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THE BUSINESS OF WASHINGTON



THE SECRET LIFE OF AN AMERICAN SPY

THE STORY OF WILLIAM BUCKLEY'S CIA TRAINING, HIS WAR OF TERROR IN VIETNAM, AND HIS BRUTAL DEATH IN BEIRUT



"WITH A HANDICAP, ALL MEN ARE CREATED EQUAL. GOLF IS A VERY MARXIST-LENINIST GAME."

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WHEN WILLIAM BUCKLEY DEPARTED Vietnam in the early 1970s, he left a friend behind. And when the North Vietnamese took over the country in 1975, Buckley's friend was in trouble. So Buckley desperately tried to convince their mutual employer, the Central Intelligence Agency, to put together a rescue mission. His pleas fell on deaf ears. In the end, Buckley's friend was brutally tortured and killed. Buckley said to a friend, "Don't ever let that happen to me."

Ten years later, it did.

Buckley was the man we left behind in the Middle East to be tortured and killed by Islamic extremists. Some say his kidnapping did much to provoke President Reagan into his foolish arms-for-hostages dealings with Iran.

We asked Mark Perry, a writer with extensive contacts in the intelligence and defense worlds, to find out who Buckley was and why his life ended in such an awful way. The story he came back with is the fascinating, bitter biography of a real-life American spy. It's also a history of the CIA and its ultimate failure as an institution.

Buckley was one of the CIA's top agents

and a man whose career mirrors the history of U.S. foreign policy since World War II. He did the dirty jobs in Vietnam, Laos, Pakistan, Egypt, and finally, Beirut. He was an "action agent"—one whose work often ended in someone else's death. But he wasn't simply a hired killer; he was a complex man who had a girlfriend back home and who ran an antique store with a friend.

Buckley was also the victim of an ill-conceived assignment. Against CIA policy, he was sent out into the cold by none other than his boss, William Casey, the ancient spymaster who hoped to put the derring-do back into the Agency. What Casey got instead was a debacle.

Inside the CIA, it was the same old story. But it's one that seldom reaches the public.

IN A WAR OF ANOTHER KIND, WE look at how Tom McNutt, the area's maverick union boss, is taking on two of the great names in Washington business: Haft and Hechinger. Enraged at how corporate takeover battles—most recently, the one that affected Bradlees—are decimating his service workers' union, McNutt has lashed out with a long-shot strategy that he hopes will make

him a player in the takeover game. David Moberg, a veteran labor writer, details how McNutt's Local 400 is suing the Haft for damages and starting an organizing drive at the resolutely nonunion Hechinger's stores.

Some folks think he's crazy, and even McNutt admits it won't be easy, but he's a new breed of union leader who often knows as much about how companies are run as the managers do. "I don't have to win to win," he says with a cryptic smile. The article about his fight starts on page 64.

WE ALSO HAVE WORD FROM OUR national correspondent, A. Craig Copetas, who has been braving the Russian winter and gathering notes on the coming of capitalism to the land of Lenin. No sooner did Copetas enter the den of the bear than he found that the commissars were limbering up their backswings and shouting, "Foreski!" Indeed, as Copetas reports on page 56, golf, that symbol of decadence, will soon make its debut in the Soviet Union.

In future months we expect Copetas to stop playing around and tell us who's making a killing as the Soviets learn the game of money, power, and greed.

—BK

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THE

THE NEVER-BEFORE-TOLD

SECRET

STORY OF WILLIAM BUCKLEY'S EXHAUSTIVE

LIFE

CIA TRAINING. HIS WAR OF

OF AN

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AMERICAN

TORTURE AND DEATH IN BEIRUT. BY MARK PERRY

SPY

PHOTO BY ERICA FREUDENSTIEN



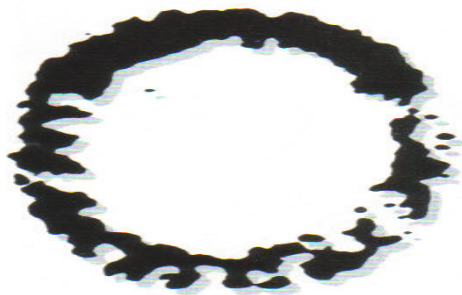


COVER



STORY

1955: BUCKLEY GRADUATES FROM BOSTON UNIVERSITY. As a boy he'd showed a predilection for the boiled-out simplicity of right and wrong; as a man he'd fight America's secret wars on grim battlefields on three continents. Even his enemies had to agree: he and the CIA were made for each other.



n the morning of March 16, 1984 America's most important intelligence asset in the Middle East followed his usual regimen: he exercised, made a pot of coffee, ate a solitary breakfast, scanned some reports, and packed his briefcase. Then

he watched and waited.

One view from William Buckley's living room on the 10th floor of the Al-Manara apartments in West Beirut looked out on the Mediterranean; the other looked out on the hazy panorama of the Chouf Mountains. It was a beautiful dawn over Lebanon, the kind of morning that could make anyone forget that just miles away warring militias were battling for control of Beirut's back alleys, as they'd done for nearly 10 years. Buckley eyed the street below, looking for any unusual movements, a sign that he was being watched. He scanned the coast road that he'd drive along to the British compound, where American interests in Lebanon were housed. The compound was only a half mile from the apartment complex, but Buckley wasn't a spy who took chances. He watched and waited for several minutes, then picked up his briefcase and walked down the 10 flights of stairs to the street below.

Thousands of miles to the west, at the Central Intelligence Agency's headquarters in Langley, Virginia, other CIA operatives were engaged in other rituals. Deep in the bowels of the world's most renowned intelligence agency, communications specialists manned the encryption and decoding machines that are the heart of the network of electronic eyes and ears that ties the Agency to its agents in the field. Buckley's messages were among the most important cables that came through the communications center; they were tagged TOP SECRET and sent immediately to the seventh floor, to William Casey, the director of central intelligence. The communications center was comparatively quiet on March 16, 1984; the inbound traffic consisted of standard intelligence reports from outposts as far-flung as Mombassa and Bangkok. With the exception of a nasty little war that was secretly being fought in Central America, the United States was at peace.

Buckley waited a few minutes before he got into his car. He was patient, his deliberation reflecting three decades of icy caution. His pur-

poseful manner was his trademark, the thing that had helped to make him one of the CIA's most successful agents. When others showed fear, Buckley became almost overly relaxed. He dropped his briefcase onto the seat beside him and began his trip along the coast road.

It was, in a sense, Buckley's last ride. Within moments a Renault had pulled out of an alley ahead of him and coughed out three armed masked gunmen. No warnings were necessary, no words were spoken; Buckley was outmanned, outgunned, and clearly outwitted. He was dragged from his automobile and shoved into the Renault, which sped away along the coast road and into Beirut, its trail lost among the grim ruins of the city's decimated Moslem and Christian neighborhoods.

The kidnapping was thoroughly professional. Buckley had been disarmed, his radio had been smashed, his tires had been blown—all in less than 15 seconds. It was clear that his movements had been closely monitored. His kidnapers knew who he was, where he lived, and, most important, how he was protected. By the time his colleagues realized that he'd vanished, all traces of him were gone, the trail obliterated by the labyrinth of blood that characterized Beirut.

"I was just overwhelmed," says Chip Beck, a State Department employee who served with Buckley in Beirut. "I tried to go through how it might have happened. I was back here [in the United States], and I just couldn't fathom it. I had a hard time emotionally."

Beck wasn't the only one who was stunned by the kidnapping. At a high-level, early morning meeting, an ashen and enraged William Casey demanded that the Agency's top counterterrorism expert be immediately located and rescued. "Find him!" he screamed in frustration. "Find him!"

No expense was to be spared, no stone was to be left unturned. Everything was at stake for the CIA, particularly the morale of every agent in every part of the world. Casey knew, perhaps better than anyone else at Langley, that the kid-

THE LIFE AND TIMES OF WILLIAM BUCKLEY

May 31, 1928 Buckley is born to middle-class parents in Medford, Massachusetts. He becomes an avid reader at a young age; later his interests turn almost exclusively to politics and history.



June 1, 1945 Buckley enlists in the army, but the war ends before he can fulfill a longtime dream: to serve in combat. He calls his enlistment a mistake.

September 1947 His two-year hitch in the army ended, Buckley enrolls in Boston University's liberal arts program. He excels as a student, friends say.



June 25, 1950 The Korean War begins.

June 1951 Buckley reenlists in the army. He's commissioned as a second lieutenant in the infantry.

September 1951 Buckley arrives in South Korea (on September 10, according to CIA colleagues) and leads a platoon in the U.S. drive up the Korean peninsula. His unit engages Chinese Communist troops in brutal battles on Korea's desolate, frozen mountains. He is 23.



COVER



STORY

1962: BUCKLEY LEADS A GREEN BERET UNIT in Boston's Memorial Day parade. The CIA, which was being pressured to train counterinsurgency experts, had sent him to Fort Bragg to work with the Special Forces. He was part of a new generation of warriors who would battle Third World rebels.

napping of a CIA agent anywhere threatened CIA agents everywhere; secrets might be revealed, identities might be disclosed. They were all watching to see what their employer would do to get Buckley back, silently measuring their own chances of survival by Buckley's fate. If Casey couldn't rescue his friend, a man whom he'd come to trust implicitly during his short time as the head of the CIA, then no agent was safe.

Buckley's kidnapping represented the worst kind of horror for the few agents who'd served with him in assignments all over the world throughout three decades. They pleaded for radical action to win his release, noting that the Agency had failed before in crises such as this. Most poignantly, they remembered the fate of one of Buckley's closest friends, Tucker Gouglemann, an agent who'd been stranded in Saigon after it was conquered by the North Vietnamese. Despite the danger, Gouglemann had traveled to Saigon to search for his Vietnamese wife and child, a lone romantic American adrift in a confused Oriental sea. Buckley had monitored Gouglemann's movements and had vainly attempted to reach him by a secure communications link, but his effort had been futile. Within days Gouglemann had been arrested. Within weeks he'd been shipped to a prison camp. Within months he was dead.

