

Cinque Called Ex-Informer

By Paul Avery

Donald DeFreeze, the escaped convict who now calls himself Cinque, general field marshal of the Symbionese Liberation Army, was once a paid informer for the Los Angeles police department, according to sources. Police said yesterday, however, that that report is untrue.

Sources in Los Angeles said yesterday that DeFreeze became an informer in 1967 and that this relationship with police continued until late 1969 when he committed a bizarre crime for which he was sent to prison.

Later, Los Angeles Police Chief Edward Davis flatly denied there was any truth to such a report.

He conceded DeFreeze had once turned in a crime partner to Los Angeles police, and then added that DeFreeze proved himself to be a cheap, undependable, turn-over man, "and that the police department never accepted him as an informer."

The official statement seemed to conflict with information obtained by The Chronicle and an official allegation by the Citizens Research and Investigation Committee.

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and Investigator Committee.

The Southern California-based group of private investigators charged DeFreeze served as a "highly valued and protected" informer for the Criminal Conspiracy Section of the Intelligence Unit of the Los Angeles Police Department during that period.

The committee further alleged that DeFreeze continued serving as a "snitch" even after he entered the state prison system and the time at Vacaville and Soledad.

Donald Freed, spokesman for the committee, urged that the legislature order an independent investiga-

tion of how a person with DeFreeze's background as a police agent could come to join and lead the SLA.

Committee investigator Lyle Headley said he had questioned DeFreeze's role in a conversation last week with Los Angeles Police Sergeant G. Farwell. Farwell is assigned to the Intelligence Unit. Headley said Farwell was the detective to whom DeFreeze reported.

He quoted Farwell as having said he (Farwell) "cut" DeFreeze "loose" in 1969 when "I know he was dead as far as his (DeFreeze's) psychological state was concerned. I just couldn't deal with him."

Headley said Farwell expressed concern for De

Freeze's safety if it was revealed he had been an informer and said: "the guy (DeFreeze) is in trouble. He's in big trouble. One thing that would really put him down the tubes would be if anybody put out the word the guy was a big snitch."

Farwell reportedly told Headley that he knew DeFreeze "well."

The Chronicle had independently learned that Farwell was one of the Los Angeles detectives with whom DeFreeze "cooperated" in a 1967 case involving the burglary of some 240 rifles and pistols from a Torrance gun shop.

DeFreeze was arrested for the armed robbery of a Los Angeles prostitute and was found to have one of the stolen pistols in his possession.

DeFreeze then made a deal leading police to the home of his crime partner where the remainder of the weapons were found. DeFreeze — despite the recommendation of a state psychiatrist he be imprisoned — was given a five-year probation term.

Farwell was transferred to the Intelligence Unit and headed a "desk" investigating alleged black radical groups, and DeFreeze continued as one of his informers, the committee said.

Further participation of DeFreeze in his work with the Intelligence Unit came from Louis Tackwood, himself a longtime informer for the Los Angeles police. Two years ago he quit that role and publicly exposed some of the inner workings of the unit.

Tackwood said he knew DeFreeze when the informer — not yet a revolutionary — worked for the Intelligence Unit.

Although DeFreeze was arrested six times on charges involving possession

of the years — on several occasions when he was already on probation — DeFreeze managed to avoid being sent to prison.

Then, in 1969, he attempted to cash a stolen check — made out in a woman's name — at a Los Angeles bank. Police were called and DeFreeze fired at officers and was himself wounded. That crime resulted in his being sentenced to multiple terms in state prison.

Farwell, contacted by The Chronicle yesterday, declined to discuss the matter, saying he had been ordered not to talk by his "superiors."

The order that nothing about DeFreeze could be discussed was issued yesterday afternoon following the press conference held by the Citizens Research and Investigation Committee in San Francisco.

The committee charged that authorities had long known the background of DeFreeze and that if they revealed it at the outset, then the SLA would never have "gotten off the ground."

"No one would have supported his so-called cause, not even the craziest among the group now with him had a true picture of just who he was been made public," one committee member said. "Can you imagine any revolutionary doing the blinding of a snitch?"

The committee also questioned the apparent ease with which DeFreeze escaped from Soledad prison on May 5, 1973.

"How do you explain that they gave an inmate — one with a record of escape and a propensity for violent behavior — a job in a virtually deserted section of the prison, and that during the first hour of his first night on that job he was left unguarded, enabling him to simply walk away?"

"We feel a thorough investigation of DeFreeze and his creation of the SLA is demanded by facts such as these," said committee spokesman Freed.

Chief Davis labeled Freed's contentions "an absolute lie."

"Donald Freed was a

with his long slick that gets others in trouble while he sits on the sidelines," Davis said.

caused by the arrests of the SLA. Freed is the type of operator who stays out of danger himself, but incites others to violent revolutionary activity. He is against work

rest and prosecution in that city in 1969. Freed, as a revolutionary supporter, undoubtedly is disturbed by the setback in the revolutionary movement

founding father of the (Black) Panthers and helped incite that group in their violent revolutionary activities which resulted in their ar-