

Kennedy halted Sinatra probe

NEW YORK (AP) — The head of the Justice Department's Organized Crime Section during the Kennedy administration has confirmed that he urged a broad tax investigation of Frank Sinatra but the suggestion was turned down, apparently by then-Atty. Gen. Robert F. Kennedy.

Edwyn Silberling, now a private attorney practicing in New York, said Tuesday in a telephone interview from his Huntington, N.Y., home that "in general" the account in the New York Times of his request was correct.

The Times reported in today's editions that Silberling, then head of the Organized Crime Section, drafted a memo to the attorney general, saying federal attorneys wanted to investigate Sinatra, who at the time was close to the Kennedy family.

The memo was passed by Silberling to then-Deputy Atty. Gen. Nicholas DeB. Katzenbach, who, according to the Times, wrote on it in longhand, "Makes sense to me."

The Times reported that the memo was marked "Received" and initialed by Robert Kennedy on May 19, 1962.

On June 14, an assistant attorney general called Silberling to say that instead of a full investigation, only certain points of the memo should be followed up, the Times reported.

Sinatra, who worked for President John F. Kennedy's election and engaged other Hollywood types to support Kennedy, was again linked to the former president last year by the Select Senate Committee on Intelligence.

The committee reported that Sinatra had introduced one of his former girlfriends, Judith Campbell, to the president. The girlfriend, now Judith Exner, last year claimed that the meeting developed into an affair.

Not long after meeting Kennedy, according to the committee, Mrs. Exner was introduced by Sinatra to Sam Giancana, the Mafia boss of Chicago who was slain last year in the basement of his home.