

# NFL SECURITY DEPARTMENT NOT BUILT TO WATCH PLAYERS

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In this Jan. 29, 2014, file photo, Jeffery Miller, NFL vice president of security, appears during a security news conference for Super Bowl XLVIII in New York. The league's internal security apparatus would be the envy of many American police departments, run by highly decorated former law enforcement executives and staffed by former stars from the FBI and state agencies. Before joining the NFL, Miller was Pennsylvania State Police Commissioner. (AP Photo/Matt Slocum, File)

NEW YORK (AP) — NEW YORK — The National Football League's internal security apparatus would be the envy of many American police departments.

Run by a former commissioner of the Pennsylvania State Police, its staff includes former agents from the upper echelons of the FBI. The league employs a network of private security contractors. The NFL reported spending \$2.3 million on "investigator fees" in its last annual filing with the IRS.

Yet for all that muscle, the league has insisted for weeks that it was unable to obtain security camera footage showing Baltimore Ravens running back Ray Rice punching his then-fiancee in an elevator at a New Jersey casino.

That could be because the NFL's security team isn't really set up to investigate players accused of crimes.

Ed Reynolds, who played with the Patriots and the Giants before becoming an executive in the league's security office, said a bigger part of the operation involves educating players about the perils of being public figures, conducting background checks, and keeping team personnel from falling victim to grifters, shady investment advisers or identity thieves.

"Typically, there are a large number of scams," said Reynolds, who left his NFL job in 2008. "Ponzi schemes were big."

NFL security is now under scrutiny because a law enforcement official told The Associated Press he mailed a copy of the Rice video in April to Jeffrey Miller, the NFL's chief security officer.

NFL Commissioner Roger Goodell has said repeatedly that no one at the league saw the recording until TMZ posted it this month. Miller denied receiving it. The league has hired former FBI director Robert Mueller to investigate.

Mueller's probe is likely to focus on an NFL security operation that has long walked a fine line between keeping players safe and gathering information about their misdeeds.

Miller has led the department since 2011. He joined the NFL after leading the Pennsylvania State Police from 2003 to 2008. His most high-profile job at the NFL has been overseeing the league's investigation into allegations that New Orleans Saints players were paid bounties for big hits on opposing players.

The NFL's director of security services, Lenny Bandy, was a lieutenant colonel in the same Pennsylvania police force. The league's director of investigations, John Raucchi, was the FBI's attaché to the U.S. Embassy in London during the 2012 Olympics. Another FBI veteran, Raymond DiNunzio, is the league's director of strategic security programs. He was an FBI section chief in a counterterrorism unit before becoming a top deputy for the Special Inspector General for Afghanistan Reconstruction.



In addition to the central staff, the league employs a network of private eyes — also mostly retired law enforcement agents — assigned to each team.

NFL franchises also hire their own security personnel who are responsible for the day-to-day protection of stadiums, players and fans. These operations, also typically led by former police or federal agents, report to the team owners, not to the league, although there is often collaboration.

The security department helps players perform background checks on people they are thinking about doing business with. NFL security representatives find themselves investigating impostors who pose as players and run up restaurant and bar bills in their names. Team security officials throughout the league have been known to send representatives to nightclubs known to be frequented by players, to make sure they aren't getting into trouble.

League and team security officials, however, are no police force.

Between 2006 and 2008, when he was playing for the Denver Broncos, Bears receiver Brandon Marshall had a series of domestic disturbances with then-girlfriend Rasheedah Watley, who accused him of physical abuse.

Watley's father, Clarence Watley, told the AP he had numerous conversations at the time with the Broncos' security director about Marshall's behavior. Watley said he found him to be sympathetic, but those talks didn't lead to any punishment for Marshall.

Watley said he finally complained to the commissioner's office, but was never contacted by a league investigator. The NFL did ultimately suspend Marshall for one game after an assault charge. Marshall was later acquitted and denies physically abusing Rasheedah Watley.

Reynolds said the security department's No. 1 job is to "protect the integrity of the game."

When players did get into legal trouble, Reynolds said, the security staff would typically reach out to police departments and prosecutors and gather basic information. But he said that the league would not independently interview witnesses or alleged victims, in part because of fears about interfering with an official police investigation.

"Those are law enforcement matters, best left to law enforcement," he said.

Goodell has said that the league's current practices for investigating player arrests may need to be overhauled.

"We gather almost entirely all of our information through law enforcement. And that's something else we're going to look at . . . is that the right process?" he told reporters a week ago. "We have to be very cautious in not interfering with a criminal investigation, but we'll evaluate that. Should we do more to get that information?"

Ross Garber, an attorney who has supervised corporate internal probes for the law firm Shipman and Goodwin, said there is no law preventing the NFL from mounting its own investigation into worker's misdeeds while a separate criminal investigation is underway. Private companies do it all the time.

But it must be done carefully, he said.

"One of the things you always want to avoid is any allegation of witness tampering. If there is an ongoing investigation, and there are individuals who know about the facts . . . investigators can talk to those people, but have to be very careful about how they do it," he said.

Corporate security personnel, he said, also have to make sure they aren't violating criminal laws to gather information, like accessing private computers without permission or paying for information or evidence.

"You also have to make sure that doing things that are not distasteful, even if they are legal," he said.

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