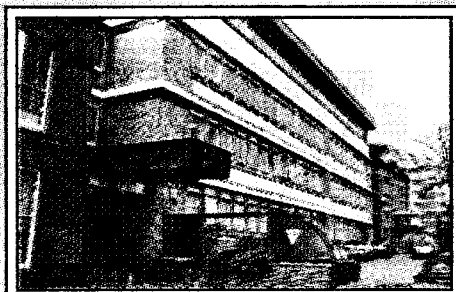


Drug money sting at insolvency firm



ACCUSED: Accountant Daniel Platt and, inset, Sorsky Defries' London offices

Pictures: GEORGE JAWORSKY/J

By MODY KREITMAN
and PETE SAWYER

Undercover trap laid by US Customs



SUBSTANTIAL: Platt's High Barnet home

BRITISH Insolvency firm M Sorsky & Co — now part of Sorsky Defries — has been accused by US Customs of being involved in a money laundering syndicate spanning Miami, New York, London and Geneva.

Court documents filed in Miami reveal how special agents used two informers to build up a detailed picture of the way the north London-based company laundered money on behalf of clients.

According to these documents, a senior partner in Sorsky Defries, Daniel Platt, 51, was entrapped by the informers to whom he offered money laundering services. These included the use of American Express cards, sham mortgages, inflated invoices and fictitious salary payments — all in the names of offshore shell companies.

The sting was the result of an undercover investigation which involved US Customs, the UK's

Customs and Excise Department, the US Drug Enforcement Agency, and the Swiss Federal Authorities. It cost \$2.5 million of US taxpayers' money to mount.

Harold Sorsky, senior partner at the insolvency firm, confirmed to Financial Mail on Sunday, that two weeks ago British customs officers 'visited' the offices.

The 'visit' — which included the breaking of a lock — was at the request of US Customs. At the time Platt, who is the second most senior partner in his firm after Sorsky, was on holiday in Monte Carlo.

Also named in the documents is Gary Kaminsky, 54, an accountant and chief financial officer of an American discount store called Dollar Land. According to a US Customs undercover agent, Kaminsky ran a courier service from his office in London and

said that he could deliver cash anywhere in the world within 24 hours.

Kaminsky was arrested in Miami ten days ago and his London office was searched. But he has agreed to testify against his former associates. Other named members of the organisation include senior Swiss directors of the third biggest private bank in Europe, Union Bancaire Privee, which is part-owned by American Express.

Untraceable

In April 1993, Kaminsky accepted an envelope from one of the informers containing \$10,000 in alleged drug proceeds. He then spoke to Platt in London who explained to the informer how the money laundering scheme would work. The scheme used an Isle of Man company called Framick,

whose directors live on Sark in the Channel Islands, and whose true beneficial shareholders are unregistered and untraceable.

Six months later British and US Customs agents secretly recorded meetings between the informer, who was posing as a drugs dealer, and two senior UBP bankers at the Savoy and Grosvenor House Hotels in London.

In October 1993, the informer met Platt at his office in Finchley. Platt told him that the organisation used lawyers 'who knew the name of the game' to create sham mortgage documents and invoices.

He said the organisation had been using this scheme for a long time. He also advised him to buy a second shell company if the money was to come from crime.

Platt has denied any involvement with the syndicate.