

UNITED PRESS
INTERNATIONAL

MAY 11, 1962

UPI A 72

CPYRGHT

MIAMI, MAY 11 (UPI)--CUBAN AUTHORITIES SENT BACK TO THIS COUNTRY YESTERDAY A SERGEANT ACCUSED OF DESERTING THE U.S. ARMY AND SEEKING POLITICAL ASYLUM IN CUBA.

FBI AGENTS PROMPTLY PLACED SGT. ROBERT JOE KESSEE, 28, UNDER ARREST WHEN HE LANDED HERE ABOARD A REGULAR COMMERCIAL AIRLINER FROM HAVANA. HE WAS HELD IN THE DADE COUNTY JAIL PENDING A HEARING TODAY BEFORE A U.S. COMMISSIONER.

NESLEY GRAPP, SPECIAL AGENT IN CHARGE OF THE MIAMI FBI OFFICE, SAID KESSEE FACED CHARGES OF DESERTION, AIRPLANE THEFT AND AUTOMOBILE THEFT.

KESSEE, OF AMARILLO, TEX., IS CHARGED IN A FEDERAL WARRANT ISSUED IN ALBUQUERQUE, N.M., WITH RENTING A SMALL PLANE THERE AND FLYING IT TO HAVANA, VIA KEY WEST, LAST MARCH 23. CUBAN OFFICIALS KEPT THE PLANE, THE FBI SAID.

NO ONE KNEW KESSEE HAD GONE TO CUBA UNTIL THE CUBAN RADIO ANNOUNCED THE NEXT DAY THAT HE HAD LANDED AT HAVANA AND ASKED FOR POLITICAL ASYLUM. HE WAS CHARGED WITH DESERTION FROM THE ARMY, THE FBI SAID, AFTER HE FAILED TO RETURN TO FORT BAUCHUCA, ARIZ., JAN. 30 AT THE END OF A TWO-WEEK LEAVE.

HE IS ALSO CHARGED WITH STEALING A 1962 CADILLAC HE RENTED IN PHOENIX, ARIZ., JAN. 19 AND ABANDONED SEVERAL MILES AWAY AT SAN ANTONIO, TEX.

THE FBI SAID KESSEE TOLD AGENTS WHO QUESTIONED HIM AFTER HIS ARREST THAT WHEN HE ARRIVED IN CUBA HE WAS PUT IN PRISON AND KEPT THERE 49 DAYS. HE WAS "EXTENSIVELY INTERROGATED BY DIFFERENT BRANCHES OF THE CUBAN GOVERNMENT," THE FBI SAID.

GRAPP SAID THAT YESTERDAY MORNING, "WITHOUT ANY NOTIFICATION," CUBAN AUTHORITIES HAD KESSEE'S BEARD SHAVED OFF, ALLOWED HIM TO TAKE A SHOWER AND PUT ON CLEAN CLOTHES, THEN PUT HIM ABOARD THE FLIGHT TO MIAMI.

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