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an exclusive interview

FBI Informer Confesses

With the disclosure of Robert Merritt's role as an FBI and Metropolitan Police informer, the reality of police surveillance of active community groups and illegal police activity in the District is confirmed. Such groups as the DC Statehood Party, RAP, Common Cause, Off Our Backs, the American Civil Liberties Union and the Gay Activists Alliance have been under surveillance. While the information Merritt provides on widespread police intelligence is

substantial, it leaves open many questions as to what else is going on. For this reason, the open letter printed below is submitted to the local and congressional officials responsible for authorizing police actions. Citizens have a right to full disclosure of illegal police activity in the District of Columbia. Groups, organizations or individuals who may be interested in forming a coalition to deal with the issues raised here should contact the Daily Rag.

My real name is Earl Robert Merritt, Jr. I worked for the MPDC Intelligence, the AFTD [Alcohol, Firearms and Tobacco Division, Department of Treasury], and the local field office of the FBI from April 1971 until, officially, June 1972. Then I worked off and on, being used through friendship by Detective Dixie Gliden 'til April 1973.

Talk a little about your motivations on getting into this thing.

The day before Sgt. Schoffler came into my apartment to proposition me, I had just lost my job at Northern Drug Co, in which Schoffler was heavily involved. He had had several conversations with my boss at work prior to my being terminated. The day after I was terminated, he came to my apartment and asked if I would go to work for Police Department Intelligence.

He told me it was full time; that it would be something I could do for my country; that it would pull me out of the financial situation he knew I was in...He said that the only qualification he knew was that the person had to be gay.

Did they threaten you or did you have any reason to feel frightened at that time?

I don't recall any threats...except that I had met Schoffler in the spring, he was around Dupont Circle, undercover. I had come in contact with him almost daily. I had no idea that he was a tac officer or that he was a police officer-period.

There were several things which I had confided to him under what I had assumed to be the trust of friendship, a matter of some checks in West Virginia. If he wanted to dig into those matters, it could perhaps have resulted in some type of an arrest.

Who is Dixie Gilden?

She is a detective in Intelligence, referred to as Officer Gilden. She picked up me as her source at my request in August or September 1971. Later she was transferred to uniform and later to scooter division, first district.

Were you close to her at that time?

Yes.

Who was Carl Schoffler?

Schoffler was a tac officer at the second precinct, later he was promoted to detective, and I understand he was transferred in March or April of this year to Intelligence, what he called criminal intelligence.

When did you first become disillusioned with the type of work that you were doing?

Not until I saw the mass arrests that were ordered by Jerry Wilson [Mayday, 1971], and the type of brutality that I had always heard about on the TV or radio. But it was the first time I witnessed it and knew that it actually existed. At this time I started feeling a disgust for what I was doing.

I started evaluating everybody around, not just the police, but the people, the different organizations, who they were representing, what they were representing, what they were. The more I did this, the more I became disgusted with the police.

I questioned the functioning of the metropolitan police intelligence division, period. They said their division existed because they handled local, and they tried to emphasize only local, affairs.

Was this true in your experience?

No, because when the assignment for IPS [The Institute for Policy Studies, a radical think-tank] came on, and even before, I came up with different organizations that were in nothing but national, even international, affairs. The police showed an interest in all of these things.

Did they encourage you?

Yes, particularly with IPS. I asked them what they did with the stuff that did not concern them locally and they said that other people were very interested in it.

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They pushed me extremely fast. Every day of the week I was doing something at their request. And it wasn't just them. Bill Seals, the AFTD [Alcohol, Firearms, and Tax Division of the Internal Revenue Service] agent was still in the picture.

When did he come into the picture?

In October of 1970. I guess I started cooperating at that time by introducing him to another individual without telling that individual that Bill Seals was any type of an agent. He [Seals] said that he was there to buy contraband, but it was not until a few weeks before Mayday that I learned he wasn't there particularly to buy contraband.

He would have if he could have, but he was unable to do so, nor did he try very hard. He was really just there to become acquainted with the community in general, the street people, crime in Dupont Circle, and considered the political community of most of the activist organizations.

He wanted me to be subpoenaed to a federal grand jury under an alias name, with all suppression of my identity, on the Pentagon bombing. All he wanted me to say to the grand jury was that Jack had split town the day before the bombing and that he [Davis] made reference that he was planning to disappear from the surveillance of the government.

