

Last 2 Guilty in

JANUARY 31, 1973

Phone 223-6000

Classified 223-6200
Circulation 223-6100

15c Beyond Washington,
Maryland and Virginia 10c

Watergate Plot

Ex-Aides Of Nixon To Appeal

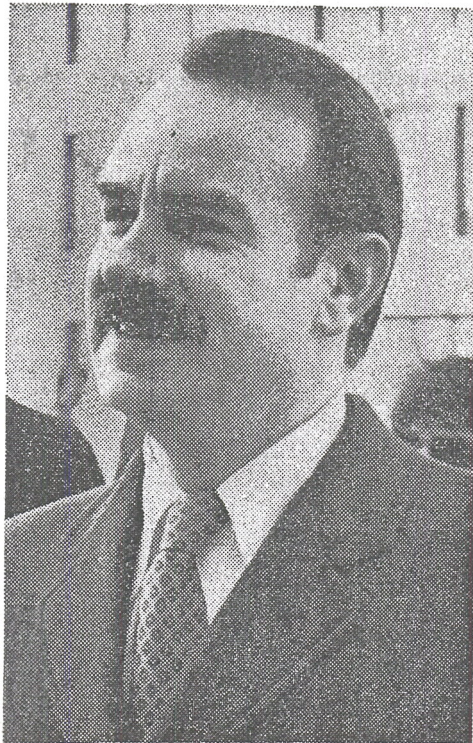
Jury Convicts Liddy, McCord In 90 Minutes

By Lawrence Meyer
Washington Post Staff Writer

Two former officials of President Nixon's re-election committee, G. Gordon Liddy and James W. McCord Jr., were convicted yesterday of conspiracy, burglary and bugging the Democratic Party's Watergate headquarters.

After 16 days of trial spanning 60 witnesses and more than 100 pieces of evidence, the jury found them guilty of all charges against them in just under 90 minutes.

Chief U.S. District Judge John J. Sirica ordered Liddy, who was also a former White House aide, FBI agent and prosecutor, and McCord, a veteran of the CIA and the FBI, jailed without bond. Sirica said he would hold a hearing



G. Gordon Liddy, left, and James W. McCord Jr. arrive at court before conviction.

United Press International

on bail after defense lawyers file formal written motions.

Lawyers for both Liddy and McCord said they would appeal the convictions, with McCord's lawyer attacking the conduct of Judge Sirica during the trial.

Five other men who were indicted with Liddy and McCord, including former White House aide and CIA agent E. Howard Hunt Jr., pleaded guilty early in the trial to all charges against them.

Liddy, 42, had maintained a calm, generally smiling exterior throughout the trial. He stood impassive, with his arms folded, as deputy court clerk LeCount Patterson read the jury's verdict, repeating six times, "guilty," once for each of the counts against him.

McCord, 53, also showed no emotion as Patterson read the word "guilty" for all eight counts against him.

Liddy, former finance counsel for the Committee for the Re-election of the President, could receive a maximum sentence of 35 years. McCord, former security director for the committee, could receive a maximum sentence of 45 years. Sirica set no date for sentencing.

Before being jailed by deputy U.S. marshals Liddy embraced his lawyer, Peter L. Maroulis, patted him on the back, and in a gesture that became his trademark in the trial, gave one final wave to

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the spectators and press before he was led away.

Principal Assistant U.S. Attorney Earl J. Silbert said, after the verdict was returned, that it was "fair and just."

In his final statement to the jury, Silbert told the eight women and four men that "when people cannot get together for political purposes without fear that their premises will be bugged, their conversations bugged, their phones tapped . . . you breed distrust, you breed suspicion, you lose confidence, faith and credibility."

Silbert asked the jury to "bring in a verdict that will help restore the faith in the democratic system that has been so damaged by the conduct of these two defendants and their coconspirators."

Despite repeated attempts by Judge Sirica to find out if anyone else besides the seven defendants was involved in the conspiracy, testimony in the trial was largely confined by the prosecution to proving its case against Liddy and McCord, with occasional mention made of the five who had pleaded guilty. The jury, which was sequestered throughout the trial, was never told of the guilty pleas.

When Hunt pleaded guilty Jan. 11, Sirica questioned him in an attempt to find out if anyone besides the persons indicted was involved in the conspiracy.

Hunt's lawyer, William O. Bittman, blocked Sirica's questions, saying the prosecution had told him it intended to

call Hunt and any other defendant who was convicted to testify before the grand jury.

An apparent purpose of renewed grand jury testimony would be to probe the involvement of others in the bugging. Asked yesterday what steps he now intended to take, Silbert said, "I don't think I'll comment on anything further."

According to testimony in the trial, Liddy was given about \$232,000 in campaign funds purportedly to carry out a number of intelligence-gathering assignments given him by deputy campaign director Jeb Stuart Magruder.

The prosecution said it could account for only about \$50,000 of this money, and that it was used to finance the spying operation against the Democratic Party.

In his argument to the jury, Silbert called Liddy the "mastermind, the boss, the money-man" of the operation.

Maroulis, defending Liddy attempted to put the blame on Hunt, who Maroulis said was Liddy's trusted friend. "From the evidence here, it can well be inferred that Mr. Liddy got hurt by that trust," Maroulis said.