When Gouglemann was captured, CIA operatives had rushed to spark the Agency to life. Meetings had been held and promises made, but in the end, they felt, little had been done to win his release. Eighteen months after he disappeared, his body was turned over to the Americans. His captors had shown no mercy: virtually every bone in his body had been expertly and brutally broken.

Buckley never forgot Gouglemann, was never dissuaded from his belief that the Agency could have done more but didn't. Gouglemann's life, Buckley believed, had been forfeited by callous bureaucrats; he'd been quickly and quietly forgotten by people who'd never worked in the field, who'd never known the face of fear.

Like Buckley, Gouglemann had been a top intelligence agent. But unlike Buckley, he'd been well liked, even loved, by dozens of Agency hands. Buckley may have been prescient, or perhaps he realized that his aloofness had offended too many of his colleagues and made him too many ene-

Mark Perry is a Washington writer whose articles have appeared in the *St. Louis Post-Dispatch*, the *International Herald Tribune*, the *London Guardian*, *Newsday*, and the *Washington Post*. He's the author of *Four Stars*, a history and investigation of the U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff, which will be published by Houghton Mifflin Company in March.

mies. And perhaps he understood that his assignment to Beirut—a city in which he'd been identified as a CIA agent—amounted to a virtual death sentence.

"Don't let that happen to me," Buckley told a friend just weeks before he was kidnapped. "Don't let what happened to Gouglemann happen to me."

Some CIA hands believe that what happened to Gouglemann happened to Buckley. The CIA would deny it, of course. It would contend that it turned the Middle East upside down looking for him. Just look at the evidence: the Intelligence Support Activity, the secret army intelligence group that Buckley had helped to establish, sprang into action. The National Security Agency ran intercepts on everything that moved in Beirut. Even the DEA was brought into the case, on the odd chance that a drug dealer somewhere in Lebanon knew something about Buckley's fate.

But agents who have a less charitable view of the CIA's search for Buckley repeat the dark mutterings that made the rounds of bars and hangouts in Northern Virginia in the days after the kidnapping.

"Look for Buckley?" an agent asks, his whisper revealing a barely audible laugh. He raises his eyebrows conspiratorially. "Why, sure we looked for Buckley. Why, we turned over every piece of paper in the CIA looking for that man."

What follows is the story of one of America's top spies, a spy whom many intelligence operatives believe was left out in the cold. It isn't a story that the U.S. intelligence community wants you to read. Nowhere in our government are secrets more closely kept than at the CIA. Its employees are prohibited from talking about their work and their colleagues, and its documents are kept under the deepest cover. But after a series of meetings over a period of many months, some former and current CIA agents were willing to talk about their friend. This report is a product of those conversations, as well as interviews with a number of U.S. intelligence officials and analysts; other information about Buckley was found in U.S. government documents and depositions.

The result is an unprecedented look at the secret life of an American spy, a soldier of misfortune whose career mirrored U.S. foreign policy after World War II. As a CIA agent, William Buckley was involved in the Bay of Pigs, in the bloodiest operations of the Vietnam War, and in sensitive missions to Egypt, Pakistan, and Lebanon. He was a fearless warrior, a skilled tactician, and an insatiable lover. His story exemplifies the best and worst about the CIA—often at the same time. ▶



Early 1952 Buckley is awarded a Silver Star, the army's medal for gallantry, for single-handedly capturing a North Korean machine-gun nest.

Early 1953 Buckley is promoted to captain. He earns two Purple Hearts for wounds received in battle.

Early 1954 Buckley is offered a job by the Central Intelligence Agency.

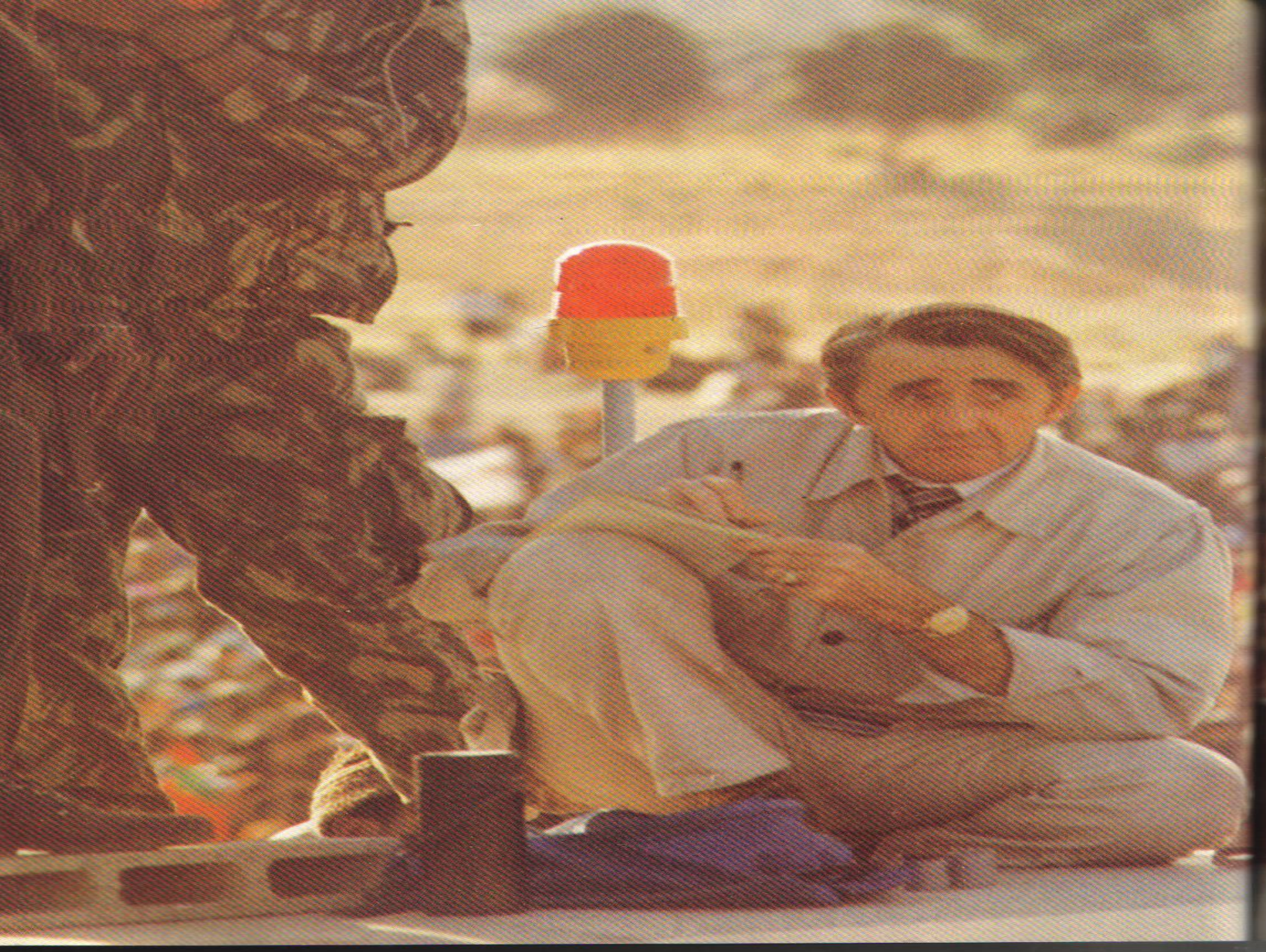
Mid 1954 Buckley completes the Agency's three-day exam and its preliminary training and receives course instruction. He's dispatched to Fayetteville, North Carolina for schooling in psychological operations.

Early 1955 Buckley receives his degree from Boston University.



February 1956 Buckley begins a tour at the CIA's headquarters in Langley, Virginia as an intelligence analyst. He's pressed into service as a result of the Agency's Berlin tunnel crisis.

Mid or late 1958 According to a CIA contract analyst, Buckley is given field training at a CIA station in Europe, probably as part of a team of political analysts who are assigned to the U.S. embassy in Bonn; the report cannot be confirmed. Other



COVER



STORY

reports say that Buckley is dispatched as an adviser to Vientiane, Laos, where he serves in an unofficial capacity with the U.S. Military Assistance and Advisory Group; these reports also cannot be confirmed.



1960 and early 1961 Buckley spends much of his time in Florida as one of the trainers for the CIA's Cuba Brigade, which was created to help overthrow Fidel Castro's government. When the brigade's invasion of the Bay of Pigs fails, he's reassigned to Langley. Buckley is bitter about the invasion, for he believes that it might have succeeded with proper support from the bureaucrats in the White House.



1962 and 1963 In Fayetteville, Buckley trains U.S. Special Forces units (Green Berets) for service in Vietnam. He's one of the few army-CIA officers who has received counterinsurgency and counterterrorism training.

Late 1963 According to friends, Buckley is a key early adviser to the Special Forces in Vietnam. Working out of the CIA's office in Cholon,

1981: BUCKLEY IN CAIRO, training Anwar Sadat's bodyguards. Before long Buckley sounds an alarm: Sadat's in grave danger.

PHOTOGRAPH (BOTTOM): J. P. LAFFOUT



COVER



STORY

1985: BUCKLEY IS DEAD. His trail had been obliterated by the labyrinth of blood that characterized Beirut. For many years he'd told colleagues that their work was the work of the nation, that their mean sacrifices were necessary, that death was part of the job. Now it was his turn.

CHAPTER ONE: THE MAKING OF A SPY

N

o one at the CIA likes to talk about William Buckley. The CIA agent who was tortured to delirium and death by his Hezbollah captors is one of the Agency's best-kept secrets. It's damned eerie, almost as if those who guard the nation's

deepest secrets have stamped Buckley's life EYES ONLY. Questions about America's top counterterrorism operative are met with palpable silence: phones go dead, conversations stop in mid-sentence, smiles are wiped clean from weathered faces.

Here is all the Company will say: Buckley worked in Beirut in 1984 as a political analyst for the State Department. He was kidnapped, held incommunicado, interrogated, tortured, and later died in captivity. The CIA tried to get him back but couldn't. His name came up in the depositions given by CIA officials to Senate and House investigators during the Iran-contra hearings and in numerous newspaper reports.

Everything else is either unknown or secret. "I don't want to talk about Buckley," says one of the few retired CIA analysts who called Buckley a friend. "What can you say about him?"

