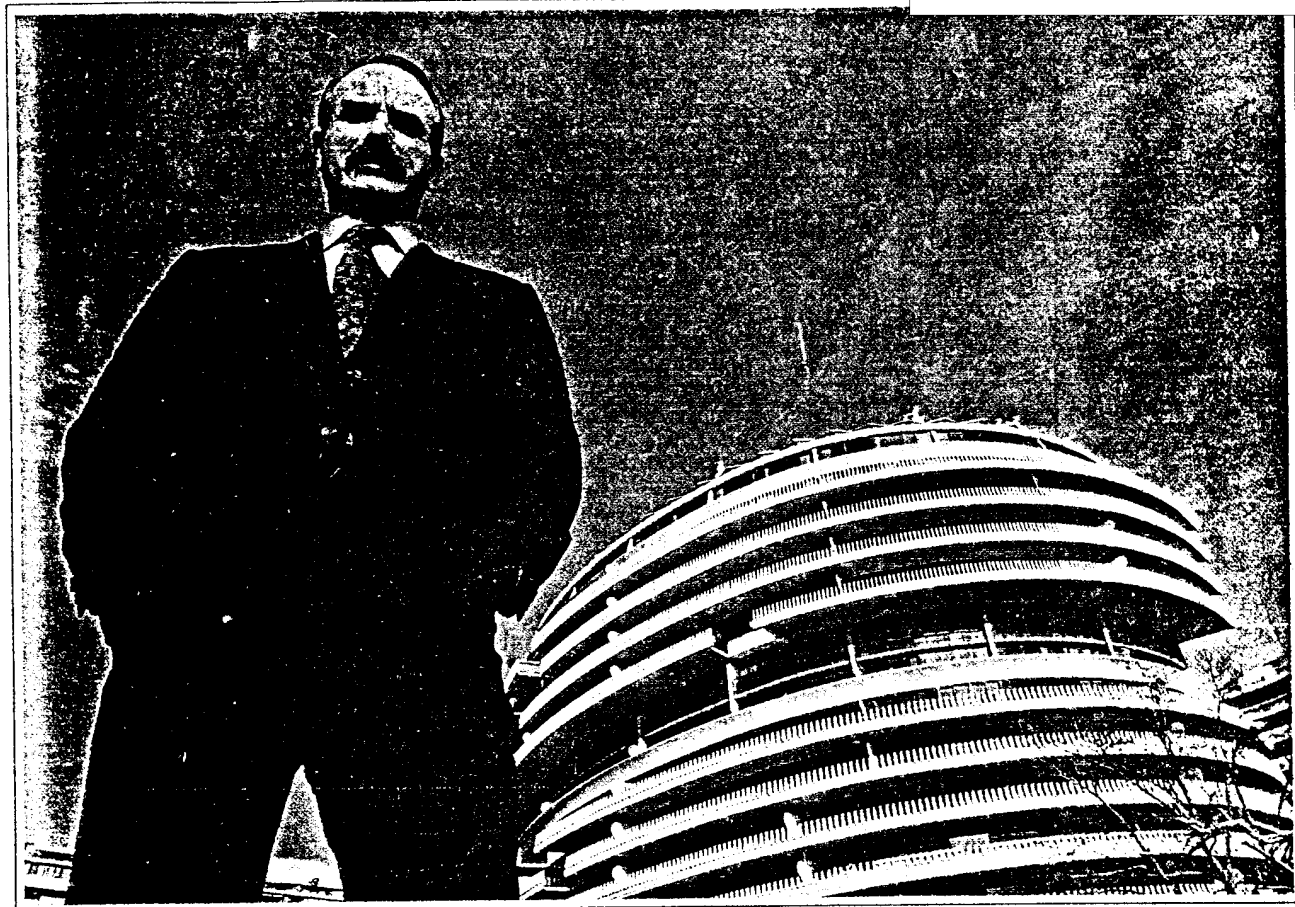


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Special Section



Watergate's Sphinx Speaks

WILL: The Autobiography of G. Gordon Liddy

The date was June 4, 1973, the setting a closed session of Senator Sam Ervin's Watergate Committee. G. Gordon Liddy was scheduled to testify before newsmen and TV cameras. But first he had to be sworn in for preliminary quizzing, and Ervin drawled the routine question: "Do you solemnly swear to tell the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth, so help you God?" Liddy's frank answer to the committee: "No."

