

The police and the public

John Moore, Lane County Deputy District Attorney, who works closely with the Lane Interagency Narcotics Team (LINT), said yesterday "It's not our purpose or intention to prevent people from taking photographs in public buildings." A noble sentiment. Hopefully this augurs a new attitude among police and their affiliates concerning the treatment of citizens when police are offended by their actions.

Moore's statement was made in connection with the harassment of a photographer at the county courthouse Tuesday. A photographer, while attempting to photograph witnesses entering a courtroom to testify before the grand jury, was accosted by members of LINT, told she was under arrest for "harassment" and detained in the District Attorney's office for the better part of an hour. During that time the photographer's film was confiscated, she was given a lecture on the problems of protecting narcotics agents and their families and was then released with no

charges filed against her.

Since then, LINT agents have been told to refrain from such actions in the future and the film has been returned with apology.

There is no question as to why the agents grabbed the photographer. They wanted to protect their anonymity.

There is no question that the effectiveness of narcotics agents depends on their anonymity and that their lives and the safety of their families is also affected by public exposure of their faces and-or names. But to grab the photographer is the wrong way of going about protecting these agents. The District Attorney should have taken precautions in advance of the grand jury hearing. He could have had the agents enter the courtroom through the judge's chambers or the agents could have been disguised with masks—a method they have used when identifying suspects at the scene of a narcotics arrest. To have them walk down the hall, a public place, is asking for someone to take their picture.

As Moore realized, probably right away, the agents had no right to interfere or rather harass the photographer. A judge may have the right to extend the boundaries of a courtroom but a narcotics agent does not.

This incident also goes to show one problem police will have with the new criminal code. The photographer was "arrested" under one of the new broad statutes under the new code. The interpretation of this new statute was done by the narcotics agent on the spot. The dangers of this are apparent. Perhaps what is needed is some general guidelines set down by the district attorney, even though they would only be working interpretations untested in the courts. This would give police officers and agents something to work with.

Hopefully this sort of thing will not happen again. If the District Attorney can get things together he won't have to worry about his agents having their pictures taken. Also, if agents and policemen have guidelines laid down for them they won't have to be instant attorneys and harass citizens.

Letters

Pollution

Why end water pollution? Our economy needs the boost. With our space program limited and full scale wars practical suicide, where else can we spend countless millions every year, from now until doomsday, without solving the problem?

If we wanted to, we could end water pollution for a small fraction of the costs we are now paying, with low cost technology cunningly concealed in the public domain for many years. Treatment processes would be completed in the treatment plant—not in the receiving waters as we are now doing—and without the usual lethal sludge dumpings in fresh as well as salt waters.

Where treatment plants are already in operation at full capacity, including secondary phases, these same treatment plants can be doubled or better in capacity for less than 5 per cent of the plant costs

without any extra land area. Secondary phases can be added to existing primary treatment plants at similar savings. New and far more efficient treatment plants can be built for less than 35 per cent of the usual costs and in less than one-third of the usual space. Phosphates can be reduced over 95 per cent, nitrogen over 85 per cent and final sludge upwards from 65 per cent—with little or no increase over conventional operating costs.

Our so-called "modern" treatment plants are less than one half-of-one-percent effective to that which they can practically be. But why kill the goose which lays the golden egg? The clever hoax of storm water overflow has enabled the foisting of huge public works projects on an unsuspecting and all too often apathetic populace.

Efficient use of the mentioned technology would end the overflow problem with immediate treatment. No

monstrous plant enlargements, no smelly and expensive holding areas, no costly sewer separations, no deep tunnels with their inevitable explosion hazards nor other misuse of public funds to benefit the few at the expense of the masses are needed, including proprietary oxygen and physical-chemical processes.

America has far too many actual needs begging for only nominal funds which are not available to permit this wholesale plunder of the taxpayer to continue—with little or nothing of value worthwhile in return.

August Vondran, Jr.
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"The freedom of the press is one of the bulwarks of liberty, and can never be restrained but by despotic governments."
Virginia Bill of Rights

"The freedom of speech may be taken away, and dumb and silent we may be led like sheep to the slaughter."

George Washington

