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5 AUG 1976

MEMORANDUM FOR: [REDACTED]

SUBJECT : Agency Castro Assassination Plotting
(Sam Giancana and Santo Trafficante)

1. Reference is made to the Senate publication "Alleged Assassination Plots Involving Foreign Leaders (An Interim Report of the Select Committee to Study Governmental Operations With Respect to Intelligence Activities, United States Senate)" dated 20 November 1975. On page 79 of this report there is an extract from an 18 October 1960 memorandum from J. Edgar HOOVER, Director/FBI, to Richard BISSELL, Deputy Director for Plans, which states as follows:

"During recent conversations with several friends, (Sam) GIANCANA stated that Fidel CASTRO was to be done away with very shortly. When doubt was expressed regarding this statement, GIANCANA reportedly assured those present that CASTRO's assassination would occur in November. Moreover, he allegedly indicated that he had already met with the assassin-to-be on three occasions *** GIANCANA claimed that everything has been perfected for the killing of CASTRO, and that the 'assassin' had arranged with a girl, not further described, to drop a 'pill' in some drink or food of CASTRO's."

2. The Senate Select Committee apparently included this extract in their report to suggest that the Agency itself may have instituted a wire tap (Las Vegas wiretap/Arthur J. BALLETTI) to determine whether GIANCANA was leaking information about his involvement in an assassination attempt against CASTRO.

3. The date of the above mentioned memorandum extract, coupled with a few specific items in the extract, would suggest that the FBI report on GIANCANA's conversation may not concern the relationship this Agency developed through Robert MAHEU, to Johnny ROSELLI, to Sam GIANCANA, to Santo TRAFFICANTE, and finally to [REDACTED]. This particular assassination attempt is referred to as Phase I in the Senate Select Committee report and the term Phase I will be used hereinafter.

APPROVED FOR RELEASE

Date 11 SEP 1990

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4. Arguments suggesting that GIANCANA's statements reported to the FBI are not related to Phase I are as follows:


a. The FBI memorandum reporting GIANCANA's statements is dated 18 October 1960, whereas the initial meeting when [REDACTED] and Robert A. MAHEU broached the topic to Johnny ROSELLI took place on 14 September 1960, just one month before. Allowing for reporting delays, this would suggest that Phase I is too young at this stage for GIANCANA to make such finalized statements. It would be very pertinent to determine the precise date when GIANCANA made the statement, or even the date the FBI source initially reported same.

b. According to the FBI memorandum, GIANCANA stated that the assassination would occur in November (1960) and would be accomplished by dropping a "pill" in some drink or food of CASTRO's. While Phase I did provide for the use of poison pills, these pills were not given to ROSELLI until circa February 1961. In this regard it should also be noted that (according to the Inspector General's "Report on Plots to Assassinate Fidel CASTRO" dated 23 May 1967) the Agency first considered a gangland-style killing in which CASTRO would be gunned down. GIANCANA reportedly opposed the idea because it would be difficult to recruit someone for such a dangerous operation and GIANCANA suggested instead the use of poison.

c. According to the FBI memorandum, the poisoning of CASTRO was to be accomplished by a girl. However, according to the 1967 report of the Inspector General, the poisoning in Phase I was to be accomplished through [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] For what follows later in this memorandum, it is interesting to note that according to the 1967 Inspector General report, [REDACTED]



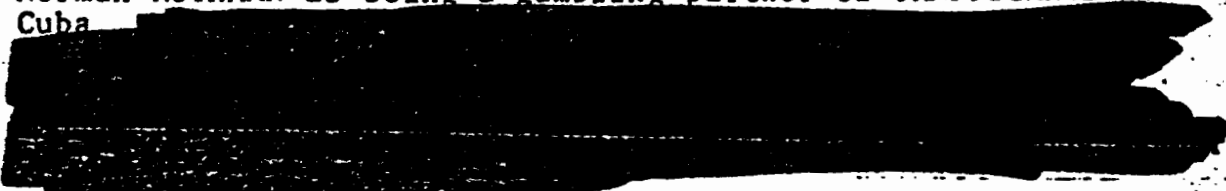
5. The foregoing would suggest that GIANCANA's statements about an assassination attempt against CASTRO may very well not pertain to Phase I. It is interesting that GIANCANA's statements strongly resemble a story which appeared in the 13 June 1976 edition of the New York Daily News in an article by Paul MESKIL. The article concerns the activities of Marie LORENZ (recently identified as Ilona Marita LORENZ, born on 18 August 1939 at Bremen, Germany) who was according to the story acting on behalf of Frank STURGIS in 1960 to attempt an assassination of CASTRO. The article concludes, "Soon after her murder mission failed, the CIA recruited Mafia mobsters....to kill CASTRO..." Attached to instant memorandum is a copy of an 18 June 1976 memorandum in the name of Frank Anthony STURGIS, aka: Frank FIORINI  which identifies Marie LORENZ and contains a copy of the referenced article.

6. If in fact GIANCANA's statements do refer to the LORENZ/STURGIS matter, it can be logically concluded that STURGIS was acting at the behest of GIANCANA and organized crime elements in this assassination attempt. This is in direct contrast with STURGIS's allegations in the article, and the other articles mentioned below that he was acting on behalf of this Agency.


NOTE: In a book published in 1962, Counter-Revolutionary Agent by Hans TANNER, wherein TANNER recounts events in Cuba between January and July 1961, TANNER identifies Frank FIORINI (STURGIS) (page 127) as Commander of the International Anti-Communist Brigade and then states "...I have an idea the Brigade is financed by dispossessed hotel and gambling room owners who operated under BATISTA..." For the purposes of the general theme of instant memorandum, it is also of note that

according to several different public sources shortly after CASTRO came to power in Cuba on 1 January 1959 STURGIS became somehow involved in regulation of gambling for the CASTRO government. Some sources have claimed that STURGIS was appointed Minister of Games of Chance, but this may be an exaggeration of his position. However, STURGIS was somehow involved with the CASTRO government's control of gambling during the first half of 1959. It is also known that Santo Trafficante was a senior organized crime gambling representative in Cuba until he was thrown out of Cuba in mid-1959.

7. Attention is also directed to additional attachments to instant memorandum, a series of articles by Paul MESKIL for the New York Daily News appearing in the 20, 21, 22, 23, 24, and 25 April 1975 editions. For the most part the articles pertain to anti-CASTRO activities involving Frank STURGIS. It is noteworthy that these articles appeared one year prior to the aforementioned article concerning the STURGIS/LORENZ CASTRO assassination attempt. However, Marie LORENZ (Ilona Marita LORENZ) is mentioned in the 20 April 1975 article. It would appear that this 20 April 1975 article generated Associate Deputy Director for Administration interest in Marie LORENZ and Frank STURGIS inasmuch as the Director of Security directed negative Office of Security results concerning Marie LORENZ to the Associate Deputy Director for Administration on 28 April 1975. It is also of note that the 23 April 1975 article contains information concerning a possible relationship between Frank STURGIS and Santo TRAFFICANTE and also mentions one Norman ROTHMAN as being a gambling partner of TRAFFICANTE in Cuba



8. Apparently, the Associate Deputy Director for Administration evidenced interest in the LORENZ and ROTHMAN related articles because the articles contain allegations that STURGIS was working for the Agency in the early 1960's. It should be noted that concurrent with the appearance of the April 1975 Paul MESKIL articles, the Rockefeller Commission was interested in Agency involvement in CASTRO assassination planning. An



Office of Security memorandum to the Inspector General dated 11 April 1975, captioned "Rockefeller Commission Request for FBI Documents", reflects that on 9 April 1975 FBI Liaison informally requested concurrence for release of certain information and documents to the Rockefeller Commission showing a connection between CIA and known or suspected Mafia personalities. However, nothing concerning this matter appeared in the June 1975 Rockefeller Commission report.

9. Of extreme pertinence to instant memorandum is that information contained in the 21 April 1975 article by Paul MESKIL which is apparently based on an interview of STURGIS, to wit:

The third (assassination) scheme involved planting a bomb in CASTRO's office. "I had access to the prime minister's office," STURGIS said. "I knew Fidel's private secretary, Juan ORTA (emphasis added). I recruited him to work with the Embassy (American Embassy in Havand)."


10. 

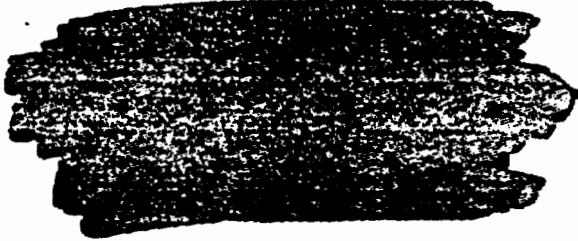
11. The cumulative impact of the foregoing and the attachments are the strong suggestions that organized crime elements had an ongoing operation to assassinate CASTRO before this Agency instituted Phase I and that Frank STURGIS was involved with these organized crime elements.

12. As attendant information, it is interesting to note that the initial 23 May 1967 Inspector General "Report on Plots to Assassinate Fidel CASTRO" was predicated on the contents of an article by Drew PEARSON on 7 March 1967 to the effect that the Agency was planning CASTRO assassinations. Jack ANDERSON was working for PEARSON at the time. In this contrast it is of note that Jack ANDERSON was apparently

responsible for articles which glamorized STURGIS as a soldier of fortune in the early 1960's. The opening paragraph of a Jack ANDERSON article in The Washington Post dated 16 April 1974 states:

"Long before Frank STURGIS joined the world's most celebrated burglary crew and broke into the Watergate, he was my friend. I knew him as a soldier of fortune, a pilot and gun runner..." etc.

13. It is recommended that this memorandum, as well as all attachments, be brought to the attention of the Inspector General, specifically 



Atts

18 June 1976

MEMORANDUM FOR: [REDACTED]

SUBJECT : STURGIS, Frank Anthony
AKA: FIORINI, Frank
[REDACTED]

1. As you are aware, Frank Anthony STURGIS, one of the convicted Watergate burglars, has repeatedly and falsely claimed affiliation with this Agency. Attached to instant memorandum are copies of two articles from the New York Daily News by Paul MESKIC, dated circa April 1975 and 13 June 1976, specifying that one Marie LORENZ was involved with Frank STURGIS and Alex RORKE in 1959/1960 in anti-CASTRO activities. Furthermore, the articles again allege that STURGIS and RORKE were acting on behalf of this Agency. The 13 June 1976 article further alleges Marie LORENZ has claimed that at the direction of STURGIS and RORKE (and the Agency and the FBI) in 1960 she went to Cuba to poison CASTRO. The poison was given to her by STURGIS. In the first article Marie LORENZ alleges that E. Howard HUNT, known to her as "Eduardo" was the paymaster for STURGIS and RORKE. HUNT has publicly claimed not knowing STURGIS until at least the late 1960's.

2. Alex RORKE, is identical with Alexander I. RORKE, Jr. [REDACTED], was a free-lance writer, photographer, and soldier of fortune who disappeared in September 1963 while flying in Central America. There is no evidence in this file that RORKE was ever affiliated with this Agency. There is evidence that RORKE was involved with STURGIS in anti-CASTRO activities in the early 1960's.

3. Relative to Marie LORENZ, initial Office of Security [REDACTED] in this name were negative in April 1975. Additional [REDACTED] relative to the June 1976 article has revealed a [REDACTED] identification. Composite information from the attach- [REDACTED] ments would suggest that Marie LORENZ is of German father/ [REDACTED] American mother birth, born circa 1940; that her father was [REDACTED] Heinrich LORENZ, a former German Navy Captain who in February [REDACTED] 1959 was the captain of a luxury liner "Berlin"; and that in [REDACTED] 1959/1960 she was living with her brother at 344 West 84th [REDACTED]

Street, New York, N. Y. In March 1960 Marie LORENZ was in contact in New York with Jesus YANEZ Pelletier of the CASTRO regime.

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

aw!

PAGES 3-6 DENIED
IN Toto

CIA Sent Bedmate

To Kill Castro in '60

By PAUL MESKIL

Copyright New York Times Inc. 1975

The Central Intelligence Agency sent a shapely Mata Hari to Cuba in 1960 to kill her former lover, Fidel Castro.

