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WATERGATE AND THE MIAMI BURGLARS



MARICE COHN BAND / Miami Herald Staff

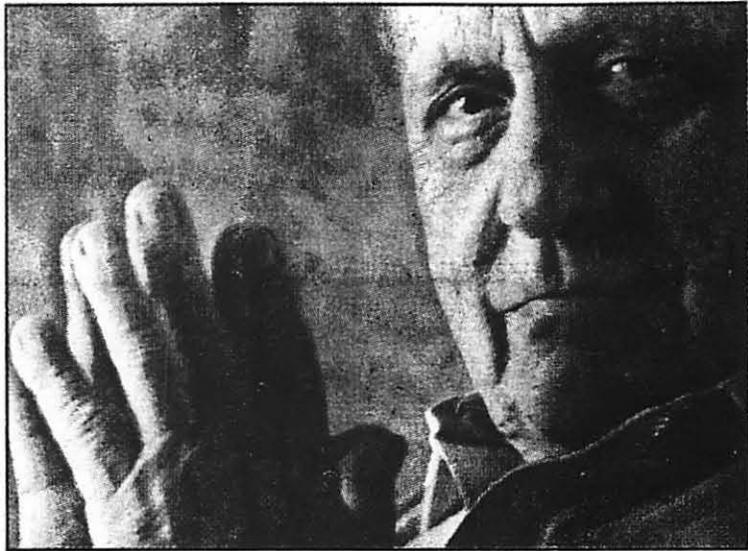
■ **FRANK STURGIS:** *'If I ever had to do something for my country again, I'm going to make sure it's legal.'*

**BURGLARS' AIM:
TO OUST CASTRO**

It was quite simple: The U.S. government needed these four Miamians for a secret mission. They needed the U.S.' good will if Cuba was to be free.

They were to penetrate the headquarters of the Democratic Party — an assignment they considered less dangerous than infiltrating the Bay of Pigs.

George McGovern's campaign, the CIA assured them, was receiving money from Fidel Castro. Read Mirta Ojito's interviews with the men who broke into Watergate, **Page 16A.**



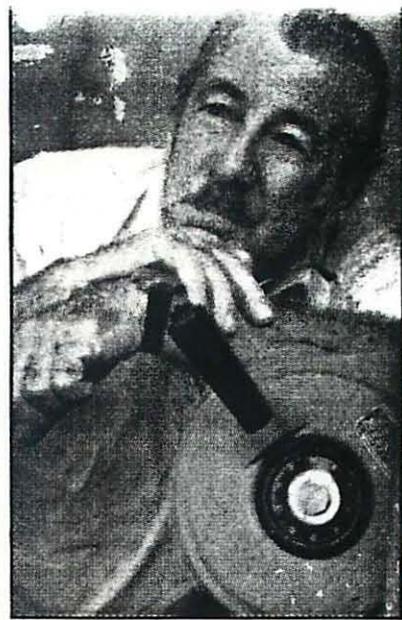
CHARLES TRAINOR JR. / Miami Herald Staff

■ **BERNARD BARKER:** *'I was more successful in overthrowing a president of the United States than in overthrowing Fidel Castro.'*

X 11 Watergate Burglars Aim: To Oust Castro



MARICE COHN BAND / Miami Herald Staff



JON KRAL / Miami Herald Staff

■ **EUGENIO MARTINEZ:** *'We were doing something for Cuba. If it hadn't been for Fidel, I wouldn't have ever been in Watergate.'*

■ **VIRGILIO GONZALEZ:** *'I'm part of history.'*

*Hiding his chin,
As usual (see
order)*

The scandal that tested a nation

Watergate remains chiseled into American psyche

By **MARTIN MERZER**
Herald Senior Writer

They slipped into the chamber past midnight, four anti-Castro activists from Miami and the man from CREEP. On a quiet night 20 years ago Wednesday, democracy and the rule of law met grave danger at a place called Watergate.

Soon, a nation already shaken by assassination, turmoil and war would fall victim to cynicism and self-doubt, its foundations undermined by political crimes in high office.

And, as in a Greek tragedy that could end no other way, the mighty would fall.

