

WHO WERE JFK'S STRANGE BEDFELLOWS, ANYWAY? IF HIS WEAKNESS FOR WOMEN HAD BEEN EXPLOITED, BY WHOM AND TO WHAT END? **BY ROBERT SAM ANSON**

" We will take care of our own people if we can. A cover-up for anyone is a cover-up."

# Jack, Judy, Sam & Johnny...

She was, in the words of the first man who married her, "a very quiet, family kind of girl," someone who "didn't have any deep convictions about anything at all." To her lawyer, she is "a very warm, charming person, private, self-contained, not a publicity seeker." And, true enough, the lady modestly describes herself as nothing more than "a happily married housewife."

To see her on the street, or in a supermarket, you would think so. A rather ordinary woman, pushing middle age, tanned and well-kempt, in a way that Southern California women are always tanned and well-kempt. Not striking, not someone you would look twice at, not different at all, save for one way, a way which will forever make Judith Immoor Campbell Exner *that woman*. For Judy was a Mob moll—and the mistress of the President of the United States.

The bare outlines of the story are by now familiar, repeated endlessly, with a smirk, a smile and a leer—how, in 1960, Judy, then 23 and an aspiring "actress," became the consort of John Fitzgerald Kennedy. This, *Time* magazine and *The National Enquirer* hasten to tell us, with another wink and a poke in the ribs, did

not make Judy Campbell, as she was then known, particularly unique. What made Judy more than just another presidential girlfriend was the other company she kept, notably John "Don Giovanni" Roselli and Salvatore Sam "Momo" Giancana, both members in good standing of organized crime, not to mention the Central Intelligence Agency.

It is a lurid tale, and the more one probes it, the more lurid it becomes. Not merely for the sex or the diminishing of the Kennedy legend, but for its utter sleaziness, the images of party girls and swarthy men in shiny suits, now being packaged and hustled to the highest bidder. It does not require a vivid imagination to predict the covers of the movie magazines for the next year or so: "Jackie and Judy and the Man They Loved... I Only Wish He Had Given Me His Baby... How Judy Cried the Night Jack Was Shot." Already, the faded dames are beginning to crawl out of the woodwork. Judy, looking brave and loving, appears in the pages of *People* with her new hubby and their mobile home. The ultimate in tackiness.

After the last ten years, we should have lost our capacity for shock. Nothing is impossible anymore; the sensational has become commonplace. Amelia Earhart living in the Bermuda Triangle? An unnatural relationship between Nixon and John Dean? Martha Mitchell being poisoned for what she knows? Why not. But, somehow, this is the one story no one wanted to hear, the one myth the country wanted left intact. And now it is crumbling, and all that is left is the task of sifting through the ruins to find out just what the hell happened and why.

The first thing a reporter discovers is that the few people who do know something are doing their best to pretend that they don't, or, in the case of Mrs. Exner, waiting until the right publisher comes along. At that, she may merely be being prudent. One principal in the tale,

namely John Kennedy, was assassinated under mysterious circumstances, while another, Sam Giancana, was shot seven times through the head little more than a week before he was scheduled to testify before the Senate Select Committee on Intelligence Activities. At her one public appearance, during a press conference in San Diego, Mrs. Exner seemed to go out of her way to announce that she had already transcribed her recollections onto a tape recorder, and that the tapes were stored in a "secure" place. When one plays with the Mafia and the Central Intelligence Agency, they had better be.

Nearly all of the rest Mrs. Exner had to say merely confirmed what had already appeared in the press, or in the Church committee report. That she had been introduced to Kennedy in Las Vegas in February 1960 by a "mutual friend" (who turns out to be Frank Sinatra); that they had a "close, personal relationship" for the next two years, during which time they lunched privately in the Oval Office on some 20 occasions; that she was also acquainted with Roselli and Giancana; that she had made some 70 phone calls to the White House; that all her conversations with the President consisted merely of "man-woman" talk. The reason she

# and Frank, Fidel, Edgar...



was now speaking at all, she said, was only to dispel the "wild-eyed speculation" that had already appeared in the press, twisting her testimony "so as to implicate me in these bizarre assassination conspiracies." She knew nothing of any such conspiracies, she insisted, nor had she discussed her friendship with Giancana and Roselli with the President. "To me, he was Jack Kennedy, not the President," the lady with the big sunglasses said demurely, if somewhat nervously. Were they lovers? a reporter asked. She would have no comment. Did she know the former attorney general? She would have no comment. Had she met Kennedy in places other than Washington and Las Vegas? She would have no comment. What was her relationship with Giancana and Roselli? She would have no comment. In fact, during the 45 minutes it took to read her statement and answer reporters' questions, she did not comment on very much.

