

The Curious Intrigues of Cuban Miami

Hatred of communism,
fear of the Democrats,
entail America's
dynamic new
immigrants in a web
of scandal reaching
into dark corners
and high places.

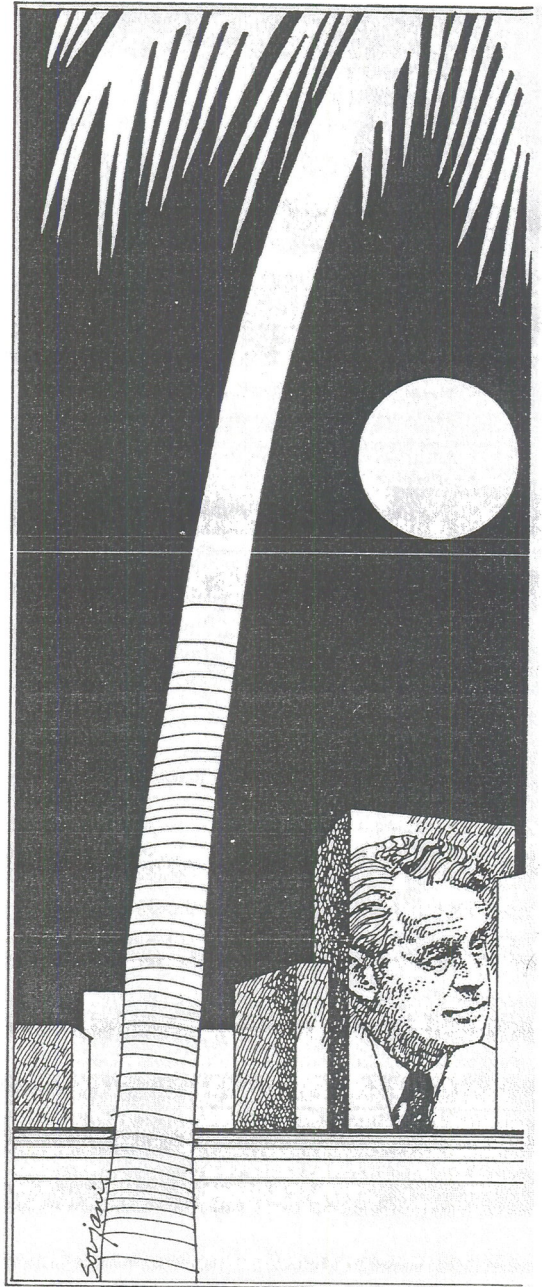
By Horace Sutton

There are sultry nights in Miami when the moon rises out of the sea yellow as heavy cream and big as all the world. It seems to hang there on the horizon, beaming on the citizens who inhabit the water-girt pleasurelands from the Gold Coast on the Beach across to Biscayne Bay and inland to the palmy reaches of Hialeah. On none does it shine more benignly than on Miami's newest residents, the Cuban exiles who now number more than 300,000.

In all the annals of U.S. immigration no ethnic group of émigrés has made a more vital or faster impact on the fortunes of a city. Within a dozen years the penniless, homeless arrivals have become bank presidents, wealthy merchants, newspaper publishers, owners of radio and television stations, professors in Miami colleges, and builders of some of Miami's most imposing new buildings. The small merchants have taken over a decaying section of the city and turned it into a prosperous Little Havana with hundreds of shops and service companies and some 300 restaurants that have added a new piquancy to south Florida cuisine. One in four Miamians is now a Cuban, bringing a new political force to power. In 1975, having gained citizenship, Cubans will represent a quarter of the electorate of Dade County, the greater Miami area.

It is altogether probable, given their vigorous drive and energy, that Cuban-Americans will one day represent a national political force. Uniquely trained, in the language and mores of two continents, some of them may well emerge as American diplomats who can effectively salvage the worsening U.S. position in Latin America.

And yet, for all its successes, the Cuban community today still seethes with intrigue and factionalism. Some of its members, linked to past anti-Castro adventures under CIA sponsorship, are in jail as Watergate burglars; others were lured into accepting assignments as political *agents provocateurs*. Still others, with mob connections that made Havana an open city during the Batista regime, have become the core of the Cuban Mafia, which provides the South American connection for the importation of hard drugs—heroin from the refining laboratories of Marseilles and cocaine from Latin America. In pre-Castro days cocaine paste smuggled up from Bolivia and Peru was refined into pure cocaine in Havana's clandestine laboratories and then shipped north. Some of the traffick-



Illustrations: John Sovjani

ers joined the exodus, continuing their trade in Miami and even branching out to marijuana and heroin. They have made Miami the main drug-smuggling city in America, passing New York.

The contrails of these groups sometimes cross and intermingle with still other paths followed by the Key Biscayne elite who dwell behind the barriers in the compound of the Florida White House.

The very circumstances that drove the Miami Cubans to emigrate welded them into a fierce anti-Communist force, eager to perform any service, go to any length, undertake any mission that would strike a blow against international com-

