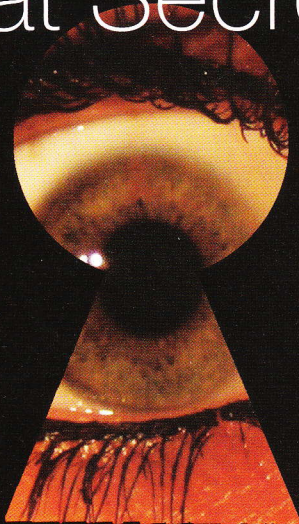


Secrets?

What Secrets?



Recently, eighty-one kilos of cocaine arrived in Rotterdam from Venezuela, courtesy of eight men who attempted to smuggle it into the country hidden in a diesel motor and water pump. The Netherlands continues to be one of the main countries through which drugs are smuggled and it leaves one to wonder how tempting it might be for criminal gangs to attempt to corrupt officials here.

So how does the Netherlands manage to keep its public servants so loyal and law abiding...with the work of the Rijksrecherche (National Police Internal Investigations Department) of course! Yet what do we know about the organisation that strikes fear into the hearts of civil servants across Holland, and which works so hard to convince the country that there is nothing secret about it?

Probably not much because, as their website is quick to explain, their investigations into violations by public servants of the integrity of public administration is usually of a highly sensitive nature, meaning that the majority of its information remains off-limits to the public. Since the Rijksrecherche is unique within Europe there are no other examples against which to assess their approach, so allowing this exclusiveness to flourish.

So is the Rijksrecherche to be viewed as an attempt by the Netherlands to put more controls into a country that is traditionally thought of as being quite liberal? Or is it a forward thinking attempt to keep the police, politicians, civil servants and judges honest? What is more of a mystery is how truly difficult and wide ranging their job really is. ■