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## Computers to Catch Smugglers

# 'Big Brother' on the U.S. Border

### San Diego

In the windowless basement of an old candy factory here, a bank of computers worked at top speed last week, picking out suspected smugglers from among the hordes of Americans returning from summer holidays abroad.

This facility is the nerve center of a little-known operation of the Bureau of Customs that goes by the name CADPIN, an acronym for Customs Automatic Data Processing Intelligence Network.

The operation, which was highly classified until recently, began in 1970 on an experimental basis and because of its success has been greatly expanded since then.

Over the three-day Labor Day weekend, this nerve center of the electronic intelligence network of the Bureau of Customs responded to 715,000 inquiries from harried inspectors on duty along the Mexican and Canadian borders, at airports handling international arrivals and at several ports where cruise ships unloaded their passengers.

At peak periods in the crush of homecoming tourists, inquiries poured into the computers at the rate of ten a second from 485 terminal points, some of them 2000 or 3000 miles away, and were answered in a same split-second.

Most of the returning travelers were unaware, as they faced a steely-eyed Customs agent, that he or she was typing out their name, automobile license or passport number on a small ivory key-board carefully hidden from their view, and getting back either a quick "yes" or "no record" response on a hooded cathode tube.

Those who evoke a "yes" response are taken aside for

questioning or for more thorough searches.

The magnetic tapes of the network's memory bank contain the names of more than 200,000 known or suspected smugglers, from the big-time operator trafficking in heroin to the wealthy widow from Winnetka, Ill., who cannot resist trying to smuggle in jewelry in a box of face powder or in her brassiere.

For each name, the network may have up to 50 additional pieces of information dealing with date and place of birth, prior arrests, any outstanding warrants, the individual's known or suspected employer or criminal associates and tricks that he or she has employed in the past.

David Bulman, chief of the center here, said the inquiries that it handled over the Labor Day holiday included 680,000 checks on automobile license numbers by agents along the northern and southern borders and 35,000 inquiries from inspectors on duty at airports handling flights from overseas.

How many "hits" were

made from those 715,000 split-second replies is classified information, as are many details of the network, including the capacity of its

two Burroughs 5500 computers and auxiliary equipment and even the location of its data control center here.

Because the network lists only suspects, only a fraction of the "yes" responses lead to the actual discovery of contraband or an arrest. Nor are all of those tagged for bringing in contraband or undeclared goods are trapped by the whirling spools of magnetic tape.

The hunches of customs agents whose long experience has made them alert to suspicious mannerisms and other telltale signs still account for a far larger number of apprehensions, ranging from professional smugglers to known drug addicts and amateur cheats trying to avoid payment of import duties.

Last year when its scope of operation was much smaller than now, the network was credited with helping to bring about 446 smuggling arrests along the Mexican border alone, from Matamoros on the Gulf of Mexico to Tijuana on the Pacific.

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