It was Liddy's refusal to talk about his role in the Watergate scandal that sent him to prison for a longer term than any other Watergate figure. Convicted of nine felonies, he was sentenced to 20 years in prison and served nearly five before President Carter reduced his sentence. During this time, Liddy steadfastly refused to speak, earning notoriety or, for some, admiration, as "the Sphinx." Now the Sphinx has finally decided to talk. He does so in an autobiography titled simply *Will* (St. Martin's Press; 384 pages; \$13.95). The book, out this week, was kept under tight wraps; a first printing of some 100,000 copies was on its way to U.S. booksellers before they were even aware of its existence.

Why is Liddy finally lifting his self-imposed lid? In a preface he explains that the statute of limitations has run out on the Watergate crimes; thus his story cannot now cause his former colleagues any legal problems. He explains that he has been per-

suaded that he "owes a debt to history." Besides, although he does not mention it, he still has to finish paying off a \$40,000 fine and some \$300,000 in debts to lawyers.

Liddy sticks with a lawyer's precision to those acts in which he was a participant. He does not speculate about what Richard Nixon knew and when he knew it. He describes the reasons behind the Watergate break-ins, adds new detail to accounts of the bungled burglaries and contradicts the testimony of some of the other principal figures. He portrays the CIA as quite willing to involve itself in domestic politics, even providing derogatory cartoons of Ted Kennedy for use if the Senator had decided to seek the 1972 Democratic presidential nomination.

What is most striking about *Will* is what it reveals about the kind of man who will do anything to stop those he sees as his country's enemies. Liddy tells how he plotted to kill Columnist Jack Anderson and drug Daniel Ellsberg for revealing classified information. After Howard Hunt, his Watergate cronny, cooperated with investigators, Liddy fully expected to get, and made plans to carry out, an order to kill him. Liddy remains unrepentant. He regrets only that so many others failed to keep their silence. Perhaps more than any of the Watergate characters, Liddy embodied the principles underlying the scandal that destroyed a President. Some excerpts from his book follow:

Rats, Lightning and Terrors of Childhood

Born on Nov. 30, 1930, George Gordon Battle Liddy grew up in Hoboken, N.J., within a few blocks of the Hudson River docks. His father was a successful Manhattan attorney. The elder of two children, Gordon Liddy was a sickly, timid child.

My first memory: absolute, overwhelming fear.

Lying on the floor as my paternal grandmother lashed me with a leather harness shouting, "Bad! Bad!" Fear. My mother insisting I not use my left hand as she forced me into right handedness. More fear. Coming upon a truck-mounted vacuum, a giant air hose snaking across the sidewalk, suction engine roaring as it cleaned furnaces. Running from the certainty that I would be sucked inside the monster bag. Fear. Soon my every waking moment was ruled by that overriding emotion: fear.

Even in the depths of the Depression, we had a maid. Her name was Teresa. She was a German national. I loved her.

Teresa's country had been, she said, in deep trouble. Now, however, a wonderful man had risen from the people and was solving all their problems. One day Teresa was excited. He was going to be on the radio. Eagerly, I joined her. We could tell when he was about to speak. The crowd hailed him in huge swelling ovations. "Sieg!" someone would shout, and what seemed like all the people in the world would answer with a roar, "Heil!" For he was their leader, der Führer, Adolf Hitler.

When I spoke of this man to my father, he became angry. Adolf Hitler, he said, was an evil man who would loose upon the world all the destruction of war. I was to stop listening to him. I continued to listen, though less frequently. Teresa had said that Adolf Hitler had raised her country from the dead . . . and delivered it *from fear!*

For the first time in my life I felt hope. Life need *not* be a constant secret agony of fear and shame. If an entire nation could be changed, certainly so could one person. I knew what I had to do: To change myself from a puny, fearful boy to a strong, fearless man, I would have to face my fears, one by one, and overcome them.

In 1941 my father bought us a beautiful new house in West Caldwell, N.J. Almost as soon as we arrived my sister acquired a cat she named Tommy. One October day in 1941, Tommy left a dead rat on the kitchen steps and I found it. The carcass was still warm and remarkably undamaged. To demonstrate to myself my lack of fear, instead of using a stick I picked it up with my hands. Then I got the idea for a test to destroy forever any dread I might still harbor for rats. For the next hour, I roasted the dead rat. With a scout knife I skinned, then cut off and ate the roasted haunches of the rat. The meat was tasteless and stringy. Finished, I buried the rest of the carcass. As I stamped down the earth over the remnants of my meal, I spotted the cat, Tommy. I smiled: from now on rats could fear *me* as they feared cats; after all, I ate them too.