This would give strong implication that Jack or his friends or the Weathermen fugitives were implicated in the bombing. I refused to.

He says, 'you know if we give you a subpoena and you don't answer the questions, we can keep you in jail until you do.' And I said well perhaps I should go to Mr. Isbell, my attorney, and tell him my entire role over the past couple of years and seek his advice on grand juries. And he dropped it right there.

What was this agent's name?

Terry O'Connor.

How did you get terminated from the FBI?

Well, after many attempts to get out, my only choice was to mislead them and just stick to it. It was a simple little move.

What did you do?

It was at the time they were pushing things very hard in the direction of Jack Davis and the Weathermen. So one weekend when Jack Davis went home to Pennsylvania, I simply insisted that he had been at my apartment and that he had been there all weekend.

I gave this report to Bill Tucker on a pay phone at Fairfax Delicatessen on Sunday afternoon. He was very quiet about it, and I knew, right then and there, that I was finally, hopefully, successful in breaking away.

The next day they came out to see me, and picked me up in a little green VW and drove exceedingly fast through Rock Creek Park to a picnic site they thought was deserted. Luckily for me there were people close by and when we got to the picnic area he [Tucker] slammed his fist on the table and asked me why I was lying to them, if I thought they were damn fools.

He said if you are doing this with the intention of being known, as some agents and informers did, then you are making a most serious mistake. He said of course you are no longer working for the bureau or any other agency. He became quite angry. Then he left and O'Connor was the good guy. Tucker was the bad guy and O'Connor was the good guy. This was the way they played all through the scene. It was to fuck your head up.

And O'Connor stayed and tried to soft talk me and all this type of bullshit.

What contact did you have with the Secret Service?

In February or March of 1973. Their main interest in hassling me was to scare the hell out of everybody gay involved because there was quite a bit of talk about Randy Agnew, who is known in the gay community as being gay. This was an area they wanted to scare us and keep us from talking.

There were six of us involved and there were some statements made under not exactly sober conditions: one person said that he had met Randy Agnew and had had sexual relations with him, and another person was just back from Vietnam and he expressed his ideas on the war and said that both Nixon and Agnew should be shot.

Anyway, Dixie Gilden asked me if I had heard these remarks. I said that yes, I had, but that it was said under the influence of alcohol, and that it was no more than hot air and not to be taken seriously, and that the comments about Randy Agnew were no more than boasting.

Anyway, five of us were called into the Secret Service office. They went to my job: when I got to work everybody was about hysterical because the Secret Service had been there for a long time, asking questions, so I had to tell the street and Dixie Gilden asked her if she had implicated me in this. She said yes; she said that had no choice in the matter but to reveal the name of the source.

How do they use the word "community" and what kind of definition and connotations do they have for that word?

That the mass majority of people who lived in Dupont Circle area were political activists, or were in some way politically involved and were considered anti-war, anti-government, or anti-Nixon.

People were often referred to as being Communists. I was told that the *Washington Post* was around the corner from the Russian Embassy [which is in fact true—ed.] They informed me that several persons on the staff of the *Post* were Communists and they knew that for a fact...

What were your assignments at MPDC intelligence?

From April through the end of May it was Mayday. I was instructed to infiltrate and become intimate with Jack and Rennie Davis, who the police believed to be gay. They asked me to become intimate with them in any way possible.

Did you become intimate with them?

No.

Then from around the first of June through July 15 there was a sort of limbo period, meaning there weren't any particular assignments.

This period was used to infiltrate organizations by mailing lists: about 200 organizations were infiltrated locally, and a large part of them nationally.

From July 15th, 1971, I began the IPS assignment. This happened because I picked up a flyer "Studies in Marxism" at IPS.

On several occasions I was given lengthy reports over the telephone on people at IPS, as to their positions at IPS, what they did in the past, their criminal records, their families, how many children they had, what their children's names were, their education.

Was there personal information?

Yes. Their sex lives were described.

Personal finance information?

Yes, as to what their salaries were at IPS, other than that, they would only say that certain individuals were being funded by Communist sources.

What happened in October 1971?

I was transferred from them to the FBI. I had met the FBI: two agents, Terry O'Conner and Bill Tucker.

What was your assignment with the FBI?

I was told to continue with the assignment at IPS, and get involved with any of the people there socially, sexually, employment, issues they were raising hell about: anything at all, just to get close.

