

**A Defector Tells**  
**Of Drug Dealing** 4/4/83  
**By Cuba Agents**

**Trafficking in New York  
and Florida Described**

By SELWYN RAAB

A Cuban defector has told Federal and New York State law enforcement officials that agents of the Cuban Government conducted narcotics trafficking in the New York metropolitan area and in Florida in 1980 and 1981.

The defector, Mario Estebes Gonzalez, was arrested on drug charges 16 months ago. Since then, in testimony in Federal District Court in Miami and in statements to officials, Mr. Estebes has said that his chief mission on behalf of the Cuban Government was to distribute cocaine, marijuana and methaqualone tablets in New York, northern New Jersey and Florida.

He has testified that he delivered between \$2 million and \$3 million to Cuban officials from proceeds of drug trafficking in the United States in a 15-month period.

Mr. Estebes told Federal officials that he and about 3,000 other Cuban agents infiltrated into the the United States among 125,000 refugees who were allowed to leave Cuba from the port of Mariel in the spring of 1980.

**Immunity From Prosecution**

In return for his cooperation, he is being protected by the Federal Government and has been granted immunity from prosecution for some narcotics trafficking crimes he has admitted.

In Washington, Miguel Martinez, the first secretary and press spokesman of the Cuban Government's Cuban Interest Section in Washington, declined to comment on Mr. Estebes's allegations. The United States and Cuba have no formal diplomatic relations and there has been no comment from Havana about Mr. Estebes's arrest and statements.

Richard D. Gregorie, who is charge of the narcotics section for the United States Attorney's office in southern Florida, said Mr. Estebes's allegations about the Cuban Government's complicity in narcotics trafficking were "very credible." Many aspects of Mr. Estebes's statements have been "independently corroborated," Mr. Gregorie asserted in an interview.

**Arrested by Coast Guard**

Justice and State Department officials gave various explanations for the Cuban Government's purported role in drug deals. The officials offered these theories about why the Cubans had become involved in drugs in the United States: to obtain hard foreign currency for use in international trade; to retaliate against American trade restrictions on Cuba; to cause social unrest in the United States, or to help finance leftist movements in Latin America.

The 33-year-old Mr. Estebes was arrested by the Coast Guard on Nov. 29, 1981, while he was transporting 2,500 pounds of marijuana in a speedboat off the Florida coast. He was indicted on a charge of possession of marijuana with intent to distribute and faced a maximum prison term of 15 years. Because

Continued on Page B7

# Defector Tells of Cuban Agents' Drug Deals in New York and Florida

Continued From Page B1

he was cooperating, he got a nine-month prison sentence.

Mr. Gregorie, an assistant United States attorney, said Mr. Estebes voluntarily admitted his role as a Cuban agent and gave Federal officials details of how Cuban officials arranged the drug trafficking. "It was a fortuitous break; we had no idea who he was," Mr. Gregorie said.

Mr. Estebes told Federal officials and investigators from the New York State Senate's Select Committee on Crime that he believed that about 3,000 other Cuban Government agents entered the United States as refugees in the emigration of Cubans from Mariel.

Mr. Estebes, the officials said, maintained that the agents had a variety of assignments, including drug trafficking, disrupting Cuban exile groups, and economic espionage.

Mr. Estebes was a principal witness for the prosecution at a trial in Federal

District Court in Miami in February that ended in the conviction of five men accused of smuggling narcotics into Florida. The drugs, he testified, were brought by ships from Colombia to the small port of Paredon Grande on the north shore of Cuba in the Old Bahama Channel. There, the drugs were unloaded and transported in small boats to Florida.

### No Means of Extradition

In the same case, four Cuban officials, including the commander of the Cuban Navy, Vice Adm. Aldo Santmaria Cuadrado, were indicted on conspiracy charges last Nov. 5. Since the United States has no diplomatic relations with Cuba, the Justice Department has no means to extradite the officials to stand trial.

Mr. Estebes, who is now being guarded in an undisclosed place by Federal agents, is expected to be given a new identity and placed in the Federal Witness Protection Program, Justice

Department officials said. A spokesman for the department said Mr. Estebes may be a witness in other narcotics trials and therefore had declined to be interviewed.

Mr. Estebes is scheduled to testify at a public hearing in Manhattan tomorrow about drug trafficking in New York City and northern New Jersey.

