

'Fat Jack' and Sedan Chair II

IF THE old adage "out of sight; out of mind" held true, then the Senate Watergate investigating committee was strictly from nowhere last week. Yet there were hints of "blockbuster" developments to come, according to Chief Counsel Samuel Dash.

The sensational developments, however, were in the field of election financial jiggery-pokery, if Dash's hints were true. And for the moment the committee was still hearing the "minor" witnesses involved in "dirty tricks."

The big-three commercial television networks had pulled the plug on live coverage of the hearings, leaving them to the educational network (PBS) with delayed tape. The result was a considerably less hectic atmosphere in the old Senate Caucus room.

'Felt Guilty'

Last week Martin Kelly, 24, and Robert Benz, 25, both hired by Donald Segretti to perform "dirty tricks" in the Florida primary, took almost diametrically opposite views of their activities.

Kelly said he "felt guilty" and "any shame or abuse that is heaped on me is certainly well deserved."

He had done many things to disrupt the campaigns of Democratic hopefuls Senators Edmund Muskie of Maine, Hubert Humphrey of Minnesota and Henry Jackson of Washington. The most spectacular was paying a young lady \$20 to run naked in front of the hotel where Muskie was staying, shouting "I love Ed Muskie."

Laconic Witness

Benz was the most laconic witness yet. His answers were a brusque, "That is correct" for the most part. Far from having any remorse over his part in planting stink bombs and unsavory letters, and "knowingly" instructing accomplices to do illegal things, he believed it "was an opportunity to give these people (the Democrat workers of previous Florida campaigns) a little bit of the medicine they had given me."

He said that when he worked in a 1970 senatorial campaign the Democrats had done lots of illegal things. Senator Edward Gurney (Rep.-Fla.) seemed to agree, saying worse things had happened to him during campaigns.

But Senator Lowell Weicker (Rep-Conn.) tried to find out without success what terrible things the Democrats had done, finally asked Benz why he hadn't asked for legal action in 1970. "You could have gone the legal route," said Weicker, and therefore "your charges really don't form a valid ba-

sis for your activities in 1972."

Benz did show regret that one accomplice, George Hearing, who had helped him send out a letter accusing Senators Humphrey and Jackson of sexual misconduct, was now in jail for that act.

At midweek two other undercover workers told their stories. The man known as Sedan Chair II was scheduled to talk first but his lawyer was delayed and instead "Fat Jack" took the witness table.

"Fat Jack" was John Buckley, whom convicted Watergate conspirator Howard Hunt had testified gave him documents "photographically stolen" from Muskie headquarters in return for cash.

Sedan Chair II — Michael McMinoway, 26, — did not



BEBE REBOZO

come up with much that was new to Watergate watchers. He had picked up \$6000 in five months by picking up information and gossip at the various Democratic campaign headquarters and passing it on to unknown persons. He said he thought he was working for "a group of concerned citizens," but had no idea one of them might have been President Nixon.

New Sensation

But it wasn't the hearings themselves that were the new sensation of the week. That was provided by Chief Counsel Sam Dash's report to the committee behind closed doors that agents of recluse billionaire Howard Hughes may have funneled \$100,000 in \$100 bills into the Nixon campaign coffers in 1969 and 1970. The story quickly "leaked" to the press.

Committee investigator Terry Lenzner reputedly was checking the records of four Key Biscayne hotels to trace the comings and goings of Richard Danner, a Hughes aide, and President Nixon's friend Charles (Bebe) Rebozo, among others.

The charge that big money changed hands first came from Robert Maheu, at one time the chief lieutenant of Hughes and now suing Hughes, in Los Angeles, for libel. Maheu in a sworn deposition claimed Danner gave \$50,000 cash to Rebozo at San Clemente in 1969 and another \$50,000 cash in Key Biscayne in 1970.

Rebozo reportedly confirmed to "a source" that he received \$100,000 from Hughes, but said he didn't remember what happened to it.

Columnist Jack Anderson, who had helped touch off the original Watergate investigation, claimed the payments coincided closely with two government decisions favorable to Hughes. The first was the sale of Air West, which President Nixon approved in 1969. The second was reversal of an antitrust action in 1970 that permitted Hughes to expand his hotel-casino empire in Las Vegas.

Liddy Again

Meanwhile, on the other Watergate fronts:

• G. Gordon Liddy, convicted Watergate conspirator sentenced March 23 to a maximum 20 years in prison and \$40,000 fine, appealed for a new trial on grounds

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Judge John Sirica had violated his constitutional rights.

Sirica, Liddy's lawyers contended, had "cast himself in the light of a witness, thus lending the dignity and authority of his office to the words he read to the jury . . ."

● In the argument before Judge Sirica over whether the Watergate committee should have a right to hear the President's tapes, Dash declared the chief question was the possibility of the President's own criminality.

"We have no denial from the President's counsel that a prima facie case has been made of presidential involvement . . . The President is still a citizen and as a citizen he comes under the law."

The President's counsel, Charles Alan Wright, countered that Dash's argument merely emphasized the White House's contention that the Senate committee's desire for the tapes had to do with "criminal, not legislative matters . . . That sounds to me like the traditional work of grand juries . . ."

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