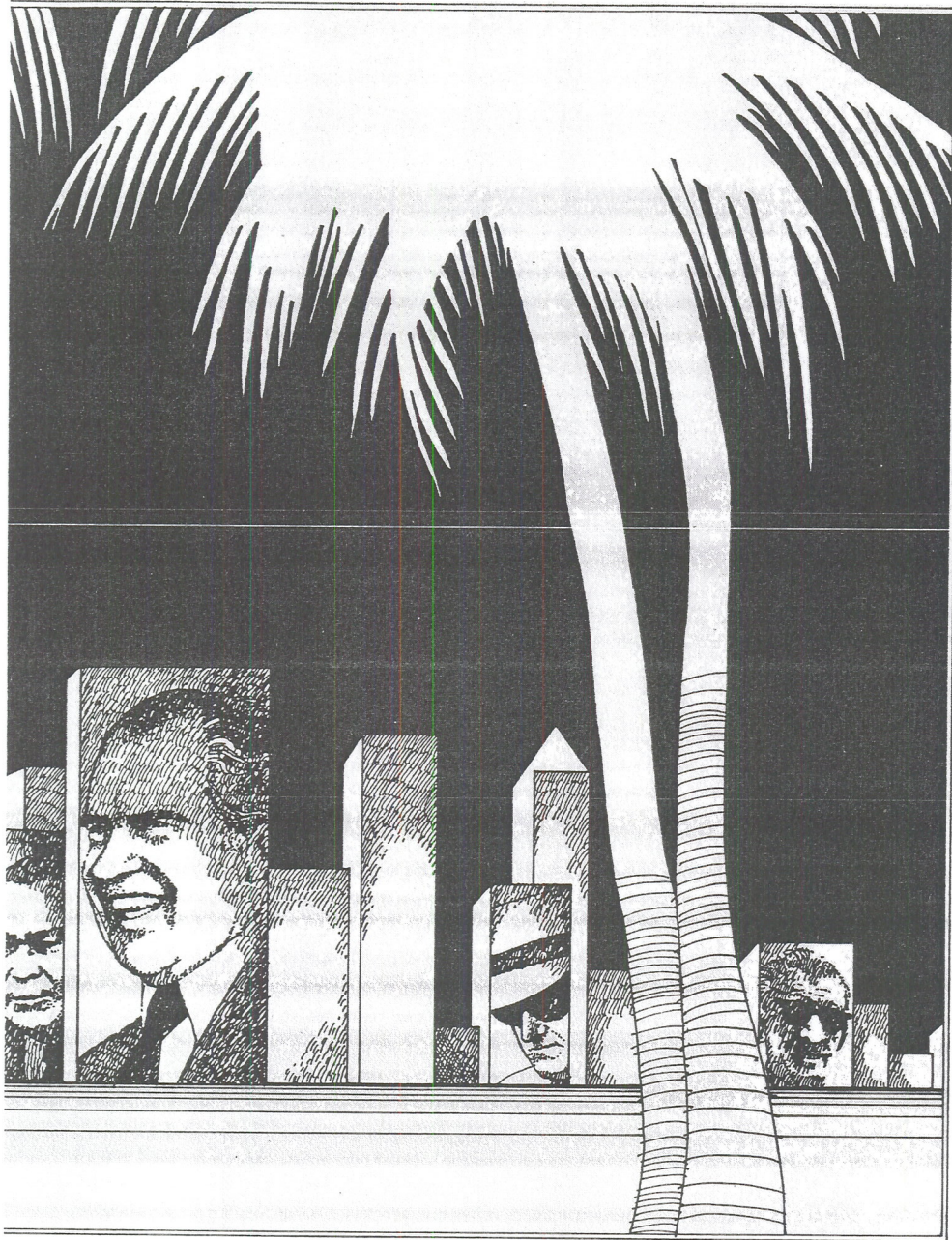
The CIA, the exiled Cubans, the radical Right, and The Mob had a mutual interest in getting Cuba back. Their efforts often interwove.

mittee, the White House felt the FBI was not properly motivated to do its job. Charles Colson, then a White House special counsel, brought in Everette Howard Hunt, Jr., whom he had met at a Brown University party. A prolific author, Hunt had written forty-six books, many of them based on his two decades with CIA in Europe and Latin America.

In the years immediately following the Castro takeover in Cuba, and for some time to follow, the Cuban colony was heavily influenced by the CIA. A prime conduit between the Cubans and The Agency was E. Howard Hunt. A Cuban who in those days was responsible for recruiting some of the leaders of the expeditionary force recalls now that "Eduardo," as Hunt was called, "was well known and very popular. He was the link with the powerful force that represented possible victory over Castro. When Eduardo called somebody, it was important, and it was reliable."

Colson says he submitted Hunt's name to Ehrlichman, and Ehrlichman hired him. Ehrlichman places the blame for Hunt on Colson. No matter who was responsible for his employment, Hunt, once hired, asked Colson if he could re-establish some of his old connections at The Agency. Colson called Ehrlichman, who then allegedly called Gen. Robert E. Cushman, Jr., at the time deputy director of the CIA, to introduce Hunt. Cushman recalls the conversation, but Ehrlichman has no recollection of the call. Which-ever, Hunt embarked on a year of cloak-and-dagger services shadowing Senator Kennedy, altering President Kennedy's classified cables concerning the Diem overthrow in Vietnam, placing taps on phones of those suspected of leaking information to the newspapers, and, finally, organizing the break-in at the office of Dr. Lewis J. Fielding, the Beverly Hills psychiatrist who was then treating Dr. Daniel Ellsberg.

Hunt was chosen for this task because it was important that no one with a clear White House connection be associated with the mission. To form a team, Hunt turned first to Bernard Barker, who had been first assistant in the Bay of Pigs. Barker functioned as the finan-



munism. A Cuban émigré, now an American citizen and vice-president of a local bank, calls Dade County "the number-one stronghold of radical anti-communism in the United States today."

The abortive invasion that ended in the disaster at the Bay of Pigs turned the new arrivals away from the Democratic party of President Kennedy, who had denied them air cover, and into the arms of the Republicans. Although the Bay of Pigs invasion was hatched during the Eisenhower regime, promoted strongly by Richard M. Nixon even after his defeat in 1960, it was Kennedy, the inheritor of the adventure, who drew the enmity of the Cuban exiles. However

simplistic the equation, the hatred smolders to this day.

The specter of a Democratic White House inhabited by Humphrey, Muskie, Jackson, or, worst of all, McGovern, any of whom might have moved toward easing the tension between Havana and Washington, loomed ominously before the 1972 elections; and the Miami Cubans were eager to help in any way to keep the Democrats out of power.