Frank Church, no doubt, would have preferred she had said nothing at all. It was so, well, *embarrassing*. Frank Church does not like to embarrass; he likes to please. He likes being liked. From the beginning, his Select Committee on Intelligence Activities has functioned much the same way, long on indignation, short on real digging. Still, it was a trial, and as summer turned into fall, Church gave every appearance of a man who wished he had never heard of the CIA, much less set out to investigate it. He was anxious to get on with the more important business of becoming the 11th announced Democratic candidate for the presidency, and the committee's work, now hopelessly behind, was proving an anchor. But there was the matter of the CIA assassination plots to tidy up, and they were turning into an exceedingly messy business. The problem, of course, was the old one: The CIA kept lying to them, kept insisting that everything it did, however harebrained or cold-blooded, was merely in the national interest, and, even if it weren't, various presidents had ordered everything.

Accountability. It bothered Frank Church, especially since he saw himself as president one day. Would his old friend John Kennedy sanction such shenanigans? Church wondered. The committee was trying to get to the bottom of the accountability problem when Judy Campbell's name floated to the surface. And floated is the right word, like a decayed corpse, and every bit as pleasant to behold. According to a number of FBI reports, she was a fairly constant companion of Roselli and Giancana, both of whom the committee had already iden-



NEW YORK DAILY NEWS



NEW YORK DAILY NEWS

Two worlds of Sam Giancana: In the late Fifties, the Chicago boss drove a pink Cadillac and partied with the McGuire sisters (bottom) and Judy Exner. By 1969, he was #3 on RFK's hit list, a man more often in court (top) than at parties.

tified as members of the Castro assassination project. The stickler was her "relationship" with the President of the United States. The dry prose of the FBI reports could not hide it. She was his girlfriend—maybe the missing link the committee had been seeking. With appetites thus whetted, the committee staff checked the telephone logs stored at the John F. Kennedy Presidential Library and found a

skein of Judy's telephone calls to the White House stretching from March 29, 1961 to March 22, 1962. The date of the last phone call was more than coincidental. It was on that day that J. Edgar Hoover had a private lunch with the President at the White House. Hoover brought with him a memorandum summarizing Mrs. Campbell's relationship with Giancana and Roselli.



The implications of the relationship among Jack and Judy and Johnny and Sam were obvious. Read one way, they suggested that the Mafia had succeeded in planting an agent in no less than the bedroom of the President of the United States. Read another, they hinted that that young lady with no "deep convictions about anything at all" had functioned as the connection on a Mafia-Kennedy assassination plot. The latter

possibility became more plausible when it emerged that Judy had also traveled with Kennedy, and was with him in Florida at the same time another of her boyfriends, Roselli, was also in the state, receiving a poison capsule from the CIA with which to kill Castro.

In October, the now Mrs. Daniel Exner was summoned to Washington to tell her story behind closed doors to the committee's majority and minority coun-

was made of her sex.

That was left to the *Washington Post*, which identified her as Judith Campbell in a story quietly tucked away on page six. The *Chicago Daily News* and the Scripps-Howard Bureau in Washington, both of whom had been working on the story, were much more explicit. In a front-page story, the *News* quoted Evelyn Lincoln, Kennedy's personal secretary, as saying of Mrs. Campbell: "She got like a pest. She would call and call." As for Mrs. Campbell's relationship with the President, Mrs. Lincoln said simply, "The President was right attractive and lots of girls used to call him."

The dirty secret was out, and Church was furious. Angriily, he ordered that every member of the committee's staff sign a statement that he or she had not been their source. No one confessed, despite hints that Church was considering administering lie detector tests to ferret out the leaker. Most Kennedy associates and former administration officials were similarly tight-lipped. When reporters sought out Evelyn Lincoln for additional comment, they were informed that she was out of the country. Kenny O'Donnell, Kennedy's appointments secretary, denied that Mrs. Campbell was ever in the White House or that Kennedy ever saw the Hoover memorandum about her



WIDE WORLD

Two worlds of Judy Exner: Today (top) she's just "a happy housewife" who, with her husband (left) and lawyer, is looking for a six-figure bid on her memoirs.

But in 1960 (bottom), she was a 23-year-old actress and consort of the President-elect.

sels, and a few members of the staff. Her appearance lasted several hours. The committee, according to some members of its own staff, displayed a remarkable lack of curiosity about her background. "Apparently the senators didn't have the stomach to go after it," says one Kennedy insider. "Either that or the guts." Even before Mrs. Exner's testimony, the committee was exceptionally solicitous about her sensibilities. She was briefed about the sort of questions the staff wanted to have answered, and was advised that she should have counsel with her. When she said she had none, the committee thoughtfully sought one out. Out of the literally thousands of lawyers in Washington, the committee selected one, Henry A. Hupshman, a recent Harvard Law graduate who, as it happened, is a member of R. Sargent Shriver's law firm.

