



# CAN YOU TRUST YOUR COPS?

*After reading about the Chicago police scandal, some citizens said, "It can't happen in my town!" But can they be sure? Hadn't they better take a hard look at local law enforcement - and themselves?*

By JOSEPH N. BELL

**A** SALESMAN caught speeding on Chicago's Lake Shore Drive recently wasn't particularly concerned. He folded a \$5 bill confidently inside his driver's license and passed it unhesitatingly to the arresting officer.

The policeman looked at the money and asked belligerently: "What's this?"

Puzzled, the salesman answered: "For you. Isn't that the way it works?"

A few hours later, the salesman was released after posting bond on a charge of attempted bribery of a police officer. He was indignant and confused. He'd been fixing speeding tickets in Chicago this way for years, he said, and he didn't understand the sudden show of morality.

This particular salesman hadn't been in Chicago for six months, nor had he been reading Chicago newspapers. Otherwise he would have known better. The lid is on in Chicago; how long it stays on depends to a very large extent on Chicago's new superintendent of police—a gaunt, incisive teacher and criminologist named Orlando Wilson, who was brought in to clean up the police force after even hardened Chicagoans were forced to swallow a dose of corruption they couldn't digest.

The event that triggered the current police reform in Chicago was the arrest of a 23-year-old burglar named Richard Morrison. Facing a stiff sentence for a lucrative series of thefts, Morrison decided to implicate his confederates. They turned out to be 13 Chicago police officers.

For more than a year, the cops had placed orders with Morrison for merchandise, then stood guard outside while he burgled stores the policemen were supposed to be protecting. He got them television sets, antifreeze, golf clubs, and shoes—among other things. Much of the loot was re-

covered from the homes of some of the accused policemen, where it had been hidden.

Morrison's disclosures encouraged other Chicagoans who had been victimized by cops to come forward. The inventory of venality grew daily; cops were accused of planning a kidnap-robbery, shaking down numerous criminal suspects, looting warehouses, accepting bribes for perjured testimony, fixing tickets, and a broad and imaginative range of other criminal activities.

The list is still growing.

### Reform Movement Begins

Chicago citizens—moribund through decades of growing police corruption—demanded action, and kept the pressure on Mayor Richard Daley to appoint a new police superintendent. Last spring, Orlando Wilson—who had served as chairman of the committee selected by Daley to find a new superintendent—severed his ties with the University of California, where he was dean of the school of criminology, and took on the job himself. Committee members insisted he was the best-qualified man available for the job, and Chicago citizens are willing to accept this verdict.

What Orlando Wilson found in the first weeks of his new job, and how he plans to bring order back into Chicago's chaotic police situation, are matters of interest to every community throughout the nation.

Why is this true?

"The factors responsible for the moral breakdown that spread through parts of the Chicago Police Department are not peculiar to Chicago," says

Superintendent Wilson. "They exist in varying degrees in many communities."

What kind of moral climate permitted police corruption to flourish in Chicago—and could well nurture the same disease in your town? Three rather broad areas of moral blight emerge from a hindsight examination of the Chicago scandals:

#### 1. The Built-In System.

Here's a rookie policeman, young, eager, reasonably idealistic, proud of the badge he's wearing. All his life he's dreamed about being a police officer. He sees himself on the threshold of an admirable career in public service, with unlimited opportunity for advancement if he does his job well—which he intends to do. Then he bumps headlong into "the system."

He's assigned to an outlying district and paired with an old-time cop who talks out of the side of his mouth and wears dirty shirts.

Their conversations turn more and more frequently to the plight of the policemen—the low pay in relation to the danger and long years of unrecognized public service.

One night they curb a drunken driver in a Cadillac. The old-timer gets in the car with the drunk and drives him home; the rookie follows in the squad car.

He sees money exchange hands as the older cop helps the drunk into his house. When the old-timer comes out, he slips a \$10 bill into the rookie's hand and says: "This is your cut."

The rookie refuses the money, and the old-timer looks at him pityingly. "Don't fight it," he says. "It won't do you any good. It's the system. Everybody does it. It's the only way we've got of building our pay up to what it should be."

If the rookie *does* fight it, word gets around and