

John T. "Jack" Cuasck Oral History
Conducted October 1996 by the DEA Museum.

00:00:00:04 - 00:00:06:19

John Cusack
My name is John Cusack.

00:00:06

Question: Talk about the 1931 Convention and the effects of it.

00:00:06:20 - 00:00:49:22

John Cusack
Well, I think we did get into the convention and it was designed to limit the manufacture of narcotic drugs. That would be opium and its derivatives and cocaine to a levels commensurate with the world's medical needs, and an established a body called the Drug Advisory Body. And that body would set quotas for all countries within the United Nations or even outside of the United Nations at that time. And the manufacturing countries would be obliged to only supply levels of legal, pharmaceutical narcotic export to those countries. Now, the manufacturing countries and this brings up something that is, I think, somewhat interesting in that today we hear a producer countries, countries that are legally producing narcotic drugs and in general they are countries in development. There are countries where there is what we call primitive agriculture.

00:01:32:05 - 00:02:14:04

John Cusack
And they complain that the industrial world is forcing them to give up these crops. Well, the industrial world gave up manufacture. We know that the industry is created through manufacturing. And we go back now, it's almost 60 years. It's more than 60 years that the that the European countries, the United States and Canada, Japan in the Orient all had huge pharmaceutical industries producing large quantities of these substances. And they adhering and adopting the provisions of the 1931 convention, stepped right in immediately and reduced the production of these substances. So they made a big political and, you might say, financial sacrifice for the good of all mankind. And as I think I pointed out earlier, the 1931 convention had a dramatic impact on the supply of drugs throughout the world.

00:02:50:00 - 00:03:27:15

John Cusack
I think it was estimated that when it came into effect, that that morphine, which is the basic alkaloid of, of opium from which heroin would be made, was being produced ten times in quantity than was needed for medical requirements. And so we see a dramatic downturn taking place right after 1931, even though the treaty was not in force, as soon as it was prepared, as soon as the ink was dry on it. Countries began taking steps to comply with the convention because they recognize what they had to do, and this provided a dramatic cutback throughout the world. And I was amazed in that when I first became an agent in 1947, when we would make an important case, old timers, men who were working in the 30s and in the 20s would say, "This is nothing. This is this is a good case, but this is nothing compared to what we experienced.

This is not big. So we used to get hogshead full of morphine and heroin and cocaine. We used to get packing crates full of it. We used to get hundreds of kilos of these substances."

00:04:27:14 - 00:04:51:21

John Cusack

A I, we, thought that they were putting us on. We really we really didn't accept what they were saying totally. But when we when you look up old files and you got into old files because it took you back to cases that you were working, we saw this and I saw this, and then, then it was really indelibly in my mind. And then when I traveled to Europe in 1950, worked in Europe for two years, and then subsequently to Australia, I was amazed that the old timers told me the same thing. They were telling me, oh, in the 20s here in Australia, we had a great problem with morphine and heroin and, and we don't see that, you know, and most of the police and even our own people didn't understand why that happened.

00:05:17:16 - 00:05:44:01

John Cusack

It happened because manufacture was taken away. And we find that the only place where a clandestine manufacturer, an embryonic manufacture, began to replace the legal production that was being diverted to the illicit traffic was in France.

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Question

Do you attribute the reduction in manufacture solely to the treaties, or wouldn't the war have played a bigger role?

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John Cusack

The 1931 convention came into force in 1934. And we saw that we saw the reduction then in both availability and seizures, purity, the quantities, for example, beginning in 1931, the cocaine traffic collapsed. We never sees the more than ten kilos from of cocaine from 1931 until 1960, '64,'65, most of the seizures in the United States of cocaine, all during a 30-year period were 2 kilos, 3 or 4 kilos a year. 5 kilos was a lot of cocaine. One year we seized 14 kilos. That was in 1949. Then it dropped down again to lower, to single digits again.

00:06:55:14

Interviewer

So did that convention of 1931 - that was responsible? So we didn't have any more conventions then?

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Well, what happened was it was recognized by the experts, by governments, that the drugs had been brought under control. Now, we saw immediately the cranking up of the French Connection. We see a I'd say the years 34 to about 36, those 2 or 3 year period where it was probably the lowest level, but then by 36, 37, we start to see the French Connection coming on. And, and this was a clandestinely manufactured heroin made in Paris and Marseille by underworld operators. Formerly these same operators were obtaining their supplies from legal factories through subterfuge and

through possibly connivance and corruption and so forth. And but there was a somewhat of a celebration. My gosh, I think we've got it. You know, the experts were saying, we've got it.

00:08:04:15 - 00:08:33:22

John Cusack

And they said, now what we've got to do is we've got to be more effective against the illicit traffic, you see, because now it's the illicit traffickers who are manufacturing the heroin. Now they couldn't manufacture cocaine. You see, treaties do very interesting things. When you get ahead, when you do things trying to suppress the availability of drugs, there are certain things you can do which will get so far ahead of them. You get the jump on them. I'm afraid for the last 30 years they've had to jump on us. We got a tremendous jump on them. They did not develop the capability to clandestinely produce cocaine from the early 1930s, '31 up really until the mid the mid '60s. And then they were able to do that in South America.

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John Cusack

They got themselves organized and they began an escalation in the clandestine production of cocaine in South America, which was very similar to the French Connection development of heroin production in Western Europe or in France to supply basically the markets in Canada and the United States now. And so to go back to the treaties, the experts said, you know, we've got to do better in suppressing illicit traffic.

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John Cusack

That's all we have to do. To the great credit of the United States are Treasury Department under Anslinger, Narcotic Bureau, the Federal Narcotic Bureau, and the key men in the State Department who were involved in this work on a full time basis over a number of years and were very knowledgeable, and they were as determined as were men like Anslinger and the Treasury Department to get at the control of opium and the coca leaf.

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John Cusack

Because the basic premise, the foundation premise of narcotics control is supply reduction. And you cannot be effective with supply reduction if you have no control over the cultivation of the opium poppy and the coca leaf in countries where they have been produced, or where they even are not produced, where they could be produced. If there's no prohibition against that, they take in international drug control what they can get, what they think everyone will agree to.

00:10:46:11 - 00:11:10:11

John Cusack

And it was agreed that they would have a convention against the illicit traffic suppression of the illicit traffic. And the United States hoped that they might be able to get some provision in that convention which would prohibit the production of opium, but they were unsuccessful in doing that. There were a few countries that supported the United States in that.

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John Cusack

And so they met in Geneva again in 1936, and they completed a convention which became known as the Geneva Convention for the repression of the Illicit Traffic in Narcotic Drugs of 1936. And it was of limited effectiveness. Unfortunately, it fell afoul of the two different legal systems, the code, several of the European countries, and the Anglo-Saxon code of the United States, Canada, Britain, and all former British territories or existing British territories.