A few weeks later, after protracted, bitter debate over whether to make any mention of her testimony at all, the committee released its long-overdue report on CIA assassination plots. The Campbell story consumed less than a page of the 349-page report. Judy was identified only as a "close friend" of the President's. Her name was omitted, and, by the unanimous agreement of all 11 members of the committee, no mention

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Mafia connections, adding that the whole thing is part of a plot to discredit Teddy. Dave Powers, the affable Boston Irishman and presidential major-domo, claimed with characteristic humor that the only Campbell he ever heard of "was the kind with the chunky soup." A former top organized-crime investigator for Robert Kennedy, asked for leads about Giancana and Roselli, said bluntly: "Sorry, this one I'm not going to help you on."

The silence is understandable. The Kennedy men are loyal to their chief,



"He sort of talked like Sheldon Leonard, always out of the side of his mouth, like in the movies," says one prosecutor who followed his career with special interest. "Only with Mooney, it wasn't like in the movies. He wasn't kidding."

Hardly. When it came to business, Moe was not known as a kidder. A product of Chicago's tough West Side, Giancana began his career as a wheelman for "Machine Gun" Jake McGurn, one of the prime suspects in the St. Valentine's Day Massacre. He did his first stretch in prison at age 15. By the time he was 20, Mooney had 51 arrests, three of them for murder. When his draft board asked Giancana his profession, he coolly replied, "I steal." The board granted him a deferment, convinced that Giancana was a psychotic, a bum rap, as far as Giancana

## The kidnapping of Frank Sinatra Jr., not long after the President's assassination, was one of the few events that commanded Bobby's personal attention during his remaining months in office

was concerned, because, for once, he was merely telling the truth. If the Army didn't want him, Giancana would put his talents to use on the home front. He organized the numbers operation in Chicago and, after the war, extended his reach into other traditional Mob activities: gambling, policy, loan-sharking, jukeboxes, prostitution, hijacking and labor racketeering. By 1957, he was ready to take over control of the entire 300-member Chicago family. All that remained was communicating his wishes to the incumbent *don*, Tony "Big Tuna" Accardo. Mooney passed the message with typical subtlety. One day as Accardo was entering his \$500,000 suburban estate, a bullet whistled over his head. From then on, Giancana was boss.

The empire he ruled was vast, stretching from Cleveland to Kansas City and south all the way to Miami. The estimated yearly take was \$2 billion, with



\$40 to \$50 million of it going directly to Giancana. The boss often conducted business on the golf course, if only because it put him well out of the range of federal eavesdropping. He was less guarded in the confines of his favorite hangout, the Armory Lounge on the West Side. There, bugs picked up a number of his conversations, including several in which Giancana ordered the murder of transgressors as casually as one might send out for a pack of cigarettes. Some were especially nasty, like the dispatching of a 300-pound stool pigeon. This particular unfortunate was hung on a meat hook for two days while Giancana's personal executioners, Fifi Buccieri and Willie Daddano, tortured him to death with an electric cattle prod, ice picks, a baseball bat and a blow torch. Later, a federal bug picked up Buccieri's sole lament: "I'm only sorry the big slob died so soon."

Giancana was never arrested, much less convicted for any of these crimes, in part because he had successfully "juiced" (bribed) a good part of the Chicago judicial and political establishment. He could also count on the services of Richard Kane, a former Chicago police detective, who later served as chief investigator for the Cook County sheriff. He was, in effect, Giancana's fox inside the henhouse. Kane was a most handy man to have on the payroll. On one memorable occasion, a number of hoods were picked up after robbing a suburban savings and loan. The word among the outfit was that one of them had ratted. Enter investigator Kane and a polygraph machine. Sure enough, one of the hoods flunked the lie test. Shortly thereafter, the stoolie came to a violent, if predictable end. Kane's own career was abruptly terminated a little more than a year ago, when he was shotgunned to



protective of his memory and good name, if only because that is all they have left. There is still a magic about the name Kennedy, a magic which they devoutly hope can be worked again. And so, in times of trouble, they close ranks. The ranks are closed now; the curtain has come down. But that hasn't stopped the investigators, the salacious and the merely curious from peeking under it, as well they should. For the issue is not whether John Kennedy was apparently sleeping with someone other than his wife. His eye for attractive women has long been well, if not widely, known. It is, rather, how that interest—that weakness, if you will—was exploited, by whom and toward what end.

To believe Judith Campbell Exner, she was merely a wide-eyed, innocent, gullible waif, aware that the men in her life were out of the ordinary, yet making nothing of the fact that one of them was the President of the United States while another was one of the most powerful, vicious figures in the whole of organized crime. She was, in short, just a good-time girl—"a party girl," as *Newsweek* euphemistically termed her—blissfully ignorant of everything except that good friend Frank seemed to have more than his share of interesting pals. There was glamour, money, parties in Vegas and Miami and a house in Malibu, heady inducements for a would-be actress who wanted to get ahead and who had, from every account, few visible means of support. Judy had the looks, the class and the hunger. She finally had what was perhaps most important: the connections.