Details of this case were uncovered by The News and a Senate Intelligence

Committee investigator who learned that a mystery woman had been involved in an assassination plot against the Cuban dictator.

It was the first of several CIA-sponsored attempts to execute Castro.

The mystery woman has now been identified by the committee and The News as Marie Lorenz, an attractive German-American brunette who shared Castro's Havana hotel suite for several months in 1959. When a committee investigator confronted her with evidence linking her to the assassination plot, she admitted that she had been recruited for the attempted hit.

Exclusive Account

Then, last week, she gave this reporter an exclusive account of a mission so secret that she never mentioned it to anyone for 16 years.

Ms. Lorenz, who now lives in New York, is the daughter of the late German Navy Capt. Heinrich Lorenz and his American wife. After World War II, Lorenz became skipper of the luxury liner Berlin. He took Marie along on a Caribbean cruise in February 1959, a month after Castro took over the Cuban government.

Castro boarded the Berlin in Havana harbor and dined with the captain and his vivacious teenage daughter. He later persuaded Marie to return to Havana to work as his personal interpreter. When she arrived she was installed in Castro's 21st-floor office at the Havana Hilton. She soon realized she was a virtual prisoner.

Quizzed by FBI

Frank Tizini, an American who had become a Cuban Revolutionary Army officer and a CIA agent, contacted her and persuaded her to photograph Castro's secret papers. He later helped her escape.

She left Havana in January

The Memo That Started It

On Dec. 31, 1959, Col. J.C. King, head of the CIA's Western Hemisphere Division, wrote a memorandum to CIA Director Allen Dulles, according to a Senate committee report. Noting that the "far left" regime in Cuba might encourage other Latin American countries to take action against U.S. interests, he recommended that: "Thorough consideration be given to the elimination of Fidel Castro. None of those close to Fidel, such as his brother Raul or his companion, Che Guevara, have the same mesmeric appeal to the masses. Many informed people believe that the disappearance of Fidel would greatly accelerate a fall of the present government."

Dulles and Deputy Director of Plans Richard Goodwin Smith approved the recommendation and the CIA launched an assassination campaign against Castro that lasted at least five years. This is the exclusive story of the first try.



Marie Lorenz—CIA's Mata Hari in Cuba.

62-1150-2

a serious illness. Two FBI agents questioned her there about conditions in Cuba. She later took part in various CIA-funded operations with Fiorini and Alex Burke, a wealthy adventurer who worked for both the CIA and the FBI.

On one of these missions she returned to Havana and stole secret maps and documents from Castro's suite while he was away. About two months later, Burke told her he had an important assignment that would enable her to "do a tremendous service for this country."

He took her to the FBI offices at 201 E. 69th St. for a conference with the two agents who had questioned her previously, and a CIA official.

"I was asked about my attitude toward Castro," she said, "and whether I was willing to work since I could get in and out (of Castro's suite). I said, 'What kind of work?'"

Thought It Was A Joke

"Alex said, 'You could knock him off. It would save everybody a lot of trouble.' I thought he was joking, but they kept coming back to it and I realized they were serious."

"Alex said, 'Why don't you kill him?' I said, 'I don't know how, with all these men around him, and I don't know if it's in me to kill him.'"

"Once, out of jealousy, I pointed a gun at him and Fidel didn't even blink. He said, 'You can't kill me.' I said, 'I'm not planning to. I'm just cleaning the gun.'"

Ms. Lorenz said there were several more meetings at which various ways of killing Castro were discussed.

"Finally they decided on poison. They said it would be easy to put poison in his food or drink. I said, 'What are you trying to tell me? To go down and kill him?'"

"Alex said, 'It would change history. I said, 'Well, I don't want to die.'"

"They didn't tell me to do it or not to do it. They said if I went I'd be protected, but who could guarantee I'd get out?"

A Method Ready

Mrs. Lorenz said she finally agreed to go to Miami with Burke for a meeting with Fiorini, who "said he had a way to do he said she spent three weeks in a CIA "safe house" in Miami, seeing no one but Fiorini and Burke. They kept talking me into it. They said, 'You can do it. You're the only one who can do it.'"

Asked if she now believes she was brainwashed, she replied: "I guess so." She said they appealed to her patriotism and told her she "would get thousands, enough to retire," if she succeeded.

When she finally agreed to accept the assignment, she said, Fiorini gave her two capsules full of poison powder. She was

to "do any operation."

Backing the olive-drab uniform that Castro had given her, designating her a lieutenant in the Revolutionary Army, Ms. Lorenz flew back to Havana on Cubana Airlines. Believing she might be searched at the airport, she hid the capsules in a jar of cold cream in her purse. When she arrived in Havana she checked into a tourist hotel, changed into her Fidelista uniform and went to the Hilton.

Cold Cream Caper

"The lobby was full of reporters and other people trying to see Castro, but he wasn't there. One of his aides recognized me and took me up to Fidel's suite."

Entering the two-room suite, she saw that nothing had changed in her absence. The sitting room was crowded with Castro's abandoned, pistol-packing retainers. The bedroom was littered with papers, cigar butts and guns.

She waited nervously in Castro's private room until he came in a few hours later. As soon as he smiled and hugged her, she knew he didn't suspect she had visited the suite a few months previously and stolen his secrets. And he certainly didn't suspect she had come back to kill him.

Do Not Disturb

"He asked why I left him and I said it was because I missed my mother and my home. He started talking about Cuba and the problems, the lack of money, the shortages. He talked a long time. He said he was expecting an important phone call, but he took the receiver off the hook and he shouted to the barberos (bearded ones) in the next room: 'No me moleste (Don't bother me)'"

"Finally he ordered food and coffee sent up. When it came, he fell asleep on the bed, in his fatigues and with a cigar in his mouth. I had no confidence left, but I knew this was the chance to do it."

"I went into the bathroom and opened the jar of cold cream. I stuck my finger in it and the whole thing came out like yuck. I couldn't find the capsules. They had melted."

"It was like an omen."

"I couldn't just dump a glob of cold cream in his coffee, so I shut the jar and went back to the bedroom and I watched him sleeping. Finally I lay down on the bed beside him."

"I thought, 'To hell with it. Let history take its course.'"

"Stupid, Stupid" "Frank and Alex met me when I flew to Miami next morning. They asked me what happened and I said the capsules melted. Frank was very upset. He said, 'Stupid, stupid, stupid. Why did you put them in the cold cream?' I said, 'Where else? It was the only place to think of where no one

interviewer said, "No," she replied, "Probably not."

Alex Burke later disappeared on a mystery flight to Nicaragua. Frank Fiorini, now known as Frank Sturges, continued to perform odd jobs for the CIA until his arrest in 1972 as one of the Watergate burglars.

Informed of Ms. Lorenz' account of the assassination attempt, he verified her story.

Soon after her murder mission failed, the CIA recruited Mafia mobsters — including John Roselli of Las Vegas, Sam Giancana of Chicago and Santo Trafficante of Tampa, Fla. — to kill Castro. But they were no more successful than the sexy Mata Hari.

... operations were undergoing a sometimes painful official... the Central Intelligence Agency maintains, as always, a tight lip. But... services with the agents who hired out to do the CIA's cloak-and-dagger... reporter Paul Meskil tells here for the first time of the intrigue... fuelled as the Cuban missile crisis, a confrontation that pushed the U.S. to the brink of war with the Soviet Union. First of a series.

AUL MESKIL

AUFRIFUL German-American scored an intelligence coup for CIA by stealing secret papers from the Havana hotel suite she had with Fidel Castro.

Among the papers, she told The... were maps showing the sites for Soviet missile installations... black-haired Maria Lorenz lives quietly in New York as the... East of the Caribbean cold war... was one of the most glamorous... bers of a spy ring recruited for Central Intelligence Agency by... Figrini, a sometime triple agent later became known to the American public as Watergate bouncer Frank...

is Lorenz, Sturgis, other former... agents, Caribbean conspirators... and Cuban freedom fighters were... viewed for this series on CIA... affairs in the Caribbean and the... areas. Some of their clandestine... acts are told here for the first time, some are being investigated by the... Select Committee on Intelligence and Vice President Rockefeller's... mission on CIA Activities.

According to sources, the CIA was, in degree or another, involved in:
 • Plots to assassinate foreign heads of state, including Castro of Cuba, in Don Duvalier of Haiti and Rafael... of the Dominican Republic.
 • Smashing a Castroite attempt to... Panama and sabotage the Panama Canal.
 • The explosion of a munitions ship Havana harbor.
 • A fantastic scheme to seize a... viet ship and use it to obtain the... case of the captured American spy... in Pueblo.

• Secret deals with American mobsters who had lost their multimillion-dollar Cuban gambling casinos.
 • Armed raids on Cuba and many... of guerrilla fighters, weapons, explosives and other war materials to the island before and after the... of Pigs fiasco.
 • Maria Lorenz played a small but... portant role in the labyrinth of...ibbean conspiracies.

Her Cuban adventures began on a... day evening in February 1959, when... launched flying the Cuban revolution... of flag gained alongside the gleaming... site luxury liner Berlin, anchored in... Havana harbor on the next-to-last stop... Caribbean cruise.

In the launch were 20 or so heavily... and Cubans, all wearing beards and... and purple olive-green fatigues. The... set's accommodation ladder was

lowered, and the barbudos (beard-... ones) swarmed aboard like pirates, grenades dangling from their belts and machine guns swinging from their shoulders.

Women in evening gowns screamed and ran for cover with their dinner-jacketed husbands, believing the ship was being raided by bandits. But other American tourists recognized the leader of the sinister-looking band as Fidel Castro, the new prime minister of Cuba, and they crowded around him for autographs.

"I'm a friend," he shouted, obviously enjoying the commotion he had caused. "I like Americans."

The Berlin's skipper, former German Navy Capt. Heinrich Lorenz, invited the barbudos to stay for cocktails and dinner, and he introduced Castro to his vivacious 18-year-old daughter, Maria.

"My father spoke Spanish and he got along well with Castro," Maria told this reporter. "He took Castro and his men on a tour of the ship, then asked them to please leave their guns outside the dining room before they sat down for dinner."

"Castro said they didn't feel safe without guns, so my father allowed them to keep their pistols, but he made them leave the machine guns, automatic rifles and grenades in the smoking room."

Castro sat at the captain's table, between Lorenz and Maria. During the meal, he smiled frequently at Maria, and she was as impressed as any normal teenage girl would be by compliments from the flamboyant hero of the Cuban revolution.

She spoke German and English, which she had learned from her American mother. Castro said he needed a secretary who could write letters in these languages. Before the meal was over, he offered the job to Maria.

Took Offer As Joke

"He asked me to stay in Havana and work for him," she said. "My father and I both laughed. My father said I was going back to Germany to finish my education."

Castro promised to write to her, so she gave him two addresses—her parents' home in Bremen, Germany, and her brother's apartment in New York, where she planned to stay when the Caribbean cruise ended. She never expected to see or hear from Fidel again.

About two weeks later, two Cuban officers called on Maria in New York. They carried a message from Castro, saying he was in desperate need of an English-German translator. He had sent a Cubana Airlines plane to bring her back to Havana.

"I made a big mistake," Maria said. "I got on that plane."

During the flight to Havana, she tried to imagine her life in Castroland. She thought she would have a desk in the premier's secretarial pool and a small apartment of her own. She may even have dreamed of a romance with



Maria Lorenz: spied on Fidel.

the tall, charismatic dictator. But her... airplane illusions were shattered soon... after the plane landed.

"I was very idealistic then," she said. "I was going on an adventure and to my first job. I was going to help the new government. Instead, I became Castro's plaything."

"I was driven from the airport to the Havana Hilton, where Fidel had taken over the 24th floor. For the next four months, I hardly ever got out of the Hilton. When I did get out, I was under guard. If I wanted to go down to the pool or coffee shop, two barbudos would go with me."

'I Was His Prisoner'

Asked to define her relationship with Castro during this period, Maria said: "I was his prisoner. I was trapped."

"Were you ever in love with Fidel?"

"No, never. How can you be in love when you're afraid, when you're treated like a piece of furniture, when you're sleeping with a live baroque under the bed, when you're living in a room with guns on every table and cigar butts all over the floor?"