As the five men broke into the Democratic national headquarters in Washington that night,

■ THE WATERGATE IMPACT, VIEWPOINT, 1C

Republican President Richard M. Nixon slept in the Florida White House on Key Biscayne.

A complex, driven man whose face was a kaleidoscope of shadow, Nixon was elected as the "law and order" president. He would fulfill that mandate in a way he never intended.

Eventually, after a street-smart South Florida investigator helped break the case open, the president's lawyers would return to Key Biscayne to tell him this:

The United States cannot withstand much

PLEASE SEE WATERGATE, 17A

'God knows what would have happened if caught. The things Nixon could have done

BERNARD

Burglars' other goal

Their zeal to free Cuba led to scandal

By MIRTHA OJITO
Herald Staff Writer

Stripped of fake ID, surgical gloves and pencil-thin flashlight, Bernard Barker, World War II hero and Bay of Pigs veteran, sat in a cell at the Washington, D.C., police headquarters. It was June 17, 1972, and he was now called burglar. A Watergate burglar.

He flinched when an FBI agent approached. It was an old acquaintance: "Bernard Barker!! What the hell are you doing here?"

What indeed!

Just a few hours before, Barker and four other men — three of them from Miami — had been arrested at the headquarters of the Democratic National Committee in the Watergate complex. They were wearing suits stuffed with bugging devices and \$2,293 for expenses. Most unusual garb for burglars.

They were men with a cause. Three Cuban exiles and an Italian-American who for years had been part of the Cuban fight: Bernard Barker, 55, realtor and broker; Rolando Eugenio Martinez, realtor; Virgilio Gonzalez, realtor; and Frank Sturgis, 47, of fortune.

For them, nothing was ever the same again. Sturgis, now 67: "I was more successful in overthrowing a president of the United States than in overthrowing Fidel Castro."

They claimed then and now that they didn't know what they were doing was illegal. They reasoned that if this operation had the blessing of the White House, it wasn't a burglary. It was, as

BARKER LIKES TO CALL IT, A SURROGATE



Associated Press

LEAVING WASHINGTON: Richard Nixon waves from the steps of his helicopter on Aug. 9, 1974, after giving a farewell speech to White House staffers.

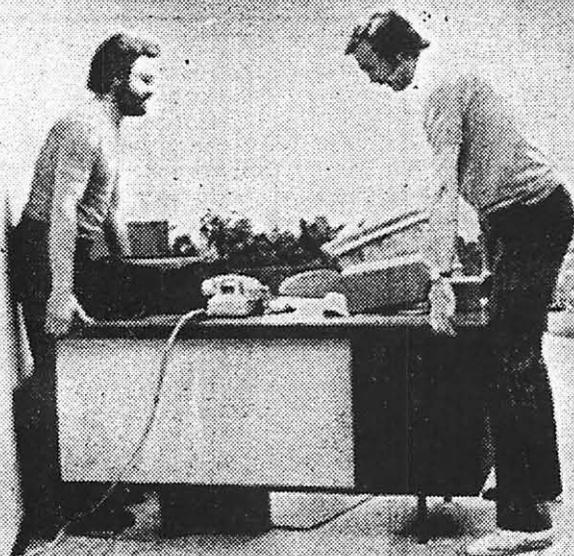
At times, Barker says he is

hadn't gotten
for Cuba!

ARKER, Watergate burglar

: Oust Castro

**DEMOCRATIC
NATIONAL
COMMITTEE**



Associated Press

MOVING DEMOCRATIC HEADQUARTERS: Workers remove furniture as the Democratic National Committee moves out of the Watergate complex in April 1973.

Virginia to first generation Ital

They had been ordered to photograph all documents; to bug all phones in the office. They had been told by CIA men that Democratic presidential hopeful George McGovern was receiving money from Castro and Ho Chi Minh. And they were looking for proof.

It wasn't the first time Washington asked for their help.

In September of 1971, Barker, Martinez and another Cuban named Felipe De Diego, led by longtime CIA man Howard Hunt and Gordon Liddy, finance counsel to the Committee to Reelect the President (CREEP), broke into the office of Daniel Ellsberg's psychiatrist looking for information that would help indict Ellsberg for releasing the Pentagon papers.

