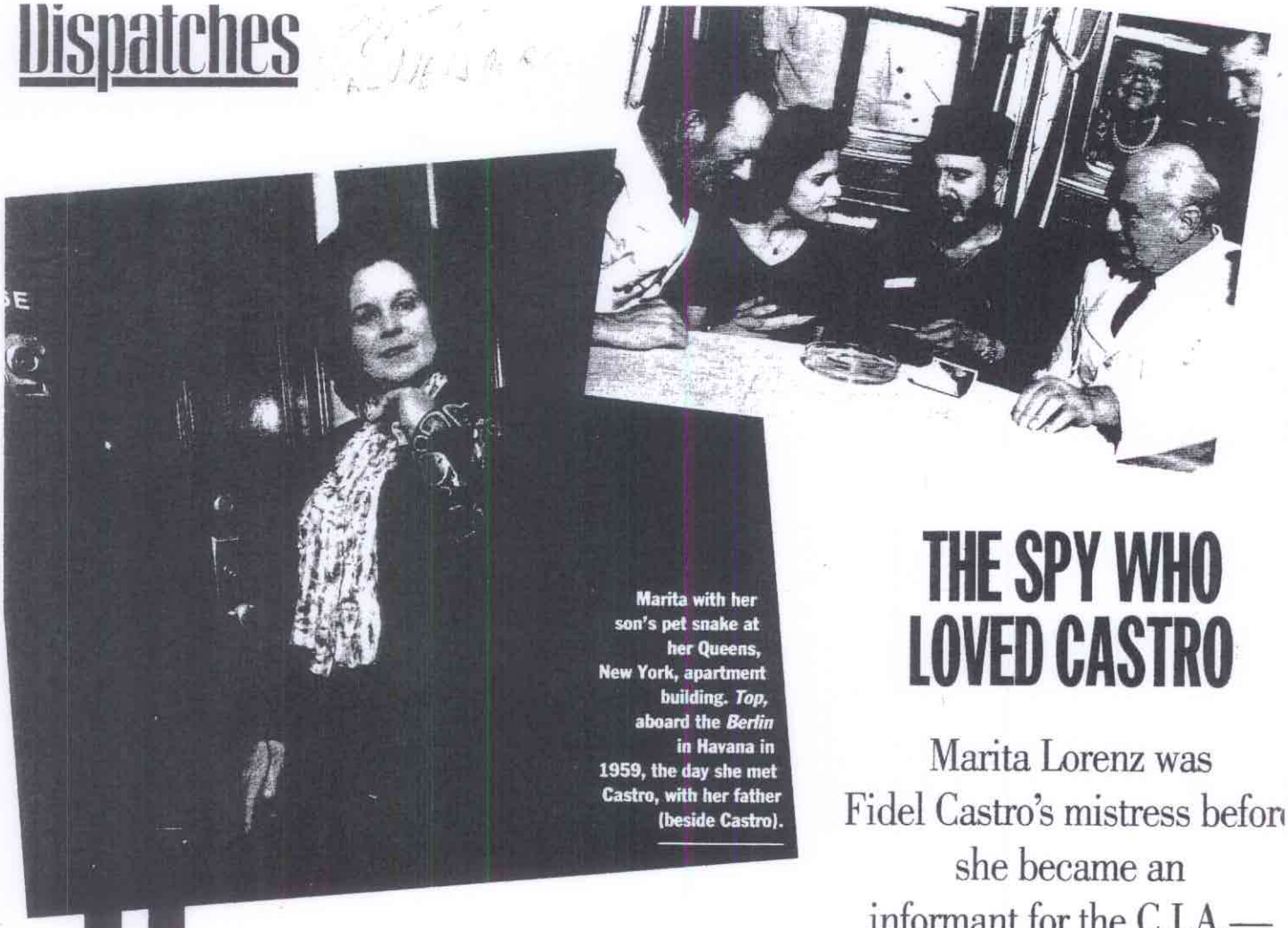

Marita with her son's pet snake at her Queens, New York, apartment building. *Top,* aboard the *Berlin* in Havana in 1959, the day she met Castro, with her father (beside Castro).

THE SPY WHO LOVED CASTRO

Marita Lorenz was Fidel Castro's mistress before she became an informant for the C.I.A.—and she claims to have borne him a son. She also says that 30 years ago this month she drove to Dallas with Lee Harvey Oswald

BY ANN LOUISE BARDACH

He explained, she said, "*We killed the President that day. You could have been a part of it—you know, part of history. You should have stayed.*"

—*FROM THE TESTIMONY OF MARITA LORENZ AT THE TRIAL OF* E. HOWARD HUNT *V.* LIBERTY LOBBY, *1985.*

A Queens mother is shedding tears because she can't wish her son happy birthday. The son, who just turned 33, is Fidel Castro's love child. His name is Andre Vasquez. Her name is Marita Lorenz.

—*CINDY ADAMS,* NEW YORK POST, *OCTOBER 23, 1992.*

I suppose I had been expecting to meet an aging, elegant beauty, a Mata Hari of sorts, her hair pulled off her face into a sleek chignon. Marita Lorenz has been, after all, the lover of two legendary Latin-American strongmen: Cuba's Fidel Castro and the Venezuelan generalissimo Marcos Pérez Jiménez, each of whom she claims fathered a child with her. Then there was the 25-year career as an informer for the C.I.A. and F.B.I., as well as the gunrunning, the black-bag jobs, at least three marriages, and another child with a small-time gangster. Even more chilling were the hushed stories that she holds the key to unraveling the Kennedy assassination. She herself calmly tells you she's been shot at, poisoned, firebombed, drugged, pistol-whipped, and dumped into the Amazon rain forest to die. If not an entirely glamorous life, it has certainly been one with all peaks and no valleys.

Indeed, the woman I met looked exhausted. At 54, Marita Lorenz is no longer a femme fatale. Now quite broad in the beam, she wears dark, sexless clothes, usually black jeans, a turtleneck, and a jeans jacket. Crowning this bulky frame is a wide circle of a face, painted the palest of skin tones, and a raven-dyed 50s bouffant hairdo. Also in the 50s motif are her nails—short and blunt but painted frosted pink, carrying a Parliament back and forth to her mouth. The only softness is in her eyes—doleful brown saucers under penciled eyebrows.

While Lorenz has long been a patron saint of conspiracy buffs, she is hardly a household name. Recently, however, her testimony was the centerpiece of Mark Lane's best-selling book on the Kennedy assassination, *Plausible Denial,* and her life story, *Marita,* co-authored by Ted Schwarz, is being published by Thunder's Mouth Press this month.

Over the years, at least 11 would-be biographers have been defeated by the messy sprawl of Lorenz's story. In interviews spanning more than a month, she agreed to tell it in its entirety, a saga that has the episodic, roller-coaster feel of a Spanish-language soap opera, but that also offers seemingly tidy resolutions to many of the questions voiced about the intelligence community throughout the 60s and 70s. With 76 percent of Americans

Portrait by JONATHAN BECKER

believing that "others were involved" in the killing of J.F.K., according to a 1991 Gallup poll, Marita Lorenz has a story the country wants to hear. However, while at least half of what she says is readily documented by the accounts of others and by F.B.I. memorandums, the other half lacks any corroboration, and at times even flies in the face of existing evidence.

In recent years, Lorenz has been living in a cramped studio apartment in Queens, New York. Although once a sleepy middle-class neighborhood, Jackson Heights has become the cocaine capital of the Northeast and the stomping grounds of Colombian drug cartels. None of this fazes Lorenz, who says she has long been used to dangerous Latins. In fact, she says, "it's the longest time I've ever lived in one place."

Nevertheless, one can't help but notice a pistol and a dagger on the dresser by her front door, not to mention her two hyperactive dogs, a pit-bull mix and a 15-year-old bichon frisé. Also on prominent display are a fishtank with one occupant—an orange piranha—a pet rat (caged), a guinea pig, a cat, and seven birds. The only homey touches are some books about spying and Cuban history, a few family photos, and several portraits of Castro.

