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Crown Casino high roller Jake Salantri jailed for trafficking meth, cocaine and speed

A Rowville lad who bankrolled a Crown Casino drug racket after landing a half-million Texas hold'em poker hand has run out of luck.

Paul Shapiro Follow

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Jake Salantri peddled drugs at Crown Towers after winning more than \$500,000 playing poker.

A druggie punter's only excuse for buying a two kilo smorgasbord of drugs after winning more than half-a-million playing poker at Crown casino was simple — "who wouldn't".

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Jake Salanitri jailed: Crown Casino high roller drug trafficking guilty plea | Herald Sun

Jake Salanitri, 24, was sentenced in the County Court on Wednesday to a minimum two years and six months' jail after pleading guilty to trafficking an aggregate commercial quantity of drugs.

Salanitri, who also pleaded guilty to five counts of trafficking drugs, was nabbed peddling cocaine, meth, speed, cannabis and GHB at his \$1200 per night Crown Towers room.

The Rowville pizza chef checked-in after he won a staggering \$582,213 on a single poker hand on July 12 2019.

Salanitri, a learner driver, also splurged \$70,000 on a flash 2018 Audi A5 from a Port Melbourne dealership near the casino.

The lucky lad's drug racket came unstuck after an eagle-eyed housekeeper spotted drugs in Salanitri's room on July 20.

Hotel security discovered more drugs in Salanitri's room then referred the mater to police.

Salanitri was arrested in the hotel lobby in possession of cocaine, Valium and ketamine.

Police asked Salanitri what was in his various drug goodie bags.

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"Ketamine, I think," Salanitri said.

"Oh yeah, they're my other bags of coke, I go through a lot of coke."

Hotel security discovered more drugs and a knife stashed in the room safe while Salanitri was hauled away for questioning.

Police quizzed Salanitri about how often he used cocaine.

"A lot more after I won the jackpot," Salanitri said.

Salanitri said he bought cocaine after winning the money because "yeah, who wouldn't".

Police also asked Salanitri what drugs he used.

"Speed, coke, juice, ketamine on the occasion," he said.

"I dabble in everything but heroin ... I like it (using drugs)."

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Investigators showed Salanitri photos of the more than 2kg combined of cocaine, MDMA, speed, GHB, meth and cannabis seized from his room.

“It’s all personal use,” Salanitri said.

“I’m a raging drug addict.”

Salanitri said the knife was for “fishing”.

“Not only did he blow most of his money he, if I can use the term, he blew his mind,” Judge Michael McInerney said.

Salanitri was charged, remanded then bailed on September 5 2019.

Police were on Salanitri again after he was spotted driving his Audi through the city just after 4am on July 17 last year.

Salanitri, who clocked speeds up to 180 km/h, hooned through red lights and drove on the wrong side of the road in an attempt to evade capture.

Salanitri ran a red light before losing control and smashing his car into a metal pole in Docklands.

A witness saw Salanitri total his car, throw a bag into the water and stash a black satchel in a bin.

Police seized the satchel which contained more than 600g of speed, cocaine and MDMA, deal bags and \$9450 cash.

Salanitri, who also pleaded guilty to dangerous driving causing serious injury, initially denied being the driver of the Audi.

The desperado’s passenger, a young woman who suffered serious injuries, told police Salanitri “freaked out” and “just accelerated like crazy”.

“He was flying and going onto the wrong side of the road,” the victim said.

“I was screaming hysterically ... telling him to stop as I was terrified ... I glanced at the speedo ... he was going about 180km/h.

“I was so terrified that I was going to die.

“He went on the wrong side of the road and went through at least two red lights, he almost hit a tram and

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then further down he almost hit a truck.”

Salanitri – who had spent 347 days on remand – was jailed for a maximum five years.

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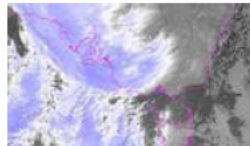
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