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John Cusack

At that time, the convention was of limited effectiveness. Within three years anyway, World War Two came. However, from 1936 onward, we see the rise of the French Connection. We see heroin seizures. One year they seized 88 kilos. I think that was 1939. But the average seizures of heroin were in the 20 to 30 kilo range in the in the mid to late to late '30s.

00:12:34

Question

Describe the French Connection.

00:12:36:01 - 00:12:59:01

John Cusack

They had to find a way to, to manufacture, get their hands on heroin. And they figured out pretty quickly that they had the skills there. They could find the technical know-how from renegade chemists to manufacture heroin or cocaine from a base product like morphine base or opium. But let's talk about heroin. At first we know that they tried smuggling opium in to from Turkey. And let me say something. At that time, the fact that we did not have the opium fields in Yugoslavia, Greece, Bulgaria and Turkey right close to Europe. I mean, all of those countries, even Turkey, is part of it is in Europe.

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John Cusack

They're all European countries. And they were all connected by rail to Paris. They're all connected by Mediterranean shipping to the ports, the French ports, particularly Marseille. And at first they started to smuggle opium and but opium had the odor and it was bulky. And, you know, you need ten kilos of opium for one kilo of morphine base, which would transform into one kilo of heroin roughly.

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John Cusack

So they recognized after a while they'll take opium if they can get it. But what they wanted was morphine base, which is again a converted through a simple chemical process, a crude process in a very primitive laboratory. And they started smuggling that from Yugoslavia and Turkey, basically, and possibly some came from Bulgaria and Greece, from the Macedonia area of Greece, of Yugoslavia.

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John Cusack

A place called Skopje was the center, Skopje. It's now the new capital of the new Republic of Macedonia, which is part of the old Yugoslavia.

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Question

How did the smuggling take place?

00:15:00:07 - 00:15:38:20

John Cusack

Orient Express. It so happened that from Venice to Istanbul, the conductors, the porters, the train crews were essentially a Yugoslavian and they are very adept at languages. They have so many in their own country, so many dialects. And we had and then in, in, in the area of, of the opium production, they were smugglers and, and organized criminal groups who were making the more feed base and shipping it to France.

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John Cusack

And the French were also getting morphine base from Turkey and they, they were also getting morphine base from, from Greece, from the opium production. It was a small opium production in Greece.

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Question

Why France? Why not Germany, why not Italy?

00:15:56:15 - 00:16:39:15

John Cusack

Germany and Italy were at these times under a fascist socialistic mode, and they were in effect police states. France was a democracy. One has to understand that Paris was the center of France. Paris is - other European countries might not agree - but the center of Europe was the continental, cosmopolitan city is the greatest city on a continent, and there was all kinds of skills and opportunities there and organizations to get this thing done.

00:16:39:16 - 00:17:13:01

John Cusack

And Paris was also a just a short train ride or automobile ride down to the port of Le Harve, where they could load the heroin onto ships for the states. And it was also close to the great ports of call and they used them too, Antwerp and Rotterdam. But France, like any great city, you know, you can't compare the underworld of San Diego with that of New York.

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John Cusack

So you know. Paris is a city that had an infrastructure to carry this out. Many of these people came from Marseille. It was, of course, the king underworld. Now, what is also fascinating is that there were a silk glove type of fancy con men, criminals who were involved with the traffic from the '20s into the early '30s. And many of

these people continued on for a few years, but they seemed to have disappeared.

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John Cusack

And the Corsicans took it over completely by the mid '30s, in the late '30s. But what is fascinating is that these people were the names that we know, and the big cases we made in the late '30s were still around in 1946 and started right up again, but they were having difficulty in getting morphine base and getting supplies.

00:18:31:13 - 00:18:39:02

John Cusack

And many of them, some died in the war and they had lots of infighting. Some were collaborationist with the Germans and some were in resistance. And of course, they brought in younger people. We began to learn more about them after the war than before the war. They were new people, and their links with the Italian Mafia were very clear to us, were in our files. We were making cases in New York in the late '30s, '37, '38, against the groups of French and Mafia Italians working together, French heroin being carried out by the Mafia.

00:19:22

Question

Describe the French Connection where morphine base conversion was done in Macedonia, transferred to Paris by Yugoslavians, converted to heroin in France, and then made its way to the United States.

00:19:29:17 - 00:20:06:19

John Cusack

Pre-war clandestine manufacture of heroin in France came about through the ability of the French underworld to obtain morphine base from Yugoslavia and Turkey, and transported by rail and via ship into Marseilles, or by rail into Paris, and that was a heavy route. They probably shipped as much by rail as they did by ship, and these were probably in five and ten kilo shipments.

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John Cusack

And even then, the link up with the organizations in that they were supplying in New York, all of this went to New York, and we did not find many French in New York at that time. Their connections were through Mafia types frequently, New York Mafia types. And cases were made, prosecutions went forward, and some heavy sentences were handed down. I participated in the arrest of a Sicilian in 1952, in Alcamo, Sicily. Major Mafia man Serafino Mancuso, who had been arrested in the United States in an Narcotic case and had done ten years in Leavenworth Prison, was released sometime in the in the late '40s.

00:21:15

Question

Did law enforcement then discover this French Connection in the traditional way by making cases on the street and tracing the source backwards?

00:21:22:18 - 00:22:04:12

John Cusack

To some extent, the way they developed these cases, seizures were made in France by the French police and customs, and we had representatives. The Federal Bureau had representatives in France and in Europe, Italy and France going back to the to the early 30s and through 1939. And leads came from France and leads were forwarded from New York to, to Europe and to France to investigate these cases, these seizures.

00:22:04:14 - 00:22:35:02

John Cusack

And but I would say that it was incredible during the war. And when I look back on it now, I never ceased to be amazed. And I'm bragging now how good we were. Perhaps it wasn't that there were so many. There were so few, but we could ferret them out. We were very successful in identifying these people. They were always in our files and we - I could give you an example. One time in I received a letter from a man in, in LA, and he was a former seaman on the French line, and he had been arrested and he did several years in jail on a big case. I don't know if it was a 40, maybe as much as 40 kilos of a shipment, but I think they would take they were parceling it over to New York.

00:23:13:18 - 00:23:41:09

John Cusack

And he told me in 1952 that the people behind that ship, and it was known as the Champlain, that was the name of the French line vessel, and he told me that there were three men who were partners. One, he called Jean Les Cheveux Blancs. That means John with the with the silver hair, the gray hair, the white hair.

