

A Heroin Smuggler Testifies Ricord Attended 5 Rendezvous

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A Paraguayan smuggler testified in Federal District Court yesterday that Auguste Joseph Ricord was present at five meetings in Asunción in the summer of 1970 at which heroin-smuggling was planned or money from drug sales in New York was distributed.

The smuggler, Felix Rogelio Becker, who is serving a five-year term at Lewisburg Federal Penitentiary, said that on one occasion he had brought the \$100,000 proceeds of a 15-kilogram heroin sale in New York to Asunción and had seen the box containing the cash handed to Ricord.

Ricord, who was extradited from Paraguay in September, is charged with conspiracy to smuggle narcotics, which carries a maximum prison term of 20 years. Officials have described him as the overlord of a ring responsible for half the heroin brought into the United States in the last five years.

Becker, a glum 37-year-old man who has spent much of his life dealing in contraband, was reportedly a middleman in the ring, serving as a contact between Ricord's alleged lieutenants—Enio Anibal Varela-Segovia and Aron Muravnik—and lower-level couriers. Varela and Muravnik were arrested in the 1970 case, but they escaped from the Federal House of Detention on West Street and have not been heard of since.

Becker said that both Varela

and Ricord were at the Asunción airport when he arrived. He said that he later saw Varela count the money and then hand the box containing it to Ricord, who drove away.

In the cross, Ricord's attorney, Herbert I. Handman, brought out conflicts between previous depositions by Becker and his testimony yesterday. Becker said the other statements were made "before I decided to tell the truth."

Ricord, a 62-year-old man, bald but with fluffy white sideburns down to his chin, listened impassively to yesterday's testimony, occasionally putting on reading glasses to frown at a document or photograph.

Ricord's niece and teen-aged daughter, who are scheduled to testify and thus cannot sit in the courtroom, are allowed in during recesses. On Tuesday, the first day of the trial, they brought Ricord a double-breasted blue suit so he could change from the yellow windbreaker he had worn at preliminary hearings.

The courtroom is under tight security. All visitors are thoroughly scanned by United States marshals with a portable metal-detector that emits a squeal in the presence of the tiniest bit of metal. There is usually a long line as the visitor being examined hurriedly goes through his pockets trying to find the odd coin or gum wrapper that is causing the machine to react.