"My way of thinking was German," she continued. "Everything in my life had been very orderly, very neat and clean. I never realized anyone, especially a prime minister, could be so disorganized. I thought he would have several offices, with desks, chairs and telephones. All he had, at this point, was a suite of rooms at the Hilton, where he lived and worked. I was kept in one of the rooms. The door to the hall was locked from the outside. Barbudos and visitors were in the next room, but the door between the rooms was kept locked."

"All I could do was read books, study Spanish, walk back and forth, listen to the radio or go on the balcony and look out over Havana. I was miserable. My father tried to find out what had happened to me. He contacted the American Embassy in Havana (Maria was born an American citizen,) but nothing happened."

Continued

number of the 26th
An olive-green uni-
form was the
way, when I was allowed out
ward, he thought people would
was one of the his officers. But
every Havana housewife heard
that Castro was keeping a for-
an American girl, at the Hilton,
becoming a problem to him.
One day two barberos came to the
while Fidel was out. They said
were there to help me. They took
a 20-minute plane ride to the
of Pines. They showed me the
dark sand beach there and
drove me by jeep to this huge
complex. They showed me a cell
dictator Fulgencio Batista had
used Fidel and Mari (Fidel's
ss) years before. I went into the
to look at a bronze picture on the
They shut the door and locked me
cell. Then they went away.

Wasn't Pampered

I spent a week there, eating the
food as the other prisoners—
a beans, rice, stale bread and cof-
As far as I know, I was the only
in there.

Every morning we would hear the
y squads. As soon as it got light,
birds would start singing. Then the
would go off. Then marching and
Then breakfast and cell checks.
guards would check to see if you'd
ad yourself during the night or if
I done something wrong in there
there was hardly room to turn
it was horrible.

After seven days, I was taken out
down back to Havana.

Mari was never told why she was
there. She now believes Castro had her
up to make sure she didn't go
while he was out of the country
the United States and South
America.

One night she was with Castro and
guards in the lobby of the
Hilton Hotel when a handsome, wavy-
haired man approached her. He wore
olive-green rebel uniform and the
rank of a captain in the Cuban air
force.

While Castro was conferring with
aides on the other side of the
door, the captain mingled with the
guards around Marie and whispered
to her in English: "I know about you."

"Can you help me?" she responded.
"If you get me out of here?"

"In I'm with the American
guards, I'll get you out."

This was her introduction to Com-
mandante Frank Fiorini (later known
as Frank Smegis), Castro confidant
and agent for the U.S. Central
Intelligence Agency.

Meets to Spy on Fidel

For the next few weeks Frank kept
contact with her in person and
other Castro officers who were
agents for him. Marie agreed to spy
on Castro. She filed secret documents
about Castro's conversations
with important visitors overheard
near the hotel walls. By now, she
read and speak Spanish fairly

ca t that was never locked. It was
full of money, papers, documents,
maps. I took papers out and slipped
them to Frank. Fidel never missed
them.

"Frank said, 'Get all the data you
can,' and I did. I was a regular Mata
Hari."

Then Marie became sick, and Frank
arranged her escape. Two Cuban offi-
cers took her out of the hotel while
Castro was away and put her on a
Cubana Airlines flight to New York.

About that time, Frank also set up
the escapes of two top Cuban air force
officers, a project that forced him to
leave Cuba. He moved his base of
operations to Miami, but he kept in
touch with his agents on the island and
his CIA contacts in Havana and Wash-
ington.

When she recovered from her ill-
ness, Marie joined him in Florida and
volunteered for a mission that meant
certain death if she were caught.

Early in 1960, Castro went to
Cienaga de Zapata, a vast swamp that
he intended to convert to rice fields. As
soon as he left Havana with his usual
entourage, Marie received orders to re-
turn to the Cuban capital immediately.
She boarded a regular Cubana Airlines
flight, posing as an American tourist
and carrying her Castro uniform and a
loaded revolver in her overnight bag.

She arrived in Havana a few hours
after Castro left town. Americans were
still welcome there in those days, and
Cuban customs officers seldom searched
tourists' luggage.

"There was no trouble at the air-
port," Marie said. "I checked into a
sleazy little hotel in downtown Havana,
changed into my lieutenant's uniform,
and went direct to the Havana Hilton.
By this time, Castro had a home on
the outskirts of Havana, Casa Cojimar,
but it was more convenient for him to
keep his papers at the Hilton.

"He had Suite 2403 and the adjoin-
ing suites. I had the key to 2403.
Nobody recognized me when I came
into the hotel. I had changed my hair
style and made my complexion darker
than it is naturally. And I wore dark
glasses. They (Castro's people) all
wore dark glasses, even at night.

"A lot of people were loitering in
the lobby, bar stools and everything. I
just walked right through, passing the
desk was the main thing that bothered
me because the desk clerks knew me. I
had a snub-nosed .33-caliber Detective
Special clipped to the inside of my
waistband. Nobody seemed to notice
me. I walked to the elevators and went
up to the 24th floor.

Saw Her Opportunity

"Nobody was around. When Fidel
left, they all left with him: his body-
guards, his advisers, whatever. When I
had lived there, I was either all alone
and everything was dead quiet, or else
Fidel was there and there was a lot of
noise and cigar smoke.

"I unlocked the door to Suite 2403,
went inside and double-locked the door
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"Frank met me at the airport and I
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Her Find Was Valuable

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Capt. Jean Yanex Pelletier, one of
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When Yanex returned to Havana about Marie, Castro did what the New York cops couldn't do. Fidel sent him to prison.

Discussed Killing Castro

Asked if she and other members of Frank's spy ring had ever discussed killing Castro, Marie replied: "Sure we all did. We were going to bomb him during one of his speeches. We were going to fly over and drop it right on top of him.

"We had the bomb, the plane. I was going to go along, lit and run. We were all set, but it was called off. Somebody stopped it. That's all I know."

Marie said two American agents went to Cuba to assassinate Castro shortly before the Bay of Pigs invasion.

"I met them at a little white house we rented in the Cuban colony in Miami. I think it was on Flagler St. We would never stay in one place too long. We'd rent a house and move on. Anyway, it was at one of our meetings that they talked real heavy about going in and killing him.

"The two Americans went in, but they didn't get out. They grew beards, dressed like Castro soldiers. I heard they came very, very close to killing him at one of his speeches."

to Cuba, delivering guns and supplies to anti-Castro guerrillas. She worked with Frank and Alex Roake, both of whom were contract employees of the CIA, meaning they were not listed on any federal payroll.

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'Eduardo' Supplied Cash

When cash was needed, it came from a CIA man she knew only as Eduardo. He would meet Frank and Alex from time to time at a "safe house" in Miami.

"Eduardo was funding our thing," Marie said. "When we went to pick up the money, I stayed in the car. I saw him when he opened the door of this little white house we used."

Years later, while reading about the Watergate break-in, Marie saw a newspaper photo of former CIA man E. Howard Hunt and immediately recognized him as the elusive "Eduardo." She also recognized a picture of Sturgis, whom she had known as Frank Fiorini.

Sturgis was one of the five burglars caught in Democratic National Committee headquarters at the Watergate complex on June 17, 1972. Four of the five—Sturgis, Bernard Barker, Eugenio Rolando Martinez and James W. McCord, then security chief for the Nixon reelection campaign committee—were former CIA employees.

Sturgis, Barker and Martinez had been active in preparations for the Bay of Pigs landing. So was Hunt, the fiction-writing mastermind of the Watergate burglary. And he referred to Sturgis, Barker and Martinez in court testimony as "some of my old CIA contacts."

Sturgis returned to Washington this month, nearly three years after his arrest there, to testify at secret staff sessions of the Rockefeller Commission on CIA Activities. He won't discuss his testimony, but other sources said he was asked about CIA operations ranging from domestic spying to political murders.

Continued

American Mata Hari Who Duped

Its clandestine operations now undergoing a sometimes painful official scrutiny, the Central Intelligence Agency maintains, as always, a tight lip. But in interviews with the agents who hired out to do the CIA's cloak-and-dagger work, News reporter Paul Meskil tells here, for the first time of the intrigues surfaced as the Cuban missile crisis, a confrontation that pushed the U.S. to the brink of war with the Soviet Union. First of a series.

PAUL MESKIL

BEAUTIFUL German-American scored an intelligence coup for the CIA by stealing secret papers in the Havana hotel suite she had shared with Fidel Castro.

Among the papers, she told The New York Times, were maps showing the sites selected for Soviet missile installations in Cuba.

Curly, black-haired Marie Lorenz, who lives quietly in New York, was the Mata Hari of the Caribbean cold war. She was one of the most glamorous members of a spy ring recruited for the Central Intelligence Agency by Frank Fiorini, a onetime triple agent who later became known to the American public as Watergate burglar Frank J. McCarthy.

Ms. Lorenz, Sturgis, other former espionage agents, Caribbean conspirators, and Cuban freedom fighters were interviewed for this series on CIA operations in the Caribbean and the Americas. Some of their clandestine activities are told here for the first time, and some are being investigated by the Senate Select Committee on Intelligence and Vice President Rockefeller's commission on CIA activities.

According to sources, the CIA was, to one degree or another, involved in:

- Plots to assassinate foreign heads of state, including Castro of Cuba, Papa Doc Duvalier of Haiti and Rafael Angel Belloso of the Dominican Republic.

- Smashing a Castroite attempt to invade Panama and sabotage the Panama Canal.

- The explosion of a munitions ship in Havana harbor.

- A fantastic scheme to seize a Soviet ship and use it to obtain the release of the captured American spy ship Pueblo.

- Secret deals with American mobsters who had lost their multimillion-dollar Cuban gambling casinos.

- Armed raids on Cuba and many shipments of guerrilla fighters, weapons, explosives and other war materials to the island before and after the Bay of Pigs fiasco.

Marie Lorenz played a small but important role in the labyrinth of Caribbean conspiracies.

Her Cuban adventures began on a balmy evening in February 1959, when a launch flying the Cuban revolutionary flag pulled alongside the gleaming white luxury liner Berlin, anchored in Havana harbor on the next-to-last stop of a Caribbean cruise.

In the launch were 30 or so heavily armed Cubans, all wearing beards and mottled olive-green fatigues. The liner's accommodation ladder was

lowered and the barbudos (bearded ones) swarmed aboard like pirates, grenades dangling from their belts and machine guns swinging from their shoulders.

Women in evening gowns screamed and ran for cover with their dinner-jacketed husbands, believing the ship was being raided by bandits. But other American tourists recognized the leader of the sinister-looking band as Fidel Castro, the new prime minister of Cuba, and they crowded around him for autographs.

"I'm a friend," he shouted, obviously enjoying the commotion he had caused. "I like Americans."

The Berlin's skipper, former German Navy Capt. Heinrich Lorenz, invited the barbudos to stay for cocktails and dinner, and he introduced Castro to his vivacious 18-year-old daughter, Marie.

"My father spoke Spanish and he got along well with Castro," Marie told this reporter. "He took Castro and his men on a tour of the ship, then asked them to please leave their guns outside the dining room before they sat down for dinner."

"Castro said they didn't feel safe without guns, so my father allowed them to keep their pistols, but he made them leave the machine guns, automatic rifles and grenades in the smoking room."

Castro sat at the captain's table, between Lorenz and Marie. During the meal, he smiled frequently at Marie, and she was as impressed as any normal teenage girl would be by compliments from the flamboyant hero of the Cuban revolution.

She spoke German and English, which she had learned from her American mother. Castro said he needed a secretary who could write letters in these languages. Before the meal was over, he offered the job to Marie.

Took Offer As Joke

"He asked me to stay in Havana and work for him," she said. "My father and I both laughed. My father said I was going back to Germany to finish my education."

Castro promised to write to her, so she gave him two addresses—her parents' home in Bremen, Germany, and her brother's apartment in New York, where she planned to stay when the Caribbean cruise ended. She never expected to see or hear from Fidel again.

About two weeks later, two Cuban officers called on Marie in New York. They carried a message from Castro, saying he was in desperate need of an English-German translator. He had sent a Cuban Airlines plane to bring her back to Havana.

