

Peck Commended For Detective Work

A native of Cumberland who is a 20-year veteran of the Metropolitan Police Department, Washington, D.C., has received a commendation for his part in a complex two-year investigation.

Detective William E. Peck, son of the late Mrs. Pearl Peck and brother of Alonzo Peck, of 926 Glenwood Street, and Mrs. Geraldine Gordon, 221 Cecilia Street, was one of several investigators of the department who participated from February 1981 through September 1983 in an investigation under Title 18, United States Code, Chapter 96, Racketeer Influenced and Corrupt Organizations (RICO).

The investigation was initially conceived by the Investigative Services Division to disrupt the illegal activities of Herbert and Mary Cole, a husband and wife team who controlled nearly all the prostitution, pornography, and illicit narcotic traffic in the 800 block of 14th Street, N.W.

The Coles owned and operated two adult theatres, two massage parlors, an adult book store, an adult video store, and three restaurants featuring nude dancers, in the 800 block of 14th Street.

Shortly after the investigation began, it was learned that investigators of the Second District had been working on the vice activities in the 800 block of 14th Street NW. Due to their knowledge of people and activities in the area, they were assigned to the Investigative Services Division for the duration of the investigation.

Detectives of the Morals Division were consulted on nearly a daily basis to benefit from their expertise in areas of prostitution and pornography.

Officer Peck and all of the other participating officers worked long hours without regard for normal tours of duty or days off. Mundane operations such as garbage collection



WILLIAM E. PECK

and analyses were completed with the same zeal exhibited when working the most interesting portions of the investigation, according to a department spokesman.

Background investigations and criminal profiles were developed on more than 20 major figures used by the Coles to insulate themselves from any taint of unlawful activity. More than 150 individuals were interviewed concerning activities in the 800 block of 14th Street, and more than 40 people presented testimony before a U.S. District Court grand jury.

Numerous sources were developed and extensive use was made of Dialed Number recorders, one-party consent recordings, and telephone toll subpoenas. In turn, this material was analyzed and link diagrams and flow charts were prepared, and net worth analyses performed.

By September 1983, the investigation had progressed as far as possible within the jurisdictional limits of the Metropolitan Police Department, and the investigation was further pursued by the Internal Revenue Service, with the assistance of the Federal

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Bureau of Investigation.

In September 1984, Herbert and Mary Cole were indicted in U.S. District Court for RICO violations and income tax evasion. At their arraignment, both Herbert and Mary Cole entered guilty pleas to one count of RICO and one count of income tax evasion. In November 1984, the Coles were sentenced to two to five years, and one to three years respectively, with stipulations that Herbert Cole serve at least 54 months, and that Mary Cole serve the entire three-year term.

Additionally, the court ordered that the Coles dispose of all business and real estate holdings in the 800 block of 14th Street, NW, and from the proceeds of the disposal, forfeit \$1,500,000 in civil penalties for income tax evasion.

Several of the key figures used to insulate Herbert and Mary Cole were also indicted and convicted of RICO violations during the investigation and, in return for reduced sentences, they became government witnesses against the Coles.

Additionally, several allegations of drug use by police officers surfaced during the investigation. These allegations were referred to the Internal Affairs Division, along with cooperating sources, and resulted in the arrest of several police officers for the use and distribution of illicit narcotics.

Detective Peck is recognized as an expert on organized crime and has received commendations from the directors of the FBI, U.S. Secret Service, U.S. Department of State and many others.

He has attended the FBI National Academy, the Florida Law Enforcement Academy, Tallahassee, Fla., and many investigative schools conducted by the Metropolitan Police Department.