



# **Ratting: The Use and Abuse of Informants in the American Justice System**

*Robert M. Bloom*

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Showing informants in a variety of contexts provides a broader picture of them, and highlights the potential pitfalls associated with their use within our criminal justice system. Police depend on insiders to prosecute the perpetrators of many of the so-called victimless crimes like drug dealing, money laundering and political corruption. As victimless crimes have grown, so has the use of informants. Providing insights into law enforcement techniques as well as the Court's response to them, Bloom illuminates the pernicious legal ramifications that can result from the justice system's relationship to and use of informers. Law professors, criminologists, and law enforcement scholars will find Bloom's account of this much used and abused but under-reported aspect of America's law enforcement efforts both edifying and sobering.

There are different kinds of informants. Some are used to infiltrate and destroy organized crime operations, and others, such as Linda Tripp, are used to investigate government officials. Informants are motivated by a variety of reasons, including financial gain, political power, elimination of competition, and avoiding criminal punishment. Some are even imaginary, fabricated by police to justify their activity. Bloom discusses each type of informer, grounding his commentary in real cases, some well known, others obscure. He then concludes by suggesting how potential and real abuses of the informant system can be curbed.

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