

LOCAL
Pants-on-fire lawyer withdraws from case — at client's request 3A



BUSINESS
No casino yet, but Genting proposes a hotel over Omni bus terminal 13A



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WINNER OF 20 PULITZER PRIZES

Partly cloudy
 79°/60° See 17B

Miami Herald

Billions in illegal gold moved through Miami

BY JAY WEAVER
 jweaver@miamiherald.com

In a zeal to hide cocaine profits, South American traffickers have funneled billions of dollars of illegally mined Amazon gold to a Miami metals refinery in what federal authorities say amounts to a massive money-laundering scheme.

The man suspected of being in the middle of it all — NTR Metals director of operations Juan P. Granda — was arrested by federal agents this week at his mother's Miami home after he flew back from Colombia and got fired from his job.

Granda is accused of conspiring with two other NTR employees to buy gold from illegal mines in the Amazon rain forest, refine the precious metal, sell it and then wire the proceeds back to drug traffickers, according to a criminal complaint unsealed in federal court Thursday. Narco-traffickers use the clandestine operation to convert their cocaine profits into cash.

U.S. Customs records show that NTR imported \$3.6 billion worth of illegal gold through a "shifting array of Latin American countries" under the "responsibility" of Granda and two Miami-based NTR sales people between 2012 and 2015, according to the complaint by Homeland Security Investigations and the FBI.

"For all of the billions of

SEE GOLD, 2A

No crime found in prison shower death



More than four years after the death of Darren Rainey, a schizophrenic inmate who collapsed while locked in a makeshift shower, the Miami-Dade state attorney's office says no crime was committed and that six inmates who said he begged to be let out are not credible.



Courtesy of Miami-Dade state attorney's office

A photograph of the shower room in TCU, west wing 13. From the Darren Rainey in-custody death investigative report released Friday by the state attorney's office.

BY JULIE K. BROWN
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A 101-page investigation released Friday concludes that corrections officers who locked a schizophrenic inmate in a hot shower at Dade Correctional Institution and left him there for nearly two hours — until realizing he was dead — committed no crime.

The report, issued by Miami-Dade State Attorney Katherine Fernández Rundle, said the death of 50-year-old prisoner Darren Rainey was an accident, the result of complications from his mental illness, a heart condition and "confinement in a shower."

At least six inmates claimed that the shower was specially rigged so that corrections officers controlled the temperature and were able to crank it up to scalding — or down to an uncomfortably frigid spray, thereby using it as punishment to control unruly inmates, most of whom suffered from mental illnesses.

But the state attorney's two-year probe decided that the inmates' statements were not credible.

While the report cited significant inconsistencies in the accounts of inmates, it acknowledged the same was true to a lesser degree of the accounts of staffers, although there was "general agreement on a core set

of salient facts."

Sgt. John Fan Fan, and officers Cornelius Thompson, Ronald Clarke and Edwina Williams — the staffers involved in putting Rainey into the shower — did not act with premeditation, malice, recklessness, ill-will, hatred or evil intent, the state attorney said.

The report includes photographs, videos, dozens of witness statements, the medical examiner's summary, prison housing logs, timelines and other documents.

Milton Grimes, the attorney representing Rainey's siblings, suggested the report's release,

SEE REPORT, 4A

The porn actress, the 'doc' and the butt lift gone bad

BY DAVID OVALLE
 dovalle@miamiherald.com

On the internet, she goes by the name Vanessa Luna, starring in porn videos that highlight her ample rear end.

Police believe she used her real name, Ruth Planas, to help women enlarge their own butts by operating an unlicensed clinic in a West Miami-Dade strip mall.

The clinic, called Cuerpos Health and Aesthetic, was shuttered after a 28-year-old mother, Suyima Torres, died following a botched butt lift performed there. Prosecutors have charged Jose Robusto, a purported medical doctor in Venezuela, who they believe injected Torres with ille-



Twitter

Ruth Planas owned Miami clinic where Suyima Torres died.



Miami-Dade Corrections

Prosecutors believe Jose Robusto injected illegal liquid.



El Nuevo Herald

Suyima Torres, 28, died after a botched procedure.

gal and dangerous liquid silicone at the facility.

