

Toward a New Vision of Informants: A History of Abuses and Suggestions for Reform

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The relations between the government and its informers are of extreme delicacy. Not to profit by timely information were a crime; but to retain in government pay and to reward spies and informers, who consort with conspirators as their sworn accomplices and encourage while they betray them in their crimes, is a practice for which no plea can be offered. No government, indeed, can be supposed to have expressly instructed its spies to instigate the perpetration of crime; but to be unsuspected, every spy must be zealous in the cause which he pretends to have espoused; and his zeal in a criminal enterprise is a direct encour-