

Ex-cop indicted in 2 'hit squad'

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and Hugh Hough

A former Chicago police sergeant was arrested Wednesday after he was indicted by a federal grand jury on charges growing out of an investigation of murders by an alleged police "hit squad."

Named in the indictment, which was suppressed until his arrest, was former Sgt. Stanley B. Robinson, accused of depriving

citizens of their civil rights by means including "shooting and killing them." Robinson was arrested on the streets at 67th and King Drive.

He was linked with the deaths of Verdell Smith, 41, and Jeff Beard, 22.

Conviction under the federal civil rights statute carries a maximum penalty of life in prison.

The indictment is the first of several expected to be returned by a grand jury that

has been hearing evidence resulting from a months-long inquiry by Federal Bureau of Investigation agents.

In all, the murders of eight black men have been under investigation. Bodies of six of the victims were found in Chicago area waterways and those of the other two alongside expressways.

Informants reportedly told the FBI the alleged police-directed slayings grew out of a police shake-down racket.

2/22/73 slayings

Those expected to be government witnesses said some of the victims were involved in narcotics peddling and had refused to make protection payoffs to police. According to these accounts, the victims were silenced when they threatened to inform on the shake-down artists.

Several of the victims operated small businesses on the West Side.

At least three government witnesses have been protected by the FBI during its long and painstaking investigation.

Robinson became one of the city's most controversial policemen after he was identified last June as one of the "hit squad" suspects.

He was one of four Chicago policemen removed from active duty June 22 by Police Supt. James B. Conlisk Jr. so they could be questioned about the murders.

He disappeared mysteriously on June 26, just before he was to undergo further questioning.

On the day he disappeared, police received a telephone call indicating Robinson had been kidnaped. But police later said the voiceprints of the recorded call matched those of Robinson.

Robinson reappeared on Aug. 21 and said he wanted to clear his name. He charged police had threatened to use a truth serum during the earlier questioning. Police denied that charge.

He quit the department Sept. 7. An official misconduct charge, growing out of the "kidnaping" phone call, was later dismissed in Felony Court because there was insufficient evidence to put Robinson before a grand jury.