

# CRIME SCENE

## KM men arrested in chop shop bust

Seven Kings Mountain men face more than 25 charges, combined, after the Cleveland County Sheriff's Department busted an auto theft "chop shop". All seven suspects have been captured.

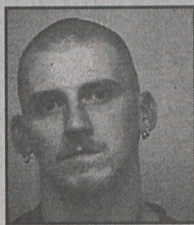
The chop shop ring targeted 1994-2002 Honda Civics and Acura Integras from Mecklenburg, Rutherford and Catawba counties, which were brought back to Cleveland County where the vehicles were then stripped for parts, according to the Cleveland County Sheriff's Office. The "chopped" parts were either sold on-line or were used to build new cars law enforcement officers have branded as "Frankenstein(s)".

The extensive month-long operation has also been dubbed "Frankenstein".

More arrests are expected



GRIGG



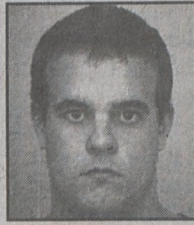
CARROLL



MOSS



LINGERFELT



CHAVIS



CAPPS



JOHNSON

and suspects could face additional charges in Gaston and Mecklenburg counties.

Authorities said that what began as an interest in street racing turned into a habit-stealing cars, "chopping" the parts and selling those parts online.

The members of the theft ring advertised stolen cars and parts on websites, such as [www.carolinahondas.com](http://www.carolinahondas.com), e-Bay and Craigslist, according to information released by the sheriff's office.

"Members of the group were actively involved in illegal street racing groups in Gaston and Mecklenburg counties and frequented local legal drag-racing facilities," according to authorities. "It was common for the group members to swap the stolen parts, particularly engines, transmissions, and engine control modules between cars for racing pur-

poses. The engine control modules can be easily converted to increase the horsepower of the Honda Civic and Acura Integra."

Police said that the stolen cars were "attractive targets" for the thieves "because of their light-weight frames, powerful engines and relative lack of internal security features."

Police suspect that many of the "Frankenstein" cars were crafted to fool the casual observer.

"The suspects in this ring were skilled enough to disguise many of these stolen vehicles as legitimately registered upon a cursory inspection by law enforcement officers," according to information released by CCSO. "Only when scrutinized by specially-trained DMV License and Theft inspectors were these cars determined to be stolen."

Department of Motor Vehicles License and Theft in-

spectors, Gaston County Police, Charlotte-Mecklenburg Police, the National Crime Bureau, other agencies, as well as administrators of websites assisted in the investigation which led to the recovery of 14 stolen cars (or parts thereof), including recovery of two stolen cars from Cleveland County thefts dating back to 2008. Detectives also confiscated a stolen semiautomatic rifle, 33 morphine pills, 19 hydrocodone tablets, 56 Xanax pills and nine clonazepam tablets, a commercial key cutting machine and hundreds of vehicle ignition key blanks.

The total value of the recovered property is estimated at over \$60,000. All owners of the recovered vehicles have been notified.

Several members of the "chop shop" gang have cooperated with the investigation, according to detectives. The Cleveland County

Sheriff's Department arrested:

Jamie Lee Grigg, 37, 415 Cherokee St., possession of a stolen vehicle and chop shop activity. Arrested March 19 with no opportunity for bond. He is being held for charges pending in Gaston County and for a probation violation.

Ricky Lewis Carroll Jr., 24, 800 First St., larceny of motor vehicle, two counts of chop shop activity, two counts of possession of stolen motor vehicle, two counts of possession of stolen goods and property. Arrested March 29, Carroll remains in the Cleveland County Detention Center under a \$25,000 secured bond.

Jackie Dean Moss Jr., 23, 202 Fairdel St., trafficking opiates, two counts of possession with intent to manufacture and sell and deliver Schedule IV controlled substance, possession with in-

tent to manufacture/sell and deliver Schedule II controlled substance and possession of stolen firearm. He was arrested March 17 and was released under a \$25,000 secured bond two days later.

Justin Lamar Lingerfelt, 23, 108 Churchill Dr., two counts of chop shop activity, two counts of possession of stolen motor vehicle, two counts of possession of stolen goods and property, and larceny of motor vehicle. Lingerfelt was arrested March 17 and was released a day later under a \$10,000 secured bond.

Jessie Lee Chavis, 19, 4943-1 E. Dixon Blvd., larceny of motor vehicle and possession of stolen goods. He was arrested and released on March 19, under a \$5,000 secured bond.

Elijah Ray Capps, 19, 404 Wilson St., larceny of

See CHOP SHOP, 7A

## Police log...

### ARRESTS

APRIL 2: April Bennett Bradford, 37, 112 McGinnis St., violation of school attendance law.

APRIL 3: Maurice Moore, 52, 704 Harmon Rd., assault on female.

APRIL 3: April Haynes, 48, 333 Bridges Circle, driving while license revoked, fictitious information to officer, resist public officer, \$2,000 bond, secured.

APRIL 5: Tory Lee Roseboro, 28, 421 N. Tracy St., attempted armed robbery, resist, delay, obstruct officer, no bond.

APRIL 7: Jonathan Ray Allen, 19, 1300 Shelby Rd., disorderly conduct and trespassing, \$1,000 bond, secured.

APRIL 7: Draylon Holland, 57, 1078 Mountain Crest Dr., assault with deadly weapon intent to kill inflicting serious injury,

\$25,000 bond, secured.

APRIL 7: April Bennett Bradford, 37, 112 McGinnis St., violation of school attendance law.