The analyst, who's leaning over a bar in McLean, slaps his knee, swivels on his stool, and gives a half smile. "Maybe you haven't heard," he says. "William Buckley met the bear. He was gotten by the getters."

In intelligence parlance, the shorthand that passes for discourse among the elite group of Agency operatives who work the field, Buckley "checked out," "squared the circle," "kissed the flag," or, worse yet, "did not rise again from the dead." William Corson, a retired U.S. Marine colonel and intelligence analyst, puts it this way: "This is a dog that won't smile, that doesn't wag his tail, that isn't warm at night." He pauses for a moment, then his bitter voice wheezes over the phone. "Let me speak American," he says. "This man died and shouldn't have. God loves little children, drunks, and the good ol' U.S. of A. But that sure as hell didn't help Bill Buckley." He laughs, but only for a moment, before going

on: "You stay away from this one. William Buckley is dead."

Some of Buckley's enemies blame him for the Iran-contra scandal. If he hadn't gone off and gotten himself kidnapped, they say, the Agency wouldn't have had to put up with the likes of Oliver North and Manucher Ghorbanifar on its public record and wouldn't have contributed to a new blot on the Republic's blemished history. They say that Buckley needn't have gone to that stink hole, Beirut. ("It's not even a part of the goddamned planet," one says.) He could have taken an assignment in a quieter part of the world; he might have gone, they say, to Saudi Arabia, "the big sandbox."

There's sick humor in all this, a bitter off-handedness that intelligence agents substitute for drunken wakes. But the urge to blame Buckley for "getting himself involved with those Hezbollah fellas" belies the paralyzing chill that came over the Agency in the weeks that followed his kidnapping. Eventually a tape that showed Buckley being tortured bobbed to the surface and was served up to the CIA's analysts with sad reluctance by Casey. Later Casey took it to President Reagan, and after an anguished silence the two spent their emotions.

The president's viewing seems to have closed the book on Buckley. Through grim wars on lonely battlefields and in little-known intelligence skirmishes from Europe to the Far East, he'd been one of the Agency's best. Even his bitterest enemies had to agree: he and the CIA were made for each other.

EVEN AS A BOY, BUCKLEY SHOWED A PRE-dilection for international intrigue and a nose for the boiled-out simplicity of right and wrong. He was an avid newshound, a voracious reader, a burgeoning diplomat. He studied the intricacies of war and lectured his classmates on the poli-

a suburb of Saigon, he dispatches Green Beret units to help train Montagnard tribesmen in the Central Highlands.

1964 Buckley asks for and receives a leave of absence from the CIA. He spends a year designing the diorama at the Lexington-Concord battlefield in Massachusetts. Friends say he also uses the leave to prepare for another tour in Vietnam; he receives detailed briefings on the war from Agency officials, who have made him a key element in their counterterrorism planning.

Early 1965 In Nha Trang, Vietnam, Buckley trains native units in counterinsurgency activities.

Mid 1966 Buckley earns a second Silver Star after he blows up Vietcong ammunition caches along the Ho Chi Minh Trail. His service in Vietnam is interrupted by a short assignment in Savannakhet, Laos, where he identifies communist agents for Laos's neutralist government.

Late 1966 Buckley conducts paramilitary operations against North Vietnamese army units in the northern part of South Vietnam and along the Ho Chi Minh Trail. He is promoted to lieutenant colonel.



1967 and 1968 Buckley runs operations designed to expose North Vietnamese agents who are working undercover in South Vietnam. He becomes known as one of the CIA's best behind-the-lines agents.

Mid 1969 A team of Buckley's irregulars destroys three Vietcong munition bases in a legendary operation. Buckley's team eludes a large enemy contingent that's sent after it; later a Special Forces officer says that Buckley is lucky to have made it out alive. Buckley is promoted to colonel.

Late 1969 Buckley is appointed the head of Provincial Reconnaissance Units for South Vietnam; the

tics of the ambiguous. He was a kind of political Mozart, as familiar with the turf of American politics at the age of 10 as most people are at the age of 30.

Buckley played elegant war games. On the floor of his room he moved line upon line of painted soldiers through drills, parades, and ceremonies. He spent hours moving the iron brigades into positions to crush enemies and win victories. For him it wasn't just play; it was practice for adulthood. The metal men died in smart, straight rows, mown down like wheat. Then he painstakingly resurrected them to fight again. When Japan attacked Pearl Harbor, he was 13.

Buckley wasn't at all like his middle-class parents; it was as if their genes had been skewed by some peculiar fate. His obsession with politics was purely personal; his father, a stockbroker, wasn't particularly interested in the subject. His mother raised him and his two sisters to respect authority, earn good grades, and love their country. The Buckleys were religious, but not devout; they were Roman Catholic exemplars of the Protestant ethic. They attended church at the proper times and sniffed after success and the elusive Dream as diligently as any other American family.

If anything, the lives of the Buckleys of Medford, Massachusetts were mildly soporific. Mom and Dad wanted their children to be exceptional, but not exceptionally well known. Buckley's father thought that a good business education, or even an education in the liberal arts, followed by a job as a stockbroker or corporate executive would suit his son just fine. He stood over his son as an example of the value of clean living. He taught him that a New England sense of self-abnegation coupled with a fervid belief in hard work and strict probity would lead to happiness. If all went as planned, young Bill would go to college, get a job, raise a family, and vote Republican. He'd be a patriot and a defender of the future that his father had helped to build. He'd manipulate portfolios, not people. When others sold, he'd buy. When the market was down, he'd be up. No one ever thought that he'd become a spy.

In June 1945 Buckley made his way to an army recruiting office and enlisted as a private. Later he reluctantly admitted that his patriotic act had been a mistake: he'd been born too late (on Memorial Day 1928) to serve in World War II. When Japan surrendered just two months after he enlisted, he recognized how ridiculous he'd been and realized that he should have gone to college. It was one of the few missteps he'd make in his life: he received two years of training in the art of soldiering without getting a chance to use it.

Buckley's friends see in his enlistment the seed of some of his later problems: he followed a plan

to its end, no matter where it led or what it cost. He was obsessed with order and clung to his decisions in the face of setbacks that would have undone most others. He finished his hitch in the army a chastened and unused soldier, then promptly enrolled as a liberal arts student at Boston University.

Four years later, when the Korean War began, Buckley got lucky. He was one of thousands of commissioned officers who'd lead their generation into the muck and muddle of Asia. Korea, he told his friends, was his chance to soldier.

Buckley's tour in Korea ensured his later employment with the CIA. "He was just damn brave," says Beck. "He won a Silver Star for valor in Korea when they weren't exactly handing them out."

Buckley also received two Purple Hearts. The first one came as a result of an injury he received when he single-handedly captured a North Korean squad. He'd destroyed a machine-gun nest and in a fit of rage and muscle had dared his enemies to kill him. He won his second Purple Heart after a dance with near-certain death. In the midst of a firefight on a frigid night he led his shattered platoon to safety. In the process he tore an enemy squad to bloody shreds and then walked among the dead and dying silently, as if he were a latter-day Patton.

Buckley was left wounded, tattered, frost-bitten, and hungry—but unshaken. He'd danced the Asian night away and lived to dance again. He'd proved that he had nerves of steel.

"He always knew what could and couldn't be done in a combat situation," Beck says. "But he scared people because he was so fearless."

BUCKLEY EMERGED FROM KOREA WITH HIS life as a professional soldier mapped out in front of him. He could've climbed the career ladder to the Pentagon and a pension, perhaps picking up another war or two along the way. But the CIA had taken note of his record and identified him as a soldier with special talents. In 1954 it made Buckley an offer: if he would submit to a battery of tests and a tough regimen of special training, it would hire him as one of its agents. He was told to think over the offer carefully because the commitment was forever, but he didn't hesitate; within 24 hours he put his fate into the CIA's hands.

The Agency gave Buckley a test it calls an "assessment and evaluation"—its euphemism for a grueling 72-hour interrogation. In part (or so retired CIA employees say), the interrogation is designed to determine when a person would lie and what it would take to make him tell the truth. The crucible is especially useful for those whom the CIA is considering for work in the field as part of its covert operations directorate. The directorate is the Cadillac of institutional spying;

PRUs run the Phoenix program, which is responsible for the "neutralization" of more than 50,000 Vietnamese political officials. Buckley works directly under the supervision of the CIA's station chief in Vietnam, Theodore Shackley.

Mid 1972 or 1973 Buckley is recalled to Langley; he's one of the last important American advisers to leave South Vietnam.



1974 Buckley and Chip Beck (above), a State Department employee, open an antique store in Manassas. Beck recalls Buckley: "He used to say, 'Give me all the little old ladies, the misfits and mavericks, those who others have given up on, and I'll accomplish great things.'"



April 1975 The North Vietnamese enter Saigon; the war in Vietnam ends.

June 1975 Buckley wages an internal Agency battle to get the United States to launch an immediate rescue of CIA agent Tucker Gouglemann, who remains in South Vietnam. Gouglemann is tortured and killed; Buckley believes that the Agency abandoned him. "Don't let that happen to me," Buckley later tells a friend. "Don't let what happened to Gouglemann happen to me."

August 1978 Buckley becomes the chief political officer of the U.S. embassy in Damascus, Syria. He is reportedly identified as a CIA agent by Syrian intelligence officials.

it has its own traditions, its own unspoken customs. It's the Agency's most elite club. In the mid 1950s, in particular, it was a club that was difficult to join; you had to be asked, and you had to pass the initiation rite: the three days of mind games that certified that you were mentally fit enough to survive international insanity.

Buckley passed the first day's hurdles, which were basically medical tests, with no trouble. The tests on the second and third days were far more rigorous. These were psychological examinations that had been individually tailored to determine his potential weak points. The CIA especially wanted to know if the brutality of war had impaired his judgment. It wanted to discover how he'd survived Korea and whether he could do it again. The tests were meant to bring out the worst and the best in him, to trick and train him at the same time. The Agency didn't want killers or psychotics; it wanted men who knew exactly what they were doing and would do it anyway.

