

# Sinatra, Now a G.O.P. 'Insider'

By WALLACE TURNER

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WASHINGTON, Aug. 14 — Frank Sinatra, host for a long weekend to a beleaguered Vice President Agnew, has held other high-level political friendships—and has lost some of them because of his friendships with major figures in organized crime.

He was briefly an "insider" after the 1960 Presidential election brought John F. Kennedy to the White House. But an investigation resulted in his being turned out of the inner circle. In 1968, he was on his way to playing a strong role in Hubert H. Humphrey's campaign but the same information gathered in 1961 put an end to that.

The Justice Department has data on Mr. Sinatra based on research begun in 1961. At that time Robert F. Kennedy, then the new Attorney General, had asked for advice as to what attitude his brother, President Kennedy, should take toward Mr. Sinatra.

Peter Lawford, then a Kennedy brother-in-law but now divorced from the former Patricia Kennedy, was an intimate friend of Mr. Sinatra and a member of the "rat pack," the name by which the Sinatra crew of entertainers was known.

The answer developed for Robert Kennedy in 1961 was substantially the same one given to Senator Humphrey's representative in 1968. It was that while the department had no evidence of criminal activity by Mr. Sinatra, it had hard evidence that he was a frequent associate of many known members of the organized crime underworld.

## Invitations Rejected

In 1961, President Kennedy turned down invitations to stay at the Sinatra place in Palm Springs, Calif., and instead he stayed at a home Bing Crosby owned there.

"It was not that we worried about Sinatra getting the President into anything," said one Justice Department staff man of that era. "It was that we didn't know who was going to come around paying afternoon calls."

President Kennedy and Robert Kennedy continued to see Mr. Sinatra socially. One former Kennedy staff man remembered an outing on the Presidential yacht, then called "Honey Fitz," during which Mr. Sinatra told of his visit to Italy and an audience with Pope John XXIII.

Mr. Lawford reportedly remarked, teasing Mr. Sinatra, that "all your friends in Chicago are Italian too."

Mr. Sinatra's friendship with Sam [Momo] Giancana, a Chicago underworld figure identified frequently with the Mafia, caused friction between him and Robert Kennedy, and later caused him to be forced to sell his Nevada casino interests.

While Robert Kennedy was Attorney General, Federal officials began close surveillance of Giancana. A Justice Department official of that time said that Mr. Kennedy had received a message from a mutual friend that Mr. Sinatra wanted the surveillance lessened. It was not.

## Dispute in Nevada

In 1963, Nevada officials found that Giancana was in residence in a chalet at Cal-Neva Lodge, a casino hotel at Lake Tahoe in which Mr. Sinatra had interests. Giancana's name was on a "black list" of persons barred from Nevada casinos.

When challenged, Mr. Sinatra at first attempted to defy the Nevada Gaming Control Board, but then sold out his interests at Cal-Neva and at the Sands Hotel on the Las Vegas Strip.

In the spring of 1968 when Robert Kennedy, Mr. Humphrey and Senator Eugene J. McCarthy battled for the Democratic nomination, Mr. Sinatra favored Mr. Humphrey as his candidate.

Knowledgeable sources said here that at one point in 1968, a member of Mr. Humphrey's staff asked the Department of Justice, "Are we apt to be embarrassed by Sinatra if he participates in our campaign?" The answer was affirmative.

Senator Humphrey, now vacationing in Minnesota, could not be reached for comment. Mr. Sinatra's press spokesman said the singer would have no comment on "the same unfounded rumors" of Mr. Sinatra's involvement with Mafia figures.

Mr. Sinatra campaigned for Mr. Humphrey before the June, 1968, primary in California, Robert Kennedy won that primary, but was fatally wounded by an assassin June 5.

## Rally for Humphrey

In the summer, Mr. Sinatra was scheduled to hold a series of fund-raising receptions for the Humphrey vote registration campaign. He held the first one at Baltimore at the home of Dr. Edgar Berman, Mr. Humphrey's personal physician.

After that first rally, The Wall Street Journal carried an article that detailed the associations of Mr. Sinatra with underworld figures including Joseph Fischetti, a cousin of Al Capone, Quarico (Willie Moore) Moretti, Lucky Luciano and Giancana.

After that the string of Sinatra rallies never materialized.

After Mr. Humphrey lost the 1968 election, Mr. Sinatra — along with important elements of the California Democratic party — seemed to drift toward the Republicans.

In 1970, Jess H. Unruh was the Democratic nominee for Governor of California, opposing Gov. Ronald Reagan's re-

election. Several important Democrats supported Mr. Reagan, and Mr. Sinatra made highly successful appearances for the Reagan campaign. Mr. Unruh lost badly.

On July 18, 1972, Mr. Sinatra testified before the House of Representatives' Select Committee on Crime, in hearings focused on crime in sports.

He was initially objecting to testimony given previously by a convicted criminal that had linked Mr. Sinatra to activities he said he had not touched. The singer accused the committee of being "indecent and irresponsible."

The committee brought out that Mr. Sinatra had been a part owner and listed as vice president of Berkshire Downs Race Track in Massachusetts. Others with interests in the track were identified as Raymond Patriarca and Tommy Lucchese, both named as members of organized criminal groups.

Mr. Sinatra said he had met Lucchese, did not know Patriarca, and had sold his interest in the track.

In 1969, a New Jersey

crime investigating commission sought to get testimony from Mr. Sinatra, but he did not appear. A warrant was issued by a state court to force his appearance.

By campaign time, 1972, Mr. Sinatra's estrangement from the Democrats seemed to be complete. He contributed \$38,000 to the Nixon-Agnew re-election effort at the end of the campaign.

In recent years, Mr. Sinatra and Mr. Agnew have become close friends. The Vice President has been a frequent visitor to the California desert resort community of Palm Springs, where he has been a resident behind the high walls of Mr. Sinatra's sprawling estate.

Last Thursday, after speaking out on the investigation of Maryland corruption, which covers the time he was an official there, Mr. Agnew flew off once again to vacation at the Sinatra estate.

There have been rumors that the Vice President's friendship with the entertainer has perturbed President Nixon, particularly after Maxine Chesire, a Washington Post columnist, ac-



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cused Mr. Sinatra last January of making "unspeakable, unprintable" remarks about her at a party during the inauguration weekend.

However, in April, Mr. Sinatra appeared at the White House to entertain at a state dinner for Premier Giulio Andreotti of Italy.