

# Agencies' use of informant questioned

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Despite adopting sweeping new guidelines a year ago that tightened the rules for handling informants, the FBI and other law enforcement agencies continued to use an admitted drug dealer and con man to set up stings against other people, according to interviews with the informant.

The informant told the Globe he has evaded jail since the 1950s, when he served a year for a Medford home invasion, because agents gave him "leeway"

to commit crimes in exchange for information about gangsters, drug dealers, bank robbers, and art thieves.

Although he was arrested in 1993 on charges of defrauding a Boston hotel, the informant said he resolved the case by agreeing to pay his \$30,000 hotel bill.

The informant, who was recruited 40 years ago by the same FBI agent who brought notorious gangster Stephen "The Rifleman" Flemmi into the fold, was finally dropped by federal officials last month after reporting that he had

been stealing prescription drugs and giving them to one of his handlers, a US Customs agent. He also accused the agent of extorting more than \$150,000 from him.

And recently, federal prosecutors launched a separate investigation into allegations that the informant tried to taint a probe of Teamsters Local 25 last year by fabricating corruption allegations against an agent assigned to that case, according to law enforcement officials.

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