Frank Sinatra was the Campbell connection, which, considering the Kennedys and Sinatra, is probably the least surprising aspect of the entire case. There were many women like Judy Campbell around Sinatra. "Frank was around here all the time, doing a show or shooting a picture down by the dam," recalls a Vegas associate. "There were dozens of broads like that with him." It could do a girl some good, for being a friend of Frank's invariably meant being a friend of Frank's friends—and they ranged from the Kennedys on down, down to the Giancanas, the Morettis, the Fischettis, down even to the big man himself, the late "Charlie Lucky," otherwise known as Lucky Luciano, the boss of all bosses. For years, the FBI and various congressional investigators have been trying to put Sinatra himself in the Mafia. Joe "The Baron" Barbosa, a self-confessed Mafia hitman, once told a congressional committee that Sinatra was a financial front man for the Mob. The committee wondered about that, as they wondered about

Sinatra's investment in a race track backed by Thomas "Three Finger Brown" Luchese, and Raymond Patriarca, the organized-crime boss of New England. They were also curious about the cigarette case that Luciano carried, the gold one with the inscription, "To my dear pal Lucky, from his friend, Frank Sinatra," as they were curious about the wiretaps of Angelo "Gyp" DeCarlo, the bugs that had the Gyp boasting how his pal Frankie would fix everything. But, in the end, nothing ever came of the investigations. Sinatra never denied the friendships—"Look, Frank knows 20 of these guys," his attorney once told an astonished congressional investigator—but always claimed that they were just that, friends. His other friends seemed willing to accept that. Sinatra played a major role in John Kennedy's presidential campaign in 1960, thanks in part to Kennedy brother-in-law Peter Lawford's charter membership in the Sinatra "Rat

## Turning off the Kennedy assault on organized crime soon became one of Giancana's chief obsessions

Pack," but in larger measure to Kennedy's and Sinatra's mutual attraction to glitter and power. After Kennedy's election as president, the new attorney general asked the FBI to run a precautionary check on Sinatra's associates, and when the word came back that Sinatra's chums included some of the most notorious members of the underworld, Kennedy put some distance between himself and the singer. The President no longer stayed at Sinatra's estate when he visited Palm Springs, camping out at Bing Crosby's instead. They continued to socialize, however, long after their reported break. One former close associate of Robert Kennedy's remembers that the kidnapping of Frank Sinatra Jr., not long after the President's assassination, was one of the few events that commanded Bobby's personal attention during his remaining months in the Justice Department. Kennedy, according to the aide, talked with Sinatra on the phone a number of times and personally pushed the FBI investigation of the kidnapping. The brothers also socialized with Sinatra while Jack was in the White House. On one occasion, Sinatra was a guest aboard the presidential yacht *Honey Fitz* for a

cruise down the Potomac. Sinatra was recounting a recent visit to Italy and an audience with Pope John XXIII when Lawford interjected teasingly, "All your friends in Chicago are Italian, too."

Frank's friends were Judy's friends, a number of them anyway. Giancana, whom she met at a party in Miami, and Roselli—Giancana took care of the introductions there—apparently were not the only hoods who came to know her charms. It is not surprising. "When they found a good broad," explains one law-enforcement official in Chicago, "they passed her around."

Sam, being boss, would naturally have first pick. Giancana was priggish with his underlings, ordering them to stay monogamous for the sake of "security." Sam himself had a healthy, some would say voracious, appetite for the female of the species, the flashier the better. He took a special interest in starlets, would-be and otherwise. His years-long wooing of singers Keely Smith and Phyllis McGuire was regularly splashed across the front pages of Chicago newspapers. There everyone would be, smiling, having a good time, lapping it up, and, in the midst of them would be the dour little man with thinning hair, who never seemed to smile.

Having spent so much time with so distinguished a personage, Judy Exner's recollections of Sam Giancana seem remarkably dim. She puts her first meeting with Giancana—"Moe" or "Mooney" his friends called him—several months after she met Kennedy, and with Roselli well after that. That is not how federal investigators remember it, nor even Roselli, who puts the date of his introduction with the lady well before the time she met Kennedy. The point seems trivial, until the rumor drifts by that when Judy finally tells all she will claim that Kennedy recruited her to spy on the Mob. She probably wouldn't have been much of an agent. It's that memory again. The first time reporters asked her at her press conference whether she knew Giancana's and Roselli's connections with the underworld, she said no; later, the "no" became a "probably."

