11/3/77

Hint of stunt reduces bail in JFK case

By John Mulligan
Associated Press

NEW YORK — Bail for Watergate burglar Frank Sturgis was reduced yesterday after his lawyer argued that charges that he tried to harass and coerce a former spy stemmed from a publicity stunt.

Sturgis, 53, was accused of trying to pressure Marita Lorenz into changing alleged testimony that he was involved in the assassination of President John F. Kennedy.

In Washington, the chief investigator for the House Assassinations Committee would neither confirm nor deny that Miss Lorenz had told committee staffers that the former CIA agent was involved in the Kennedy assassination.

Sturgis was arrested at Miss Lorenz' apartment Monday night. His lawyer, Alan Goldfarb, said at the bail hearing that Miss Lorenz had invited Sturgis to New York and had sent him the air fare.

Goldfarb protested that someone was trying to create a case of "international intrigue." He accused Miss Lorenz of staging the arrest incident to generate publicity for a book she is writing about her onetime CIA activities.

Alan Broomer, assistant district attorney, maintained that Sturgis made death threats against Miss Lorenz.

After hearing their respective arguments in Manhattan's State Supreme Court, Justice Walter Gorman reduced to $10,000 the $25,000 bond that had been set Tuesday. He said it "seems like a lot of money under the circumstances."

Henry Rothblatt, another of Sturgis' attorneys, told a reporter in Washington that Miss Lorenz' book agent had confirmed the stunt story. He said that Sturgis knew Miss Lorenz from the time when he was running Premier Fidel Castro's air force in Cuba. Sturgis claims that he broke with Castro after the Cuban leader embraced Communism.

Miss Lorenz reportedly told investigators for the House Committee on Assassinations that she, Sturgis, Lee Harvey Oswald, and others drove to Dallas from Miami together a few days before Kennedy was shot on Nov. 22, 1963. She said she had left before the shooting. Sturgis has denied that he ever made such a trip.

G. Robert Blakey, chief investigator for the committee, denied that Miss Lorenz had made such a statement to him personally. But he replied, "No comment," when asked whether she had given the account to committee investigators.

In an interview with the New York Post yesterday, Miss Lorenz said that five city police officers were guarding her in her apartment and tasting her food to make sure it was not poisoned.