

# The state of things



## Big brother gets around

By DON AND VAL HYMES



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We haven't heard the last of the horror stories about bugging, spying surveillance and dossiers on "personal habits" of public officials and reporters, and the infiltration of political and even religious groups.

What we've heard so far are apparently bedtime stories compared with what will come out in the next few months.

In Washington, there is a new revelation almost daily that the CIA, the FBI, or internal security committees of the Congress itself have been, and probably still are, keeping dossiers on congressmen.

And in Baltimore and Annapolis, the slow but equally shocking process of unravelling the activities of the Baltimore police Inspectional Services Division goes on amid repeated top-level protestations of ignorance of the scope of its spying.

Unrelated? It would seem so on the surface.

But when Rep. Parren Mitchell, a Baltimore Democrat and early civil rights leader, was slipped copies of an ISD report of a Black United Front meeting he attended in 1970, he noticed something. Copies of the report went not only to Attorney General Francis Burch and various Baltimore police officials, but to the FBI and Army Intelligence as well.

Mitchell believes that the early civil rights movement, and the threats of riots and burnings, was an early target of the ISD. Later it was broadened to cover student agitators and seek out potential assassins.

"There's no doubt in my mind," Mitchell said, "that there was a nationwide apparatus put together with several vital links in it: the CIA, which tied in with the FBI, and both were tied

in with local police departments. I think there was a feeling in the country that the civil rights movement could not be broken in terms of spirit and strength, therefore the best way to attack it was through infiltration, smear, and discrediting."

The various revelations have already provoked the State Senate to schedule hearings on the entire question of police spying.

And at this moment, a subcommittee of the House Judiciary Committee in Washington begins hearings on FBI spying and dossier-keeping that will reach far beyond Capitol Hill, into "every local and state police agency that uses federal money or is connected with the national criminal records system."

A grand jury in Baltimore is looking into the ISD business, which gives Gov. Mandel his latest excuse to evade questions on the subject.

The U.S. Senate, at the same time, begins a probe into the CIA with a select committee on which Maryland's Charles McC. Mathias sits. Mathias, whose bill set up the probe in the first place, sees the CIA as having a legitimate function, but wants to know whether it has overstepped it.

How does all this fit together? It doesn't — yet. They're only pieces of a puzzle at this point, but a frightening clue may be the repeated reports that local and state police are regularly trained by the CIA at Baltimore's Fort Holabird, not only on riot control but on bugging and burglary.

For years, people who complained of being followed or bugged were accused of being paranoid. Mitchell, who used that word himself the other day, said he is still convinced his phone is "intermittently" tapped, and that the FBI engineered the theft of one of its own secret documents on student informers from his office safe in Washington.

Such things, he feels, are still going on. "These are the kind of tactics that were followed, I suppose, by the NKVD in the Soviet Union and the Gestapo in Nazi Germany. That's how they succeeded," he added, "by keeping dossiers, intimidating and infiltrating."

No less than Gov. Mandel himself, in

his inaugural address, said that the public's distrust of public officials is related to "the reckless spying by those who have sworn to guard our liberties (which) has fettered our private lives with terror and suspicion."

Except for that moment of oratory, however, he has not reassured anybody that he is particularly concerned.

Attorney General Burch draws a fine line between crime prevention and political espionage. Certainly nobody wants to tie the hands of the police in doing their job.

But it's both tragic and frightening that the nationwide system of communications and sophisticated techniques, designed to help a hodge-podge of local police departments fight a rising crime rate, now takes on the image of a police-state network of sleazy bedroom spying.