

Liddy's Father Believes Son Acted 'Under Orders'

Los Angeles Times
 Per 4/10/73

NEW YORK—Loyalty to President Nixon keeps convicted Watergate conspirator G. Gordon Liddy from telling what he knows about the bugging case and other political espionage, Liddy's father has told the Los Angeles Times.

Sylvester Liddy, a prominent New York attorney, believes that his son, a former White House aide, was working "under orders" and that it would be "ridiculous" to suggest he had initiated the bugging operation on his own.

Evidence in the case indicates that his son is a key link to any White House involvement. Another convicted Watergate figure, James W. McCord Jr., has testified before a federal grand jury that Liddy told him that former Attorney General John N. Mitchell and presidential counsel John W. Dean III had personally approved the bugging and that other officials in the White House had advance knowledge of it.

All of those named in the hearsay testimony have denied involvement.

Interviewed at his law office across the street from City Hall here, Liddy's father emphasized he did not know the facts of the case, but added:

"I'm sure if Gordon talked he would say the President had no knowledge of it because even the President's critics don't accuse him of being involved. But my assumption is that Gordon feels that to talk and involve the White House would be disloyal to the President of the United States."

Sources within the Nixon Administration have been circulating rumors among Washington reporters seeking to discredit Gordon Liddy as untrustworthy and mentally unbalanced. His father called the rumors "nauseating" and said he had been disgusted upon reading in Newsweek that the Administration had been "painting Liddy as a flaky, self-promoting adventurer."

Friends and political foes of Gordon Liddy in Poughkeepsie, N.Y., where he served as

assistant district attorney during the late 1960s, agree with his father that he is a man of intense loyalty and determination who probably will never talk if he feels silence is a matter of loyalty or patriotism.

"Anything Gordon did, he had a way of equating it with patriotism, whether rightfully or wrongfully," said Robert Trotta, first deputy public defender of Dutchess County. Trotta frequently defended clients prosecuted by Liddy.

Some acquaintances in Washington, as well as in Poughkeepsie, describe him as almost a fanatic on patriotism.

Among seven persons convicted in the Watergate case, Liddy is the only one to refuse to testify before a federal grand jury here after being granted immunity. His refusal cost him an extra 8-month sentence for contempt of court, tacked on to the six years and eight months he was given in the Watergate case. In his first interview a courtly, 73-year-old senior partner of his law firm, talked of their close relationship and of his son's accomplishments as an FBI agent, a prosecutor and a Nixon Administration official.

Father and son both graduated from St. Benedict Prep School in Newark, N.J., and from Fordham Law School. "And he practiced in this firm for a while," Liddy said. "I'm like most fathers, I guess. I had always hoped he would come back and continue the name Liddy in this firm. But now he stands to be disbarred unless his conviction is reversed on appeal."

The father, who suffers from a heart condition, said he had conferred with Peter Maroulis, of Poughkeepsie, his son's attorney, about the case. And to publicly show his confidence in his son, he said he offered to assist in the defense. "But Gordon thought it would be too much of a strain on me and wouldn't let me do it," he said.

He quoted his son as saying, "Dad, I'm not going to tell you

or anybody else anything about it."

Maroulis said it would violate a confidence to say whether Gordon Liddy told him if others were involved in the case or to say whether he had advised his client to cooperate with the government in its investigation.

The attorney, a close personal friend and former law partner of Gordon Liddy, said his client "is very tight-lipped and always has been."

But he said Liddy is also "very truthful" and "if he ever did talk and denied others were involved, you could believe that, and if he implicated others, you could believe that."

Liddy Reprimanded For Part in Scuffle

Watergate conspirator G. Gordon Liddy and a fellow inmate have been reprimanded by District of Columbia jail officials for a scuffle at the jail last month, authorities said yesterday.

Liddy and the other inmate exchanged a few blows on the morning of March 26 in a dispute over a hairbrush. Liddy suffered a cut on his ear and a bruise on his nose. The other inmate was unharmed.

Jail supt. Anderson Magruder said yesterday that both inmates had been reprimanded and warned that a similar incident in the future would be punished. Magruder said that Liddy had appeared before a disciplinary panel made up of jail officials.

It was learned also that Liddy, a former White House aide who is a lawyer, but cannot practice because of the conviction against him, was represented at the hearing by a third-year law student. Sources said that Liddy had asked to represent himself, but the request was denied.