

How Mafia Got Girl To JFK And Spy On Him

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Judith Campbell Exner, who brags that John F. Kennedy was her lover, spied on him for Mafia boss Sam Giancana.

It could be she also spied on the Mafia for JFK, playing a double game.

One thing seems for sure: her ample charms were not the only reason for the peculiar three-cornered friendship involving the White House, the Chicago gangster and Judy.

Some of the story was laid bare by the Senate Committee on Intelligence Activities. Now many of the gaps have been filled in by a new paperback exposé, "The Dark Side of Camelot," by Nelson Thompson, just published by Playboy Press.

"Perhaps the Mafia was actually able to plant an agent in the President's bedroom," the book brings out.

Living in Los Angeles, Judy was the sister of actress Susan Morrow and the friend of a number of movie people. She first met Jack and Ted Kennedy at a party in the Sands Hotel, Las Vegas, on Feb. 7, 1960, when Jack was campaigning for the Presidency.

"Judy liked Jack immediately," the book reveals. "He invited her to have lunch with him the very next day..."

The day after that, JFK had to go off to California. "But he called her a number of times that day and at least twice a day for the month that followed.

"Toward the end of February, Judy and Jack made plans to meet in March in New York City. In the second week of March, they met in Judy's suite at the Plaza Hotel and they spent the next four days pretty much together.

During this brief time, an emotional relationship developed between them that would last for at least two years.

"After this sojourn, Judy and Jack met in many places across the country," Thompson notes. "They met in Washington, in the Senator's house in Georgetown, and later in the White House. They met in Palm Beach, Los Angeles and Chicago. During the middle of 1961, Judy met Jack in the White House at least 20 times."

The same people who brought JFK and Judy together also introduced her to mobster Giancana and he in turn made her acquainted with another gang leader, John Roselli.

The question of which introduction came first could be important. Judy told the Senate committee she had met Sam after she met Jack Kennedy, but the FBI reports she had actually met him some months before, according to the book.

"If she met Giancana after Kennedy, the implication might well be that he hired her to spy on the mob. If she met



SAM GIANCANA was near the top of Bobby's list of the most wanted public enemies.

Giancana before she met Kennedy, it could very well be the other way around."

While Judy was in a hospital for an ovarian operation and an appendectomy, Giancana sent her five dozen yellow roses every day.

At the same time, the President of the United States was sending three dozen roses a week to the same hospital room.

"What was Giancana to the Kennedys?" the book asks, and answers, "When all the threads to the story are unravelled, perhaps the mystery of the Kennedy assassinations will be revealed..."

Here was the situation:

When Bobby Kennedy became Attorney General, he put Giancana near the top of the list of public enemies to be prosecuted.

At the same time, Giancana's pal Roselli was being used by the CIA in several assassination plots against Fidel Castro. "Perhaps Judy was the link..." Thompson suggests. "Was the assassination of Fidel Castro to be Kennedy's vindication for the Bay of Pigs?"

"One thing is certain. During RFK's reign as Attorney General, there was considerable interest on the part of the Justice Department to see that certain members of the mob be eliminated.

'During RFK's reign as Attorney General, there was considerable interest on the part of the Justice Department to see that certain members of the Mafia be eliminated.'

Romance



JUDITH CAMPBELL EXNER was listed as a Mafia moll by the FBI.



DURING JFK'S PRESIDENCY, Attorney General Bobby declared war on the Mafia. After Jack's death, Justice Department had a new boss.

"Bobby might have been able to blunt the edge of organized crime in this country.

"But Jack Kennedy was assassinated, and shortly after that, Robert Kennedy was no longer Attorney General of the United States..."

Do these facts stack up to just random coincidence, or a meaningful sequence?

The book doesn't try to present any final answers to that question, but it certainly leaves you wondering. "Judy, herself, prefers to play the wide-eyed innocent," it points out. "She says simply that her friendship with Jack was a love affair."

Another point the book makes about JFK is that he had a streak of cruelty, never mentioned in the well-publicized image, which stresses kindness and compassion.

An incident is cited when Joan Kennedy, Ted's wife, was on water skis behind a boat driven by Ted. Jack was at his

side. Then Jack took over the wheel and gunned the engine, although Joan was only a timid athlete, as he knew.

Joan was terrified, though somehow she stayed on her skis. Later she admitted, "I was scared to death, and worried if Jack knew what he was doing."

He knew, all right, suggests the book, adding, "It was precisely this streak of cruelty that kept Jack away from his wife in her time of crisis."

"After Jack lost his bid for the Vice-Presidential nomination to Estes Kefauver in 1956, he went for a cruise on the Mediterranean without Jackie, who was pregnant at the time.

Jackie had a miscarriage, and it took several days to get the information to Senator Kennedy. In the meantime Jackie's life was in danger. Bobby stayed with her but Jack did not return home until several days after the crisis was past.

"Rumors circulated that the Kennedy marriage was on the rocks, and that Joe" — Kennedy's father, the patriarch of the clan — "had offered to pay Jackie a million dollars to stay married to his son."

This was a story confirmed more recently by Judy Exner, who explained the Kennedy family felt Jackie had to stay with Jack simply because a divorced Catholic from Boston could never get the Presidential nomination, let alone the Presidency.

His charm with the ladies was recognized as Kennedy's most useful campaign tool. While he was busy skirting the issues because he didn't want to offend anybody, he gave off a smoke screen of charm.

"He gave the impression of needing a mother," says the book. "His so-called 'boyishness' encouraged protection.

"The image of 'matinee idol,' carefully cultivated for the purpose of winning elections, was actually not far from Jack Kennedy's personal tastes. It was apparent from the start that Jack's marriage to Jacqueline was a mistake. The rumors that floated throughout his career were based on some pretty hard-core reality.

"The rift between Jack and Jackie was ever-widening, and when Jackie was off traveling in Europe or vacationing in Florida, he lost no opportunity to sport with other women in the Lincoln bedroom."

The book also details some of the other racy goings-on at the White House during the "Camelot" days. It tells again the story of how Jackie Kennedy, as First Lady, reacted indignantly when she found a pair of panties in a pillow slip in the Lincoln bedroom. "Would you shop around and see who these belong to?" she reportedly said to her husband. "They're not my size."

But all that is nothing compared to the way the FBI worried over JFK's affair with Judy.

At one point, FBI chief J. Edgar Hoover scheduled a private White House lunch meeting with JFK, bringing with him a memo that listed all the FBI had learned about Judy's association with Mafia bosses Giancana and Roselli.

"It's hard to believe," the book declares, "that Jack Kennedy had to wait for a call from Hoover before he would find out that his girlfriend was a Mafia moll."