

Muskie Lists 'Sabotage' Incidents

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Sen. Edmund S. Muskie has charged that his presidential race was victimized by "a systematic campaign of sabotage," including the use of his letterhead to make false allegations that two of his Democratic opponents had engaged in illicit sexual acts.

Muskie made the assertion to a Washington Post reporter a week before it was disclosed that federal investigators had uncovered an apparently un-

precedented spying and sabotage campaign against the Democrats, conducted on behalf of President Nixon's reelection and directed by presidential aides.

During his unsuccessful campaign for the Democratic presidential nomination, Muskie said, documents were stolen from his files; voters were awakened by middle-of-the-night phone calls from imposters claiming to be "Muskie canvassers"; false items were planted in newspapers, and facsimiles of his envelopes were used to mail embarrassing material under the senator's name.

"Our campaign was constantly plagued by leaks and disruptions and fabrications," Muskie said in the interview, "but we could never pinpoint who was doing it. It was vicious."

As the first of what he said were "many clear cases of sabotage," Muskie cited the celebrated "Canuck letter," in which the senator was accused of condoning a racial slur ("Canucks") on Americans of French-Canadian descent. According to federal investigators that letter was part of a hoax engineered by a White House official.

Muskie offered no evidence that any of the other incidents were carried out by Republicans.

"Somebody was out to ambush us," Muskie said. "We assumed it was being done by Nixon people because that's the nature of this administration; they have no sensitivity to privacy or decency in poli-

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tics. But we had no proof it was them."

The incidents mentioned by Muskie and his aides included:

- More than 14 months ago, Muskie said, facsimiles of his stationery were used to mail a Harris poll reprint dealing with Sen. Edward M. Kennedy and the incident at Chappaquiddick. In a letter sent to then Winton M. Blount, then Postmaster General, on July 29, 1971, Sen. Muskie described the mailing as a "fraud" and an "attempt to embarrass Sen. Kennedy and me." Postal inspectors did not determine who sent the letters, which were mailed to Democratic members of Congress and resulted in complaints to Muskie about unethical campaigning.

- Disruption of a Muskie fund-raising dinner at the Washington Hilton on April 17. According to James Goodbody, the Muskie campaign's finance chairman, the following items arrived at the dinner—collect on delivery: \$300 worth of liquor, a large \$50 floral arrangement, cakes from the Watergate pastry shop and 200 pizzas. About a dozen African diplomats were telephoned and invited to the dinner by persons posing as Muskie aides. Chauffeur-driven limousines were ordered for the diplomats, Goodbody said, and—as a final touch—two magicians were mysteriously sent, including one who flew in from the Virgin Islands. The magicians said they had been hired to entertain children, but there were no children at the dinner. According to the former Muskie aide, most of the bills for the uninvited services remain unpaid.

- Several days before the Florida primary, a flyer was distributed in part of the state on Muskie stationery. It accused two of Muskie's Democratic opponents, Sens. Hubert H. Humphrey and Henry M. Jackson, of illicit sexual activity. "The flyer was bogus and was apparently designed to hurt Muskie, while tarring Jackson and Humphrey too," said Muskie's administrative aide, John McEvoy.

- McEvoy, recalling an incident widely reported during the New Hampshire primary

campaign, said, "A number of Manchester residents complained of receiving phone calls in the middle of the night from people who identified themselves as canvassers from the Harlem for Muskie Committee. They were calling New Hampshire people to urge them to vote for Muskie because he'd been so good for the black man."

In addition, several hundred other New Hampshire residents complained of post-midnight phone calls "from alleged Muskie people who would sometimes call three or four times in rapid succession to ask them how they were going to vote," said McEvoy.

- During 1971, according to Muskie, raw polling data twice disappeared from the desk of Anna Navarro, the senator's polling expert at Muskie election headquarters. An entire winter New Hampshire poll and summer New Jersey poll "were stolen," the senator said. One poll disappeared during the night. The other, said Muskie, "was removed during a few minutes when Anna was away from her desk. We were convinced from then on that there was a middle-level spy working somewhere at our campaign headquarters."

