

Woman Admits 'Close Personal' Tie With JFK

San Diego (AP) — "To me, he was Jack Kennedy and not the president,"

In those words, Judith Campbell Exner denied her involvement in any plot between the slain president and the underworld to assassinate Cuban Premier Fidel Castro.

"My relationship with Jack Kennedy was of a close, personal nature and did not involve conspiratorial shenanigans of any kind," said Exner, dark haired, now 41.

She appeared at a news conference Wednesday wearing dark glasses and acknowledged that while she had this relationship with Kennedy, she had similar relationships with alleged Mafia bosses Sam Giancana and John Rosselli.

But she denied acting as a go-between for the Kennedy White House in reported plots by the Mafia and the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) to assassinate Castro.

Exner refused to elaborate on her relationship with the late president.

Flanked by her husband, Dan Exner, and attorney Brian Monaghan, she told of meeting Kennedy and Giancana through a "mutual friend" and later visiting Kennedy "more than 16 or 20" times in the White House.

Her involvement with Kennedy became public earlier this week as a result of an investigation of the CIA by the Senate Select Committee on Intelligence. The committee reported there were 70 phone calls between an unidentified "close friend" and the Kennedy White House. News reports first identified Judith Campbell as the person mentioned in the committee report.

Exner, former wife of Hollywood actor William Campbell, said she last talked to Kennedy "in late 1962."

She said she called the news conference to end what she termed "wild-eyed speculation" about her connection with the plots against Castro. She also denied reports she was a Kennedy campaign worker.

She said she met Kennedy in February 1960 in Las Vegas and was introduced to

Giancana a month later in Miami. She met Rosseelli through Giancana, she said.

She refused to name the "mutual friend" who brought her together with the president and the Mafioso, but she promised to do so "when the entire story is told."

President Kennedy was assassinated in Dallas in 1963, Giancana was the victim this year of a gangland-style slaying in his Chicago home, a week before he was scheduled to testify before the Senate intelligence committee.

Exner said she hadn't known for certain that Giancana and Rosselli were Mafia figures, but she said she suspected it. "I imagine I probably knew they were part of the underworld," she said.

She told of numerous White House luncheons with Kennedy but said she never met Jacqueline, the president's wife. She was divorced from Campbell during her involvement with Kennedy, she asserted.

Under questioning, she said she knew singer Frank Sinatra, but she refused to say whether it was he who had introduced her to Kennedy and Giancana.

Evelyn Lincoln, Kennedy's personal secretary, and former Kennedy aide Kenneth O'Donnell both have described Exner as a former Kennedy campaign worker. But she called their statements "entirely contrived" and designed to insulate the slain president from scandal.

"Both Evelyn Lincoln and Kenny O'Donnell were fully aware of the nature of my relationship with Jack Kennedy," she said.

Exner, who said she is a New York City native, said the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) investigated and harassed her during her relationship with Kennedy.

"Portions of the FBI file on me which were read during my session in the committee shocked me," she said. "Their investigation was prying, insidious and sounded more like a scandal sheet than a governmental investigation. The information it quotes was both incorrect and speculative."

The FBI file has not been made public. However, the Senate intelligence committee reported that the final phone talk between Kennedy and Exner came only hours after FBI Director J. Edgar Hoover had a luncheon meeting with Kennedy on March 22, 1962.

Exner's current husband is a golfing professional. The two have been living in San Diego since they were married last year, residing in a motor home.



UPI Telephone

JUDITH CAMPBELL EXNER DENIES CONSPIRACY
Linked to John F. Kennedy and Mafia Bosses

Woman's JFK Revelations Deflate Interest in Staff Leak

Chronicle Washington Bureau

Washington — Now that a California woman has said she had a "close, personal relationship" with President John F. Kennedy, the Senate Intelligence Committee has apparently lost interest in pinpointing what it believes was a leak that led to the first public word of the assassination.

Earlier, committee sources said that some members of the committee, especially Democrats, were enraged by the leak. They were angry enough, the sources said, to threaten all staff members with lie detector tests if the source of the story could not be determined any other way.

But Wednesday after Judith Campbell Exner, the woman in question, held a news conference and confirmed the relationship, sources reported that interest in finding the leak had waned dramatically.

The woman's relationship with Kennedy, which she said lasted for just over two years in the early 1960s, was uncovered by Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) wiretaps on the home of Chicago mobster Sam Giancana. He was found slain at that home earlier this year.

The FBI said Exner called Kennedy's private White House number from Giancana's tapped line, a point Exner denied Wednesday.

The Senate committee report on assassination attempts against foreign leaders referred to Exner only as "a close friend" of Kennedy.

Sen. John G. Tower, R-Tex., was a member of the drafting committee for the report, and said that he approved of the veiled reference to Exner.

Tower has refused to comment on the reports of dissension in the committee over the leak of the Exner story, claiming it was "internal committee business."

In a secret session earlier this month, the committee informally decided to ask all members of the committee staff to sign statements that they were not the source of a story which first appeared in Scripps-Howard papers in November about Kennedy and the woman.

If the statements did not uncover the source of the leak, the committee agreed in principle to subject the staff to lie detector tests, a plan now apparently dropped.