

# Crime novelist to unravel Watergate

BOSTON (UPI) — George V. Higgins had been working as an assistant U.S. attorney in Boston since 1970 writing best-selling crime novels on the side until Atlantic Monthly magazine made him an offer he couldn't refuse — unraveling the Watergate affair.

"I always said I wouldn't leave this job until I could find something more exciting than being a prosecutor," Higgins said in a telephone interview

from his Hingham (Mass.) home.

The 33-year-old novelist has written two crime novels, "The Friends of Eddie Coyle" and "The Digger's Game." Both are best sellers.

The Atlantic Monthly announced Saturday it had commissioned Higgins to write a series of articles on the Watergate scandal. The articles are to be used as the basis for a book to be published by Atlan-

tic Monthly Press.

"It is a perfect marriage," said Robert Manning, editor-in-chief of the magazine. "The country's greatest crime writer covering what promises to be the crime of the century."

To undertake the writing assignment, Higgins has resigned his assistant U.S. attorney's post effective June 15.

Higgins said he plans to "pull things together rather

than report things that have already been reported." The Boston College law school graduate said he wanted to trace "what happened to the lives and personalities" of those involved in the Watergate.

As in his novels where the "characters run the novel," Higgins said he would "let the people involved (in the Watergate) decide how my story turns out.

"I have a typewriter, but not a crystal ball," said the former prosecuting attorney and one-time daily newspaper and wire service reporter.

Higgins said he envisions his account will resemble Truman Capote's "In Cold Blood," a highly detailed non-fiction account of two murderers who killed a Kansas farm family.

In his work as a reporter and later as a prosecuting attorney, Higgins said he spent much of his time "trying to unravel secret agreements.

"There seems to be one or two of those involved in Watergate," he said.