Although fluent in three languages, Lorenz speaks street English, but it is the street talk of another time, like the speech in *On the Waterfront*. In fact, much of the time she dresses, walks, talks, drinks, and smokes like a longshoreman. At our first meeting, a noontime lunch, she knocks back a glass of straight vodka minutes after she sits down.

"I'm the mutt of my family," she declares. Her mother was a second cousin of Henry Cabot Lodge, and her older brother Joachim Lorenz, a Fulbright scholar and former State Department diplomat, worked for Senator Howard Baker. Her other brother, the late Philip Lorenz, was a concert pianist and a protégé of Claudio Arrau, and her sister, Valerie, holds a Ph.D. and works as a counselor in Maryland.

Espionage, however, was always a part of the family business. Her mother was a spy, and there is evidence that her father did some double-agenting. Lorenz's mother, Alice Lofland, started life as an actress and dancer on Broadway. En route to a movie location in France in the early 30s, she met and fell in love with Heinrich Lorenz, a wealthy German navy captain. Lorenz talked her into giving up her career and settling down with him in Bremen. The couple had four children, the last being Marita, who was born in August 1939. Two weeks later Germany invaded Poland, and Heinrich Lorenz became commander of a fleet of U-boats. Alice Lorenz was not allowed to leave Germany. Early in the war she rescued a French soldier and a British pilot, who recruited her into the French underground and British intelligence. In 1944 she was thrown into the Bergen-Belsen concentration camp, where she almost died. Meanwhile, her husband's ship had been captured, and he was interned in an English P.O.W. camp. Five-year-old Marita was sent to the horrific children's detention facility at Bergen-Belsen.

As her first assignment, Marita accepted nothing less than the assassination of Castro.

Liberated by the Allies, the shattered Lorenz family moved to Bremerhaven, where Alice went to work for U.S. Army intelligence and later the O.S.S., the forerunner of the C.I.A. Shortly after the family's reunion, seven-year-old Marita was raped by a deranged American soldier. Many close to Lorenz say that her childhood rape and the subsequent trial, in which she testified against the soldier, set in motion a lifelong pattern of violence and revenge in her relationships with men.

In 1950 the family moved to the States and eventually settled in Manhattan. While Heinrich Lorenz was a captain of luxury ocean liners, his wife slid into the American intelligence community, working alternately, it appears, with army intelligence and at the Pentagon. "I was never sure who my mother was working for," says Valerie Lorenz, "except I knew she worked in intelligence with high security clearance. She didn't confide in me, but she was very close with Marita." Valerie stresses that she couldn't be more different from her sister. "I was raising three children in Harrisburg, Pennsylvania, while Marita was off to God knows where."

With less than a ninth-grade education, Marita persuaded her parents to let her work on her father's cruise ships, and for several years she traveled around the Americas. On February 28, 1959, the *Berlin* dropped anchor in Havana harbor. "I was standing on the bridge," Lorenz remembers, "and in the distance I could see this launch coming toward us. It was filled with around 27 men, all with the same beard. One was taller than the others. He was standing on the bow, and he had a rifle. I said, 'Oh, shit, what is this? We're being invaded.' "

Her father was taking his afternoon nap, so Marita took command. "I screamed out to them in German. The tall one yelled out, 'I want to come aboard.' I asked who he was, and he started laughing and flashing a lot of teeth. '*Yo soy Cuba*,' he said. 'Comandante Fidel Castro.' "

Only two months earlier, Castro had seized the island from Batista. "I reminded him, 'This is German soil.' Fidel said, 'Yes, but you are in my harbor.' " A good-looking man pushed forward and introduced himself as Che Guevara. "I want a German beer," he said.

Marita, who had never even been on a date, says she was instantly mesmerized by Castro. "When Fidel talks to you," she says, "he talks to you very close. He looks right in your eye. We had drinks and sloppy joes. He immediately made me feel nervous. I had to kill two hours until my father woke up. I gave him a tour. Then I had to lose him, because I wanted to be more pretty."

Marita raced down to her cabin to primp, but she was soon interrupted by a knock on the door. It was the steward. "He was making a face," she says, "and Fidel was standing behind him. He was smoking one of those humongous cigars. My heart's beating a mile a minute. He just steps in and looks around and says, 'Do you have an ashtray?' "

The steward disappeared, and Fidel closed the door. "He stands in front of me, and he takes both my hands, and he is kissing me. And he said, 'From one comandante to another.' He kept saying, 'Don't you know who I am?' I said, 'No. Papa told me Batista is out and somebody else is in. I guess you are that somebody.' Nothing hit me as hard as this ever—like a ton of bricks. He didn't let me completely undress. He was the sweetest, tenderest. I guess nobody ever forgets their first lover."

They had dinner that night with Captain Lorenz, and at midnight the *Berlin* headed back to New York. Days later, Marita was in the family apartment on West 87th Street. "I was in love and miserable. I was stirring this Jell-O, and

the phone rings . . . and it's him." The following day, she says, Castro sent his private plane to New York.

"My sister was 19 going on 12," says Valerie Lorenz, "when she met Castro. This was the big love of her life." Joachim Lorenz recalls events differently, remembering a "lot of phone calls" from Havana, and he believes that Marita hooked up with Castro later, having flown down with one of his friends.

From the airport she was escorted to the Habana Libre hotel, formerly the Habana Hilton, where Castro occupied one whole floor. For the next seven months, she lived there with him. "He wasn't a Communist then," she says. "He never mentioned the word 'Communist.' That was later, and he always wore a Madonna-and-Child gold medal around his neck. Always." She met Castro's aide and longtime companion, Celia Sánchez, who died in 1980. "She didn't resent me. She was happier to have only one girl than to have him flying around," she says. Marita traveled through Cuba with Fidel, perfected her Spanish, and suffered through his flings with other girlfriends. "Every day letters came in from women all over the world," she says, "offering to do anything to meet him."

"Fidel said, 'Did you come here to kill me?' Just like that. I said, 'Yes. I wanted to see you.' "

In April 1959, Castro flew to the States, determined to meet President Eisenhower and reinforce Cuba's relationship with the American government. "It was an unofficial meeting," says Lorenz, who accompanied him. "Fidel invited himself, more or less. I said, 'Fidel, wear a suit. They're not gonna go for your uniform.' " The trip was a disaster. Eisenhower refused to meet him, dispatching his vice president, Richard Nixon, who had little patience with the bearded Cuban. "Nixon was quite rude with him," remembers Lorenz.

During Castro's U.S. trip, Lorenz says, she discovered she was pregnant, news Castro greeted enthusiastically, telling her, "Wonderful! A German-Cuban baby!" According to one account, the State Department was referring to Lorenz as "the First Lady of Cuba."

In May 1959, Lorenz met the man she has cast primarily as the villain in her life's melodrama. Frank Sturgis, formerly Frank Fiorini of Norfolk, Virginia, who would later make history as one of the Watergate burglars, spent the late 50s working in Havana. According to Lorenz, he did odd jobs for the mobster Meyer Lansky and the Batista crowd until 1957, when he hitched his wagon to Castro's star. Sturgis quickly won favor with the emerging new leader by putting his gunrunning talents at his disposal, then joining Castro's troops in the Sierra Maestra Mountains for their final triumph. In return, Castro rewarded him with the prized position of operating the casinos, and promoted him to chief of air-force intelligence.

Early on, it became clear that forging a relationship with the U.S. was not going to be the anticipated cakewalk. Lorenz claims that Sturgis saw the writing on the wall and knew it was time to switch teams again. "He's always been a soldier of fortune," she says, adding derisively, "or misfortune." The same could be said of her, of course. As for Sturgis, he makes no bones about his various allegiances. "I was a double agent," he thunders over the phone when I reach him in Miami. "I was recruited by the C.I.A. in 1958, and stayed in Havana until June 30, 1959." He and Lorenz met in the lobby of the Riviera Hotel, where Sturgis and Castro's brother Raúl "were looking over the slot machines." Lorenz says that Sturgis "shimmied by me and said in Spanish, 'I know who you are. I can help you.' His lips were moving, but his eyes were dead. That's Frank." A week later, she had another encounter with Sturgis. Both of them were wearing their revolutionary uniforms, having been made honorary members by Castro in his 26th of July Movement. "I was having coffee downstairs at the Habana Hilton," remembers Lorenz, "and he sat down next to me. He wanted me to get him some of Fidel's papers. So again I tell Fidel's people, 'Who is this guy?' They said, '*Un americano*, but he's a sympathizer.' Maybe somebody talked to him, because I didn't see him again. I think he dived into the American Embassy after that."