The three days of tests were only the beginning. Buckley was told that he still had to undergo a final examination that the CIA then referred to as a "technical interview." Put simply, a TI is a polygraph test, a struggle with a machine that maps canyons of lies and plains of truth. No one then or now can be employed by the CIA without taking a TI, including the director of central intelligence, and no one is steely enough to maintain a neat line of truth. Even those who fool themselves can't fool the needle. After taking the test, prospective employees sign a form that spells out their willingness to undergo future examinations. Anyone who fails a TI is dismissed, as is anyone who refuses to sign the form. Anyone who's found coaching someone else on a TI is dismissed. Anyone caught prepping for a TI is dismissed. A TI is the confessional of the spies' cathedral, every agent's ritual Pater Noster.

The results of Buckley's TI were put in his file in the CIA's security office. In the same file, which the CIA calls an agent's 201, the security officer who'd evaluated Buckley's performance placed a signed copy of Buckley's oath of secrecy. It was the first of many that he'd sign during his career. He promised to tell the truth and to keep the nation's secrets, to obey its laws and guard the national security.

Finally, Buckley was given his orders: he would remain in the army and tell no one that he was actually employed by the CIA. The Agency would ensure that he received the training he needed. He'd get his first orders at the end of his field training. Until then, he was told, he'd take courses in international relations, intelligence analysis, research and evaluation, international communism, and special operations.

THE CIA IS MORE DOGGED IN TEACHING people how to spy than most people realize. CIA indoctrination is emotionally exhausting and physically exacting. Training the intellect is given less attention than training the body for survival; spying is as much technique as gray matter. Agents are expected to be in shape and to know how to escape, hide, fight, kill, and calm their fears. They're trained to intercept radio communications, plant bugs, surreptitiously listen in on conversations, identify friends, and discredit foes. An agent is more than casually dishonest; the life of a patriot can lead to outright paranoia. Trust is a comfort of those who never fight, who've never endured the physical brutality of military training, which is still the core of an agent's first months as a CIA employee.

Buckley spent the last six months of 1955 at Langley taking the usual recruits' training. At the end of his stint he was dispatched to Fort Bragg in Fayetteville, North Carolina, where he received psychological operations training at the army's newly established special warfare school. The training was the brainchild of Major General Robert McClure, who'd been General Eisenhower's "psyops" officer in Europe during World War II. McClure was using Fort Bragg to train Eastern European immigrants in the fine art of subversion before they were sent back into the Soviet Union's new satellite states. When Buckley wasn't being trained, he was training others, attempting to mold the Germans, Czechs, Magyars, and Poles into a small but effective anti-Soviet strike force that could operate with impunity behind the Iron Curtain.

Not every CIA official believed that the operation would work, for the Eastern European recruits were well meaning but inexperienced. They claimed that they controlled parties of untold numbers whose far-flung networks would rise up and throw off the Bolshevik jackal, but it was an illusion; they were defeated men who controlled parties composed of themselves. They were demi-Napoleons who ranted endlessly against the injustice of it all. In the end, skeptics warned, most of them would be identified and eliminated.

Eventually, the skeptics were proved to be right: few of those who returned to their homelands became valuable sources of information. Some simply vanished. A few were behind pathetic operations that ended in embarrassing show trials put on by the East's new rulers. The trials seemed to say it all, as if the KGB were sending a pathetic plea to the CIA: Can't you do any better than this?

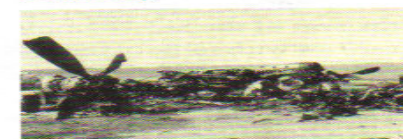
At the end of 1955 Buckley was recalled to Washington and detailed to the army's technical training facility at Fort Meade, Maryland, where

Mid 1979 Buckley is part of an American team that's assigned to train Anwar Sadat's bodyguards. Cairo, Buckley discovers, is on the edge of revolt.



November 4, 1979 U.S. embassy employees in Tehran are taken hostage by Iranian revolutionary students.

November 21, 1979 The U.S. consulate in Islamabad, Pakistan is sacked by fundamentalist students. Buckley narrowly escapes and spends the balance of the year in Mexico City.



January 1980 Buckley is an adviser to Operation Eagle Claw, President Carter's ill-fated plan to rescue the American hostages in Iran. The mission's failure further embitters Buckley against the U.S. national security bureaucracy.

February 1981 Buckley is part of a unit that trains the army's latest counterterrorism group, the Intelligence Support Activity, in Fayetteville.



March 1981 Buckley meets William Casey, the director of the CIA, and becomes one of his important advisers and friends.

June 1981 Buckley returns to Cairo to continue his training of Sadat's bodyguards. His observations rein-

he was made a part of the 902nd Army Communications Group, a reserve unit that the CIA used to train recruits in intercept techniques. After classes on Friday and Saturday the boys of the 902nd headed into the countryside around Baltimore and tapped into phone lines, identifying the callers and the called. It was a straight and simple operation, Spying 101. The Agency valued the training because it provided experience in its more technical operations and because it fostered camaraderie among the troops.

In early 1956 Buckley became an analyst at Langley. At the time the Agency was engaged in a murderous battle with the KGB in Berlin, Prague, Warsaw, and Budapest, a battle that was leading to the deaths of the Agency's best agents. The killings were turning the CIA into a battleground of recriminations. To get to the bottom of the trouble, Buckley and others analyzed thousands of pages of intercepts that had come from "the Berlin tunnel," a massive underground communications complex that had tapped into the Soviets' military communications line between East Berlin and the Kremlin. The lines that connected the seat of the Soviet empire to its vassal states ran raw with some of the most interesting intelligence anyone had ever seen. The tap was considered to be the greatest intelligence coup in history. The intercepts were processed, translated, analyzed, reassessed, and then, inevitably, used to identify Soviet agents in the West. It was Ultra and Enigma rolled into one—a greater victory than any military maneuver could promise.

Despite the avalanche of information, however, the CIA's assets in Eastern Europe continued to turn up dead. It was absolutely frightening. Eventually the mounting number of deaths led CIA officials to conclude that there was an insider somewhere, a mole who was passing the secrets.

The CIA took extraordinary steps to plug its leak. The final step was to shut down the tunnel operation. It seemed, at least at the time, to be the only possible solution. The murders had begun when the tunnel was opened; they'd likely stop when it was closed. Only much later did the Agency learn the source of the leak. In the early 1960s British government officials admitted that a number of their top agents had been passing secrets to the KGB—a shocking security breach that shook the foundations of the British government. England's deputy station chief in Berlin, these officials said, had kept the Soviets apprised of information that had been received from the tunnel.

Analyzing raw data was exciting work for Buckley—a chance to prove that he'd be a valuable Agency employee—but it hardly made for the kind of career he'd envisioned. His combat experience in Korea, he believed, indicated that he'd be more valuable to the CIA in the field as a

military trainer for operations that used military assets. By the beginning of 1957 he'd made it clear that he was tired of being "an intelligence chopper." He said he wanted to get back to soldiering.

In 1959 he got his wish. He won an assignment as a military trainer to the CIA's Cuba Brigade in Florida. Composed of exiled Cuban civilians and former officials of Batista's government, the Cuba Brigade was the brainchild of Allen Dulles, President Eisenhower's director of central intelligence. The idea was to employ it in an effort to replace Castro's government with a pro-American regime, as had been done in Guatemala in 1954. Molding the disparate political elements of the Cuban community into a military strike force was challenging work, but Buckley was particularly adept at it.

"He loved this kind of work," one of Buckley's friends from the period says. "He hated the bureaucracy, just hated it, so getting this hands-on stuff, getting away from Langley, just brought him out."

If Buckley hated the bureaucracy before his unit hit the beaches of Cuba, he despised it afterward. Within 48 hours of the invasion on April 16, 1961, it was clear that the Bay of Pigs operation had failed. Like most of his fellow Agency officers, Buckley was quick to blame the inner circles of the Kennedy administration, which had pulled the brigade's air cover just as the operation began.

"He just couldn't believe it," a friend says. "All this work and then they just threw it away. He was just crushed, really. Very angry."

IN THE WAKE OF THE BAY OF PIGS FIASCO, Buckley continued his search for the best way to use his considerable talents. He told the Agency that he wanted to maintain his operational freedom, that he'd prefer not to be detailed to Langley. In fact, the Agency wasn't about to bring him back into the bureaucracy, especially in light of the Kennedy administration's new emphasis on special operations. After Kennedy established the Green Berets, the CIA sent Buckley to Fort Bragg to become a Special Forces expert, one of the few CIA men who had training in the area. Buckley's expertise brought him a promotion and respect among Agency officials, who were being pressed by Kennedy to turn out a new generation of counterinsurgency experts. It was to be the newest and most effective form of warfare, a way of doing battle that would turn back the tide of Third World rebels who answered to Moscow.

The experience was another challenge for Buckley, a way he could put his military training to use. By 1964, however, Buckley realized that the real action wasn't in training the Green Berets after all. The real challenge was in leading them in battle, in fighting in Vietnam.

force his feelings that Sadat is in danger.



October 1981 Sadat is assassinated while he watches a military parade in Cairo.

Early 1982 At Casey's request, Buckley agrees to become the CIA liaison in Lebanon. The assignment, he is told, will be a short one since it is clear that he's been identified as a CIA agent. He hopes that the assignment will be his last one in the Middle East.



August 1982 PLO troops withdraw from Beirut; Buckley serves as the CIA's eyes on the operation. He returns to Langley to conduct a high-level assessment of the U.S. government's counterterrorism policy.



April 18, 1983 The U.S. embassy in Beirut is bombed. The head of the CIA's Near East division, Robert Ames, and other top officers are killed.

June or July 1983 Buckley is reassigned to Beirut by Casey in direct contravention of CIA policy.



ietnam was a carnival of death, a brutal freak show. In the jungles of Southeast Asia, American chrome and flash wrestled with Vietnamese fangs and claws in a horror house of death. Buckley arrived in Saigon just in time to see the beginning of

the madness; he was stunned to stark disbelief when he witnessed the self-immolation of a Buddhist monk. He knew then that Vietnam would be a different kind of war, a war more terrifying than any America had ever fought. Within weeks after he took his job as the commander of a Nha Trang-based shooter team (a counterinsurgency squad that hunted Vietcong units), he went deep into the war, transforming himself into the epitome of a soldier, a man alone against the darkness. His assignment would last, on and off, for a decade.

