

Mrs. Exner Plans a Book On Kennedy Friendship

By JOHN M. CREWDSON

Judith Campbell Exner, who has described herself as President Kennedy's "close friend," has decided to tell what she says that she knows about Mr. Kennedy and other prominent personalities in return for what her literary agent, Scott Meredith, said yesterday would be a sum of money "substantially into six figures."

Mr. Meredith announced at a news conference here that he was accepting bids for Mrs. Exner's memoirs from "appropriate American publishers," and that the National Enquirer had purchased serialization rights to the as yet unwritten book for \$150,000.

Mrs. Exner, whose relationships with the late President and a Mafia leader, Sam Giancana, who was slain last year, were first disclosed by the Senate Select Committee on Intelligence, maintained at a news conference in San Diego last month that she had no wish to profit from her purported friendship with the two men.

She left a number of questions unanswered on that occasion, saying that she was speaking out only to clear herself of any involvement in plots by the Central Intelligence Agency to assassinate Prime Minister Fidel Castro of Cuba, and that details of her personal life would be made public at a more appropriate time.

Sizable Money Offers

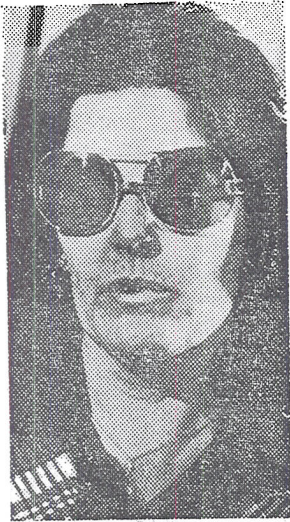
The Senate panel said that although Mrs. Exner had been close to Mr. Kennedy and Mr. Giancana in the early 1960's, when the organized crime figure was helping the C.I.A. in its unsuccessful assassination attempt, it had found no evidence that she had known of the plot or acted as a liaison between the Mafia and the Kennedy White House.

Mr. Meredith said yesterday that hundreds of requests from the news media for details of Mrs. Exner's life and sizable offers of money for her story, had led to her decision to answer the remaining questions in a book.

"It just seems the best way to do it," he told reporters assembled in the Savoy Room of the Plaza Hotel. He said "everything is going to be revealed" in the memoirs when they are published next summer.

Mrs. Exner, he said, was unable to attend the news conference because "she has no money." He said that she was living in a mobile home near San Diego.

A hint of the book's contents was contained in a 10-page outline being circulated to prospective publishers and released yesterday by Mr. Meredith. Asked how his agency could be sure that Mrs. Exner's story, which none of Mr. Kennedy's former aides have corroborated, was truthful, Mr. Meredith replied that he was "satisfied" that her assertions were accurate.



Associated Press
Judith Campbell Exner

Collection of Photos

"We know that when this book comes out, everybody will be satisfied," he said. He added that Mrs. Exner had "a fairly substantial collection of photographs" of herself with the figures about whom she would write, including Mr. Kennedy and Mr. Giancana.

Mr. Meredith said that the Senate committee, and not his client, first disclosed details of her relations with the President. "She didn't break this story," he said.

According to the book outline, which Mr. Meredith said had been prepared by his office and approved by Mrs. Exner and her lawyer over the telephone, Mrs. Exner already knew Mr. Kennedy's sister Patricia and her husband, Peter Lawford, the actor, when she met John Kennedy, then a Senator.

That introduction, she said, took place at a dinner party at the Sands Hotel in Las Vegas on Feb. 7, 1960, at a time when Mr. Kennedy and his youngest brother, Edward, who is now a Democratic Senator from Massachusetts, were involved in the 1960 Presidential primary campaign.

The mutual friend who arranged for her to attend the dinner was Frank Sinatra, the singer, whom she had been dating for several months. Mrs. Exner said in the outline that she and the singer had by that time discovered a divergence in their sexual preferences, but "remained good friends."

Mrs. Exner described the evening that followed as an early morning "round of gambling" with Edward Kennedy, who she said attempted to take her with him to Denver later that day and who became "childishly temperamental" when she insisted on keeping a luncheon date with his older brother.

No Sinatra Comment

John Kennedy, she said, later told her that he shared her opinion of "Ted's tendency to childishness" and expressed doubts that "Ted would act responsibly enough" to ever become President.

A spokesman for Mr. Sinatra said he had no comment on Mrs. Exner's assertions, and an aide to Senator Kennedy said that the Senator could not remember ever having met her.

The picture that Mrs. Exner painted of what she said was her affair with John Kennedy was one of a sexual and emotional relationship that began in earnest during a four-day assignation at the Plaza Hotel

here in March, 1960. She said that the relationships extended over the next two years to Palm Beach, Los Angeles, Chicago and Washington, where, she said, she saw Mr. Kennedy first at his Georgetown home and later at the White House.

In mid-1961, she said, she met with the President at the White House about 20 times. At one point, she said, Mr. Kennedy told her that his marriage had been "in poor shape" and that his wife, Jacqueline, had made known her intention to divorce him.

The Kennedy family managed to hold the marriage together, Mrs. Exner said, by telling Mrs. Kennedy that "a divorced Catholic from Boston stood small chance" of gaining the Democratic Presidential nomination or winning the general election.

Mrs. Exner said that Mr. Kennedy had promised to take her on "a two-or three-months cruise" if he did not win the nomination.

She said that she remembered the President as "a warm, extraordinarily energetic and inquisitive man" who "was fascinated by Hollywood gossip and [by] who was sleeping with whom among the stars."

Her relationship with the President, the 41-year-old Mrs. Exner said, ended in the fall of 1962, about a year before his assassination in Dallas, not out of bitterness, but because the difficulty in maintaining their clandestine relations produced too many "frustrations."

During nearly all that time, she said, she was also seeing Mr. Giancana, to whom she was introduced by Mr. Sinatra about a month after she first met Mr. Kennedy. She said that she had turned down a proposal of marriage from Mr. Giancana.

Mr. Sinatra, she said, "seemed aware" of her relationship with Mr. Kennedy when he introduced her to Mr. Giancana at a party in Miami Beach.

'Joked' About Relationship

She said that she and Mr. Giancana never discussed the C.I.A. assassination plot or Mr. Giancana's other business, although Mr. Giancana "joked" with her about her relationship with the President.

Mr. Giancana, who was murdered in his suburban Chicago home last June, once bragged to Mrs. Exner, she said, that he "had thrown his weight behind" Mr. Kennedy in the close Presidential election in 1960.

Mr. Kennedy's victory in Illinois was a crucial factor in his defeat of Richard M. Nixon that year, and Illinois' electoral votes were pushed into the Democratic column by Mr. Kennedy's margin in Cook County, which includes Chicago, where Mr. Giancana's influence was strongest.

Mr. Giancana was staying at the Fontainebleau Hotel in Miami Beach when Mrs. Exner first met him, Mr. Meredith said today, and it was also from a luxurious suite at that hotel that he and other mafiosi plotted Mr. Castro's death, according to the Senate committee.

But a committee source said today that Mr. Giancana did not begin to arrange the attempt on Mr. Castro's life in behalf of the C.I.A. until the fall of 1960, some five months after he met Mrs. Exner.