Threat Against JFK Witness Brings Federal Probe

Bulletin Wire Services

New York — Convicted Watergate burglar Frank Sturgis is free on $10,000 bail while a swirl of charges — including one that he was the "second gun" in the Kennedy assassination — tantalizes Senate investigators.

Sturgis left a New York City detention facility yesterday, accompanied by lawyer Ronald Goldfarb. He had no immediate comment on his arrest on harassment charges.

He was jailed Monday night, pending a hearing tomorrow on charges that he threatened Marita Lorenz, who reportedly has told the House Select Committee on Assassinations that Sturgis shot at former President John F. Kennedy the day he was killed in Dallas. Miss Lorenz already has testified about her own role in a plot to kill Cuban President Fidel Castro.

Newspaper reports yesterday quoted Sturgis as saying he had documents in his possession that linked Castro to Kennedy's assassination and proved that Jack Ruby — who shot Lee Harvey Oswald to death — was in Havana two months before the assassination.

Reduction of Sturgis' bail from $25,000 to $10,000 was granted by Acting State Supreme Court Justice Walter Gorman.

Sturgis' attorney, Henry Rothblatt, said "some of Frank's friends" raised money to secure his release from Riker's Island Detention Facility yesterday afternoon. He refused to identify the "friends."

An FBI spokesman said the agency is investigating a possible obstruction of justice charge against Sturgis, including the possible intimidation of a federal witness.

Sturgis, one of five men arrested and convicted in 1972 for trying to bug Democratic National Headquarters in Washington's Watergate complex, originally was held on $25,000 bond on charges that he harassed Miss Lorenz, a former CIA informant who became Castro's lover.

A onetime Philadelphia resident, Sturgis attended Germantown High School between 1930 and 1942, when he dropped out to join the Marine Corps.

Miss Lorenz once took part in a botched attempt to assassinate the Cuban leader. Later, she said that she, Sturgis and Oswald drove to Dallas two days before Kennedy's death.

In Washington, the House assassination committee met in closed session, but members refused to say whether any new evidence on the Kennedy probe was discussed.

Committee staff counsel G. Robert Blakey denied a report that he interviewed Miss Lorenz Tuesday. Blakey said he had never met either Sturgis or Miss Lorenz. But he replied "no comment" when asked at another point if she had given the account to committee investigators.

Miss Lorenz stayed in her 18th-floor luxury apartment at 1725 York ave., under protection of five armed guards, described by sources as New York City Police officers. They reportedly are tasting her food to make sure it is not poisoned.

Rothblatt claimed that Miss Lorenz was trying to drum up publicity for a book of her memoirs.

Alan Broomer, assistant district attorney, maintained that Sturgis made death threats against Miss Lorenz. Broomer said Sturgis told his former CIA colleague that "the company would take care of her" if she didn't change her story.

The New York Daily News, meanwhile, quoted Miss Lorenz as telling Blakey during interrogation Tuesday that she had "documentary and photographic evidence" that Sturgis fired a shot at Kennedy from a grassy knoll at the same time Oswald fired from the Texas Book Depository.

The Warren Commission, which investigated the Kennedy assassination, dismissed the "second gun" theory.

The New York Post, meanwhile, reported yesterday that Sturgis has in his possession documents that show Castro asked Jack Ruby to organize the Kennedy assassination. The Post quotes Sturgis as saying that Ruby then "covered his tracks by taking care of Oswald."

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