

Narcotics in the Mail Stream

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"The Inspection Service has investigative jurisdiction whenever the mails are used in furtherance of an illegal scheme, but our efforts would be sorely limited without the cooperative quid pro quo which exists today among all law enforcement agencies."

When the Drug Enforcement Administration was established on July 1, 1973, its creation underlined the President's determination to win the battle against illicit narcotics traffic in the United States. Here, for the first time, was a consolidation of various agencies into a single comprehensive organization, "empowered to investigate and prepare for prosecution all suspects for violation under the federal drug trafficking laws."

As with other segments of the law enforcement community, we in the Postal Inspection Service applauded the creation of DEA since our participation

in narcotics investigations has always been a cooperative effort with the other agencies which prosecute under statutes within their own investigative jurisdiction. Although the yearly number of narcotics and drug cases which the Inspection Service opens is but a small portion of our total criminal investigations, the fact remains that today one out of every five mail thieves is a narcotics user. Over 27 percent of all persons arrested for postal holdups are narcotics users. This dependence on drugs has become a major cause of postal crime since the unguarded letter box, especially in large urban areas, represents an attractive target to the criminal who must support his addiction by theft of checks and money from the mail.

In the span of just a few short years, our investigative involvement in narcotics and dangerous drug cases has increased tremendously. Since use of the mails in any unlawful activity is always a matter of investigative