

San Francisco Chronicle  
TUESDAY, JANUARY 18, 1983

## **Cocaine Seized From Frogmen at S.F. Pier**

By Maitland Zane

In a fog-shrouded scene right out of a B movie, federal agents on a San Francisco waterfront stakeout seized 400 pounds of cocaine early yesterday after frogmen from a Colombian freighter swam ashore carrying bundles of the drug.

At least five Bay Area men were among the 12 Latinos arrested in what U.S. Attorney Joseph Russoniello described as the largest cocaine smuggling seizure in memory on the West Coast.

Customs agents estimated the wholesale value of the drug at \$12 million, but Russoniello said the street value after "routine dilution" would be about \$750 million.

But Joe Krueger, agent in charge of the Drug Enforcement Administration office, estimated the street sale value at \$100 million. He put the wholesale value at \$11 million or more.

Forty agents from the Customs Service, the FBI, the Drug Enforcement Agency and the Immigration and Naturalization Service took part in the 4 a.m. arrests at India Basin's Pier 96.

Several shots were fired by one of the smugglers, but no one was hurt, agents said.

Russoniello held a news conference in the FBI headquarters at 450 Golden Gate Avenue, where several duffel bags containing drugs were displayed, as well as an Israeli-made Uzi machine gun and several pistols.

Robert Downey, area patrol director for U.S. Customs, said nothing illegal was found aboard the freighter, Ciudad de Cucuta, when customs agents routinely searched the ship Sunday afternoon

Apparently because of a tip, agents kept the ship under surveillance anyway, and their vigilance paid off.

Russoniello said he has not yet decided whether forfeiture proceedings will be instituted against the ships owners, the Gran Colombiana line. Russoniello said several other ships owned by Gran Colombiana have been involved in drug smuggling cases. The captain of the Ciudad de Cucuta was not arrested or detained.

Downey said that about 2 a.m. yesterday, a customs "surveillance unit" saw seven men jump off a truck on Cargo Road, near Pier 96, and head across a marshy field toward the bay.

Soon after, Downey said,

agenu spotted two frogmen in wet-suits with bundles wrapped in waterproof paper.

"The cocaine was being swum in to shore," said Russoniello.

When the agents moved in, one of the frogmen fired a burst from his Wilkinson "Linda" machine gun, but no one was hurt and the man surrendered without incident.

Downey said.

Downey said three of the men arrested were believed to be "counter-surveillance" confederates who had been cruising the area keeping a lookout for the federal agent.

The following Bay Area men are due to be arraigned today before a U.S. magistrate:

Carlos Guestabo Ortiz, 27, an electrician from San Francisco; Hoover Ortiz, 30, a Daly City mechanic; Julio Mena, 33, a San Bruno truck driver; Marcos Rodriguez, 24, no occupation listed, of Daly City; and Humberto Calero, 39, a Hayward draftsman.

Others included Sacria Moraeno, 32, Arnoldo Botero, 30, both of Calle, Columbia, as well as Carlos

Juan Losano, a Los Angeles seaman; Marco Llanos, 23, of Miami, Fla.; Alberto Lebron, 29, of New York City; Miguel Cruz, 20, no address; and Rudolfo Boniolla Santiesteban, 39, no address.