Buckley's transformation was an immunization against the stupidity of the American strategy; he drew a line between the institutionalized insanity and indiscriminate murder of the free-fire zones and his own belief that the war could only be won by the individual soldier. His closest friends noticed it first. Buckley became an ascetic fighter, a man pleased by the essentials: a well-made bunk, a broken-in pair of boots, two pairs of rumpled greens, and a combat cap. His pistol and rifle were shiny steel, his sole novena to the conflict. Eventually, he believed, America's chrome machine would rust and break down, leaving rifle-toting soldiers to decide the contest in unbroken combat in jungles and rice paddies.

Buckley's assignment was to work with South Vietnamese intelligence operatives to identify and neutralize the Vietcong's political network in South Vietnam's Central Highlands. It was one of the first assignments of its kind, a highly sensitive military and intelligence operation that the Agency wanted to keep under wraps. Buckley ran operations against his intelligence counterparts who worked with the Vietcong and North Vietnamese army. Posing as a civilian political analyst, he also doubled as a uniformed American adviser who trained South Vietnam's native tribesmen.

Within a month of his arrival in South Vietnam, Buckley had transformed his unit of hill

tribesmen into a legendary jungle fighting force. He took to his group of men immediately; he found them honest, compassionate, and, above all, uncommonly brave. They never hesitated to carry out an assignment, even when they understood its danger. He learned as much from them as they learned from him, and he gloried in their successes. Night after night, through months of combat anguish, he practiced his trade, scoring a kill here, then there, always making certain that the fights were short, brutal, and without quarter.

BUCKLEY'S SUCCESS WAS SOON THE TALK OF 60 Pasteur Street, the CIA's dingy six-story walk-up in the Saigon suburb of Cholon. In these early days of the war, few Americans could boast of the kinds of victories that Buckley won. Fewer still survived the intricate web of corruption that infected the American war effort. Buckley remained uncompromised and uncorrupted, and he showed the same bravery he'd shown in Korea.

"I saw him go down tunnels without hesitation," a friend from Buckley's Indochina days says. "He wanted to show how it could be done. One day, soon after he arrived, his group flushed a VC official from a village, but he just disappeared. We found the tunnel and in Buckley went—absolutely fearless, you know. He came out an hour later and looked like hell. But he got the guy."

Buckley's first two-year stint in Vietnam included a short stay in Savannakhet, Laos, a putrid Mekong River town known for its intrigue, opium, corruption, and brothels. It was Buckley's first seriously dangerous assignment in Indochina; he worked with Laotian officials to uncover the network of North Vietnamese and Soviet agents who wanted to undermine Laos's neutrality.

"He stood on street corners," a colleague remembers. "He would watch the streets for hours and



October 23, 1983 The U.S. Marines barracks in Beirut are bombed; 241 marines die. Buckley views the disaster from his apartment in West Beirut.



February 1984 Candace Hammond, who'd been romantically involved with Buckley for several years, receives her last phone call from Buckley. "He said he hoped he'd be coming home soon," she remembers. "I knew he thought he was in danger. He was very upset. He kept talking about going with me to antique shops, about how he enjoyed that."

Hammond continues: "He told me before he went to Beirut that he was expendable, that he was being sent there by his boss because he didn't matter much. I thought he was a little bitter."

March 16, 1984 Buckley is kidnapped by the Islamic Jihad in Beirut. Casey orders an immediate rescue attempt.

May 1984 The FBI and the army's Intelligence Support Activity launch intelligence operations in Lebanon in the hope of locating Buckley and securing his return.

Late 1984 Buckley is held in the Bekaa valley. Some CIA operatives claim that he is also interrogated in Damascus and possibly transferred to Tehran.

June 1985 Buckley dies in Tehran.

hours. 'There's one,' he'd say. Then, 'There's another one.' He'd smell Communists. He knew exactly what he was up against."

Buckley soon became one of the CIA's most successful Indochina assets, known as much for his intelligence insights as for his personal bravery.

"He could really run an agent," says one of his former CIA cohorts. "It's half knowing what to look for, where to send someone. Vietnam was a shit hole, but he loved it. Loved everything about it."

Buckley loved Vietnam so much that he signed on for another two-year stint and then yet another; he put six years of his life into saving Vietnam from the Communists. According to Agency officials, his career was made by his work during the war, where he began to carve out a personal legend as an indestructible agent. He won another Silver Star, apparently as a result of an operation he launched to blow up an ammunition cache on the Ho Chi Minh Trail in Laos in 1969. Like his other irregulars, Buckley was dropped into western Laos by helicopter and left to make his way into NVA territory. Veterans of these operations are quick to spell out the dangers involved: the NVA were smart and secretive and often trailed Americans for miles in the jungles, waiting for them to let down their guard. Then they left their calling cards, marking the American dead in Laos with a brutality unequaled in any other war.

"There wasn't one time in any of these [operations] when we weren't on the run when we came out," says a former Special Forces soldier. "You had to stay awake. If you dozed off, they had you. They were always so damn good; they knew we were there every time. It was just a matter of outrunning them—of getting in, doing it, and getting out."

In mid 1969 Buckley moved his team of Laotian irregulars into the NVA's heartland and detonated a North Vietnamese army depot. Colleagues say that the odds were against Buckley, but he managed to come out without a scratch.

"He was just cool about it," says a CIA regular. "He must have been afraid, but I could never tell, really. He communicated it to others. He was just so damn cool that everyone thought, Well, if this asshole can do it, I should be able to."

Buckley ended up running dozens of operations. Almost all of them ended with him and his team emerging from the jungle to grab ropes dangling from the helicopters

that would lift them to safety. On one such operation, apparently in South Vietnam, Buckley met Beck, a Navy Seal who was to remain a lifelong friend.

"He had this gruff exterior," Beck says, "and then I got to know him. He was a warm human being, very warm. He loved the Vietnamese people; he had real sympathy for them."

After the war Beck and Buckley operated an antique store in Manassas, Virginia. "He had an incredibly dry sense of humor, and he was continually cracking jokes," Beck recalls. "He was upset if people didn't bargain. He'd say, 'Why didn't you bargain with me? Come on, get the price down.' The customers would love him."

Beck, who calls Buckley "one of the most generous human beings I've ever met," says that in Laos Buckley befriended a number of native families and became especially close to one that had suffered greatly from the nation's civil war. In the late 1960s he convinced a West German family to help a young Laotian child that he knew; the West Germans adopted the girl. When she wanted to go to college, Buckley paid for it. He met the girl on one of his many trips to Europe in the early 1980s, but he never told her that he'd helped her.

It wasn't the first time that Buckley had shown his compassionate side to the world. According to a number of colleagues from his Vietnam days, he generously supported an orphanage that had been started in Da Nang; there are even reports that he monitored the orphanage's progress after the war.

But Buckley's blood could also run cold. "I can see him now, you know, the way he was back then," Beck says. "We had this big operation, and everyone was very tentative. I could tell he was frustrated with the way it was going, how long it was taking. So he just said, 'Oh, the hell with it.' We'd done all this planning, and he just went out and did it. He one-upped us all. He just blew the hell out of those people."

Buckley also took part in far more dangerous operations inside South Vietnam after 1969, when he was detailed to the legendary Military Assistance Command Surveillance and Observation Group (known by its acronym, MACSOG). As a U.S. operative with 15 years of counterinsurgency and counterterrorism training, he became one of MACSOG's most sought-after operatives. Based in Nha Trang, he conducted "order of battle" reports on NVA and VC units, undermined the area's VC political offices, and

identified VC officials for assassination as part of the Phoenix program.

By the end of 1969 Buckley had himself been targeted by the VC and NVA for assassination. "Look, Buckley did what most CIA agents did then," a former MACSOG officer says. "This was a war. He ran teams, and did a damned good job doing it."

Some MACSOG officers remember Buckley differently, however: as an agent who took too many chances and who exposed himself unnecessarily. A few claim that by 1970, at the end of his sixth year in Indochina, he'd become a clear security risk to ongoing CIA operations.

"Buckley just didn't know when to stop," says intelligence analyst Corson. "He was a true believer, an intelligence swashbuckler. He couldn't leave well enough alone. He wanted it all. The CIA worries about guys like that; it starts thinking that maybe they want to die."

Other charges were also made. It was whispered that Buckley played it "too loose" during his time in Vietnam. He'd always been a womanizer, but never more so than during his Vietnam assignment. His many liaisons were the talk of the CIA station—as much a sign of envy as a cautionary note that his habits could lead to trouble. If the Agency is anything, it is puritanical. No one really believed that Buckley was a security risk because of his romantic liaisons, but a rake is more likely to be compromised than a man who minds his own business.

"He was just careless," says an agent, "and it could have led to trouble. It didn't, but it certainly could have."

BY 1973 BUCKLEY WAS IN DANGER IN Vietnam, but not simply as a result of his covert activities. Former special operations officials, all of whom served with Buckley, say that he served his last years in Indochina in something less than an official capacity. For two years, these former "Green beanies" say, Buckley ran the PRU campaign in South Vietnam. It was a brutally taxing job that took him into the ugliest part of the war.

The PRUs, or Provincial Reconnaissance Units, were the CIA's answer to North Vietnam's campaign of terror. In essence, the PRUs were assassination squads—tightly run, inhumanly disciplined, viciously exacting in their retribution. They killed thousands of Vietnamese—more than 50,000, according to some reports. Buckley reportedly did a magnificent job, serving with great competence and even greater loyalty under the CIA's station chief, Ted Shackley.

For two years Buckley dispatched teams and issued orders from the CIA's small office in Cholon. The teams gathered intelligence, probed Vietcong strongholds, and identified VC commanders in provinces under South Vietnamese control. It was the assignment that Buckley had wanted since his days in Korea. While the U.S. Army struggled to gain control of the country, he fought the real war from behind his desk. If the war was to be won, he believed, it would be won in the villages. The Americans might pummel and grind enemy units to dust, might annihilate enemy units on the battlegrounds, but ultimately the war would be won (or lost) by men like him—men who eliminated the enemy's leadership.

