

Wrongdoing on Rise

# Chicago Police Image Still Tarnished

FEB 21 1969

By D. J. R. Bruckner  
Los Angeles Times

CHICAGO—“Like Caesar's wife, we should be above suspicion,” says Chicago Police Supt. James B. Conlisk Jr.

“A lot of bad publicity against the Department makes us realize that we must tread the straight and narrow. We are truly public servants, and we must be responsible not only in public, but in private. We must not only give the best of service, but, the appearance of the best.”

Conlisk's remarks, characteristic of the frank way he discusses problems inside and outside his 12,000-man police force, came in a recent press conference at which he was discussing the growing number of Chicago policemen who are under investigation, suspension or even indictment, and the public's uneasiness about the quality of the police.

Revelations of police wrongdoing began to increase last summer before former Supt. O. W. Wilson, who had reformed the Department after a major scandal in 1960, retired. Conlisk took over in August.

But, since last November,



Associated Press

James B. Conlisk

... noble experiment

the charges have increased in number and in seriousness. Early in February, two uniformed policemen and two detectives were transferred to desk work while investigators of the Internal Inspections Division and the Cook County State's Attorney began probing charges that the four men took a \$450 bribe from a northside tavern owner. The

Division is responsible for policing the police.

The four were called to the tavern when a fight started between the owner and a patron. That altercation was settled, but the four policemen then questioned patrons and found one of them to be a minor—which could have cost the tavern owner his license.

The owner said one of the detectives offered to forget the charge for \$450. He had only \$280, however, so he borrowed the other \$170 from two patrons at the bar and they, in turn, cooperated with the Inspections Division in naming the offending four officers.

Last November, the police raided a flop bar run by August Circella, confiscating weapons, narcotics and a lot of jewelry.

A police sergeant directing the raid said Circella offered him \$1000 to forget the whole thing and not take him in, but the offer failed and Circella was hauled off to the vice squad headquarters. At the headquarters, a lieutenant who was questioning him said Circella offered \$1200 to be al-

lowed to go free. When the officer asked to see the money, Circella handed him a wad which turned out to be only \$540, so Circella wrote him an IOU for the other \$660.

Not everyone is amused by such antics, least of all the Inspections Division men assigned to keeping an eye on their fellow police. “You cannot have bribery without someone offering or giving the bribe,” says one detective. “We have to educate not only our own men, but the people about the dangers of this situation.”

In December Conlisk turned the entire top command of the Department upside down, shifting 13 top officers, combining old sections into new ones and creating a new internal control division, the present Inspections Division, which represents a merger of the old internal inspections and intelligence functions.

At the head of this unit he placed Dep. Supt. John Mulchrone, who at 38 is the youngest officer ever to hold the No. 3 spot in the department. Mulchrone's unit has more than 450 men, about 270 of whom were assigned to internal departmental discipline when the new unit was formed in December.

The biggest recent breaks in the Department's effort to clean itself out have come since Mulchrone took command of the Division, Conlisk has commented, “I think our work is coming along all right.”

Some cases have an amusing side, such as a pair of dismissals announced by Wilson shortly before he retired. The dismissed officers, Wilson said at the time, had taken a \$1500 bribe from a man, agreeing not to arrest him for carrying a concealed weapon. But they also confiscated the weapon and sold it back to him for \$40.

But Mulchrone's men have produced a case of severe jitter among policemen with several new drives. Shortly after Christmas, the Inspections Division made public the

names of six uniformed policemen who were members of the Ku Klux Klan, including one officer who was the State's grand dragon and who had been recruiting others in the Department.

To the outside world this case appeared scandalous, but inside the Department the point was made that, except for passing out membership applications, none of the Klan members had conducted his Klan activities inside the Department. It was all done at home or outside regular police hours. It is fairly common now for policemen on the beats to tell you they think they are watched closely outside their precinct stations, and even when they are out of uniform.

More worrisome to professional criminals is the continuing investigation of a "bolita" (numbers) ring broken by the Inspections Division Jan. 15. The ring, which had netted about \$1 million a year, was the toy of Mafia bigwig Fiorvante (Fifi) Buccieri. When the police raided the ring, they found all its records, including a directory of policemen who have been paid off, identified by nickname or full name and sometimes by auto license numbers. This investigation, the police say, is continuing and will result in further indictments.

Mulchrone, the guardian of the guardians, says "most of the officers in this Department do not resent us (the Inspections Division). The vast majority of these guys are honest and decent, and some of them are noble. But you do not make a man honest just by swearing him in or putting him in a uniform. The policemen understand the need for watchfulness and they help us out."