The hearing, which has been called by Senator Alfonso M. D'Amato, Republican of New York, and the State Senate Select Committee on Crime, will also review charges that the Cuban Government released thousands of people imprisoned for violent crimes and allowed them to enter the United States by boat from Mariel in 1980.

### Federal Help Sought

The chairman of the crime committee, State Senator Ralph J. Marino, Republican of Oyster Bay, L.I., said one purpose of the hearing was to obtain Federal help for communities that have drug and other crime problems created by criminals who entered the United States as refugees in the emigration from Mariel.

New York City Police Department records show that from May 1980 through last December, people who are believed to have entered the country in the Mariel exodus have been arrested on charges of 6,288 felonies and misdemeanors. There are no accurate figures on how many of the Mariel refugees have been convicted of crimes in the United States.

Verne Jervis, a spokesman for the Immigration and Naturalization Service, said Cuba had refused to accept the return of Mariel refugees convicted of crimes in this country.

The hearing tomorrow will begin at 9:30 A.M. at the Federal Court of International Trade at 1 Federal Plaza.

Mr. Estebes was questioned in Miami through a Spanish-speaking interpreter by investigators from the crime committee on March 19. In a report to the committee, the investigators said Mr. Estebes told them that drugs obtained by Cuban agents in Florida were transported to dealers in New York City and to Newark, Elizabeth and Union City in New Jersey.

### Concealed Compartments

According to the report, Mr. Estebes said heroin and other narcotics were shipped to the New York area inside vans with concealed compartments to hide the drugs.

"We have checked out Estebes's credibility with the Justice Department and the Drug Enforcement Administration, and they are satisfied he is telling the truth," said Senator Marino.

In accounts of his background to Federal and state investigators, Mr. Estebes said he was born in Havana and

had been trained as a naval mechanic. He said he was employed by the State Bureau of Missions in the Cuban Ministry of the Interior when he was instructed in the spring of 1980 to enter the United States on a boat from Mariel.

Records in the Community Relations Service of the Justice Department which supervised the relocation of Cuban refugees, show that Mr. Estebes was released from a refugee camp at Fort Chaffee, Ark., on June 4. There is no record of when he arrived in the United States.

Mr. Gregorie, the assistant States attorney, said Mr. Estebes' assignment from Cuba's Ministry of the Interior was to join Alpha 66, a group opposed to the Government of Fidel Castro. According to Mr. Gregorie, Mr. Estebes said he was directed to sabotage boats used by the government to bring missions to Cuba.

### A Change in Assignment

Mr. Estebes said his assignment to Alpha 66 was soon changed, according to Mr. Gregorie.

Mr. Gregorie said Mr. Estebes was trained in August 1980 he underwent a brief drugs training program and returned to Florida with contacts in the illegal narcotics trade. Before his arrest, Mr. Estebes had access to speedboats and frequently to and from Florida to Cuba, a distance of about 100 miles.

"He ran narcotics, and he was bringing in as many drugs as possible," Mr. Gregorie said. "He said his superiors in Cuba: 'I'm a good worker. If that is what you want me to do, I will do it.'"

According to Mr. Gregorie, Mr. Estebes said he delivered between \$1 million and \$3 million in cash to Cuban officers at the Interior Ministry in Cuba.

### 'A Narcotics Runner'

Mr. Gregorie said it would be difficult to describe Mr. Estebes. "He was really a narcotics runner for the Cuban Government," Mr. Gregorie said. He said that when Mr. Estebes was asked by Federal officials why he had admitted his role as a undercover agent, Mr. Estebes said that "I am tired of helping Cuba bring in drugs."

At the trial in February, Mr. Estebes testified that he saw Vice Adm. Santmaria give orders permitting the loading of narcotics at Paredon Grande brought in by a reputed Cuban narcotics trafficker, Jaime Lara. Mr. Guillot Lara, a Cuban, has been indicted on Federal charges and is a fugitive, according to the Justice Department.

The drugs, Mr. Estebes said, were later smuggled into Florida

**These times demand more of a travel advertiser.**

That's why travel advertisers have made The New York Times Magazine Number Five in travel advertising pages among all consumer magazines.

**The New York Times Magazine**

**Page Denied**