"I made a big mistake," Marie said. "I got on that plane."

During the flight to Havana, she tried to imagine her life in Castroland. She thought she would have a desk in the premier's secretarial pool and a small apartment of her own. She may have dreamed of a romance with



Castro
RO

Marie Lorenz: spied on Fidel.

the tall, charismatic dictator. But her airborne illusions were shattered soon after the plane landed.

"I was very idealistic then," she said. "I was going on an adventure and to my first job. I was going to help the new government. Instead, I became Castro's plaything."

"I was driven from the airport to the Havana Hilton, where Fidel had taken over the 21st floor. For the next four months, I hardly ever got out of the Hilton. When I did get out, I was under guard. If I wanted to go down to the pool or coffee shop, two barbudos would go with me."

'I Was His Prisoner'

Asked to define her relationship with Castro during this period, Marie said: "I was his prisoner. I was trapped."

"Were you ever in love with Fidel?"

"No, never. How can you be in love when you're afraid, when you're treated like a piece of furniture, when you're sleeping with a live bazooka under the bed, when you're living in a room with guns on every table and cigar butts all over the floor?"

"My way of thinking was German," she continued. "Everything in my life had been very orderly, very neat and clean. I never realized anyone, especially a prime minister, could be so disorganized. I thought he would have several offices, with desks, chairs and telephones. All he had, at this point, was a suite of rooms at the Hilton, where he lived and worked. I was kept in one of the rooms. The door to the hall was locked from the outside. Barbudos and visitors were in the next room, but the door between the rooms was kept locked."

"All I could do was read books, study Spanish, walk back and forth, listen to the radio or go on the balcony and look out over Havana. I was miserable. My father tried to find out what had happened to me. He contacted the American Embassy in Havana (Marie was born an American citizen,) but nothing happened."

... anything. Fidel measured for a uniform so I look like a member of the 26th Movement. An olive-green uniform with a lieutenant's star. At any, when I was allowed out guard, he thought people would I was one of the his officers. But every Havana housewife heard that Castro was keeping a former American girl, at the Hilton, becoming a problem to him. One day two barbudos came to the while Fidel was out. They said were there to help me. They took on a 20-minute plane ride to the of Pines. They showed me the beautiful black sand beach there and drove me by jeep to this huge on complex. They showed me a cell the dictator Fulgencio Batista had visited Fidel and Raul (Fidel's brother) years before. I went into the to look at a bronze plaque on the wall. They shut the door and locked me in the cell. Then they went away.

Wasn't Pampered

"I spent a week there, eating the same food as the other prisoners—beans, rice, stale bread and coffee. As far as I know, I was the only man there. "Every morning we would hear the marching squads. As soon as it got light, the birds would start singing. Then the guards would go off. Then marching and cell checks. The guards would check to see if you'd managed yourself during the night or if you'd done something wrong in there because there was hardly room to turn around. It was horrible.

"After seven days, I was taken out and flown back to Havana."

Marie was never told why she was arrested. She now believes Castro had her arrested up to make sure she didn't escape while he was out of the country visiting the United States and South America.

One night she was with Castro and his bodyguards in the lobby of the Riviera Hotel when a handsome, wavy-haired man approached her. He wore the olive-green rebel uniform and the insignia of a captain in the Cuban air force.

While Castro was conferring with his aides on the other side of the lobby, the captain mingled with the barbudos around Marie and whispered to her in English: "I know about you."

"Can you help me?" she responded.

"Can you get me out of here?"

"Yes. I'm with the American Embassy. I'll get you out."

This was her introduction to Commandante Frank Fiorini (later known as Frank Sturgis), Castro confidant and hired agent for the U.S. Central Intelligence Agency.

Agrees to Spy on Fidel

For the next few weeks Frank kept in contact with her in person and through Castro officers who were working for him. Marie agreed to spy on Castro. She filched secret documents and reported Castro's conversations with important visitors overheard through the hotel walls. By now, she could read and speak Spanish fairly well.

... the bed, the dresser. He had one trunk cabinet that was never locked. It was full of money, papers, documents, maps. I took papers out and slipped them to Frank. Fidel never missed them.

"Frank said, 'Get all the data you can,' and I did. I was a regular Mata Hari."

Then Marie became sick, and Frank arranged her escape. Two Cuban officers took her out of the hotel while Castro was away and put her on a Cubana Airlines flight to New York.

About that time, Frank also set up the escapes of two top Cuban air force officers, a project that forced him to leave Cuba. He moved his base of operations to Miami, but he kept in touch with his agents on the island and his CIA contacts in Havana and Washington.

When she recovered from her illness, Marie joined him in Florida and volunteered for a mission that meant certain death if she were caught.

Early in 1960, Castro went to Cienaga de Zapata, a vast swamp that he intended to convert to rice fields. As soon as he left Havana with his usual entourage, Marie received orders to return to the Cuban capital immediately. She boarded a regular Cubana Airlines flight, posing as an American tourist and carrying her Castro uniform and a loaded revolver in her overnight bag.

She arrived in Havana a few hours after Castro left town. Americans were still welcome there in those days, and Cuban customs officers seldom searched tourists' luggage.

"There was no trouble at the airport," Marie said. "I checked into a sleazy little hotel in downtown Havana, changed into my lieutenant's uniform and went direct to the Havana Hilton. By this time, Castro had a home on the outskirts of Havana, Casa Cojimar, but it was more convenient for him to keep his papers at the Hilton."

"He had Suite 2408 and the adjoining suites. I had the key to 2408. Nobody recognized me when I came into the hotel. I had changed my hair style and made my complexion darker than it is naturally. And I wore dark glasses. They (Castro's people) all wore dark glasses, even at night."

"A lot of people were hithering in the lobby, barbudos and everything. I just walked right through, passing the desk was the main thing that bothered me because the desk clerks knew me. I had a snub-nosed .38-caliber Detective Special clipped to the inside of my waistband. Nobody seemed to notice me. I walked to the elevators and went up to the 24th floor."

Saw Her Opportunity

"Nobody was around. When Fidel left, they all left with him: his bodyguards, his advisers, whatever. When I had lived there, I was either all alone and everything was dead quiet, or else Fidel was there and there was a lot of noise and cigar smoke."

"I unlocked the door to Suite 2408, went inside and double-locked the door behind me. I felt pretty confident because I knew Fidel was at Cienaga de Zapata. When he left the suite, no one was to go in. Those were the orders."

... as much as I could and maps into my uniform pockets and inside the jacket. Then I left the Hilton, went back to the other hotel, changed into a dress and caught the next flight to Miami.

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Three years later, another intelligence agent told her the maps were "the original groundwork plans" for Soviet missile sites. The circled areas were the spots where Soviet missile bases were built in 1962, setting off the historic showdown between President Kennedy and Premier Khrushchev.

From information supplied by agents inside Cuba and Cuban refugees, and from aerial photos snapped from U-2 spy planes, the CIA was able to pinpoint all the missile bases on the island. But Marie believes her sole mission to Castro's hair gave the CIA its first inkling of what the Russians were plotting. She also believes Castro suspected she was the burglar who swiped his secrets. (The CIA has declined to comment on Marie's involvement.)

In March 1960, soon after she had completed this dangerous assignment, Marie received a mysterious telegram from Havana. Delivered to her brother's apartment at 344 W. 84th St., it said: "CALL 28607 (Castro's private number) LATE AT NIGHT. IT'S VERY IMPORTANT."

It was signed "Yanez," meaning Capt. Jesus Yanez Pelletier, one of Castro's closest aides. Marie's first impulse was to ignore the message, but curiosity overcame common sense. Without mentioning the telegram to her brother, she left the apartment around midnight to place a collect call to Havana from a phone booth on the corner.

As she stepped into the small vestibule between the outer and inner front doors to the apartment house, two men grabbed her. One of them was Yanez.

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Continued

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"Eduardo was funding our thing," Marie said. "When we went to pick up the money, I stayed in the car. I saw him when he opened the door of this little white house we used."

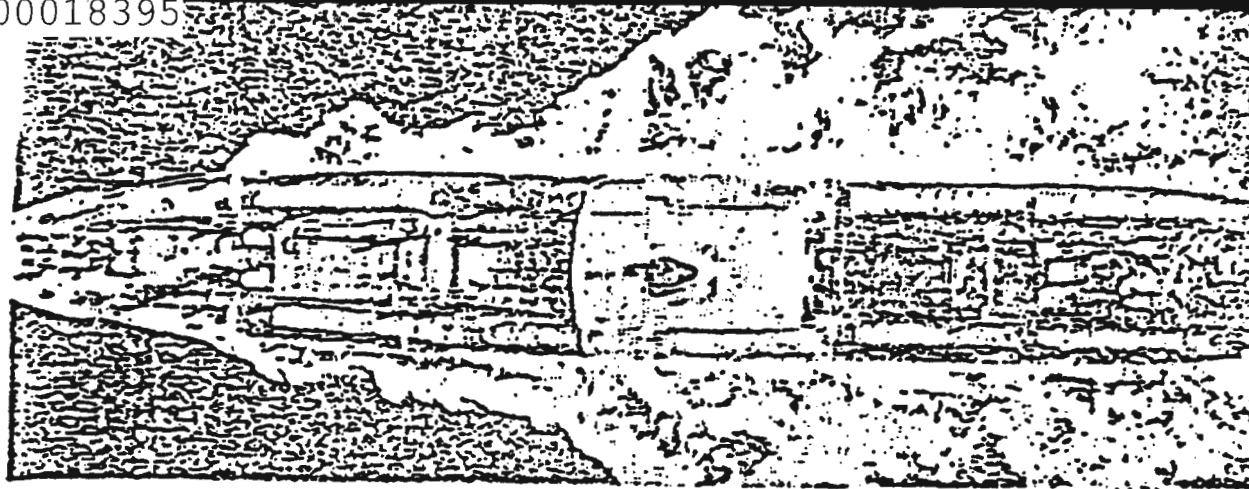
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Continued



Mario Lorenz says she was told that maps she took from Castro's headquarters were factor in locating and photographing missile sites (above). Under pressure from U.S., Khrushchev ordered missiles removed and shipped back to Soviet Union (right).

Our Havana Triple Spy Helped Hurt Castro

PAUL MESKIL

"I was a spy," Frank Sturgis admits.

"I was involved in assassination plots and conspiracies to overthrow several foreign governments, including Cuba, Panama, Guatemala, the Dominican Republic and Haiti.

"I smuggled arms and men into Cuba for Castro and against Castro. I broke into the intelligence files of the Cuban Army and Air Force. I stole and photographed hundreds of secret documents.

"That's what spies do.

"I also broke into foreign consulates and business offices in Cuba, for the purpose of obtaining information, and into import-export office in Caracas, Venezuela, that was a front for the KGB (Soviet Secret Service)."

Sturgis was a hired operative of the Central Intelligence Agency for at least a decade. Maybe he still is, though his career was blown forever by the notoriety received as a Watergate burglar. He directed and controlled an espionage work in Cuba that is still functioning despite frantic efforts by Castro security forces and the KGB to destroy it.

Though he was only a bit player in the Watergate drama, Sturgis is a real-life James Bond whose exploits rival those of any fictional spy. Interviewed at the office of his Miami lawyer, Ellis Florin, and at other places in New York and Florida, he candidly revealed many details of his colorful career as a warrior, secrets-stealer, gun-runner, guerrilla fighter and professional plotter.

Changed the subject

Asked if he had also been an assassin, he politely changed the subject. Some things he will not talk about.

A stocky, iron-jawed man who looks much younger than his 50 years, he was born Frank Angelo Fiorini in Norfolk, Va. He joined the U.S. Marine Corps at the start of World War II and fought through the Pacific with the famed First Marine Battalion. After the war, he served in the Air Force, Army and Navy Reserve.

He had the perfect training for a secret agent. The Marine Corps taught him how to do, knife-fighting and jungle warfare techniques. The Air Force taught him to fly a plane and the Navy Reserve trained him to handle small, fast ships.

The Army completed this education. During a hitch in Germany, he was assigned

to a security unit that handled top-secret reports from Allied intelligence agents all over Europe. This was his introduction to the dark world of espionage and intrigue.