APRIL 7: Rhonda Gail Guin, 42, 120 Delmar Rd., larceny of motor vehicle and possession stolen goods, \$5,000 bond, secured.

APRIL 9: Christopher Shane Peavey, 30, 212 Fulton St., DWI, \$500 bond, unsecured.

APRIL 10: Susan Annette Knight, 46, Waxhaw, obtaining registration plate, no insurance, \$500 bond, secured.

APRIL 11: Christopher Cooke, 31, York, SC, possession stolen vehicle, felony, possession of stolen property, fictitious information to officer, \$5,000 bond, secured.

### CITATIONS

APRIL 6: Katherine Marie Blanks, 45, Bessemer

City, revoked license, failure to reduce speed to avoid a collision.

APRIL 6: Brandon J. McClain, 22, Gastonia, revoked license, failure to operate head lamps.

APRIL 6: James Strickland III, 55, 203 Waco Rd., altered registration plate, no insurance, no operator's license.

APRIL 7: Trey Clinton, 23, 803 W. King St. Apt. 2, expired tag.

APRIL 7 Eliv Pedroza,

33, Gastonia, no operator's license.

APRIL 7: Deonte Lindsay, 18, Gastonia, revoked license.

APRIL 7: Elijah Capps, 19, 404 Wilson St., underage drinking.

APRIL 8: Kristen Freeman, 20, 812 Ellison St., expired inspection sticker, expired tag.

APRIL 8: Marisa Bergeson, 31, Henderson, NV,

See POLICE LOG, 7A

## CHILDCARE

From Page 1

tivities include school readiness skills, arts and crafts, games, intro to music, Spanish, Karate/self defense, outdoor play, science and multi-cultural activities.

The center's website describes itself as "a Christian Academy offering Christian curriculum to all ages".

The Higher Learning Childcare Academy is open 24-hours-a-day, six-days-a-week and operates in three shifts.

For more information, call 704-484-9001 or visit [higherlearningchildcare.com](http://higherlearningchildcare.com)

## FIREHOUSE

From Page 1

preparing for the event that has become the state championship to win for cooks fired up at the chance of competing in the Jack Daniels Invitational.

"Our event has been nominated for one of the top 20 events in the southeast to visit," Burns added.

The department hasn't learned yet whether or not KM's cook-off has won that top-20 placement, but Burns said that they are excited about the nomination.

The money raised during the event supports KMFD's Fire Museum - one of very few that remain in the state.

Several local dignitaries and firefighters will gather at the museum (next to the walking track) around 7 p.m. Friday to enjoy a traditional BBQ feast before setting off to judge the Firehouse's

Anything Butt competition.

The Anything Butt contest allows contenders a chance to show off their culinary skills outside of the 'que, in two categories--dessert and non-dessert.

This year's Firehouse will welcome 11 vendors, selling a variety of treats from barbecue to funnel cakes.

Eight local teams, including Big E's BBQ, captained by Eric Pardo of Kings Mountain, have signed up to compete this weekend.

Other teams are coming to Kings Mountain from as far away as Florida, Virginia and Tennessee. With an average of six people per cooking team and judges, over 300 people could be on their way into town this weekend.

Grills will be fired up at the track on Friday and chefs will continue to smoke, grill and prepare their meats through the night for judging that starts at 11 a.m. Saturday.

The winner of the North Carolina

Firehouse Barbeque State Championship, a Kansas City BBQ Society sanctioned event, will be invited to compete in the American Royal Barbecue Contest and will be eligible for a shot at the Jack.

The state champion will also walk away with a grand trophy and \$4,000 in prize money. Reserve champions will win \$1,000 and top category prizes of \$550 - 1st place, \$300 - 2nd, \$200 - 3rd, \$150 - 4th, and \$100 - 5th will be awarded to the top 5 teams that place in beef brisket, pork ribs, pork, and poultry contests.

A new competition for BBQ sauce, sponsored by Big E's BBQ, of Kings Mountain, will also be held this year with a top prize of \$100.

Anything Butt winners will be rewarded with \$200 for best dessert and best non-dessert. The best booth will receive \$100 as will the highest placing Cleveland County team.

## Mills pleads guilty in Movie Gallery heist

One of three suspects in the February robbery of Movie Gallery on East King Street in Kings Mountain has pled guilty of conspiracy to commit robbery with a dangerous weapon. Cases against two other suspects are still pending.

Superior Court Judge James W. Morgan sentenced twenty-four-year-old Stephen Edward Mills to 29-44 months suspended and 30 months probation with a nine-month active split sentence. After Mills serves nine months in prison he will be placed on 30 months probation. If he violates probation, he will return to prison for 29 to 44 months.

Kings Mountain Police said that Mills' brother, Brandon Scott Mills, 22, of Second St., entered the store in February brandishing a knife and demanding money. He was found minutes later and arrested near the business and charged with armed robbery and conspiracy to commit armed robbery.

After further investigation, police arrested Stephen Edward Mills, charging him with conspiracy to commit armed robbery and aiding and abetting armed robbery; and Kyile Ann Dorman, 22, with conspiracy to commit armed robbery and obstruction of justice, police said.

## Mobile home lost to fire

A mobile home on Green Meadows Drive outside the city limits went up in flames last Tuesday evening.

Cleveland County Assistant Fire Marshal Perry Davis said the fire remains under investigation.

Shiela Carnes told investigators that she was in process of buying the residence that was under construction.

No one had been working at the site Tuesday.

The Carnes family had planned to move soon.

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