"Probably." So there is some humor in the affair after all. Because there was never any "probably" about Sam, never any doubt, and "connections" does not do the man justice. A boss does not have connections. People have connections to him. Salvatore Giancana was the boss. You couldn't very well miss it; Mooney even acted the part. The silk suits, the shades, the cigars (Cuban, naturally) and pink Cadillacs and the blonde on each arm—Giancana had them all.



Cuban coast, then simply disappeared. Another time a landing party was driven off in a running gun battle with a Cuban patrol boat. On a third occasion, a Roselli operative tried to kill Castro with a poison capsule which had been slipped into the Cuban leader's daily chocolate malted. The attempt failed when the waiter bearing Castro the fated malted started shaking in terror and aroused Castro's suspicions.

Giancana's role—aside from being Roselli's boss—in all these capers is also unclear. It is known, though, that Giancana was present at a syndicate commission meeting in 1959, which, at the behest of Meyer Lansky, put a \$1-million price tag on Castro's head. Giancana did his part in Chicago. Kane worked at recruiting would-be invaders for the Bay of Pigs operation from the Spanish-speaking community on the West Side. According to law-enforcement officials, Kane made little secret of the fact that his efforts were being sponsored by the CIA, and, in fact, were being directed by the agency. The Mob was later rewarded for its efforts. In 1969, shortly after the inauguration of Richard Nixon, pending deportation proceedings against Roselli were dropped in what were called the "interests of national security." Giancana's problems were somewhat more complicated. Robert Kennedy, unaware of what a fine fellow he was, had targeted Giancana for special attention by the Justice Department. On a "hit list" of 4,300 hoods Kennedy had designated for harassment and prosecution, Giancana, according to a former Kennedy aide, "ranked number three on the list, maybe number two, with Hoffa, of course, claiming top spot."

The weapon federal prosecutors employed against Giancana was a little-noticed immunity clause in the Federal Communications Act. The prosecutors charged, with ten volumes of FBI reports and toll tickets to back them up, that Giancana had used the phone to foster a criminal conspiracy and, with Kennedy's blessing, hauled him before a grand jury. The questions were asked, Giancana took the Fifth and was promptly immunized. When he still refused to talk, he was cited for contempt and slapped into prison for the duration of the grand jury, which turned out to be a year. When the year was up, Giancana was again brought before the grand jury. But times had changed dramatically. John Kennedy was dead and Robert Kennedy was no longer attorney general. Moments before Edward Hanrahan, the then-U.S. Attorney, was to begin grilling Giancana, he got a telephone call from Fred Vinson Jr., head

of the Justice Department's criminal division. Giancana was not to be immunized, Vinson ordered. Hanrahan hung up the phone ashen-faced. Moments later, Sam Giancana walked out of the federal courthouse a free man. Before the day was out, he had boarded a plane for Cuernavaca, Mexico, and the beginning of an eight-year exile from Chicago and its inquisitive federal strike force.

The official explanation was that a technicality in the law prevented prosecutors from immunizing him again. Few people believed it, least of all the investigators in the case. There were suspicions that Giancana's fabled ability to juice his adversaries had somehow worked its wonders once again. But subsequent revelations of the government's involvement with a number of Mob *capos* are beginning to change minds. "They cut a deal, no question about it," says one investigator intimately involved in the case.

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"Mooney talked to the 'G' and he walked. I don't know what he was doing for them, but he did something. The whole thing stinks." It will be surprising if prosecutors ever do find out what sort of deal Giancana had with the CIA; even now, the agency isn't talking. "You'd call these guys up at CIA and ask them if they had an arrangement with Giancana, and they'd say, 'Giancana? How do you spell that?'" remembers a former senior official in the Kennedy Justice Department. "They were lying bastards. They were in bed with this guy."

These days, that seems an especially apt metaphor. But, while Robert Kennedy was attorney general the national security argument never washed. Not that the CIA didn't try. Larry Huston, the agency's former counsel, went to Kennedy in late 1962 and informed him that Giancana had been recruited for the

Castro assassination project. Kennedy was livid. "The next time you deal with the Mafia, come to me first," he snapped at Huston. Kennedy, in fact, was paying particular attention to Giancana and his activities. A number of Giancana lieutenants were busted on what seemed the flimsiest of charges. Joey Aiuppa, a leading member of the Chicago organization, was a typical example; Kennedy had him prosecuted for violating the provisions of the Migratory Bird Act. Henry Petersen, then a senior aide in the Justice Department, later recalled Bobby's approach: "His instructions were: 'Don't let anything get in your way. If you have problems, come see me. Get the job done, and if you can't get the job done, get out.'"

Turning off the Kennedy assault on organized crime—an attack that centered on Las Vegas and Chicago—soon became one of Giancana's chief obsessions. If the President could not be juiced, well, there were other ways to reach him. For, as Giancana knew well, Kennedy was vulnerable.