But nearly a year after his arrest, authorities have been unable to build a case against clinic owner Planas, who claimed no in-

jections were ever done at the business. Planas insisted she only used the clinic to sell cosmetic products, pitch Herbalife nutritional supplements and, a couple times a week, perform on live

X-rated web videos.

Yet, in newly released statements, witnesses say that Planas arranged and helped carry out illegal cosmetic surgeries there. Still, the statements have not carried enough weight for prosecutors to charge Planas with practicing medicine without a license or for arranging the two procedures that led to Torres' death.

Torres' family attorney, Jorge Silva, believes that criminal charges should be filed against Planas and her sister.

SEE BUTT INJECTIONS, 2A

MORE INSIDE

Woman dies at Hialeah cosmetic surgery clinic where another died last year, 2A



BAL HARBOUR

SHOPS GIVE NEW EXPANSION PLAN

Residents can learn about new plans for the shopping center's expansion at a workshop. Council will consider plans later. 4A



NATION

WIRETAP CLAIM REMAINS ISSUE

President Trump refused to back down from claims that Obama ordered his phones tapped during the closing days of the campaign. 12A



TROPICAL LIFE

COCKTAIL HOUR: TRY THESE DRINKS

For those nights when you want to get your liquor on but don't want to change out of your comfy clothes, read some options. 1C

SPORTS

KEY LEADERS FOR THE HURRICANES

Coach says UM would not have made the NCAA Tournament without team leaders Davon Reed and Kamari Murphy. 1B

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PEOPLE

TV ACTOR KAL PENN SAYS HE STILL STRUGGLES AGAINST STEREOTYPES IN HOLLYWOOD, 4C

COCKTAIL HOUR

Want a fabulous drink? We've got you covered with these six recipes



For more drink recipes, like one for this Hibiscus-Dandelion Root Margarita from 1 Hotel South Beach, turn to 6C.

BY AMANDA MESA
Miami.com

There's no rule that says going into party mode can't come with a little turn-down service.

For those nights when you want to get your liquor on but don't want to change out of your comfy clothes, we've got six recipes from some of our favorite Miami watering holes.

We can't guarantee they'll come out as good as when the pros make 'em, but we can guarantee that the more you drink, the less you'll notice.



Nikki Beach's Strawberry Basil Margarita

Nothing says 'beach day' like a strawberry basil margarita, and this Nikki Beach mainstay gets the proportions just right.

What you need:
4 fresh muddled strawberries
1 fresh basil leaf
Splash of simple syrup
¼ ounce of triple sec
1 tablespoon of lime juice
1½ ounces of tequila

Muddle the strawberries and basil leaves. Add the rest of the ingredients, shake, and strain over ice.

DINING REVIEW



Opt for lobster and corn agnolotti if you want to try something more adventurous at Michael Schwartz's new restaurant in Brickell, Fi'lia.

Michael Schwartz's ode to Italian

BY KENDALL HAMERSLY
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If you think farm-to-table restaurant cooking is a relatively new concept, think again. Michael Schwartz, who helped bring to Miami an emphasis on seasonal local ingredients 10 years ago

with the opening of Michael's Genuine Food & Drink, knows this from his days as a young cook watching the *nonnas* make pasta and other traditional Italian fare at his first outpost in Philadelphia.

You don't have to be a fan of "Tuscan Kitchen" to know that Italian fare is by its very nature farm-to-

table, and that synchronicity is on display at Fi'lia, the newest gem in Schwartz's jewel box. The handsome space in the tutti-frutti confection that is Brickell's new SLS Hotel is a showcase for Schwartz's original passion, simple Italian cooking. It's a place for palates both adventurous and

risk-averse: You can build a meal of Caesar salad, margarita pizza and chicken Parmesan, or opt for lobster and corn agnolotti, fish paired with charred-bread salsa verde or olive oil cake. Both styles bear the quality you expect from Schwartz, from spa-

SEE REVIEW, 7C



Vote for your favorites

BY CARLOS FRÍAS
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The tournament is well under way and the competition fierce — and, no, we're not talking about basketball.

