

(Mount Clipping in Space Below)

Stole Castro files Sturgis admits cloak-dagger role

By PAUL MESKIL
New York News

"I was a spy," Frank Sturgis admits.

"I was involved in assassination plots and conspiracies to overthrow several foreign governments, including Cuba, Panama, Guatemala, the Dominican Republic and Haiti.

"I smuggled arms and men into Cuba — for Castro and against Castro. I broke into the intelligence files of the Cuban Army and Air Force. I stole and photographed hundreds of secret documents.

"That's what spies do.

"I also broke into foreign consulates and business offices in Cuba, for the purpose of obtaining information, and into an import-export office in Caracas, Venezuela, that was a front for the KGB (Soviet Secret Service)."

Sturgis was a hired operative of the Central Intelligence Agency for at least a decade. Maybe he still is, though his cover was blown forever by the notoriety he received as a Watergate burglar. He constructed and controlled an espionage network in Cuba that is still functioning despite frantic efforts

by Castro security forces and the KGB to destroy it.

Sturgis was convicted with E. Howard Hunt for their part in the Watergate breakin.

Though he was only a bit player in the Watergate drama, Sturgis is a real life James Bond whose exploits rival those of any fictional spy. Interviewed at the office of his Miami lawyer, Ellis Rubin, and at other places in New York and Florida, he candidly revealed many details of his colorful career as a war hero, secrets-staller, gunrunner,

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Frank Sturgis . . .
real life James Bond

(Indicate page, name of newspaper, city and state.)

"The Dallas Times Herald"
Dallas, Texas

Page FRONT

Date: 4-21-75
Edition:
Author:
Editor: Kenneth P. Johnson
Title:

Character:
or
Classification:
Submitting Office: Dallas
 Being Investigated

Sturgis admits spy role

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guerrilla fighter and professional plotter.

Asked if he also had been an assassin, he politely changed the subject. Some things he will not talk about.

A stocky, iron-jawed man who looks much younger than his 50 years, he was born Frank Angelo Fiorini in Norfolk, Va. He joined the U.S. Marine Corps at the start of World War II and fought through the Pacific with the famed First Raider Battalion. After the war, he served in the Air Force, Army and Navy Reserve.

He had the perfect training for a secret agent. The Marine Corps taught him judo, knife-fighting and jungle warfare techniques. The Air Force taught him to fly a plane and the Navy Reserve trained him to handle small, fast ships.

The Army completed this education. During a hitch in Germany, he was assigned to a security unit that handled top-secret reports from Allied intelligence agents all over Europe. This was his introduction to the dark world of espionage and intrigue.

In Berlin during the chilliest part of the cold war, he met his first real spy. She was a beautiful actress who also was an agent of Haganah, the secret army formed to defend the new state of Israel.

When he returned to civilian life, Frank became a Haganah courier — perhaps the only Roman Catholic in this group. In the 1950s, he went to Miami to visit an uncle who had married a Cuban exile. Her family was close to Carlos Prio, the Cuban president who was ousted in 1952 by a military coup led by Fulgencio Batista. Frank met Prio and other wealthy Cubans whose Miami mansions were not beds of anti-Batista intrigue. Some of them supplied financial support for a fiery young rebel, Fidel Castro, who was then living in Mexico.

Prio asked Frank to "go to Cuba, join Castro's army and let me know what he's doing. Frank accepted the assignment. He flew to Havana and with the help of a Cuban priest, he quickly located Castro's camp in the Sierra Maestra Mountains and volunteered his services.

"Fidel remembered me," he said. "We could understand each other. I spoke Italian, which is similar to Spanish, and he spoke some English. I offered to help train his troops, but he said, 'Frank, what I need is guns.'"

So Frank became a gunrunner. With money supplied by the Castro underground in Florida, he purchased thousands of rifles and other weapons from International Armament Corp. (Interarmeo) of Alexandria, Va., the world's largest dealer in surplus arms. He then set up an elaborate land-sea-air smuggling network to get the guns and ammunition into Cuba.

After several months as a double agent, working for Prio and Castro, Frank became a triple agent. This time, he was recruited for the game of intelligence by a major league scout, Park F. Woolam, the State Department official then in charge of the U.S. Consulate in Santiago de Cuba.

"Later, when the revolution was over, I received orders to go to Havana. Woolam told me who to contact in the American Embassy there." His new contacts, Frank said, were CIA agents, one of whom was the embassy's military attache.

Castro immediately placed his most trusted officers in command of the Cuban military services. Major Pedro Diaz Lanz, a close friend of Frank's, became commander in chief of the Air Force and his brother, Marcos Diaz Lanz, became inspector general of that service.

Frank helped the Diaz Lanz brothers reorganize the air force and they make him their security and intelligence chief. He also became the officer in charge of inspecting and supervising all Cuban gambling casinos, which were owned and operated by American mobsters.