

For LA informant

Double agent role backfires

First of a two-part series.

By JERRY COHEN
(C) 1971, The Los Angeles Times

LOS ANGELES — Ever since he was a runty kid, his cunning and cool have allowed Louis Tackwood to connive and survive in the hostile world on the streets of Los Angeles.

...Until now.
Now, at the age of 28, he is caught in a web of his own intricate contrivance, and for the first time, it looks like there is no way out for Louis Tackwood.

A criminal by choice and a police informer because of his fascination with plot and counterplot, as well as for obviously practical reasons, Louis has lived by his own rules.

To justify them, he developed a philosophy that is part ghetto-shaped, part the product of his native foxiness:

"Crimes are a part of the game. I've always liked intrigue. It's like chess (which he claims to play well) — you have to be a master at it.

"A man lives more than one type of life. You're two different people with two different conflicts of interest. You can't let one take possession of the other."

But the games have closed in on Louis. The two different people he claims to be are at war with one another, and conflict has taken possession of him.

During the last three weeks, he has told wildly

'Crimes are part of the game. I've always liked intrigue. It's like chess--you have to be a master at it.'

conflicting stories which could have vast repercussions not only for law enforcement and the militant left but even for America itself.

That is, if any of what he said is true or even partly true.

He claims two of the Los Angeles Police Department's elite units, the Criminal Conspiracy Section (CCS) and the Special Investigations Section (SIS) — are guilty of dirty, even murderous doing against militants, both black and white.

Among his allegations in that respect are these:
—That CCS had prior knowledge of both last year's Marin County Courthouse shootout in Northern California and George Jackson's fatal escape attempt from California's San Quentin Prison — and allowed both to proceed despite a certainty that lives would be lost.

—That SIS funneled money and arms through him to Ron Karenga, then head of the US Organization, with the understanding that the weapons were to be used to kill Black Panthers.

—That Tackwood, upon SIS officers' instructions, made the controversial anonymous phone call Aug. 18, 1965, informing Los Angeles police that guns were stashed at the Black Muslim Mosque here. During the raid that followed no weapons were found at the mosque.

—That Melvin (Cotton) Smith, principal witness in the current trial of 13 Black Panthers here, was a police informer and agent provocateur long before the Dec. 8, 1968, raid on Panther Headquarters which led to the arrest of the defendants. Officers contend Smith turned state's evidence only after the raid.

—That CCS and the FBI had organized a special squad, "Squad 19," to provoke violence at the 1972 Republican National Convention in San Diego, Calif., which could be blamed on leftists. The object: "to create a situation which would permit the President to invoke special emergency powers leading to the arrest and detention of political activists throughout the country."

—That CCS had sent him to the San Francisco bay area to work undercover for the FBI and the California Bureau of Criminal Identification and Intelligence (CII). The object: To spy on militants there and to infiltrate the "Black Caucus," two of whose members were elected last April to the Berkeley, Calif., City Council.

—That because of his long service as an informer and agent provocateur, dating back to 1962, the Los Angeles Police Department granted him "a license to steal."

When Tackwood disappeared in mid-September after making these and other allegations to a band of young student activists, the latter fired off letters containing the charges to Los Angeles Dist. Atty. Joseph Busch, California Atty. Gen. Evelle Younger and U.S. Atty. Gen. John Mitchell.

They demanded an investigation, and claimed "We believe his police superiors have found it

necessary to conspire in the kidnapping or worse of Mr. Tackwood."

They also approached representatives of the Los Angeles Times, the Washington Post and Newsweek Magazine, which jointly began investigating Tackwood's disappearance and the allegations.

Spokesmen for those who approached the media were Mike McCarthy, 28; Robert Duggan, 32, and Marilyn Katz, 26. All admitted their leftist leanings.

They claimed to have gotten in touch with newsmen to prevent a "cover-up" of Tackwood's disappearance and his allegations.

There are two versions of how Tackwood met the trio about three months ago.

The one offered most consistently by Tackwood is this: He went to the Los Angeles Free Press, where McCarthy then was a staff writer, looking for work. When McCarthy learned he was an informer, he put him in touch with Duggan and Ms. Katz who he knew to be writing a book about police informers. Tackwood contends, by this account, that he did not know the political persuasion of his new friends at the time.

The other version is that he learned through the grapevine of McCarthy, who served seven years in California prisons where he earned a reputation as a political activist. By this account, Tackwood was disenchanted with his work for the police and was looking for someone who would be interested in what he knew about police intelligence operations.

Duggan, McCarthy and Ms. Katz taped more than eight hours of interviews with Tackwood, detailing his allegations.