00:23:41:11 - 00:24:21:17

John Cusack

And the other was Charles Vinci Leoni. And the fourth (third) he described as Aguste Calm. It turned out that Aguste come true name was Jean Jehan, and John Jehan was the man in the French Connection case in New York. The case, you know, that they called the French Connection case. There was maybe 100 cases, and of the 100 cases, probably 50 or more important than that case.

00:24:21:17 - 00:24:51:07

John Cusack

But that was a very good case. I'm not taking anything away from that case. But he was the one known in the case as Frog One, I believe, and the one the subway. He was the leader of the operation at New York and he escaped. But we later caught him in 1972. But all those three men now, they had been operating - Now when this man was telling me about Jean Les Cheveux Blancs, that was, that was-

00:25:04:03 - 00:25:29:18

John Cusack

I had the name on my tip of my tongue, Jean. That was Jean Léger. And we were in the process at New York in developing a case against Jean Léger. And Jean Léger was arrested and prosecuted and went to jail for many years. So we had gotten Jean Léger. Then we had gotten Jean Jehan, who eluded us for many years. But we put him out of business, in effect, and caught him later on around 1972, '73.

00:25:37

Interviewer

And he is the one for people who are only familiar with the case through the movie-

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John Cusack

With the French Connection case. He was Frog One.

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Interviewer

He's the one who escapes at the end of the movie.

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John Cusack

That's right.

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Interviewer

But you're identifying him as Jean -

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John Cusack

Jean Jehan. J-E-H-A-N.

00:25:50

Interviewer

And you caught him in?

00:25:50:20 - 00:26:02:18

John Cusack

He was he was caught at the age of, I think, 80, in a laboratory in the Marseille area around 1974.

00:26:01

Question

Tell us about shutting down the French Connection and New York.

00:26:02:20 - 00:26:39:13

John Cusack

To give you an idea, in at some point in early 1949 Garland H. Williams, Colonel Garland H. Williams, who was still the district supervisor of the New York Region. He was an innovator and a manager par excellence, a leader who could stimulate. And he liked surprises and had his Monday morning meeting early. It was either late '48 or early '49.

00:26:39:14 - 00:27:28:02

John Cusack

He said that he wanted to again concentrate - the trends were evident and he wanted to concentrate on three ethnic groups. I didn't put it in those terms. These were

three, three national types, if you will. It would be the Italian Mafia, organized crime groups, smuggling heroin and whatever French traffickers and Hispanic traffickers, would be Cuban and Puerto Rican in New York area.

00:27:28:07 - 00:28:02:14

John Cusack

And so he assigned senior agents to start research on it and set up to collect and sort out the existing trends and information. And as they needed support, manpower, he would he would give it to them. And they were given a private office and their own files and given clerical support. Well, I used to talk to these men. One of the Puerto Ricans

was Che Re Olivera, a great a great investigator. And he was he was going along very nicely. And the ones with the Italian Joe Amato was assigned to handle that element.

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John Cusack

And a man by the name of Arthur Giuliani was assigned to the French Connection. And we didn't call it a French Connection. We called it the French traffickers. And he was having the toughest time because they were very few. But he was dogged and he expanded his horizons at all time. And it wasn't until - Oliveira he was off and running and he was making conspiracy cases within 1949, within a within a year -

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John Cusack

And Amato was getting things going and Giuliani stuck with it, but he wasn't he wasn't scoring, as we would say. I have to say that I thought it was, I was skeptical. I didn't hear of any Frenchman. I was working, I was making cases. I was involved with Jewish violators and organized crime types and Italian violators. And Frenchmen, I never heard of any Frenchman. I thought this was a really, you know, I had great confidence in Garland Williams and certainly in Giuliani. But I didn't see anything. And I was skeptical. I said, well, maybe it isn't there. I was not finding it then, but sooner or later, it wasn't until 1951. It was almost, almost two years before he got into the Orsini case.

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John Cusack

And we were beginning to know then, of course, that it was linked up. The French was Paris, Marseille, Montreal, New York and Orsini. We had things in the file on Orsini, and we knew that, believe it or not, some of the French Connection traffickers had fled to Canada and the United States after the war to avoid prosecution for their involvement as collaborators with the Nazis.

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John Cusack

And you had- And let me say this, the earliest French Connection types that were identified and it was a movie made of these people. It was called the movie was called Borsalino with Alan Delon and another famous French actor movie was probably ten years old. Maybe it's older than that, but it's about Marseille and gangsters in Marseille.

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John Cusack

And the two men in the movie really were, the types in the movie that the characters were patterned on, was a man named Carbone, and Francoise Spirito. And Francoise Spirito was in New York at this time, coming in and out of New York. And Carbone and Spirito were men who we know were the first to set up the first big operation of clandestine manufacture and international distribution, along with the other three.

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John Cusack

They were separate, apparently, but they all knew each other, which was Leger, and Jehan, and Vince Leoni. Giuliani made that case, which was linked with both the Genovese and the Lucchese crime families in New York. And that case also involved Joseph Valachi, who became, a few years later - it's more than a few years. Almost 13 years later, he became the source of fully and completely identifying the five families of the Mafia before the Senate and for the law enforcement agencies. From that point on, the New York office constantly was developing leads and providing information to our European offices, but particularly in France and Italy, on the activities, the movement of the French Connection and providing witnesses, providing informants. And we on the other side, both out of our Beirut office, out of our Marseilles, Paris and Rome offices were providing leads to New York. And if you go, if you go through the years, we were batting 350, believe me. And there is no question in my mind I could make the case -

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John Cusack

It would take hours to document all the cases and you see the levels of the traffic. The traffic was kept in bounds was kept in bounds during those years. The supply grew slowly and the capability to manufacture- See, one of the things we knew from the French Connection was they were having difficulty in obtaining all the morphine base that they wanted. They had more capacity to produce more heroin, but they couldn't get the morphine base because they were competing with each other for morphine base. But the morphine base just was not there.

00:33:51:09 - 00:34:31:21

John Cusack

They just couldn't get it. And I remember talking to a man who was a go between. He was an Italian and he was a go between before between the French Connection, heroin manufacturers and traffickers and the Mafia. And he got to know the French. He was a French speaker. He got to know the French very well. And I asked him one time why, how much did he think they were producing in volume of heroin in Marseilles?

00:34:31:21 - 00:34:55:09

John Cusack

And this was probably around 1959. And he thought I was insulting his intelligence. He said, you know, you're an intelligent man, and I know you by reputation. Why do you ask me a question like that? I said, well, I don't understand. What's wrong with the question? Did they make 100 kilos a month? Did they make 200? Did they make 300?