After the Pentagon papers were published, President Nixon created a Special Investigations Unit "to stop security leaks and investigate other sensitive security matters." As John Ehrlichman was later to testify before the Ervin com-



“Instead of mingling with the American community, we have formed an autonomous economy, created our ghetto.”

cial funnel from the CIA to the Miami Cubans.

The Agency, or “The Company,” as the CIA was called in the Cuban colony, supplied the funds, the training, and the psychological motivation to bind the Cuban exiles into a strike force. Although there was no open sponsorship following the Cuban missile crisis in 1962, the hard-line anticommunism of the Cubans was considered a useful tactical asset, and there was American support for it, however modified, until 1969. Even now there are some intellectual Cubans who aver that The Agency is keeping the lid on further activism. The result has been frustration in the Cuban community, and it mounted with the appearance of George McGovern and his statement that he might seek a negotiated settlement with Castro. Reinaldo Pico, a Cuban who demonstrated at J. Edgar Hoover’s funeral, was to tell *The Miami Herald’s* Roberto Fabricio, “Barker was our contact for CIA work for Cuba—and every time I would see him on the street I would ask if some-

thing was working, and for a few years he would just say no. Suddenly, last year, he said that Eduardo was in touch, and that at last we could work for Cuba.”

BARKER WAS BORN in Havana in 1917 of an American father and a Cuban mother. His grandfather, a Tennessee potato farmer, had gone to Cuba with Teddy Roosevelt’s Rough Riders and had stayed there after the war.

A U.S. veteran of World War II, Barker returned to Cuba and worked in Batista’s secret police, with, he has said, “the consent and cooperation of the FBI.” After Castro, he moved to Miami, worked in a store, managed a fighter, ultimately studied for a real estate license, and opened his own real estate office. Among his associates were Miguel A. Suarez, a prominent lawyer who headed Senator Gurney’s election committee three years ago, and Guillermo Alonso Pujol y Bermudez, son of a former vice-president of Cuba in the regime of Carlos Prio. Guillermo’s father, Alonso Pujol, a wealthy expatriate,

lives now in Caracas. His other son, Jorge Alonso Pujol y Bermudez, a veteran of the Bay of Pigs who had been ransomed from Castro for \$100,000 by his father, was caught in a narcotics sweep in Miami three years ago. Arrested with Alonso was Juan Restoy, a member of the Cuban legislature under Batista. Restoy escaped from jail with Mario Escandar, who had a long history of drug arrests. Escandar gave himself up, drew twelve years, a sentence that was later thrown out because authorization for the wire intercept that had to be signed personally by Attorney General John Mitchell was actually signed, in Mitchell’s absence, by his designee. Juan Restoy, who had a reputation as a smuggler in Cuba, was killed in a shoot-out with federal narcotics agents, two of whom he wounded. Alonso was convicted and sentenced to seven years, but he was later released and placed on probation. He was represented by Miguel Suarez.

While in Miami, for a Bay of Pigs reunion in the spring of 1971, Hunt looked up Barker; and the two of them, with their wives, held their own reunion at a Cuban restaurant. That summer Hunt flew to Miami and looked up Barker again. This time he asked Barker to join him in a “national security organization,” which, Hunt said, “was above both the CIA and the FBI.” Barker was to say later that he was impressed by Hunt’s White House position, which might one day prove important in the ultimate liberation of Cuba. He signed on with Hunt and brought in two Cuban members of his real estate firm, Eugenio Martinez and Felipe DeDiego, both confirmed Castro fighters. According to Barker, Martinez had participated in 300 “infiltrations” into Cuba, while DeDiego took part in a raid inside Cuba to capture some Castro documents. It was later to be revealed that Martinez had been on the CIA payroll at \$100 a month to screen newly arrived Cuban émigrés for information that might prove useful to Washington. According to Ambassador Richard Helms, former director of The Agency, Barker, Hunt, McCord, and Sturgis all had CIA connections, and it might have been that Mrs. Hunt was so connected, too.

With these credentials in the murky arts, Barker, Martinez, and DeDiego flew from Miami to Los Angeles early in September 1971 and broke into Dr. Fielding’s office. Barker says they found nothing on Ellsberg, but DeDiego testi-

fied that he had held the Ellsberg file while Martinez made pictures. Hunt, meanwhile, kept a surveillance at Dr. Fielding's house to ensure that the psychiatrist would not make a midnight visit to his office and interrupt his agents.

The Cuban team returned to Miami, and Hunt went to Washington, where he kept in active touch with Barker, using a secret phone in the Special Investigations Unit located in Room 16 in the basement of the Executive Office Building adjacent to the White House. This was the office of the so-called Plumbers. Bills for the calls were sent to the home of a twenty-three-year-old secretary named Kathy Chenow, who took them to an Ehrlichman aide for approval.

The Miami-Cuban connection developed by Hunt proved useful. Money raised in Texas (some of it already laundered in Mexico) and in Minnesota came in to former Secretary of Commerce Maurice Stans, who gave it to Gordon Liddy for further laundering. Five checks, totaling \$114,000, were sent to Bernard Barker, who, over a three-week period, converted them to cash in Miami's Republic National Bank in Little Havana. The Nixon campaign fund got \$111,500, \$2500 having been extracted for expenses.

By now Hunt had moved over to work for the Committee to Re-Elect the President, and, soon, so did his Miami-Cuban connections. Shortly after the famed Key Biscayne strategy meeting in March 1972, at which, according to Jeb Stuart Magruder's testimony to the Watergate committee, John Mitchell, then attorney general, approved plans to maintain a surveillance on the Democrats, reservations for a suite of rooms were made in the Fontainebleau Hotel in Miami Beach, which was to be headquarters for the Democrats during their convention.

