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**Merry-Go-Round** **SFChronicle** APR 13 1973

# Liddy May Hold Watergate Secrets



**Jack Anderson**

**T**HE TRUTH about the Watergate scandal, it now appears, may be locked behind the clenched mouth of G. Gordon Liddy.

As evidence that he won't talk, Justice Department sources tell us Liddy once held his hand over a burning candle until the flame seared through the flesh of his hand and burned the nerve endings. He merely wanted to prove to a couple of girls in Detroit, say our sources, how tough he was.

Both E. Howard Hunt and James McCord, the other Watergate ringleaders, have now implicated ex-attorney General John Mitchell, White House counsel John Dean and ex-presidential aide Jeb Magruder in the Watergate break-in and bugging. The three have denied any advance knowledge of the illegal activity.

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**O**NLY THE tight-lipped Liddy can give direct testimony. He was the liaison between the higher-ups and the spying-sabotage operation. Hunt and McCord have recited elaborate details, which they swear Liddy gave them about his meetings with Mitchell, Dean and Magruder. But it will take Liddy's testimony to make the case stick.

The "cowboy," as his friends call him, isn't talking. He took an additional sentence for contempt rather than answer questions before a grand jury. And Justice Department sources are convinced that a

man who would hold his hand over a candle flame will sit it out as long as necessary in a jail cell.

White House aides, meanwhile, are spreading the story that Liddy is mentally unbalanced and promoted the whole Watergate adventure himself. This kind of talk could backfire and bring Liddy out of his jail cell with an angry rebuttal.

People who know Liddy describe him as mentally sharp, if slightly eccentric. He had a reputation, they say, for telling the truth. "If he ever did talk and denied others were involved, you could believe that, and if he implicated others, you could believe that," the Los Angeles Times quoted Liddy's former law partner as saying.

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**L**IDDY'S FATHER, Sylvester Liddy, a respected New York attorney, also described the rumors about his son's mental instability as "nauseating" and denounced the portrayal of the younger Liddy "as a flaky, self-promoting adventurer."

We have also established that money was delivered by higher-ups to pay the legal and living expenses of the break-in crew after they were caught at gunpoint in Democratic Party Headquarters. This suggests that the higher-ups, whoever they are, recognized their responsibility for the Watergate crimes.

Meanwhile, Liddy is keeping his mouth shut in jail.