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Strange Saga from Florida

IRS 'Sex Spy' Talks

Miami

A Miami woman said yesterday that she was recruited by the Internal Revenue Service in 1972 to take part in a widespread operation to gather information on the sex lives and drinking habits of 30 prominent Floridians, among them a state attorney involved in the Watergate investigation.

The woman, Elsa Suarez, said the spy effort had been dubbed Operation Leprechaun and had been aimed mainly at federal and state judges and several city and county commissioners.

She said that the goal of the operation had never been made very clear to her but she said that she had been promised a life-long pension of \$20,000 a year and a home abroad if she could come up with information that would "get" the state attorney, Richard Gerstein of Dade county.

"It was 1/8 like a small CIA operation," she asserted in an interview. "I was supposed to mingle in local exclusive clubs and bars with these judges and politicians, pick up all the dirt I could, maybe even go to bed with them."

"I never did sleep with anybody or get any good dirt during the three months I was on the job. My contacts had told me that the people I was supposed to watch were 'no good,' that one was a homosexual, that others had mistresses."

The Internal Revenue Service normally gathers intelligence only on tax violations.

IRS officials said a "full investigation" of the charges will be made.

Six weeks ago, the Philadelphia Bulletin reported that a secret unit of the IRS that allegedly had collected

"personal information" on thousands of American citizens in recent years had been ordered to disband and destroy its files.

The article indicated that the unit had operated in a number of cities, including Miami. It quoted sources who said that some of the unit's operatives had reported directly to the White House when Richard M. Nixon was president.

Mrs. Suarez, a 33-year-old divorcee, has made a sworn statement regarding her assertions to Richard Gerstein, the state attorney for Dade county who is one of the 30 persons she was told to watch.

Gerstein, an early investigator in the Watergate case because of its many Florida aspects, called yesterday afternoon for a congressional investigation of Mrs. Suarez's charges.

New York Times