

Cocaine Seized From Frogmen at S.F. Pier

By Maitland Zane

In a fog-shrouded scene right out of a B movie, federal agents on a San Francisco waterfront stakeout seized 400 pounds of cocaine early yesterday after frogmen from a Colombian freighter swam ashore carrying bundles of the drug.

At least five Bay Area men were among the 12 Latinos arrested in what U.S. Attorney Joseph Russoniello described as the largest cocaine smuggling seizure in memory on the West Coast.

Customs agents estimated the wholesale value of the drug at \$12 million, but Russoniello said the street value after "routine dilution" would be about \$750 million.

But Joe Krueger, agent in charge of the Drug Enforcement Administration office, estimated the street sale value at \$100 million. He put the wholesale value at \$11 million or more.

Forty agents from the Customs Service, the FBI, the Drug Enforcement Agency and the Immigration and Naturalization Service took part in the 4 a.m. arrests at India Basin's Pier 96.

Several shots were fired by one of the smugglers, but no one was hurt, agents said.

Russoniello held a news conference in the FBI headquarters at 450 Golden Gate Avenue, where several duffel bags containing drugs were displayed, as well as an Israeli-made Uzi machine gun and several pistols.

Robert Downey, area patrol director for U.S. Customs, said nothing illegal was found aboard the freighter, Ciudad de Cucuta, when customs agents



U.S. Customs Officer Paul De Cotiis displayed bundles of seized