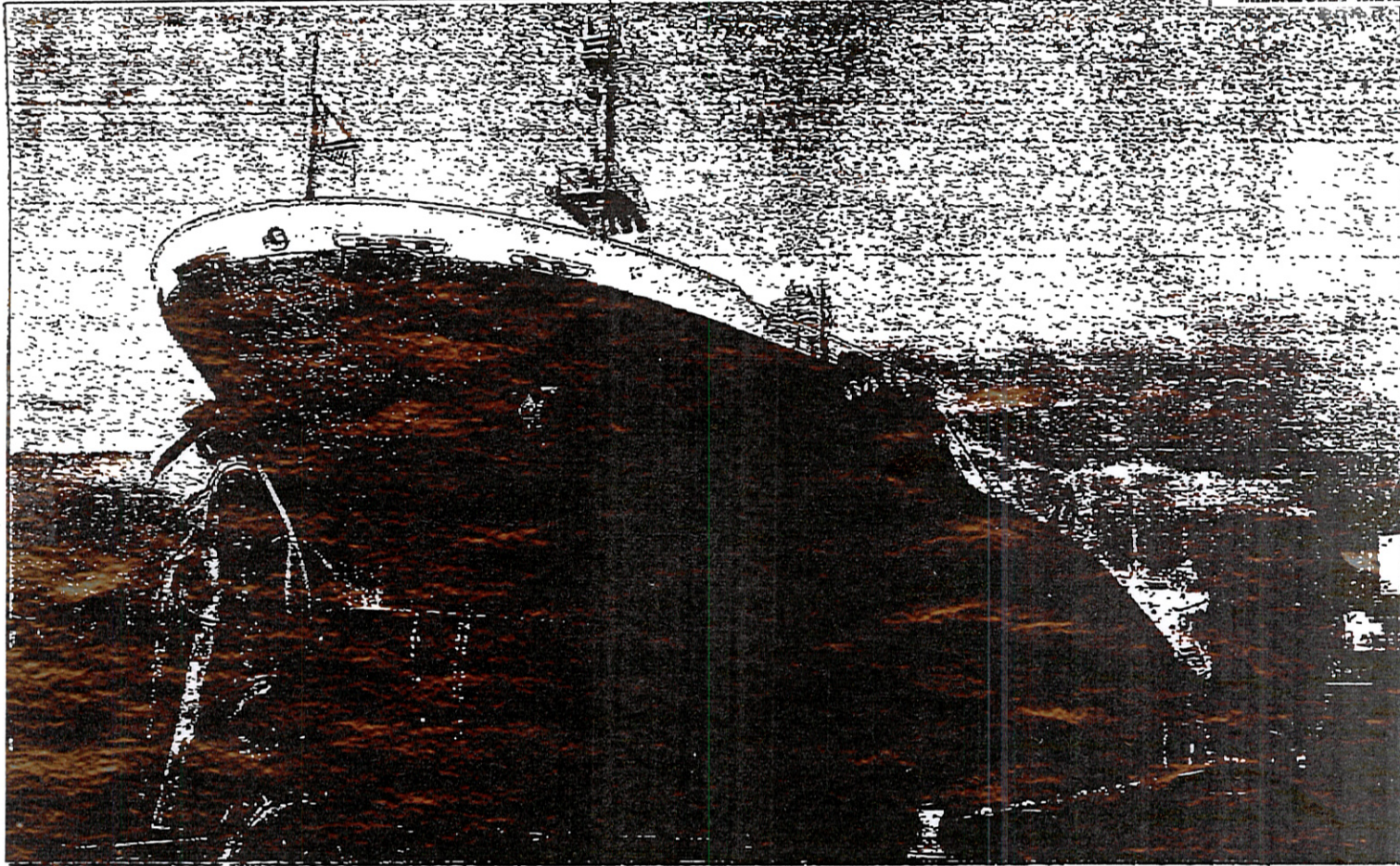


Seized drug boat goes up for sale

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Rick Silva/The Tribune

The Bulk Princess, docked at the Port of Fort Pierce, was seized by U.S. Marshals after its owners were jailed on cocaine trafficking charges. The vessel is currently for sale.

FORT PIERCE — A large vessel with a shady past is calling Fort Pierce home until it finds a new owner.

The Bulk Princess, a carrier ship docked at the Indian River Terminal Company near the Port of Fort Pierce, was seized in October in Miami by U.S. Marshals after its owners — both Greek nationals — were jailed on cocaine trafficking charges following a Drug Enforcement Agency investigation.

Mark Brown, spokesman for National Liquidators, explained that the U.S. Marshals contracted with his company to maintain the Bulk Princess until it can be sold. According to Brown, the ship's registry is in Malta, a small island nation southeast of Sicily in the Mediterranean Sea.

"The reason it's in Fort Pierce is because the dockage cost [here] is less than in Port Everglades and Miami," Brown said.

Brown said that the vessel, which was used to transport bulk cement, has been in Fort Pierce since Dec. 1.

"The crew is Ukrainian, and at this point no one is pointing the finger at them," Brown said.

Thursday, a few crewmembers fished off a dock near the ship, which is emblazoned with a sign indicating its seized status.

According to DEA spokesman John Kilmer, the ship's owners — Dimitrios Kondilios and Panagiotis Haikalis — were arrested in August on the drug charges. Both men were convicted and sentenced in Greece, though DEA investigations proved essential to the case, Kilmer said.