According to Sturgis, who denies that he ever worked for the Mob, he recruited Lorenz while she was living with Castro. "Fidel would lay a snake if it wriggled," says Sturgis, "and she was one of the snakes. I tried to get her to poison Fidel, but she backed off because she was in love with the son of a bitch." Although Sturgis is apoplectic on the subject of Marita Lorenz, he concedes that at the time "she could have had me taken out and shot in a minute. She didn't betray me. Not then."

I'm watching Lorenz on television. She's the subject of a segment of *Hard Copy*, and she's talking about the child she had with Castro. She's crying. Crying, she says, because she never got to raise him. It is a heartbreaking story, but under scrutiny, according to some observers, it unravels like a cheap sweater.

While it is indisputable that Lorenz had a long affair with Castro and became pregnant, perhaps even twice, there is no evidence that a child was born. What evidence there is leads to several other possible conclusions: (1) Lorenz's pregnancy ended in a late-term abortion. (2) She had a miscarriage followed by a later abortion. (3) She lost a baby, which led her to adopt a child.

In early October 1959, she says, when she was seven and a half months pregnant, she was slipped a Mickey in a glass of milk. Why this happened she does not know, although one possibility is that the drug was intended for Castro. Castro has said that the most successful assassination attempt on his life was by a C.I.A.-hired cafeteria worker in the hotel, who made his nightly chocolate milk shake. "I realized I was going down," she says. "I just passed out." When she came to, she was in a doctor's office. "Somebody said, 'Everything is fine. The baby is fine.' Then I was given an injection and taken back to the Habana Hilton." When she awoke, she found Camilo Cienfuegos, the commander of the Cuban army, packing her suitcase and arranging her return to the States. "Camilo said the baby had to be taken away because of Fidel's enemies," she says. "Fidel wasn't there for any of this. He was on the other side of the island."

However, in 1959, Lorenz told a different story. Soon after her arrival in New York, she was admitted to Roosevelt Hospital, where, according to retired F.B.I. agent Frank O'Brien, "she was being treated for a botched abortion she had in Havana. She never said anything about having a kid." O'Brien and his partner, Frank Lundquist, were sent

to interview Lorenz, as the F.B.I. had a keen interest in her activities. "She was very young," remembers Lundquist. "Maybe she was 20, but she looked more like 14. I knew one thing: she was in over her head."

According to an F.B.I. report, on December 3, 1959, Lorenz told the agents that she had had a miscarriage after her return to Havana in the spring of 1959. "Miss Lorenz stated that she is not too clear on the details of this matter . . . but she has been told rumors that she had been drugged, taken to a hospital and an abortion was performed. . . . Miss Lorenz stated that it was after this miscarriage and the reaction of Fidel Castro, that she turned against him."

A second pregnancy may have ended in an abortion on September 19, 1959, according to another F.B.I. report, which notes that Jesús Yanes Pelletier, Castro's mulatto aide-de-camp, was responsible for making the arrangements. Other F.B.I. reports document several visits made by Yanes to see Lorenz in New York. One F.B.I. memo states that on January 16, 1960, Lorenz told agents that Yanes had warned her that "Fidel Castro was denying that he was in any way involved in the pregnancy . . . and that Yanes Pelletier was the one responsible, and that [the Cubans] were willing to pay $500 to $1,000 for medical expenses."

Lorenz angrily dismisses these reports as "disinformation," even though they are based entirely on information she provided at the time. Even more mysterious is the fact that she freely offered the reports that contradict her baby story.

In New York, Lorenz's mother introduced her to Alexander Rorke Jr., a Jesuit turned adventurer with impeccable blue-blood credentials: son of a prominent judge, graduate of St. John's University, and son-in-law of Sherman Billingsley, the owner of the Stork Club. A freelance photojournalist, Rorke had covered the Cuban Revolution. After a stint in a Cuban jail, he became a rabid anti-Castroite, eventually working for the C.I.A. "Alex was a 'Camelot.' He was dapper, well-spoken, with a trust fund," says Lorenz. "Alex would take me to church. He taught me how to pray."

For weeks, she says, her mother, Rorke, and Sturgis hammered away at her on the evils of Castro and Communism. Her mother wrote Castro an outraged letter and sent copies to Eisenhower, Cardinal Spellman, and the Pope. In May 1960, Alice Lorenz and Rorke wrote a maudlin, sensationalized version of Marita's story entitled "Fidel Castro Raped My Teenage Daughter" and sold it to *Confidential* magazine. "My mother was a big factor in my decision," says Lorenz. "I was in the spy business before I knew it."

Marita infiltrated the New York chapter of the 26th of July Movement, and was soon providing the F.B.I. with reports on its members. Lorenz says she became "a contract agent" for the C.I.A., a claim which is impossible to confirm owing to the agency's policy of secrecy regarding personnel. However, it is indisputable that she worked with various anti-Castro groups that were supervised and funded by the C.I.A. As her first assignment, she accepted nothing less than the assassination of Castro—an action which gives further credence to her 1959 story that she had an abortion or a miscarriage, and that it was Castro's unsympathetic reaction to her misfortune that turned her against him.

In Miami, where she was trained for her mission, she says she met the man in charge of the ultrasecret unit dubbed Operation 40. Eduardo, as Sturgis introduced him, was tall and rather elegant. "He always wore white suits," Lorenz says, "and was very quiet. Eduardo was the moneyman," who handed out envelopes of cash. It was not until Watergate, she says, that she learned Eduardo's real name: E. Howard Hunt. "Hunt reported directly to Washington," she says. "He was very close with [C.I.A. director] Allen Dulles. Sturgis bragged about him and Hunt going to see Dulles."

On December 4, she made a quick "dry run" visit to Havana "to make sure that Fidel would see me and that everything was cool." The visit is confirmed by F.B.I. reports, which note that her stated reason for returning was to "handle personal matters," which included seeing a child she had adopted after her miscarriage.

A few weeks later, Lorenz says, she returned to carry out the assassination. She was given two botulism-toxin pills that looked like "white gelatin capsules" to drop in Castro's drink. Just one would do the trick—killing within 30 seconds, she was told. Whatever ambivalence she felt about her mission was compounded when she said good-bye to Alex Rorke as she boarded her plane. "Without moving his lips, he said very, very softly, 'Don't do it.' " Rorke also told her not to take the "guts pill" she had been instructed to swallow before leaving. "It's some kind of shit the C.I.A. gives you," says Lorenz, "that makes you feel very strong, courageous, indifferent. Like speed.

"I knew the minute I saw the outline of Havana I couldn't do it," she says.

Marita, blonde and 24, holding Monica, at a hearing for her paternity suit against former Venezuelan president Marcos Pérez Jiménez, Miami, 1963. *Below*, Frank Sturgis in a New York court in 1977, charged with harassment of Marita Lorenz.

"Marcos was heavily connected. He was C.I.A.-connected. He was Mob-connected. I decided, O.K."

PHOTOGRAPH, RIGHT, BY FRANÇOIS BOTA

"I hopped a jeep and went to the Hilton. Just simply walked in, said hi to the personnel at the desk, went upstairs to the suite. Room 2408. I went in and waited."

Even if she had had the will to go through with her mission, she had already botched it, having stashed the capsules in a jar of cold cream. When she looked for them, "they were all gunked up. I fished them out and flushed them down the bidet." When Castro finally appeared, he was wary. "Why did you leave so suddenly?" was his first question, she says. " 'Are you running around with those counterrevolutionaries in Miami?' I said yes. I tried to play it cool. The most nervous I have ever been was in that room, because I had agents on standby and I had to watch my timing. I had enough hours to stay with him, order a meal, kill him, and prevent him from making a speech that night, which was already pre-announced.