Peculiarly enough, the reservations, booked to coincide with the Democratic convention, were made by an executive at the Miami Beach First National Bank who said he needed them for a friend named Edward Hamilton. The head of Miami First National is Frank Smathers, Jr., the brother of former Sen. George Smathers, who first introduced Richard Nixon to Key Biscayne, sold him his house there, and is now his neighbor.

Edward Hamilton is an alias that was used by Frank Sturgis (as well as by Hunt). Sturgis, an American soldier of fortune who also goes under the name of Frank Fiorini, has been active on both sides of the Cuban controversy. He

The Bay of Pigs was hatched under Eisenhower, promoted by Nixon, but it was Kennedy, the inheritor, who drew the exiles' enmity.

joined Castro in the Sierra Maestra, flew missions for him, was captured and beaten by Batista's police and released. Two weeks later he was flying to Mexico with Castro's air force chief, Maj. Pedro Diaz Lanz, to buy arms that were to be smuggled to Castro forces still in the mountains. Later, he and Major Diaz defected, and Fiorini claimed he had really been working undercover against the Castro government the whole time. Nonetheless, he was stripped of his American citizenship. It was through Senator Smathers's efforts that Fiorini got his citizenship back. At that point he assumed the name of Frank Sturgis. In May 1961, one month after the disaster at the Bay of Pigs, Fiorini showed up on the cover of *Parade*, the Sunday magazine insert, heralding a story on him by Jack Anderson, of all people. Entitled "We Will Finish the Job," the account told of Fiorini's daring exploits harassing Castro by boat and plane.

Fiorini-Sturgis was to surface again in 1968 when he led a group called the Secret Army Organization on an aborted thrust at Cuba. This time he left with an American task force from a Yucatán port to rendezvous with Cuban exiles sailing aboard another boat. The raid would have put forty men ashore in Cuba; but their craft came a cropper on coral reefs, and they ended up in jail in British Honduras. At the time Fiorini-Sturgis said that the Secret Army Organization was an anti-Communist movement that had bases in Mexico.

IT WAS NOT the first time armed secret groups of Americans and Cubans, banded together for anti-Communist or anti-Castro adventures, had been captured. In August 1963 a heavy cache of arms, all ostensibly for use in an attack against Castro, was found hidden in a cottage on Lake Pontchartrain, Louisiana, that belonged to Mrs. William Julius McLaney. The accounts of the discovery in the New Orleans newspapers listed no arrests by the FBI. Mrs. McLaney, whose husband was described as the operator of a race-horse feed business, said that at the request of friends in Cuba she had

lent the house to a newly arrived Cuban refugee. William McLaney's brother, Michael J. McLaney, described as having been in the tourist business in Cuba, actually had operated Havana casinos under the umbrella of Meyer Lansky during the Batista years. Even after Castro came out of the hills (and the casinos were under the aegis, for a short time, of Frank Fiorini), McLaney took over the tables in Havana's Nacional Hotel from the Cleveland Syndicate. (Later, McLaney was invited to leave the Bahamas, where he was endeavoring to work out an arrangement with Lynden Pindling's PLP. He is now operating the casino in Haiti.) Lansky is said to have had a \$1 million price on Castro's head, and McLaney, remembering those cushy days in Cuba, is reported to have once said, "If it weren't for Castro, Caesar's Palace [one of the largest hotels and casino operations in Las Vegas] would have been built in Havana."

The Lake Pontchartrain cache included more than a ton of dynamite, bomb casings, striker assemblies, primer cord, and blasting caps—enough to start a small war. The FBI announced no arrests to the newspapers, but in fact, eleven arrests were made, including a number of Cuban exiles and several Americans, among them Richard Lauchli, Jr., known as one of the founding fathers of the Minutemen.

SOME, POSSIBLY FAR-OUT, THEORIES, advanced by those at variance with the findings of the Warren report, have suggested that one or more of the allegedly anti-Castro build-ups in Central America after the Bay of Pigs were really a camouflage for the assassination attempt on President Kennedy. Kennedy's failure to provide air cover for the Bay of Pigs, his enforcement of the neutrality act, his alleged curtailment of the CIA, the liberal swing of his administration, all produced dissidents on the hard Right, many of them with means, many with the desire to encourage a force that would destroy him.

The CIA, the exiled Cubans, the radical Right, and the Mob had a mutual interest in getting Cuba back. Frequently their efforts were interwoven. As the clock ticked toward the 1972 political campaigns, the Miami Cubans were put on alert for new adventures. Hunt flew often to consult with Barker in Miami, telling him on one visit to commence training his men so they would be in top physical condition. In the interests of anticommu-

nism and of a Republican victory, they were to be used as *agents provocateurs*, street ruffians, and burglars.

Eugenio Martinez, a veteran of the Ellsberg break-in, asked a onetime CIA operative named Pablo Fernandez to enlist the aid of ten young persons who could assume the role of hippies. They were to march on McGovern's headquarters during the Democratic convention, rioting and relieving themselves in public. Fernandez had to turn it down even though it paid a reputed \$700 a week. The Cuban, who made \$800 a month as a clerk, had already signed on with a special investigator of the Miami police department to foment an overt action at the convention by offering machine guns to the Vietnam Veterans Against the War, who were encamped nearby. "We were hoping for the overt act necessary to produce a charge of conspiracy," Maj. Adam Klimkowski of the City of Miami Police Department was later to say.

The Martinez idea, intended to embarrass McGovern, fell through, but other plans were to be carried out. As Barker and his force prepared to leave for Washington to begin a series of covert operations that was to end with Watergate, J. Edgar Hoover died in the capital.

