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Narcotics Smuggler Tells Court Ricord Had Him Carry Heroin

By PAUL L. MONTGOMERY

A Frenchman who had been a waiter on ocean liners testified in Federal District Court here yesterday that Auguste Joseph Ricord had recruited him as part of complex mechanism that transferred a shipment of heroin from Paraguay to the corner of Broadway and 22d Street in the fall of 1970.

The former waiter, Pierre Gahou, who is serving a seven-year term for narcotics smuggling, said that he had stayed in Ricord's house in Asunción and that at one point Ricord had sent him to stay in the Waldorf-Astoria Hotel in New York with instructions to call a "Mr. Nick."

Gahou said he had called "Mr. Nick," who represented himself as an Argentine real-estate dealer, and after a series of rendezvous had passed a suitcase containing 10 kilograms of heroin at 22d Street and Broadway.

The next day, Gahou said, at the corner of Park Avenue and 53d Street, "Mr. Nick" handed him an Iberia Airlines flight bag containing \$107,000 in cash.

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A previous witness, Felix Becker, had testified that he had taken \$100,000 of the \$107,000 back to Paraguay and had seen the box containing it handed to Ricord, who then drove away.

Ricord, reputedly the overlord of a ring responsible for half the heroin smuggled into the United States in the last five years, is on trial charged with conspiracy to smuggle narcotics in connection with three shipments totaling 132 kilograms in the summer and fall of 1970. The charge carries a maximum sentence of 20 years in prison.

Yesterday was the fifth day of his jury trial in Federal District Court in Manhattan before Judge John M. Cannella.

Gahou was led through his testimony by Walter M. Phillips Jr., an assistant United States attorney in charge of the narcotics division for the Southern District of New York.

Gahou, a 42-year-old Parisian, said that after he stopped going to sea in 1967 he worked around Ricord's Paris-Nice motel-restaurant in Asunción.

In June, 1970, he said, he went to Montevideo at Ricord's instruction to help drive a Citroën car to Asunción. Previous witnesses have said that 70 kilograms of heroin—about 155 pounds—was hidden in the car.

In September, 1970, Gahou said, Ricord paid his airplane fare to Paris so he could renew his passport. Back in Asunción, he went no, Ricord gave him instructions for his trip to New York and went with him to the airport. He said that just before leaving, Ricord told him to call a telephone number in New York and ask for "Mr. Nick."

Gahou described meeting three other alleged members of the ring at the Waldorf-Astoria and being given a suitcase of "merchandise." He said he did not know the "merchandise" was heroin until he had completed the transaction with Mr. Nick. According to previous testimony, the heroin had been smuggled in through Miami by private plane.

"Mr. Nick" was subsequently identified as Nicholas Giannatasio, a former professional soccer player in Argentina who was then living in Elmhurst, Queens.

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