

Liddy 'Holds Court' as a Popular Jailhouse Lawyer

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WASHINGTON, May 10—The word among inmates at the District of Columbia jail is: If you want help, see Mr. Liddy.

Mr. Liddy is George Gorgon Liddy, a convicted Watergate conspirator and former lawyer and prosecutor. He has become something of a hero to the inmates of the ancient, huge stone building, according to city officials and jail sources.

The flamboyant Liddy, they say, has set himself up as a jailhouse lawyer for the 700 men who are awaiting trial, sentencing, a hearing or transfer to other institutions.

"He is enjoying the limelight and really holding court," one city official remarked.

'A Folk Hero'

"He is reveling in it and is fascinating the inmates with stories of his exploits, and advising them in their cases," an official reported. "He has become a folk hero among the inmates."

Officials at the jail are concerned about the popularity and activities of Liddy, the jail sources said.

"The authorities are watching him and are suspicious that he is organizing the inmates to complain about con-

ditions," one source reported. "There have been no complaints yet, but they might come. We are also concerned that he is organizing the men to intimidate and harass Mr. Hunt." (E. Howard Hunt Jr., was a co-defendant of Liddy's who pleaded guilty in the Watergate conspiracy.)

"The mere fact that those guys are there presented problems for authorities," the source said. "We don't want anything to happen to them, and Mr. Liddy has been in several scraps already."

Earlier this week Liddy requested and was granted a transfer from Cellblock Four, a minimum security area, to Cellblock One, a maximum security section.

A source said that Liddy had told officials that he wanted to get out of the cellblock with Hunt because Hunt had testified before a grand jury about their spying activities.

"Mr. Liddy was quite perturbed with Mr. Hunt for talking," the source said, "and transfers are granted routinely when an inmate wants to get away from an individual or group of individuals."

Jail sources report that the jail lifestyles of the two men have been the antithesis of each other.

"Mr. Liddy adjusted almost immediately and became

liked instantaneously because he was helping the men by giving legal advice," one source reported.

"When he was in Cellblock Four, the men lined up to talk over their legal problems with him. He sits with them surrounding him as he tells his stories. He is gregarious and is well-received.

"On the other hand," the source reported, "Mr. Hunt is quiet and keeps to himself, mainly waiting only to make a lot of phone calls. Officials are concerned about his possible physical and mental deterioration. When James M. McCord [also a convicted conspirator] started talking to the grand jury, Mr. Hunt got hysterical and at 3 o'clock one morning he began hollering for his lawyer.

"While both men have lost weight," the source continued, "Mr. Hunt seems to be suffering from it more than Mr. Liddy."

2 Were Sentenced

Liddy, Hunt and McCord, along with four other men, broke into the Democratic National Headquarters at the Watergate building complex last June.

Liddy was sentenced to serve from 6 years 8 months to 20 years. In addition, he is now serving a contempt of court sentence for refusing to answer grand jury questions.

He will serve the break-in conspiracy sentence in a Federal prison, but he was placed in the district jail as added pressure to force him to tell all he knows about the case. So far he has refused to cooperate.

Hunt was given a tentative 35-year term and McCord is free on \$100,000 bail pending sentencing.

The District of Columbia jail is a drab, century-old, five-story structure that has a reputation of being easy to escape from. Guards and the authorities live with the fear of inmate rioting or takeover. Last October, for example, the men in Cellblock One overpowered guards and took them and the corrections director hostage for 22 hours before releasing them and surrendering.

Cellblock Four, the minimum security area, houses nonviolent, nondangerous and older inmates usually charged with crimes against property or themselves, such as theft or drug abuse. The men are free to walk around the cellblock.

Cellblocks One and Two are maximum security areas with individual cells, populated by men considered hardened criminals or facing the most serious charges, such as murder or armed robbery.