

F.B.I. FILES DISCLOSE LETTER ON KENNEDY

Hoover Gave His Brother Report on Alleged Settlement of Suit and Sealing of Records

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WASHINGTON, Dec. 14—J. Edgar Hoover told Attorney General Robert F. Kennedy in 1963 that the Federal Bureau of Investigation had information that Mr. Kennedy had paid a \$500,000 settlement and had had court records sealed in a lawsuit brought by a woman who said she had been engaged to marry his brother, John F. Kennedy, in 1951.

According to sources familiar with the treatment of F.B.I. documents obtained through the Freedom of Information Act, it is likely that Mr. Hoover was relating to Mr. Kennedy information given to the bureau by a source, not factual information in possession of the bureau.

The exchange between the director of the bureau and the President's brother is one entry in two thick volumes of Mr. Hoover's personal and confidential files spanning 13 years on John F. Kennedy that was obtained by William Safire, columnist for The New York Times, through the Freedom of Information Act.

The New York Times was unable to reach people familiar with the situation at that time who could offer any facts to shed further light on the reports. One source close to Robert Kennedy called the report "highly unlikely." But, another source close to Mr. Hoover said that Robert Kennedy did not respond to the letter advising him of the alleged court settlement, "so Mr. Hoover thought it was true."

The file contains little that would titillate those interested in the President's private life. It does contain an internal F.B.I. memorandum that links organized crime figures to the Kennedy White House through Judith Campbell Exner, who later said she had had an affair with the President.

Most Are Threat Letters

The bulk of the files relate to threats against the President, including hate letters and leaflets accusing Mr. Kennedy of treason and "Commie-loving" and of being a "pawn of the Pope."

As much as anything, the file gives a picture of the way the late F.B.I. director operated.

The alerting of Robert Kennedy to the file about the alleged settlement of a jilted woman's lawsuit could be viewed as either a friendly, loyal, ingratiating gesture or as veiled blackmail.

Most of the letter from Mr. Hoover to the Attorney General has been deleted, but the readable portions say:

"In addition to the bill of particulars, letters were exhibited which mentioned

John F. Kennedy as an associate of this woman. When this suit was filed in New York just prior to the President's assuming office you went to New York and arranged a settlement of the case out of court for \$500,000. All papers relating to this matter, including the complaint, allegedly were immediately sealed by the court."

Then there is another deleted paragraph before Mr. Hoover ends his letter by saying:

"In this connection a weekly magazine published in Turin, Italy alleged that Alicia Purdom, the wife of actor Edmund Purdom, claimed that several years ago she was engaged to be married to John F. Kennedy, but the latter's father vetoed the wedding because of Alicia's Polish-Jewish descent."

Apparent Connection

The apparent connection is that it was Mrs. Purdom who was bringing suit against the President-elect and to whom \$500,000 was paid to drop the case in 1961.

Mrs. Purdom, according to the documents, had entered the United States as a "displaced person," and lived with her mother in Boston. Her original name was Barbara Maria Koczyńska, the files said, but she was also known by the name Alicia Darr.

Alicia Darr, a professional painter, was married in 1937 to Edmund Purdom, the English actor, and they were divorced in August 1961 in Juarez, Mexico.

On Sept. 16, 1961, she became the sixth wife of Alfred Corning Clark of Coopers-town, N. Y., heir to the Singer sewing machine fortune. He died 13 days after the wedding and she inherited his fortune.

Mrs. Alicia Corning Clark of Manhattan could not be reached for comment today.

A source close to Mr. Hoover said that Robert Kennedy did not respond to the director's letter advising him of the alleged court settlement, "so Mr. Hoover thought it was true."

But sources close to Robert Kennedy said that it was "highly unlikely" that any such transaction occurred.

Likelihood of Publicity

"First of all, Bobby would never do anything like that personally," one source said, "and secondly, if there had been such a lawsuit filed, the newspapers would have been all over it at the time. After all, Jack Kennedy was a United States Senator throughout the 1950's and was either a Presidential candidate or the President from 1958 on."

In a lighter vein, Mr. Hoover's file verified what had long been suspected—that assignment of an F.B.I. agent to Butte, Mont., was indeed an assignment to the shores of the mainstream.

In a Sept. 12, 1963, memorandum to Mr. Hoover, the special agent in charge of the Butte office mentioned the President's impending visit to his area:

"While I have received no official information regarding the proposed visit of President Kennedy within the Butte division . . ." Then the agent ended his memorandum, "I will follow this matter closely and in the event more specific information is received, the bureau, as well as interested offices, will be advised."

The linkage of Judith Campbell Exner to the White House corroborates the story previously told by Mrs. Campbell and denied by President Kennedy's secretary, Evelyn Lincoln.

The F.B.I. internal memorandum said that Judith Campbell has been "in telephonic communications with Sam Giancana, Chicago gangster, and with other underworld figures. In addition, she is the individual who has been in telephonic contact with Evelyn Lincoln, the President's secretary, and the White House. The nature of the relationship between Campbell and Mrs. Lincoln is not known."