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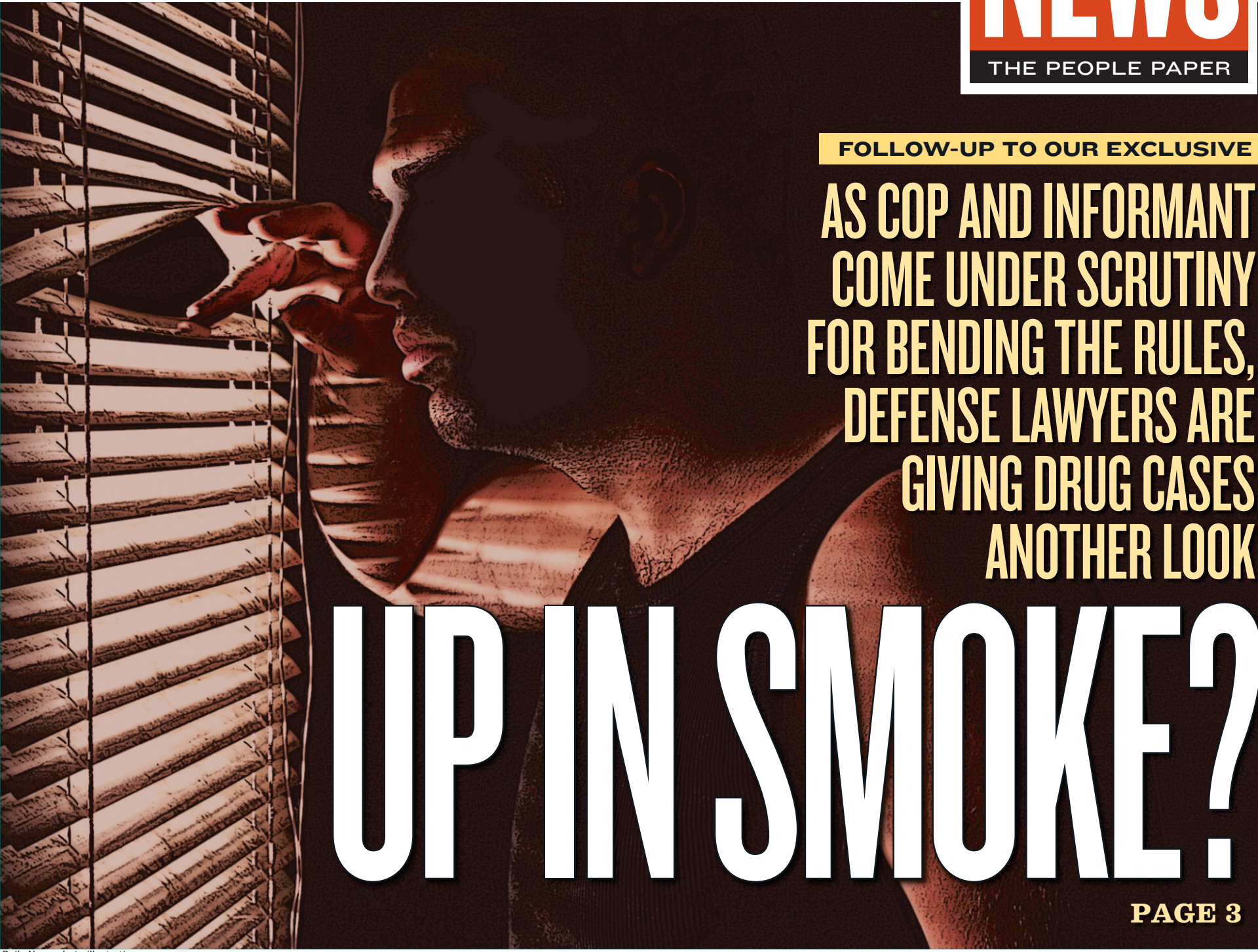


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PHILADELPHIA
DAILY NEWS
THE PEOPLE PAPER



FOLLOW-UP TO OUR EXCLUSIVE

**AS COP AND INFORMANT
COME UNDER SCRUTINY
FOR BENDING THE RULES,
DEFENSE LAWYERS ARE
GIVING DRUG CASES
ANOTHER LOOK**

UP IN SMOKE?

PAGE 3

Daily News photo illustration

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After DN report, hard look at arrests

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Philadelphia's public defenders yesterday began to scrutinize scores of drug cases in response to a *Daily News* investigation into allegations that a veteran narcotics cop and his informant fabricated evidence so that police could obtain warrants to enter homes and make arrests.

Dozens of criminal cases are at stake. Those pending could be dismissed, while closed cases could be overturned, legal experts say.