McCord's lawyer, Gerald Alch, told the jury that McCord "is the type of man who is loyal to his country and who does what he thinks is right." At one point, Judge Sirica interrupted and told Alch he was only giving his "personal opinion."

Alch criticized Sirica during a recess, saying the judge "did not limit himself to acting as a judge—he has become in addition, a prosecutor and an

investigator . . . Not only does he indicate that the defendants are guilty, but that a lot of other people are guilty. The whole courtroom is permeated with a prejudicial atmosphere."

Alch said that "in 15 years of practicing law" he had not been previously interrupted by a judge while giving his final argument.

McCord and Liddy were each convicted of the following counts:

- Conspiring to burglarize, wiretap and electronically eavesdrop on the Democratic Party's Watergate headquarters. (Maximum penalty—five years' imprisonment and a \$10,000 fine.)

- Burglarizing the Democratic headquarters with the intent to steal the property of another. (Maximum penalty—15 years imprisonment.)

- Burglarizing the Democratic headquarters with the intent to unlawfully wiretap and eavesdrop. (Maximum penalty—15 years.)

- Endeavoring to eavesdrop illegally. (Maximum penalty—five years' imprisonment and a \$10,000 fine.)

- Endeavoring to wiretap illegally. (Maximum penalty—five years' imprisonment and a \$10,000 fine.)

- Illegal wiretapping. (Maximum penalty—five years' imprisonment and a \$10,000 fine.)

In addition, McCord was convicted of two additional counts:

- Possession of a device primarily useful for the surreptitious interception of oral

communications. (Maximum penalty—five years' imprisonment and a \$10,000 fine.)

• Possession of a device primarily useful for the surreptitious interception of wire communications. (Maximum penalty—five years' imprisonment and a \$10,000 fine.)

Although the total number of years Liddy could be sentenced to adds up to 50 and McCord's total possible sentence adds up to 60 years, neither, according to legal sources, can receive consecutive sentences for both burglary counts.

As a result, Liddy's maximum sentence could be 35 years and a \$40,000 fine and McCord's maximum could be 45 years and a \$60,000 fine.

In addition to Liddy, McCord and Hunt, four men from Miami were named in the indictment—Bernard L. Barker, Frank Sturgis, Virgilio R. Gonzales and Eugenio R. Martinez.

All four pleaded guilty Jan. 15 to the seven counts with which they were charged.

They face maximum sentences of 40 years in jail and fines of \$50,000. The four men were arrested, with McCord, by Washington police in the Democratic Party headquarters at 2:30 a.m. on June 17. The arrests marked the beginning of the Watergate affair.

These five men, dressed in business suits and wearing rubber surgical gloves, had electronic bugging equipment and sophisticated cameras and film. In their possession or their rooms they had \$5,300 in \$100 bills.

The story unfolded slowly. The day after the arrests, it was learned that one of the five men was the security coordinator for the President's re-election committee. That was McCord, one of the two defendants left in the Watergate trial yesterday.

Two days after the break-in, White House consultant Hunt was linked to the five suspects. Hunt pleaded guilty to all counts in the opening days of the trial.

Near the end of July, it was learned that the finance counsel to the Nixon re-election committee was fired because he refused to answer FBI questions about the Watergate bugging and break-in. The counsel was Liddy, a former Treasury and White House aide who was the other defendant to remain in the trial.

On Aug. 1, The Washington Post reported that a \$25,000 cashier's check intended as a contribution to the Nixon re-election effort had been deposited in the Miami bank account of one of the Watergate suspects. The General Accounting Office, the investigative arm of Congress, ordered an immediate audit of the Nixon campaign finances.

The audit report concluded that former Commerce Secretary Maurice H. Stans, the chief Nixon fund-raiser, had a possible illegal cash fund of \$350,000 in his office safe.

The \$25,000 from the cashier's check and another \$89,000 from four Mexican checks passed through that fund, the GAO concluded.

In September, reports surfaced that a former FBI agent and self-described participant in the bugging had become a government witness in the case. He was Alfred C. Baldwin III, who later was to testify that he monitored wire-tapped conversations for three weeks from a listening post in the Howard Johnson Motor Lodge across the street from the Watergate.

On Sept. 15, the federal indictment against the seven original defendants was returned.

The next day, The Post reported that the \$350,000 cash fund kept in the Stans safe was used, in part, as an intelligence-gathering fund. On Sept. 29, The Post reported that sources close to the Watergate investigation said that former Attorney General John N. Mitchell controlled disbursements from the intelligence fund or so-called "secret fund."

On Oct. 10, The Post reported that the FBI had concluded that the Watergate bugging was just one incident in a campaign of political espionage and sabotage directed by the White House and the Nixon committee.

The story identified Donald H. Segretti, a young California lawyer, as a paid political spy who traveled around the country recruiting others and disrupting the campaigns of Democratic presidential contenders.

Five days later, the President's appointments secretary, Dwight L. Chapin, was identi-

fied as a person who hired Segretti and received reports from him. Segretti's other contact was Watergate defendant Hunt. Segretti received about \$35,000 in pay for the disruptive activities from Herbert W. Kalmbach, the President's per-

sonal attorney, according to federal investigators.

This Monday it was announced that Chapin was resigning. Earlier in the trial, Hunt pleaded guilty, and Segretti was not called as a witness in the trial.