

Cuban Reportedly Links Convicts' Funds to Hunt

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MIAMI, July 8—The Cuban exile leader of the abortive 1961 Bay of Pigs invasion has reportedly delivered \$21,000 in "support" money for the convicted Watergate burglars who were from Miami.

Manuel F. Artime, the Cuban leader, has reportedly told the Dade County State Attorney, Richard E. Gerstein, that the money had come in cash either directly or indirectly from E. Howard Hunt Jr., another convicted Watergate conspirator.

Sources close to the investigation told The New York Times that Mr. Artime had testified that the money was passed on to Bernard L. Barker, Frank Sturgis, Eugenio R. Martinez and Virgilio Gonzalez—all convicted Watergate burglars from Miami—and their families.

In sworn testimony Thursday before Mr. Gerstein's investigator, Mr. Artime reportedly said that he had had frequent contacts with the five jailed figures. He said the latest took place a week ago when he visited them at the Federal prison at Danbury, Conn.

Key Biscayne Meeting

Mr. Gerstein, whose year-long investigation of the Miami aspects of the Watergate affair first uncovered financial links between the break-in and the Committee for the Re-election of the President, is seeking evidence that the entry was planned and approved at a Key Biscayne meeting on March 30, 1972. The break-in occurred June 17, 1972.

Details of the meeting, allegedly attended by former Attorney General John N. Mitchell, were described last month before the Senate Watergate Committee by Jeb Stuart Magruder, former deputy director of the Committee for the Re-election of the President.

Some legal experts here have indicated a belief that persons involved in the Key Biscayne meeting, and others who from Washington allegedly ordered the wiretapping of Senator George McGovern's Miami Beach election headquarters, could be indicated under Florida law.

Mr. Artime and other Cuban exiles organized the Miami Watergate Defense Relief Fund last February.

At that time, the fund, in-

corporated as a Florida "charitable organization," opened an account with the Bank of Miami and began soliciting funds for the relief of Barker, Sturgis, Martinez and Gonzalez.

The fund's account is said to be exhausted at present. But sources close to the case said that bank records showed that between February and May, more than \$5,800 was deposited to the account, of which almost \$3,600 was in cash. During that period Barker received \$660 and the other three Cuban conspirators \$425 each. A total of \$3,797.50 was paid to the Washington law firm that represents the four.

Mr. Artime, owner of a meat importing company here, was selected early in 1961, reportedly by Hunt, to lead the Bay of Pigs invasion force.

At that time Hunt was the top Central Intelligence Agency operative supervising the invasion's planning and execution. Working for Hunt as paymaster for the United States-supported, Miami-based Cuban Revolutionary Council was Bernard L. Barker. The council's military arm was the invasion force.

Mr. Artime was among the exiles captured and jailed.

After his release from a Cuban jail in December, 1962 Mr. Artime is said to have had many personal and professional contacts with Hunt, who is the godfather of one of his children.

Barker, in his testimony before the Senate Watergate Committee last month, said that when he was recruited by Hunt in April, 1971, he and Hunt saw in Miami "two or three persons who are in the old Cuban Revolutionary Council."

Sources close to Mr. Gerstein's investigation said that Mr. Artime had denied any prior knowledge of the Watergate break-in. He reportedly said, however, that he met Hunt later in 1971 and that Hunt, who said he was working for the White House, tried to recruit him and other Cubans for an operation in Panama related to drug traffic.

Also Met Liddy

Mr. Artime, who appeared voluntarily and who was not accompanied by a lawyer, said that during one of his contacts with Hunt in Miami he also met G. Gordon Liddy, another convicted Watergate conspirator.

According to sources close to the case, Mr. Artime testified that he had first learned about the Watergate break-in from newspaper accounts.

A few months later, he reportedly said, he and a "group of friends" came up with a plan to set up the relief fund, but in the testimony did not elaborate on the inception. He is said to have consulted Hunt about the plan during a trip to Washington, and Hunt is said to have called it a "very good idea."

Shortly afterward, the sources quoted Mr. Artime as saying, Hunt's wife, Dorothy, came alone to Miami and told him that money would be provided to the fund. She is said to have assured Mr. Artime that the four Miamians would have no legal problems in Washington. But she reportedly said that Barker might have some

trouble in Miami because of a charge of having falsely notarized a signature to cash a \$25,000 check that went through the Committee for the Re-election of the President.

Gerstein for Prosecutor

Prosecuted by Mr. Gerstein, Barker was found guilty in the charge last November.

Following Mrs. Hunt's death in an airplane crash in December, 1972, Mr. Artime visited Hunt again in Washington. At that time, the sources said Mr. Artime said, Hunt gave him a Manila envelope with \$12,000 in cash.

Earlier this year, during another visit to Washington, Mr. Artime reportedly was told by Hunt that an American would

telephone him soon in Miami, identify himself with a code name and arrange for a new delivery of "support" money.

The man never called, according to the sources, but a few weeks later, he found in his mail box three envelopes containing \$3,000 each in cash.

Mr. Artime was quoted as saying that most of the \$21,000 was distributed among the four Miamians, although Martinez got less than the others because he is not married and has no close family.

The sources said that in his testimony Mr. Artime volunteered his own observations about the Watergate break-in. Although he characterized Hunt as a good political oper-

ator, he is said to have described both Hunt and Barker as "very bad agents," and added that he would recommend only Martinez for such an operation.

Mr. Artime also was quoted as saying that in one message from prison Hunt asked him for advice on how to invest his money. Mr. Artime reportedly declined and suggested that Hunt employ a professional consulting agency.