

Cubans Aren't Bitter Over Watergate

By Jack Anderson

The four Cubans who were caught inside the Watergate in the crime that has rocked the nation have written some poignant letters from prison.

Although they were recruited to do the dirty work and then were abandoned behind bars, their letters aren't bitter.

"All things considered," wrote Bernard Barker to his daughter, Maria Elena Moffett, "we are all pretty damn lucky people."

Another Watergate prisoner, Frank Sturgis, wrote to his wife Janet: "I've been thinking of you constantly and dream of you always. Keep your chin up baby. Things will somehow work out."

The letters were shown to us by friends of the four. Although Barker and Sturgis were reluctant to let the world read their personal sentiments, they gave us permission to quote from the letters.

Barker, for instance, called upon Watergate ringleader E. Howard Hunt inside the White House and came away with the impression that the Watergate break-in and the earlier Los Angeles burglary were national security assignments. Afterwards, the Cubans wound up in prison while those who plotted the Watergate crimes remained free.

Yet on Father's Day, Barker wrote to his daughter and her husband: "If you are lucky and wise, you will be of those selected few that will know real happiness in life. Your mother and I have it, and you two have it now and should have it more than us because you don't argue the way we do."

Again on Aug. 24, he wrote to his daughter in Spanish: "I have always been proud of you, but now I walk around with a special smile on my lips since now it also includes your husband. . ."

He concluded the letter with this rueful apology: "Well, my love, receive all the love from your problematic progenitor, a relic of a problematic generation that has been unable to give more than what it has and that can only distribute its problems."

Sturgis wrote hopefully to his wife about a visit from Sen. Lowell P. Weicker Jr. (R.-Conn.), one of the Senate Watergate committee members. "I think he wants to help us somehow. I hope so! He may come back to see us again," wrote Sturgis.

He explained to the Senator, Sturgis told his wife, how "the CIA trains men to infiltrate industries past their security guard and if caught, say nothing because someone will make contact and bail us out and if

anything happens, it is common knowledge that your family will be taken care of.

"No one spoke to us about that, but our chief was Howard (Hunt)—ex-CIA official and White House aide. We thought it was gov. operation and it may still be one."

The Senator "feels that the three of us took orders from Macho (Barker) and thinks Macho is holding back," related Sturgis. "We three do not know if that is so but the Sen. has an idea that he may know something on that order."

Hunt was taken away to testify on Aug. 16. Reported Sturgis to his wife: "Howard has not returned as yet. Everybody thinks he is talking his butt off. If he is, he can only help us and not hurt us."

But Sturgis wound up cheerfully: "We still may win this yet. Keep the faith, honey! I love you always."

Footnote: Perhaps the most fascinating reference was to columnist William Buckley. "I don't know if I told you before," Sturgis wrote to his wife, "but William F. Buckley used to work for CIA and I don't know if he still does. When he found out that Howard (Hunt) was going to work in the White House, he told Howard it was good that he could be so close to the President but Howard told him that

he was there to take orders and not to influence anyone. That was a good answer! I'm not clear whether this is what Howard or Buckley really said!" Reached for comment, Buckley frankly admitted he was a "deep cover agent" for the CIA from July, 1951 to March, 1952, but said he had not worked for them since. He declined to say what his CIA role was.