To handle the demonstrations and counterdemonstrations that were to be staged by the political intelligence group, Barker drew on the services of Reinaldo Pico, Frank Sturgis (Fiorini), Eugenio Martinez, Felipe DeDiego, and an expert locksmith named Virgilio Gonzalez. Pablo Fernandez did accompany the band to help start fights at the Hoover funeral. At the Capitol the next night, in a protest meeting unrelated to the Hoover death, antiwar protesters, including Daniel Ellsberg, were intoning the names of the Vietnam dead. The demonstrators were set upon by the Cuban group; Pico and Sturgis pummeled the pacifists. Both men were arrested. After a quiet aside to the police by an unidentified onlooker, Pico and Sturgis were released.

It was to be a busy spring. Jack Anderson wrote a piece suggesting that Sturgis and Martinez may have been implicated in the May 13 break-in at the Chilean embassy. Late in May the Cuban team was to launch the first of three assaults on Democratic headquarters at the Watergate. The first was unsuccessful. During the second one they placed taps on some of the phones and took photographs of documents that later were to be developed in Rich's photo shop in

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Miami. Barker insisted he had been told by Hunt to search for documents that would indicate contributions to the Democrats from Castro Cuba or from leftist organizations.

On June 16 the assault team, pared down to Barker, Martinez, Sturgis, and Gonzalez, once more left Miami for Washington, this time to meet their Armageddon. The capture of the Watergate burglars in the capital that night, Sturgis-Fiorini included, created a flurry at the Fontainebleau in Miami Beach. The man from the Smathers bank arrived at the hotel and asked that the reservations that had been made in the name of Edward Hamilton, the Sturgis-Fiorini alias, be changed to the name of Edward Failor. When Mr. Failor arrived, he filed nightly intelligence reports to Clark McGregor, the Nixon campaign manager, and when he left, his bill was sent to the Committee to Re-Elect the President.

The capture of the Watergate burglars set off a chain of firecrackers in Miami. *The Miami Herald* ran a full-page story under an eight-column streamer headline that read, "Spy Thriller Spins Web to Miami." Among the tidbits gleaned was the news that the FBI had traced a portion of the \$6300 seized from the Watergate burglars to the Republic National Bank of Miami. The arrested men had registered as employees of Ameritas, a Florida real estate company established a few years earlier by Miguel Suarez, an avid Nixon supporter, a onetime Gurney campaign manager in the Latin community, and a friend of Barker's since they both worked at a Cuban clinic some years ago.

The Republic National Bank had been operated, until his arrest and incarceration in Central American jails for allegedly stealing an airplane and falsifying bank records, by Dr. Arnaldo Masvidal, a Cuban alien who had given sums variously estimated at \$5000 to \$25,000 to Senator Gurney's campaign. Dr. Masvidal, who plans to start a Cuban newspaper in Miami, is also represented by Miguel Suarez.

Actually, requests for reservations at the Watergate for the break-in team had

been made on the Ameritas letterhead. Suarez holds that the stationery was used either by Barker or Barker's wife, but that one of the burglars "had interests in Ameritas."

Barker's daughter recalls knowing Sturgis since she was a child. When captured in Washington, Sturgis was found to be carrying a full set of fake identification papers, including a Mexican visa made out to Edward Hamilton, the name in which the Committee to Re-Elect the President originally had engaged rooms at the Fontainebleau. Jack Anderson arrived at the bail hearing and asked that Sturgis be released in his custody.

ON JUNE 18, one day after the break-in, Leo Zani, then press aide to Sen. Edward Gurney (later to be singled out by John Dean as "Nixon's only sure friend" on the Watergate committee), phoned *The Miami News* with a good story. The *News* was invited to have its reporter inspect the voting rolls in Dade County, where they would discover that the Watergate burglars had registered as Democrats. Zani suggested that in truth the burglars were double agents whose mission had really been to embarrass the Republicans. Martinez had registered as a Democrat in 1971 and Frank Sturgis in 1962. In any case Zani was to call up later in the day. He had been to the Committee to Re-Elect the President and had returned with the theory that the burglars were in the employ of Jack Anderson, who had been a constant gadfly to the administration. "We know that Sturgis is Anderson's tie with the Cuban committee. . . . Somebody finked. Everything is ready-made. Talk about double agents," the Gurney press aide said, "Martinez and Fiorini [Sturgis] were double agents. The others did not know they were being used. That is why they are not getting out of jail."

Ronald Ziegler, the President's own press aide, offered no theories, only disdain. He called it "a third-rate burglary." But if the principals were already cutting away from those who had been caught—as governments traditionally disown spies who have been captured—the Cubans among them were hailed as heroes by Miami's exiled community. Appearing on a William Buckley television show with E. Howard Hunt, Attorney Mario Lazo declared, "These men are heroes who believed they were fighting communism. We should give them a medal instead of throwing them in jail."

A fourteen-man "Committee of Help" was formed by Miami Cubans, and five accounts were opened at the Bank of Miami. One was under the name of "The Miami Watergate Defendants' Fund," while the others were opened separately for Barker, Martinez, Gonzalez, and Sturgis. The fund totaled nearly \$6000.

Besides Mario Lazo, the committee included Manuel F. Artime, who had been the leader of the Bay of Pigs. Artime has said that he owed his life to Barker, who had smuggled him out of Cuba with the help of the anti-Castro underground. Throughout 1960, during the CIA build-up for the Bay of Pigs, Artime and Hunt had an apartment together in Miami, and Artime is the godfather of one of Hunt's children. While denying prior knowledge of the Watergate break-in, Artime admitted he met Hunt in 1971, when Hunt told him he was working for the White House. At that time Hunt tried to enlist him, along with other Cubans, in an investigation of illicit drug movements in Panama. During one of Hunt's Miami visits,

Artime also met G. Gordon Liddy. Frank Sturgis said, after his capture at the Watergate, that in 1971 he had joined Hunt in an investigation of the drug traffic that was entering the United States from Mexico, Paraguay, and Panama. (Some reports suggested that the Plumbers unit even had been involved in an assassination attempt on Brig. Gen. Omar Torrijos Herrera, the military ruler of Panama who has been hostile to the United States.)

