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# Informant

## Says Police Urged Theft

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A former D.C. police informant contended yesterday that he was instructed by his supervisor to steal mail, break into buildings and disrupt legitimate demonstrations of the antiwar movement here in the early 1970s.

His assertion contrasts with those in a D.C. police department report released Wednesday that said informants "were instructed to engage in no illegal activities" and no such activity is known to have occurred.

The informant, Earl Robert Merritt 30, says he was a \$50-to-\$75-a-week "special employee" of the police department's intelligence division and infiltrated antiwar groups from 1970 through 1972.

In addition to monitoring and reporting routine activities of antiwar groups and individuals, Merritt told a reporter that on instructions from police he:

- Broke into the Community Bookshop, formerly at 2028 P St. NW, in May, 1971.
- See POLICE, A6, Col. 4

# D.C. Police Urged Thefts, Informer Says

## POLICE, FROM A1

1971 and stole a quantity of antiwar petitions containing names and addresses of activists and supporters.

• Stole a paper bag filled with mail from the Institute for Policy Studies, an independent public policy research center that has attracted a number of leftist scholars.

• Helped disrupt several street demonstrations by giving protesters false information about times and locations of rallies. He also yanked out the wires and tubes from two sound systems at the Mayday encampment in West Potomac Park in early May, 1971, he said.

Police Chief Maurice J. Cullinane could not be reached yesterday, and Asst. Chief Theodore Zanders, who has headed a recent house cleaning of intelligence division records, refused to comment.

Merritt, who "went public" in mid-1973 and has spoken previously about his undercover activity, has been confirmed by police officials as a one-time informant.

Zanders said he did not want to comment on Merritt's present claims because of pending litigation between the police department and the Institute for Policy Studies.

The Institute last year sued two FBI agents, former Attorney General John N. Mitchell and "unknown" employees of the D.C. police department for alleged illegal infiltration of the institute. Merritt is a key witness in the litigation.

Police officials including Zanders and Cullinane generally have declined to elaborate on an extensive report issued by the department Wednesday on activities of the intelligence division from 1967 to the present.

The report described in general terms undercover operations by both police officers and paid civilian informants and included acknowledgements that police borrowed electronic equipment, cars and men from the Central Intelligence Agency on some occasions.

In one of his few detailed discussions of the report, Zanders described how three police officers who were enrolled in local colleges con-

ducted surveillance of campus antiwar activity.

He stressed that the officers already had independently decided to enroll as full-time students and entered through the regular admissions process when the police department asked them also to monitor antiwar groups. Zanders did not specify which universities they attended.

Zanders said the officers received credit for the courses taken, were paid regular salaries while attending school and had their tuition paid from the department's confidential fund.

Officials of area universities contacted said they did not know whether undercover po-

lice officers had operated on their campuses.

The officials said they were not approached by anyone from the Washington police department regarding such placements.

William Ahlstrom, an American University vice-president, said, "We weren't approached, and we wouldn't have approved such an operation if we were. It would be unethical to the spirit of the university and of a free society."

Ahlstrom added, however, that it would probably be impossible to determine whether undercover agents did operate on the campus because of the fluid nature of the university community.