

Agnew and Sinatra's Associates

By Jack Anderson

The late President Kennedy quietly disassociated himself from an admiring Frank Sinatra after reading a Justice Department dossier on the singer's racketeer friends.

Vice President Spiro Agnew, however, has disregarded advice that he, too, should keep Sinatra at arms length. The Vice President, who met Sinatra through California's Gov. Ronald Reagan, has found the controversial crooner to be a warm, thoughtful, sensitive friend.

Agnew, therefore, accepts Sinatra's explanation that he was unavoidably thrown into the company of hoodlums during his rise from the streets of Hoboken, N.J., and his early days as a night club entertainer. The singer has never been implicated in any illegal activities himself.

In Agnew's company, Sinatra has always been the model of propriety. He still insists upon addressing Agnew as "Mr. Vice President," although they have frequently golfed, joked and loafed together.

Once, another golfer barged into their company, greeted the Vice President with "Hey, Agnew!" and made a blunt remark. Sinatra politely excused himself, followed the intruder out of Agnew's hearing and threatened to throw the man out of the club if he ever ad-

ressed the Vice President as "Hey, Agnew" again.

Sinatra's Friends

Despite Sinatra's impeccable manners around the Vice President, however, the House Crime Committee possesses FBI reports attesting to the singer's close association with various mobsters. Two of them allegedly visited Sinatra at his plush Palm Springs, Calif., hacienda not long after the Vice President had been a guest there.

Even the singer's own attorney, Mickey Rudin, made some startling admissions to committee staff members during the preliminary negotiations over Sinatra's appearance before the crime committee.

"Look," the fast-talking Rudin confided at one point to committee counsel Joe Phillips and his top aide, Chris Nolde, "Frank knows 20 of these guys."

"What do you mean 'these guys'?" demanded Nolde. "Do you mean organized crime figures?"

"Yeah," admitted Rudin. He went on to mention the singer's "friendship" with such underworld chieftains as Gaetano Lucchese, Sam Giancana and Joseph Fischetti.

Later, Sinatra testified he had met Lucchese only "once or twice a long time ago," and brushed off questions on other Mafia associates.

Rudin originally tried to keep Sinatra out of an open hearing, explaining that "he is psychotic about testifying before committees under oath." Nevertheless, arrangements were made for Sinatra's appearance.

Sinatra Ducks

But as Phillips later reported in a confidential memo to Chairman Claude Pepper (D-Fla.): "All during this period, according to his attorney, Mr. Sinatra knew that he was scheduled to appear on June 8 . . .

"We have subsequently learned that at the same time Mr. Sinatra's attorney was discussing the guidelines for Mr. Sinatra's testimony on June 8, he (Sinatra) boarded an airplane in Los Angeles and left the country."

Incensed, Pepper ordered a subpoena out for Sinatra at every major port of entry in the country. Sen. John Tunney (D-Calif.), who had tried to intercede for Sinatra, told Pepper: "Go ahead and serve him."

But this brought other calls in Sinatra's behalf. Among them: the Vice President's staff, several friendly congressmen, and Teamsters official Hal Gibbons.

As a result, Pepper withdrew the subpoena, permitted Sinatra to appear voluntarily and agreed to limit the questioning to Sinatra's holdings

in a mob-infiltrated race track. Sinatra showed his gratitude by upbraiding the committee for calling him at all.

Footnote: Pepper and his staff have confirmed the quotes we have attributed to attorney Mickey Rudin. Rudin's office said, "Mr. Rudin does not accept calls from the press." A spokesman for Sinatra told us: "Mr. Sinatra has never denied knowing some of these people." As for the European trip, the spokesman said Sinatra had planned it "months earlier."

Uninvited Witness

Pat Nixon has confided to friends that she secretly watched the signing of the strategic arms agreement in Moscow in defiance of her husband's orders.

The First Lady wanted diplomatic wives to be present for the historic event. But President Nixon, fearful that the wives might somehow upset the Russians, disapproved.

The determined Mrs. Nixon witnessed the signing anyway. She quietly made her way down a long corridor in the Kremlin and stood behind a pillar as her husband signed the treaty.

Next to her was the President's communications expert, Herb Klein. Whispered Mrs. Nixon excitedly: "Herb, I just had to see this with my own eyes."