

Church Denies Cover-Up Of a Kennedy Friendship

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WASHINGTON, Dec. 15—Senator Frank Church acknowledged today that the Senate Select Committee on Intelligence Operations had uncovered evidence that President Kennedy and two reputed organized crime leaders had a close friendship with the same woman in 1961 and 1962. But he denied published suggestions that the committee had tried

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to cover up information about the matter.

Mr. Church, an Idaho Democrat who heads the Senate panel, noted today that Mr. Kennedy's relationship with the woman had been discovered during the committee's inquiry into Mafia involvement in Central Intelligence Agency plots to kill Prime Minister Fidel Castro of Cuba during that same period.

But the Senator said that details of the relationship, mentioned in a segment of the committee's 349-page report on C.I.A. assassination plots released last month, had been

withheld by unanimous agreement of the panel's 11 Senators on the ground that they were irrelevant to the subject at hand.

The brief reference to the woman in the panel's report did not identify her sex, and described her only as a "close friend" of Mr. Kennedy, to whom she allegedly made some 70 telephone calls over a 54-week period, and of the two Mafia figures, Sam Giancana and John Roselli.

Some of the calls, the report said, originated from Mr. Giancana's home. The panel reported that on Feb. 27, 1962, J. Edgar Hoover, director of the Federal Bureau of Investigation, sent a memorandum to the Attorney General and the White House stating that the President's friend had been associated with both Mr. Roselli and Mr. Giancana. On March 22, 1962, President Kennedy and Mr. Hoover had lunch together, the report said, adding:

"According to White House logs, the last telephone contact between the White House and the President's friend oc-

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curred a few hours after the luncheon."

The Senate report asserted that Mr. Giancana, one-time head of a large Chicago crime syndicate who was found murdered in his home there several months ago, acted with Mr. Roselli in late 1960 and early 1961 on behalf of the C.I.A. in recruiting Cuban agents who might be persuaded to poison Mr. Castro's food.

A primary issue before the Senate Committee was the degree of knowledge of such plots possessed by Mr. Kennedy and others in his Administration, and the panel's interest in the woman was piqued by the possibility that she might have gained some knowledge of them from the two members of the Mafia, which she then passed on to Mr. Kennedy.

'She Had No Knowledge'

Mr. Church said today, however, that "the committee looked very carefully into this matter," and "the evidence showed that she had no knowledge of assassination activities on the part of the Mafia leaders."

For that reason, he continued, the Senate panel agreed unanimously that it would not be "appropriate to wade into the personal life of the President" in its investigation or to add detail to the assassination report that went "beyond the subject matter."

Mr. Church said that the woman, who has been identified by other sources as Judith Campbell, was "extensively interviewed" by committee staff members, as were "others who knew her," and that there was no evidence to suggest that her relationship with Mr. Kennedy had been encouraged by the Mafia.

"Had we had such evidence," the chairman said, "we certainly would have included it in the report."

Mr. Church's discussion of the Campbell matter, which was first reported last Nov. 18 by the Scripps-Howard newspaper chain, was prompted by a charge today by William Safire, a columnist for The New York Times, that the Church committee had "attempted a cover-up" of Mr. Kennedy's relationship with Miss Campbell.

Charges Are Rejected

Mr. Church said today that Mr. Safire's charges were "preposterous," and he reiterated that "the committee has in every case agreed unanimously on the actions taken," and that "we included everything relevant to assassination in the assassination report."

None of the C.I.A.'s attempts to kill Mr. Castro or Patrice Lumumba, the late Congolese Prime Minister, was successful, the Senate committee said, and it found no evidence that either President Kennedy or his successor, Lyndon B. Johnson, had been informed of any of the anti-Castro plots until after the plots were terminated.

Brian Monaghan, a lawyer for Miss Campbell, said in a telephone interview today that she had married and was living under another name in the San Diego area.

Mr. Monaghan said that he had not yet spoken with the woman at length about her involvement with Mr. Kennedy, Mr. Giancana and Mr. Roselli, but that he expected her to make a statement to reporters within a few days.

Reports Are Varied

None of the Senators who sit on the select committee reportedly was present when Miss Campbell was interviewed by F. A. O. Schwarz 3d, the panel's majority counsel, and Curtis Smothers, the Republican counsel, and reports of her testimony there vary.

Committee officials, who were described today as "very upset" by the leak of the Campbell matter last month to the Scripps-Howard organization, declined repeatedly today to discuss any aspect of her appearance.

Other committee sources said today that every member of the panel's staff had been asked to sign a statement to the effect that he or she had not been the source of the leak, and that some, but not all, of the panel's members had produced similar statements voluntarily.

A committee spokesman would say only that, thus far, the source of the initial leak regarding Miss Campbell had not been discovered, and the spokesman denied reports that polygraph, or lie-detector tests would be administered in the event that no one confessed.

According to two well-placed individuals who say they are familiar with Miss Campbell's tightly held testimony, the woman told committee investigators that she had indeed spoken with Mr. Kennedy by telephone on numerous occasions during the period in question.

Report is Denied

One of the individuals denied emphatically, however, a report circulating in Washington today that she had admitted to intimacies with the late President.

According to evidence gathered by the Senate committee, Miss Campbell's relationship with Mr. Roselli, and subsequently with Mr. Giancana, was discovered by the Federal Bureau of Investigation in the

course of an organized crime investigation.

The F.B.I. also uncovered the fact that some 70 long-distance calls had been placed from a telephone used by Miss Campbell to the White House, and on Feb. 27, 1962, a memorandum outlining the apparent relationship of Mr. Kennedy's "friend" with the two Mafia figures was sent by the F.B.I. to the White House.

The memorandum, signed by J. Edgar Hoover, the late F.B.I. director, was addressed to Kenneth O'Donnell, the special assistant to Mr. Kennedy, with a copy to Robert F. Kennedy, then the Attorney General and the late President's brother.

Evelyn Lincoln, the President's personal secretary, reportedly told the Senate committee that she had received the Hoover memorandum and thought she had passed it on to Mr. Kennedy, but a former high official of the Kennedy Administration said today he believed that the President had not seen it.

The former official, who asked not to be named, telephoned The Times after the appearance of Mr. Safire's column and said that while he recalled that Mr. Kennedy, while a Senator, met Miss Campbell in 1958, he believed that she never saw the President once he entered the White House.

The question of whether the F.B.I. tried a second time to bring Miss Campbell's connection with Mr. Giancana and Mr. Roselli to Mr. Kennedy's attention was addressed in the Senate committee's report in a reference to a luncheon meeting between the President and Mr. Hoover on March 22, 1962.

Mr. Hoover, the report said, was briefed about the affair by aides in advance of the meeting, and although there was no record of what was discussed over lunch, "the last telephone contact between the White House and the President's friend occurred a few hours after the luncheon."

The former Kennedy aide said today, however, that he was present for all but five minutes of the hour-long meeting, and that the Campbell matter was not discussed while he was in attendance.