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Agents raid Perfect Title

Leaders arrested;
material seized

By Jean Christensen
 and Robbie Dingeman
 Advertiser Staff Writers

State and county law enforcement agents yesterday raided the downtown Honolulu office of Perfect Title Co. and arrested two company officials on suspicion of tax evasion, racketeering and other crimes.

The agents also seized computers and documents from the company, which recognizes land ownership based on Hawaiian Kingdom law instead of state-registered deeds.

Company president Donald A. Lewis and chief title investigator David Keanu Sai, along with a secretary, were taken to police headquarters in handcuffs after the 8 a.m. raid on the Richards Street office. The three were released pending further investigation.

Lewis and Sai denied any wrongdoing.

The arrests were the result of a joint investigation by the state attorney general's office and the Police Department. Attorney General Margery Bronster said that in addition to the criminal investigation, the state is pursuing a civil action to clear Perfect Title's "baseless" liens against state property.

In the past year, Perfect Title has generated a storm of criticism in the local real estate community by challenging the validity of land titles issued since the overthrow of the Hawaiian monarchy in 1893.

Reports filed by Perfect Title in the state Bureau of Conveyances have cast clouds on the ownership of parcels and prompted some clients of the company to stop paying their mortgages.

"They have been misleading people and issuing liens that are not based on the law," Bronster said.

See B1, Page A5

outside the building where she died.

She is to be buried Wednesday in the graveyard of St. John's Church in Calcutta's Sealdah district.

the planet. She looked in eyes of the loneliest, si most forgotten men and w and saw their humanity the divinity in their souls.

A final glimpse



The hearse carrying the Princess of Wales' coffin travels toward Kensington Palace in prepara-

Inside

Historic address

Queen Elizabeth II says Diana's memory must be cherished.

Page A2

Surge of charity

Donations overwhelm Diana's office; Hawali supermarkets differ on tabloid sales as Diana memorabilia sells out at Island stores; Fayed family confirms ring, releases security video.

Page A2

Ode to princess

A Nanakuli woman dedicates a poem to Princess Diana.

Page B1



Raid: Perfect Title president arrested; files confiscated

FROM PAGE ONE

Lewis and Sai have said they are following Hawaiian Kingdom law and do not recognize the Hawaii state government as a legal entity. They say they do not pay state or federal taxes because, they contend, the United States is a foreign government.

The two started the company in December 1995 and say they have 400 clients, each of whom is charged \$1,500 or more for title searches that go back to 1845.

Bronster said: "There is absolutely no problem with them saying that the state government is not valid, and we have never tried to infringe upon their First Amendment right to say whatever they want. But what they've done is that they have taken actions which are illegal, and avoiding paying taxes is not a proper expression of your First Amendment rights."

... Filing illegal liens also is not a proper expression of First Amendment rights.

Big Island Judge Riki May Amano issued an injunction on Aug. 8 that prohibits Perfect Title from filing any more liens in the Bureau of Conveyances for five years unless they get court approval to do so, Bronster said.

The action was taken because property on the Big Island was subject to improper liens filed by Perfect Title, she said.

In March, Big Island Judge Ronald Ibarra ruled that a title report and warranty deed filed by the company were invalid. He ordered Sai and other defendants in the case to pay more than \$9,000 in damages and attorneys' fees. Sai said then that the state has no authority to fine him or the company.

The Legislature passed laws in the past two sessions that give the state Bureau of Conveyances

more power to reject frivolous property liens and speed their removal from the bureau.

"The problem is that if there are improper or baseless liens filed, it wreaks havoc on the whole filing system," Bronster said. "You have all sorts of people who are concerned about what appears on title reports. And it doesn't only affect the person who may be the owner of the property."

Seven clients of Perfect Title filed a lawsuit in Circuit Court on Aug. 4 accusing the company of unfair or deceptive practices and demanding their money back.

