

Houston Police Dept. Said to Quit Intelligence Co-op Over Snooping

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HOUSTON, May 13 (AP)—The Houston police department has refused to supply further information on non-criminal activity to a nationwide intelligence cooperative after allegations that the co-op spied on ordinary citizens, police sources said.

The cooperative called the Law Enforcement Intelligence Unit—LEIU—is headquartered in Long Beach, Calif., and operates a computerized information bank known as the Interstate Organized Crime Index.

That index, based in the California Department of Justice, has received \$1,338,486 from the Federal Law Enforcement Assistance Administration. About 230 police agencies in the United States and Canada belong to LEIU.

A high police source in Houston said his department resigned from LEIU when it was asked by another LEIU member to spy on a legitimate businessman.

The source said LEIU encouraged spying on ordinary citizens through its network of member police agencies in the

United States and Canada and sanctioned the collection and filing of "gutter gossip."

Long Beach Police Lt. Ray Henry, recently elected national chairman of LEIU, said in a telephone interview that members exchanged information only on "traveling organized crime hoodlums."

He said it had "nothing to do with investigating political figures, churches, blacks or anything of that type."

He also said Houston has been "kicked out of LEIU... terminated from membership," partly because of reports of illegal wiretapping by the Houston department's intelligence unit. The alleged wiretapping is under investigation by a federal grand jury.

Capt. B. G. Bond, chief of Houston criminal intelligence division, said Houston had resigned from LEIU but he declined further comment.

But Police Lt. J. O. Brandon said Houston had not resigned but was technically on probation. He said it is considering not reapplying for membership and is refusing LEIU requests that do not relate to criminal activity.

"The department has been asked for information of the marital history of noncriminals by other departments through the LEIU," Brandon said, adding Houston has refused to supply the information.

He said Houston also has refused a request by a California police department for a complete investigation of the wealth and worth of a person buying a chain of grocery stores in California that sold beer and would require a beverage license.

"We're not going to check... him unless it is a criminal investigation," said Brandon.

However, Henry said he does not believe Houston received such a request and would not want them to comply with it even if they did. What he would expect, he said, is that Houston police officers would notify him of the improper request so the LEIU could take sanctions against the responsible party. No such complaint was ever voiced to him, he said.

Henry, a 22-year member of the Long Beach police force, said LEIU's membership includes "probably every major intelligence unit—county sheriff, district attorneys and mu-

nicipal police departments—from New York to Los Angeles."

He said it is "a professional law enforcement organization, created in 1956 for the specific purpose of obtaining and exchanging information about organized crime. Each member is investigated as to its integrity and honesty before it is admitted to membership."

The files provided the Houston intelligence division by other LEIU members are among police files in Houston currently impounded in a \$55 million American Civil Liberties Union lawsuit filed on behalf of two Houston residents who claimed to be subjects of intelligence files. Henry and other LEIU members want the files back.