The Miami Herald's Munch Madness pits some of Miami-Dade's best and most popular restaurants against each other — and you vote on the winners. Our selection committee included a wide range of eaters, from Miami Herald dining critics to staff food nerds who just love to dine out. Together, we narrowed the field to 64 restaurants (mirroring the college basketball tournament's 64 teams) that we felt represented some of the most-loved Miami-Dade County spots.

The field includes year-old Diaper Dandies, as Dicky V would say, such as Wynwood's KYU, the upscale Asian barbecue-

style spot the James Beard Foundation nominated as one of the country's best new restaurants last month.

But it's not only fine dining and upscale, chef-driven restaurants. The varied field goes all the way to one of our 16 seeds, local favorite El Rey de las Fritas, whose Cuban-style hamburgers have made them renowned in Miami for more than 40 years.

Visit MiamiHerald.com/restaurants each day, vote for your favorite, and help them move through the bracket over the next three weeks until you crown the Munch Madness champion on April 4.

We've tackled half the bracket, with the Casual Dining and Chef-Driven regions decided Thursday and Friday. Now it's your chance to pick among the World Cuisine and Local Favorites and Chains division. Voting closes at 8 p.m. each night.

DINING DISCOVERIES

Dine, dance the night away at Bagatelle on the Beach



Executive chef Matthieu Godard at Bistrot Bagatelle, Miami Beach.

The Place: Bagatelle means "a light courtship or trifle" in French, but Bistrot Bagatelle is more of a truffle. Facing Collins Park, the outpost of a small chain with locations in St. Tropez, Dubai, Sao Paulo, New York, Rio and Punta del Este offers French and Mediterranean dishes. It becomes a party place after 9 p.m. complete with customers dancing on ban-



BY LINDA BLADHOLM
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quettes under crystal chandeliers, a DJ and grooving

bartenders. If you order a large bottle of champagne it will be poured by a server in costume, perhaps the Pink Panther, Wonder Woman or a fireman. The dimly lit space is Euro-chic with white walls, framed posters of famous people and white tablecloths.

The History: The first clubby French bistro was opened in 2008 in New York by French business

partners Remi Laba and Aymeric Clemente of Essence Hospitality. French executive chef Matthieu Godard designs and crafts the dishes on the menu. He studied culinary arts in his native Rouen in Normandy, then spent five years as a Club Med chef before driving to Marbella in the far south of Spain to invite himself to work with innovative Chef Ramon

Freixa (he got a job). A year later he flew to New York and knocked on the door of Chef Daniel Boulud, got hired and followed him to Miami to become executive chef at DB Bistro Moderne. He then was recruited by the owners of Bagatelle before it opened a year ago.

The Food: The seasonal
SEE BAGATELLE, 7C

WYNWOOD

A sour split for The Salty Donut

BY CARLOS FRÍAS
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Things have gone sour for The Salty Donut.

The pastry chef behind the Wynwood gourmet doughnut shop that inspired blocks-long lines resigned last week. After a falling out with owners Andy Rodriguez, 29, and Amanda Pizarro, 24, executive pastry chef Max Santiago, 41, made the announcement on his Instagram page.

The doughnut shop, which was started as a pop up out of a trailer before a permanent location opened in the Wynwood Arcade last fall, will continue using the recipes Santiago created as pastry chef. Among them are

their maple-bacon 24-hour-raised brioche doughnut and a brown butter cake doughnut.

Rodriguez and Santiago had made a name for The Salty Donut together. They even teamed up to compete in and win the Cooking Channel's Sugar Showdown in September. They recreated their winning doughnut — a cream-filled cannoli doughnut — for their fanatical customers. Many waited for up to an hour there and at a pop-up at Miami Beach's Confidante Hotel to try the confection.

Rodriguez wished his former pastry chef well and stressed the quality of their doughnuts would not be affected.

"It's never been about one or two or three people.

It's about the creativity, the quality of the product," Rodriguez said. "It has always been a team effort."