In Berlin during the chilliest part of the cold war, he met his first real spy. She was a beautiful actress who also was an agent of Haganah, the secret army formed to defend the new state of Israel.

When he returned to civilian life, Frank became a Haganah courier — perhaps the only Roman Catholic in this group. In the 1950s, he went to Miami to visit an uncle who had married a Cuban exile. Her family was close to Carlos Prío, the Cuban president who was ousted in 1952 by a military coup led by Fulgencio Batista. Frank met Prío and other wealthy Cubans whose Miami mansions were hotbeds of anti-Batista intrigue. Some of them supplied financial support for a fiery young rebel, Fidel Castro, who was then living in Mexico.

In 1957, Prío asked Frank to "go to Cuba, join Castro's army and let me know what he's doing." Frank accepted the assignment. He flew to Havana and with the help of a Cuban priest, he quickly located Castro's camp in the Sierra Maestra Mountains and volunteered his services.

"Fidel remembered me," he said. "We could understand each other. I spoke Italian, which is similar to Spanish, and he spoke some English. I offered to help train his troops, but he said, 'Frank, what I need is guns.'"

So Frank became a gun-runner. With money supplied by the Castro underground in Florida, he purchased thousands of rifles and other weapons from International Armament Corp. (Interarmco) of Alexandria, Va., the world's largest dealer in surplus arms. He then set up an elaborate land-sea-air smuggling network to get the guns and ammunition into Cuba.

He Becomes Triple Agent

After several months as a double agent, working for Prío and Castro, Frank became a triple agent. This time, he was recruited for the game of intelligence by a major league scout, Park F. Woolam, the State Department official then in charge of the U.S. Consulate in Santiago de Cuba.

"We met at the Case Grande Hotel in Santiago," Frank recalls. "Woolam knew who I was and what I was doing. He approached me or someone introduced us. We had several other meetings and he discussed my patriotism and so forth. I agreed to work with him.

"Later, when the revolution was over, I received orders to go to Havana. Woolam told me who to contact in the American Embassy there." His new contacts, Frank said, were CIA agents, one of whom was the embassy's military attaché.

Castro immediately placed his most trusted officers in command of the Cuban military services. Major Edeño Díaz Lanz, a close friend of Frank's, became commander in chief of the Air Force and his brother, Marcos Díaz Lanz, became inspector general of that service.

Frank helped the Díaz Lanz brothers reorganize the Air Force and they made him their security and intelligence chief. He also became the officer in charge of inspecting and supervising all Cuban gambling casinos, which were owned and operated by American mobsters.

Frank said his CIA advisers "asked me to recruit reliable people so that we could put agents in the military. In the presidential palace, in with Fidel. I recruited everyone I could, Americans and Cubans, to be undercover agents."

Max Gorman Gonzales, a Miami businessman who took part in cloak-and-dagger operations against both Batista and Castro, has known and worked with Sturgis for many years. He says Sturgis "was a CIA employee from 1959 to 1968. The CIA asked him to participate in assassination plots in Cuba and elsewhere. Sturgis introduced top Cuban military and political leaders to American agents at the U.S. Embassy in Havana. During these visits, a conspiracy to assassinate Castro and other Cuban leaders developed.

"Two attempts against Castro's life were made in the early part of 1959. Both failed. The assassins then waited for a green light from Frank Fiorini Sturgis. A third attempt was made in 1960."

This reporter asked Sturgis when the agency first began thinking about assassinating Castro.

"The first discussion of assassination with my (CIA) contacts was in February 1959," he replied. "I was making reports on all the communist activity in the military. I suggested that this would be a good time to assassinate Fidel. I said I would organize it and follow it through."

"I would arrange an important conference at Campo Libertad (Camp Liberty, the combined army-air force base and headquarters formerly known as Camp Columbia). All the top commanders would come to the base in their jeeps and cars. I was going to station gunners on the roofs, set up a crossfire. I would have wiped out Fidel, his brother Raul and all the top (pro-communist) military commanders in 30 seconds.

"I asked my contact in the Embassy to get a green light (official approval) on this. Whether this would have to come from the top level in Washington or a lower level, I don't know."

While they waited for the green light,

continued

...meids, ordered Pedro's arrest and the Diaz Lanz brothers went underground.

At this point, Frank was pulled out of Cuba. "I left Havana on June 30 and came to Miami to arrange the escapes of the Diaz Lanz brothers and their families. Pedro and his wife got out by sailboat; Marcos was picked up by a plane."

The brothers fled to Florida, told all they knew about the Castro regime and went to work for the CIA.

A few weeks after Frank's abrupt departure from Havana, he received word that Castro was sending an assassination team after him. Frank's informant supplied full descriptions of the three assassins, who were Mexican communists. The FBI posted a round-the-clock guard on Frank's Miami home and federal agents followed him wherever he went.

Tailed to Florida

Customs and Immigration officers were alerted. The Mexican gunmen were spotted when they crossed the border and were tailed to Florida, where they were arrested. Their car was confiscated and they were booted back to Mexico.

On Oct. 25, 1959, an American B-25 bomber swooped over Havana and dropped thousands of anti-Castro leaflets. Castro called this "bombing" raid a Cuban Pearl Harbor.

"Pedro Diaz Lanz was the pilot," Sturgis told the News. "I was the co-pilot. Marcos Diaz Lanz and another Cuban were with us. Cuban Air Force fighters came after us but they missed us and almost shot their own planes down. The big guns at the Navy station and the Habana fortress opened up but the angle of the guns was such that they were firing from the heights into the city. At least 36 people were killed and wounded."

The leaflet bombardment was the first of many CIA-sponsored missions Sturgis made to Cuba by air and sea. "I made at least 125 air operations into Cuba," he said, "with the green light and without the green light (with and without official approval). And I made some 60 boat missions."

"I had four boats. They were financed by the agency. One was a converted Coast Guard cutter, 83 feet long, with twin 650-horsepower engines. It has a maximum speed of 20 knots. Another boat, the Cuzco, was about the same size. I also had two 35-foot fiberglass boats with radar and other sophisticated equipment. They could carry 80 people and do 50 miles an hour."

Next: The Panama Canal plot

Sturgis and his CIA contacts devised two alternate plots. One was to execute Castro in the second-floor conference room of Air Force headquarters. As he and the other officers would not arrive at exactly the same time, it might be more practical to wait until they were all assembled around the conference table.

"The whole idea was to kill all of them at once. Unfortunately, if some of the anti-communist officers were in there at the same time, they would have to go too. The lives of some of the anti-communist commanders would have to be sacrificed in order to get Castro and his men."

The third scheme involved planting a bomb in Castro's office. "I had access to the prime minister's office," Sturgis said. "I knew Fidel's private secretary, Juan Orta. I recruited him to work with me at the Embassy. I planned to go to Fidel's office with a briefcase full of explosives which I would leave there. When Fidel entered the office, a signal would be given and the bomb would be set off by an electronic device across the street."

The plotters waited several months for the green light from Washington, but it never came. "They couldn't make up their minds," Frank said of the unseen, unknown decision-makers. "They couldn't decide what to do."

Asked for Green Light

But, according to former intelligence agents, the CIA later approved and bankrolled other plots to wipe out Castro. American adventurers, Cuban exiles, Mafia dons and high-ranking Cuban officials played prominent parts in these conspiracies.

In June, 1959, Castro fired 25 top Air Force officers suspected of disloyalty, including the Diaz Lanz brothers. Pedro Diaz Lanz then resigned from the Air Force and denounced Castro as a communist. The new air chief, Maj. Juan

How an Invasion of the Canal Zone Was Foiled

PAUL MESKIL

rd of a series

The Central Intelligence Agency investigated Fidel Castro, Marina Margot Fonteyn and John Wayne and Errol Flynn connection with a bizarre invasion of Panama.

The colorful cast of this comic-opera spy story included three American adventurers, two of whom were working for the CIA. William Morgan and Alex Rike, both former U.S. Army paratroopers, were on opposite sides of the same plot. And Frank Sturgis, a former Marine Raider, was in the middle. Sturgis, born Frank Fiorini, was a runner and troop-trainer for Castro. He became security and intelligence chief of the Cuban Air Force, meanwhile acting as a secret agent of the CIA.

Morgan was a freelance conspirator, more interested in money than politics. A native of Toledo, Ohio, he went to Cuba in 1955 and became second-in-command of an independent rebel army in the Escambray Mountains. This non-communist force helped Castro's guerrillas overthrow the Batista dictatorship. Castro made Morgan a major, high rank in the revolutionary army.

The upset victory over Batista, and spoils that went with it, encouraged Morgan to consider extending the revolution to other Latin lands. A few weeks after the Castro takeover in Havana, he was called at Capt. Frank Fiorini's office in Cuban Air Force headquarters.

Major Morgan spoke to me confidentially. Sturgis told The News. "He said he was preparing an invasion of Panama, the Canal Zone. He wanted me to be second-in-command of the expedition. I told him I was interested, but not in a leadership position.

"I said, 'Bill, you've got to be crazy. The American government's got a military force there. You're willing to go against your own country?' He said, 'If the U.S. never did anything for

The American military strength in the Canal Zone at that time in 1959 totaled 13,000 men, compared to 65,000 in World War II. Morgan figured a surprise attack by a few hundred Cubans, aided by Panamanian leftists staging riots and other disorders, would be sufficient to capture or at least sabotage the canal.

The conspirators planned to overthrow the Panamanian government and take the Canal for propaganda and other reasons," Sturgis said.

They were going to send a ship, loaded with explosives, through the canal. They were going to blow up and



Photo by Rosendo Cuevas

In Panama, part of the invasion team is quickly seized.

"Morgan figured it would tie up the canal for at least two months. He was all set to go. He had the men, guns, ships, planes, everything.

"I contacted the American Embassy in Havana and notified the CIA agent in charge. I took Col. Nicholas (Erickson Nichols, air attaché at the embassy) to the air base and showed him the camouflaged planes that were to be used for the invasion, and I named all the people who were involved in the conspiracy."

Those names reportedly included Margot Fonteyn, superstar of London's Royal Ballet and dame commander of the Order of the British Empire (the equivalent of knighthood), and her rich, aristocratic husband, Roberto Arias, former Panamanian ambassador to Britain and son of a former president of Panama.

Dame Margot and her husband were in Cuba at the time. So was Ruben Miro, head of the Panamanian revolutionary movement. They allegedly conferred with Morgan at Cienfuegos, where he was military commander.

According to intelligence reports, the invasion was to take place while Castro was visiting the United States and Canada. A spearhead force of Cubans and Panamanians would land on the Caribbean coast of Panama. A second force of Panamanians would strike inland from the Pacific coast. Then the main invasion army would sail in from Cuba.

Police and National Guard posts were to be attacked. Rebel bands were to come down from the mountains to join the invaders. And militant leftists were to march on the Canal Zone and riot in Panama City, to keep Panamanian police and U.S. troops occupied.

But Frank's reports to the CIA provided sufficient advance warning.

Castro left Cuba on April 11. Then Arias and his wife flew to Panama and rented the 32-foot motor launch Nola for \$75 a day, saying they were going fish-

Cache of arms

They reportedly sailed directly to a spot where a cache of arms — semi-automatic rifles, revolvers, machine-guns, grenades and ammunition in waterproof containers — had been dropped in the Pacific Ocean, 15 miles outside the Panama Canal entrance. The shrimp boat Elaine had been standing by for the arms drop. It retrieved the weapons from the water and later transferred them to the Nola.

The "fishermen" aboard the Nola came ashore on the Pacific coast, near Santa Clara, and buried the guns and ammo on the beach. Dame Margot and her husband then resumed their cruise.

On April 16, after receiving a CIA report that an invasion ship had sailed from the Cuban port of Patabano (part of Morgan's military district in Las Villas Province), the Panamanian government ordered Arias' arrest. He heard the news on the Nola's radio, returned to the Santa Clara area and went into hiding on his family's ranch.

Before dawn next day, the Nola slipped into the Panama Canal with only the skipper and Dame Margot aboard. She went to the home of her sister-in-law, Senora Chela Arias. A few hours later, she was arrested. After 25 hours in jail, the prima ballerina was released back to Britain. Meanwhile, Arias had taken refuge in the Brazilian Embassy in Panama City. He was later allowed to leave the country.