On a Saturday afternoon in September, the western sky blackened and the wind rose. Thunder began far away. Soon I could see the glow of lightning. I left the house quietly by the back door. I brought with me a 4-ft. safety belt I'd fashioned with a clothesline rope, a D-ring and a metal snap link.

The tree I had chosen was a pin oak about 75 ft. tall. Some 60 ft. up I lashed myself to the trunk with the belt. My eyes were closed—against the stinging rain, I told myself, knowing it was a lie. I didn't want to see the great blue flashes of lightning. *Open your eyes, I commanded myself, OPEN YOUR EYES!* I did. It was chaos. The earth danced as the tree trunk swayed and snapped back against the wind.

There was a short, enormous tearing sound that overwhelmed the screaming of the wind, and the world turned strobe

blue. The instantaneous thunderclap was an explosion of such short duration and intensity it sounded like a twelve-gauge-shotgun blast six inches from my ear. I had been holding my breath. I let it out with a shout of pure joy. I was still alive! I shook my fist at the wildly pitching sky. "Kill me!" I shouted. "Go ahead and try! I don't care! I DON'T CARE!"

Liddy wept when World War II ended, for he had missed it. Eager for combat during the Korean War, Liddy, fresh from Fordham, was assigned instead as an Army lieutenant to antiaircraft batteries in New York City. After his discharge, he met "the woman I wanted to bear my children," Frances Ann Purcell: "A Teuton/Celt of high intelligence, a mathematical mind, physical size, strength and beauty, she had it all." Liddy finished Fordham law school, passed the New York bar exam in July 1957, and in September was sworn in as an FBI agent. "I submitted a memo on Frances [to the FBI] and had her checked," he writes. "She was clean." The two were married on Nov. 9, 1957, as Liddy was finishing training at the FBI Academy. At the wedding ceremony, Liddy wore a gun under his morning coat.

I enjoyed two kinds of training the most; firearms and "defensive tactics." I learned how to take a gun away from a man and to tear off his trigger finger into the bargain. I learned to kill a man with no more than a pencil; to maim; to blind.

But firearms training was my favorite. I wanted to be the best gunfighter in the world. During lunch break, I'd spend most of the time taking advantage of the unlimited supply of ammunition. Soon the inside flesh of my trigger finger was worn off, and I was wiping my blood from the trigger when I cleaned my revolver at the end of the day. I obtained a product called Nu-Skin, a quick-drying plastic coating that resembled clear glue, and coated my trigger finger with it, then fired until that, too, was worn off.



Facing the fear of lightning

On to Watergate

Finding it difficult on his FBI salary to support his wife and a family that had grown to three (and later to five) children, Liddy joined his father's law firm in 1962. Liddy in 1968 campaigned hard for Richard Nixon's election to the presidency, leading to an appointment as a special assistant in the Treasury Department in 1969. In June 1971, he shifted to the White House and was assigned to a secret group that was to become known as the "plumbers." The group was headed by Egil ("Bud") Krogh, deputy assistant to the

President, and David Young, a former assistant to Henry Kissinger. Howard Hunt, a former CIA agent, was Liddy's co-worker. Their priority was to discredit Daniel Ellsberg, whose release of the Pentagon papers, a secret study of U.S. involvement in Viet Nam, to the New York Times, had enraged Nixon. In a nighttime raid, they ransacked the files of Dr. Lewis Fielding, a Los Angeles psychiatrist whom Ellsberg had consulted. But they found nothing.

In September of 1971 Howard Hunt approached me on the next Ellsberg neutralization proposal. Ellsberg was scheduled to speak at a fund-raising dinner in Washington, and Chuck Colson [special counsel to the President] thought it an opportunity to discredit him. Could we drug Ellsberg enough to befuddle him. make him appear a near burnt-out drug case?

