Police Investigate Arrest of Sturgis, Who Denies Threat

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, 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 hre, 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.