"He was very tired and wanted to sleep. . . . He was chewing a cigar, and he laid down on the bed and said, 'Did you come here to kill me?' Just like that. I was standing at the edge of the bed. I said, 'Yes. I wanted to see you.' And he said, 'That's good. That's good.' "

Castro asked if she was working for the C.I.A. "I said, 'Not really. I work for myself.' Then he leaned over, pulled out his .45, and handed it to me. I flipped the chamber out and hit it back. He didn't even flinch. And he said, 'You can't kill me. Nobody can kill me.' And he kind of smiled and chewed on his cigar. . . . I felt deflated. He was so sure of me. He just grabbed me. We made love. I contemplated staying—to try talking to him later, after his speech, but it would be too late, because he rambles on for 8, 10, 12 hours. That was the hardest part. I wanted him to *beg* me to stay, but he got dressed and left. I just sat there by myself awhile. I left him a note. I told him that I would be back."

After a 45-minute flight from the José Martí airport, Marita was back in Miami. "I was terrified," she says, "knowing I was going to get hell." Even before she landed, Sturgis and company knew she had blown it, because they had heard Castro speaking on the radio. "One guy said, 'Now we've gotta go to war. Because of you!' "

Beginning in February 1960, Operation 40 went into full-tilt military training for the Bay of Pigs invasion. Lorenz's group, the International Anti-Communist Brigade, was stationed in the Everglades. Assassination techniques were central to the training. "Frank told us about slow-acting poisons, fast-acting poisons, injections that give you cancer and other diseases." Lorenz says she often piloted boats loaded with munitions bound for various destinations—"sometimes Nicaragua, sometimes Guatemala," which was to be one of the jumping-off points for the Bay of Pigs. "If we needed extra boats, we just took them from people's backyards. It was an incredible high." One of her jobs, Lorenz says, was being a "decoy" while her group stole arms caches from U.S. military bases. "I never understood that," she says, "why we were stealing from our own."

"I think Alex knew they were going to kill Kennedy," Lorenz says, "and they got rid of him."

Described by one source as "an absolute stunner, ravishing and really wild," Lorenz quickly won entrée into Miami's high life, not to mention its low life. For a while she busied herself with a millionaire who allowed his company to be used by the C.I.A. as a gunrunning front. He introduced her to his friend Santo Trafficante Jr., the Mafia boss of Tampa, who had run casinos in pre-Castro Havana. "The main thing to know about Marita," says New York theater businessman Sheldon Abend, a longtime family friend, "is that she was always pursuing men who were like her father, these powerful, dictatorial types." "I met Johnny Roselli at the Fontainebleau," Lorenz says. "He was a nice, flashy guy who treated women nicer than the guys I worked with—because he was Italian. He worked for Sam Giancana, and they worked with us, because the Mob guys hated Fidel because of him closing the casinos."

Sturgis admits to "using Marita to try to kill the bastard [Castro]," but he says she never worked for Operation 40 or knew Howard Hunt. "She worked for one of the anti-Castro groups," he says. "There were about 200 of them. South Florida was the biggest C.I.A. station in the world at that time because of Cuba. I think she tried to do training with Orlando Bosch [a leader of the anti-Castro movement]. Giancana and Roselli would never talk to her. She never met them. *I* don't remember meeting them. She's a lying bitch and a traitor. I mean, she shacked up with Fidel—a Communist!"

Lorenz says she was also a courier for her group. In March 1961, she was instructed to pick up a $200,000 contribution from a General Díaz at 4609 Pine Tree Drive in Miami Beach. "When he gave me the money, he said, 'This is for rice and beans.' I took it and gave it to Sturgis. I later found out that he was Marcos Pérez Jiménez, the former dictator of Venezuela. He was settling into political exile, playing the Perón game. He chased me around for six weeks."

Pérez Jiménez, whose famously brutal regime had been backed by the U.S., had finally been sent packing. Venezuelan authorities pressed charges against him for the theft of $13.5 million. Lorenz claims Pérez Jiménez later boasted that he had actually gotten away with more than $700 million. Though she describes him as "a short, fat, balding guy who bit his nails to the quick," she nevertheless succumbed to his charms, which were no doubt connected to his vast fortune. "He was heavily connected. He was C.I.A.-connected," she says. "He was Mob-connected. He was police-department-connected. . . . I decided, O.K."

Pérez Jiménez also provided her with a breather from the Op 40 crowd, particularly after the debacle of the Bay of Pigs invasion. All of her group, she says, returned from the failed mission in a ballistic rage, blaming their military flop on President Kennedy, who they claimed had betrayed them by failing to provide air support. "Orlando Bosch was totally fanatic, and Sturgis just hated Kennedy. 'Fucking Kennedy' this and 'fucking Kennedy' that. He wanted the bastard dead. They hated him as much as they hated Fidel." Sturgis concedes that there was plenty of anti-Kennedy sentiment around, but denies that he made any threats.

A month after becoming Pérez Jiménez's mistress, Lorenz was pregnant. For more than two years, she was the Evita of Miami, blissfully cocooned by Pérez Jiménez's prodigious wealth and power. It didn't matter that the hyper-promiscuous Pérez Jiménez already had numerous girlfriends and mistresses and was married with children. What counted was his promise to provide for Lorenz

for the rest of her life. "I went to the apartment of [lawyer] Roy Cohn when I was eight and a half months pregnant. He was a shifty little shit. He charged Marcos $20,000 to set up the trust funds for me."

In March 1962, Lorenz's daughter, Monica, was born in New York while Pérez Jiménez was fighting his extradition in Miami. "He wanted a boy, but he loved Monica," says Lorenz. She still blames Robert Kennedy, then U.S. attorney general, for wrecking her domestic paradise by honoring Venezuela's extradition demand.

While Pérez Jiménez was sitting in the Dade County jail, Lorenz discovered that she was pregnant again. (She later miscarried under mysterious circumstances, the victim of a hit-and-run driver in an incident that Lorenz claims was no accident.) At the behest of David Walters, Pérez Jiménez's Miami attorney and deal-maker, Lorenz says, she filed a paternity suit against Pérez Jiménez. "Walters told me, 'We need an angle for a stay of extradition. We are going to have to use you.' I loved Marcos. I thought it was just a legal maneuver, so I said, 'Go ahead.' "

"Castro was the big, glamorous hunk at that time. My mother was a dictator groupie."

A month later, on August 16, 1963, Pérez Jiménez was sent back to Venezuela, where he did five years of very cushy jail time. Upon his release, he and his fortune were graciously offered asylum in Madrid by fellow tyrant Generalissimo Francisco Franco.

Lorenz discovered that she had violated a clause in the trust funds created by Roy Cohn by breaking Pérez Jiménez's anonymity with the paternity suit. "When Walters told me about it later, he said, 'Too bad. Tough shit.' Everything started to vanish after that. I got death threats. I felt I was going to get killed." Even today, Lorenz is loath to acknowledge Pérez Jiménez's abandonment of her. Her villain of choice is David Walters, later the U.S. ambassador to the Vatican, who, as Pérez Jiménez's executor, she claims, acted independently of his client and seized her trust funds.

Reached in Miami, Walters charges that Marita's paternity suit was instigated solely by her. "The general has always denied that it was his child," says Walters, though he admits he paid child support to Marita on Pérez Jiménez's behalf for "some time." Walters adds, "I drafted the trusts, not Roy Cohn." He confirms that the trusts were nullified when Marita broke the general's anonymity in the suit, which Walters characterizes as "out-and-out extortion."

Fearful, broke, and miserable, Lorenz says, she drifted back to her old pals. "I wanted protection," she says. "I intended to shoot Walters, but Sturgis talked me out of it. I started running guns again, from Miami, New Orleans, and the Keys to Guatemala, where anti-Castroites were plotting another invasion of Cuba."

