

# Hoover Files Indicate He Told RFK He Had Data on a JFK Jilting Payoff

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J. Edgar Hoover's private files indicate that Hoover told Robert F. Kennedy in 1963 he had information that Kennedy paid \$500,000 apparently to quash a lawsuit by a woman who claimed she was jilted by John F. Kennedy 10 years before he became President in 1961.

The late FBI director's files, released by the FBI under a Freedom of Information request, are heavily censored. In addition, they note that neither Hoover nor the FBI actually saw court documents relating to the alleged lawsuit. According to Hoover's memorandum to the former Attorney General the entire record of the suit was sealed by a judge in New York.

According to a Hoover memorandum addressed to "The Attorney General" and sent to Kennedy on June 5, 1963, Hoover noted that an Italian weekly magazine, *Le Ore*, published an article in 1961 claiming that a woman identified by the magazine as Alicia Purdom, at the time the wife of actor Edmund Purdom, said she had been engaged to marry John F. Kennedy.

The magazine said the engagement was broken off in 1951 after objection from Kennedy's father, Joseph P. Kennedy, concerning the woman's Polish and Jewish ancestry.

A separate memorandum sent to Robert Kennedy at the same time does not refer to Alicia Purdom by name but does discuss the alleged lawsuit. The heavily edited memorandum reads: "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."

Several persons close to Hoover and Robert Kennedy in the early 1960s claimed yesterday that there was little likelihood that the alleged cash payoff annually took place.

"I never heard of the woman, and I don't have any recollection of the memos,"

said John Seigenthaler, who was Robert Kennedy's administrative assistant in 1960 and 1961. "I shared an office with him when he supposedly paid the money in New York and I lived with him at his house during that time, so I'm sure I'd have known," said Seigenthaler, who is now publisher of *The Nashville Tennessean*.

Courtney Evans, Hoover's liaison between the FBI and Kennedy's office, said he recalled receiving a memo on the Italian magazine article from Hoover in 1963 with instructions to pass it on to Robert Kennedy. "I'm sure we did," Evans said, "but I don't recall anything more about it."

Evans, who later transferred to the Justice Department to work under Kennedy when he became Attorney General, said the lawsuit was never mentioned to him either by Hoover or Kennedy.

According to Hoover's chronology Kennedy allegedly went to New York to arrange the out-of-court settlement of the lawsuit before John Kennedy's inauguration Jan. 20, 1961. Seigenthaler said he could recall only one trip by Kennedy during that period, a speech to a sports dinner in Pittsburgh.

Seigenthaler and others who were close to Kennedy also questioned whether Robert Kennedy would have been delegated to make such a settlement when Joseph Kennedy, the family's patriarch, was still alive and active.

Attempts yesterday to reach the woman named in Hoover's memorandum—whose name now is Alicia Corning Clark—were unsuccessful.

Much of the 2-inch-thick files kept by the late FBI director contain only a series of threatening letters directed at John Kennedy and forwarded to the FBI.

On one occasion in 1958, however, the FBI director was warned that Kennedy attended church in Tucson with an associate of organized crime figure Joseph Bonanno. Hoover's files also bolster previously reported relationships between Judith Campbell Exner and organized crime figures and repeat Exner's assertions that she was in telephone contact with President Kennedy's secretary, Evelyn Lincoln. Exner has claimed an intimate association with Kennedy when he was President.