

# Tight-Lipped Liddy Key to Watergate

By Jack Anderson

The 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.

Only 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.

We have carefully investigated the possibility, however, that Liddy may have recruited the Mission Impossible team and ordered the Watergate break-in strictly on his own to satisfy his romantic bent.

We established that he had a fascination for guns; that he distributed to various girls huge pictures of himself beside a police car, gun and flashlight at the ready; that he threatened to kill people who crossed him; that he terrified the youngsters in his neighborhood once by leaping out at them "like Batman" from a garage roof.

My associate Jack Cloherty talked to parents and children in Liddy's neighborhood. They said he sent his own children to bed before dark and be-

came agitated when the neighborhood kids, made noise around his house.

He berated them, chased them and, on one occasion, leaped upon them from a hiding place on the garage roof. Another time, he lay in wait for some loudly talking teenagers, jumped them and slapped one of them around.

After this incident, a delegation of parents called on him to complain about his abuse of the neighborhood children. They noted that his guns were prominently displayed on the dining room table throughout their visit.

Others 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.

Liddy'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 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 where, characteristically, he got into an altercation with another inmate over a hairbrush and wound up with a cut ear and a bruised nose.

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## Sen. Scott Asks Watergate Details

Sen. William L. Scott (R-Va.) yesterday joined other Republicans in asking for "full disclosure" of details of the Watergate affair.

"I feel that there should be full disclosure. The President should tell his subordinates that they are free to give testimony before a congressional committee," Scott told newsmen.

"The more you try to hide something, the more curious people get," Scott said.