During the summer of 1962, Lorenz says, she met a new recruit at a training camp in the Everglades. "Ozzie" was a quiet, thin man who seemed neither particularly fit nor alert. "He was very quiet, like he wanted to be part of—but he wasn't part of—the gang. He wasn't a talker. He was a chimer-inner. I only saw him once or twice. He looked like pneumonia warmed over, like he couldn't carry a rifle. I asked Frank, 'What's he going to do?' And he said, 'Never mind. He'll serve his purpose.' " Sturgis denies working with Lee Harvey Oswald, and says he never even met him. Curiously, what appeared to be Sturgis's name (Fiorini) was found in Oswald's phone book.

Lorenz says her group transported arms to New Orleans, another hub of anti-Castro activity. She vividly remembers David Ferrie, who died days before New Orleans district attorney Jim Garrison was going to arrest him for conspiracy to murder Kennedy. She remembers driving down from New York with Rorke and Manuel Artime, who had been the C.I.A.'s great white hope to succeed Castro. "Ferrie was a real weirdo," she says. "Real hyper. But Alex told me he was one of our best pilots—very daring."

On November 18, 1963, Lorenz says, she got a job call from Frank Sturgis. She dropped her daughter with her sitter and drove over to the group's safe house, "a small, shabby converted hotel" in southwest Miami. The group, she says, included "Ozzie, Pedro Díaz Lanz [the former head of Castro's air force], Gerry [Patrick Hemming, a longtime C.I.A. agent], who was the nicest of them all, and Frank. We picked up two cars with tail fins—one was black and one was blue—and went over to Orlando Bosch's house." According to Marita, waiting with Bosch were "the two Novo brothers," Guillermo and Ignacio, militant anti-Castroites. Alex Rorke, however, was no longer with the group. "In September, Alex had a serious falling-out with Sturgis," says Lorenz. "He told me, 'I'm sick of all this hating-Kennedy stuff. They're up to something rotten.' "

The group piled into the two cars. "I thought we were going to get guns," she says, "but instead they *brought* guns." A third car, carrying, she says, a small armory of weapons, followed them. "Sturgis was in my car. So were Bosch, Pedro, and Gerry." In the second car was Oswald, she says, flanked by the Novo brothers. They drove straight through the night to Dallas, "stopping only to pee and get coffee."

They settled into two adjoining rooms in a motel, according to Lorenz. "I thought we were going to hit an armory," she says. "Like we're here to do an operation. I thought they were going to use me as a decoy. That's what I was told. Sturgis brings in a bag with disguises and another bag with automatic weapons and starts clipping them together. It seemed different this time because of the instructions Frank gave. Nobody could make phone calls. No broads. No booze. No contacts with the outside."

Soon after their arrival in Dallas, they had a visitor, whom Lorenz had never met. "This guy comes into the room. He's like a little Mob punk, a short, balding guy with a cocky hat, heavyset, with a cleft on his chin." His name was Jack Ruby, and he was a small-time mobster who had visited Cuba several times during Castro's early days. "He took two steps inside, saw me lounging, and said, 'Who's the fucking broad?' And I said, 'Fuck you, punk.' "

Never willing to be a mere fly on the wall of history, Lorenz describes how she exploded into a catfight with Ruby. "I was furious how he spoke to me. I had been sitting in a crowded car. I had P.M.S. I said, 'Fuck this, Frank, I'm going home. Give me some plane fare.' " Sturgis, she says, tried to calm her down, then went outside with Ruby. Through the window, Lorenz watched the two talking quietly. "Frank and Ruby were *(Continued on page 96)*

(*Continued from page 90*) leaning against the trunk of the car," she says. "And Sturgis came back in and says, 'O.K. All right. You can go.' "

Not long after Ruby left, Lorenz says, E. Howard Hunt (who has denied having been in Dallas) showed up at the motel. "I saw Hunt talking to Sturgis outside the motel, handing him an envelope." Later, she claims, she saw Hunt speaking with Oswald in the adjoining room. "The door was open between the two rooms. Oswald was sitting in the other room with the other guys. On the bed. Just casually sitting there waiting for instructions. That was the last time I saw him."

In the early hours of November 21, according to Lorenz, Sturgis drove her to the airport. After spending one night in Miami, Lorenz decided to visit her mother in New Jersey. Halfway there, the co-pilot came out to talk to the passengers. "He said, 'Ladies and gentlemen, the president has been shot in Dallas.' Boom! And I screamed out three times, 'No! No! No!' I wanted to tell the pilot, 'Get this plane down. I got to talk to somebody.' "

"My mother knew too much," says Lorenz. "They gave her a shot. Same as they gave Jack Ruby."

Frank Sturgis contends that he was home watching television in Miami. He says that the day after the assassination he was interviewed by the F.B.I. "They said, 'Frank, if there's anybody capable of killing the president of the United States, you're the guy that can do it,' " he bragged in a 1975 interview. Calling Lorenz "a liar who's double-crossed a lot of people," Sturgis adds, "She keeps changing who the people were in the cars. It's ridiculous. I'm not saying that everything that Marita says is a lie, but she'll do anything for money." Sturgis denies that he ever met Jack Ruby, and says that he didn't meet Howard Hunt until the time of Watergate.

Initially, Hunt claimed that he was out shopping with his wife in Washington, D.C. Later he said he was at his C.I.A. office. In 1980, Hunt filed a $3.5 million libel suit against Liberty Lobby, an eccentric right-wing D.C. think tank, for running a story in its publication, *The Spotlight,* by ex–C.I.A. agent Victor Marchetti which contended that Hunt was involved in the assassination of J.F.K. Hunt lost the case on appeal in 1985. That trial is the basis for Mark Lane's *Plausible Denial*. Lane says that the evidence that ultimately swayed the jury was the testimony of Marita Lorenz, read by another woman (Lorenz said she was too fearful to appear in person), placing Hunt in Dallas at the time.

Gerry Patrick Hemming, reached at his home in Miami, doesn't deny knowing Lorenz, nor does he refute the story of the three cars driving to Dallas. He says that "other people" knew about the caravan, but he says he was not among the passengers. "I was invited to go . . . indirectly through Sturgis," he says. "I declined, and advised a number of others not to go." However, he adds, almost as an aside, he and a cohort were twice solicited in 1962 to participate in an assassination of the president. The first time, he says, was in New Orleans in April. "Guy Banister, who was working with the C.I.A. until the Bay of Pigs and was then freelancing, took us aside and suggested that a considerable sum of money could be had immediately if we did a direct hit on both Castro and J.F.K.," says Hemming. In late 1962, he says, he was again propositioned by "government agents" during a visit to Dallas. Hemming also says that he met Oswald on numerous occasions, first in Monterey Park, California, in January 1959, then in Miami in December 1962, and later in New Orleans.

Pedro Díaz Lanz satisfied investigators of the House Select Committee on Assassinations that he was addressing a "women's group" in Wichita, Kansas, on November 22, 1963. In the mid-70s, Orlando Bosch told committee investigator Gaeton Fonzi that he had had only limited contact with Marita Lorenz, and described her as "an adventuress with a psychopathic disease." Bosch contemptuously dismissed Lorenz's allegations, adding that he had "never traveled west of New Orleans in my life." Repeated attempts to reach the Novo brothers failed to gain a response.

Pursuing assassination theories is like stepping into a hall of mirrors. The trickiest part is that anyone who has firsthand knowledge is likely to be less than an entirely credible witness. Most of them, like Marita, have been "informing" for years, and have their own enemies and agendas. Moreover, the quest to resolve the crime of the century has recently snowballed into a kind of assassination mania, producing an amazing spate of tell-all books in which the authors, ranging from C.I.A. agents to famous mobsters, claim that *they* killed J.F.K. or know who did.

While most of Marita's claims concerning Castro, Pérez Jiménez, and anti-Castro C.I.A. activity can be corroborated, the Dallas story cannot. In the first place, there is no documentation or testimony from anyone other than her. Pressed for substantiation, Lorenz says she told her story to F.B.I. agents O'Brien and Lundquist upon her arrival at her mother's. The agents, she says, had their own bad news: Alex Rorke was dead, his plane having disappeared off the coast of Cozumel, Mexico. "I think Alex knew that they were going to kill Kennedy," she says, "and they got rid of him." However, neither agent has any recollection of any discussions with Marita Lorenz concerning J.F.K.