Santiago has worked as pastry chef over the last 20 years for several notable James Beard award-winning chefs, such as Michelle Bernstein (at the former Seagrape in Miami Beach), Norman Van Aken and Allen Susser. Santiago had several one- to two-year stints with different restaurants over the past 10 years. He said in helping to found The Salty Donut he "found my calling," and hopes to open his own doughnut and pastry shop.

He said he lamented the split but wished his young cofounders good luck, even as he decides what



Max Santiago, left, has split with The Salty Donut co-owners Amanda Pizarro and Andy Rodriguez.

comes next in his career.

"I'm definitely going to open my own place. I'm not settling for anything less," he said. "It's just a

matter of time."

READ MORE: Salty Donut opens brick-and-mortar shop in Wynwood

Carlos Frías
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@Carlos_Frias



LINDA BLADHOLM

Pan-seared Maine diver scallops with Jerusalem artichoke, Iberico ham, Brussels sprouts, trumpet royal mushrooms, walnuts and blood orange composed at Bistrot Bagatelle in Miami Beach.

FROM PAGE 1C

BAGATELLE

menu has some dishes that stay. Start with loup de mer (sea bass) tartare with a layer of crème fraîche, Meyer lemon, little gem lettuce and American caviar or soft French-style

gnocchi made with pate a choux (flour, butter and egg dough) in black truffle sauce with aged Parmesan. There's also pizza with crème fraîche, black truffle oil and smoked scamorza

cheese. Entrees include horseradish-crust halibut with roasted beets, potato puree, blackberries and a bottarga croquette with salt-cured mullet roe; honey glazed duck breast with root vegetables and enoki mushroom tempura; and filet mignon with barley risotto and trumpet mushrooms in red wine

reduction. Or order Le St. Tropez seafood platter with oysters, littleneck clams, mussels, tuna tartare and shrimp, or upgrade to the Le Sobe to add King crab, Scottish salmon and jumbo lump crab salad. End with a pear tart with orange and Amaretto ice cream, good with a sip of Cognac. Then dance the night away.

You Didn't Know This: Scamorza is a pasta filata or spun paste cheese made from stretched curds that are marinated in its whey for acidity, then kneaded, formed into balls, tied around the middle with string and hung to ripen for two weeks (called "strangling" the cheese). The pear-shaped, semi-soft

The Place: Bistrot Bagatelle

Address: 220 21st St. (at Collins Avenue), Miami Beach

Contact: 305-704-3900, bagatellemiami.com

Hours: 7 p.m.-1 a.m. Tuesday-Wednesday, 7 p.m.-2 a.m. Thursday-Saturday, Sunday brunch noon-6 p.m.

Prices: Appetizers \$14-\$36, seafood platter \$85, entrees \$18-\$69 (for a whole truffle roasted chicken that serves two to three), desserts \$12, brunch favorites \$18-\$36

white cheese, which has a texture similar to firm, dry mozzarella but is more elastic and stringy, is made in Apulia and Campania. The name scamorza is thought to come from the phrases capa mozza or testa mozza, both meaning "severed head." This explains the use of "scamorza" in Italian to call someone a "fool" or "idiot" who has lost their head.

Linda Bladholm is a Miami-based food blogger and writer and creator of Mermaid Sea Salt and Indian Spiced Toffee, available at Cream Parlor, 8224 Biscayne Blvd.

FROM PAGE 1C

REVIEW

ghetti cooked just right to perfect meatballs to gorgeous olive oil.

The concept was so intriguing that Schwartz has been asked to open a second Fi'lia location in Los Angeles at The James West Hollywood hotel, on Sunset, in early May.

That oil is your first taste at Fi'lia. Ciabatta is brought to the table with sprigs of fresh oregano and a can of imported oil. Munch on the herb-infused treat as you sort through the broad menu, arranged as is typical for Schwartz into snacks, small plates, pizzas, pastas, large plates and really large plates.

Snacks not to miss include charred eggplant spread with shallots, garlic, lemon, basil and bottarga, Italian cured fish roe. Treated properly, eggplant has as rich and deep a flavor as any vegetable, and this is an absolute hit, shimmering with a perimeter of olive oil, the bottarga faint and savory in the background. The Mediterranean medley continues with chickpea fritters, which look and eat just like falafel except the seasonings are fennel seed and basil, and the sauce is a

tomato aioli.

