

Arrested Soldier of Fortune Had Served in Castro Army

By Carl Bernstein

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In U.S. District Court Thursday, Frank Sturgis—also known as Frank Fiorini—was described by a prosecutor as the most well-traveled of the five men arrested in the alleged plot to bug the offices of the Democratic National Committee.

Contending that Sturgis would be the most likely of the five to flee, the prosecutor successfully argued for a second time Friday that the 47-year-old soldier of fortune be denied a reduction in the \$50,000 bond that has kept him inside the District of Columbia jail since Saturday.

At the time of his arrest, Sturgis was carrying a birth certificate, two driver's licenses and a social security card—all in the name of Edward Joseph Hamilton.

Since 1954, when he disappeared on a hunting trip in the Dismal Swamp of North Carolina, Sturgis has demonstrated a propensity for dropping out of sight and then showing up in strange places at strange times.

In 1958, after his wife and friends in Norfolk reported



FRANK STURGIS
.. held on high bond

him missing, Sturgis unexpectedly appeared in an Associated Press wirephoto from Cuba. It showed him standing over the mass grave of 75 executed followers of Fulgencio Batista. He had joined the rebel army of Fidel Castro in the hills of Oriente Province.

A year later, Sturgis landed a plane in Miami with the chief of Castro's air corps, Maj. Pedro Diaz

Law, and immediately joined the Cuban exile campaign against Castro.

The campaign may or not have taken him to the Bay of Pigs (depending on whom you listen to), definitely landed him in Guatemala (where he trained a guerrilla force of 23 Cuban exiles), and eventually led to a jail in British Honduras.

On that occasion, in 1968, Sturgis told British authorities that the boat on which he and 10 companions were arrested was on a voyage to make a commando raid in Cuba. However, the Mexican captain of the craft claimed that Sturgis and his friends had hijacked the boat.

By that time, Sturgis had already had his American citizenship revoked (for serving in a foreign army, Castro's), then restored (with help from then Florida Sen. George Smathers) had been arrested for making a propaganda leaflet raid over Havana with his old friend, Diaz Lanz, and had acquired the reputation of something of an irresponsible adventurer among Cuban exile leaders in Miami.

Miguel Acocá, a Washington Post special correspondent who said he knew Sturgis "quite well" in Miami recalled:

"Until 1967, when I last saw him, Fiorini was part of that band of seedy anti-Castro James Bonds living off anti-Castro movements in Florida, and getting money from right-wing Texans and Californians."

Acoca said Sturgis was "among those questioned by the FBI after John Kennedy's assassination because of his activities. At one time his Miami house was an arsenal, complete with 20 millimeter cannons."

See FIORINI, D3, Col. 1

FIORINI, From D1

Cuban exile leaders variously described Sturgis as unreliable, a romantic, a seeker of publicity, a hanger-on constantly trying to assert himself into whatever intrigue he could find at the moment.

The latest of his adventures—notwithstanding the break-in at Democratic National Committee headquarters—appears to have been an attempt to drum up Cuban exile support for President Nixon's decision to mine the Haiphong harbor.

According to reliable exile sources in Miami, Sturgis and another of the suspects in the bugging case, Bernard L. Barker, showed up uninvited at a meeting called to organize a demonstration supporting the President.

Both Barker and Sturgis spoke at the meeting, the particularly tried to assume sources said, and Sturgis a role of leadership in the demonstration, claiming he represented the interests of exiles from "captive nations." He eventually ended up driving one of the lead trucks in a 200-vehicle convoy that was in the vanguard of the demonstration, the sources said.

Cubans in Miami reported that Sturgis and Barker had been attempting to organize exile demonstrations at the Democratic National Convention next month, for the purpose of embarrassing the party.

"The problem in figuring out Sturgis," one Miami newspaper reporter has said, "is that you don't know how much of what you hear about him is self-generated and exaggerated, and what is fact."

The reporter cited Sturgis' purported involvement with the Central Intelligence Agency as a case in point. "There's no question he might have done some relatively minor work for the agency off and on," the reporter said, "But some people think he was once a big wheel who organized guerrillas; and other people think he was supposed to report on Cubans who were too wild for the CIA."

Separating fantasy, fact and fancy, this much is defi-

nitely known about Frank Sturgis, the stocky, wavy-haired itinerant with an equal fondness for jungle fatigues and white-on-white shirts.

He was born Frank Anthony Fiorini in Norfolk, Va., worked as a bartender and waiter and completed two years of college at Old Dominion College there.

During World War II, he served as a corporal in the Marine Corps and reportedly was wounded at Okinawa. Following the war, he served as a reserve lieutenant in the Civil Air Patrol and worked as a flight instructor at Glenrock Airport in Norfolk.

In 1952, when his mother (said to be a cripple in newspaper reports) married Ralph Sturgis, Fiorini changed his name to Sturgis.

His two-month disappearance on that hunting trip in 1954 ended when Sturgis turned up in San Diego. He told police he remembered little about the interval except that it had been "too late" for hunting, so he went

to a movie in Elizabeth City, N.C., instead. Following the movie, Sturgis said, he was mugged and beaten by four men.

By the time he showed up in Cuba in 1958 (he became interested in the revolution when he attended a pro-Castro rally during his Miami honeymoon a year earlier) Sturgis was using the name Fiorini again. In a letter datelined "of Cuba" he wrote:

"My Darling Wife: It breaks my heart to be away from you but I cannot undo what I started. I have gotten myself a very good reputation with Fidel and—believe it or not—he is a good friend of mine."

Following the march of Castro's rebels into Havana, Sturgis claims that the new premier made him overseer of gambling in that city. Some exiles say the claim is true, others say Sturgis was simply posted at one of the casinos as a bouncer.

Soon after his return to Miami from Cuba, Sturgis and Bernard L. Barker—identified in some reports as the leader of the group arrested inside the Democratic National Committee offices—became acquainted.

That relationship goes back at least 11 years, according to Sturgis' lawyer, Joseph A. Rafferty Jr.

Columnist Jack Anderson, whom Sturgis has previously supplied with information and who yesterday offered to take legal custody of the suspect, told reporters that "Frankie . . . said he worked for Barker" when they were arrested.

Meanwhile, Sturgis' attorney told a judge that his client lives with a wife and daughter in Miami, where he earns \$150 a week as a salesman for an aluminum company and owner of a salvage firm. He argued that Sturgis is a good candidate for reduction of bond and urged that he be released to the custody of Anderson or Barker's daughter, Marie Elena Moffett of Washington.

The Barkers and the Sturgises often play pinochle together, Mrs. Moffett said.