

Put Your Dreams Away: The Sinatra Connection

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In a recent essay about the way Senators Frank Church and John Tower were trying to conceal a connection between the Kennedy White House and the Mafia mobsters assigned to kill Fidel Castro, I concluded: "Senator Church cannot slam the lid of Pandora's box back down now that he has glimpsed the evil that lurks therein. As that great matchmaker of Mafia hoodlums, good-looking women and a President of the United States used to croon: 'All—or nothing at all.'"

A Beverly Hills attorney, Milton A. Rudin, has kindly sent me a copy of a letter he wrote to The New York Times, which reads in part:

"There is no question in the minds of many readers that the last sentence refers to my client, Frank Sinatra."

After objecting to my "yellow journalism" in general, Mr. Sinatra's lawyer underscored the "e" in "women," and suggested that readers might infer from that word that his client had been acting as a procurer. He says he is not filing a libel action because of "the horrendous state of the law" on that subject, and because:

"Our client has not issued any statement concerning the stories which have appeared in the press concerning President Kennedy and Judith Campbell because he refuses to join in the chorus of ghoulish scandalmongers. A libel action would have the same effect. Even the printing of a retraction continues this shameful episode in the history of the American press."

At the risk of such shameful continuance, I concede one point: "Women," plural should have read "woman," singular. The Church committee's interim cover-up reported only one instance of a person introducing a friend of unspecified gender to Mr. Kennedy and also introducing that same friend to Mafioso Giancana.

Committee sources cited in many publications have identified that introducer as Mr. Sinatra, which charge he has not denied. Nor does his attorney deny it now, and it is logical to assume that he would have refuted the charge in his letter if Mr. Sinatra had not been the middleman, or matchmaker, in this particular White House-Maffia connection.

Accordingly, we in the ghoulish-scandal monger set would like to know why the Church committee never called Mr. Sinatra to testify under

oath, nor even had an investigator call him up. One man, presumably Mr. Sinatra, brought together a mobster and a woman, and a President and that same woman; the mobster was the one hired by the C.I.A. in that President's Administration to murder a head of state; as an investigation began in 1975, the mobster was silenced permanently with seven bullets. And Senator Church decided not to hear from the man who probably built the original bridge.

Here are a few of the questions Senators Church and Tower were duty-bound to ask Mr. Sinatra. I regret the innuendo necessarily burdening these shots in the dark, but in view of the Senators' craven reluctance to ask them, and Mr. Sinatra's stated unwillingness to "issue a statement," I know of no other way to set the questions forth.

● When did you introduce Sam Giancana to Judith Campbell, if you did, and at whose request? When did you introduce Miss Campbell to either of the Kennedy brothers? Do you know if the Kennedys were ever aware of Miss Campbell's close association with the mobster Giancana and his lieutenant, John Roselli? Did the mobsters ask you to introduce her or anyone else to the Kennedys?

● Did you ever see Judith Campbell and John Kennedy together, or Messrs. Giancana and/or Roselli and

## ESSAY

By William Safire

Miss Campbell together? Did you make available premises controlled by you to any of them? Did Sam Giancana or John Roselli ever boast to you about Miss Campbell's calls and trips to the White House?

● To your knowledge, Mr. Sinatra, were any recordings made of any meetings between Judith Campbell and John Kennedy, or were any pictures taken of them that could have been used by organized crime for blackmail purposes? Were you aware of any communications between the President and the men hired to kill Fidel Castro through the woman you introduced to both? Did Sam Giancana tell you how he persuaded the C.I.A. to bug a Las Vegas hotel room on his behalf?

● What was the content of your last conversations with Sam Giancana, John Roselli, and Judith Campbell? Was Mr. Giancana fearful, and if so, did he tell you why?

● Did any member of the Kennedy family, including in-laws, tell you about the plot to kill Fidel Castro? Did Sam Giancana or John Roselli mention it to you?

● Was your association with Sam Giancana, which cost you the right to own part of a casino in Nevada, the cause of your break with the President? When President Kennedy changed his plans to stay with you in Palm Springs, and switched to the home of Bing Crosby, did Robert Kennedy give you the reason why? Did he mention a visit to the President by J. Edgar Hoover?

● Did you ever intervene with the Kennedys to get the Justice Department to stop an investigation?

● Before or after the Kennedy assassination in Dallas, did Sam Giancana or John Roselli ever mention the name of Jack Ruby to you?

Mr. Sinatra, who admirably refuses to abandon friends after their popularity fades, might emerge from such an interrogation with honor bright.

But we can put our dreams away for another day; Frank Church, dart-gunning for the Presidency, needs Kennedy support and has accordingly aborted any future hearings of his cover-up committee. We are left to ponder what might have been learned if only "Old Blue-Eyes" could have been required to sing.