The war took its toll. By 1973 Buckley was a shadow of the man he'd been when he'd come to Saigon a decade before. His various eccentricities and his almost reverential worship of the lone warrior had destroyed his relations with his colleagues. He was a silent and stern disciplinarian, an exacting and irritating workaholic. The war had swallowed him just as it had swallowed others. It consumed his every moment with an obsessive need to tackle the task at hand.

Buckley's transformation made him a hated enemy to some of his associates. A colleague describes him in sarcastic, biting terms: as the kind of man who'd count every penny of the Company's change, piling up the silver and copper in neat little stacks of quarters, dimes, nickels, and pennies. Like Kurtz in Conrad's *Heart of Darkness* or the colonel in *Apocalypse Now*, Buckley believed that he personified the war, that he could do things that others couldn't or wouldn't do. And he made certain that they knew it. Buckley bore the cross for the Agency in Vietnam, becoming an impatient taskmaster—a characteristic that might have been overlooked if only he hadn't become so insufferable.

IN 1973, AT THE END OF THE VIETNAM debacle, Buckley was ordered back to Langley again. According to those who knew him during this period of his career, the recall couldn't have come at a better time. According to these associates, Buckley's name had appeared on a list of CIA agents that was circulated in East Germany in 1970. In the Agency's parlance, he'd been "burned"; he'd been identified as an agent in Saigon, in Nha Trang, in Savannakhet, in East Berlin, and, CIA officials feared, in Hanoi.

Buckley's trail goes cold after Vietnam—

an indication of the extraordinary steps he took to stay alive. After his high-profile years in the front lines of MACSOG's twilight foot soldiers, he stayed close to Langley, marshaling his few friendships and waiting for new jobs and bigger challenges. After a year-long debriefing, the CIA dispatched him to West Germany, where he served as a high-level Agency official in Bonn. It should have been a quiet time for the Company, which was in the process of withdrawing many of its assets from Indochina, but it wasn't. By the mid 1970s it was clear to almost everyone at the CIA that the battle lines in the war of the international intelligence services were once again about to shift.

Chapter Three: The Middle East

IN 1978 BUCKLEY WAS SENT TO SYRIA, where he served as a political officer in the U.S. embassy. The assignment was the first of many for him in the Middle East, a new front line in the CIA's widening intelligence war. Over the next six years he served in six assignments in six parts of the world.

When Buckley arrived in Damascus, the city was awash with rumors about Syria's leader, Hafez al-Assad: he was said to be under fire from his own party, was reported to be seriously ill, and, at one point, was even rumored to be on his way to foreign exile. Buckley had trouble confirming the rumors; his informants were extremely frightened. Syria's internal security operatives provided formidable opposition to him, so much so that he often couldn't tell whether his informants were providing as much information to them as they were to him. As he'd done in Vietnam, he decided to take some risks to get good information.

"It was almost inevitable that he'd be identified. It was only a matter of time," says a CIA contract employee. "He'd been identified in East Germany, and it was fairly easy for the Syrians to pick him out of the embassy crowd in Damascus."

It was hardly a surprise, then, that Buckley was soon burned again, this time by the Syrian government. His almost too-easy identification with the Agency prompted a quick but temporary recall to Washington. He was happy to be out of Syria, but angered that he'd been unable to provide the information that the CIA needed. He returned to Langley convinced that his Syrian experience meant that he'd spend the rest of his career in Washington. It was just too dangerous to send him overseas.

Much to his surprise, however, in mid 1979 Buckley was dispatched to Cairo, where he assisted in the training of Anwar Sadat's bodyguards. In the wake of the Camp David Accords, the United States had promised some \$4 billion in military and internal security assistance to Egypt, most of it to be provided in the way of training by U.S. Pentagon subcontractors. The deal was a bargain: in exchange for the money the United States gained a secure ally in the Middle East, and Israel was no longer threatened by a two-front war.

At least part of the reason for Buckley's acquiescence to the CIA's decision to send him to Cairo had to do with his sense of personal loyalty. Loyalty was a prized commodity at the Agency, perhaps the only thing that could've made Buckley work in a part of the world where he'd been identified as a CIA asset.

Buckley's time in Cairo was short-lived. A sudden, peremptory order from Langley cut off his assignment in Egypt only months after he'd arrived. The CIA told him that he was needed in Pakistan, where the U.S. consulate had security difficulties. Such sudden changes in assignments were happening to Agency employees throughout the Middle East; the CIA was running into trouble across the Moslem rim, and it needed experienced operatives to shore up its embattled stations.

In September 1979 Buckley reported to the CIA's station in Islamabad, a city that was being buffeted by the fallout from Iran's Islamic revolution. The assignment turned out to be a nightmare.

"Pakistan was a goddamned mess," a former CIA contract employee says. "The whole damned Arab world was coming down around our ears. The shah was out, the Saudi royal family was fearing for its life, Afghanistan was a disaster, Iraq hated our guts, Lebanon was being torn to shreds. We thought it was all over, that they were going to kick us out on our asses."

They almost did. On November 4, 1979 America's embassy personnel in Iran were taken hostage and paraded blindfolded through the streets of Tehran. The ayatollah called the United States "the great Satan," and U.S. agents, who'd been identified in the files kept by the shah's secret police, were running for their lives.

A little more than two weeks later, on November 20, 1979, a group of Islamic fundamentalists took over Islam's holiest shrine in Mecca. "At first, it looked like a full-fledged revolution in Saudi Arabia," a

CIA analyst reports. "They were taking us apart—first the shah, and now the royal family."

American trainers, including some of Buckley's best friends, led the Saudi National Guard in an operation against the well-armed fundamentalists. For 24 hours Saudi soldiers exchanged gunfire with them. The crisis was made worse by the royal family's insistence that Americans not accompany Saudi troops inside the shrine. Though American Special Forces advisers told the Saudis that their decision would result in a bloodbath, the royal family's wishes were followed. The operation resulted in a paroxysm of brutal hand-to-hand combat, but within 72 hours the fundamentalists had been subdued. The Saudi National Guard, trained by paramilitary experts that had been hired under a Pentagon contract with Vinnell Corporation, one of Washington's beltway bandits, had done its job with vicious precision.

From his desk at the U.S. consulate in Islamabad, Buckley watched the events in Saudi Arabia with growing concern. Pakistan's fundamentalists, who were willing believers of Iranian reports that the attack on Mecca was a CIA operation, were restive. The day after the Mecca takeover, Buckley had a taste of just how dangerous the situation in the Near East had become. As a crowd of chanting Pakistanis jeered from the street, U.S. employees were ushered into the embassy's vault. The crowd began to storm the outer gates and climb the high wire fence that surrounded the compound. The marines couldn't hold them off. In a rush of zeal the American office was taken and its files set ablaze. The embassy's employees made their escape through a trap door and onto the roof. Like other agents of the CIA's station in Islamabad, Buckley evaded the Pakistani army, which had been sent to lift the siege, and made his way to the British consulate across the city. In 24 hours he was spirited out of the country.

ACCORDING TO LATER REPORTS, BUCKLEY was "protected" by the Agency, which assigned him to a low-profile position in Mexico City as an executive of Pemex Corporation, the Mexican government-owned petroleum company. Two independent sources confirm Buckley's tenure with the company, and yet Buckley's closest friends say that he never spent any time with Pemex—or at least he never talked about it. Regardless of whether Buckley was given a job in Mexico or not, he was told that he'd have to stay out of the Middle East.

No later than early 1980 Buckley returned to Langley to help the Carter administration plan its military mission to rescue the American hostages in Tehran. His assignment was to monitor the rescue operation, to represent the CIA's interests at the Pentagon, and to advise the Joint Chiefs of Staff on the operation's chance of success.

Buckley immediately felt at ease with the JCS officers, a group of Special Forces veterans and Vietnam hands who understood his sense of urgency. Operation Eagle Claw was to be the JCS's claim to history, indisputable evidence that the United States would strike back when its citizens were in danger. But Buckley was skeptical; while he participated in most of the meetings on the rescue operation, he criticized the plan as being vulnerable to technical failure and full of operational danger. Buckley turned out to be right—Eagle Claw failed for just the reasons he mentioned—but that was no consolation. In its aftermath, with pictures of burning helicopters plastered on the nation's television screens, Buckley decided to accept the CIA's offer to become part of a new team of special operations experts that was being put together by the Joint Chiefs of Staff.

According to the JCS's plan, the services' separate special operations groups were to be molded into one unit that would be based in Fayetteville. In early 1981 Buckley was assigned to conduct this new unit's training. In addition, he served as the CIA's liaison to a secret army intelligence group that was later identified as the Intelligence Support Activity, a hybrid covert intelligence unit that was established to be an extension of the army's special operations capability.

Buckley had been identified in Vietnam, in East Germany, in Syria, and almost certainly in Pakistan. The Agency had no plans to make him even more vulnerable by sending him back to the volatile Middle East, at least for the time being. But he remained a valued asset, even more so in the Reagan administration. He divided his time between Fayetteville and Washington, between training the military's new antiterrorist team and reorganizing the CIA's counterterrorism office.

During one of his trips to Fayetteville Buckley became romantically involved with Candace Hammond, a landscape architect who now lives in Farmer, North Carolina. "I thought he was very handsome and very much a gentleman," says Hammond. "I can't remember a time when he didn't open a door for me, when he wasn't mannered. That's the way he was."

"Why, I can see him now, sitting in the rocking chair that he loved so well," adds Hammond, who says that she was completely unaware of Buckley's secret identity. "He would sit there for hours. He was so political, you know. I could never talk when the news was on; he'd go crazy. He'd laugh about it, about the news, because he was so conservative. And he really was; he said that he was just to the right of Attila the Hun. He said it all the time, and he'd laugh."

IN EARLY 1981 BUCKLEY WAS CALLED back to Langley by none other than Casey, who'd taken to reading the Agency's personnel files. When Casey, who'd served in the intelligence services during World War II, ran across Buckley's name, he asked to be introduced to him. The two CIA hands got on well. As their friendship deepened, Casey often turned to Buckley for advice on how the Agency should respond to threats against its intelligence operations.