In May of 1972, the Miamians were again recruited. This time, Barker, Martinez, Gonzalez, Sturgis, De Diego and five other Cubans — among them a book publisher named Reinaldo Pico and a contractor named Hiram Gonzalez — went to Washington to break up an anti-war demonstration on the steps of the Capitol, as the body of FBI director J. Edgar Hoover lay inside.

And, finally, there were the Watergate break-ins. On Memorial Day, after two unsuccessful attempts, Barker, Martinez, Gonzalez, Sturgis and James McCord, security coordinator of CREEP, took pictures and planted wiretaps while De Diego and Pico stood guard outside. A few days later, the bugs needed to be repaired. So they went back. This time, without De Diego and Pico.

"God knows what would have happened if we hadn't gotten caught," Barker says. "The things Nixon could have done for Cuba!"

Here are the stories of the Miami men who, propelled by their zeal and those who played upon it, found themselves convicted of betraying the same government that sought their help.

BERNARD BARKER

Bay of Pigs veteran: 'I have no regrets'



1973 File Photo

"Macho" Barker, as those who know him call him, was born in Havana, of a Cuban mother and an American father. He lived in a northwestern seashore town, called Mariel.

AT TIMES Barker says he is an American. Other times, depend-
ing on what he is talking about,
he says he is "one hundred per-
cent cubano."

He speaks both languages without the trace of an accent. At 75 and retired, he lives in West Dade with Margarita, his wife of 2½ years.

Margarita was an early love. They fell in love as students in Cuba. But World War II separated them, when Barker, the first Cuban to volunteer for the war, left the island. He spent 16 months as a prisoner of war when his plane was shot down over Germany.

Before Castro came to power, Barker says, he was recruited by the CIA, where he worked for seven years. Then, like thousands of Cubans, he came to Miami. He got a job managing a parking garage.

In 1961, he was one of the Bay of Pigs organizers. That's when he met Howard Hunt. So, when Hunt asked him for help, Barker thought this time he had found the government support the Cubans had been longing for. Hunt was calling from the White House, where he had an office and a job as a consultant.

"And then he tells me, 'This would put us in a situation in which we can later ask for help for the freedom of Cuba.' He was putting himself in our place, as if he were a Cuban," Barker adds. "To me, Hunt's words meant that he was making a promise to do everything possible for the freedom of Cuba.

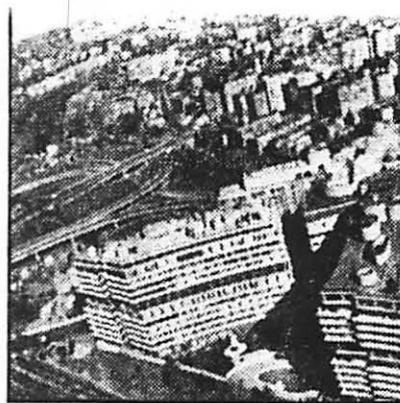
"And when my former CIA boss, my friend, a person I admired, and with whom I am totally in agreement on all major issues, tells me this in his office, in the *White House*," Barker stresses these last two words, "and he is an assistant to the president of the United States, you better believe I believed him."

In jail, where Barker spent 13 months, he decided to go back to school. In 1978, he graduated from FIU with a bachelor's degree in engineering, the career he had intended to pursue when he left Cuba for the war.

At the same time, Margarita was also finishing her bachelor's in education. The two met again after 44 years. She was a widow; he was getting a divorce. They married quickly.

This is what Barker thinks of his role in history: "I sleep good at night. I have no regrets. We Cubans, at the time, knelt down and prayed and hoped the government would keep its promises. That's all we could do then and that's all we can do now."

One other thing. Barker really hates to be called a burglar.



SCENE OF THE CRIME: The Watergate break-in.

EUGENIO MARTINEZ

Says he's ashamed of his role in scandal



1973 File Photo

At one point during the Watergate investigation, Sen. Howard Baker asked Martinez what he thought of what was happening to the U.S. government and if he had analyzed the significance of his actions.

