

S.F. Police Got CIA Equipment

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Washington

The CIA loaned electronic eavesdropping equipment to the San Francisco police department in 1973 and financed a 1966 study on lie detection involving the San Mateo county sheriff's department, the Rockefeller Commission revealed yesterday.

The two activities came to light in appendices to the 299-page report on the CIA that has been made public by the commission. The commission said it did not regard either action as improper.

That was not the case in a third CIA operation in the Bay Area, which involved purloining mail destined for Asian Communist countries, photographing its contents and replacing the letters a day or two later.

Those actions, which the commission said took place on three occasions between 1970 and 1971, prompted a commission recommendation that the CIA be specifically forbidden to open domestic mail except in times of war.

The report did not say where the mail tampering took place, but Chief U.S. Postal Inspector William Cotter said in May that it occurred at the postal inspection facility in San Mateo near San Francisco International Airport.

A source close to the commission told The Chronicle that the CIA in February,

1973, loaned the San Francisco police department "audio surveillance" equipment which included two M-40 radio receivers, two transmitter beacons and one toning transmitter.

"They were never used," Police Chief Donald M. Scott said yesterday. "They were intended to be used in the investigation

San Francisco of a criminal matter, but the occasion never arose to use them."

Scott said the electronic gear, which he called "very expensive and not too effective," was designed to be attached to cars for tracking purposes. It was returned to the CIA a year ago.

The commission source said the devices "had the capability for picking up conversations."

The commission report described the lie detection study as follows:

"In 1966, the CIA contracted with a private company to undertake an extensive study on the use of polygraph machines as a tool in personnel investigations. The purpose of the study was to determine what kind of individual could 'beat the polygraph.'

"During the period of the study (1966-67), the CIA's contractor drew from the resources of the San Mateo county sheriff's office to find subjects for the study. Various inmates of the San Mateo county jail were used in connection with this experiment."

Former San Mateo Sheriff Earl Whitmore, who retired in 1973 after 23 years with the department, said he had a dim recollection of the polygraph study.

"I have no recollection of any CIA involvement. I know I didn't know anything about it," said Whitmore, who is now general manager of the Kenocti Harbor Inn in Lake county.

He said that Lieutenant N. John LoSchiavo, chief of the department's intelligence unit, might have known about the CIA backing for the study. But LoSchiavo said he didn't know about it at the time either.