The lawsuit, which seeks an unspecified amount of damages, said Lewis and Sai told the plaintiffs that titles to real property in Hawaii were "no good" and that they should stop making their mortgage payments.

After their release from police custody yesterday, Lewis and Sai jovially greeted visitors.

Avoiding paying taxes is not a proper expression of your First Amendment rights.

— MARGERY BRONSTER
SUIR ATTORNEY GENERAL

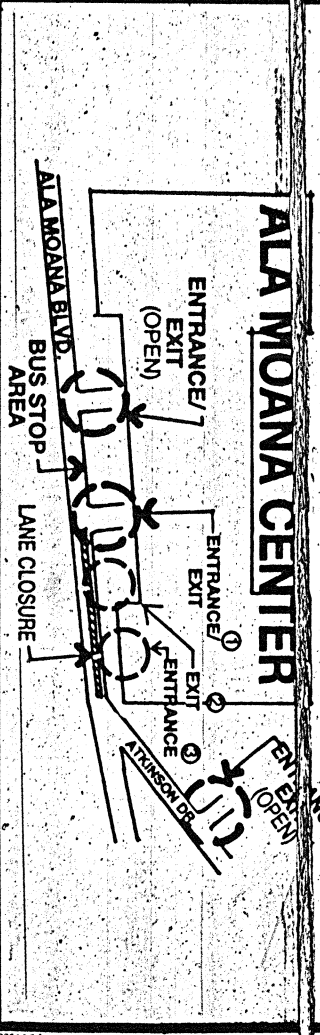
He said the company has done nothing wrong and suggested the state could be liable for harm caused to their clients as a result of the raid.

"The liability rides everywhere," Sai said, "because you've got 400 clients. That's their files. They paid us to do a title search. We can't fulfill it right now. . . . The people it really affects is the clients, and that's the sad thing."

NOTICE TO MOTORISTS - LANE CLOSURE - SEPTEMBER 6-7, 1997

There will be a temporary closure of two west-bound lanes September 6-7 on Ala Moana Blvd. adjacent to Ala Moana Shopping Center between Atkinson Dr. and the first main entrance to Ala Moana Shopping Center (4450 LF). Three (3) entrance/exit ways will be closed periodically throughout the day for construction purposes. These conditions will remain for a 48 hour period for the demobilization of one tower crane starting the morning of September 6 through the evening of September 7.

PLEASE NOTE THAT THREE ENTRANCE/EXIT WAYS WILL BE CLOSED PERIODICALLY BUT ALL OTHER ENTRANCES WILL REMAIN OPEN AND ACCESSIBLE. ALTERNATE ENTRANCES TO THE CENTER ARE LOCATED ALONG ALA MOANA BLVD. AND ATKINSON DR.



WAYBORN
Furniture & Accessories of Hawaii

Clearance Sale
Furniture & Accessories of Hawaii

Camphorwood Chests
Small \$49
Med. \$99
Large \$149

Dining Table
Superb Quality Solid Rosewood
Now from \$1699

Porcelain Fishbowl
Only 5 sets left!

Porcelain Jars
from \$25

Bamboo Birdcages
\$39

549 Kakaia St. #D-1 847-1386
Across Canal - Canned Food Grocery (outlet) Mon-Fri 8-5, Sat 10-4

Pressure builds for raiding on mine

Senators Kempster

WASHINGTON — A study of the Senate Relations Committee agreed yesterday a petition intended by the Chairman Jesse R. N.C., to hold a hearing to consider to consider there will be a petition on the nomination of William F. Weid to Ambassador to Mexico. Sen. G. Lugar of Indiana joined all eight members on the 18-member panel in a parliamentary maneuver intended to name Helms' deposition to President Clinton's selection of moderate Republican of the nation's most diplomatic posts. Senate rules, has three days to the petition, will probably will call a meeting next Saturday, or side and allow the majority to continue to meeting without the chairman retains entary powers that use to continue to the Nield nomination. If he agrees to meeting. Republican staff said: "Sen. Helms continue to control