"If you don't know, how am I going to know? I am just a Cuban from Artemisa," Martinez recalls.

He was born on the outskirts of Havana, in Artemisa, a town he proudly calls "the birthplace of revolutions, of rebels and of civic spirit."

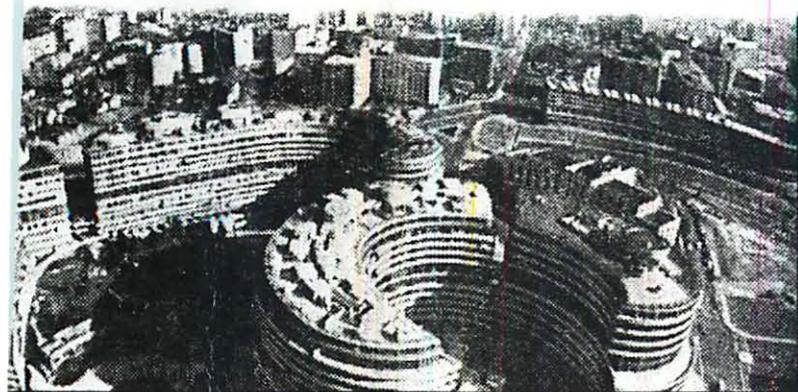
Martinez had his first lesson in politics during the government of Gerardo Machado, in the early '30s. The rural police showed up at a political rally in his town and from their horses used machetes on peaceful activists. His neighbor was killed that night.

He fought against Machado. Then, against Fulgencio Batista. And, eventually, against Fidel Castro, whom Martinez and hundreds of other young men and women had helped bring to power in 1959.

That same year, he returned to Cuba from exile in Mexico, but by December, Martinez was one more Cuban exile in Miami.

Martinez is a veteran of many missions to Cuba — getting in and out of the island to foment counterrevolutionary activities was his expertise. He says he never kept count, but during the Watergate years it was revealed he had participated in 354 missions to Cuba from 1960 to 1970, under the auspices of the CIA.

"I still have a hard time saying CIA. I wasn't recruited by them.



Associated Press

gate complex was among the most luxurious in Washington, D.C.

I never had an ID. I was recruited by good *americanos* who wanted to help Cuba."

Martinez said he wept when John Kennedy was assassinated.

The only Watergate burglar to be pardoned later, Martinez works as a manager at Anthony Abraham Chevrolet. At 69 and the grandfather of eight, he is fit and strong. When Castro falls, he insists, he'd be the first to go back to Cuba.

He claims to be deeply ashamed of his role in the scandal. "I wish I could forget about it. I didn't come to this country to become a criminal and to be judged by the same people to whom I owe all my loyalty."

Who does he blame for Watergate and his 14 months in prison?

"Fidel. We were doing something for Cuba. If it hadn't been for Fidel, I wouldn't have ever been in Watergate."

VIRGILIO GONZALEZ

Still feels McGovern had ties to Havana

holding his chin!
In 1952, Gonzalez was already a political refugee. He arrived in Miami seeking refuge after Gen. Fulgencio Batista's coup d'etat against Carlos Prío, Cuba's last democratically elected president. González was a member of Prío's secret service.

Like Martínez, González also went back in 1959, hoping democracy had returned to Cuba. By April of the same year he was back in Miami, already conspiring against Castro.

He bought a home in northwest Miami, where he still lives, and settled into his job as a locksmith.

Then, one day Barker and Hunt asked him for help opening



1973 File Photo

some doors.

"I always thought that having a Republican government behind us would be great. The Democrats had already betrayed us at Bay of Pigs. So, what better way to get their help than helping them first?" he reasons.

Gonzalez still believes that one day, proof will be found that McGovern had ties with Havana and Hanoi.

Even after he served 14 months in jail for the burglary, Gonzalez continued opening Miami locks and programming downtown bank safes.

He is not ashamed of Watergate. On the contrary: "It gave me personality and friends. I'm part of history. My name is in the books in this country."

From Watergate, he learned one important lesson: "Nobody who works for a government can expect that government to save him when the time comes."