For his Caesar salad, Schwartz set out to "elevate it without tricking it out." Done. But what they did trick out is a pair of tableside carts, which are wheeled around the restaurant so friendly fellows can put on a tightly choreographed show of making your salad to order. The custom-made carts are equipped with griddles on which they toast garlic croutons, and that aroma is one of Fi'lia's defining sensations. The salad is fresh and classic, with Romaine, garlic, anchovy, salt, pepper, Dijon, egg yolk, olive oil, lemon and Parmesan, with a bit of radicchio just for color.

No Italian experience is complete without meatballs. Fi'lia's use the classic mix of beef, veal and pork, rolled with cubed bread soaked in milk for moisture, lightly fried then simmered in a basic marinara and dolloped with ricotta. Three fat ones to an order, they'd be enough for a small meat entree, and they're outstanding, with sturdy texture and deep flavor.

Pizzas use the same dough made at Schwartz's

Harry's Pizzeria parlors but with different toppings. The wood oven at the restaurant's center spit out a crackling-crisp crust for our puttanesca pizza, coated with a rich, briny sauce bearing concentrated flavors of garlic, anchovy and capers, bits of pork sausage, stracciatella and fresh oregano.

On another visit, the wild mushroom pizza with pureed mushroom, onion and leek, sliced porcini and mozzarella had plenty of flavor but came out underdone, the crust soggy. We sent it back for another trip to the oven, and all was well. Arugula scattered on top adds color and contrast against the intense essence of mushroom.

Two excellent pasta dishes underline the dueling approaches here. Basic spaghetti caccio e pepe couldn't be more traditional, with al dente pasta, butter, Pecorino, lots of pepper and a bit of pasta water as the sauce. But corn agnolotti with lobster is a majestic creation, creamed corn inside the agnolotti in a concentrated lobster reduction with cognac, white wine, tomato and lobster meat.

That wood oven produces plenty of meat entrees. Our wood-grilled leg of lamb was the lone serious

If you go

Place: Fi'lia

Address: 1300 S. Miami Ave., in the SLS Hotel.

Rating: ★ ★ ★ 1/2 (excellent)

Contact: 305-912-1729; sbe.com

Hours: 7 a.m. to 10:30 p.m. Sunday-Thursday, till midnight Friday-Saturday

Prices: Breakfast items \$9-\$17; lunch \$8-\$35; dinner \$12-\$129; desserts \$5-\$13

FYI: Happy hour with food and drink specials 4-7 p.m. daily. Reservations strongly suggested. Full bar and strong wine list. Corkage fee \$35. Street and valet parking (\$12).

What The Stars Mean: 1 (Poor) 1.5 (Fair) 2 (OK) 2.5 (Good) 3 (Very Good) 3.5 (Excellent) 4 (Exceptional)

misstep on all our visits. Marinated in salsa verde, the lamb was gristly and underdone, ruining the flavor and diverting attention away from an excellent puree of sunchoke and the tart salad of sunchoke, apple, lemon, olive oil, hazelnuts and salsa verde.

Wood-grilled cobia was significantly better, the sturdy fish succulent and sweet, served with a salsa verde studded with pieces of burnt ciabatta for texture. The fish rested on a base of blanched and braised broccoli rabe and cipollini onions with chili flake, garlic, olive oil and lemon.

A side dish of grilled zucchini was over the top. Fat slabs of sweet zucchini, juicy and textured just right, got a savory hint from anchovy butter with garlic and parsley. Our

serving was enough for four.

Sauteed Swiss chard gets an interesting treatment with pine nuts and plump rosemary-olive oil-simmered raisins, but ours had too much salt.

To finish, our server recommended a chocolate Budino, a rich cross between pudding and cake. Rich and velvety, it had deep chocolate flavor and a welcome touch of salt, with brandied cherry cookies adding contrast. The pine nut and honey tart is rich and dense, with a flaky crust and ample pine nuts. Classic Italian indeed.

For the latest restaurant inspection reports, visit dine.miami.com

Miami Herald critics dine anonymously at the newspaper's expense.

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