What role, if any, Judy Campbell played in Giancana's plans remains a matter of sheer speculation. But sexual blackmail, obviously, is a possibility. Such a tactic would have been in keeping with Giancana's known methods of doing business. Giancana himself, according to some reports, later boasted that his organization had placed a girl with the President. It could have been a Mob bluff, or, once again, it could have been one of those rare times when Giancana was telling the truth. The Church committee would never know. In the early morning hours of June 19, 1975, Sam Giancana was in his kitchen preparing a late-night snack of Italian sausage, escarole and cece beans. Upstairs, his caretaker watched television, with the air conditioner humming in the background. Someone else was in the house, too, someone who Giancana apparently knew, for there were no signs of forced entry. The unmarked Chicago police car that had been sitting outside Giancana's Oak Park home earlier in the evening had left to check the houses of other nearby mobsters. It would be some time before it would return. The house was quiet. No one heard the faint popping of seven silenced slugs as they destroyed Sam Giancana's brain.

Giancana's assailant has never been found. The police have a prime suspect or two, but a number of witnesses called before the grand jury, including the caretaker, have been taking the Fifth. "The trail," says one disheartened investigator, "looks pretty cold." One lead that is being checked out is a silenced .22 used



death in a Chicago restaurant. His assailants, who were never apprehended, entered the restaurant wearing ski masks and toting a walkie-talkie. After they had lined the other patrons up against the wall and cornered Kane, a voice from somewhere outside crackled over the speaker. "Have you picked up the package?" "Sure have," one of the murderers answered and, with that, proceeded to blow Kane's head off.

Roselli, Judy Campbell's other boyfriend, was another important component of the Giancana apparatus. Just

where he fit into the apparatus, what his specific duties were, and what rank he held in the organization have always been matters of some dispute among various law-enforcement agencies, the general view being that "Johnny," as everyone calls him, was something of a third stringer. His conviction in 1968 for hustling a number of prominent Hollywood types in a card-cheating scam at the Friar's Club did little to enhance his reputation. Most of Johnny's credit comes from his earlier days in Chicago and on the Coast, where he operated as an extor-

tionist and strong-arm man. During the Fifties and Sixties, Roselli spent much of his time in Vegas. Officially, his occupation was running concessions in one or two of the big hotels, though Johnny himself liked to boast that he was a "movie producer." His actual job, in the opinion of local and federal law-enforcement officials, was as a fixer, the man to see when you wanted to cut a deal. Suave, charming, a legendary ladies' man, Johnny, says Hank Greenspun, publisher of the *Las Vegas Sun*, was "the guy who made you the offers you couldn't refuse." He was exceptionally well-connected, not only in Vegas but in Los Angeles and Chicago, as well as in Washington, where he was often seen dining at Duke Ziebert's in the company of a prominent Washington lawyer and fixer with his own well-established connections to the Central Intelligence Agency.

Few people ever made much of those connections until Roselli's name surfaced as one of the hoods the CIA had recruited to assassinate Castro. The middleman in that operation was Robert Maheu, the former FBI agent who, for a time, headed Howard Hughes' empire in Nevada. As Maheu subsequently described his role to reporters, his agency project officer "asked me if in connection with a planned invasion in Cuba I would contact a Mr. John Roselli in Los Angeles, asking if Mr. Roselli would be inclined to help in a program for removing Mr. Castro from the scene." Roselli, Maheu went on, was "reluctant to participate," but finally agreed after Maheu prevailed on his patriotism and devotion to the national interest. Roselli went to Giancana, and, with CIA assistance, the two of them cooked up a variety of plots, all of which went awry. The Church committee report on CIA assassinations details only one scheme, in which Castro was saved because an agency-supplied poison capsule failed to be delivered to its intended recipient. Other accounts have Roselli taking a more active role. According to one story, Roselli flew to Miami in March 1961 to iron out the details of the Castro assassination in separate meetings with the CIA and Santo Trafficante Jr., the organized-crime boss of Tampa, Florida, whose specialty is drug traffic on the East Coast. Though accounts differ, the agency apparently agreed to supply Roselli with money, weapons and transportation for the assassination attempt. Roselli himself volunteered to accompany one of the missions to Cuba. For all the elaborate preparations, the Roselli hitmen turned out to be the gang that couldn't shoot straight. The first group of assassins was successfully landed on the



Sinatra played a major role in JFK's campaign, thanks to Peter Lawford's membership in the "Rat Pack" (bottom). He shared Kennedy's attraction to glamour and power, but only occasionally socialized with Jack (top) and Jackie (left) after the election.



in another gang killing. It seems remarkably similar to the weapon used to kill Giancana. Coincidentally, the second gun was recovered in San Diego.

