

Where Were You in 1973?

by Steven W. Hooper

Take a moment and think back to the year 1973. You might remember that:

- Richard Nixon was President of the United States.
- The Vietnam War was winding down.
- G. Gordon Liddy, a planner of the Watergate burglary, was convicted.
- The movie, *The Godfather*, won the Academy Award for Best Picture.
- *Tie a Yellow Ribbon Round the Ole Oak Tree* was the #1 song of the year.
- Billy Jean King defeated Bobby Riggs in a televised tennis match in Houston.
- Oil shortages caused the price of gasoline to rise to \$.55 a gallon.
- The average cost of a new home in the United States was \$32,500.

If you were employed by U.S. Customs, you will certainly remember that effective July 1, 1973, the Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) was created in the Department of Justice. The U.S. Customs Service was out of drug investigations and our drug seizures were turned over to DEA. You might have been one of the 500 special agents with the equipment that were involuntarily transferred to this new agency. It would be years before special agents would again be fully involved in investigating drug smugglers.

As part of a booklet titled "*A Progress Report*," the U.S. Customs Service published *A Special Report on The War Against Drug Smugglers* highlighting some of the last cases initiated and investigated by U.S. Customs. A copy of this report published in 1974 follows this article. Do you remember or did you participate in any of these cases from the early 1970s?

Today U.S. Customs special agents' legacy of investigative excellence resides in the Department of Homeland Security (DHS), Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE), Homeland Security Investigations (HSI) office. HSI consists of over 10,000 employees and is the principal investigative component of DHS. The agency is responsible for investigating, disrupting, and dismantling transnational criminal organizations and terrorist networks that threaten or seek to exploit the customs and immigration laws of the United States.