00:34:55:11 - 00:35:24:23

John Cusack

He looked at me and he says, they make as much as they can, have morphine base. If they have ten kilos of morphine base, they make ten kilos of heroin. If they have 1000 kilos of morphine base in a month, they'll make 1000 kilos of heroin. It is the morphine base. That's the only thing. So that turned me in my focus toward Turkey and the morphine base. Lebanon and the morphine base. Morphine base coming to the French Connection came in the early years, postwar years, through 1968 - the 1968 Israeli Arab War -

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John Cusack

In other words, why was Lebanon so important? Well, the French felt comfortable in Lebanon. They had a mandate there for after World War One, and they had connections there. And the Lebanese spoke French very well and Lebanese traffickers, and it was a pleasant place. And so the morphine base, most of the base at that point in time was being manufactured, a lot of it in southern Turkey and also in Syria, and, and then moved into Lebanon for smuggling to Paris or Marseilles, mostly to, well, frequently, I think it went by air to Paris.

00:36:29:22 - 00:36:50:07

John Cusack

It went by ship to Marseilles, into the laboratories. Also there were groups in Istanbul and in southern Turkey, in the towns on the border with Syria, where they were making the morphine base.

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John Cusack

And then by 1968, we saw a shift that things got rather chaotic in Lebanon. And the Turks were getting more and more organized, and there had been a Turkish migration into Western Europe beginning in the early '60s, which had reached a very high, high level. And Turkey was using bases in Italy and Germany to move morphine base in. And then they were moving in and in truckloads and they had another, another traffic moving out back to Turkey with smuggled goods, all kinds of consumer goods, whether it was an island, stockings for women or cosmetics, various watches, all kinds of semi-valuable items.

00:37:44:03 - 00:38:26:19

John Cusack

And the French Connection grew in volume. Now, I can tell you that the cases we were making right after the war, from 1946, '47 through about 1950. They were smuggling about five, 5 to 10 kilos per shipment. This could be a body carry or given to a seaman or cash in an automobile. Then in 1955, we learned that they were they were smuggling, we had developed evidence of this in cases and prosecutions, 25 kilos per shipment. Then in 1960, we seized our first 100 kilogram shipment. Before that, let me let me say we seized our first 50 kilogram shipment. And then in 1964, we got a seizure of 60 kilos. And then I think in 1965 or 66, we got a shipment of 95 kilos.

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John Cusack

And then 1968, I think we got our first seizure of over 100 kilos. It was a little over 100 kilos. And then from that time on, the shipments were in a neighborhood of 100 kilos. But the largest shipment was in 1972, when a shrimp boat at Marseille was seized with 432 kilos. And we know that two previous trips had been made by that vessel, and it probably was going to Florida.

00:39:38

Question

How did you shift your focus on the morphine base administratively? Did you get more involvement from the State Department in invoking treaties?

00:39:40:04 - 00:40:24:16

John Cusack

I never tire of congratulating and stating my great admiration for Anslinger and the people in the State Department who provided for the transfer of the responsibility for international narcotic control from the League of Nations to the United Nations in 1945, and starting with the Commission on Narcotic Drugs in 1946. And the first thing they had to do was to prepare a protocol in 1946. This was administrative things, and this protocol transferred the conventions and the responsibility for their administration from the League of Nations to the United Nations. And then another technical thing had to be done as quickly as possible. And that was the synthetic narcotic drugs such as pethidine or Demerol, as it is commonly known, and methadone, they had to be brought under the regime of the conventions.

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John Cusack

So in 1948 they had another protocol was prepared in Paris, international protocol under the UN auspices to bring those under the conventions. They would be treated similar as opium, would be an opium derivatives. Then the United States made the move to do what it had been trying to do for at least at least 10, 15 years bring the crops under control.

00:41:41:22 - 00:42:22:22

John Cusack

Now, having had a great deal of experience with, with, with the trying to reach too far and the fact that cocaine was not a problem at the time, we were still seizing two kilos, three kilos a year and we're seizing now, you know, 30, 40 kilos of heroin a year. At that point in time, a decision was made that they would they would prepare a convention that would bring the, the production of, of opium under control as narcotic drugs were under control internationally.

00:42:22:22 - 00:43:24:22

John Cusack

And in 1953, at the UN and New York, they prepared what they call the Opium Protocol of 1953, and in effect, it limited the number of countries that could legally produce opium for medical purposes. That is a cardinal principle of narcotics control. And those countries were Yugoslavia, Greece, Bulgaria, Turkey, Iran, Soviet Union and India. And they were required, if they grew opium to license each and every farmer to establish how much in hectares or acreage he could grow, and he would be required to deliver his entire crop to a government monopoly.

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John Cusack

That was the start. Now that treaty didn't come into effect, that protocol did not take effect until 1962. Unfortunately, the reason it didn't was that the Soviet bloc took a position, a political position, that the UN or any international organization had no right to tell any government by a convention that it could not produce opium.

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John Cusack

Well, it didn't exactly do that. It permitted any country to grow opium for its own needs, which would be small. That was a sovereign right. But it did have the right. And I think the World Court agreed with that, that that did have the right to limit the number of countries that could produce opium for, for export, for international legal drug production.

00:44:28:07 - 00:45:12:01

John Cusack

So that was unfortunate because all things were delayed. Turkey argued with that convention. Turkey did not ratify that convention until 1962 and 1963, when it took effect, because if they didn't ratify that convention at that time, no country could have that that ratified. It could buy opium from Turkey. So while they were posing it as an affront to their sovereignty and saying that opium producers were being picked on and so forth.

00:45:12:03 - 00:45:55:18

John Cusack

They finally ratified it when it was greatly in their economic interest to do so. However, in the late '50s, let me put it this way. The UN Commission kept a diplomatically pressing Turkey to ratify the protocol, and they said that they would not ratify it, but they would adopt its provisions. And in 1959, they adopted a law which they said they'd put into effect in 1960, which would license the farmers and collect the opium and.

00:45:55:20 - 00:46:37:23

John Cusack

Limit the number of licenses. Well, they did some of that, but they did not implement the - We came to learn subsequently that they did not effectively implement the program. And so opium production, opium became increasingly available. And this was a period of development in Turkey where they were building roads. And instead of the opium coming out in on the backs of donkeys, the opium was coming out on the backs of two and a half ton trucks going over good blacktop roads.

00:46:38:03 - 00:47:10:10

John Cusack

So this was a causative effect in bringing about availability. And with the Turkish infrastructure in Europe moving it more effectively into Europe so they could smuggle better. You had Turks going up in cars and trucks and all kinds of things. So that was the situation.

00:47:10

Question

What got Turkey out of opium production?

