

Sinatra's Race Track Link Traced

By Jack Anderson

Two of the entertainment world's shrewdest businessmen, Frank Sinatra and Sammy Davis Jr., were the innocent dupes of high-pressure race racketeers, a secret congressional study contends.

This is the judgment rendered by the House Crime Committee on Sinatra's \$55,000 flyer in a now-defunct New England race track, and Davis' brief ride as a thoroughbred stable owner.

"Because neither could say 'no' to a good business deal," concludes the 183-page confidential draft report, Davis and Sinatra "each found himself the unwitting front in corrupt racing schemes orchestrated by middle men with close ties to major racketeers."

Sinatra, says the report, "ascended to the board of directors and was elected vice president of Berkshire Downs Race Track in Hancock, Mass.," all on a \$55,000 investment.

"Also invited to share in the deal was Sinatra's old sidekick, singer Dean Martin," says the committee document. "Martin, who was offered a similar 5 per cent investment in the track for \$55,000, ultimately turned it down..."

The committee findings, based on detailed hearings,

says some of the Sinatra's less entertaining co-investors in the track included New England Mafia boss Raymond Patriarcha and New York mobster Tommy (Three-Finger Brown) Lucchese.

Sinatra says he agreed to join the venture after he was introduced to a man named Salvatore Rizzo in 1962 at a night club in Atlantic City. Rizzo, identified by the FBI as a conduit for organized crime funding of the track, insists he has known Sinatra for 15 to 20 years.

Though Sinatra concedes he was acquainted with Lucchese, he denies he knew the hoodlum was involved in the race track. Indeed, Sinatra swears he didn't even know he was going to be on the track's board of directors.

Sinatra Withdrew

In any case, Sinatra withdrew from the track and got back his \$55,000, partly, says the committee report, because he was investing in the Sands Hotel and gambling casino in Las Vegas. Nevada law bars casino owners from holding interests in gambling ventures in other states.

Summing up Sinatra's role in the track, the committee says "Sinatra and his attorney pictured it as little more than a petty speculative venture."

But in fact, Sinatra's "character and reputation were misused to deceive racing officials" about Mafia participation at the track.

Davis also fell into the race horse business at a night club, the study finds. At New York's famous Copacabana, a Mafia boss named Gaetano (Corky) Vastola courted Davis' attention by sending over bottles of champagne.

Finally, Davis was sold on the idea of letting his name be used by Vastola's friends on "Sammy Davis, Jr. Farms," in New Jersey. But before he could say "Candy Man," Davis found he was being personally billed for purchasing four race horses and was dunned for \$8,800. Davis refused to pay.

Footnote: The confidential study is presently being held up by a squabble among crime committee members over whether to include a long section on racket ties to Emprise, a nationwide concern that runs food concessions at stadiums and other service enterprises.

Brezhnev's Stomach—Soviet leader Leonid Brezhnev may have a stomach for international power politics, but he doesn't have a stomach for long airplane rides.

According to sources who accompanied Brezhnev on the plane from Moscow, every downdraft sent the distressed

Communist chieftain scuttling off to the washroom.

Brezhnev's air sickness may have been the reason why photographers were not allowed close enough to snap his presumably pallid picture upon arrival last Saturday at Dulles airport.

His 18-hour stay at the President's Camp David retreat before official ceremonies began probably was planned to give the Russian leader time to recover.

Earmuffed Press—Newspaper publishers, faced with new regulations on the noise levels in their press rooms, are itchy over the possibility that the government may use its occupational safety powers to quiet the presses completely.

Under the Occupational Safety and Health Act, the government theoretically could step in and shut down the printing plants of papers whose reporters irritate highly placed politicians.

The act sets a stringent ceiling on noise allowed in any workplace, and, as a short term remedy, has sent newspapers scrambling to equip pressmen with the kind of earmuffs used by jet airport employees. At the Labor Department, which administers the act, sources say soothingly there is no intention to use it to stifle the press.