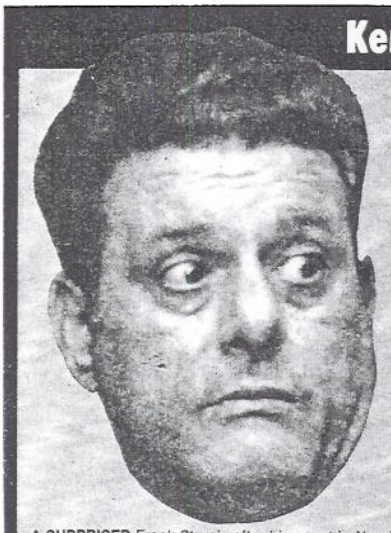
Kennedy's assassination...and the frightened spy



A SURPRISED Frank Sturgis after his arrest in New York.

It was a bizarre Halloween night for Frank Sturgis. The former master, spy, convicted Watergate burglar and CIA contract agent, had come to New York to confer with another top spy, Marita Lorenz, former girlfriend of Fidel Castro.

But when he arrived at her fashionable Manhattan east side apartment, instead of a warm welcome, Sturgis was met by two New York City intelligence detectives pointing guns at his head.

He was arrested on charges of coercion and harassment against Marita Lorenz.

Just five hours before, MIDNIGHT/GLOBE reporter Malcolm Abrams had interviewed Frank Sturgis. The subject of that tape-recorded conversation was Miss Lorenz.

Weeks earlier, Miss Lorenz had publicly accused Sturgis, her long-time friend and ex-conspirator in a 1960 plot to murder Fidel Castro, of taking part in the assassination of President John F. Kennedy.

DAUGHTER with a gun, 15-year-old Monica Mercedes Perez Jiminez.

MOTHER with a secret... Marita Lorenz after her escape from Cuba.

She had told reporters that she, Sturgis, Lee Harvey Oswald and a group of anti-Castro Cubans had driven to Dallas from Miami in November, 1963, in two cars with weapons to kill the President.

The charge was false, claims Sturgis. What's more, he told GLOBE's reporter, Miss Lorenz had been forced to make the accusations.

This is what Miss Lorenz had told Sturgis in a telephone conversation, long distance from New York to his Miami home a week before. Her life and those of her two children, had been threatened. "You know by whom," Sturgis said she had told him.

Miss Lorenz was in mortal fear, according to Sturgis. She was afraid to name names on the telephone. She pleaded for him to come to New York so she could tell him the story personally.

Abrams was one of the last people to talk to Sturgis before he was arrested.

He was the last reporter to speak to Sturgis before his imprisonment.

Unknown to Sturgis, Miss

I'M BEING FRAMED AS JFK'S

Frank Sturgis is feeling the heat. He charges that communist agents are out to discredit him... and then "blow him away."

That's the way it's done in the world of international espionage. Frank Sturgis knows it and so does Marita Lorenz.

Together they were involved in CIA attempts to assassinate Fidel Castro. That was back in the late '50s and early '60s when Sturgis was Fidel's righthand man and Marita was Fidel's mistress. The plots failed and both fled Cuba just ahead of the firing squad.

Since those days, Sturgis has swelled from a lean soldier-of-fortune to a stout 52-year-old armchair revolutionary. Along the way, he fought in the "secret war against Castro" and served time for his role in the Watergate break-in.

And through the years, the beauty that was once Marita Lorenz's and so captivated Fidel Castro, has largely faded. Instead of softness, there's hardness now. But Miss Lorenz is still playing spy games.

And it was one of those games, Sturgis believes, that got him arrested and almost killed in New York City on Halloween night.

"My theory is that there's a communist conspiracy and that they used Marita. And now, she in turn, was using me. I believe she was setting me up to do me bodily harm."

Sturgis told MIDNIGHT/GLOBE that he believes Marita was brainwashed, drugged and coerced into working for the communists.

MALCOLM ABRAMS with Frank Sturgis.

That's why, he says, she told newspapers and the House Assassinations Committee that he was with her, Lee Harvey Oswald and others in two cars bound for Dallas from Miami to kill President Kennedy in November of 1963.

And that's also why, he believes, Marita lured him up to New York, even paying for his airplane ticket, and then had him arrested for threatening her life.

"And imagine," Sturgis added, "if Marita's 15-year-old daughter (picked up by police for carrying a gun) had killed me, with her mother accusing me of going to Dallas to assassinate JFK. Who would there have been to deny it? Marita and her daughter would have looked like heroes."