00:47:10:12 - 00:48:16:19

John Cusack

In the fall of 1965 President Johnson met with, had the occasion to meet with Mayor Robert Wagner of New York. And Mayor Wagner told the president that the heroin problem, which had been a serious problem in New York, according to his information from the best sources in the city, was moving further out of control and spreading, getting far more serious. And he urged the president to try to do something about this. President Johnson called in his domestic head of his domestic policy staff, Joseph Califano, and told him what he had learned from the mayor and said he wanted him to take the necessary measures to address this situation.

00:48:16:21 - 00:48:54:19

John Cusack

And Mr. Califano got in touch with David Acheson, who was the special assistant, the Secretary of the Treasury for enforcement, brought to him the instructions of the president and suggested that the Treasury see what it could do and possibly, if necessary, work with the states, and that Mr. Califano and the president would be fully supportive of what to do, what needed to be done.

00:48:54:20 - 00:49:32:04

John Cusack

I became the regional, we used to call it, the district supervisor of district 17 in 1959, in Rome, Italy, and we had an office at that time in Rome, only in Rome at that time, because our Beirut office had been shut down by the political upheaval and fighting and chaos in Lebanon in late '58. But when I got to Rome as soon as we could, in the late spring of 1959, we reopened the Beirut office.

00:49:32:06 - 00:50:16:22

John Cusack

And then subsequently, in 1960, I opened an office in Istanbul, Turkey, and later that year, and in Paris. And then in 1961, we opened an office in Marseille, and I used to spend from 1959 until June of 1963, when I left the Rome assignment, I spent about a week in Turkey, sometimes more than that, and I worked a lot in Ankara with the embassy people and with the aid group USAID.

00:50:17:00 - 00:50:53:06

John Cusack

And I began to see I had a very broad and deep understanding of the enormous economic and military assistance that the United States was giving to Turkey. And I felt that we're helping them in every way except in the drug area, in the narcotic control area, which would at that point in time be most beneficial to the United States.

00:50:53:08 - 00:51:33:19

John Cusack

And my concept was that that they needed help to try to control the illegal opium

production and prevent the version and suppress the illicit traffic and the illicit manufacture of morphine base for shipment to France. And so I prepared a paper after many, several years of research, and that recommended that a special program be developed in Turkey, an Narcotic Control Assistance program to help the Turks implement.

00:51:33:21 - 00:52:30:11

John Cusack

That, an opium control program. And in the meanwhile, the 1961 Single Convention, we talked about several conventions. And in 1961, all of the previous conventions were amalgamated into one single convention, and that is called the Single Conventional Narcotic Drugs of 1961. I prepared a paper, a proposing that that Treasury with the State Department develop a narcotic control program for Turkey in the aid infrastructure, which would help them.

00:52:30:13 - 00:53:04:08

John Cusack

Control the crop and prevent the illicit manufacturing trafficking, and eventually cut back the crop. Because it was thought that opium there were substitutes coming out for, for example, a cough medicine for codeine, and that there would be less need for opium. So we'd gradually tighten it and reduce it, and eventually probably end the production of opium in Turkey.

00:53:04:09 - 00:53:46:15

John Cusack

That at that point in time didn't get any attention. When Assistant Secretary Acheson received the mandate from Mr. Califano from the president, he began talking with the Bureau of Narcotics and at one point they sent me over to talk to him. I had come into the bureau in at the end of 1964, a year before that, to handle the international desk.

00:53:46:17 - 00:54:19:17

John Cusack

And so I went over and met with him and we talked about what could be done, (about) the French Connection. And I pointed out that my experience over with two tours in Europe at that point in time, that even if we were successful in taking out the French Connection, the laboratories could move to Italy, they could move to North Africa, they could move to Corsica itself.

00:54:19:17 - 00:54:49:18

John Cusack

And it's very difficult to find laboratories. On the other hand, I said, until the Turkish opium could be brought under control, I didn't see any hope of bringing the traffic in heroin under control. And this was explored and we began talking with the State Department and my original proposal called for centralizing the existing production in Turkey. And, and but that was the first step in ending it entirely. And of course, our model on this, our model on this was Iran. The Shah of Iran ended opium production in Iran in 1955, effective in 1956. And it was a remarkable success in Iran and Greece ended opium production after 1950.

00:55:25:06 - 00:55:41:17

John Cusack

They said, well, we don't want to bother with opium production. It's too much trouble. We would get into too much trouble, difficulty with this. And Yugoslavia had reduced their opium production to a very tightly-knit, central area in Macedonia, and even they were moving in the direction to get out of the production in favor of what they call straw production. The Soviets had good control over their opium, and it was no problem. And even they were reducing this production at that time. There was there was a declining need for opium, raw material, and it was thought that India could supply all of the opium needed in the world for medical purposes, and that Indians, the Indians, were in control of their opium.

00:56:19:01 - 00:56:53:23

John Cusack

We were getting no illicit traffic in heroin or opium from India anywhere in the world. The decision was made that the government, Turkey, would be asked to phase out opium with there. This was, now we're now in 1966, and they would issue a decree in July of that year, phase out the production beginning with the '67 crop. We couldn't get our proposal together in time for that.

00:56:53:23 - 00:57:31:01

John Cusack

And in September of '66, the proposal went to the government of Turkey, and I was sent out to Turkey in April of '66 to explain what we were doing technically to the ambassador and, and the his, his team in Ankara. And then in 1960, well, the ambassador presented it to the government of Turkey, to the prime minister.

00:57:31:01 - 00:57:52:21

John Cusack

And the prime minister, you know, indicated he recognized the problem. It was serious. And a turkey wanted to cooperate in every way it could. But this was a very delicate and technical problem for Turkey. And the that he would get back to the ambassador, he couldn't give him, couldn't give him any a positive response at that time.

00:57:52:21 - 00:58:32:04

John Cusack

And then shortly thereafter, he indicated to the ambassador that they had formed a cabinet committee, a study group, and they would get back to him as soon as possible. So by the end of the year, by the end of 1966, they there had been no response from Turkey. And I guess the State Department and Treasury and the White House was getting a little bit anxious, and they decided that they would send me out as a technical advisor to the embassy.

00:58:32:04 - 00:58:53:14

John Cusack

And, you know, I went out for two weeks and I stayed until March. I went out in January, first week of January, and I stayed until March. Well, the Turks had some technical experts in this, and the embassy didn't have a technical expert. And I went out and I guess I was very helpful to the ambassador and they wanted me to

stay.

00:58:53:14 - 00:59:28:21

John Cusack

And we got we got a movement going. I was housed in the aid office there. The ambassador was dealing with the prime minister. And he was dealing with the foreign minister on the subject, and the aid director was dealing with the foreign minister. The aid director was dealing with the ministers on the subject in the various ministries of Turkey, where there were aid programs in progress and in under way.