"It seems that dozens of people are improperly sitting in jail, based on fraudulent police testimony and false search warrants,"

said Bradley S. Bridge, an attorney with the Defender Association of Philadelphia. "Those cases need to be reopened immediately."

The *Daily News* story, published yesterday, detailed the relationship between Officer Jeffrey Cujdik and his informant of seven years,

Ventura Martinez.

Martinez alleged that in at least 24 cases Cujdik instructed him to buy drugs elsewhere after he was unable to buy from the targeted house. Then Cujdik allegedly lied in the subsequent search-warrant application, saying that the

drugs had come from the house.

The story prompted other reactions, including:

► The District Attorney's Office launched an investigation into Martinez's claims, according to spokeswoman Cathie Abookire, who declined to discuss the investigation.

► Police Commissioner Charles Ramsey said that the department will examine every case involving Martinez and interview him at length. The allegations are being investigated "very aggressively," Ramsey said.

► Police Inspector Bob Snyder, who heads the narcotics field unit, said that he feared that the allegations, if true, could free dozens of drug dealers.

"Unfortunately this casts a black cloud over the entire unit," Snyder said. "It erodes public trust, and that's something we try to build."

► Civil-rights attorneys and police watchdogs called on Ramsey to re-examine police training, supervision, discipline and the use of informants to ensure that departmental regulations prevent corruption.

"There's an enormous potential of corruption in narcotics investigations," said David Rudovsky, a prominent civil-rights lawyer in Philadelphia. "You need a department that vigorously examines the relationships between informants and officers."

The Police Department pays confidential informants to make

drug buys or to provide information that leads to gun and drug arrests.

Martinez alleges that he paid Cujdik at least \$20,000 in rent, money that he earned from being an informant. Cujdik leased a three-bedroom house in Kensington to Martinez and his family between September 2005 and Jan. 30 of this year, in violation of a police rule requiring officers to keep an arms-length relationship with informants.

Last month, the FBI and police Internal Affairs began to investigate Martinez's allegations. Cujdik was placed on desk duty and his police-issued gun was taken from him.

Cujdik's attorney, George Bochetto, has said that the allegations are fiction — based on the word of "professional liars, felons, and drug addicts."

Bridge, of the Defenders Associ-

See **ARRESTS** Page 26

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In 1895, William Edward Burghardt Du Bois became the first African American to earn a Ph.D. from Harvard University. At the time, he was 27 years old and already had two bachelor's degrees. He had also studied in Germany and traveled across Europe.

Yet Du Bois came from a poor family and struggled from an early age to help his mother financially. Hard work and scholarship money helped him pursue his education.

Although Du Bois taught at several universities, including the University of Pennsylvania, his life's work was the struggle against racial discrimination. He helped found the Niagara Movement and the NAACP. He wrote thousands of articles and more than 20 books in his long career to draw attention to the African American quest for full citizenship. In a 1903 publication he posed the question that inspired the America I AM exhibition, "Would America have been America without her Negro people?" He also helped create several international Pan-African conferences, where he shared his vision of peoples of African descent working together for economic and social justice.

AFRICAN AMERICAN IMPRINTS IN THE NEWS

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What is W.E.B. Du Bois' imprint on America?

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ARRESTS

Continued from Page 3

ation, said that he hopes to work with the FBI, the Police Department and District Attorney's Office "to try to get to the bottom of this outrageous police behavior."

"So far, we've examined dozens of cases which raise serious questions about what Officer Jeffrey Cujdik did," Bridge said. "Obviously, more investigation will be needed. . . . It is in all of our interests to get to the bottom of this abuse."

Martinez's allegations are reminiscent of those lodged in the so-called "39th District scandal," in which six cops landed in prison for illegally searching and arresting dozens of suspected drug dealers in the late 1980s and early '90s.

That scandal led to a 2002 report that examined police enforcement of drug laws and made recommendations for preventing systemic abuse.

The report, written by Ellen

Green-Ceisler, then director of the Police Integrity and Accountability Office, concluded that narcotics officers and supervisors should be regularly rotated. Green-Ceisler, now a judge, found that police departments across the country require such rotations to keep officers honest. Her recommendation, however, was never adopted.

Ramsey said that he likes the idea, but that the police contract doesn't allow him to systematically rotate narcotics officers.

Defense attorney Troy Wilson said that Martinez's claims, if proved in criminal court, could spark a more far-reaching probe.

"The argument could be made that if Cujdik and Martinez conspired to lie, then there is nothing to say that Cujdik and some other [confidential informant] didn't conspire to do the same thing," said Wilson, former chair of the criminal-justice section of the Philadelphia Bar Association.

"It could open up a whole nasty can of worms," Wilson said. ★

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