More problematic is the fact that Lorenz has spun variations on her story over the years. The first published account, by Paul Meskil, which ran in the New York *Daily News* in September 1977, reported that Lorenz claimed to have gone to Dallas with Sturgis, Oswald, Bosch, Díaz Lanz, and "two Cuban brothers whose names she does not know." Meskil, now retired, says he does not recall her mentioning either Jack Ruby or Howard Hunt. "She claimed she had a picture of Oswald taken in the Everglades," says Meskil, "but I don't think anyone has ever seen it." Sheldon Abend says he saw the photograph, which he says showed Marita and "Ozzie" in South Florida. "I have my own reasons for not thinking the guy was Oswald," says Abend, "but judging from the picture, he was a dead ringer for Oswald. I think Marita was completely sincere. She believed it." Lorenz says she turned the photo over to the office of Senator Howard Baker, for whom her brother worked.

Although Lorenz remains the darling of the conspiracy set, one former admirer, A. J. Weberman, co-author of *Coup d'État in America,* has become bitterly disillusioned with her. Weberman says he is convinced that Hunt and Sturgis were in Dallas, but he no longer believes that Lorenz went along for the ride. Weberman met Lorenz in 1976, shortly after Howard Hunt had

brought suit against him for libel. (The suit was later dropped.) "I needed an eyewitness account at the time," he says, "so I was not being as objective as I should." However, Weberman continues, she did provide some significant information that he was able to corroborate from other sources. "She *did* see Hunt and Sturgis together in the early 60s at the anti-Castro training camps. She did see Oswald in the Everglades, and probably saw him at the camp at the No Name Key." But as to her Dallas story, he doesn't buy it. "Why would these guys take along a 24-year-old girl," he asks, "and why would they *drive* to Dallas when three of them are top-notch pilots? At the risk of discrediting my own witness, I have to state Marita Lorenz has never told a story in her life without embellishment."

This observation is repeated in an F.B.I. report dating from the early 80s: "Lorenz has provided information in the past, some of which is reliable, however, she does have a tendency to exaggerate."

On May 31, 1978, Lorenz testified under a grant of immunity to the House Select Committee on Assassinations in closed, secret executive session. She says she told the committee "everything—the gunrunning, the training, the Dallas thing—naming names." She adds that she paid a "nightmare price" for her testimony, and claims that Sturgis and others had launched a terror campaign—a claim Sturgis denies—to prevent her from testifying. One old pal didn't even make it to the hearings. In 1975, a week before Sam Giancana was to testify before the Senate hearings on C.I.A.-Mafia plots and the J.F.K. assassination, he was murdered in his kitchen. Johnny Roselli, who did manage to testify, ended up in an oil drum, carved into pieces.

According to Congressman Louis Stokes, who chaired the committee hearings, the committee concluded "that there probably was a conspiracy, but we could not designate who the actual coconspirators were, except we believed there was a role played by some members of the Mob and some anti-Castro Cubans. Those were the two main groups." It is a conclusion that neatly dovetails with Marita Lorenz's story. However, her story struck the committee as being riddled with coincidences. Robert Blakey, chief counsel of the committee, wrote in his book *Fatal Hour* that Lorenz "did not help her credibility by telling us that when she arrived in Dallas . . . they were contacted at their motel by Jack Ruby."

Gaeton Fonzi, a staff investigator for the committee and the author of the upcoming *The Last Investigation*, interviewed Lorenz extensively prior to her testimony. "Marita Lorenz has a lot of credible information regarding anti-Castro activities and other things, but I don't believe her Dallas story." For one thing, he says, "she did not initially name the Novo brothers, who are wonderful candidates. She came up with them later." Nor does he trust her allegation that enmity existed between her and Sturgis. "They were working together in the mid-70s, after she testified against him," he says. Her story, he believes, is sophisticated disinformation, which always has some verifiable elements.

In the Cuban Mission in New York, Marita wrote a note: "I need help. They are going to kill me and my children."

Six months after Kennedy's assassination, Lorenz, hoping to be reunited with Pérez Jiménez, flew to Venezuela with two-year-old Monica. "I went down to tell him that David Walters had taken my money, my trust funds, my apartment, my car, the island, the yacht—everything. They left me penniless." Upon her arrival in Caracas, she says, she was thrown into jail, "in the cell next to Marcos's. I never saw him, but we talked through the wall."

Following her release, she accepted the offer of a sight-seeing tour from two Venezuelan intelligence agents. The small military plane landed, she says, "at an abandoned mining camp" in the rain forest on Venezuela's border with Brazil. "The co-pilot ran back to the plane on the pretext of getting my bag. Then they got in and started the engine up. I saw my bag flying out the plane and the door shut."

Lorenz makes the amazing claim that she lived with an Amazon-rain-forest tribe for nine months. Valerie Lorenz confirms that her sister was "in Venezuela for a long time. She talked about the jungle for years afterwards, and how she tried to flag down planes."

John Stockwell, a renegade former C.I.A. agent who was one of Marita Lorenz's erstwhile biographers, says that while he feuded with his subject over some of her stories, "her wildest tale, the jungle saga, turned out to be true. It's chock-full of convincing detail."

Lorenz spent most of the next decade in Yorkville, Manhattan's German neighborhood, around the corner from her mother. She resumed working as an informant for the F.B.I.'s political division and for the New York Police Department's 23rd Precinct. Lorenz lived at 250 East 87th Street, a building which she says housed many of the staff of the Soviet Consulate, as well as those of other Eastern-bloc consulates. After spending her days sifting through the building's garbage, the nights were hers. In 1966 she met another Latin-American strongman, Nicaragua's future dictator, Anastasio Somoza. "Everyone thought that Tachito and I had an affair," she says, "but we didn't. Just friends. We talked about fixing up Monica, when she got older, with his son Luisito."

She tried twice more to visit Pérez Jiménez, in Madrid, but both times she left without having laid eyes on him; the second time, she was summarily escorted back to the airport.

In the mid-60s she married a moody Cuban with whom she had had a torrid fling. She says that "it lasted two weeks," and that she got an annulment. In 1969 she had another child, a son named Mark, the offspring of another ill-fated romance. She has claimed that the father was "a dumb fucking Irish hump," a former New York City police chief. However, most observers, including her sister, believe that Mark's father was Eddie Levy, a small-time gangster who served a sentence in Florida for insurance fraud. In fact, Valerie testified at a paternity hearing that Levy was Mark's father. "I was there the day Marita decided to change Mark's dad," says John Stockwell. "She simply told Mark it was better to have a father who was a cop than one who went to jail."

Further complicating this dizzying spiral of relationships, Marita was married briefly to a *third* man, Louis Yurasits, the building superintendent at 250 East 87th Street, whom she also has on occasion identified as Mark's father.

Monica Mercedes Pérez Jiménez Letelier is a 31-year-old green-eyed stunner with one of those killer bodies created in a gym. "She's a dead ringer for her father, Pérez," says Frank Stur-

gis, and indeed the resemblance is striking. A bodybuilder who has posed for *Playboy*, she was recently a finalist in the Miss Fitness U.S.A. contest in Las Vegas. She is also the mother of a two-year-old boy, the child of her marriage to Francisco Letelier, an artist and the son of the late Orlando Letelier, the former Chilean ambassador to the United States, who was assassinated on Embassy Row in Washington, D.C., in 1976. The couple is no longer together. "I feel terrible," Marita Lorenz says. "My old ops killed his father. Terrible." Indeed, the Novo brothers—who Lorenz alleges escorted Oswald to Dallas—and Virgilio Paz, all anti-Castro activists, were indicted for the murder of Letelier. Paz and Guillermo Novo were found guilty, but through a series of appeals and technicalities, Novo was eventually acquitted of the murder.

