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Kennedy Assassination Figure Seized in N.Y.

Sturgis Arrested for Threats

New York — (AP) — Convicted Watergate burglar Frank Sturgis was arrested last night for allegedly threatening a witness who gave investigators of the House Select Committee on Assassinations details of Sturgis' relationship with Lee Harvey Oswald, police report.

Oswald was charged with the assassination of President John F. Kennedy in 1963 but was slain by Jack Ruby before he could be tried.

Police said Sturgis, 52, of Miami, was seized at 11:30 P.M. in the Manhattan apartment of Marita Lorenz, a former undercover agent for the FBI and CIA and onetime lover of Cuban President Fidel Castro.

Police charged Sturgis with aggravated harassment and coercion. They said he applied coercion "instilling fear on the complainant to refrain from testifying before a legally constituted authority."

Sturgis, a onetime lieutenant of Castro's who later turned against him, lived in Philadelphia from 1930 when he was five years old, to 1942 when he dropped out of Germantown High School to join the Marine Corps.

Sturgis' name was Frank Florini, but was legally changed when his mother remarried.

Miss Lorenz, Sturgis told the press a year ago, was selected to kill Castro in 1960 by putting poison in his coffee, partly because of her closeness to the Cuban leader and partly because of her unhappiness because of Castro's refusal to marry her.

The plot fell apart, Miss Lorenz told the press, when the capsules given her by Sturgis melted in a cold-cream, where she had hidden them.

Miss Lorenz, who is German-born, was interviewed Saturday by Gaeton Fonzi and Antonio Gonzales, investigators from the House Select Committee, about a trip she says she took with Oswald, Sturgis and four Cubans in a car from Miami to Dallas a few days before Kennedy's death.

She told Fonzi and Gonzales that her companions were members of Operation 40, a 30-member guerilla organization originally formed by the CIA in 1960 to prepare for the invasion of Cuba.

Sturgis, who has admitted he took part in Operation 40, has denied he made the trip with Miss Lorenz.

Police said Sturgis somehow heard about Miss Lorenz's session with the committee representatives and flew to New York. Police said some of the threats were telephoned. Sturgis is considered one of the key witnesses by investigators for the House Committee, which has been in operation since September 1976.

Sturgis was to be arraigned in Manhattan Criminal Court.