

Liddy Note Gets Sentence Changed

Washington

Watergate-conspirator G. Gordon Liddy told a federal judge that he'd been handed an illegal sentence yesterday and got it changed.

Liddy wrote U.S. District Judge John H. Pratt that he couldn't sign a court imposed probation contract because it required him not to associate with known criminals and to stay within the District of Columbia unless he had a probation officer's permission.

"I would be in violation of the contract the moment I signed it," Liddy wrote the judge. "At the present time I live in close association with more than 700 such persons."

Liddy is in the District of Columbia jail serving a contempt sentence for refusing to testify to a Watergate grand jury.

"It would be difficult for me to resist United States marshals attempting to remove me . . . for transfer to another prison," he wrote.

Judge Pratt, who gave Liddy a suspended six-month sentence plus probation for his refusal to testify before a congressional subcommittee, called Liddy into court yesterday.

"I suggest to the court it just lift the suspension," Liddy said.

The judge changed the sentence. It's still two concurrent six months terms, but the judge said: "Execution suspended. Period. The effect of this is you are not on any probation."

In his May 15 letter, Liddy

pointed out that he might not start on probation until his case had been disposed of in the appeals process — which he said might take longer than the six-to-20-year prison sentence he is under for the Watergate break-in.

"In prison, only my body is captive, its physical movement restricted," he added. "My intellect and will are free. Such would not be the case should I enter into a contract of submission of my will to that of a probation officer."

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