But why a communist conspiracy against Frank Sturgis? And why would the communists choose to use Marita Lorenz?

The answers, Sturgis claims, date back more than a year. At that time, Marita had broken into a communist mission in New York and stolen secret communist codes. She also claimed to be dating a KGB agent.

"Marita had been threatened at that time," Sturgis told MIDNIGHT/GLOBE. "She told me someone was going to throw her out of her 18th story apartment window. She also said her children had been threatened.

"Because of the documents she had, the communists were trying to kill her.

"I told her to take the documents to the Senate Intelligence Committee, but she was afraid to go to Washington or to send the documents through the mail."

So Sturgis came up to New York, had Marita tell her story into a tape recorder, and then personally delivered the codes and tapes to the Senate Select Committee on Intelligence in Washington.

In December of 1976, in an interview with MIDNIGHT/GLOBE, Sturgis showed GLOBE's reporter photostat copies of the codes and his receipts from the Senate Intelligence Committee. Pictures of those receipts appeared in the January 3, 1977 edition of MIDNIGHT.

"I think there's a good possibility that there has been a continuation of these threats against her because they think she still has these codes," Sturgis says now.

Or if the communists knew that Marita turned the information over to Sturgis, it could explain why they are after him now.

There's still another possibility to explain why the communists would be out to discredit or even murder Frank Sturgis.

"About a year ago," he told the GLOBE reporter, "I received word through contacts of mine that there was an international terrorist conspiracy to do bodily harm against the then Secretary of State Henry Kissinger and one of the leaders of a South American country that Kissinger was going to visit.

"I passed this intelligence information over to friends of mine in government agencies in Washington and in Miami.

"They contacted me saying they were very interested in the information and that there was a possibility that Mr. Kissinger's trip would be aborted.

"It was. He never went on the trip. Whether or not this was because of the information I gave, I don't know. But I felt myself that this was the reason that they decided to cancel his trip."

Despite all the accusations Marita Lorenz has made against him, Sturgis sticks to the belief that she has not been responsible for her actions.

"But I could never trust

GLOBE Exclusive by Malcolm Abrams

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'My theory is there's a Communist conspiracy and Marita was setting me up to do me bodily harm'

Lorenz's 15-year-old daughter Monica had been picked up by police, because she was carrying a loaded .22-caliber revolver. The girl had apparently bought the gun to protect her mother from Sturgis.

At least that's what Miss Lorenz told police, because she said, Sturgis had threatened her life.

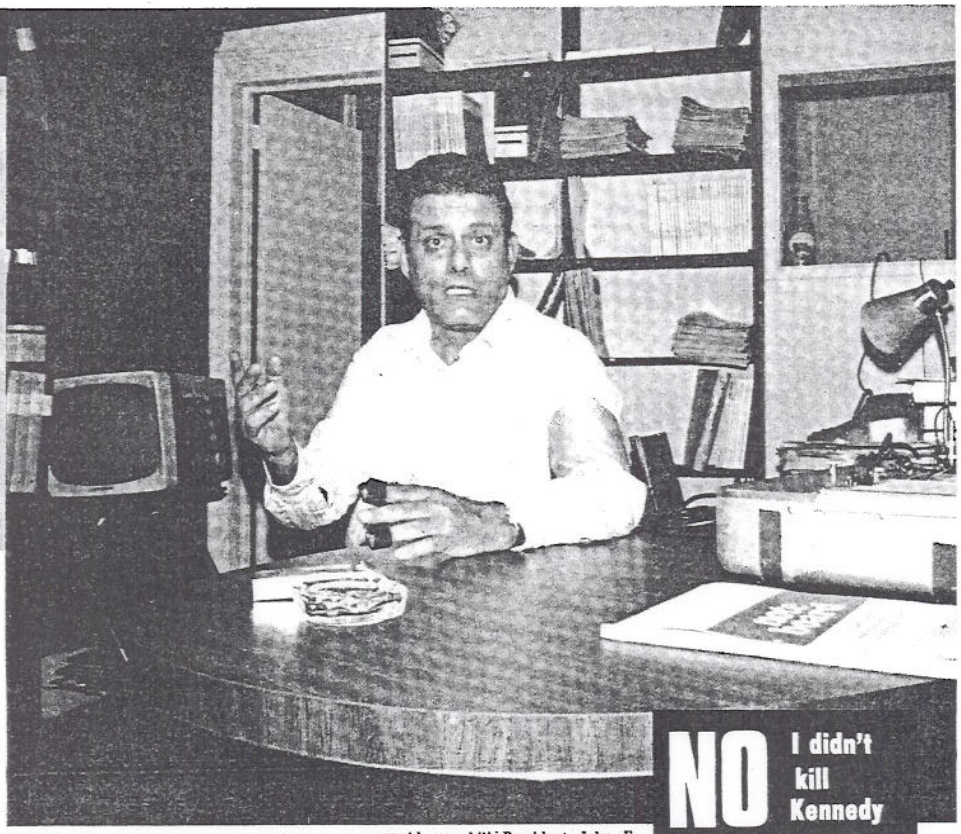
Four days later, the charge was dropped for lack of evidence. Sturgis was exonerated.

