

Strollers' leader Ming made 'exchange', former narc says

Leader of the Bermuda Strollers Ted Ming was seen outside his house making an exchange with Antonio Miranda just days before both men were arrested for conspiring to import cocaine, a former Narcotics officer said yesterday.

Former Det. Con. Philip Swift, who watched Ming's house from across the street, said Miranda arrived at the Southampton home after 9 p.m., handed something to Ming, who in turn handed something back to Miranda, who then left on his moped.

Following Ming's arrest on May 19, he denied in a statement he made to Police that he ever met Miranda outside his house, saying, "It wasn't me". He then said he did not use cocaine, did not sell it, and never bought any from Miranda. Ming also said in the statement that he could not think of any reason he would give cash to Miranda. He denied that he exchanged Bermuda money for US cash for Miranda for a charge of 10 percent of the amount changed.

Ming said in the statement that

while he knew Miranda, Miranda had never been to his Southampton home. But Swift told the court yesterday that Miranda drew a picture of the inside of Ming's kitchen that matched one he had drawn himself.

Ming, along with Dexter Dillas, Larry Ebbin, and Colin Winfield Smith, have all denied importing cocaine with Miranda and Angela Trappasso between May 11 and 20, 1990, and conspiring to import the drug between October 1, 1988, and May 20, 1990.

Three other charges were laid after a raid on Ming's home on May 18, and a search of Smith's house the following day. Ming has denied possession of cannabis, Smith has denied possession of drug equipment, and Dillas has denied obstructing Det. Sgt. Alex Arnfield.

Legal arguments took up much of the morning yesterday. When the jury returned shortly before noon, Det. Sgt. Stephen Rollin told the court the 377.9 grams of cocaine found in Miranda's apartment on May 18 was worth approximately \$143,250 if sold in half-gram wraps.

He said he understood that Miranda also used the names Hanlock and DeSilva.

Maria Jones, who lives at McGall's Hill Court in Smith's Parish, said she rented an apartment on the property to a man named Anthony DeSilva. She identified Miranda as the man she knew as DeSilva when he was brought into the courtroom yesterday.

Swift also told the court he believed Miranda used the name Hanlock, as well as others which he could not remember.

He said that Ming told him he met Miranda at Elbow Beach while he was selling his band's tapes. He said Miranda bought a tape for his girlfriend whom he later married. Ming reportedly told Swift and Sgt. Arnfield that neither Miranda nor his wife had ever been to his Southampton home.

He said in his statement he had seen Miranda at his shows, as well as sometimes while running along South Shore Road.

"They were nice people. Yeah,

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Meeting a 'friend of a friend' led to drug bust, accused says

A Supreme Court jury yesterday heard how a meeting with 'a friend of a friend' at Sonesta Beach Hotel turned into an unexpected drug bust for two men.

Kenneth O'Neill Cann, 25, told Puisse Judge the Hon. Mr. Justice (Austin) Ward: "Troy just told me we were going to see a friend of a friend. My mind wasn't set on anything like that (drugs). I never thought anything was wrong until the Police grabbed me from behind." The story was supported by Raymond Troy Rawlins, 28, who also appeared on the witness stand. "I was expecting a lady to open the door. I had never seen the man I now know as Carmelo Delgado. I asked him if he knew Tony and he said 'Yes. Check this out', and just tried to push something to me."

The two men appeared on the stand in defence of charges that they helped import 59.5 grams of heroin and 226.1 grams of cocaine into the Island on June 26, 1990. They are also charged with possession of the drugs. Cann is further charged with handling the drugs. Both have pleaded not guilty to the charges. If sold in rock form, the cocaine has a street value of \$43,500. If sold in half gram wraps, it can be sold for as much as \$61,875. The heroin has a street value of \$8,125.

The drugs were found by customs officers after a search of American drug courier, Carmelo Delgado when he arrived at the Civil Air Terminal on June 26, 1990. The officers took Delgado to Sonesta Beach Hotel where he was allowed to call his New York contact, Tony, under Police supervision. Police then hid in the hotel room and waited with Delgado for his local connections to turn up to collect the

drugs.

Cann and Rawlins were the men who appeared at the door of room 1330 but insist they were there not to collect drugs, but to show 'a friend of a friend' around the Island.

Rawlins told the Court he had met the man Tony at a Bermudian party he was at with his fiancée, former Miss Bermuda Zina Minks. He said that Tony's girlfriend, Janet, became friends with Miss Minks and the two kept in touch after the Americans returned home. Rawlins said Tony and Janet had even shown he and Miss Minks around New York while they were there on holiday.

So, Rawlins said, when he received a message from Tony that a friend of his was in Bermuda and staying at Sonesta Beach, he agreed

"to go and pick her up, take her out and make sure she was all right as she had never been here before. My intentions were to bring her back to Zina's house. I was just trying to return the good favour he did for us."

Both Cann and Rawlins gave similar accounts of the evening's events at the hotel. They deny ever touching the drug, as is alleged by the Police witnesses.

"We just looked at each other, wondering what it was being held out to him," said Cann. "We never took it from him, we just asked Delgado what it was." The case continues tomorrow. Prosecuting is Crown Counsel Mr. Stephen Harrison. Lawyer Mr. Richard Hector is defending both men.

Ming denies marijuana use

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they were friends, but I had no idea they were dealing in drugs," Ming reportedly told Swift.

In a second statement he made to Police, Ming said the \$15,000 in Bermudian cash that was found in his house was money that had been repaid to him by members of his family. He also said in the statement that he had never seen the hand-rolled cigarettes that were found in his music box, and that he did not smoke marijuana.

Swift told the court that during his observations at Ming's residence the same night he witnessed the exchange with Miranda, he saw several people come and go from the lower apartment which Ming rented to Dillas and Ebbin.

He said that between 9.50 p.m. and 11 p.m. he watched three people

arrive at the apartment by livery cycle, stay a minute, then leave. He said of two cars parked in the yard, one was moved inside the garage by two men, while the other remained. He said someone walked from Dillas and Ebbin's apartment to the car in the yard and then went back inside. He said the activities continued until 10.30 p.m. when all the vehicles left the area travelling in different directions. Swift said there was no further activity between 10.30 p.m. and 11 p.m. when he left.

The trial continues this morning before Puisse Judge the Hon. Mr. Justice (Martyn) Ward. Senior Crown counsel Mr. Barrie Meade is prosecuting, while English QC Mr. John Perry is defending Ming, Mr. Delroy Duncan is defending Dillas and Smith, and Mr. Perry Trott is defending Ebbin.

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