Obituaries

Frank Sturgis; Convicted Watergate Burglar

From Associated Press

MIAMI—Frank Sturgis, a Watergate burglar who served 13 months in prison for the crime that brought down the Richard Nixon Administration, died Saturday of cancer. He was 68.

Sturgis died at the Veterans Affairs hospital in Miami a week after he was admitted, said his lawyer, Ellis Rubin. Doctors diagnosed lung cancer that had spread to his kidneys.

Sturgis was a member of the burglary team caught after a break-in at Democratic Party headquarters at the Watergate Hotel.

"In Watergate, he claimed to his dying day that he was acting under orders of the White House," Rubin said. "He had no idea that he would be put in prison as a result."

Sturgis received a sentence of one to four years for the burglary.

Associated Press

Frank Sturgis in 1992

He was denied a pardon by President Jimmy Carter.

Interviewed last year for the 20th anniversary of the botched break-in that brought Nixon's resignation, Sturgis said the United States was better off for the experience.

"It really screwed up the country," Sturgis said. "But it made our government a little bit stronger. . . . I feel the laws that came about after Watergate didn't give the President—whether it was Nixon or anybody else—the free rein to do what a dictator would do."

Born in Philadelphia, Sturgis had been a police officer and private investigator and was a rabid anti-communist as a leader of PUND, a Miami paramilitary group intent on toppling Cuba's Fidel Castro.

Sturgis is survived by his wife, Jan, and a daughter.