"My mother came from a concentration camp," Monica is explaining to me over lunch in Beverly Hills, "so her desire to be loved was very strong." Blithely comparing today's rock stars to the Latin *generales* of the 50s and 60s, she says, "Castro was the big, glamorous hunk at that time. It was like being with Bon Jovi or Patrick Swayze. My mother was a dictator groupie." To her mind, Marita has always been singularly apolitical, a woman guided by simple, romantic impulses and a searing need to be protected. "She was a power junkie," Monica says matter-of-factly. As for her mother's lifelong career of spying and informing, Monica says with a shrug, "That was just her job for money."

Monica has no memories of her father, Marcos Pérez Jiménez, nor has she seen a peseta of his multimillion-dollar fortune. She also has only "the vaguest images" of her life as a two-year-old in the Amazon. However, she suspects that Pérez Jiménez masterminded their trip. "I think it was my father who arranged that," she says between ladylike sips of white wine. "My father is totally capable of having this woman and her child killed. He's a dictator. Why not, man?" Aware that her mother blames Pérez Jiménez's lawyer, David Walters, for their jungle adventure—which Walters has denied any part in—she says diplomatically, "This is where we differ. Sure, I'd like to believe that it wasn't my father. . ."

When Watergate broke, Marita Lorenz instantly recognized most of Sturgis's fellow plumbers as "the usual suspects" from the Op 40 gang. There were Eugénio Martínez and Bernard Barker, Sturgis's close friend, who had been Howard Hunt's deputy during the planning of the Bay of Pigs. She guessed there would be plenty of singing and plea bargaining.

In 1975, after doing a 14-month jail stint for Watergate, Frank Sturgis decided to tell all about his life as a double agent, including his and Marita Lorenz's attempts on Castro's life, in a series of stories by Paul Meskil in the *Daily News*. "I never wanted anyone to know about my life with Castro," Lorenz protests. "He did it. That bastard is my downfall." It wasn't long, however, before she was telling her own tales to Meskil, including a chaste rendering of her life with Castro, who she claimed had kept her a prisoner until she was rescued by Sturgis.

"Fidel is totally fluent in English. He plays dumb when he wants to with American reporters."

In 1976, Tom Guinzburg, then president of the Viking Press, read the Meskil stories and saw a blockbuster book in Marita Lorenz's story. "We gave her and a co-writer a $320,000 advance," he says, "which was a huge amount of money in those days." The book, however, came to naught, because Viking had recently been sold to Penguin, and the new owners decided to abandon the project. Nevertheless, Guinzburg says, he became quite close with Marita, and still hears from her on occasion. "She was very attractive, very convincing," he says. "We checked out all her stuff, and no one said she was not who she said she was. When I met Marita, she was sifting through the garbage at the Bulgarian Consulate. Her gas, phone, and electricity were always off, because she couldn't pay her bills. I think she spent her entire advance in around an hour and a half."

Over time, Guinzburg noticed something "skewed and jumpy about her. The level of paranoia was acute, and she was a grievance collector, for sure." While Lorenz's detractors have spoken about her predatory approach toward men, Guinzburg says he saw no evidence of her being opportunistic. "Her impulses were very generous," he says, "but she was a total sucker, and could be taken in by anyone." Robert Yaffee, a computer consultant at New York University, who has known Lorenz since the mid-70s, agrees only in part. "It's true she is a victim," he says. "But she's a victim who victimizes others. There are very few men in Marita's life that she has not turned against, from Castro to Sturgis to Stockwell. . . all her husbands—just about all of them."

In 1977, Marita Lorenz claims, Frank Sturgis showed up on her doorstep, eager to jump-start their old friendship. "She's always had this love-hate thing with Sturgis," Valerie Lorenz explains. Marita admits to being awed by Sturgis's bravado. "We were walking down York Avenue," she says, "and Sturgis was bragging about all his exploits. So I asked him, 'Did you kill Alex?' He said, 'Alex took too many pictures.' Then he told me, 'We can kill anybody we want. Just blame it on national security.' He said columnist Dorothy Kilgallen 'got whacked' because of her intention to publish a book which included information from her exclusive prison interview with Jack Ruby." With Sturgis spilling the beans so freely, Lorenz cranked up her nerve for the $64,000 question. "I asked him about Kennedy. He says, 'So what if I fucking did it? Who's gonna prove it? I have a fucking alibi. I was home watching television.' And he starts laughing: ha, ha, ha. And he says, 'You missed the big one, Marita.' "

According to Lorenz, Sturgis suggested that one way for her to dodge the House hearings was to leave the country. "He wanted me to infiltrate Fidel's military advisers in Angola," she says, a charge Sturgis denies. "He warned me that if I testified I would be killed." From the heated exchanges between Sturgis and her mother, 15-year-old Monica learned that Sturgis was planning to come by and "straighten things out" on the afternoon of October 31, 1977. With a pistol borrowed from a friend's brother, Monica waited for him outside her apartment building. Someone phoned the police, who talked Monica into giving up the gun. Hours later, when Sturgis did appear at the apartment, he was arrested and charged with aggravated harassment and coercion.

Sturgis says that his arrest was "a setup," that he had flown to New York at Marita's request and that she had

even paid for his plane ticket. He sued the city for false arrest, and actually won a $2,500 settlement. He says further that he never told Lorenz to avoid the hearings, that he never believed that Dorothy Kilgallen was murdered, and that he had nothing to do with the disappearance of his friend Alexander Rorke.

In December 1977, Alice Lorenz died from an "unknown paralysis." Valerie recalls her mother's accusations in the hospital. "She kept saying the C.I.A. had done it," she says. "Something about an injection." Marita, who sat with her mother till she died, says, "She knew too much. They gave her a shot. Same as they gave Jack Ruby."

"My grandmother had kept my mother intact," says Monica. "After she died, everything got very bad. We went on welfare. We had no money, no electricity or gas—once for six weeks."

Left in her mother's will, according to Marita, were a letter imploring her daughter to get out of the spy game and a photograph of a boy named Andre, Marita's son with Fidel. According to Marita, the note said, "I did not tell you before about the boy because you would have been sidetracked."

"Then Andre came in. The first thing I noticed was his white, white skin and Fidel's curly hair."

Marita Lorenz is standing over her copying machine, duplicating old news clippings while expostulating on how she almost paid with her life for testifying at the House hearings. First, she says, were the phone and mail threats, followed by a suspicious fire in her Yorkville apartment, a poisoning, a pistol-whipping, and a hit-and-run accident involving her son. In order to escape, she moved her family to a small farmhouse in Darien, Connecticut, which she bought with her book advance. Within six months, she says, the house was raked with automatic gunfire. After Monica was hospitalized with an inexplicable illness, Lorenz was close to a complete breakdown. Some observers suggest, however, that any harassment she suffered had more to do with her career of befriending, and then informing on, various lowlifes, who were frequently her lovers.

Early in 1981, Lorenz marched into the Cuban Mission on Lexington Avenue in New York City. Knowing the building was under continuous surveillance by the F.B.I. and the National Security Agency, Lorenz didn't dare speak. Instead, she wrote a long note. " 'I need help. There is no justice for me. They are going to kill me and my children.' I pleaded for help. I showed them the photos of me and Fidel so they knew who I was." That night, she says, two Cuban bodyguards stationed themselves outside Monica's room in a New York hospital and stayed there until her release.

Emboldened, Lorenz returned to the mission, requesting a visa to visit Havana. "I'd write these notes," she says. "They would read them, and then I'd burn them with my cigarette lighter." In September 1981, she boarded a chartered plane out of Miami and flew into Havana. She was met by soldiers, who escorted her in "a Czechoslovakian Cadillac to Fidel's house"—one of the 15 homes Lorenz says he has, scattered about Havana. "This one was called Casa Inmigración. It's the one with the satellite dish. I was greeted by two *barbudos* [bearded ones, as Castro's soldiers are known], who showed me to my room. Nice big room with a terrace around it. . . . I was nervous as hell." She was also buzzing, having taken three Eskatrol pills—amphetamines—before she left Miami. "I'm going into hell," she had told her doctor. "I'll need it."

