

Flamboyant Watergate Defendant

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George Gordon Liddy

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WASHINGTON, Jan. 31— At least one man who knows George Gordon Liddy does not find it surprising that, in a little more than four years, he has gone from an Assistant District Attorney to a defendant in one of the most celebrated criminal trials in recent years. "We

always regarded Man him as someone in the News who would ultimately receive either national fame or notoriety," says Albert Rosenblatt, who now heads the District Attorney's office in Dutchess County, New York, where he and Liddy once worked together. "That was absolutely predictable," Mr. Rosenblatt said. "He was a man of extraordinary ambition."

Liddy's conviction yesterday on charges that he conspired with six others to spy on the Democratic party last spring marked the end of the most bizarre episode in a career that has included a Congressional candidacy and highly paid jobs in the Treasury Department, White House and President Nixon's campaign organization.

Brash and Flamboyant

During the 16-day trial, Liddy exhibited much of the brashness and flamboyance for which he first won a reputation as a gun-toting prosecutor in Poughkeepsie, and which has often gotten him into varying degrees of trouble.

"He would revel in news-making," said one man who worked with him in the District Attorney's office, which he joined in 1966. "He had a brilliant capacity to turn the most routine and monotonous case into what would appear to be an earth-shattering event when he would present it to the newspapers."

After leaving the courtroom during the Watergate trial, the acquaintance noted, Liddy couldn't get his face into the camera quick enough, when most guys hold a newspaper over their face. That's very consistent with what we knew to be his personality."

Liddy's talent for generating publicity—he took public credit for a 1966 drug arrest involving Dr. Timothy Leary after playing what an associate says was "an almost non-existent role" in the case—quickly propelled him to the point where he could challenge Representative Hamilton Fish in 1968 for the Republican nomination in what



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A flair for publicity

was then New York's 28th Congressional District.

Liddy's unsuccessful campaign, which has been described by John S. Dyson, the Democratic candidate that year, as "hyperadrenoid and bitterly anti-Communist," was built around a tough law-and-order theme.

Liddy was still an Assistant District Attorney at the time, and a favorite campaign technique was to remove his coat at public appearances, displaying his shoulder holster. "He knows the answer is law and order, not weak-kneed sociology," read one of his campaign advertisements. "Gordon Liddy doesn't bail them out—he puts them in."

Liddy lost the Republican nomination to Mr. Fish, but won the Conservative party nomination. In the general election, which Mr. Fish won by about 5,000 votes, Liddy decided not to campaign as a Conservative, however, but to publicly support Mr. Fish.

Liddy received 9,000 votes as a Conservative, even though he had been named the Dutchess County chairman of Citizens for Nixon-Agnew two months earlier. In April, 1969, Mr. Fish recommended Liddy for his first Government job as a special assistant to Eugene T. Rosides, Assistant Secretary of the Treasury.

Liddy, a gun fancier since his days as a special agent of the Federal Bureau of Investigation in the late nineteen-fifties and early sixties, was given a special responsibility at the Treasury Department for narcotics and firearms control.

One Treasury official remembers Liddy as a particularly troublesome employe, "a staff man who kept trying to set policy." He recalled that Liddy would write unauthorized letters to Congressmen, for example, and "had his own blinkers on" when it

came to the issue of gun control.

In April, 1971, Liddy made an unauthorized speech against gun controls to the National Rifle Association, and the Treasury official described the incident as "The Last Straw."

Liddy was discharged from the Treasury Department a few months later because "we couldn't control him," the official said, only to be offered a job on the staff of the White House Domestic Council under John D. Ehrlichman.

While working on a White House study relating to the declassification of secret Government papers, Liddy re-

portedly suggested that it would be "a great idea" to bug The New York Times's Washington office in an attempt to find out who had leaked the Pentagon papers to the press.

According to the Los Angeles Times, the Justice Department attorney he had approached with the idea stopped dealing with him as soon as they realized he was serious.

Liddy left the White House in December, 1971, to take a job as general counsel to the Committee for the Re-election of the President at a salary of \$22,800 a year. Four months later, he moved to Mr. Nixon's finance committee where,

one campaign official said, Liddy became "the expert around here on campaign finance law."

It was then, according to the prosecution in the Watergate case, that Liddy and the other defendants "went off on an enterprise of their own" to bug the Democratic party's headquarters at the Watergate office complex.

Liddy was born in New York City on Nov. 30, 1930, to Roman Catholic parents. He followed his father, a Manhattan lawyer, to Fordham University and, after time out for service as an Army officer during the Korean War, to Fordham Law School.