

A Cuban Ring Is Identified As Main Cocaine Supplier

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TRENTON Dec. 18 — A Cuban narcotics ring, operating between the Miami area and northern New Jersey, was identified by law enforcement officials today as "the prime source" of cocaine for the New York metropolitan area.

Couriers, including women concealing the drug in "false pregnancies" and padded bras, take the drug into Florida from South America, Mexico and British and French possessions, and carry it north to Cuban population centers where law enforcement officials say it is "Americanized" — sold to entrepreneurs who distribute it through normal drug channels.

The domination of cocaine smuggling by Cuban drug organizations was outlined by Florida and New Jersey law enforcement officials today at the opening of a three-day public hearing by the State Commissioner of Investigation into narcotics operations in the state.

The commission also heard several witnesses, including the man charged with prosecuting New York's tough new drug laws testify there had been no exodus of pushers from New York since the new law took effect in September.

Operation May Shift

But Frank Rogers, special deputy district attorney for drug-law enforcement in all five boroughs, said drug dealers could begin transferring their operations across state lines "when they fully appreciate the weight of the new law, along about March when 200 to 300 people are sentenced to life imprisonment."

John J. Hill Jr., assistant Hudson County prosecutor, and John Stamler, assistant Union County prosecutor and counsel to the New Jersey Narcotics Enforcement Officers Association, agreed that the New York law had not yet chased any drug operators across the river.

But both men said that if the

New York law was enforced vigorously and produces the "heat" it is capable of, the New York operators would have to relocate. "It's simply a matter of economic Mr. Stamler said. "They'll pay the \$1 toll and move over here."

Mr. Rogers mentioned Weehawken and Fort Lee, N.J., and Greenwich, Conn., as likely resettlement areas for New York dealers because of their proximity to the city. He also said New York had increased its liaison work with drug-law enforcement officials in New Jersey, Connecticut and Massachusetts to monitor the movement of known dealers since the new was adorted.

Widely Sought Drug

Both Mr. Rogers and New Jersey officials identified cocaine as the most widely sought narcotic on the current drug scene, partly because international efforts have cut down on the heroin trade and reduced its purity on the street in New York to about 3 per cent.

New York is still the importation center for heroin that is shipped to other parts of the country, witnesses said today. But the major center for cocaine smuggling activities is southern Florida, they asserted, because of its proximity to South American countries where the coca plant is grown and where drug processing laboratories have been established.

Alan Richards, supervisor of the narcotics investigation section of the Dade County, Fla., Public Safety Department, said it was neatly impossible to stem the flow of the drug into southern Florida because of the area's large number of private air fields and marinas as well as its two major seaports and two international airports.

Mr. Richards said a kilogram of cocaine of 60 per cent purity would sell at wholesale for \$14,000 to \$20,000, but would sell

at retail for as much as a similar quantity of heroin, approximately \$300,000.

Martin G. Holleran, executive director of the State Commission of Investigation, said cocaine was the new "in" drug with the "jet set and beautiful people," and added that marijuana had become "passé" among those who like to experiment with drugs at parties.