"Finally, the boss, an old guy with a limp, who lost a leg at the Bay of Pigs, came back," she says, "and said, 'Comandante will see you now.' And the door opens, and Fidel lets it slam against the wall. He always did that. It's so crude." She sighs. "And the first thing that struck me was that he's gray—his beard. And he's walking back and forth, looking at me. Then he said, 'Welcome back, my little assassin.' I said, 'That wasn't nice. You're still alive. You owe me.' And it started like that." They bantered in Spanish and English. "He's totally fluent in English," she says. "He plays dumb when he wants to with American reporters.

" 'Well, did you come back to kill me?' he asked. 'Did you run out of dictators? Are you still working for the C.I.A.?' I said, 'Fidel, be glad it was me and not somebody else, because you would have been dead.' And I said, 'And I still love you.' I didn't know what else to say. And then I started to cry. I said, 'I want to see the boy. I know he's alive.' " Castro agreed, she claims, with one provision: that she would never try to take the boy to the United States.

"Then Andre came in. I just looked, and, my God, it's alive. It's real. My God, it's mine. It's got my mouth, my eyes. Oh, God, it's got Fidel's nose. The first thing I noticed was his white, white skin and Fidel's curly hair. And I started to cry. He speaks English, too. He's a doctor—a pediatrician. I said, 'It's nice, Fidel. You did a beautiful job.' "

After an hour and a half, she says, father and son left. "I never knew when the hell he was going to walk in. I couldn't believe it after all these years. So I take a shower real quick. The water was lukewarm. The towels were shit—Russian, like dish towels. I believed he would come back—more out of curiosity." Five hours later, she says, Castro returned. "It was almost dawn. We made love." She howls with laughter. "Can you believe that?"

In the morning, Lorenz says, she had breakfast with her son—"if you want to call it breakfast," she snorts. "It was like Spam, dog food. And forget the coffee—no more Cuban coffee. It comes from Nicaragua. It's like brown water." From there, she was whisked to the airport.

Valerie Lorenz, who drove her sister to the Miami airport, says the first time she ever heard about a son with Fidel was when she picked Marita up on her return. "She was in a state of shock," she says. "She went on and on about her kid. 'He's alive! He's alive!' She was sort of hysterical. She talked about meeting this old couple who had raised him."

However, Lorenz returned without a single photograph, letter, or memento of her alleged son. And asked to produce either the photograph or the letter left by her mother, she balks, finding endless excuses. Most damning is her own account in her unpublished Viking biography, describing her stay in Roosevelt Hospital upon her return from Havana in 1959: "I saw the doctor look at the X rays and say, 'Jesus Christ, they left half of the baby in there.' And I thought I would go crazy. Mother told me that they had taken 22 bones out, including

the entire rib cage. . . . I cannot think about it without knowing how old the baby would be to the day."

Still, there is the slim possibility that she adopted a child, as she told the F.B.I. in 1959. However, the most compelling argument for the love-child story comes from the fact that the Cubans have allowed Lorenz to visit Havana on two occasions, in 1981 and again in 1988, as documented in her passport. Why, one wonders, would the Cubans—i.e., Castro—grant a visa to an admitted assassin unless there was a compelling personal reason?

So desperate is Lorenz to prove her claim of having had Castro's child that she offers me what looks like an F.B.I. report in order to verify her story. However, misspellings, uncharacteristic language, and the lack of an F.B.I. file number betray the document as a fraud.

For more than two years, Lorenz was the Evita of Miami, blissfully cocooned by Pérez Jiménez's prodigious wealth and power.

Through the early 80s, Lorenz continued to do odd jobs for the F.B.I., most notably infiltrating the Marielitos, Castro's boat people, and working undercover in a stolen-car ring operated out of Miami. By the late 80s, however, she seems to have run out of steam. She joined a network of former spies and spooks, such as Philip Agee. The group formed the Association of National Security Alumni—basically a self-help group. "We call each other now and then," says Lorenz, "and give each other a boost."

Meanwhile, nearly all of the old gang who she alleges were in Dallas for the assassination of J.F.K. have been behind bars for one thing or another. Orlando Bosch spent 4 years in the federal penitentiary in Marion, Illinois, for firing a bazooka at a Polish ship in Miami, followed by a 12-year jail stint in Venezuela for allegedly blowing up a Cuban airplane, which killed 73 civilians. Upon his return to the States, Bosch was jailed for parole violation and held for two years. Recently, according to *The Miami Herald*, he was seen outside the Republic Bank on West Flagler Street in Miami, selling limes. Both Novo brothers served time for their involvement in the Letelier murder. In 1978, Guillermo was arrested in Miami for possession of illegal weapons and cocaine. Today they live in Miami. Gerry Hemming served 8½ years of a 35-year sentence on a Florida chain gang for drug trafficking.

After Watergate, Sturgis was convicted of transporting stolen cars to Mexico. He got off with probation, though he was not allowed to carry a weapon for a number of years. According to the New York *Daily News*, he was arrested again in 1986, for "promising an undercover agent to get someone out of jail in exchange for watches worth $75,000." (He was acquitted.) Sturgis still lives in Miami, where he works as a "security specialist" and remains active in anti-Castro groups. In 1991 his house was destroyed by Hurricane Andrew.

Master spy E. Howard Hunt, following his release from prison for his involvement in Watergate, lived in Mexico for a few years before returning to Miami, where he continues to write spy novels.

Marita Lorenz says she still stays in touch with some of her old pals in Miami, which she calls "the second Langley." She says that the Cuban-exile community in Florida is even more volatile today than it was 20 years ago, that Radio and Television Martí are C.I.A. operations, and that much of the money for the cause comes from drug trafficking. Jorge Mas Canosa, the self-proclaimed leader of the exiles, she says, "is a real scary guy who's waiting to seize the throne for himself. These guys have already bought and sold Cuba so many times you wouldn't believe."

On her last real visit to Havana, in 1988, she stayed 10 days. Her son, she says, was in Nicaragua working as a medic for victims of the contras. She claims that she saw Fidel one night and that they made love—for the last time. "The last mercy hump," she says with a laugh. "That was it. It began with him and ended with him." However, John Stockwell, who went to Havana a short time later, says that he met with a Cuban official who told him that Marita had visited the island but that she had not seen Castro. "He said, 'Look, we know who all of Castro's children are, and we know who the mothers are. Marita is not one of them,' " says Stockwell. "Their attitude is that Marita was just some whore . . . which is typical Cuban macho." When Lorenz tried to return a year later, she was detained at the airport and sent home without any explanation. Stockwell, she claims, had made the Cubans nervous about her again.

In 1990, on a two-week tour of Nicaragua with Monica, Marita Lorenz met Isabel Letelier and finally realized her dream of forging a match for her daughter with a celebrated Latin. Following the birth of their son, Monica and Francisco Letelier were married. After the couple's breakup this year, Monica moved into an apartment downstairs from Marita.

Lorenz settled into her tiny studio apartment so that she could be near her son Mark, who lived next door until this summer. Mark, who attends college at night and works at a pet store, would just as soon not know anything more about his mother's checkered life.

For the last 2 years, Marita has been finishing up her autobiography, some 20 years in the works. She is clearly banking on her past to be the meal ticket for her future. She seems depressed, and has few relationships other than those with her children, a neighbor, and some "ops" from the old days. She is forever broke, never having figured out how to make a living outside the spook business. Sheldon Abend says he's been telling her for more than 25 years to focus on one thing only: getting her money from Marcos Pérez Jiménez. "Marita has an uncontested, legitimate claim to one of the world's great fortunes," says Abend, "and she's living on welfare because she never followed through with a lawyer to take care of it." However, her cycle of poverty may soon be behind her if all goes according to plan with the deal she signed with Oliver Stone for a purchase price of "more than $200,000" for the film rights to her story. Marita's casual weaving of fact, fiction, and fantasy seems to be no impediment to the filmmaker. Tom Guinzburg says he still hears from her once or twice a year—always needy and in crisis. "I think she is really unsophisticated when she gets beyond the basics," he says. "It's like ice floes keep breaking off in her head. I don't know how many Maritas there are, but there are a lot." Her daughter, Monica, muses, "I think my mother thought she was going to have this wonderful, glamorous life." □