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Police Spy and Berkeley Politics

By Tim Findley

Berkeley City Councilman Ira T. Simmons confirmed yesterday that former police informer Louis Tackwood tried to infiltrate the Simmons-D'Army Bailey campaign earlier this year.

At one point in the campaign, Simmons said, Tackwood took him and Bailey aside, said he was an informer for the California Bureau of Criminal Identification and Intelligence, and showed them an electronic listening device strapped to his body.

Tackwood, Simmons said, tried to convince the two black city council candidates to fire one of their campaign workers because the worker was "about to be arrested and Tackwood didn't want us involved because he said we were good guys."

But when the candidates demanded proof of Tackwood's charges against the campaign worker, Simmons said, Tackwood stopped pressuring them and disappeared.

The campaign worker was never arrested, and the two

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council candidates did not tell him of the charges Tackwood made against him.

Tackwood's attempt at infiltration was never mentioned in the campaign, Simmons said, "because, frankly, we didn't take him seriously and he didn't hang around here that long."

CHARGES

Tackwood, who is a 28-year-old Negro, revealed himself as a police informer in Los Angeles last week and made some startling charges that the Los Angeles police operate an elaborate network to spy on radicals and had even set up violent incidents

to be blamed on left wing groups.

Independent investigation has established that Tackwood was a police informant for ten years, although some of his claims, including one that police planned to bomb the 1972 Republican National Convention and blame it on radicals, were in severe doubt.

The city councilman said Tackwood first showed up at the Simmons-Bailey campaign headquarters in February.

"He said he worked for the Bradley mayoral campaign in Los Angeles and knew all about organizing," Simmons recalled.

LITERATURE

Tackwood's only campaign work, however, amounted to one night of passing out literature during a handshaking tour of Berkeley taverns and community gathering spots by the two candidates.

"He was from out of town and didn't know the area and just didn't fit in the campaign," Simmons said.

Once, he button-holed the two candidates and "we went into this room in the headquarters that served as a kind of kitchen and Tackwood went over and turned on the water faucet," Simmons said.

"He pulled out this card and showed at to D'Army and said he was working for CII. Then he pulls out this device he had strapped to his body with wires wound all around him."

TRANSITTER

The device, known as a Fargo, is a transmitter which picks up conversations and sends them to a receiver



IRA SIMMONS



D'ARMY BAILEY

The informer tried to infiltrate their campaign

concealed elsewhere.

Simmons said he still did not believe Tackwood until Tackwood took the two candidates outside their headquarters and walked half a block away to where a beige sedan was parked with two conservatively dressed white men sitting in it.

"He said they were the two guys working with him," Simmons recalled.

"It's disturbing to think that the Los Angeles Police

Department can become a political police force with agents roaming up and down the state," Simmons said. "That's frightening to me and I think it ought to be frightening to everybody in California."

Simmons said state legislators and the United States Justice Department should demand an investigation of such intelligence networks and the source of their financing.