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STATES-ITEM

Plimsoll Chef Pleads Innocent

BOSTON, Mass.—Jean-Pierre Lafitte, the manager and executive chef of New Orleans' Plimsoll Club, pleaded innocent today to a charge of jumping a \$7,000 bail in 1963.

Known in New Orleans as Jean M. Martin, Lafitte was arraigned today in Boston on a charge of defaulting bail posted in connection with an indictment returned in 1962 alleging that he used the mails to defraud.

U.S. District Judge Francis J. W. Ford set Lafitte's trial for Jan. 12.

The 66-year-old food authority was apprehended at his Gretna home, 717 Fairlawn Dr., Dec. 5 by agents of the Federal Bureau of Investigation. He was charged with being a fugitive from justice.

Following his arrest, bail was set at \$25,000 and he was ordered to appear today in the Boston federal court for a hearing and subsequent trial.

He had been indicted in 1962 on 15 counts of mail fraud and transportation of stolen property after allegedly swindling speculator Ralph L. Loomis out of more than \$300,000 in a scheme to develop mineral rights and diamond mines in Africa.

In December, 1963, Lafitte failed to appear at a hearing scheduled on those charges.

Since coming to New Orleans about two years ago,

Lafitte has developed a wide reputation for the food served at the Plimsoll Club in the International Trade Mart. He has received compliments from Mrs. Lyndon B. Johnson and numerous state and city officials for the French cuisine served at the club, and was made a Louisiana "colonel" by Gov. John J. McKeithen.

A spokesman for the Plimsoll Club said Lafitte has had no involvement in financial affairs of the club. He has not signed checks, handled cash or otherwise served in a position to affect the club's finances, the spokesman said.

Lafitte once served for several years as an informant for the FBI in its investigations of swindling operations. According to federal officials, he has used several names.

Lafitte claims he is a South Louisiana native and learned his culinary art while living for a number of years in France.

January Trial Ordered for Club Manager

(Special to the States-Item)

BOSTON — Jean-Pierre Lafitte, manager and executive chef of the Plimsoll Club in New Orleans, has been ordered to stand trial Jan. 12 after pleading innocent yesterday to a charge of jumping \$7,000 bail in 1963.

Lafitte, known as Jean M. Martin in New Orleans, appeared before U.S. District Judge Francis J. W. Ford for allegedly defaulting bail posted after a 1962 indictment for using the mails to defraud.

The 66-year-old defendant was arrested Dec. 5 at his residence, 717 Fairlawn Dr., Gretna, by Federal Bureau of Investigation agents and taken before the U.S. Commissioner for being a fugitive from justice.

JUDGE FORD set the January trial date on the default allegation. Separate from this charge are those involving alleged fraud.

Lafitte is accused of obtaining more than \$300,000 from Ralph Loomis of Kittery Point, Me., for two transactions — one for financing mining ventures in Africa and another in connection with Loomis' dealings in Canadian Javelin Ltd. stock. Loomis died about one year ago.

The \$25,000 bond set by the U.S. Commissioner in New Orleans was continued in Boston.

Court records in Boston show that Lafitte is from Armonk, N.Y., a small Westchester County town near New York City.

LAFITTE, NOW on leave from the Plimsoll Club, earned considerable praise for his culinary work there, such as a complimentary letter from Mrs. Lyndon Johnson.

A spokesman for the Plimsoll Club, located in the International Trade Mart Building, said Lafitte has had no involvement in the financial affairs of the club.

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