During this collaboration, he established his credibility as an informer by, among other things, producing information he claimed to have obtained from secret CCS files from Los Angeles Police Headquarters.

He said then— and continues to insist even today—that he was such a trusted informer, "Like one of the family," that he had "easy access" to CCS confidential information.

He even obtained, he would later tell newsmen, CCS files on Duggan, Ms. Katz and their associates, plus names of informers and CCS officers spying on them.

Once, he claimed, he called from a telephone from inside CCS Headquarters itself to warn Duggan and Ms. Katz their apartment here was the subject of a stakeout and agents were going to arrest Duggan, who was planning to drive to the airport for a trip out of town.

Meanwhile, Tackwood was acting as a double agent, feeding police worrisome information about Duggan and Ms. Katz. Much of it, he claims, amounted to phony advisories suggested by the pair to ensnare police in "a conspiracy."

He said CCS officers sometime in September put a phone in the rented home where he was living with his young wife Gwen, 18, and her mother, then told him to sign an authorization for a "tap".

Tackwood claims he believed the authorization covered only a device they gave him to record his conversations with Duggan. He said he avoided the

He was such a trusted informer. . . 'like one of the family.'

phone and talked over it with Duggan only once— about the so-called "San Diego Plan."

Upon discovering in mid-September the telephone had an extension which rang in a nearby Los Angeles Police Station, he said he became frightened and he and his wife "disappeared," moving in with friends.

He also would say that he "hid out" because he had come to fear Duggan, a karate expert, and Ms. Duggan.

Having been approached by the young leftists toward the end of Tackwood's three-week "disappearance," newsmen independently turned up a string of confirmations of what he had related on tape.

While unable to corroborate his more inflammatory allegations, they found he indeed had met with certain persons at certain places on the approximate dates he had given.

Among other claims, newsmen confirmed that he was indeed a longtime police informer—if not necessarily an informer on militant matters and an agent provocateur.

In a 1966 report, a probation officer wrote: "Los Angeles Police Department officers report that this defendant in the past worked for them as a reliable informant and had been extremely helpful to them in recovering stolen cars and the apprehension of a number of car thieves."

Court documents also showed that he had done suspiciously little "hard time" despite a long record of arrest and conviction, mostly for auto theft.

HEAD KILLY SKIS

LAST YEARS MODEL

was \$155 NOW \$99⁵⁰

11th & Mill
343-0013

BERG'S

NORDIC SKI SHOP

Open 10 - 9:00 p.m. Mon. - Sat.



For those

**SPORTS
MINDED**



INDIVIDUALS WHO WANT

THE BEST!

COME IN AND SEE THE ALL NEW
OPELS FOR '72

AVAILABLE NOW FOR IMMEDIATE DELIVERY

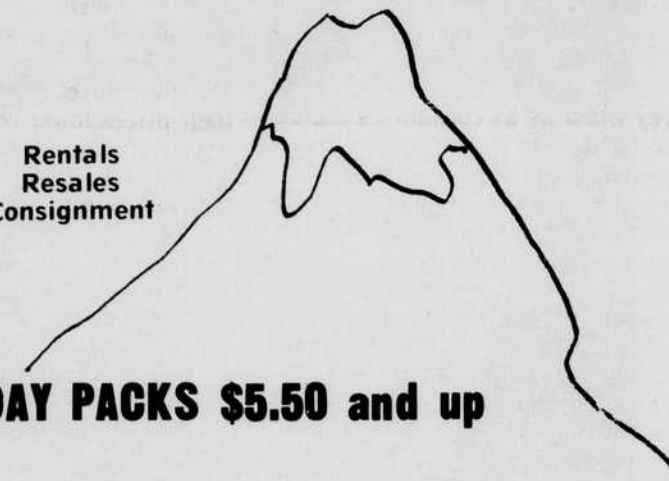
HULING BUICK

2200 W. 7th

EUGENE

GET HIGH ON A MOUNTAIN WITH THE OUTDOOR RESOURCE CENTER

Rentals
Resales
Consignment



DAY PACKS \$5.50 and up

Room 21 Erb Memorial Union Ext. 3089

**ASUO Cultural Forum &
Butterfly Productions Present:**

In Dance and Concert



**Delaney &
Bonnie
and
FRIENDS**

Also

Barry Melton & The Fish

Mac Court Saturday Oct. 23

Tickets---\$3.50 in adv. and at the door

Tickets available at the Craftsmen Center, Sun Shop EMU Main Desk, New Moon Imports, Sherwood forest, & Chrystalship

8-12 PM