National guardsmen found the arms buried in the beach at Santa Clara. A second arms cache was discovered near a cottage owned by an American friend of the Arias family.

Late Friday night, April 24, a Cuban ship landed at Puerto Coronado on the Caribbean coast of Panama about 60 miles northeast of the capital. In it were 25 armed men, Cubans and Panamanians, and a woman nurse.

in the main invasion of about 500 men, mostly Cubans had fought under Morgan. When Castro learned that the spearhead failed to penetrate Panama, he called the invasion and ordered the three ship ships back to Cuba.

Meanwhile, Panamanian officers discovered a blue canvas bag left behind by Margot. Among the interesting items in it were a notebook containing a list of arms to be used in the two-pronged invasion, maps of Panama, a tide table and several letters which Panamanian authorities said proved Margot's involvement in the plot.

There was also a letter from film star John Wayne. Signed "Duke," it stated that Arias had received \$525,000 from Wayne's account between Nov. 19, 1957, and April 5, 1958.

Questioned by American agents, Flynn explained that he and Arias were partners in a shrimp-exporting business. "I don't deal in politics," he said. "I'm an actor." The feds were convinced they knew nothing about the Panama plot.

Errol Flynn also was asked about his friendship with Arias. They had been together in Cuba, where Flynn was making a movie based on the Castro revolution. The screen swashbuckler said Arias wanted to hire Flynn's yacht, the can-going Zaca, for a trip to Panama. Suspecting what he had in mind, Flynn refused.

Some CIA agents believe Morgan would not have attempted the Panama invasion without Castro's consent. But Morgan insisted: "I had nothing to do with it."

When the spearhead force splashed ashore on a San Blas Indian reservation, the CIA had a man at the scene. He was Alexander Rorke Jr., a freelance journalist, photographer and intelligence agent.

Double doublecross

Son of a New York judge, Alex served as a paratrooper and intelligence specialist in World War II. In 1952, he married actress Jacqueline Billingsley, daughter of Stork Club owner, Sherman Billingsley.

Frank Nelson, an American businessman in Cuba, was involved with Sturgis, Morgan and Rorke in various plots, including a double doublecross. Nelson, who now lives in New York and has just finished writing a book titled "For a Million Dollars," told the News:

"I started the counter-revolution against Castro in 1959 because he arrested a close friend of mine. I went to see Frank Sturgis in Havana and asked if there was anything he could do to get my friend out of jail. He sent me to Morgan who was very close to Castro, but Morgan wasn't interested in anything but money.

"I found out that Castro was going to invade the Dominican Republic, so I went there and told Trujillo (Dominican dictator Rafael Trujillo) about the invasion plans. I said he should beat Castro with the punch and invade Cuba, with Morgan's help.

"I told Trujillo, 'I think you can buy an army for a million dollars. Let him take his army back to the mountains and establish a base. Then you come in with your army and in a few days Castro is finished.'"

Trujillo approved the million-dollar deal and put up the cash to get it started. Nelson said he paid Morgan \$500,000, plus \$100,000 "for expenses." The remaining \$500,000 was to be paid when

Sturgis soon learned the details of this new plot and informed the CIA. When the agency pulled Sturgis out of Cuba in the summer of 1959, it sent Rorke in to find out what was happening.

Nelson arranged a meeting between Rorke and Morgan. Soon after Rorke arrived in Havana, he phoned Morgan's home. A woman answered, identified herself as "Mrs. Morgan" and told Rorke to come on over. When he got there, he was arrested. The woman who answered the phone was Vilma Espi, Raul Castro's wife.

By this time, Morgan had told Fidel about the invasion plot. Without mentioning the million dollars, he said he had pretended to go along with Trujillo in order to set a trap.

In mid-August, Morgan sent an urgent radio message to the chief of Dominican military intelligence. He said he had seized Trinidad, on the south coast of Cuba, as an invasion beachhead. When a planeload of Dominican soldiers and arms landed near Trinidad next day, it was surrounded by 1,000 Cuban troops led by Fidel Castro himself.

The Dominicans were paraded before TV cameras on their way to jail. Castro denounced Trujillo and praised Morgan as a hero. Less than two years later, Morgan was executed by a Castro firing squad for a much less profitable plot.

What became of the \$600,000 is not known. Neither Morgan's Cuban wife nor his American family ever saw a cent of it. Nor did Castro.

As soon as the Trujillo invasion collapsed, Alex Rorke was released from jail and deported from Cuba. But he returned many times by air and sea. For these clandestine trips, he used a twin-engine Beechcraft plane, a B-25 bomber and a 36-foot speedboat, the Violynn III. Sturgis accompanied him on many mysterious missions.

On one occasion, Rorke reportedly landed an execution squad that tried but failed to kill Castro. Early in 1963, the Violynn III was detained in the Bahamas when it stopped to refuel on a run between the U.S. and Cuba. British intelligence agents questioned Rorke and the 17 Cuban raiders who were with him. Rorke told them the CIA had financed many trips of the Violynn III and "the United States government, through the Central Intelligence Agency, had advance knowledge of these trips."

Former CIA agents told The News this statement was true.

On April 25, 1963, Rorke and three other CIA contract agents flew over Havana in the Beechcraft and tried to bomb two oil refineries. The bombs missed their targets and caused little dam-

Five months later, Rorke went on his last mission. The 36-year-old adventurer and his partner, Geoffrey Sullivan, 28, of Waterbury, Conn., took off from Ft. Lauderdale, Fla. in a rented twin-engine Beechcraft on Sept. 24, 1963. Two Cubans accompanied them.

Rorke and Sullivan filed a flight plan indicating they were bound for Nicaragua, where they planned to start an air freight service. They made two fuel stops — at Czumel Island off Mexico's Yucatan Peninsula and at Belize, British Honduras. When they left Belize, the plane disappeared.

That night, Sturgis received a report that the plane was overdue in Nicaragua. Frank immediately called the commander of naval intelligence in Miami. An air-sea search was launched by the Navy, Coast Guard and Air Force. A private search party was organized later by Rorke's Miami lawyer and personal friend, Ellis Rubin. But no trace of the missing Americans or their plane was ever found.

Forced onto boat

Some investigators believe the plane was sabotaged by Castro agents. Frank Nelson has another theory:

"When they stopped to refuel at Stanley Field near Belize, Alex spoke to an American commercial pilot, Floyd Park of Alamo, Texas. Alex said they were headed for Tegucigalpa (capital of the Republic of Honduras). They took off in the direction of Tegucigalpa, but they never got there.

"Several months later, Park received information from a couple of Hondurans that two Americans answering the description of Rorke and Sullivan were forced to board a Cuban fishing boat that had pulled into shore in Honduras two weeks earlier with engine trouble.

The fishing boat left immediately after the two Americans were put on board."

If these men were indeed Rorke and Sullivan, they never reached Cuba. Investigators are certain of that. The two Cubans who left Florida with Rorke and Sullivan were still with them when they made the two fuel stops. According to reports received by both Nelson and Sturgis, one of these men was Enrique Molina, a Cuban officer who supposedly turned against Castro and fled to the United States.

"Molina was seen in Havana a few months after he disappeared with Rorke and Sullivan in Central America," Nelson said. He believes Molina may have forced the Americans to land somewhere in Honduras, where they were delivered to Castro agents who kidnaped and killed them.

How U.S. Made Unholy Alliance With the Mafia

PAUL MESKIL

10th of a series

When Fidel Castro threw the American gangsters out of Cuba, they vowed to return—over his dead body.

Their determination to get rid of Castro was shared by many high-placed American officials and this common sense led eventually to an unholy alliance between the CIA and the mob. A strange story of CIA agents and Mafia mobsters plotting together against Castro was pieced together from interviews with police, federal agents, agents and underworld sources.

Meyer Lansky, the crime syndicate's financial genius, and Santo Trafficante, Mafia boss of West Florida and Havana, got out of Cuba immediately after the hasty exit of their benefactor, dictator Fulgencio Batista. The overseers of the gambling casinos remained on the island, nervously waiting for the axe to

"I was in touch with all the casino owners and operators in Havana," said Frank Sturgis, who was Castro's casino director during this period. "Fidel ordered me to close all the casinos for days. The owners got the hint. They saw he was preparing to shut them down permanently, which he did.

"They were very, very mad. Those casinos were worth \$100 million a year to the American crime syndicate. Every important mob boss in the United States had points (percentages) in the Cuban casinos. Each point was worth \$200 to \$100,000.

"Lansky and Trafficante were the main men in Cuban gambling. Lansky had direct business dealings with Batista. Trafficante had several casinos, including the Sans Souci."

Sans Souci partners

His Sans Souci partners included Norman Rothman of Miami Beach and the notorious Mannarino brothers, Gabriel and Sam, Mafia chiefs in Pittsburgh. Rothman and the Mannarinos tried to stop the Castro steamroller in 1958 by smuggling a plane load of arms stolen from a National Guard armory in Ohio — to anti-Castro forces in Cuba.

According to police and federal sources, Rothman was high up in the Cuban crime syndicate and shared his hefty profits with Batista's brother-in-law, Gen. Robert Fernandez Miran-

Rothman returned to Florida soon after the Castro coup and, with his Cuban partners, bought the Biltmore hotel in Miami Beach, the sources said.

SECRETS OF THE CIA

The hotel's most elegant suite, on the top floor overlooking the ocean, was made ready for Batista, but he chose the cooler climes of the Dominican Republic, Portugal and Madeira.

Sturgis was on friendly terms with several gambling racketeers, including Hyman Levine, a Lansky mobster who ran Havana's Comodoro casino. One evening, during a casual conversation, Levine observed that it "would be worth a million" to the syndicate to get rid of Castro. Sturgis didn't rise to this bait and Levine changed the subject.

It popped up again a few weeks later while Castro was in New York during a whirlwind tour of North and South America.

Fidel and his entourage stayed at the Statler-Hilton, where Sturgis registered under his real name and Cuban military rank, Capt. Frank Fiorini.

Frank was in his room one evening when he received a phone call from a detective captain on duty in the lobby as part of a heavy security detail. No visitors were allowed on the Castro floor without special permission.

"There's a guy here to see you," the cop reported. "He says he's your uncle."

"Send him up," Frank replied.

The short, pot-bellied man who arrived a few minutes later looked more like a godfather than an uncle. Frank recognized him as a member of the Havana gambling mob. Coming straight to the point, the hood offered Frank \$100,000 to kill Castro.

"I'm not for hire," Frank said, ending the conversation.

When he returned to Havana a few days later, he reported the offer to his CIA contacts at the American Embassy.

Sturgis had no further contact with the gangster who approached him in New York, but someone in the intelligence hierarchy decided that the CIA and the syndicate should join forces against Castro. The go-between picked for this project reportedly was Norman Rothman.

"Rothman was in touch with several CIA agents," a former agent told The News. "They had many meetings concerning assassination plots against Castro."

Rothman, in turn, discussed the matter with his peers. Among those who took part in these secret parleys, reliable sources said, were Santo Trafficante of Tampa; Sam Mannarino of Pittsburgh; Salvatore (Sally) Buras; Granello and Charles (Charlie the Blade) Tourine, both of New York, and

John (Don Giovanni) Roselli of Las Vegas.

Granello, a member of the Vito Genovese crime family, had run casinos in Cuba and bossed a major bookmaking operation on Manhattan's East Side. Tourine, an associate of New Jersey mob chieftains Ruggiero (Richie the Boot) Boiardo and Gerardo (Jerry) Calvo, also had operated Havana casinos.

Several suggestions were made for Castro's demise. One was to send for Cayetano Magaddino, a one-man murder inn who killed more than 50 people in various parts of the world before he was blown away by a shotgun blast in Brooklyn in 1970. A Sicilian Mafia boss, Magaddino had lived in South America and Cuba, where he performed lethal chores for Trafficante prior to the Castro coup. He knew Havana well and was a perfect choice for the assassination assignment, but he either declined or wasn't offered the contract.

The mob and the CIA finally gave it to Roselli, reputed Mafia boss of Las Vegas, federal sources said.

