

Washington Merry-go-round

F Post
3/17/77

By Jack Anderson & Les Whitten

WASHINGTON — G. Gordon Liddy, the macho Watergate conspirator who once tried to impress friends by holding his hand over a burning candle, has been coming under some fire in prison as well.

The tight-lipped Liddy has remained silent to this day about his role in the ill-fated Watergate break-in. But he was quick to complain loudly about his accommodations at the Allenwood Prison Camp in Pennsylvania. Liddy moved to the minimum security prison three months ago from another penitentiary in Danbury, Conn.

The tenacious tough guy was assigned to sleep on a cot in a hallway near the television room because the better rooms were all booked up. Liddy soon squawked that he couldn't sleep because of the noise from the all-night TV room.

Almost immediately, prison officials banned TV watching after 11:30 p.m., and even started making spot checks to make sure the inmates weren't sneaking a peek at the late show. The other inmates were infuriated at what seemed to be the special treatment for their famous colleague. Many other sleepless inmates had complained about the late-night TV noise, to no avail.

The outraged prisoners retaliated by setting Liddy's mattress on fire. When he got a new one, they soaked it. The inmates also threw all the beleaguered Liddy's personal property out the door.

We learned of the brouhaha when an angry inmate bellyached to us that the prison surrenders to every demand Liddy makes. Allenwood warden Eldon Jensen confirmed that Liddy had some trouble with his fellow prisoners. He told us, however, he closed the TV room early due to numerous complaints, not because of Liddy's protest.

Footnote: Last month, we revealed that the Justice Dept. was seriously considering Liddy's petition to commute the rest of his sentence. Justice officials are studying the request and a recommendation will likely be sent to President Carter early this spring.

HEARTBROKEN HOOVER — Behind the bulldog visage of J. Edgar Hoover, who intimidated lawmakers and lawbreakers for decades, was a man acutely sensitive to any criticism of his beloved FBI.

No one defended the bureau more staunchly than Hoover when the Warren Commission complained about the FBI's handling of the investigation into President Kennedy's assassination. But long-secret documents show that Hoover was nearly heartbroken over his

bureau's failings in the JFK probe and felt the commission had "debunked" the FBI forever.

Every morning, the tough-talking director carefully perused clippings from 10 daily newspapers, including the Washington Post and New York Times. But nothing pleased him more than the peppy style and sympathetic viewpoint of the New York Daily News and the now-defunct Hearst papers, the Journal-American and the Mirror.

When the Journal-American got wind of secret FBI files and reported that Hoover would tell President Johnson that Lee Harvey Oswald acted alone, the FBI chief was surprisingly calm. Had the breach of security appeared in a more liberal paper, Hoover probably

would have unleashed his own plumbers to track down the leaker.

Instead, he sent a mild memo to his sidekick Clyde Tolson, commenting wryly: "I assume none of this is coming from the FBI." His aides assured him it wasn't.

Hoover did withhold some information about the killing that could have damaged the FBI's reputation, however. When the Warren Commission report criticized the FBI, Hoover sadly found that even the loyal Journal-American was giving him bad reviews. Solemnly, he underlined the harshest phrases.

In a handwritten note to closest bureau friends, Hoover conceded that the commission report was "a real debunking of the FBI which we will never live down."

Now, after 13 years, the late director's words seem prophetic. For as charges of a coverup have been leveled at the FBI, its actions in the Kennedy investigation are once again being probed by Congress.

Footnote: Hoover's successor, Clarence Kelley, is still trying to clear the air. We reported in January that the FBI withheld from the Warren Commission 23 summaries of Oswald's activities. Kelley told us that all 69 summaries were provided to the commission. Kelley also said the bureau furnished the commission with all pertinent information about potential informants, including the Cuban Sylvia Odio and right-wing activist Joseph Milteer. All allegations about them were investigated and turned over to the commission, Kelley said.

DRUG COURSE — The drug industry's message is now being peddled to congressmen, doctors and officials across the country under the guise of academic respectability.

They recently received an impressive-looking report from the Center for the Study of Drug Development at the University of Rochester. The study, warning that federal regulations are preventing important new drugs from being marketed, is written by G. Frederick Roll.

The study doesn't mention that until last year, Roll was vice president of Smith, Kline & French, a major drug company. Nor does it point out that the center gets half its money from the drug industry, including a \$10,000 grant from Smith, Kline & French.

The National Science Foundation has given the center a \$165,000 grant to study drug regulation, and the Federal Trade Commission has offered a similar contract. But the center's top associate, William Wardell and Louis Lasagna, have spent years testing drugs for companies such as Merck, Lederle & Bristol Labs. Asked what other drug companies finance his center, Wardell said: "We don't have to tell you and we're not going to."