Until Judith Campbell Exner publishes her memoirs, the best source of information on the Kennedy-Campbell connection is the Federal Bureau of Investigation, and the FBI is not talking. One investigator intimately familiar with the FBI's records, however, says that "Judy Exner is just the tip of the iceberg." He adds that the bureau was well aware of her relationship with Giancana and Kennedy long before the famous lunch with Hoover at the White House. The FBI reports and recollections are so detailed that the investigator surmises that the bureau shadowed and/or wired Kennedy during his trips to Vegas.

The young senator and his family would not arouse even the most innocent curiosity. For they were no strangers to Nevada. They were, as a matter of fact, related by marriage to one of the most powerful men in the state, real-estate developer Norman Biltz. Until his death several years ago, Biltz was known—with no particular affection—as "the Duke of Nevada." He was a king-maker in the grand style, and one of the kings he made

## If John Kennedy was a problem, and John Kennedy could not be blackmailed, well. . .

was Senator Pat McCarran, the legendary bigot and Red-hunter who was thinly fictionalized as the corrupt senator in *The Godfather, Part II*. Biltz had married into the Auchincloss clan and was Jacqueline Bouvier Kennedy's step-uncle. In 1960, Biltz took the uncharacteristic step of bucking the pro-Johnson state Democratic organization by endorsing Jack Kennedy. Biltz very nearly succeeded in swinging the entire delegation to his side, finally missing by a margin of one vote. According to one of Biltz's associates, who was with him during the Democratic convention, Jackie called him shortly after the caucus and said, "Uncle Norman, how could you let your state vote against Jack?"

No lover of Las Vegas, Biltz centered his power in the northern part of the state, where, on the shores of Lake

Tahoe, he entertained various visiting dignitaries, friends and potentates, among them Joseph P. Kennedy Sr. The Kennedy patriarch spent several summer vacations at Tahoe in the late Fifties. He stayed at the Cal-Neva Lodge (the border with California runs through the swimming pool) as the guest of Bert "Wingie" Grover, a gambler from Miami. Grover and his partners later sold the Cal-Neva to a syndicate headed by Frank Sinatra. Sinatra, in turn, was forced to sell his interest after Nevada authorities discovered that one of the guests in residence was Sam Giancana, then one of 11 hoods listed in the Nevada "black book."

Politics do make strange bedfellows, and nowhere are they stranger than in Nevada. One of the elder Kennedy's acquaintances, for instance, was Morris "Moe" Dalitz, a prominent figure in the Cleveland and Detroit underworld before World War II. Dalitz, a partner in the Stardust casino and hotel, boasted of his acquaintance with Kennedy, claiming that they had done business during Prohibition days. Dalitz was also close to Biltz. The relationship between Dalitz and the Kennedy family was ironic, to say the least, for soon after Bobby became attorney general he began probing the shady activities of the Teamsters Union's gargantuan Central States Pension Fund (estimated assets: \$1.3 billion), one of whose clients was the self-same Moe Dalitz. Dalitz, who used an estimated \$57 million of pension fund money to build the Rancho La Costa Country Club near San Clemente, later became sensitive about his associations—particularly his close friendship with Jimmy Hoffa. In 1975, Dalitz and three partners sued *Penthouse* magazine, contending that the magazine had libeled them by suggesting that La Costa was founded by the syndicate and controlled and frequented by mobsters. In its rejoinder to Dalitz's suit, *Penthouse* claimed in court papers that there was "overwhelming documentation" of his "critical role as the architect in the organization of crime in this country."

The trouble, of course, was the nature of Democratic politics. To run for national office, one had to make friends and raise money, and, in Nevada, that invariably meant meeting the Mob. Kennedy made one trip to Vegas in 1956 at the request of Wilbur Clark, then head of the Clark County Democratic Central Committee and partner with Dalitz in the Desert Inn. Kennedy was back in town in 1958, and Ralph Pearl, a local entertainment columnist, places him at the Sands at the opening of the Clan. Kennedy reportedly made several other trips to the

state in the succeeding two years, some for pleasure, others for politics. When he returned in February 1960, he was a candidate for the presidency. Sinatra, Lawford and the rest of the Rat Pack were in town to shoot *Oceans 11*, a light-hearted



Norman Biltz was called "the Duke of Nevada" by some, "Uncle" by Jackie Kennedy.

tale of the Mob and their casinos. Kennedy's visit was apparently on short notice. Jackie was not along. The records show that he attended and addressed a dinner reception for about 500 people at the Gold Room of the Convention Center, and later retired to a small, fundraising cocktail party with about 50 heavy givers at the Sands. According to an organizer of the party, those present were "politicians and casino people." There was someone else in town, too. Her name was Judy Campbell.

They met, she says, at 10:30 the night of February 7 at a dinner table in the Sands Garden Room. Teddy and Lawford were also present. Frank took care of the introductions. The rest, as they say, is history.

