

LIDDY SAID TO DEFY WHITE HOUSE PLEA TO TALK TO JURORS

Jailed Watergate Defendant
Is Reported Informed of
Presidential Interest

STRONGER CASE SOUGHT

Officials Say Ex-Campaign
Leader Remains Silent
to Protect Mitchell

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WASHINGTON, April 22—

G. Gordon Liddy, the leader of the Watergate break-in, has turned down a White House request that he change his mind and begin telling all he knows about the bugging of the Democrats to the Federal grand jury, sources close to the case said today.

The sources said that although he was told about Presidential interest in his case, Liddy was adamant about refusing to cooperate with the Federal prosecutors in the case. Last month the former official of the committee for the re-election of the President was given an additional eight-month sentence for refusing to testify to the grand jury after being granted immunity from future prosecution.

"Liddy believes that the President wants him to cooperate," one source said, "but he still isn't saying anything."

Protection Hinted

Some Government officials are said to believe that Liddy, in refusing to talk, is protecting former Attorney General John N. Mitchell, his old superior at the re-election committee. Liddy is now in the District of Columbia jail.

Liddy attended at least three planning meetings in early 1972 with Mr. Mitchell, John W. Dean 3d, White House counsel, and Jeb Stuart Magruder, a Mitchell deputy on the campaign committee, which have become a focal point of the prosecution inquiry.

Mr. Magruder has accused Mr. Mitchell and Mr. Dean of approving plans for the bugging of the Democratic National Committee headquarters at those sessions. The others deny any such approval was given, although Mr. Mitchell has said that the bugging plan was discussed.

Approval Reported

Henry E. Petersen, Assistant Attorney General who has been put in charge of the case by President Nixon, is said to have some doubts about the Magruder statements and to feel that further confirmation must be obtained to strengthen the Government's case.

Two former members of the Watergate team, James W. McCord Jr. and Frank A. Sturgis, have stated that Liddy repeatedly assured them before the June, 1972, arrests inside the Democrat's offices that their operation had been approved by Mr. Mitchell.

McCord's statements were repeatedly made to Senate investigators and to the grand

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jury since he decided to turn state's evidence one month ago. Mr. Sturgis made a similar statement during a conversation with a reporter for the New York Times in Miami nearly four months ago.

White House involvement in the Liddy situation apparently began within the last two weeks, sources said. One former high-ranking White House aide was said to have met with John Ehrlichman, President Nixon's chief domestic adviser, and to have urged him to get Mr. Nixon personally involved.

Peter L. Maroulis of Pough-

keepsie, N.Y., Liddy's attorney, refused to comment today on possible White House pressure on his client.

Another closely involved Liddy as being "aware" of the White House interest and pleased by it.

"It's important to Liddy to know that the White House is interested in this," the source said.

"Liddy is a man of singular fortitude," he added. "He's going up the river but he's not taking the captains or lieutenants along with him."

Liddy was given a 6-year 8-month sentence last month for his role in heading the bugging operation. It could not be learned how the White House communicated its desires to Liddy, in jail.

Mr. Maroulis, while refusing to discuss that matter, did express distress at what he called

a "despicable" attempt by Earl J. Silbert, the chief Government prosecutor, to influence his client.

Liddy's insistent refusal to talk has dismayed both the prosecution and his friends, who believe that his best chance of getting a significant reduction in his jail term can come only from cooperating.

Mr. Maroulis visited his client twice in the jail last week in an apparent attempt, among other matters, to get him to change his mind.

"The kind of loyalty Liddy has you don't find any more," one source said. "Too bad it was so misguided."

Liddy, a former district attorney in upstate New York, joined the Nixon Administration in 1969 and worked in the Treasury Department and in the White House before transferring to the re-election effort.