They told me that they would handle me with IPS more discreetly than what PD intelligence was doing. They said that PD intelligence was requesting too much time... They encouraged me to go to meetings, except for groups that might be opposed by IPS, for example they told me not to go to any Nazi meetings.

My attorney was trying to get at the small matter of the checks [that had bounced] so that the FBI could not use that against me. But they never were successful, there always seemed to be something in the way, and always assumed that it was just the FBI playing games with me.

Could you name three or four groups that you went to at this time?

YSA [Young Socialists Alliance], Young Workers Liberation League, GAA [Gay Activists Alliance], DC Statehood Party.

In December 1972 they then changed the main assignment back to Jack Davis. They told me where he was employed, at a steam bath in S.E.

His disappearance was in June '72, a day or two before the... I had nothing to do with that. Like a week later — and this was after I terminated — he [O'Connor of the FBI] came out and kept bugging me to cooperate.

It was supposed to be like a sacred trust between the officer and the source, but that sacred trust meant nothing; I mean they would do this all the time, reveal the source to another officer or another agency or another agent;

They would only tell the source this to perhaps make him think that there was some sort of a trust.

So I went down to the Secret Service office and they took me to a room with just four bare walls, no windows, no furniture except for a table and a couple of chairs, three three or four chairs.

He then tried to exploit the issue of June 1972 when I was terminated by the FBI, and I told him that I did not particularly care what my status was with the FBI, that I just wanted to get out.

He could not believe that the FBI would not let me out, that I had to tell a lie to the FBI to cause bad relations between them and me.

He informed me after asking some questions that he

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planned to commit me to St. E's, to the "White House Corral" as he called it, where people who made threats against the President or Vice President, or against their families or who wrote poison pen letters, were sent for observation, or to be kept there.

They did, in fact, commit one of us, but it was just for one day. He was one of the persons in the room who had just overheard the comments about Randy Agnew.

And the Secret Service kept coming around to him, and harassing him and pestering him so much. They picked his day off to harass him with telephone calls and visits and so forth.

So he gets extremely aggravated, and he was very intoxicated and he calls up the Secret Service and he tells Agent Cook, he says, "I'm sick and tired of hearing all this God damn shit about the Vice President and somebody threatening to kill him and all this business, but if you furnish me with a gun, I'll be glad to shoot the son of a bitch" And immediately—and I mean immediately—they were at his door.

They took him out with practically nothing on, and took him straight to St. E's—no stopping at courts, no telephone calls permitted.

I'm sure this was just a means of threat to make us tremble at the mention of the name of Nixon or Agnew or particularly Agnew's son because that's what they were trying to hush up and cover up.



Groups under Surveillance

Access to Merritt's files showed that the following groups, among others, have been under some sort of surveillance.

The Academy of Political Science
The American Civil Liberties Union
Action Resources Collective
"The Advocate," a publication of the National Law Center
at George Washington University
American Friends Service Committee
Anti-War Union
Attica Brigade
Black People's Union Party
Black Panther Party
Catholic Peace Fellowship
Clear Creek
Childrens March for Survival
Coalition on National Priorities and Military Policy
Committee for Study of Incarceration and DC Corrections
Common Cause
The Furies, a radical feminist publication
Md-DC Committee to Oppose Political Repression
Community Bookshop
DC Statehood Party
Gay Activist Alliance
Howard University Committee to Free Angeles Davis
Institute for Policy Studies
Middle East Research and Information Project
National Organization for Reform of Marijuana-Laws
Off Our Backs, a woman's a monthly feminist magazine

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People's Coalition for Peace and Justice
 RAP, Inc, a local drug rehabilitation program
 Tenants' Rights Workshop
 Runaway House
 The Union of Radical Political Economists
 at American University



These are two bombs purchased by Merritt from a former member of the American Nazi Party, who, in turn, had procured them from within the Party. According to Merritt there was no further investigation or prosecution after he had purchased the bombs. Bill Seals, an undercover AFTD agent described them as 'sterile grenades': they had been manufactured for the CIA without markings or serial numbers to eliminate tracing. What was a member of the American Nazi Party doing with bombs manufactured for the CIA? You might well ask.

Watergate

What was your contact with the Watergate affair?

