

# 'The Sphinx' breaks silence on Watergate, tells all under oath

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G. Gordon Liddy, once "the Sphinx" of Watergate, is a sphinx no more. For the first time, the one-time White House insider has exchanged an oath of silence for an oath of honesty.



Liddy

"The man who would not break" testified in a deposition filed recently in U.S. District Court in Miami. For the first time under oath, he talks about the range

of sinister plots and dirty tricks and general lawlessness that came to be known, collectively, as Watergate.

There was the plan to import Cuban waiters from Miami and have them slip LSD into the soup of Daniel Ellsberg, the man who stripped the Pentagon Papers of their supersecret status and put them on the front pages of newspapers across the nation.

There was the plan to kidnap, and then drug, leaders of anti-Nixon rallies. The plan was patterned on Gestapo tactics used during the Third Reich.

And there was the plan, again using Miami Cubans, to put an end to alleged breaches of national security caused by the writings of columnist Jack Anderson. The solution — suggested by Liddy — was to put an end to Jack Anderson. He was to be ambushed and killed.

## Ready answers

Liddy readily answered questions about these things and more in the deposition filed before U.S. District Judge Edward Davis. Liddy was called as a defense witness in one of two pending libel suits filed by E. Howard Hunt, Liddy's former co-port and Watergate co-conspirator.

Hunt, a former CIA agent who now makes his home in Miami, is suing authors and publishers who link him with the 1963 assassination of John F. Kennedy.

Much of Liddy's testimony is contained in far greater detail in *Will*, a best-selling autobiography that gives his first-hand version of the scandal that toppled a presidency.

Some critics were unconvinced of Liddy's literary honesty. The deposition, on the other hand, represents the first time Liddy swore to tell the truth about Watergate.

It was, as his attorney noted, "a historic occasion."

In his deposition, Liddy says:

● Both he and Hunt came to Miami to recruit Cubans for Operation Gemstone, a wide-scale intelligence and dirty tricks campaign that came to include break-ins at Democratic National Committee headquarters at the Watergate Hotel in Washington.

"We had perhaps a dozen [Cubans] who were willing to come on board, so to speak," said Liddy, a former FBI agent who now makes his living as a lecturer and author. "Mr. Hunt, to impress upon me the high caliber of these individuals, stated that they had accounted among them for a substantial number of deaths, including two who had been hanged from a beam in a garage. He indicated that these, not he, but these Cuban individuals were connected in some way with organized crime."

## Cubans unidentified

In his book, Liddy said Hunt told him the Cubans were responsible for 22 deaths "so far." The Cubans were otherwise unidentified.

● Hunt came to Liddy in the summer of 1971 and said Charles Colson, onetime special counsel to Nixon, suggested lacing Ellsberg's soup with the hallucinogenic drug. Ellsberg, who had become something of a hero to leftist groups, was to be the featured speaker at a dinner that night.

"The purpose [of the LSD] was to disorient and discredit Dr. Ellsberg," Liddy says. But by the time Colson gave the final go-ahead to drug the soup, "there was insuffi-

cient lead time to follow the plan, which called for the infiltration of our Cuban asset persons as waiters at this function up here in Washington and to introduce the chemical into the soup course of Mr. Ellsberg.

"There was insufficient time to get the Cubans up and into the place to do that. And so the mission had to be canceled, the idea being we would do it at some later time should the opportunity arise." It never did.

● Liddy suggested the name *Nacht und Nebel* — the German words for "night and fog" — for an anti-demonstrator program aimed at kidnaping and drugging leaders of anti-Nixon rallies. The theory was that leaderless rallies would be easy to disperse. "*Nacht und Nebel* was a euphemism used in Germany by the secret police during the Third Reich," Liddy explains. "When they would remove an individual without explanation, the person would be said to have disappeared into the night and fog."

● In February, 1972, "Hunt came to me and said, '[Jack] Anderson has now gone too far. He has just identified and caused the death or imminent death under torture of one of our human assets abroad.'

"He, Hunt, had been charged by his principles, meaning his superiors in the White House, with conferring with me and with someone from the CIA [on] how best to prevent Mr. Anderson from repeating this behavior. Hunt brought up that business of the LSD again. I suggested that the only way effectively to stop Mr. Anderson was to kill him."

Hunt agreed.

## Plans for Hunt

● Liddy made plans to have Hunt killed while the two were in prison together, even though those in the White House never indicated they wanted Hunt killed. Still, Liddy felt he might receive the orders at any time. "I was prepared,

should I receive those orders, to carry them out immediately," Liddy says. The lethal agent would be "one of the most powerful poisons in the world" — pure nicotine. It was to be imbedded in Hunt's food by one of Liddy's mob-connected fellow prisoners. As an alibi, Liddy had himself placed in solitary confinement. "But the order," he noted, "never came."

● Liddy had little to say about the subject of the Hunt's suit and the reason for the deposition itself: Hunt's alleged non-involvement in the Kennedy assassination. But the two men did discuss the fatal shooting.

"The subject of conversation was the speculation that the most reasonable of the conspiracy theories either of us had heard was that Premier Fidel Castro of Cuba, having twice or thrice been the intended victim of aborted assassination attempts initiated by President Kennedy, might well have initiated the assassination of President Kennedy by Mr. Oswald as a defensive measure," Liddy says.