

SOCIAL NOTES

Frankie and His Friends

Ticket holders who had paid \$20 to \$500 to attend an Inaugural concert were disappointed when the emcee, Francis Albert Sinatra, failed to appear. But later in the evening, guests at a champagne breakfast at the Jockey Club in Washington's Fairfax Hotel witnessed a Sinatra performance that was—well, a performance.

Accompanied by Barbara Marx, the estranged wife of Zeppo Marx, Sinatra arrived with a glare for everyone present. Maxine Cheshire, the Washington *Post* society columnist, approached Barbara Marx in the hotel lobby and introduced herself. Sinatra exploded. "Get away from me, you scum. Go home and take a bath. I don't want to talk to you." He continued, "I'm getting out of here to get rid of the stench of Miss Cheshire." While about 30 people looked on, Sinatra moved across the lobby, addressing a passer-by: "You know Miss Cheshire, don't you? That stench you smell is from her." His face reddening, he shouted at Mrs. Cheshire, "You're nothing but a \$2 broad...Here's \$2, baby, that's what you're used to." With that, he stuffed two dollar bills into Mrs. Cheshire's empty ginger-ale glass and marched off.

Mrs. Cheshire burst into tears. When she recovered, she hired Lawyer Edward Bennett Williams to file a million-dollar suit against the actor. "If Sinatra had attacked me as a reporter I would have taken it, but he attacked me as a woman," said Mrs. Cheshire, a mother of four. "I feel I owe it to my children to sue. I'm square enough that virtue means something to me."

In searching for a reason for the outburst, Cheshire could think of no recent cause. Only a year ago, when Sinatra was entertaining at an Agnew

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party, she had asked him: "Do you think your Mafia ties might prove embarrass-

ing to the Vice President?" At that time, Sinatra replied, "Naw, I don't worry about anything like that." But these things rankle—particularly when a man who has friends in the mob keeps trying to make friends in the White House.

Doghouse. More than ten years ago Sinatra devoted time and talent to the Jack Kennedy campaign, and he was a guest at Kennedy's Inauguration. But in October 1961, Sinatra's name turned up on an FBI tape of a conversation between Chicago Mafioso Salvatore Giancana and a friend. Giancana indicated that he was trying to use Sinatra as a link to Attorney General Robert Kennedy. It was a doomed effort. Sinatra went to the Kennedy doghouse.

A lifelong Democrat, Sinatra did not give up. In 1968 he volunteered to campaign for Hubert Humphrey, but his hopes there never materialized. Annoyed, Sinatra turned to the Republicans and campaigned for Ronald Reagan in 1970. Through Reagan's graces Sinatra came to know Spiro Agnew. Cordial friends ever since, Agnew frequently spends long weekends at Sinatra's place in Palm Springs. The Vice President honored Sinatra in January 1971 by flying to Palm Springs for the dedication of the Martin Anthony Sinatra Medical Education Center, Sinatra's monument to his father. Later, while on a good-will tour, Agnew discovered pal Sinatra waiting for him in Portugal. Last summer Sinatra was back at a national convention—the Republicans' this time—in the Agnew box.

Just what effect Sinatra's attack and Mrs. Cheshire's threatened law suit will have on the singer's friendship with Agnew is unsure. After a long, stiff silence, Agnew's press secretary Victor Gold offered a statement: "Maxine Cheshire has a carapace of an armadillo." Not everyone has friends like that.

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