

This kind of conservative myopia is different from straight hypocrisy, which is more common. There's pork-based hypocrisy such as Phil Gramm's unflagging support for big Texas projects like the supercollider, which he favors while, with a straight face, arguing for "less government and more freedom." And there's politically expedient hypocrisy, like Al D'Amato's support for gays in the military, a position that—call me nutty—may have more to do with New York's politics than with the junior senator's personal empathy for homosexuals. No, the Domenici-DeWine fallacy is born of personal experience, and so is at once more understandable and more frustrating. It's understandable because every parent wants to help his or her child; it's frustrating because one would hope that a personal tragedy would at least lead to a wider sense of empathy. Wouldn't it be better if Domenici worked as tirelessly for universal health care as he does against mental illness? Wouldn't it be better if DeWine expanded his commendable concern for auto safety and became the pre-eminent fighter for workplace safety and a much tougher OSHA? And wouldn't it be better if Dole, who runs for president trumpeting his war wounds, did more for society's other underdogs? •

Corporate snooping 101.

CANDID CAMERA

By Mark Frankel

I used to think professional snoops were all variations on Harry Caul, the paranoid, guilt-ridden wiretapper of Francis Ford Coppola's *The Conversation*. But W.T. "Ted" Sandin clearly loves his work. With the infectious enthusiasm of a high-school camera club faculty adviser, the middle-aged Sandin runs Video Systems Inc., one of the country's leading manufacturers and distributors of covert video surveillance hardware. At Surveillance Expo '95, which brought several hundred private investigators and corporate security specialists (plus a smattering of Armani-clad Middle Eastern and Latin American gentlemen too discreet to expose their affiliations) to the McLean Hilton in Virginia last summer, Sandin was among the top draws. About three dozen conferees paid \$100 each to attend his seminar on how to spy on other people in the electronic age.

He did not disappoint. Reminding his scribbling pupils that "surveillance means only extension of the eye," Sandin spent four hours demonstrating a collection of eye-popping miniature video cameras, each seemingly tinier than the last. The smallest was a black-and-white TV camera barely larger than a piece of

Bazooka bubble gum. Attached to a tiny transmitter powered by a common 9-volt battery, such minicams can be hidden almost anywhere in a typical office or factory, Sandin explained. Light switches, exit signs or room thermostats are just a few of the possibilities for camouflage. "Be creative," he exhorted us.

In the name of personal security, Americans have already learned to accept and ignore video cameras in the public spaces they routinely pass through: parking lots, elevators, bank lobbies and hotel stairways. (According to STAT resources, a Massachusetts research firm, an estimated \$2.1 billion will be spent on closed-circuit video gear this year alone.) Now they may have to learn to accept them in the workplace as well. Propelled by concerns with worker productivity, industrial espionage, personal security, drugs on the job and skyrocketing insurance liability, corporate America is increasingly resorting to secret monitoring of its employees. An August 1994 report by the Geneva-based International Labor Organization concluded that "Monitoring and surveillance techniques available as a result of advances in technology make methods of control more pervasive than ever before and raise serious questions of human rights."

Consider a few recent cases. In Phoenix, Arizona, Freddy Craig, a longtime elementary school principal, stumbled upon a video camera hidden in the ceiling of his suburban school office—as well as one secreted in the school shower he often used after jogging. The cameras had been installed by the newly hired school district superintendent, who claimed that Craig was under investigation for unspecified "misconduct" with his students' parents. The charges proved groundless.

In Elmira, New York, a former McDonald's restaurant manager went to court seeking \$2 million from the burger chain, as well as the local franchise, for invasion of privacy. In addition to overseeing the deep fryer and griddle, the plaintiff, Michael Huffcut, had been conducting an extramarital affair with another McDonald's employee. Huffcut's suit charged that not only did his former restaurant supervisor obtain copies of the romantic messages the illicit lovers left for each other on their office voice mail, he also played the recordings for Huffcut's wife.

Several years ago, the Boston Sheraton Hotel installed a hidden camera in the employees' locker room in what management claimed was an effort to crack a drug ring—and what lawyers for the hotel workers describe as a heavy-handed attempt to discourage union activity.

The threat is not limited to videocams and voice mail. Service industries place millions of workers in front of computer terminals where their performance is easily monitored by remote. Desktop computers, fax machines, pagers, computer networks, cellular phones and e-mail have become as ubiquitous as styrofoam coffee cups in most offices. While employees have been introduced to these contraptions with soothing talk about "personal passwords" and "private files," workers' privacy

is easily shredded. In one of the few surveys of corporate electronic privacy policies, conducted by *MacWorld* magazine in 1993, of 301 U.S. companies polled, more than one in five had searched their employees' computer files, voice mail, e-mail or other digital network communications. "Users naturally assume that, because they have private passwords, only they can enter their e-mail and private files, . . . but even the most insignificant network managers can override passwords and enter files," says Charles Pillar, who conducted the survey.