Yet, he is proud of this country. His son was in the Army and the National Guard. And, when Castro falls, Gonzalez says he will stay in Miami.

FRANK STURGIS

Has fought communism around the world

With his white *guayabera*, black hair combed back and gold cross dangling from his neck, few wouldn't think him Cuban.

In fact, when the burglars were caught in Watergate, they were described as "the Cubans."

"It could be crazy Cubans," said Howard Simons, the Washington Post's then-managing editor, as a reason not to make the burglary the top story in his paper.

But Sturgis was really born in Virginia, to first generation Ital-



1973 File Photo

IAN PARENTS. His father's name was Florida. When his mother remarried, he took his stepfather's name and moved to Florida, where he met some Prío sympathizers.

To spy on Castro for Prío's men, he says, he joined Castro's rebel forces in the mountains of Oriente, where he achieved the rank of colonel. When the rebels came down, Sturgis got a job with the new air force.

Soon, he had to escape Cuba and came back to Miami. Because he fought with a foreign, enemy army, he lost his U.S. citizenship but quickly got it back.

Sturgis belongs to a militant anti-Castro group and lives with his wife and 13-year-old daughter in South Dade. At 67, he looks young and fit and admits to coloring his hair jet black.

He keeps an aura of mystery about his activities but is not shy about dropping hints of his latest exploits. In recent years, he says, he has traveled to Angola and Argentina to fight Communists.

Sturgis says he also met with PLO leader Yasser Arafat two years ago in a secret mission. He has pictures of himself with Che Guevara in the Cuban mountains and with South African intelligence men somewhere in Angola.

"I'm still patriotic and would do anything for my country. But I learned one thing," he says. "If I ever had to do something for my country again, I'm going to make sure it's legal. It's tough, I had never been in prison before."

Sturgis spent 14½ months in prison, where he thought much about Castro: "I kept thinking, Castro couldn't get to me, and my own country put me behind bars. What an irony!"

HOWARD HUNT

'Plumber' who recruited Miamians



1973 File Photo

The man who recruited the Cubans and spent 33 months in prison for his role in Watergate, would not talk to The Herald.

"Can you imagine 20 years?" he said when a reporter went to his house in Biscayne Park to interview him.

A career CIA man, he was hired in 1971 by fellow Brown University alumnus Charles Colson, special counsel to President Nixon, as one of the White House "plumbers."

Before he closed the door to the reporter, he said he had already said everything he was going to say about Watergate.

WATERGATE: WHERE ARE THEY NOW?



Former President Richard M. Nixon resigned in August 1974 and received a full pardon from his successor, Gerald Ford, for

any crimes he might have committed while in office. He has since written nine books, including his memoirs, and occasionally appears at speaking engagements and television interviews. He lives with his wife, Pat, in Park Ridge, N.J.



H.R. Haldeman, former White House chief of staff who served 18 months of a 2 1/2- to 8-year prison term in the Watergate

cover-up. He has since written one book, *The Ends of Power*, and lives in Santa Barbara, Calif., where he works in real estate and advises several small businesses in which he has partial ownership.



John Ehrlichman, former Nixon domestic counselor who served 18 months of a 2 1/2- to 8-year prison term in the

Watergate cover up. He has written six books and is currently writing a novel on the impeachment of a president. He recently moved to Atlanta, where he works as an executive for an international consulting company.



Charles W. Colson, former special counsel to the president who served 207 days of a 1- to 3-year term for obstruction of justice in

connection with the break-in at the office of Daniel Ellsberg's psychiatrist. He is chairman of Prison Fellowship, a Christian counseling outreach that operates in 600 prisons. He has written several books and writes a monthly column. He lives in northern Virginia.



E. Howard Hunt, former White House aide and counsel for the financial arm of Nixon's re-election committee who

served 32 months of a 2 1/2- to 8-year sentence for burglary, conspiracy and wiretapping in the Watergate burglary. He lectures, writes spy novels and lives in Biscayne Park in North Dade.



Jeb Stuart Magruder, the deputy director of Nixon's re-election campaign who served 218 days of a 10-month to four-year

sentence in the cover-up. He later earned a masters degree from Princeton Theological Seminary and is a Presbyterian minister in Lexington, Ky.