In June 1972, a few days after the Watergate break-in and arrests, MPDC Intelligence Schoffler and Leaper approached me and tried to get me to do one last job. They said that it was the most important thing I had ever done, that it was for my country. They did not even discuss the lie that I had told the FBI.

They wanted me to get close to Douglas Caddy [the lawyer for the burglars caught inside Watergate], who was alleged to be gay. They wanted me to get to know him him socially, sexually, or any other way. They said he had been born in Cuba, that he liked Cubans and was associated with communist causes.

Sgts. Schoffler and Leaper were among the arresting officers of the burglars inside Watergate, and one of the first witnesses before the Watergate Committee. Leaper testified second, and Schoffler third, I think.

When Leaper was on the stand, I saw him on television- he was asked one question at the end of his testimony; "has there been any attempts at further investigation of the..." He answered "no." That was that.

07-23-71 - 10 00 - 71
 (with Assignment)

Class + E.P.S.

07-23-71 - Paid \$124.00 by
 C. Robinson - [unclear] News
 World = 100 Cash S. =

07-24-71 = PHONE to INT =
 = CBS - BOOKS for INT \$2.80 =

07-25-71 = NO ACTIVITY

07-26-71 = People's Party for Int
 \$1.80 = Phone 2684 100 =

Roadie - [unclear] for Int \$1.80 =
 Phone 105 Cash S. = Phone 2684
 100 = Phone 2684 PS 100 =
 Phone 2684 100 = Phone 2684
 100 = Phone 2684 Scrapper and
 MANANELY - 400 = Phone 2684
 100 = 1 phone 2684 100 =

07-27-71 - Phone 2684 2673 100
 - Phone 2684 100 = Phone Library
 - 100 = Phone 2684 100 =
 Militant on 10 250 =
 Phone 2684 200

07-28-71 - Phone 2684 200 =
 phone IPS 100 =

A sample, hand written report submitted to the Metropolitan Police by Merritt, indicating receipt of funds, and surveillance of IPS, and the phone extensions of the officers to whom he was reporting.



Dirty Tricks

Your police have been using your tax dollars to train agents to perform illegal acts. Informers have been taught the techniques of breaking and entering, forging identification, disrupting legal demonstrations and hand to hand combat, all under the guise of "law and order."

Informers and police agents were told that the Police Department would supply burglar's tools to break into businesses and homes. Police agents were assured that if caught during these illegal activities they would be released. Police agents surveilled and kept lists of names of people attending legal, public meetings.

Other activities which Merrit had admitted being involved with include:

- † Delivering mail stolen from The Institute of Policy Studies to the FBI and the Metropolitan Police, neither of whom returned it to IPS
- † Being trained by a DC policeman to forge a draft card, in violation of Federal Draft Laws.
- † Disruption of legal demonstrations by removing tubes and wires from a public address system, Mayday, 1971, and by providing false and misleading information to demonstrators
- † Breaking into Community Bookshop to steal petitions at the behest of police, who informed him that they would supply him with burglar's tools and bail him out if he was caught
- † Conspiring with DC policemen to break into the offices of Georgetown Legal Interns for the purpose of stealing files. (That plan was not carried out)
- † Infiltrating public service groups such as the American Civil Liberties Union, the Black United Front, Common Cause, and the GAY Activist Alliance
- † Supplying names and license plate numbers of individuals who attended meetings of these and other groups.
- † Shadowing Phillip Hirschkop, noted civil rights lawyer and attempting to infiltrate the offices of Leonard Hurdin who was at the time attorney for the Berrigans in Harrisburg.

An open letter Mayor Washington, the DC Council, Sen. Bayh, Sen. Eagleton, Del. Fauntroy, Rep. Natcher, Rep. Diggs

1. Exactly how many community-active groups have been under surveillance?
And what is the extent of recordkeeping on these groups?
2. What qualifies a group for surveillance?
3. Who authorizes such surveillance?
4. What regulations or departmental policies cover the use of surveillance, agents-provocateurs and the gathering of political intelligence.
5. How many tax dollars are allocated to the DC Police and their agents for gathering political intelligence.
6. How many members of the Metropolitan Police have been used for political intelligence work from 1969 to the present?
7. What are the formal and informal relationships between the Metropolitan Police, FBI, Justice Department, Internal Revenue Service, Secret Service, Civil Service Commission and other federal law enforcement and intelligence gathering agencies.