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ON PAGE 1 Part I

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# CIA Employee, Ghanaian Held on Spy Charges

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WASHINGTON—The FBI Thursday arrested a CIA clerk and a Ghanaian national on charges that the clerk had provided the Ghanaian with the names of his countrymen spying for the United States and other defense information and had agreed to obtain more secrets from the agency's headquarters.

Charged with an espionage conspiracy that allegedly began in late 1983 were Sharon Marie Scranage, 29, a seven-year CIA employee, and Michael Agbotui Soussoudis, 39, described by government sources as a cousin or nephew of Ghana's leader, Jerry J. Rawlings, and as Scranage's lover. Scranage was stationed with the CIA in Accra, Ghana's capital, until last May.

The arrest of Scranage apparently signaled a rare penetration of the CIA by a foreign power. According to a court affidavit, she admitted to key elements of the alleged conspiracy during three days of questioning by FBI counterintelligence agents. But she indicated at a hearing Thursday in suburban Alexandria, Va., that she would plead innocent.

## Protests Innocence

Soussoudis had protested his innocence at an earlier hearing, contending that he is not an employee of the Ghanaian government but only a business consultant who happens to be a relative of its revolutionary leader.

The arrest warrant alleged that Scranage and Soussoudis conspired with other intelligence agents in the West African nation, headed by a nonaligned military government, to carry out the espionage. Although the FBI did not identify the other agents, an intelligence source said they included the chief of Ghana's intelligence service. The Ghanaian Embassy in Washington declined comment.

Scranage, whose official job title

is operations support assistant, began working for the CIA after she was graduated from a two-year secretarial studies program at the National Business College in Roanoke, Va. Friends and relatives in King George, Va., where her parents live, described her as a highly religious person who had never been in trouble.

According to the arrest warrant, the conspiracy allegedly began in Accra in December, 1983, when Scranage revealed to Soussoudis details on Ghanaian nationals secretly furnishing information to the CIA there, including the identity of a code-named individual who had been cooperating with American agents.

Last November, after Scranage told Soussoudis that certain Ghanaians had provided classified government information to the CIA, Soussoudis asked her to obtain copies of the information "so that he could apprehend these individuals," the court paper said.

## Identities Allegedly Told

A month or two later, the FBI said, Scranage gave Soussoudis an update at her residence in Accra on the names of CIA personnel in the country, the identities of individuals who were cooperating with the CIA and general information on the agency's activities.

She also allegedly has provided Soussoudis with the names of CIA "assets," or sources, in Ghana—which she copied down by hand from classified agency records and microfiche—as well as information on CIA operational plans.

Last May 24, just before Scranage returned to the United States, the FBI charged that she discussed classified CIA information about Ghana and other nations with Soussoudis and two other conspirators who were Ghanaian agents.

At that time, a Ghanaian security official asked her to obtain information from files at CIA headquarters in Langley, Va., on the identities of three Ghanaians who had given the CIA information, according to the FBI court papers. The unnamed security official instructed her to pass this information on to Soussoudis, who would be contacting her in the United States.

Intelligence sources said Thursday that they were not certain what has happened to the CIA sources that Scranage allegedly identified to the Ghanaians.

Soussoudis was arrested Wednesday at a Springfield, Va., motel where a source said he expected to meet with Scranage. Scranage was arrested in Alexandria Thursday.

Speaking in a monotone, the CIA clerk said at her court hearing that she earned \$22,000 a year and had \$8,000 in savings.

Although she said she lives with her parents, Mary Belle and Perry Scranage Sr. in King George, her brother, Perry Jr., said in an interview that she had not lived there for the last decade and was now living in Alexandria.

## 'Very Religious Type'

A former high school boyfriend, Richard Fortune of King George, described her as "a very religious type" who sang in a Baptist church choir and was "always law-abiding. Until this happened, she could serve as a role model for any young girl."

In fact, Fortune said, "her hobby was going to church—that's all she ever did. When I was dating her, my friends used to give me a hard time about her always going to church. They asked how I could stand it."

Scranage's brother Perry said: "No one can believe this. No one in this country who knows her could believe this. She had to be coerced."

His sister, he said, telephoned Thursday morning and "just wanted us to know what had happened. I believe in my sister, and I don't believe she did this."

He said Sharon Scranage had been married to a security guard for about 15 months, although her current marital status is not clear.

"It's almost like a death," Fortune said of the arrest, "and it will be for her family."

Times staff writer Jonathan Eig also contributed to this story.