

'Fat Jack' Identified As U.S. Aide

By John Hanrahan
Washington Post Staff Writer

John R. Buckley, who at the time was an official in the Office of Economic Opportunity, was identified yesterday by E. Howard Hunt Jr. as the man who hired a spy in the 1972 presidential campaign of Sen. Edmund Muskie and who passed photographed copies of Muskie documents to Hunt on a dozen occasions.

In testimony before the Senate select Watergate committee yesterday, Hunt identified Buckley, a former FBI agent who retired June 30 as the chief of the inspection division of OEO, as the contact he knew as "Fat Jack."

OEO Director Alvin J. Arnett said last night that Buckley had held a so-called "supergrade" position at OEO, but added that "even supergrades are clearly covered by the Hatch Act," which prohibits partisan political activity by Civil Service employees.

Buckley, who did not respond to phone messages at his office and home, is currently associated with Leonard and Cohen, the law firm of Jerris Leonard, a former assistant attorney general and former director of the Law Enforcement Assistance Administration.

Senate sources yesterday also alleged it was Buckley and Leonard who privately raised allegations against Carmine Bellino, chief investigator for the Watergate committee, to Republican National Chairman George Bush in July.

Bush at the time alleged that Bellino had attempted to recruit spies in 1960 to help him electronically bug a Washington hotel where Vice President Richard M. Nixon was preparing for one of his televised debates against John F. Kennedy in the 1960 presidential campaign.

A three-member Watergate subcommittee was assigned to look into Bush's charges, which were bolstered by affidavits from three persons claiming knowledge of a 1960 electronic surveillance attempt against Mr. Nixon. The committee has not released its final report.

Thus far, Senate sources said, the charges against Bellino are unsubstantiated. Leonard was reported by his office to be out of town yesterday and unavailable for comment.

Hunt yesterday identified Buckley from a picture shown him by Sen. Lowell P. Weicker Jr. (R-Conn.), a committee member. Hunt said he had previously "Fat Jack" and met him periodically in front of the Roger Smith Hotel at 17th avenue NW between February and mid-April of last year.



Photos by James K. W. Atherton—The Washington Post

Sen. Lowell Weicker leans forward with Buckley, who E. Howard Hunt testified passed information on Muskie campaign.

In his testimony, Hunt said he met with "Fat Jack" at the request of G. Gordon Liddy, later to be his coconspirator in the break-in and bugging of Democratic National Committee headquarters at the Watergate. On occasion, Hunt said, he turned over unspecified sums of cash to "Fat Jack" in envelopes given him by Liddy.

Hunt said he knew only that "Fat Jack" was supplying the Nixon campaign with "material that he received from a penetration of the Muskie headquarters."

He said he did not know that "Fat Jack" was, at the time of the operation, a government official. He said "Fat Jack" provided him with copies of the Maine Democrat's advance schedules, policy papers and other "material of medium value" last year.

The contacts ended when Muskie's candidacy faded and "Mr. Liddy's superiors wanted Fat Jack's agent to transfer" to the presidential campaign of Sen. George McGovern (D-S.D.). Hunt said he understood that "Fat Jack's" agent was unable to

find an opening in the McGovern campaign where he would have the same access to information as he had had in the Muskie campaign.

Hunt did not name "Fat Jack's" hired spy and indicated he did not know who it was.

Senate sources said the identity of the spy remains uncertain. Buckley, according to Senate sources, was recruited in September, 1971, by Kenneth S. Rietz, youth director for the Committee for the Re-election of the President in the 1972 campaign.

Rietz, according to sources, sought Buckley's advice on how to infiltrate the Muskie campaign staff. Buckley himself did not serve as a spy in the Muskie camp, but instead hired, paid and placed the spy within the Muskie campaign, sources said. Buckley then served as a conduit for the information from the spy to Hunt and Rietz, sources said.

An OEO spokesman said Buckley served as chief of the inspection division from August, 1969, until June 30

of this year. The job required him to investigate violations of OEO regulations, the spokesman said.

Buckley served in his post at OEO during a period when the antipoverty agency was under intense criticism from the Nixon administration.

Before coming to OEO, Buckley served from 1965 to 1969 as chief minority (Republican) investigator and minority counsel on the poverty and manpower programs for the House Education and Labor Committee after a brief time in private law practice.

Buckley, an FBI agent from 1950 to 1964, is 53 and lives in Rockville. An OEO spokesman said that Buckley did not take any leave of absence during the period he allegedly was providing Muskie documents to Hunt.

"He worked continuously from August, 1969, until he left in June," the spokesman said.

There was no indication whether Buckley allegedly passed the documents to Hunt during government working hours.