Dwight L. Chapin, former presidential appointments secretary who served 235 days of a 10- to 30-month sentence for lying to a

grand jury. He later served as publisher of Success magazine. He lives in Connecticut.



John Dean, the presidential counsel who served 127 days of a 1- to 4-year sentence in the cover-up. He wrote a best-selling book,

Blind Ambition, and lives in Los Angeles.



John N. Mitchell, the former attorney general and head of Nixon's re-election committee who served 19 months of a 2 1/2-

to 8-year sentence in the Watergate cover-up. He died in 1988.



G. Gordon Liddy, former White House aide and counsel for the financial arm of Nixon's re-election committee who

served 52 months of a 6- to 20-year sentence in the Watergate burglary. The sentence was later commuted to eight years by President Jimmy Carter. He hosts a radio talk show on WJFK-FM in Washington.



Archibald Cox, the original Watergate special prosecutor who was fired by Nixon in the famous "Saturday Night

Massacre" after he refused to back down on subpoenas for White House tapes. He recently stepped down as chairman of the government watchdog Common Cause and from his position on the Harvard Law School faculty. He still teaches at Boston University.



Maurice H. Stans, former commerce secretary and chief fund raiser for Nixon's re-election committee who was fined

\$5,000 for nonwillful receipt of illegal corporate contributions but was acquitted on more serious federal charges alleging conspiracy in the receipt of campaign funds. He has written a book and lives in Pasadena, Calif.



James W. McCord, security chief for Nixon's re-election



Herbert W. Kalmbach, Nixon's personal lawyer who served 191 days



Leon Jaworski, the Houston lawyer who succeeded Cox as special

Documentary will attempt to identify mysterious 'Deep Throat'

Reuters News Service

NEW YORK — After years of speculation, CBS says it will take an "educated guess" in a documentary about solving one of American journalism's biggest mysteries: Who is "Deep Throat"?

Watergate: The Secret Story, which airs Wednesday at 9 p.m.,

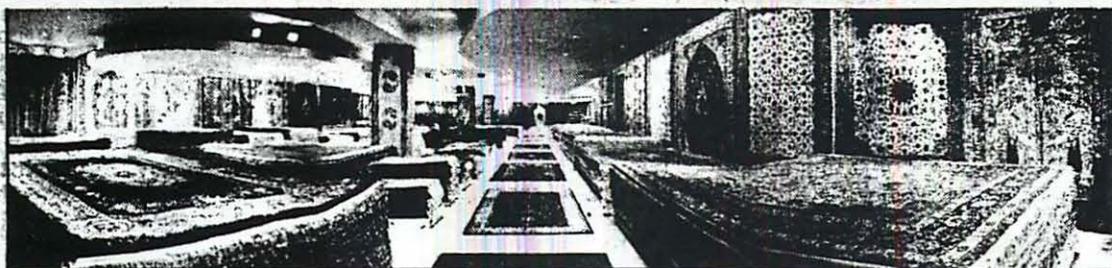
attempts to identify the White House figure who provided key information to reporters Bob Woodward and Carl Bernstein about the Watergate break-in.

"We know he is alive. . . . We know he held a key position in the executive government. He is not a fictional character," said

Andrew Lack, executive producer of the special.

Lack said the program has ruled out former White House Chief of Staff Alexander Haig and former Secretary of State Henry Kissinger as being "Deep Throat."

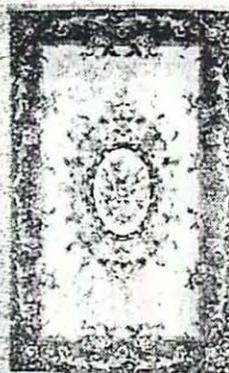
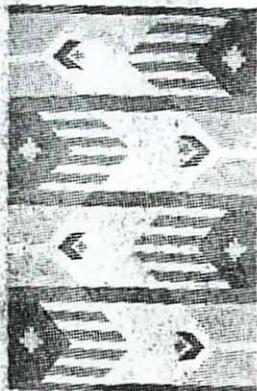
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