00:59:28:23 - 01:00:04:23

John Cusack

And the government of Turkey was indicating, yes, they were receptive and they're working on this. And then finally it followed this path until the early part of June or the end of May, I forget which it was now, was just about that time where the prime minister said that, yes, he thought, well, one thing - he could not end opium production immediately in one year. Could not end it, it just could not be done.

01:00:04:23 - 01:00:43:12

John Cusack

But that they would begin phasing out of the production, and they thought that they would end it within five years. So there was no written agreement. This was a this was a verbal agreement between two governments. Now, I must say that Turkey recognized its obligations to the 1967 convention. Article 22 required that any country that could not control its legal opium production had an obligation to end that production, and Turkey took that obligation to heart.

01:00:43:14 - 01:01:17:22

John Cusack

We were able to present to the prime minister and the higher officials of Turkey hundreds of cases made over the past 15 years, from the early 1950s right up to 1967, we could say 17 years, cases of smuggling of opium and morphine base from Turkey into France, the arrest of Turks and this traffic and so forth. So we documented our case and that that influenced Turkey, Turkey greatly.

01:01:17:22 - 01:01:56:17

John Cusack

Then in March, before this, this agreement in the late spring, in May, at the end of May or early June of 1967, in March of '67, the president of Turkey visited the United States on a state visit, and Lyndon Johnson personally spoke to him on this subject, personally spoke to him, and requested that that Turkey do everything possible to end the production of opium as soon as possible.

01:01:56:17 - 01:02:24:11

John Cusack

And the president indicated he was aware of the problem. He was aware of the United States request, and that he assured the president that everything was being done to correct this problem. And so immediately, on a 30th of June, the Turkish government took three provinces out of production and then each year thereafter, until 1972, they took provinces out.

01:02:24:11 - 01:03:03:13

John Cusack

By May of 1968, about a year later, we had negotiated with Turkey and a program of assistance. It was it was what they call a project loan, and it was a loan to permit the Turks to well, it was 1,800,000 for law enforcement and 1,200,000 for crop substitution and technical assistance in the agricultural area.

01:03:03:15 - 01:03:23:10

John Cusack

I left Turkey in May of '68 and came back to Washington. And then in September, I went back to Turkey to implement that program, and I - And then in 1972, 1971, Turkey was down for 1972. They had brought it down to four provinces. And Turkey was, was going to reduce it for the crop year '73 to 2 provinces in the crop year of '74 two more provinces. The White House under President Nixon, and I have to say again, President Nixon, probably on the basis of his advisers, he had some very good advisers who had served in the Eisenhower administration, people such as Miles Ambrose, and they were aware of what we were doing in Turkey, and they picked it up and carried it forward.

01:04:08:10 - 01:04:36:20

John Cusack

It just it was just like passing the baton in a relay. President Nixon took a personal interest and was knowledgeable on this. And his Secretary of State, William Rogers, who was a former attorney general, he was knowledgeable. And so it was carried forward. And what the Nixon administration did was they wanted they decided that why not have Turkey end all production after with the '72 crop?

01:04:36:20 - 01:04:51:16

John Cusack

That would be the last crop. And in response to that, they provided them with about \$12 million additional in support to carry this out.

01:04:15

Question

Turkey complied. Was that the end of the morphine base?

01:04:51:17 - 01:05:12:10

John Cusack

That was the end of the morphine base. And in 1971, in the United States we see 714 kilos of heroin.

01:05:13

Question

Without morphine base, how was heroine still an issue?

01:05:12:12 - 01:05:42:06

John Cusack

Skeptics, they're unbelievers. Unbelievers. But the point is, '71 was, you see,

there was opium production. The first year where we were not influenced by Turkish opium production and morphine base was '73. And the seizures went down to, what, 133 kilos? I think it was something like that, from, I think it was 233.

01:05:42:08 - 01:06:27:00

John Cusack

But you have to understand that what we had gotten into was, was arising. You know, we had almost 400 kilos in '70, 714. That 714 kilos of 1971 was only surpassed by 800 and some odd kilos in 1988 that it never that was the record in the United States. So that was 16 years. Now the average from 1973 through 1987 is 331 kilos of heroin at a time when in Western Europe, they're seizing their seizing - and this heroin is coming from Afghanistan, from Burma, from the raw materials from Thailand, Hong Kong. They're seizing 800 kilos, 900 kilos, a thousand kilos in some of the European countries, like Italy, France, Britain, Germany and the Netherlands, a little countries like Belgium and Holland are seizing as much heroin as we in the United States.

01:06:55

Question

We tend to think of our drug use in the United States as just exploding in the 1970s. So were was it coming from?

01:06:55:08 - 01:07:23:13

John Cusack

It did explode in 1970s with cocaine and with marijuana. Well, you see heroin we didn't we didn't get heroin under control until '73, we brought under control. But people sat around here when we knew that we had to see something. Because people did not want to believe that it would work. Believe me, they didn't want to believe it.

01:07:23:14 - 01:07:47:18

John Cusack

And in 1970, late '73, early '74, a high-ranking French police officer came to the United States in connection with our regular our regular movement, our regular meetings of US, French, Canadian Intergovernmental Committee on Narcotic Control, which later was joined by the Italians. See, I wanted to do two things internationally and my plate was full. I succeeded in addressing the Turkish thing and then shifting our office from Rome, Italy, where it had been for 17 years, from 1951 until 1969. So we could concentrate our efforts on the French Connection with the main thrust of our manpower.

01:08:26:07 - 01:08:54:09

John Cusack

And we were very successful in France. And then we built other offices that were support of the work done in 1969, '70, '71, '72, in France and Belgium. And in regard to the French Connection was tremendous. We were seizing more heroin and morphine based and was being seized in all of the United States. We had a great operation going.

01:08:54:11 - 01:09:25:06

John Cusack

Now, all of that receded by 1973. It just collapsed with our agents, I think, sometimes disappointed that something like, like the demise of the Turkish opium was the real key to our success because they had seized a great quantity of drugs, but we always seized large quantities of drugs. The quantity was getting larger every year because the production was getting larger, and the success came in the French.

01:09:25:07 - 01:10:03:00

John Cusack

The French told me, you know, the French came and they told me that, you know, together with you people, we did great things in France, great things in France. But what you did in Turkey, not meaning me personally, Americans, what you did in Turkey with them often base was the answer. They told me. They told me. And you know, I think there are some people believe that like in one year, we had such great success over 2 or 3 year period that that finished the French Connection.

01:10:03:00 - 01:10:19:15

John Cusack

They all went to jail. They all didn't go to jail. A lot of them went to jail. Many of them went to jail. But the success was we cut off - it was like turning off a spigot. I used to like to tell people, if Turkey is out of opium, it's like taking Saudi Arabia out of the oil business.

