

Witness: Watergate

MIAMI
HERALD
6/9/73 p1

Figures Called

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Watergate burglars Bernard Barker and Frank Sturgis were involved in recruiting agents to discredit anti-war groups during the 1972 national political conventions the Broward County State Attorney's Office have been told.

The evidence was given in a sworn statement by Vincent J. Hannard of Miramar, a private investigator who was disqualified as a witness in a 1971 Miami narcotics case. The reason: psychiatrists testified that Hannard could neither understand the witness oath nor tell the difference between truth and lies.

In sworn testimony before two assistant state attorneys Hannard said he was contacted by Barker and Sturgis before the first of two Watergate burglaries. He said he was offered work in "intelligence and instigation" during the conventions at Miami Beach.

HANNARD claimed he received separate phone calls from Sturgis, and maybe Barker, and two others and that they asked him to help disrupt and discredit activities of the Vietnam Veterans Against the War — an organization thoroughly infiltrated by police and federal informers before and during the conventions.

Hannard said Sturgis told him that if he was not interested, he would make the offer instead to John Eck, a Miami gun dealer who also was once a registered representative of the Castro government.

Eck later said he was contacted in April 1972, but refused to say by whom, other than that it was someone involved in the Watergate case.

Assistant State Attorney Kenneth Jenne confirmed that he had questioned Hannard about his contacts with the convicted Watergate burglars. He declined to reveal

details except to say he took Hannard's statement as part of an investigation into possible conspiracy to commit crimes during the two conventions.

Hannard said he told Jenne and Robert Butterworth, another assistant state attorney, that in the week prior to May 29, 1972, he received four phone calls proposing undercover convention work of the first attempt to break into Democratic National Committee offices at the Watergate hotel and office complex in Washington.

According to Hannard, each call came from a different person, and each caller tried to persuade him that it was his "patriotic duty" to help undermine the VVAW.

Hannard said Sturgis identified himself as Frank Fiorini, his name before he charged it to Sturgis. Hannard said he was sure it was Sturgis, because he has known him for more than 13 years and recognized his voice.

Hannard said another caller identified himself as Barker. However, Hannard said he never has met Barker and

could not be certain who actually called him.

But the first of the four calls, he claimed, came from a man who called himself Guy Hawkes. Hannard said Hawkes was an agent of the Central Intelligence Agency in Miami several years ago, and that he used to know him.

"I'm sure this call did not come from him," said Hannard. "I don't know who it was."

THE HERALD has been unable to confirm that any-



Frank Sturgis
... named

one using that name ever worked for the CIA in Miami. A spokesman for the agency promised to check the name, then reported that no one using it has worked for the agency during the past 20 years — as far back as he checked.

Hannard said he could not give a name, if any, used by the fourth person who called him.

Hannard said he told an FBI agent, Jack Ackerly, about the calls shortly after he received them. Ackerly said he knows Hannard, but

refused to talk about conversations he may have had with him.

According to Hannard, none of the four callers told him what would be expected of him if he agreed to do the proposed undercover work. But he said each mentioned the VVAW and described the task as covert, intelligence and instigation.

"It was clear from what they said that I was supposed to incite trouble or riots from the anti-war groups," he said. "I was told it would be activity pertaining to the convention and an opportunity to travel.

"And there would be great rewards when the President was reelected."

HANNARD SAID he was offered \$1,000 a week for that work, but that in the fourth call the offer was raised to \$1,500.



Kenneth Jenne
... asks questions

He said he turned it down because he was suspicious of the motives of the callers — but might have accepted such an offer had it come in writing and from someone he could trust.

Hannard first met Sturgis when the two were active in

Cuba during the Castro takeover, he said.

Records show that Hannard was registered as a Castro agent in the United States and in Cuba in 1959 and part of 1960. He was employed until mid-1960 as a detective for Castro, reportedly as a double agent.

During that period, he gave information to the FBI which resulted in the arrest of three persons charged with conspiring to sell stolen machine guns to the Castro government.

In 1961, he renounced support of the Castro regime and formed a group known as Freedom Fighters for America to launch an anti-Castro attack on Cuba. The effort collapsed, and the group was disbanded.

He was convicted in 1962 of impersonating an FBI agent and has been convicted of operating an ambulance service and a detective agency without required city licenses.

But he was also an informant for federal and local police agencies and was a

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key witness in several cases.

IN 1961, Hannard was credited with giving information leading to the arrest of alleged labor racketeer Charles Karps for possessing \$50,000 worth of stolen bonds.

And in 1970, his testimony helped convict former Miami police inspector Francis Lee Napier for conspiracy to sell

875 pounds of marijuana smuggled into Miami from Jamaica.

Defense lawyers dispute Hannard's mental ability to allow investigators to reconstruct his conversations with Napier. A psychiatrist testified that Hannard didn't know the difference between truth and lies, and he was disqualified as a witness.

An appeals court set Napier's guilty verdict aside until a determination about Hannard could be made, the Napier pleaded guilty.