FORREST RIEKE

DA HARL HAAS

ROD ADDICKS

FLOYD FORSBERG

Who killed James Turel?

Five years ago two men concocted a murder plan, one that would lead the authorities to the Black community on a wild goose chase while the real killers leisurely went their way. Today, one of the killers is in prison. The identity of the second is open to question.

Dennis Cartwright admitted his role in the killing and implicated Rod Addicks, partner of the murdered man. Addicks was convicted and is serving a life sentence. For the past year, Floyd Forsberg, bank robber and gangland killer, has claimed the murder to be his own.

Forrest "Joe" Rieke, who as a Multnomah County Deputy District Attorney prosecuted Addicks, states that he still believes Addicks is guilty. Besides Cartwright's testimony against Addicks, all of which he states was corroborated by other witnesses, Rieke believes Cartwright incapable of designing the murder plan. He considers Cartwright a pathetic man who became involved in the murder because of his friendship with Addicks. Only Addicks was intelligent enough to put together the murder plot.

Although Rieke admires Addicks' extraordinary intelligence and believes only he was capable of creating such an ingenious plan, he does not know Floyd Forsberg. He also does not realize that this plan fits Forsberg's mode of operation—learned as a member of organized crime and as an FBI informant.

Forsberg's story involves involvement in the Nevada mobs and the "Mexican Mafia"; service as an FBI informant; the Catlin murder, for which he is incarcerated; the Turel murder, for which Rod Addicks was convicted; civil rights suits against District Attorney Harl Haas and former Assistant DA Forrest "Joe" Rieke and Multnomah County corrections officials in connection with the Turel case; and now the Tolentino case.

Forsberg says he has been a criminal all his life, first going to reform school at the age of 15, and spending 14 of the last 15 years in prison. His role as an FBI informant began in 1966, when he was charged with a Portland bank robbery and a Washington burglary. In exchange for pleading guilty and providing evidence against others, he was promised a light sentence. After receiving a 25 year sentence, he says he was pressured into serving as an informer for the FBI by a promise of an early release. He did provide some information, but became disillusioned and angry when this resulted in cutting only six months off of his time.

In prison he met Curtis Michelson, "one of the best bank robbers in the country and as I was later to learn, one of the FBI's top informants." Prior to his release from McNeal Island he helped Michelson escape He and Michelson formed a gang to rob banks and kill public officials. The first hit was to be Judge Gus Solomon, who had sentenced both men. The plan was to kill Solomon and leave his body in his car in Albina with Black hair in it -- a plan Forsberg says came from the FBI's attempts to destroy Black groups.

"It was generally understood that we should use every opportunity to discredit Blacks, especially those involved in civil rights type causes. We were led to believe it was Director Hoover's orders to all regular agents and they passed it on to us operatives."

Forsberg's release date was near, but Michelson was only half through his 22 year sentence, so Forsberg arranged his escape from McNeal Island.

Forsberg says that as soon as he was released in March of 1974, he was again approached by the FBI and asked to help get Michelson. He claims that during that summer he was under surveillance, his phone was tapped, and he was threatened in various ways.

As the result of this harassment, Forsberg says, he agreed to help kill Portland businessman, James Turel. Dennis Cartwright, a long-time friend, had asked him to help kill Turel in return for $5,000. He was not interested, but when Cartwright told him Turel did income tax returns for many FBI agents and he might find the address of the agent that had been harassing him, he changed his mind. This was accomplished on August 28, 1974.

Working for the FBI

Following the Turel murder he was involved with Michelson in a $1.5 million bank robbery in Reno. Following the bank robbery the FBI harassment intensified and Forsberg finally agreed to provide information on Michelson, then fled to New York.

That summer Forsberg became involved with Fred Hopper, an attorney and former policeman, whom Forsberg claims was then involved in organized crime. He learned through Hopper's friends still in the FBI that his original robbery, the one he had been arrested for in 1966, had been set up by the FBI to make a "1930's type arrest to generate publicity for the FBI."

After Michelson was caught Forsberg returned to Portland but was arrested on his way to Ridgefield to retrieve money he had hidden there.

Incarcerated at the Cowlitz County jail in Kelso, Forsberg contemplated what Hopper had told him about how the FBI allows crimes to be committed and allows the criminals to go free in order to get the identities of other criminals—an effort to control criminals and radicals and neutralize them before they can unite. He had helped rob a bank and got seven years while the informant got 90 days. He heard Michelson had always been an FBI informant and knew he would get a light sentence in this case.

He contacted the FBI and offered to plead guilty; give evidence against those involved in the Reno bank robbery; provide information on Hopper and several of his men; and give information on the narcotics traffic in Mexico and Los Angeles. In exchange he asked to serve his sentence at Oregon State Penitentiary, where he could be near his wife.

He was then approached by the Organized Crime Task Force to help set up Hopper and agreed. He would be paid with years off his sentence for every gang leader he could implicate. He was sent to jail in Los Angeles and then to Reno. Finally he got tired of waiting, and hearing that Michelson would get out of the bank charge and he would be the fall guy, he allowed Hopper to arrange his escape.

The escape was set up by Hopper, and he was transported back to Oregon by Clark Timmons and Denise Catlin. Since he had given the FBI information on Hopper's contracts, after his escape the FBI began closing in on them and Hopper became suspicious.

The Catlin murder

Forsberg says that he and Timmons were ordered to kill Denise Catlin, a 20-year-old drug runner who had driven the escape car. He did not want to kill her because he didn't think it was necessary, but Hopper threatened to have his wife killed if he didn't. However, if he did go through with the killing of Ms. Catlin and two others, he and his wife would be sent to safety in South America.

"I didn't want to kill Denise. I had gotten to know her. She was young and excited about being a drug runner and didn't deserve to die. I wanted to give her some money and send her away." The murder was performed, but Forsberg and Timmons stopped to plan a bank robbery and were arrested for escape.

While held in Rocky Butte, Forsberg contacted his attorney and offered to tell all he knew as well as confessing to the Catlin murder. He was told that the U.S. Attorney in Las Vegas would not allow him to plead guilty to the bank robbery. He was returned to Reno along with Timmons . Charges against Timmons were dropped; Michelson got ten years to run concurrently with the sentence he was serving for escape; Forsberg got 30 years. Hopper got 25 years, reduced to 5.

Returned to Oregon, Forsberg led the authorities to the Catlin body and pleaded guilty. His only and pleaded guilty. The only consideration he asked was that Timmons be prosecuted. To this date, Timmons has never been indicted nor brought to trial.

Forsberg says this is because following Timmons' trail to the higher echelons of organized crime would reveal FBI involvement.

When he arrived at O.S.P., Forsberg was shocked to find Dennis Cartwright, who had pleaded guilty to the Turel murder and had implicated Turel's business partner, Rod Addicks. "I was surprised that Dennis had been caught, since so much time had passed, but I was even more surprised when he told me another man had been convicted on the murder I committed."

(Next week: The Turel murder)

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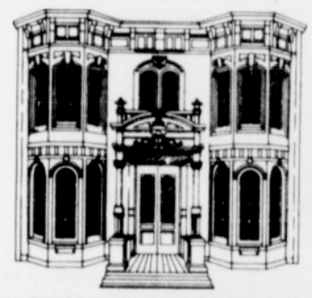

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