

# Ricord Takes Stand and Denies Any Role in Heroin Trafficking

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By PAUL L. MONTGOMERY

Auguste Joseph Ricord denied in Federal District Court here yesterday that he had ever had anything to do with international heroin traffic, but he was later forced to retract or modify at least eight statements as new documents or witnesses were brought forward.

Ricord, who officials have said was responsible for smuggling perhaps 15 tons of heroin into the United States in the last five years, took the stand in his own defense at his trial. He is charged with conspiracy to smuggle narcotics, which carries a maximum prison sentence of 20 years.

Ricord, a bald, 61-year-old man with fluffy gray sideburns down to his chin, spent most of the day on the stand talking about his bank accounts in various countries and his restaurants in Argentina, Paraguay and Venezuela. The Government has said that although Ricord had never been in the United States until he was extradited here in September, he was the overlord of a ring whose market was in this country.

## Built 15 Restaurants

Under questioning by his attorney, Herbert I. Handman, Ricord told of building and then selling about 15 restaurants — Le Fetiche, Tex., Molino Rojo, Pizzeria Andres, Pompadour and others — since he went to Argentina from France after World War II. He said the bank accounts he had in Paraguay, Argentina, Venezuela, New York and Switzerland were to handle the proceeds of these businesses. Passports and identity cards were introduced to show he had operated under his own name.

It was brought out that after he arrived in Argentina in 1946 or 1947 he had used the name Lucien Dargelles because "I wanted to start a new life with a new name." He said he had used the name for only a few months. But assistant United States Attorney Walter M. Phillips Jr. showed on a document that he had not changed his name back to Ricord until 1953.

Ricord denied ever talking

about narcotics with two men, serving prison terms for smuggling, who had testified that he was their boss. He said he had never seen another witness, a pilot who implicated him, until the man came into the courtroom.

## Contradiction on Checks

Mr. Phillips asked Ricord if he had ever dealt with the foreign exchange house of ~~Manfra Tordella & Brookes~~. "Never," he replied. He was then shown two checks signed by him and made out to the company.

"I don't understand," Ricord said several times. He then said the checks were made out by him to a Paraguayan exchange house run by Edgardo Enrique Gayol. He said he had perhaps left the line for the recipient's name blank and it had been filled in later.

"Isn't it true that you exchanged almost \$400,000 in American currency with Gayol in the three years before your arrest?" Mr. Phillips asked. Ricord snorted—half laughter half denial—then said "No." Mr. Phillips did not pursue the point.

The prosecutor, apparently trying to show that Ricord was fleeing when he was arrested near the Argentine border in 1971, asked if he had seen any policeman in his Paris-Nice restaurant near Asunción on the day he left for the border. Ricord said he had not. Mr. Phillips' assistant, Eugene Bannington, then left the room and returned a moment later with a squat Paraguayan policeman, Salvador Victor Ibarrola. Ricord acknowledged he had seen the policeman in his restaurant the day of his arrest.

Ricord spoke a combination of French and Spanish, shifting more to Spanish when his testimony was contradicted. He told Judge John M. Cannella he did not understand English, but several times answered questions put to him in English before they were translated.

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