01:10:19:17 - 01:10:53:01

John Cusack

It just won't be the same. And it took 17 years. Now the other thing that you have, that one, should understand is that today, why is Western Europe using more heroin than the United States? Between 1973 and 1996? Why? And the answer is it's easier to smuggle heroin into Western Europe than the United States. And why does the United States use more cocaine? Enormously, more than the Europeans at the moment, because it's easier to smuggle cocaine into the United States by far, than to Western Europe. And that's an argument to support the supply theory where drugs are available. People will use them. I don't care what drug it is. You bring it in, you make it available, people will use it.

01:11:16:02 - 01:11:31:00

John Cusack

The more you bring available, the more they will use it. The cheaper it is, the more they'll use it. The more you bring, the cheaper it is. So that's what the game is all about.

01:11:30

Question

As you look back on your career, what do you want others to remember as your unique contributions?

01:11:31:02 - 01:11:55:02

John Cusack

Well, I did a lot of things and I was very proud of. I enjoyed it all. I enjoyed it all, but I like to think that I had a lot of success in as an agent, as a field agent, working street. I love the street. I loved all of that.

01:11:55:03 - 01:12:23:23

John Cusack

I had the opportunity to be a senior agent for a number of years, where I trained younger agents, and I have a whole string of men that I trained, became very successful. And then I was cast into a role to develop conspiracy cases, which was, I thought, a sedentary type of thing, rather than working on a street in the field.

01:12:23:23 - 01:13:10:08

John Cusack

But I accepted it because it was a promotion, and I learned to make conspiracy cases, and it really surprised me how great it was to do and to bring before the courts and successfully prosecute the major violators, the French Connection types and the Mafia, who were doing the importing. Two great conspiracy cases in New York, and then left behind the group that I started and it carried on for several years thereafter, at least ten years thereafter, and continued to make the same types of cases, which is which is a great, great satisfaction not only to me personally, but to the to the organization of which I was a part of.

01:13:10:09 - 01:13:51:21

John Cusack

It's like it was a dynasty almost. We put behind bars for a long periods of time the major narcotic traffickers in the Mafia and Lucchese and the Genoveses and the Bonanno families. And that was a great satisfaction and had great impact. My, the work I did undercover overseas, which we really haven't talked much about, was my only chance to work really undercover very much, because in the States, in New York, I quickly became identified.

01:13:51:23 - 01:14:23:23

John Cusack

I did a little undercover or a small time on the cover work, but then I was a case agent. I was arresting people. I couldn't work undercover. I could be discovered too easily. So I didn't do much of that. I did have a stint undercover in Boston, which was small cases, but it was a great experience. And then I think going back, the regional director, or the regional supervisor in Europe, it was very interesting.

01:14:23:23 - 01:14:58:10

John Cusack

And when I left there in 1963, I had two unfinished things. I had wanted to do something in Turkey and wanted to move the office to Paris to get out the French Connection more directly. And if you persevere, you can succeed, I guess, because I was able to do both of those. So if I left then, I would have had a great measure of satisfaction.

01:14:58:12 - 01:15:08:03

John Cusack

However, I have a greater measure of non-satisfaction because while I spent another several years in service, and since I've left, we have never replicated what we did in Turkey and France. Not at all.

01:15:26

Question

If the President of the United States put you in charge of all drug enforcement activities today, and asked you to turn the drug situation around, how would you do it?

01:15:23:16 - 01:15:57:12

John Cusack

If the president offered me a job, the only job I would want to do would be to work with the White House and the State Department, to negotiate the end of the illicit production of coca, opium and cannabis in the 16 countries in the world that produced the bulk of those three products. And I am as confident that that can be done as I am that I'm sitting in this chair right now.

01:15:57:14 - 01:16:28:21

John Cusack

That can be done. It must be done. There is nothing that the government is doing now that is going to bring our existing problem under control until the production of these crops by a handful of countries is ended, and they have to end it with our help and that can be done. And other countries, the industrial countries of the world can help in this. They are willing. I'm sure they can. They will be very willing to join the United States in a coalition of interested nations, that's what I like to call it, to bring about the end of this production.

01:16:49

Question

Who are your heroes in drug enforcement?

01:16:48:10 - 01:17:25:06

John Cusack

My first heroes are all the men who gave their lives, and women who have given their lives in the cause. A noble cause. This is a noble cause. This is no work. The international conventions. It's mankind at its most prudent and charitable, beneficent self. And I hope it's recognized that they died in an important cause.

01:17:25:08 - 01:18:03:21

John Cusack

Yet they are the heroes I have a great respect for. For anyone who was worked in this work successfully, their courage, their integrity, I have I have great respect for the men who have integrity, it is as important as courage. We all have to have some courage to do this work, but you also have to have integrity. If you don't have the integrity, the courage, it's not worth too much.

01:18:03:23 - 01:18:42:20

John Cusack

I always go back, you have to selfishly go back to your own leaders. I admired beginning on the top, Anslinger. He was a great man, a great leader. People, his deputies that I'd work for, George Cunningham and of course, Mel Harney, who was the assistant commissioner for many years in charge of enforcement, and Garland Williams, my first district supervisor, who was a great leader, my first group

leader, who was my mentor, who really taught me a great deal, partners that I worked with, like George O'Connor.

01:18:42:20 - 01:19:18:21

John Cusack

When I come in and I look back on all of that, I realized that that I was trained by men of courage, integrity and compassion. They were tough men, but they had compassion in their heart for the drug addict, the drug user, understanding for them, and even traffickers. They treated them fairly and professionally, although they despised them as we all despised them.

01:19:18:22 - 01:19:44:03

John Cusack

It was an informal indoctrination, but you certainly developed a very strong distaste for the people who trafficked in drugs. And I admired about a prosecutors I worked with. I admired judges that I set before.

01:19:44:05 - 01:20:20:19

John Cusack

In 1951 I was programed, I took over to develop a lead that I had uncovered in New York through an informant of an organization that was bringing heroin in from France. And what they were they were operating on a base in Antwerp, and I was programed to go overseas to do that. And then while there, too, before I was to go the case, I discussed that Arthur Giuliani was developing the Orsini case.

01:20:20:21 - 01:20:54:13

John Cusack

It so happened that the letter was received by the wife of this Mafia, important Mafia guy from the Lucchese family, one of the principals, in this case, Sheilatani, his wife, received a letter and turned over the letter to the government. And the letter invited someone to come over to talk. And I was then designated to go over and talk to these people who were supplying the drugs, the heroin.