If the Mob was employing Judy Campbell as a means of blackmailing Kennedy, the attempt failed miserably. The organized-crime prosecutions did not stop; if anything, they intensified. Giancana continued to be a special target. In June 1963, more than a year after Kennedy learned of Judy's Mob connections, Giancana was put under "rough surveillance." Carloads of federal agents were parked outside his house around the clock, seven days a week. They dogged his every step, interviewed his neighbors, followed his family, tailed his friends and, according to Giancana, even pursued him to weekly Mass at St. Bernadine's Church. Giancana finally went into court to seek relief. At the hearing, his lawyer protested: "How would you like it if you



were on the 18th hole trying to line up a putt—and there were six FBI agents watching you?" The judge was sympathetic; the agents were henceforth ordered to keep at least two foursomes back. At that, Giancana was merely getting a taste of the medicine Robert Kennedy had in store for the whole of organized crime. At the time of his brother's death, Bobby was laying the groundwork for the strongest dose of all: a massive federal assault on the whole of Nevada, a demonstration that if the Mob could be taken on and beaten on its home ground, it could be defeated anywhere. It was only after John Kennedy's death and his brother's departure from the Justice Department that the drive against organized crime began to sputter and die. Within four years of the assassination, the number of days spent in the field by Justice Department organized-crime investigators had been cut nearly in half; the number of court briefs filed by government lawyers in organized-crime cases was slashed by more than 80 percent. Then, and only then, were hoods like Giancana and Roselli able to seek CIA immunity for their crimes.

While he lived, John Kennedy's best defense against sexual blackmail

seems to have been his utter disregard for the consequences of what he did. If a tenth of the stories about the President's sexual peccadillos turn out to be true, he was obviously a man who was sure of himself and not overly caring of what people thought, including the director of the Federal Bureau of Investigation. None of which says much for his judgment. There was obviously an appalling lack of it, not only about becoming involved with a Sinatra-supplied young lady, but a whole range of associations in Las Vegas, which, however casual or politically necessary, look and smell bad, especially with the benefit of 12 years' hindsight.

Something stinks about this affair, stinks about the way it is not being investigated. The Church committee concluded, and all too quickly, that Judy Campbell was just another lady in John Kennedy's life, that their chats were, as Judy insists, merely "man-woman" talk. Her presence with him in Florida, while Roselli was on assignment for the CIA? Mere coincidence. Her boyfriends in the Mob? Mere coincidence. And the kind of mobsters they were—the kind CIA relied on? Mere coincidence. Giancana being murdered before he could testify? Mere coincidence. Frank Church and his col-

leagues were only too willing to accept everything at face value, to put the most innocent construction on possibly the most sinister events. Even Judy Campbell's assertion that she was not reporting to the Mob on Kennedy (or, for that matter, to Kennedy on the Mob) went unquestioned, despite the fact that at least one of her telephone calls to the White House was placed from the same suburb where Giancana maintained his headquarters. Frank Church's motives are understandable. Having inadvertently lifted the rock, and being horrified at what lay underneath, no doubt he was in some haste to put it securely back into place. He is not a man who likes to offend.

Maybe it was all innocent—though we have only Frank Church's and Judy Campbell's word to take for that. Yet all too many questions remain outstanding. The Church committee was never able to nail down the problem of presidential accountability in the foreign assassination plots. If, as seems likely, John Kennedy did not know that the CIA and the Mafia had gone into the assassination business, what else did he not know, and why? This is not idle speculation. When so upright a fellow as William Safire, the conservative columnist for the *New York Times*, begins to wonder in print whether Sam Giancana ever mentioned the name "Jack Ruby" to Frank Sinatra, then it is more than kooks and crazies who want to know. What Safire hints at is not inconceivable. Jack Ruby, the slayer of Lee Harvey Oswald, *did* come out of the West Side Chicago Mob. There were other mobsters—along with anti-Castroites and CIA agents—in, around and through the assassination. If John Kennedy was a problem, and John Kennedy could not be blackmailed, well...

That is of little concern to Judy Campbell now. To hear her talk she longs for nothing so much as the obscurity she once enjoyed and so richly deserved. She doesn't see any of the old crowd these days. Her last contact with Moe was shortly before he began his Mexican exile. Johnny R. hasn't been around in years. She calls herself an "artist" now and goes by the name Kate. The dreams of being an actress are far behind her. Soon, she and her husband will be able to move into something more substantial than a mobile home; according to her lawyer, the bidding for her memoirs is in the six-figure range. One of Frank's old songs says it all: you know, the one about California and easy living and being broke... "That's why the lady is a tramp." ●



John Roselli, who testified before the Church committee (above), was known as suave, smooth, but something of a third stringer in the underworld.