Buckley's friendship with Casey began to pay dividends almost immediately. Within weeks of their meeting, Buckley became Casey's special adviser, accompanying him on a series of overseas inspections. In April 1981 Casey and Buckley traveled to the Middle East, where they met with the head of the CIA's operations in Saudi Arabia. It was a heady tour; after years of loyal but obscure service, Buckley was at the right hand of the CIA's top officer.

Still, this wasn't exactly the kind of power that Buckley wanted. The Buckley-Casey tour of Saudi Arabia brought back memories, and Buckley told Casey that he'd like to be back in operations. In particular, Buckley's closest friends report, Buckley told Casey that he thought he had some unfinished business in Cairo, where the United States was still providing training to Sadat's personal security force.

"He was always a field guy," a CIA source says. "The officialdom of the Agency got him down. He was always claustrophobic."

Casey grudgingly acceded to Buckley's request, and Buckley returned to Cairo in June 1981.

BUCKLEY'S STAY IN EGYPT WAS A RESPITE from his usual CIA duties. In a different time, his months in Cairo might well have been considered the epitome of a man's life. These were new days for the CIA in Egypt. U.S. citizens were granted unprecedented access to the upper reaches of a Moslem country.

Sadat loved Americans; he affected Western attitudes and styles, and he believed that Egypt could gain entrance to the modern era only by tying its future to that of the United States. His nation needed to be modernized, and for that it needed peace. Buckley and his team of American trainers enjoyed the fruit of this new political philosophy.

"It was an open city," says a former special operations trainer. "It wasn't like anywhere else back then in the whole Moslem world. Egypt was isolated, you know, the only friend on the other side of things that Israel had. Money was pouring into the country. Americans were treated like kings."

Once again, however, Buckley sounded an alarm. Within weeks of his arrival he reported that Sadat was in greater danger than he or anyone in the United States had believed. Using his experiences in Pakistan as a model, he told his colleagues that Sadat actually had little control over the course of events in his country. Egypt, Buckley insisted, was about to explode, the fuse sparked by the fires of Iran's 1979 revolution. To Buckley, it seemed as if an explosion was inevitable: the nightmare that had awakened him in Damascus and that had stalked him in Islamabad had reared its ugly head in Cairo. And on a sultry October afternoon in 1981, a group of Islamic revolutionaries jumped from their troop carriers during an official military parade and gunned down the man whom Buckley was sent to protect.

"It was just another fuck-up," says a CIA Middle East analyst.

Buckley's report on the assassination was highly critical of the United States' inability to protect an ally. Buckley made enemies with his paper, for he argued that providing protection for America's friends would never be enough; the problems in the Middle East and in the emerging nations of the Third World, he argued, had to be attacked on all fronts. When he returned to Langley 60 days after the incident, he reported directly to Casey and reviewed the events that had led to Sadat's assassination.

THIS TIME BUCKLEY'S STAY AT LANGLEY was even shorter than his previous one. Just seven years short of retirement, his friendship with Casey sealed by their common mistrust of the Agency's entrenched bureaucracy and the horror of America's failure in Cairo, Casey asked Buckley if he would report on the CIA's activities in Lebanon. Casey couched his order as a question,

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as a tentative, personal request. There were dangers involved, Casey admitted, but he needed someone he could trust to do the job, and Buckley was really the only one.

Hesitantly, Buckley yielded to the request, though he knew that Casey was acting well outside normal CIA procedures. The Company's internal rules say that an agent who's been identified in one part of the world has to take another assignment for at least five years before he returns. In addition, a senior team has to review the assignment and assess its danger.

In fact, Casey had little choice when he selected Buckley; the CIA's intelligence agents throughout the Near East had been identified when the U.S. embassies in Tripoli, Islamabad, and Tehran were taken over. Even if Casey had looked around for someone else to take the assignment, he wouldn't have found anyone. The CIA's best agents were running for their lives, and precious few had gotten out alive.

Casey was desperate; he was sure he could rely on Buckley, that his request would have an impact. Buckley had always agreed to such "requests" in the past; he knew an order when he heard one.

AT THE END OF AUGUST 1982 BUCKLEY stood in a crowd of marines at Beirut's waterfront watching the PLO's militias depart from the city. The PLO fighters, who'd met the Israelis in combat, waved their weapons in the air and shot off the last of their ammunition in a celebration of their victory. What was left of Beirut had been turned to rubble.

In a last-ditch effort to stave off a house-to-house battle, President Reagan had dispatched U.S. forces to guarantee the safety of the Palestinian civilians who remained in the city; Buckley was on hand as an observer and a trainer for the small Lebanese armed forces. For weeks he'd planned the PLO's withdrawal, negotiating a series of agreements with Beirut's welter of militias. Now, with his plan nearly completed, he wondered whether the CIA would play it safe and order him back to Langley. For several weeks he'd felt that his cover had been blown. With his Western dress, his rugged American looks, and his plain suits, he "had CIA written all over him," according to one American.

When the marines left Beirut in September 1982, Buckley went with them. He returned to Washington, where Casey told him that he'd next be responsible for coordinating the Reagan administration's anti-

terrorism policy. The job was a reward for his years in the field; for the first time in his career, he'd be responsible for a CIA policy. Casey told Buckley that he'd be the policy's chief architect and would report to the director of central intelligence through the head of what was then called the Domestic Terrorism Group.

For six months Buckley and government officials hammered out a policy. The Agency would be responsible solely for foreign intelligence, he insisted, leaving domestic security in the hands of the FBI.

"It was a delicate job," a former CIA analyst says. "Buckley not only had to come up with a policy that everyone could agree to, he had to make sure it would work. He offended some people, but I think he was right. When the Federal Emergency Management Administration and some of those others thought they should have a piece of the counterterrorism pie, he told them, 'No way. You're going to have nothing to do with it.' You know, he told them to go to hell."

After months of work, Buckley presented his counterterrorism plan to Casey. It included a recommendation that the Domestic Terrorism Group change its name to the International Antiterrorism Group. The name change was significant: Buckley was signaling his concern that the CIA could be accused of domestic spying, which had caused trouble in the 1970s. Buckley's plan called for a coordinated effort to combat security breaches under the leadership of the National Security Council's director, who'd be in charge of monitoring the agencies that were responsible for domestic law enforcement. According to a government security official, Buckley's recommendations were "straight down the middle. There was nothing really creative about what he said. He just made it clear that all of these people who wanted to have something to do with it were better off watching their own shops. He called them 'those crazies.'"

Despite Buckley's concern that the CIA assiduously follow his plan's mandates, many of his recommendations were later weakened. According to a number of Pentagon officials, the Domestic Terrorism Group later became part of a secret Pentagon intelligence unit that was then coming under scrutiny, the Intelligence Support Activity. Buckley had been part of the Intelligence Support Activity during the planning for the hostage rescue operation in 1979. It ran intelligence operations in Libya and participated in the rescue of General James Dozier, who'd been kidnapped by Italy's Red Bri-

gade. Buckley watched the slow disintegration of his plan with frustration; it was more proof that the best intentions can be undone by a hellish bureaucracy.

Despite these frustrations, Buckley finished his special assignment with a sense of relief; he had only a few years left until retirement. But his relief was short-lived. In March 1983 an Islamic terrorist detonated an explosive outside the U.S. embassy in Beirut. It was perhaps the most serious breach of security in the CIA's history. Sixteen Americans were killed, including the Agency's Near East Division chief, Robert Ames. Ames, who'd been sent to Lebanon for a meeting with Agency operatives, had been in the country for only 24 hours. The photographs of the collapsed embassy sent shudders through the operations directorate at Langley.

"We were ripped apart over there," says a retired Agency official who spent his career at Langley. "They took us out in Iran, got all those files. We had embassies on fire everywhere. It makes sense that they would get our files. But Ames was a loss. Hell, no one wanted to be there. It was a major disaster."

In June, Casey told Buckley that he wanted him back in Lebanon, this time as the CIA's station chief in Beirut. Beck, who served with Buckley on this assignment, remembers Buckley's reaction. "He knew his duty," Beck says. "Things were rough, but he knew the dangers. He never shied away from anything."

The situation in Lebanon had become far worse than it was during Buckley's first assignment. Shackley believes that Buckley knew he was in an extremely vulnerable position. "Anyone in that part of the world has to know he's a target," Shackley says. "I'm sure Bill did. You know, it's like playing Russian roulette."

BUCKLEY CULTIVATED INFORMANTS IN an attempt to get information about Beirut's disparate political factions. His job once again meant that he'd eventually be burned by some of our nation's fiercest enemies.

The years hadn't eroded Buckley's fearlessness. In the midst of a firefight, Beck says, Buckley stepped into the street and demanded that the combatants lay down their weapons.

"I just couldn't believe it," Beck says. "Everyone stopped shooting and just looked at him. He stood there for a while, then went into a nearby café, where he was meeting a militia leader. He looked at this guy and said, 'Now that's more like it.'"

One night Buckley and Beck were caught in an artillery barrage. After years of experience in the field, Buckley was unfazed. "We were in the middle of Beirut, and suddenly everything started going off," Beck remembers. "We were on our haunches up against some buildings, and Bill got hungry. So right in the middle of this artillery barrage he went next door, to a café called the George Washington, believe it or not, and got some food. He had no idea what it was. He came back and looked at me, shrugged his shoulders, and said, 'I just love to eat wet dog.'"

Buckley's best efforts to come up with information weren't enough; America's position in Lebanon was deteriorating rapidly. In a frenzy of activity, Buckley redoubled his efforts to infiltrate the Iranian-backed Islamic gangs that had sprung up in the city, but he was frustrated in his attempts. It was no longer merely a matter of getting good information; Buckley was responsible for making certain that the U.S. Marine peace-keeping force at Beirut's airport stayed out of danger.

In September 1983, according to a retired Pentagon intelligence official, Buckley was told that the Islamic Jihad, the most notorious revolutionary group in Beirut, was planning a major operation against the United States. But Buckley couldn't figure out the nature of the operation or who would be put at risk by it. Since the marines were protected, Buckley attempted to discover what other target the Jihad had in mind. "It could have been anyone," the Pentagon official says. "You never knew what was going to happen."