01:20:54:13 - 01:21:42:04

John Cusack

And my photograph was sent to them, and I had a half a dollar. They were sent a torn dollar bill for identification. And I went to Paris in November of 1951 and checked into a hotel. And Syracuse came up from Rome. I went to the place to contact the man, and I couldn't contact him, but I left the message where I was, and the next day he contacted me at the hotel and he then took me by car to meet with a man who turned out to be Marius Ansaldi, and he was at that time known as a big racketeer in Paris.

01:21:42:04 - 01:22:13:01

John Cusack

He was not known as a drug trafficker. He was a man, probably 50, 55 years of age. But he had been big in black market and he had been big in the gold traffic during the war. He was a racketeer type. However, he was well-acquainted with all the major traffickers. So it turned out that there was another man who was probably his partner named Dominique Reissent and Dominic Reissent's wife was kind of used as a

messenger carrier back and forth across the Atlantic. Also, she had been a French movie actress. We didn't know how important this meeting was. The difficulty was that Ansaldi, he complained to me as he complained to the letter that that he had not been paid for certain deliveries, and that he wanted to know when he could expect to be paid.

01:22:46:12 - 01:23:06:03

John Cusack

And he wanted to assure them that he had a new merchandise ready to be moved. And he outlined in a letter how much he had and when he'd have it available for movement. Unfortunately, it was a period of time where the State Department wouldn't give us a passport with a with another identity on it. And the French police picked up through their telephone interceptions, the fact that that these people had determined that that I was not who I said I was, that I was an Narcotic agent. So really what they did, they just went underground.

01:23:32:02 - 01:24:05:16

John Cusack

They just didn't surface. Again, we set up another meeting and but they never they never kept it. They never called. So this proved to be a very valuable meeting because they then had this unsolved identified and, and their surveillance on him uncovered a laboratory. He had a big laboratory, one of the biggest laboratories ever taken in France, in a suburb of Paris.

01:24:05:18 - 01:24:47:14

John Cusack

And that laboratory was seized in June of 1992. And it was one of the most successful cases. And they had been supplying heroin to both the Lucchese and Genovese family in New York. In that case, I was able to develop into a conspiracy. When I came back to New York in 1953, I developed another interesting case because when we when I went to Europe, we were operating our permanent operation was only two months old or three months old when I got there.

01:24:53:02 - 01:25:23:13

John Cusack

And so we really had a lot to learn and a lot to discover. But my Antwerp leads proved valuable in that. That case that I went there originally developed, was not successfully developed for ten years. I mean, it took that long to get that group, but because we just didn't have a good entree. But when I was fooling around up there meeting people, I ran into people who were on the fringes of the traffic.

01:25:23:15 - 01:25:52:16

John Cusack

And finally we got an introduction to a Greek who came up from Paris, and he had heroin connections in Paris and brought another agent that had just come over, Tony Zirrelli, and introduced him to this character. And he was brought down to Paris and cut into one violator. And then he was hanging out in a cafe where other violators were, and became interested in him.

01:25:52:16 - 01:26:00:23

John Cusack

So as a result of that, as it really was able to make three, three other cases down there and in Paris, very important undercover cases. But the major case I made was against another major trafficker's brother. We didn't know that as it involved the Adriani and Agostino group. That was a type case that I used to use other agents and informants in doing was a technique I use when a man would go to jail and we knew who his source of supply was as soon as he got to jail and he'd be placed in isolation, he couldn't reach anybody.

01:26:40:21 - 01:27:12:23

John Cusack

I would send an informant or an undercover agent directly to his connection, saying that he was sent by the guy that just went to jail and that he said he could take care of him and he'd by an ounce, a heroin or whatever, whatever the guy was selling. So what happened was a French seaman was caught. His name was Alain LeRoi on the Liberté, or the Flandre, a French ship in New York harbor.

01:27:13:01 - 01:27:47:01

John Cusack

He had a couple of kilos of heroin, and the French police figured out that he was sent, or he was working for a man by the name of Jean Coure, who operated from a bar in Le Harve. So I went down and before going to see Coure, we knew who his girlfriend was. So I visited his girlfriend. That is, the seaman's girlfriend and LeRoi's girlfriend, and talked to her and told him, you know, I just seen him in prison and he was fine.

01:27:47:01 - 01:28:08:23

John Cusack

And he'll be there a few years. Et cetera. And I had a visit with her, and then I went up to see Coure, because I wanted to be able to tell him that I had seen I did a favor to his friend and so forth. We were not sure that that Alain, that that he was linked with Coure.

01:28:09:00 - 01:28:33:08

John Cusack

But it was it was a very humorous, really. It was almost just like a movie. I got to leave about 11:00 in the morning, and I found this bar was right across the street from the station was a huge French bar. It must have been 30ft long, and Coure was just like a New York Mafia guy.

01:28:33:08 - 01:28:50:05

John Cusack

He was sitting in the corner of the bar looking out the window. So as I come up to the window, the window was clear. I look in, I said, gee, I had seen pictures of Coure. It looks like Coure. So I walked in. I didn't look at him and I walked right up to the bar.

01:28:50:05 - 01:29:10:09

John Cusack

I didn't sit down. I walked up to the bar where the bartender was. He was in the

middle of the bar. So I said to him, I'm looking for the Jean Coure. And he says, are you a friend of Jean Coure's? And, you know, loud enough to hear. I said, no, I'm a friend of a friend.

01:29:10:11 - 01:29:27:01

John Cusack

Oh, you're a friend of a friend. Meanwhile, as I'm saying this, I could see Coure, corner of my eye, coming up along the bar, and he looks at me and he says, Jean Coure, c'est moi.

01:29:27:03 - 01:29:55:16

John Cusack

So I told him about Alain. And to make a long story short, he then showed up two days later pursuant to my arrangements at my hotel in Paris, and he and his partner delivered a quarter a kilo of cocaine to me as a sample. And that was the evidence. And they took me all over Paris. And we had planned to arrest them with the delivery. And however, it turned out that the one guy identified as brother as Michel Cisco, his name was Antoine Augustino, I guess, and a major trafficker. He was in Mexico at the time, well-known to us from Montreal, New York and so forth.

01:30:22:10 - 01:30:54:21

John Cusack

But the French police couldn't possibly keep up the surveillance. So I ended up getting the delivery. And I had, I think we were going to deliver - they were going to deliver a full kilo to me. But when we got down to it, when we got to the place, I talked them into letting me give me the quarter and I'll be back in two weeks when I come back from the States after delivering this, and I'll pick up a kilo from you.

01:30:54:23 - 01:31:04:09

John Cusack

So they went for that. But then when I came back, so to speak, they wanted to the money out front and I couldn't give them the money. So they, they were arrested and they went they both went to jail.