While researching this article, I struck up an e-mail correspondence with a New York-based high-tech surveillance specialist who told me about his work:

For a cellular phone interception system, I charge \$2,500 to \$4,000. This allows the employer to monitor all employees' cellular phone conversations or simply to keep a log of the times and length of calls and any numbers called, etc. It is not actually necessary to listen in on the conversations; they can be logged into a computer. The employer can thus see who has been using these phones for personal use to make \$2-a-minute personal calls to the kids. . . .

I've been called to do phone interception work a lot, especially with telemarketer and service representative type workers where the boss monitors the line to make sure that the employees don't have a nasty tone with the customers. . . .

For computer modem interception, I usually charge \$3,000. It allows an employer to passively monitor a particular telephone line and intercept the modem data that's going through [it]. The employer can, in effect, see everything that the employee types into his computer and that appears on his screen.

Most American workers assume that their privacy on the job is ensured by constitutional safeguards. Unfortunately, they are wrong. While the Fourth Amendment protects citizens against unreasonable search and seizure by the state, it does not touch private employers, who are free to run their businesses—and spy on their employees—as they please. Current federal privacy laws are case studies in half-measures. While the 1986 Electronic Communications Act prohibits eavesdropping on telephones without a warrant or permission, it provides a loophole that permits companies to monitor employees' calls "for business purposes." And, while privacy laws vary widely from state to state, cutting-edge gizmos such as mini-video cameras are so new they slip between existing wiretap statutes and labor regulations.

Privacy advocates, labor unions and groups such as 9 to 5, the working women's lobby, have long sought national standards that would regulate workplace surveillance. In the last Congress, Senator Paul Simon and Representative Pat Williams introduced such legislation, the Privacy for Consumers and Workers Act. But the U.S. Chamber of Commerce and the National Association of Manufacturers (NAM) opposed the bill fiercely, and it died in committee. Privacy advocates have all but given up on trying to pass a meaningful piece of legislation this session.

Until Congress puts on the brakes, video cameras and other means of workplace surveillance will only get

cooler, and more insidious. Back at the Surveillance Expo, Ted Sandin proudly demonstrated the latest thing: body video. Wearing a tiny camera hidden in a pair of plastic sunglasses, he strutted about the stage. In the audience, we watched, mesmerized, as an image of ourselves jiggled on a nearby video monitor. Sandin promised that as marvelous as this micro-gadgetry seemed, even niftier stuff was coming down the pike. After all, he reminded us, "this is a consumer-driven marketplace."

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NORTH CAROLINA POSTCARD

EYES ON THE PRIZE

By Robert Lammé

While most of her fellow volunteers are handing out leaflets at the annual Ham and Yam Festival in Smithfield on this sunny April afternoon, 79-year-old retired secretary Mary Lou Ellis is stuffing envelopes in a windowless campaign office. It's a few weeks before the May 7 North Carolina primary, and Ellis, a big woman in an ankle-length floral print muumuu and sandals, is in the midst of a twenty-hour week working for retired Glaxo Pharmaceutical exec and Democratic Senate hopeful Charlie Sanders. She stops sealing envelopes just long enough to explain why she's supporting Sanders instead of former Charlotte Mayor Harvey Gantt for the dubious honor of taking on Jesse Helms this fall. A little impatient, Ellis says the answer is obvious: "I like Mr. Gantt but I think Mr. Sanders has a better chance against Jesse. Gantt lost last time, you know."

Too bad North Carolina Democrats aren't taking Mary Lou Ellis's political advice. Their sentiments, however, are easy enough to understand. After all, what's not to love about a black MIT-educated architect who won two terms as mayor in the Republican stronghold of Charlotte, the state's biggest city? Gantt further endeared himself to his party in 1990 when he raised close to \$8 million from glamorous liberals like Paul Newman and Barbra Streisand as well as the usual gang of labor unions, teachers, trial lawyers and gay activists who love the idea of replacing Helms with the first Southern black elected to the U.S. Senate since Reconstruction.

Despite the \$17 million Helms threw at him, Gantt actually led with about ten days left in the race. Then Helms unleashed the notorious "hands ad." It showed a pair of white hands slowly crumpling a rejection letter while the narrator intoned, "You need that job. And you