- The same spy, Muskie believes, was responsible for forwarding internal campaign memorandums to Rowland Evans and Robert Novak that were reprinted in their Washington column. Members of the Muskie staff say they were warned subsequently by Evans that they had a Nixon spy in their camp. Questioned by a Post reporter, Evans said: "We never disclose or discuss our sources."

- In August, 1971, two campaign documents were prepared for Muskie by his staff, including a lengthy memo suggesting scheduling plans for the fall and winter. "They were so closely held that only a very few copies were produced," said the senator. Nonetheless, he said, one of the copies disappeared from the desk of Eliot Cutler, the senator's chief scheduler. It was later found on the headquarters' Xerox machine, a staple having been removed, apparently before it was copied.

- Dick Stewart, Muskie's campaign press secretary, said he received a call from the Associated Press in Boston several days before the New Hampshire primary to confirm a statement purportedly issued in the senator's name by campaign headquarters in Washington. The statement said: "Ted Kennedy has become an obstacle and an issue in the New Hampshire primary. I challenge him to come to New Hampshire and once and for all tell the people whether or not he is a candidate for president." Stewart said: "No one in the Muskie organization had authorized such a statement, and its only effect would be to hurt Muskie and Kennedy."

- While campaigning in the West, Muskie was to leave San Diego for a charter flight to Richmond, Ore., where the candidate had scheduled a speech. However the plane landed in Salem, Oregon, instead, far from the speech location and threw the whole day's campaigning schedule into disarray. According to Charles Winner, Muskie's West Coast coordinator, the pilot's itinerary inexplicably called for a Salem landing.

- At a \$250-a-plate fund-raising dinner in Beverly Hills, Winner said, Muskie had to abandon his prepared speech because podium floodlights were directed into his eyes. Muskie, never known for first-rate extemporaneous speeches, had assigned an aide in his campaign (of identical height to his own) the task of always adjusting lights. On this particular occasion, said Winner, the lights had correctly been adjusted before dinner. When the candidate began to speak after dinner, however, he was unable to read his prepared speech, gave some poor off-the-cuff remarks and, according to Winner, possibly lost some big donations to his campaign.

- In California, said Winner, potential big donors received a fabricated Muskie letter on the senator's stationery. The letter told how the candidate did not want any big contributions to his campaign and intended to support his candidacy with small contributions "from the people, instead of the usual fat-cats," in Winner's words.

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When interviewed last week, Muskie also mentioned that "we thought we were being followed"—himself, members of his family and some key campaign aides—"but we never were able to establish a connection with Republican espionage."

Since it was disclosed that FBI agents had been assigned to report on a speech Muskie made for Earth Day in 1970, the Senator said, "I have assumed I've been followed by the Republicans."

According to federal investigators, Democratic candidates and members of their staffs and families were followed by Nixon operatives as part of an "offensive security" program—the term for the sabotage-and-spying operation reportedly used inside the White House and at the Committee for the Re-election of the President.

Investigators have said that at least one of Muskie's children was the subject of investigation by Nixon operatives.

Asked to assess the effect of these incidents on his campaign, Muskie declined, except to say: "The 'Canuck letter' definitely hurt us." Immediately after publication of the letter, which figured in the senator's "crying speech" less than two weeks before the New Hampshire primary, Muskie's standing in the state's polls began to slip and finished with 48 per cent of the Democratic vote—far less than his camp had anticipated.

Rep. Thomas M. Rees (D-Calif.), one of Muskie's early supporters for the Democratic nomination, said yesterday:

"What blew us out of the water was that phony letter. That was the beginning for the campaign's trouble." He added: "There were always these phony polls being leaked out. We wondered where they came from; now we're finding out. This is the worst election year I have ever seen. If the Justice Department won't act in this case (before Nov. 7) then Congress should."