

Dealing with one another in multiple illicit enterprises, they maintain close ties protected by power of immense wealth, their only loyalty to themselves, their only commitment to what they regard as venture capitalism. Penetration of this caste without a country has heretofore presented almost insurmountable difficulties.

On Christmas Eve, 1972, federal narcotics agents arrested a Danish seaman, John Thomsen, in Brooklyn, New York, in possession of 18 pounds of Asian heroin. Documented information by DEA's regional office in New York revealed that as much as a thousand pounds of Asian heroin had been smuggled into New York City by independent seamen during the period 1971-1972. In September 1973 the Special Assistant for Conspiracy Operations called for an intensive case review of Far Eastern traffickers. I was then serving as Group Supervisor of the Regional Conspiracy Group in New York. Here, in summary, is the still fragmentary situation as we reported it at that time:

- Purchase or seizure by DEA of 63.5 pounds of Asian heroin from Chinese violators—21 percent of the total amount recovered from the region in 1972.
- Seizure by the Bureau of Customs of another 40 pounds of Asian heroin bound for New York City.
- Seizures in Holland and Canada of 55 pounds of Asian heroin bound for New York City.
- Deliveries over an 18-month pe-

riod of 700 pounds of Asian heroin to an Italian violator.

- DEA undercover negotiations with a Cuban of Chinese extraction for an initial shipment of 15 to 20 pounds of Asian heroin with regular shipments in 100-pound lots to follow.

The report concluded:

*Southeast Asian traffickers are completely ignorant of federal conspiracy laws; they feel they cannot be arrested unless they participate directly in the sale to an enforcement officer. It should be noted, however, that to date it has been unusual to get a Far Eastern defendant to testify in court.*

In January 1974, Central Tactical Unit 3 was formed under the Special Assistant for Conspiracy Operations to direct an Administration-wide search for demonstrable evidence. I was assigned to DEA Headquarters to head the unit, which included Group Supervisor Thomas O'Grady and Special Agent David Samuel, and later Special Agent Matthew Maher. We began slowly to plot the pattern of known events. It was at this point that the tenuous ties of unrelated intelligence began to acquire the strength of an inextricable web of evidence that would reach around the world. Into this net were drawn a number of the most notorious Chinese traffickers who had been operating for years beyond the reach of the law. How to get a Far Eastern trafficker to testify in court turned out to be less difficult than

had been foreseen. Such is the pecking order of prison life that after a year or two they were more than willing to implicate the otherwise invulnerable violators at the top of the organizations directing both supply in Southeast Asia and distribution in North America.

The indictments drawn up under the direction of Paul J. Curran, U.S. Attorney for the Southern District of New York, and David G. Trager, U.S. Attorney of the Eastern District of New York, allege that about 250 pounds of heroin and a hundred pounds of opium were smuggled into North America and distributed in New York, Chicago, San Francisco, Toronto, Montreal, and Vancouver from 1970 to 1972.

About one-third of the defendants are foreign nationals, most of them Chinese traffickers who are responsible for directing the movement of hundreds of pounds of heroin into the United States in recent years. These suppliers and financiers have previously been insulated from police action and prosecution in the sanctuaries they operate in Southeast Asia. The primary purpose of CENTAC 3 was to find a way to bring them to justice. The indictments obtained in New York are the first in a series of carefully planned steps to achieve this end. Extradition or prosecution in their own countries of nationality is the next necessary step. Public exposure attending the outcome of CENTAC 3 should help to achieve this.