The tie-in between this group and drug investigation, as farfetched as it may appear on first look, becomes apparent when one looks back to the Plumbers, whose formation the President authorized a week after the Pentagon papers were published. John Ehrlichman was assigned to supervise the unit, which, in the President's words, was "to stop security leaks and to investigate other sensitive matters," working on what was called "the heavy stuff." Ehrlichman gave the job to Egil Krogh, Jr., who set up shop in the basement of the Executive Office Building, to which, by the middle

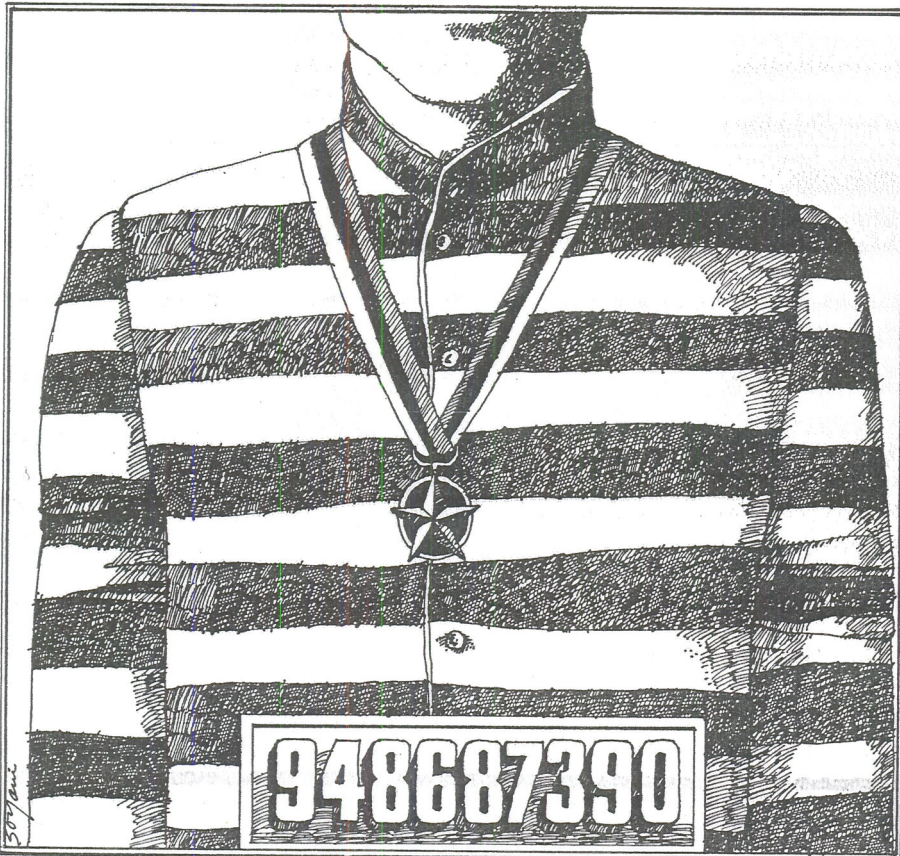
of August 1971, Hunt was reporting. The unit was augmented by G. Gordon Liddy, newly fired from the Treasury Department for fighting the gun-control position adopted by the administration. At Treasury, where he worked with Eugene Rossides, an assistant secretary, Liddy held a specific narcotics responsibility. He was charged with creating ideas and programs during the national narcotics crisis in 1970. Krogh, too, had been similarly occupied. As Ehrlichman's assistant in domestic affairs, Krogh had the responsibility of narcotics control, overseeing the work of such agencies as the Bureau of Narcotics and Dangerous Drugs, Customs, and other special-action groups. He was also active in the Cabinet committee for international narcotics control. Krogh knew Liddy at Treasury, and it is not inconceivable to consider that once in command of a freewheeling unit formed at presidential command, with Cubans enlisted for action work in the field, Krogh, with Liddy, might have entertained clandestine antidrug forays no matter whose territory they invaded.

While Artime was never recruited for any of this work, he was visited by Hunt's wife, Dorothy, later killed in a plane crash in Chicago, who assured him that the captured Cubans would not endure legal difficulties in Washington and that money would be delivered to the aid fund. After Mrs. Hunt's death, Artime visited Hunt in Washington and, according to some sources, was given \$12,000 in cash. Later, Artime said, he found \$9000 stuffed in envelopes and placed in his mailbox. He said the money was distributed to the families of the Cubans.

After the Bay of Pigs, Artime was the mastermind of a second operation for which arms and ammunition were bought in Europe. A few hundred men were recruited, and the expedition was mounted in Costa Rica and Nicaragua. Artime, who is in the export and import trade and deals in meat, is said to be involved with President Anastasio Somoza Debayle of Nicaragua. He was also one of the lessees in Centro Comercial Cubano, the shopping center that Charles "Bebe" Rebozo had built and for which he was able to obtain financing through the Small Business Administration.

An American born of Cuban parents, Rebozo had gotten a start as the operator of gas stations in Florida. When controls were placed on tires during World War II, Rebozo made his first real money by ex-

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panding into the tire-recapping business. By coincidence, one of the government officials working in the legal section of the tire-rationing part of OPA was Richard Nixon, then a young lawyer fresh from Duke University. It was a period of Nixon's career he never advertises in his official biographies.

Although some have tried to put Nixon in Florida in the Forties, the accepted meeting between Nixon and Rebozo is said to have occurred in 1951 when George Smathers, then Florida senator, suggested that Nixon, tired from a hard campaign, recuperate in the Florida sun. He put him in touch with Rebozo, who took him deep-sea fishing.