What prompted Marita Lorenz to turn on her close friend Frank Sturgis and accuse him of taking part in the most heinous crime ever in this country — the assassination of President Kennedy?

And what prompted Marita Lorenz to have Frank Sturgis arrested for coercion and harassment?

MIDNIGHT/GLOBE interviewed Frank Sturgis twice more to get the answers. He spoke with GLOBE's reporter immediately after his court hearing, and again, after submitting to a lie detector test.

Watergate Burglar Frank Sturgis Tells All



THE truth test... Frank Sturgis is strapped into a polygraph machine to answer questions about his alleged involvement in the Kennedy assassination.

KILLER

NO I didn't kill Kennedy

NO I didn't know Oswald

NO I wasn't in Dallas

"Did you kill President John F. Kennedy?"

"No."

"Did you know Lee Harvey Oswald?"

"No."

"Were you in Dallas on November 22, 1963?"

"No."

After years of living with accusations that somewhere, somehow, he took part in the assassination of President Kennedy, Frank Sturgis voluntarily submitted to a lie detector test.

The results, say his lawyer Henry Rothblatt, scientifically prove him innocent of all accusations.

A MIDNIGHT/GLOBE reporter was present in the building while Sturgis took the three-hour polygraph test.

Afterwards, Sturgis related the questions posed to him by polygraph examiner Henrietta Santo of the Darrow Investigative Service Inc.

Sturgis, along with E. Howard Hunt, another Watergate conspirator, has been charged by various researchers with taking part in the JFK assassination.

They claim that the two former CIA contract agents were arrested and released by Dallas police immediately after the assassination. There are photographs of two hobos in police custody, who bear a resemblance to Sturgis and Hunt.

More recently, Marita Lorenz, a former spy, has charged that she, Sturgis, Lee Harvey Oswald and a group of anti-Castro Cubans drove in two cars from Miami to Dallas in November of 1963 to assassinate the President.

And even more recently, the House Assassinations Committee has found a small notation in Lee Harvey Oswald's diary which appears to spell "Fiorini," Sturgis' real name.

All of these accusations have repeatedly been denied by Sturgis, both publicly and to investigators of the Assassinations Committee.

It has even been suggested by one Assassinations Committee investigator, Gaetan Fonzi, that if indeed that is Sturgis' name in Oswald's diary, it may have been there for an entirely different reason.

Says Sturgis, "We discussed the possibility that Oswald was picking his people. He attempted to assassinate General Walker and Richard Nixon and I may also have been on his list. I was a well-known opponent of Castro's.

"I had been chief of security for Castro's Air Force and was one of the first of his military commanders to turn against Castro and to accuse him of being a communist agent for the Russians.

"I would be a threat to somebody like Oswald who admired Castro."

Sturgis denied all the allegations against him once again in the lie detector test.

"We covered everything in the test," Sturgis said, "from whether I personally killed JFK or was in a conspiracy, to whether I went with Marita Lorenz to Dallas."

Even so, neither Sturgis nor his attorney truly expects the accusations to stop.

"Regretfully," said lawyer Rothblatt, "the Warren Commission investigation was such a botched-up job, it was such a classic case of bureaucratic bungling, that because of it, questions will probably never be answered."

her again," he pointed out. "I could never have any faith in her again.

"To me she's a dangerous person."

Dangerous to the extent that someday he might end up as just another dead spy.

"Americans are being assassinated every day by communist agents and you don't hear about it," he said. "Oh, sometimes you hear, but you don't hear the story around it.

"But, believe me, they're being executed one way or the other.

"I think things are heating up on me now. Let's face it, I was being set up."

THE good bad old days... Marita Lorenz and Fidel Castro in 1959. Miss Lorenz, who says she was Castro's mistress, later tried to assassinate the Cuban dictator while working for Sturgis.