



By Larry Morris—The Washington Post

The files of Earl Robert Merritt: almost 50 pounds of leaflets, magazines and public documents kept in a suitcase.

## Informant's Data Mostly Irrelevant

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*Art Roscoe is righthanded, has a receding hair line—long dark brown hair, long shaggy beard with some gray—black rim glasses, gold wedding band on left hand —H: 5-11—W: 175.*

This description of author and community activist Arthur I. Waskow, complete with the misspelling of his last name, is part of almost 50 pounds of assorted documents and files maintained by former FBI and D.C. police informant Earl Robert Merritt during the antiwar days of the late 1960s and early 1970s.

The files, consisting primarily of antiwar tracts, leaflets, flyers, mailouts, news clippings and other publicity available documents, have been described by both Merritt and his superiors in the intelligence division of the D.C. police department as "mostly junk."

Merritt estimates the FBI and D.C. police paid him a total of \$4,500 in salaries and expenses for his efforts for a 14-month period between April, 1971, and June, 1972. Both police and FBI have verified that he worked for them.

Merritt made copies of his files available to The Washington Post after D.C. Police Chief Maurice J. Cullinane issued a report earlier this month acknowledging that the intelligence division collected thousands of unevaluated and irrelevant files on local political figures and organizations.

The detailed physical description of Waskow is one of the few independently developed reports made by Merritt—written in September, 1971, after Merritt attended a prison reform meeting chaired by Waskow.

Yet, police acknowledge its value is virtually nil: it describes a man who already well known to the police and who was a familiar public figure in the antiwar and civil rights movement of that time.

Merritt says his control officers in the intelligence division specifically instructed him to include detailed physical descriptions, including the racial and ethnic appearance of individuals he monitored.

The control officers, Christopher Scrapper, now a sergeant in the first

police district, and Charles Robinson, now an investigator for the General Services Administration, deny they gave such instructions.

The meeting was held at the Institute for Policy Studies, then at 1520 New Hampshire Ave. NW, an independent public policy research "think tank" that police had asked Merritt to infiltrate. The institute had attracted a number of leftist activists during the antiwar movement.

Merritt's report notes that 80 persons attended, including "35 females, 45 men, 8 Negroes, 6 Negro men, 2 Negro women, 8 foreign, as of German descent."

Also, it said the "majority of whites looked to be Jewish, some Spanish and small percentage of Irish, etc."

Included in Merritt's files was a rough sketch showing the ground floor plan of the Institute for Policy Studies.

Waskow, a senior fellow at the institute, recalled the prison reform meeting and said that with the exception of the spelling of his name, Merritt's descrip-

See INFORMANT, C2, Col. 1

## Informant's Information Mostly Minor

### INFORMANT, From C1

tion of him was "essentially correct."

Merritt, 30, who "surfaced" more than 18 months ago and has spoken publicly several times about his undercover activity, has been characterized by police as an inefficient and unreliable intelligence gatherer.

An acknowledged homosexual, Merritt came to Washington from the hills of West Virginia and became a criminal informant for the police department in 1970, helping with narcotics and other vice-related surveillance in the Dupont Circle area.

With the increase in antiwar demonstrations and the advent of the massive

Mayday disruptions in the spring of 1971, he said, he was switched to political intelligence, although he had little knowledge of the antiwar movement and its underlying philosophies.

Given the code name "Butch," he worked for the police department's intelligence division from April to October, 1971, at \$50 a week, plus expenses, grossing about \$1,500, he says, before he switched to the FBI where he was paid about \$75 a week plus expenses until June, 1972, collecting another \$3,000.

He also was in periodic contact with the Treasury Department's Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms Bureau and was

given \$150 in April, 1971, to accompany Mayday organizer Jack Davis to New York City. An ATF spokesman confirmed that the bureau give \$150 for the New York assignment to a confidential source known only as "Butch." Merritt said ATF wanted to determine if any firearms or explosives were being brought in for Mayday. Merritt said he found none.

Both police and FBI officials say they were dissatisfied with Merritt and fired him. They acknowledge that the quality of informants varied widely, but Merritt was inferior to most others used during the antiwar movement.