As the Cubans began to flow into Miami after Castro, Rebozo made connections with the community, joining a Cuban group known as El Centro, for which the shopping center was named, and agreeing to take a position as co-chairman of the city's inter-American committee. One of Rebozo's links to the Cuban community was Dr. Edgardo Buttari, former mayor of Havana, who, in 1968, headed the Cubans for Nixon. Rebozo brought Buttari into the Centro shopping center to organize the merchants, each of whom was eligible for a loan of up to \$25,000 from the Office of Economic Opportunity.

To build the Centro, Rebozo and his partner, C. V. W. Trice, Jr., employed the Polizzi Construction Company, operated by "Big Al," Alfonso Polizzi, a Cleveland underworld figure once known in Ohio, where he served time, as head of the Mayfield Road Mob. Polizzi told the Kefauver committee investigating crime in America in 1950 that he had retired from less savory ventures and was pursuing a straight career; but as late as 1964, according to an investigation by *Newsday*, the Federal Bureau of Narcotics continued to consider him one of the underworld.

Rebozo and Trice sold El Centro to a Canadian group a year later, making a \$200,000 profit. Buttari was able to get his citizenship with dispatch and obtained a job with HEW in Miami that pays him \$26,898 a year. However, even

after the sale, Rebozo maintained an interest in a coin laundry for which space had been set aside in the center and which had not opened. One José Alonso had secured a lease from Buttari to operate this laundry and had obtained a \$25,000 loan from OEO to run it. But in 1969 Congressman Wright Patman, the Democrat from Texas who was chairman of the House Committee on Banking and Currency, objected strenuously to the Rebozo loan from SBA for the Centro project, and at that time Alonso decided not to accept his OEO loan. It turned out that Alonso, a refugee from Castro's Cuba, was the manager of Wash Well, Inc., a chain of coin laundries owned by Rebozo. Indeed, Alonso was paying Rebozo rent for an apartment behind one of the Wash Well stores. Once Centro was sold, Alonso's title to the laundry disappeared, along with his request for the loan, and the place opened for customers with Rebozo as owner. "Mr. Rebozo decided he was going to own it," Alonso was later to say.

It was Rebozo, along with Smathers, who was instrumental in helping to form the presidential compound at Key Biscayne. Smathers had bought a ranch house there in 1967, leased it to Nixon during and following the 1968 campaign, and sold it to the President-elect in December of that year. The house next door has been Rebozo's residence for many years. However, Smathers's other neighbor had been Manuel Arca, Jr., a Cuban exile. Arca had lived in the house for ten years, his first permanent home since Castro took away his Cuban house and installed his brother, Raul, in it.

Stating that he was acting as Nixon's agent, Rebozo asked Arca to sell his Biscayne house in order to ensure presidential privacy. The house was sold at a loss to Arca, with Rebozo handling all the details. "The President of the United States wanted it. What else could I do?" Arca said. "Besides, it was an honor. I was very glad and happy to sell it to him," he added.

Through the years such Cuban accommodation had been a great aid to Nixon, who was friendly with the late Fulgencio Batista and with a number of other wealthy Cubans. Carlos Prio, the president of Cuba who was ousted by Batista, is a multimillionaire with interests in sugar and real estate in Puerto Rico. His home is in Miami, and he was an active pro-Nixon placard carrier during the Miami conventions. Another staunch supporter is Nicholas Arroyo, who be-

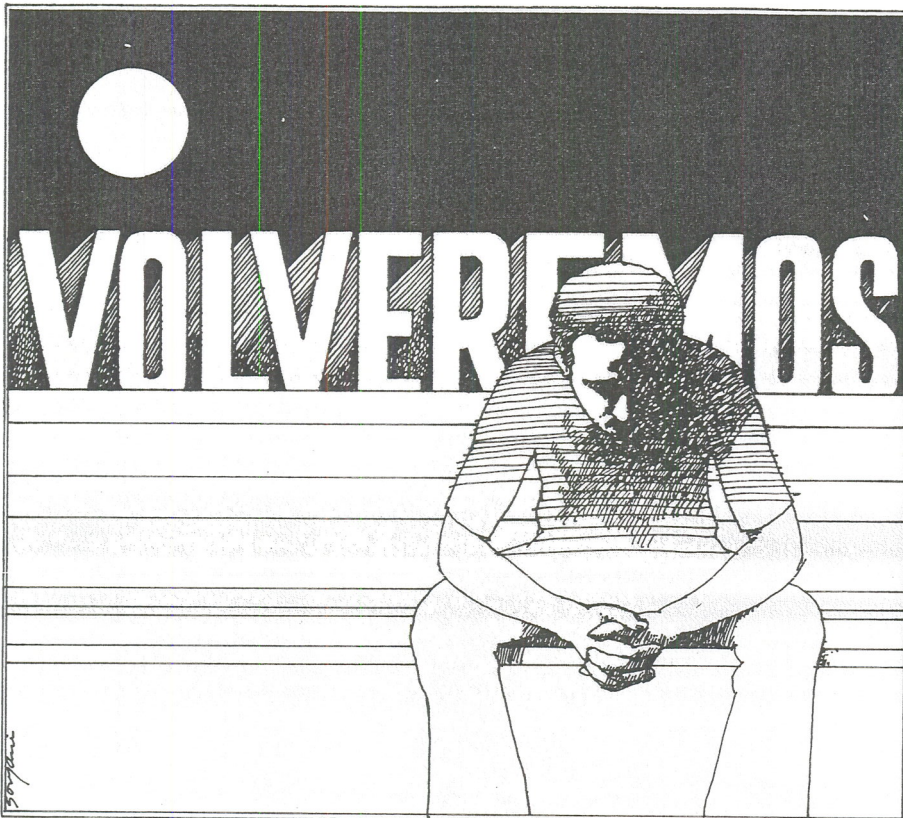
came Batista's ambassador to Washington. When Castro assumed power, Arroyo, who had once maintained a successful architectural office with his wife, remained in Washington. His investments include sugar in Ecuador and Central America and real estate in Washington and Virginia. Some Cuban sources in Miami put his wealth at \$10 million.

