated in both communities."

## police/fire calls

Listed below are some of the Farmington-area police incidents, fire calls and court cases reported during the past week:

### ARMED ROBBERY

A 37-year-old Farmington Hills man was robbed of \$200 at gunpoint as he left a restroom at the Topps Motel, 2874 Grand River, at 1:45 p.m. Sunday.

Two men in their 20s pointed a gun at his head and demanded his wallet, which contained the cash, according to a Farmington Hills police report.

### MOLOTOV COCKTAIL

A homeowner on Kendallwood heard glass breaking about 10:15 p.m. Friday, stepped out on the front porch and found broken glass from a pop bottle on the sidewalk.

A strong odor of paint thinner was evident. A wick was found in the shrubs. No arrests have been made, according to a Farmington Hills police report.

### CAR STOLEN

A man who she had met in a bar and agreed to go out for a drink with took a 1977-old Detroit woman's car after he asked her to stop at a Farmington Hills gas station and make a call for her early Monday.

As she left the car at 3:40 a.m. to use a pay phone in the lot of the Marathon station at 29450 Nine Mile, the man drove north on Middlebelt in the 1987 Chevrolet Camaro. The woman's purse inside

the car contained \$200. Moments earlier, the two had dropped off the man's friend, who lived in Farmington Hills, according to a Farmington Hills police report.

### BUILDING FIRE

Damage was estimated at \$1,000 when a discarded cigarette ignited an outside corner of an office building at 28530 Orchard Lake Road Monday afternoon.

Occupants extinguished the fire with a pan of water, according to a Farmington Hills fire report.

### RESTAURANT FIRE

Damage was estimated at \$12,500 when a grill fire broke out in the kitchen at Klancy's Restaurant, 38170 Grand River, at 7 p.m. Friday. The fire was ruled accidental, according to a Farmington Hills fire report.

### HOST LIABILITY

A 33-year-old South Lyon man was ticketed under Farmington Hills' host liability ordinance when officers responding to a loud party at Motel 6, 38300 Grand River, found minors drinking at 2:25 a.m. Sunday.

A 17-year-old Union Lake woman and an 18-year-old Walled Lake man were ticketed for possessing beer, according to a Farmington Hills police report.

### TICKETS ISSUED

Two 18-year-old men — one from Bay City, the other from North Carolina — were ticketed for possessing

intoxicants in a motor vehicle when beer was found in their car during a traffic stop at Smithfield and Grand River Sunday, according to a Farmington Department of Public Safety report.

Three 17-year-old men from Novi were ticketed for possessing beer in the parking lot at Taco Bell, 38300 10 Mile, Aug. 19. Two 18-year-old men and two 17-year-old men, all from Farmington Hills, were ticketed for possessing beer in the parking lot at Taco Bell, 29925 Orchard Lake, Aug. 19, according to Farmington Hills police reports.

### THEFTS REPORTED

A bicycle valued at \$110 was reported stolen from a back yard on Rhonswood, Farmington Hills, Aug. 19.

Aluminum building materials valued at \$2,304 were reported stolen from Titus Welding, 20750 Sunnydale, Farmington Hills, Aug. 19-20. Some of the items weighed 300 pounds.

A bicycle valued at \$170 was reported stolen from a garage on the 31100 block of Folsom, Farmington Hills, Aug. 20.

More than 25 cases of pop valued at \$140 were reported stolen from the Speedway station at 29250 Eight Mile, Farmington Hills, Aug. 20-21.

Cash was reported stolen from Fantastic Sams, 22036 Farmington Road, Farmington, Aug. 21.

# Gunman undergoes testing

The 28-year-old laid-off drywall hanger who held police at bay with a shotgun from his house on Purdue in Farmington Hills Sunday is undergoing psychological testing at Clinton Valley Center, Pontiac.

A competency hearing, to determine if he requires treatment or should be released, will be held Monday in Oakland County Probate Court, said Lt. Richard Murphy of the Farmington Hills Police Department.

The standoff with police sharpshooters began after the man, distraught over family and financial problems, had an argument with his wife and forced her and their four young children from the house, near Grand and Middlebelt, at 5 p.m.

No hostages were taken, no shots were fired and no one was hurt in the tense 4½-hour drama which ended when the gunman surrendered after talking to a close friend.

No charges are anticipated, police said.



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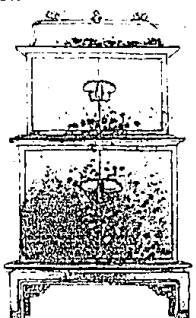
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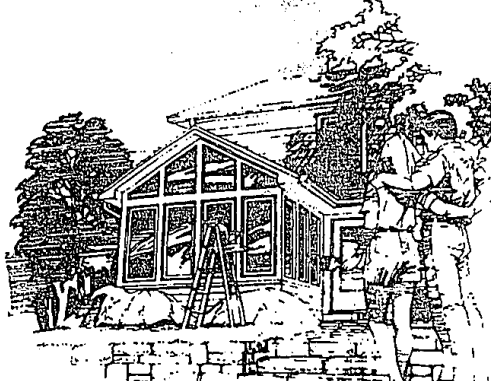
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