

Police Studying Arrest of Sturgis, Who Denies Threatening Accuser

By LAURIE JOHNSTON

A Police Department investigation was ordered yesterday into the arrest of Frank A. Sturgis, convicted Watergate burglar and former Central Intelligence Agency spy in Cuba, for alleged telephone threats to Ilone Marita Lorenz, whom Mr. Sturgis says he once recruited to kill Fidel Castro.

The 53-year-old former marine was arrested late Monday night at Miss Lorenz's apartment at 88th Street and York Avenue, on her complaint that he had threatened her after she reportedly gave testimony to the House Committee on Assassinations linking him in Dallas with Lee Harvey Oswald, the slayer of President John F. Kennedy. Mr. Sturgis is to appear at a hearing in Manhattan Criminal Court today on charges of attempted coercion and aggravated harassment.

Police Commissioner Michael J. Codd put First Deputy Commissioner James M. Taylor in charge of an inquiry into the arrest, which was made by Detectives Matthew Rosenthal and James Rothstein of the Intelligence Division.

A police official said there was some question of sufficient grounds since the detectives had not overheard the alleged threats by telephone. In such a case, it was said, the usual procedure would require either a witness or a complaint previously sworn in court by the accuser.

Sturgis Denies Threats

At a news conference yesterday at his lawyer's office, Mr. Sturgis denied that he had either threatened Miss Lorenz or had had anything to do with the assassination of President Kennedy. He said Miss Lorenz must have made the accusations against him because "she was being pressured by certain elements" that he later described only as "Communist."

Mr. Sturgis volunteered to take a polygraph test and his lawyer, Henry Rothblatt, said arrangements were being made.

Mr. Sturgis said he had telephoned Miss Lorenz from Miami last week because he "wanted to help her" and find out what was behind her reported testimony. She told him, he said, that she

was afraid to talk by phone and offered to meet him here, in Miami or "halfway between." When he told her he was "short of cash," Mr. Sturgis said, she prepaid his round-trip ticket from Miami.

Mr. Sturgis served a prison term for his part in the June 17, 1972, break-in at Democratic national headquarters. Earlier this year, he and three others involved in the burglary shared in a \$200,000 out-of-court settlement from Richard M. Nixon's 1972 campaign fund. They charged that they had been led to believe they were working for the C.I.A. or some other official agency.

Mr. Sturgis described for reporters the calls he had made to journalists and others Monday before reaching Miss Lorenz by telephone. One was to George Greenfield, who confirmed later that his New Line Presentations lecture bureau would begin bookings for Mr. Sturgis in January at \$1,250 to \$1,500 plus expenses. When asked by a television reporter whether he had been paid "more than \$500" for an interview with The New York Post, Mr. Sturgis deferred to Mr. Rothblatt, who said the figure should "remain confidential."

Three months before the President Kennedy's assassination in 1963, Miss Lorenz, then 26, was involved in a Miami paternity suit against Marcos Pérez Jiménez, Jimenez, aged 15, who lives with her here, following the birth of a daughter, Monica, the exiled former Venezuelan dictator, Sheldon Abend, a literary agent, said "a six-figure contract" for a movie about Miss Lorenz's life had been negotiated and awaited her signature and that "a book is in the works."

In seeking a "credible" collaborator for the autobiography, Mr. Abend said, he is negotiating with Jim Garrison, who investigated the Kennedy assassination when he was New Orleans District Attorney and wrote a novel, "The Star-Spangled Contract," and Gerald A. Browne, novelist, whose latest book is titled "Green Stuff."