MUCH OF THE LAND on Key Biscayne, the island a few minutes from Miami where Rebozo first began to seed his own fortune and where Nixon has accrued profits from his own real estate investments, was developed early by the late José Manuel Aleman, who had been minister of education and, in the words of one informed Miami Cuban, "owned three or four other ministries," one of which was the national treasury.

A senator under Carlos Prio, Aleman spent most of his time in Miami. Before his death he built Miami Stadium, which he willed to his son, José Aleman, who is also represented by Miguel Suarez. The senior Aleman owned Cape Florida, which was to become the state park on the south end of Key Biscayne. Ironically, Cape Florida is such a popular retreat for hundreds of Cuban exiles and their families that park officials often close the gates by 11:00 A.M. Sunday morning. The traffic jam on Key Biscayne at departure time on Sunday afternoons often lasts until evening.

Some perceptive members of the Miami Cuban community see this clannishness as acute introversion. "Instead of mingling with the American community, it has formed an autonomous economy," says one Cuban former editor. "It is creating its own ghetto, feeding on social events that recall the old days in Havana when social position was based on membership in one of the big clubs."

That opinion is shared by Dr. Bernardo Benes, now vice-president of the Washington Federal Savings and Loan, who arrived here at the age of twenty-five and is now successful and thirty-eight. "Unfortunately, many people in the Cuban-exile community," he says, "have not learned the American way of life. We are too many in a relatively small city. We represent twenty-five percent of the population of Dade County, and therefore we have created our own environment. We are self-sufficient, so to speak. You can live in Dade County today, being a Cuban, having a little money, making a living, and you really don't have to speak English to live



“Some Cubans are being buried vertically. The dead will not rest until Cuba returns to the free world.”

an almost full life. This has prevented many Cubans from understanding the American free society in which we live. We tend to ignore all that and adapt ourselves to our new realities. I believe the next generation, the children of the exiles, are going to understand American life much better.”

Economist Antonio Jorge, once in Castro's finance ministry and now a professor at Merrimack College in North Andover, Massachusetts, likens Cuban success in south Florida to Operation Bootstrap in Puerto Rico and the celebrated *Wirtschaftswunder* of postwar Germany. The exiles had the stamina and vigor to supply themselves, and supply and demand grew simultaneously. Cubans arrived in America to find economic values more important than they had been at home. That gave them all a prod with an *aguijón*, a steel-tip shaft used to move oxen. “Their alertness and vigor was translated into economic terms once they had learned the ways of the host country,” says Professor Jorge.

But the native drive of the Cubans, spurred as it may have been by the in-

fluences of the American work ethic, is not a phenomenon but a natural evolution. That is the theory of Prof. Juan Clark, who teaches sociology at the vast south campus of Miami Dade Junior College. “Cubans are a mix of Spanish people descended from the northern provinces—Basques, Galicians, and others, conditioned over centuries to industrious labor.” If, however, Professor Jorge warns, the Cuban colony maintains its pace of economic development and there is not more integration between the Cubans and the rest of the nation, then the Cuban society may ghettoize itself, and its self-feeding economy may stall.

Still, the rate of Cuban naturalization is now 1500 a month. Sixty-two thousand Cubans voted in the last election, and the estimate for this November is between 95,000 and 100,000. Within five years Cubans will have the capability to elect their own mayor, but it is unlikely their political concepts will change. They believe American rapprochement with the two major Communist capitals represents tactical games but that the larger strategy must be anti-Communist.

Americans may interpret detente with the Communist capitals as a lessening of tension, but Cubans are not interested in lessening tension. They are belligerently anti-Communist. They passionately believe that any softening toward communism means that communism will press for further gains because its basic premise is expansionist and activist. They tend to dismiss Watergate as *El Gato Mojado*, a play on words that comes out to mean “The Wet Cat.” Watergate appears to them to be like Latin politics, an art form that Americans have suddenly begun to learn. Cubans are not interested in domestic politics; they are concerned about Communists versus non-Communists in the international arena. They worry less about Watergate and its erosion of the foundations of the republic than they worry that Puerto Rico could swing to the Left.

They are willing to undertake any means to contain communism, but they have been warned by the State Department against further overt action. Juan Clark, a paratroop veteran of the Bay of Pigs, feels that the CIA is keeping the lid on the Miami Cubans to avoid further incursions against Castro. Now an American citizen and about to earn a doctorate, Clark still would be willing to return to a free Cuba if he thought he could make a contribution to the mother country.

“To be a Cuban and live in exile in Miami is a frustrating experience,” says Dr. Bernardo Benes. “We were never prepared to lose Cuba, much less to a foreign ideology.” One evening recently, he says, he had dinner at a Cuban restaurant whose owner is making a remarkable success in Miami. Yet the man whispered to him imploringly, “When do you think we are going to go back?”

Despite the successes here the sentiment for the soil of the homeland remains undiminished. In Woodlawn Park Cemetery on SW Eighth Street, in Miami, some Cubans are being buried vertically. The dead will not rest until Cuba is restored to the free world.

The air in Cuban Miami is filled with as much unfaltering hope as in the Jewish cry “Next Year in Jerusalem.” That idea strikes fancy with Dr. Benes. “Don’t ask me how, don’t ask me where, but it is a very strong feeling. Tomorrow in Havana. I like to believe that it’s going to happen.”

“Volveremos,” the Cuban bumper stickers in Miami declare. “We shall return.” □