A dapper, gray-haired man who calls himself a Hollywood movie producer and is a benevolent patron of Vegas showgirls, Roselli reportedly was introduced to CIA agents in 1960 by a Howard Hughes executive who formerly worked for the FBI. Then, federal sources said, Roselli agreed to recruit a death squad to go to Cuba hunting Castro.

Money from CIA

The CIA was to supply money, weapons, and transportation.

Roselli flew to Miami in March, 1961, and held separate conferences with CIA agents and Trafficante on the Castro project.

Roselli volunteered to accompany CIA-financed missions to Cuba, the federal sources said. One of these expeditions reportedly landed an execution squad that attempted but failed to hit Castro. On another occasion, the crew of Roselli's launch fought a running gunfight with a Cuban patrol boat.

Columnist Jack Anderson reported that CIA agents gave Roselli some poison capsules which he passed along to a Cuban who was related to Castro's chef. The chef was to put the poison in Castro's food. The sources interviewed by the News confirmed that at least one attempt was made to poison Castro.

An American who was active in the anti-Castro underground in Cuba at the time said "enough poison to kill 10 people" was dumped in a glass of malted milk sent to Castro's suite in the Havana Hilton in 1961.

"Castro ordered a chocolate milk every afternoon and the same waiter always brought it to his room," he said. "When the waiter came in with the poisoned malt, he was shaking so hard that he almost dropped the tray."

"Castro said, 'What's wrong with

Continued

you? The waiter said, 'I don't know; maybe I got a fever.' Castro had him arrested and had the drink analyzed. Chemists found the poison right away."

In early 1961, a more elaborate assassination attempt was directed by a well-financed American who arrived in Havana soon after the Castro takeover and lived there until security police accused him of working for the CIA and plotting to murder Castro.

Working with anti-Castro Cuban military officers, the American planted several sticks of dynamite under the garage floor of a 20-story apartment building where a number of Castro aides and Communist-bloc diplomats lived with their families.

"Castro came to the apartment house every two weeks to see one of his adjutants," one of the plotters said. "He always arrived in the afternoon, on the same day of the week.

"He would drive in with his bodyguards and park his car in the space reserved for him. We timed his visits. It always took at least five minutes for him to get into the garage, out of the car and into the freight elevator that took him upstairs where he wanted to go.

"We had a line of four men. One would signal from a nearby roof when Castro's car started into the garage. The signal would be passed on. Then a couple of guys would hit the plunger of an electronic detonating device. The detonator was in a hotel near the apartment house.

"We would have blown him to dust.

"The night before it was to happen, the guys (the Cuban plotters) had a final meeting to go over the details. Nobody outside our group knew about the dynamite, but a friend of theirs in G-2 (Castro's intelligence service) found out about the meeting and reported it. The G-2 came looking for them.

"They were in an apartment miles away from the place where the dynamite was. The G-2 raided the meeting, and everybody started running all over the place.

with the raiders and killed two of them before he was slain by a motorcycle cop. Three other conspirators, all rebel officers who had fought with Castro in the Sierra Maestra, were captured and taken to G-2 headquarters. They escaped a few hours later, with the help of friends in the intelligence service, and found refuge in the Uruguayan Embassy.

"Castro never found out about the dynamite," said the source who disclosed the plot to The News. "It's probably still there, under the garage floor."

Intelligence sources told this reporter that the CIA sent an execution squad into Oriente Province in November 1962 to ambush Castro near Santiago de Cuba as he drove to a memorial service for his fallen guerrillas.

Snipers hid along road

Snipers hid among trees and bushes lining the road to the cemetery where the service was to be held. On the morning of the scheduled ceremony, a motorcade of five jeeps approached the graveyard. The first jeep was full of soldiers. In the second jeep, a tall, bearded man sat next to the driver. He was wearing sunglasses and his fatigue cap was pulled down to his eyes.

Machineguns and rifles sprayed the second jeep with bullets, killing the driver and his passenger, who turned out to be Castro's lookalike bodyguard, Capt. Alfredo Gamonal. The assassins escaped. So did Fidel, who had prudently taken another route to the cemetery.

The CIA plots against Castro began in 1960, during the Eisenhower administration and continued through the Kennedy and Johnson years, causing President Johnson to observe to an aide that "we're running a damned Murder, Inc. in the Caribbean."

In 1967, the Immigration and Naturalization Service began deportation proceedings against Don Giovanni Roselli, claiming he was brought to this country illegally from Italy.

In 1969, soon after President Nixon took office, government lawyers argued in court that Roselli should not be deported because he had performed unspecified "valuable service in the national security." Roselli was not deported.

A Mission to Cuba: Tale of the Doomed Raiders

by PAUL MESHIL

1st of a series

On March 17, 1960, President Eisenhower authorized the CIA to form a guerrilla army of Cuban fugees and invade Cuba. Shortly thereafter, the CIA dispatched agent Frank Sturgis to Guatemala to confer with President Miguel Ydigoras about setting up training bases in that country.

This "secret" mission was quickly uncovered and reported by the Guatemalan news media.

"I had planned to break into the Cuban Embassy while I was in Guatemala City," Sturgis told this reporter recently, "but the president suggested I leave the country because of the publicity. The newspapers and I reported I was a CIA agent and was trying to obtain bases for the invasion."

Over the next year, the CIA trained Cuban recruits in Guatemala, Panama, Puerto Rico and the United States. Sturgis, a marine combat veteran of World War II, trained about 50 Cubans in the Florida Everglades.

Sturgis was part of the agency's top-secret Operation 40, an infiltration and intelligence-gathering group.

It was to go into Cuba before the Bay of Pigs assault.

Some former CIA agents describe Operation 40 as an "assassination squad." Sturgis won't go that far.

"It was a top CIA project," he says. "Most of the men in it were Cubans who had been trained by the U.S. Army. I am not saying that Operation 40 had an assassination squad. There are reports that there was one, but I'm not saying so."

Infiltrate

"The prime purpose was infiltration, not assassination. They (group members) were to infiltrate Cuba and contact anti-Castro military leaders, political leaders and underground people. We had to be sure they could do it—if they had to, it was really necessary."

Chief of Operation 40 was Jose Juan Sanjonia, a former Castro aide who defected and became a CIA agent. Two of his cousins also worked for the agency.

Early in 1960, the CIA learned that a group of Cuban military officers was plotting to overthrow Castro. The leader of this plot was Major Humberto Sorí Marín, a former Havana lawyer who had drafted the Castro penal code and made firing squad executions legal. Sorí Marín had been adjutant general of Castro's army, presiding over the 1959 "war crimes" trials

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that sent hundreds of Batista loyalists to the firing squads, and Castro's first minister of agriculture. But by 1961 he had turned against the Castro regime.

His partners in the anti-Castro conspiracy included other Cuban army, navy and air force commanders, the chief of Castro's secret police, the deputy finance minister and the head of the Cuban Sugar Institute. They planned a military uprising during which Castro and his Communist advisers would be killed.

As soon as the CIA learned what they were up to, Operation 40 went into action. Agents slipped into Cuba, contacted the conspirators and asked them to time the military revolt to coincide with the Bay of Pigs invasion.

A month before the coordinated revolt-invasion was to start, a militia patrol was sent to the Miramar section of Havana to arrest a woman who had been overheard complaining about food shortages. As the militia jeep pulled up to her house, she ran out the door and fled to the nearby home of a retired engineer and his wife.

The militiamen charged after her, entered the engineer's house and burst into a room where ten leaders of the military conspiracy were seated around a table littered with Havana street maps pinpointing the locations of key installations that were to be seized.

The militiamen were outranked and outnumbered. They hesitated, not sure what to do. Then informed sources said, Sorí Marín pulled his pistol. A short burst from a Czech-made submachine gun wounded him in the leg and persuaded him and his co-conspirators to surrender. They were hauled off to La Cabana Fortress for questioning.

Around this time, in March 1961, a so-so party was held in a small white bungalow in Miami's Cuban section. The bungalow was a CIA "safe house" and the party was a sendoff celebration for an Operation 40 squad—five Cubans and an American—that was about to invade Cuba.

Contact underground

The squad's mission was to contact the anti-Castro underground and create a diversion on the north coast to make Castro think a guerrilla force was landing there. The diversionary action was to begin shortly before the real invasion on the south coast.

Most of the people at the Miami party were Cuban refugees. Among the Americans there were Frank Nelson, a former Havana businessman and a veteran Caribbean conspirator, and CIA

Nelson fell into conversation with young Angus McNair, lone American member of the Cuba-bound squad. Asked why he was going on such a dangerous mission, McNair replied: "Because Castro killed an American soldier, Bill Morgan."

(Morgan, a former U.S. Army paratrooper who attained the rank of major in Castro's army, was executed by a Castro firing squad on March 11, 1961.)

"About 20 people were at the party," Nelson recalled recently. "I asked McNair, 'Aren't you afraid of a leak, with all these people knowing about your mission?' He said they were all friends and relatives of the Cubans who were going with him. He trusted them all. That was a fatal mistake."

The CIA raiders set off the following night from the Florida Keys in the 42-foot motor launch Mercury, loaded with automatic rifles, tommyguns, pistols, grenades and boxes of ammo. Their destination was an inlet of Cabañas Bay in Pinar del Rio Province, about 30 miles from Havana.

Reputed CIA agent

McNair, 25, of Coral Gables, Fla., was working for Sturgis. His orders were to contact Howard Anderson, 31, a reputed CIA agent who owned a chain of gas stations in Havana and commanded the American Legion post there.

Anderson had been in close touch with the Cuban military officers who were plotting an anti-Castro coup. After they were captured, he was instructed to determine if other Cuban officers were in on the plot and if they would attempt to carry it out. He was also to advise the CIA of the progress of the diversionary action to be launched by Operation 40 in Pinar del Rio.

Shortly after midnight on March 19, the Mercury scraped the sandy bottom of a small, palm-fringed cove. McNair and the Cubans sat perfectly still, listening for signs of possible danger.

Hearing none, they jumped into the waist-deep water and started to unload the boat.

Searchlights were turned on, blinding the invaders. Armed men spilled onto the beach and surrounded them. More than 100 soldiers and militiamen had been waiting for them to land. Someone, perhaps a Castro agent who was a guest at their going-away party, had talked.

Anderson was executed the same night on his way to rendezvous with McNair. The two Americans died at dawn before a firing squad on April 19, two days after the Bay of Pigs invasion began.

Seven Cubans were executed with them, including Gilberto Etanourt, one of the leaders of a spearhead force sent from Cuba to invade Panama in 1959. A former Castro aide, he defected after

Twelve more anti-Castro plotters were executed next day, April 20. Seven of them were shot in the bullet-pocked wall of LaC Habana Fort. Among the plotters were Humberto Sori Marin, the man who legalized firing squads, and a mysterious American citizen who called himself Rafael Diaz Bencom and was employed by CIA. He reportedly served as liaison between Sori Marin's group and the agency.

Although the Bay of Pigs adventure was a disaster, the CIA plots continued and many invasion veterans continued to work for the agency. Some of them were assigned to the "spook ship" Rex, a 175-foot converted U.S. Navy patrol boat that made hundreds of clandestine voyages to Cuba.

Flying the Nicaraguan flag, the Rex operated out of West Palm Beach and Ft. Lauderdale, Florida. It carried the latest radar and sonar equipment, five cannons, several .30-caliber machine-guns and two 20-foot speedboats.

Its skipper reportedly was Eugenio Rolando Martinez, a Miami real estate salesman and CIA agent who made more than 300 nocturnal runs to Cuba. (He was taken off the official CIA payroll in 1972, the day after he was caught in the Watergate break-in.)

On the night of July 21, 1963, one of the Rex speedboats deposited six men on a small island off Las Villas province. The invaders reportedly had been sent to kill Castro at a July 26 rally in Havana's Plaza de la Revolucion, but they never got there. They were picked up by a military patrol soon after they landed.

Men captured

On the night of Oct. 21, 1963, the Rex sent its twin speedboats ashore at the western tip of Cuba. The landing was observed by a militia patrol and the six men in the first boat were captured as soon as they hit the beach. The second launch was sunk by a Cuban gunboat as it raced back to the Rex.