The report of a pending anti-American incident lay dormant for weeks. Buckley met with the commander of the marine unit to warn him of a possible attack. "Bill shared everything he knew with him," says Beck. "Every report he got he passed right on."

Noel Koch, a retired Pentagon official, also gave warnings to the marines. "We went out there and talked to some of these heavy breathers with the Lebanese armed forces and inspected the [marine] barracks," Koch says. "We warned them. We went to [the marine commander] and said, 'Hey, you've got some problems here.' You know what he said? He said, 'Don't tell us how to suck eggs. The marines know how to suck eggs better than anyone in the world.'"

On the morning of October 23, 1983 the marines in Beirut sucked eggs for the last time. In one of the corps' most shattering military disasters, 241 U.S. service-

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men died in what the FBI would later call "the largest nonnuclear explosion in history." Buckley had found his terrorist operation. Looking out from his apartment, which had been rocked by the blast, he watched in disbelief as a large black cloud rose over Beirut.

Through the winter Buckley stoically attempted to put the pieces back together in Lebanon. More obsessive than ever, he took chances that he'd never taken before. He called on an untapped physical reserve, calming the Agency's fears and sending back terse reports of his progress in Lebanon. His task wasn't hopeless, but it was clear from his cables that the U.S. position in the Middle East was at its nadir. He struggled to repair the damage, and in fits and starts he won small victories where none had seemed possible.

And then suddenly, one morning, he was gone.

BUCKLEY HAD BEEN A CAPTAIN IN SOME of America's most secret wars. For three decades, on three continents, he'd served his country with unfailing loyalty and without question. But in that time he'd remained unaware of the most covert war of all: the war that was being fought inside the CIA itself. It was a war that would eventually decide his fate.

Within hours of Buckley's kidnapping, Casey had spit out his orders: find Buckley and find him fast. He'd pounded his desk when he'd said it, fairly leaping out from behind it. Yet it appears that nobody in the world's most renowned intelligence organization knew where to look.

The CIA's search for Buckley has become the stuff of controversy. Clair George, the Agency's deputy director of operations, told a reporter that he'd turned the operations directorate upside down looking for Buckley. Some of Buckley's colleagues scoff at the claim. Clair George is probably right, they say, he probably *did* turn the operations directorate upside down. But Buckley wasn't anywhere near it. He was in Beirut.

What steps the CIA took to find Buckley accomplished little. A special committee was set up to monitor the search. The National Security Agency was asked to provide high-resolution photographs of probable hostage hideouts in Beirut. Intelligence reports from the Middle East were scoured and scoured again. Finally, the Agency dispatched

an FBI team to Beirut, then an army intelligence team. Both units went into Beirut's destroyed neighborhoods to poke here and there for a trace of Buckley.

But there isn't a hint that the Agency launched its own teams of operatives to turn Beirut upside down. Casey may have been desperate, but he was apparently unable to move the Agency to take extraordinary steps to find its own kidnapped station chief.

Those who served with Buckley and knew him best are adamant: the Agency did little or nothing to gain his release, and not simply because of bureaucratic inefficiency. Theirs is something more than mere barroom talk, and not much less than flat-out allegations of betrayal. Buckley was hated by a number of important covert action operators, they contend, and had made enough enemies to ensure that when he needed help they'd do not quite everything they could to find him. The tables had been turned; the man who'd stacked the coins on his desk in Saigon, who'd thumbed his nose at the bureaucrats, had had the nightmare loosed on him. The irony is horrifying: after years of being accused of working outside the law, the CIA played according to the rules.

"He wasn't liked. He wasn't liked at all," a CIA contract employee says. "Do I need to spell it out? There were people who hated him at the CIA, who were glad that he went to Beirut. Why the hell would they look for him?"

To understand the CIA's betrayal, say Buckley's friends, it's essential to understand the CIA. The Agency, they say, isn't a fraternity of like-minded, dedicated professionals bent on fighting the communist scourge. The CIA is a bureaucracy like any other, with its own petty hatreds, office politics, and banal complaints. The coffee goes unmade, desks need to be repaired, some employees get uppity. Buckley was one of them.

In the end, a number of events came together to seal Buckley's fate. All had to do with his personality, for he'd compiled a nearly unrivaled record of achievement in his career. He had, after all, accomplished what few CIA operatives dream of. He'd been burned in a handful of countries, and he'd gotten away with it. In Vietnam he'd been a top-notch combat operative, a brave, nearly reckless agent in an insane dance with death, and he'd gotten away with it. He'd been sent to the Middle East as an expert when he

wasn't one, and he'd gotten away with it. Finally, he'd been befriended by the most powerful CIA agent of all, William Casey, a fact that had made his colleagues (and bureaucratic competitors) in the covert action branch green with envy. They thought he was one of them, that he didn't belong in the jet stream. For some of them, it was almost too much to bear.

A friend of Buckley's gives a final judgment. "It's the perfect out," he says. "*We can't tell you what we did to get him back because it's a secret.* Like 'Mission Impossible': the Agency disavowed any knowledge of his activities. If they'd looked for him, then everyone would have known he was an agent. Stupid bastards."

It's hard to miss the bitterness in the words of those who believe Buckley was left out in the cold. For too many years, they say, he'd told others that their careers came before anything, that their work was the work of the nation, that their sacrifices weren't only necessary but expected. He'd told it to them in simple terms: do your work, do it well, obey the rules, and, above all, understand that the gratitude you receive will come from your knowledge that you've paid the ultimate price in silence. He'd said it in Vietnam when he'd run the PRU teams and demanded the impossible from his associates. Death is part of the job.

Now it was his turn.

EVENTUALLY BUCKLEY'S CLOSEST FRIENDS outside the Agency took steps to get him back. In a series of meetings held in Hamburg, West Germany in November 1984, Shackley, now retired from the CIA, assessed the possibility of striking a deal with the Iranian government for Buckley's return. Shackley met with Ghorbanifar in Hamburg at the suggestion of a former official of the shah's secret police, Manucher Hashemi. Ghorbanifar told Shackley that the Iranians would be willing to trade Russian military equipment that had been captured in their war with Iraq in exchange for Buckley. After three days of meetings, Shackley returned to the United States.

"That's when I wrote a memo to the State Department," Shackley says. "I knew Buckley professionally in Vietnam. I had great admiration for him. I sent the memo to the State Department, and that was the end of it."

The State Department rejected Ghorbanifar's offer of a straight arms-for-Buckley swap because it believed, with justification,

that Ghorbanifar was "only interested in money and that his reputation as an untrustworthy source made his claims suspect." Still, the wheels had turned ever so slowly: Shackley had sent his memo to Vernon Walters, an ambassador-at-large; Walters had passed it on to Hugh Montgomery, the State Department's director of intelligence and research; Montgomery had given it to Robert Oakley, the State Department official who's in charge of counterterrorism; Oakley had taken it to Richard Murphy, the assistant secretary of state for Near Eastern affairs. Oakley and Murphy had then given Shackley their answer: the deal was a "scam."

The Islamic Jihad was much less bureaucratic. After spiriting Buckley out of Beirut, it held him at the Abdullah barracks, its headquarters in the Bekaa valley, then shipped him to Syria for serious interrogation. Buckley was repeatedly tortured, and finally he broke under the pain. A June 1987 report says that he gave his captors "a virtually complete list of U.S. agents in the Middle East."

Buckley, his health deteriorating, was returned to the Bekaa valley in the spring of 1985. Fearful that he'd die, his guards requested that he be given medical care in Tehran. He was flown to Tehran from Damascus in early June 1985. He died soon after.

Agency officials knew of Buckley's death by June 1985, yet they held out hope that he might somehow turn up alive. They feared that the 400-page "confession" that had been wrung from him would end up in Soviet hands; they took steps to get their own copy of it. At least part of the reason that Robert McFarlane, Oliver North, and others traveled to Tehran in May 1986 was to get Buckley's testimony and to bring his body back to Washington. But the mission was only partially successful. The team failed to retrieve Buckley's body, but it retrieved his confession, either in the form of a document or a video or both. CIA officials all but confirm that Buckley's testimony as well as recordings and a videotape of his session with his Hezbollah torturers were handed over to the United States in Tehran or soon thereafter.

Epilogue

PERHAPS ONE DAY THE REAL STORY OF the CIA's rescue attempt will be made public. As things stand now, there are many villains in the

Buckley story and many unanswered questions.

Or maybe the answer to the riddle is simple. Perhaps the disease that afflicts every other government department has finally infected the CIA. Perhaps the Agency is incompetent. There's a hint of this point of view on the public record: It's not that the Agency doesn't want to run covert operations, Richard Secord told the Senate committee that investigated the Iran-contra affair, it's that it doesn't know how to. And Casey often complained that the Agency had lost its tone, that it had become fat and happy. He vowed to reinvigorate it or find a way to run operations some other way.

Buckley had witnessed bureaucratic incompetence and rebelled against it. Casey saw this rough-hewn individualism in Buckley and rewarded him for it. He felt that Buckley understood the nature of the Agency's problems. Casey undoubtedly knew that Buckley was a victim of the Agency's paralysis; why else would he have decided to trust Oliver North and the NSA to retrieve Buckley and not the CIA's covert action staff? When North's attempt failed, Casey was sickened by the horror of it all.

Casey was given final proof of this failure in the form of the videotape of Buckley's torture and confession. The head of the CIA wept openly, then delivered the tape to Ronald Reagan. On an unusually humid night in June 1986, the head of the U.S. Central Intelligence Agency and the president of the United States played back the videotape at the White House. It was almost too much for either of them to bear. They viewed it with the fervent hope that Buckley had not suffered too much, that in his dying moments he'd somehow been given some forlorn comfort. Reagan was stunned by what he saw. Casey was enraged.

No one knows now what vow Casey made that night, nor what retribution, if any, he planned. But this we know: the friends of William Buckley believe that Casey is a hero, a man who has been too often maligned and too easily misunderstood. For those who honored Buckley during a simple ceremony on a hillside in Arlington National Cemetery, William Casey was part of a dream: a dream that the Agency could be mastered, controlled, and made to work, that it could become a truer defender of the nation than it had ever been.

In the final analysis, this had been William Casey's finest dream—and William Buckley's only hope. R