

The Forgotten Men Of the Watergate



— Jack Anderson

ALL BUT forgotten in the Watergate wreckage are the four Cubans who were recruited to do the dirty work.

They thought they were serving their adopted country. Three of the four had been trained by the Central Intelligence Agency and had risked their lives on CIA missions.

Eugenio Martinez, for instance, slipped into Cuba at least 300 times. He carried out his CIA orders so faithfully that he wouldn't jeopardize the missions to rescue his own parents. They eventually died in Cuba. Martinez would have been tortured to death if he had been caught. Yet he risked his life repeatedly for a CIA salary of \$300 a month.

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AT THE APPEAL of the wives, I interrupted a trip and flew back to Washington to speak to the four Cubans at the Mockville, Md., Detention Center. It was their first press interview.

We have no doubt after a long talk with the four Cubans that they were motivated by a misguided sense of patriotism. Their leader, Bernard Barker, went directly to the White House for their orders. In those impressive surroundings he was asked by his former CIA superior, E. Howard Hunt, to handle some surreptitious, national security missions.

Not until ten minutes before the Cuban break-in crew tried to steal Daniel Ellsberg's psychiatric records were they told

the object of their mission. They had been led to believe they were after a spy who had been delivering military secrets to the Soviet Embassy.

Before they broke into Democratic Party Headquarters, they were told their main mission was to seek supposed evidence of secret Communist contributions to the Democrats.

Their arrest caused international shock waves. But it was the White House plotters, not the four Cubans, who panicked.

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AREPORTED \$460,000 was slipped to the Watergate defendants and their lawyers to buy their silence. Yet only a paltry few dollars filtered down to the Cubans — less than \$14,000 to help them maintain their families, another \$13,000 to their first attorney, Henry Rothblatt. Frank Sturgis, for example, collected a total of \$2500 in expenses. Virgilio Gonzalez and Eugenio Martinez received \$1600 to \$1800 apiece.

Despite all the hundreds of thousands in hush money, those at the top were the first to break. The poorly paid Cubans, true to their CIA training, refused to talk.

They wound up behind bars while those who plotted the Watergate crimes remained free. Bob Haldeman and John Ehrlichman, even after their dismissal from the White House, were chauffeured to the grand jury in White House limousines. The four Cubans were brought in manacles by federal marshals.

Same column appeared in Frederick (Md.) Post, but included following Footnote:

Footnote: The Cubans have also been the subject of malicious rumors, including one report they helped plot the assassination of President Kennedy. As evidence a picture has been circulated allegedly showing Sturgis in Dallas on the day of the assassination. We have seen the picture; it is not Sturgis. We have also checked out the report; it is not true.