Cannon fire from the Rex drove off the Cuban vessel. The men in the water were hauled aboard the spy ship. Next morning, a U.S. Navy submarine surfaced near the Rex off the Bahamas. Five Cubans—four dead, one wounded—reportedly were transferred to the sub, which then submerged and headed for Florida.

One month after this incident, President Kennedy was assassinated by Lee Harvey Oswald, who had visited the Cuban Embassy in Mexico City shortly before the murder and had joined the pro-Castro Fair Play for Cuba Committee. President Johnson later told an aide, Leo Janos, that he thought the Kennedy assassination might have been a "retaliation" for the CIA-backed efforts to kill Castro.

These efforts continued after Kennedy's death.

In the fall of 1961, CIA agents in Paris made contact with Cuban Army Major Rolando Cubelas, a hero of the Castro revolution and a leader of the Cuban student organization. Two Cuban-born CIA employees, Luis Enrique Treanco and Carlos Trepedino spoke with Cubelas and put him in touch with CIA agents working out of the American Embassy in Paris. The discussions continued a few days later in Madrid, where Cubelas met four more CIA agents. Cubelas had become disenchanted with the Castro regime and he eventually agreed to kill his former idol. On his return to Havana, he was given a high-powered sight.

Other plotters rented an apartment overlooking the building where the prime minister's office was located. Cubelas reportedly drew a bead on Castro one day in 1965. He lined up the cross hairs and squeezed the trigger, but the rifle failed to fire. Castro's secret police later got wind of the assassination attempt and arrested Cubelas and seven other plotters, all of whom were saved from the firing squad by a clemency appeal from Castro.

This may have been the last CIA-sponsored attempt to eradicate Castro. But other CIA activities kept the Caribbean cauldron boiling.

'Frogmen' Blew Up a French Ship in Havana

PAUL MESKIL

Part of a series

At 3:10 p.m. on March 4, 1960, a French munitions ship blew up in Havana harbor, killing at least 13 people and injuring more than 50.

The vessel, *Le Couvre*, exploded during the unloading of 76 tons of ammunition and grenades intended for Fidel Castro's military and police forces. Cas-suspected sabotage, but couldn't prove it. The United States denied any involvement in the incident.

A former CIA agent told *The News* recently that *Le Couvre* was sabotaged by "CIA frogmen." He said an underwater demolition team slipped into the harbor at night and attached a bomb to the ship's hull, under the waterline. The bomb, a detonator and a timing device were in a waterproof container, he said. The ex-agent added that the frogmen were Cubans working for the CIA. "It was definitely a CIA-connected thing," he said.

Another source said the bomb was supposed to go off around 3 a.m., when the waterfront was deserted, but something went wrong with the timer and the blast came 12 hours later, when the area was crowded with dock workers and harbor traffic.

Still another source, formerly connected with the CIA and other intelligence agencies in the Caribbean area, blamed the big blast on Gen. Rafael Trujillo, then dictator of the Dominican Republic.

Trujillo and his sinister intelligence chief, Johnny Abbes, had many conferences with CIA officials and secret agents. On one occasion in 1960, Trujillo offered CIA agents Frank Sturgis and Pedro Diaz Lang, former chief of Castro's Air Force, \$1 million to lead an invasion of Cuba from the Dominican Republic. Diaz Lang declined, telling his CIA bosses that he didn't want to work for another dictator.

Plotting to kill Trujillo

While in the Dominican Republic to confer with Trujillo in 1961, Sturgis also contacted Dominican military officers who were plotting to kill Trujillo. The CIA agreed to give the plotters guns and ammunition.

"The guns arrived in boxes sent to a supermarket in Ciudad Trujillo (the Dominican capital, now called Santo Domingo)," said Frank Nelson, an American who worked with Trujillo in a plot to overthrow Castro. "The Dominican officers didn't need the guns. They already had enough stuff for a war. They needed the moral support of the U.S. government, and this was represented by the arms shipments."

The rebel officers assassinated Trujillo on May 30, 1961. Whether they

SECRETS OF THE CIA

used the CIA guns has not been disclosed. But similar weapons figured in subsequent attempts to exterminate Francois (Papa Doc) Duvalier, the voodoo Hitler of Haiti.

On the night of Aug. 23, 1963, a converted B-25 bomber left Florida with an arms shipment for Gen. Leon Cantava, a former Haitian Army commander who was planning to invade his homeland from the Dominican Republic, which shares the island of Hispaniola with Haiti. The CIA plane swooped over a flare-lit field near the Dominican military airport of Najabon.

Wooden crates rained down on parachutes. They contained mortars, bazookas, M-1 rifles, .30-caliber machineguns, M-3 tommyguns, .45-caliber pistols, grenades and ammunition.

The weapons were distributed among 210 Haitian exiles who comprised Cantava's invasion army. They crossed the Massacre River, borderline between the Dominican Republic and Haiti, on the night of Sept. 22. Late the following day, after a bloody battle with Haitian troops, Cantava led the remnants of his rebel band back across the river to their Dominican sanctuary.

A week later, a small group of Haitian refugees entered a U.S. Army Special Forces camp in North Carolina for training in guerrilla warfare. Most of the Haitians were in their early 20s and had attended college in the United States after service in the U.S. Army or Air Force. All of them lived in New York City.

They had been hand-picked by the CIA for what became one of the bravest and most pitiful invasions in the history of Caribbean carnage.

The invasion force consisted of only 13 men, eight of whom had been trained by the Green Berets. They belonged to an anti-Duvalier group called Jeune Haiti (Young Haiti). Nearly all of the unlucky 13 were the sons of Haitian military officers or officials who had been killed by Duvalier's thugs.

The leader, Gusle Villedrouin, was a former U.S. airman whose father, Haitian Army Col. Roger Villadreuin, was clubbed to death by Papa Doc's Tonton Macoutes.

They chartered a boat in Florida and landed in Haiti on Aug. 3, 1964, carrying a variety of weapons supplied by CIA agents. Although the invasion was doomed to failure before it began, the 13 young New Yorkers managed to hold off hundreds of Duvalier soldiers, militiamen and Tonton Macoutes.

They were killed one by one, and those who were left kept fighting. The last three invaders ran out of ammunition on Oct. 25, then threw stones at the troops who gunned them down. The heads of all 13 were cut off and sent to the presidential palace in Port-au-Prince.

Drops two gasoline drums

On May 20, 1968, a B-25 flew over Duvalier's palace and dropped two gasoline drums, one of which blew a hole in the street outside the Haitian White House. The other did not explode. The plane was piloted by an American who reportedly had done contract jobs for the CIA.

A much more imaginative, though no more successful, CIA plot was simmering on another burner at this time. Its aim was the release of the U.S.S. *Pueblo* and her crew, captured by communist North Korea in January, 1968.

CIA officials named the *Pueblo* project "Operation Sword," but those who took part refer to it as "the Mexican thing." It went from the planning stage to the recruiting stage in the summer of 1968, when a classified ad appeared in a Ft. Lauderdale newspaper, offering "adventure" and "high pay" to qualified applicants.

The ad was placed by Ray Sandstrom, a Ft. Lauderdale lawyer who allegedly had worked for the CIA as a pilot. About 60 men answered the ad and Sandstrom forwarded the letters to Sturgis, who was in charge of the operation.

Sturgis had already appointed Max Gorman Gonzales, who had worked with him on previous missions, as security chief of the project. From the letters and personal interviews, Frank eventually picked 11 volunteers.

"They all had been in military service," Gonzales said recently. "Three had been in World War II; the others served in Korea and Vietnam. Most were young, but one was in his late 40s and had a drinking problem. He said he had never accomplished much in life and had always wanted to go on some kind of an adventure, so Frank said, 'Well, if you stay sober, we'll take you along.'"

"The men were offered \$10,000 for a completed assignment. They were told it was to be a commando raid into Cuba to free political prisoners from Castro's concentration camps."

To lend credence to this story, Sturgis displayed a map showing the locations of Cuban prisons and prison camps. He also had a list of prisoners who supposedly were to be freed.

None of the men, not even Gonzales, were told the real objective.

"This operation was planned months

continued

Sturgis said. The CIA was aware of it. So were several other federal agencies, including the FBI and Customs.

"The objective was not to raid Cuba but to rendezvous with another ship off the coast of Mexico and, with the assistance of this ship, seize a Russian vessel. We were to meet a Cuban vessel. I assume it was a naval vessel, commanded by Cuban navy officers who were disenchanted with Castro.

"The orders for completing the operation were aboard the Cuban ship. The captain also had a sailing schedule listing arrivals and departures of all Soviet and communist-bloc vessels in the Caribbean and the Gulf of Mexico. We hoped to grab a Soviet 'fishing trawler' that was actually a spy ship.

"This ship was to be intercepted and

stopped by the Cuban vessel. The shipper of the Soviet ship probably would not be suspicious of a boarding party wearing Cuban Navy uniforms.

"We would then capture the ship. We were to take it to a point off the coast of Venezuela. The officers were not to go into any port but to stay off the coast. Certain officials in the Venezuelan government were aware of the plan. They would participate in negotiations for the release of the captive ship and its crew. A statement would be issued to the effect that we wanted to exchange the ship and crew for certain political prisoners in Cuba.

"But this was a ruse. Then we would go into the second phase of the operation—to dicker with the Russians and North Koreans for the release of the U.S.S. Pueblo, its captain and crew, who were still in confinement at this time.

"We were going to threaten to sink the communist ship and kill all the hostages if any ship of any country came close. It was supposed to look like a pirate operation, organized by American mercenaries and anti-Castro Cubans."

In preparation for the trip to Mexico, guns, camping equipment, medicine, bandages, uniforms and other supplies were hidden in door panels, seats and a false trunk of a 1963 Falcon that was outfitted by the mechanics of a Miami garage owned by two CIA employees.

The volunteers were to provide their own transportation to Mexico and their own weapons and camping gear.

"The men had to get to the meeting place, Guadalajara, at their own expense," Gonzales said. "The contract didn't go into effect until they got there. How they got there was their business."

Running out of money

One of the recruits, Robert Curtis, later testified in a court case resulting from the operation: "When we got to Guadalajara, the hotel we were supposed to go to was torn down. We went across the street to Los Americanos (another hotel). We left the car parked out front where he (Sturgis) could see it. We waited three weeks and we were running out of money... so we went to a gun shop and sold my Japanese Nambu (automatic pistol) for about \$30."

Frank and the rest of the gang eventually arrived and proceeded to a training camp Gonzales had set up in the mountains near the Guatemala border. It rained much of the time they were there and they called their base Camp Mud.

After two weeks there, they moved to Camp Sand on the beach near the Yucatan fishing village of Progreso. They chartered the fishing boat Amigo, smuggled guns and ammo aboard, and set off to meet the Cuban vessel. But the charts they had obtained to guide them through the Gulf and Caribbean were 16 years old and, therefore, not completely accurate.

They cruised south along the Yucatan coast for four days, entered Central American waters and then ran aground on a reef two miles off Belize, capital of British Honduras.

"We threw a lot of gear over the side," Gonzales said. "We waited until the tide came in. Then everybody jumped into the water to help get her off the reef although there were sharks around. We didn't intend to go into Belize but the propeller and shaft were bent and there was a small leak. We were taking on water and needed repairs."

When the Amigo limped into port, flying no flag, police and customs officers boarded her. British Honduran authorities at first thought it was an invasion from Guatemala. Sturgis and his dirty dozen were questioned by British intelligence agents. Then Sturgis spoke to the American consul and, after a few phone calls to Mexico City and Washington, the consul told him not to worry. The Americans were released and flown back to Miami.

"We was supposed to get \$1,500 a month plus a \$10,000 bonus (on completion of the mission)," Curtis said later. "Well, all I seen was 30 or 60 bucks to get back home (from Miami)."

"Whatever it was, it was definitely a CIA operation," said Max Gonzales, a native New Yorker who is now in business in Miami. "Frank Sturgis was a CIA agent at the time and still may be. He was in contact with other CIA agents in Guadalajara and Mexico City. Frank never told me what our real mission was, but I knew it was important to the agency."