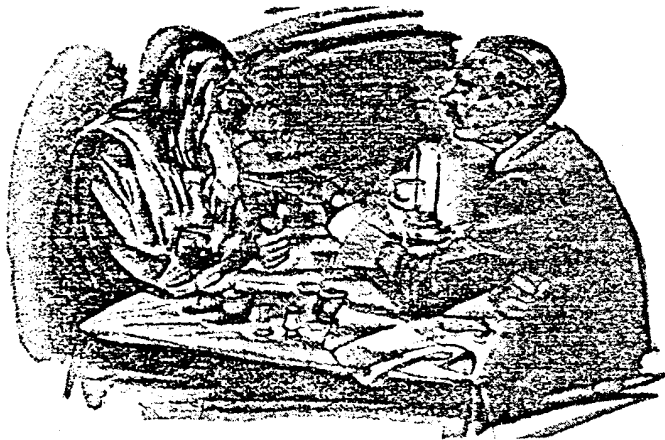
Hunt and I developed a plan to infiltrate enough waiters to ensure that one of our people would serve Ellsberg. One of the earliest dishes on the menu was soup, ideal for the rapid absorption and wide dispersal of a drug. Hunt was certain that he could provide men from the Miami Cuban community; the drug would be a fast-acting psychedelic such as LSD 25 he said he could get from the CIA. The plan went through Colson. We waited and waited for an answer, but when it finally came in the affirmative, there was no longer enough lead time.

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Prelude to Political Spying

In the late fall of 1971, John Dean, counsel to the President, asked Liddy to set up "an absolutely first-class intelligence operation" to ensure Nixon's re-election in 1972. Liddy said such an effort would cost \$1 million. "No problem," he quotes Dean as replying. Liddy and Hunt set about recruiting people for the operation.

In California I attempted to recruit one woman, Sherry Stevens, who was ideal as a plant. She was flashily good-looking, young, had secretarial skills and experience, and appeared able to attract men sexually if she wished. At dinner Miss Stevens seemed reluctant, and when I told her that her identity would be revealed to no one, she pointed out that I would know her identity. I told her that no one could force me to disclose anything I chose not to reveal. She didn't believe me. I told her to light her cigarette lighter and hold it out. She did and I placed my hand,



Impressing a skeptical prospect with the power of his will

palm down, over the flame. Presently the flesh turned black and when she smelled the scent of burning meat, Sherry Stevens pulled the lighter away from my hand. Pale, Miss Stevens said she was sure I would never betray her, but excused herself as a candidate, invoking a just remembered plan to marry a Swiss airplane pilot in September of 1972. She asked to be taken home.

At her apartment Miss Stevens appeared even more fearful, saying she hoped "you won't go down in flames" if she didn't offer to sleep with me.

"My God," I said, "is that what you thought all this was about? Weren't you listening to what I was saying?"

"Well, I wasn't sure."

"Be sure. I want you for the job. No strings attached."

Stevens turned the job down. No matter. Liddy, who had become the counsel for Nixon's re-election committee as a front for his intelligence assignment, was soon asked to lay out his million-dollar operation. With handsome, 3-ft. by 4-ft. charts provided by the CIA, he readied a Madison Avenue-style presentation for Attorney General John Mitchell.

We met Mitchell in his small inner office. At my request there was an easel set up. I greeted the Attorney General and, as Magruder [Jeb Stuart Magruder, deputy director of the Committee to Re-Elect the President] seated himself in front of the desk with Dean, I set up my charts.

The plan was given the overall name of GEMSTONE, and although most components bore the names of a precious or semiprecious stone, some were named for minerals. I started with operation DIAMOND.

DIAMOND was our counterdemonstration plan. At the time, we still expected the [Republican] convention to be held in San Diego. I proposed to identify protest leaders, kidnap them, drug them, and hold them in Mexico until after the convention was over, then release them unharmed. The sudden disappearances, which I labeled on the chart in the original German, *Nacht und*

Nebel (Night and Fog), would strike fear into the hearts of the leftist guerrillas [as would] the team slated to carry out the plan as a "Special Action Group." When John Mitchell asked "What's that?" I knew that Mitchell, a naval officer in World War II, would get the message if I translated the English "Special Action Group" into German. It was a gross exaggeration, but it made my point. "An *Einsatzgruppe, General*," I said, inadvertently using a hard *g* for the word *General* and turning it too into German. "These men include professional killers who have accounted between them for 22 dead so far, including two hanged from a beam in a garage."

RUBY concerned the infiltration of spies into the camp of Democratic contenders, then [into that of] the successful candidate. COAL was the program to furnish money clandestinely to Shirley Chisholm of New York to finance her as a contender and force Democratic candidates to fight off a black woman, bound to generate ill feeling among blacks and, we hoped, with women. EMERALD would use a chase plane to eavesdrop on the Democratic candidate's aircraft and buses when his entourage used radio telephones. QUARTZ emulated the technique used by the Soviet Union for microwave interception of telephone traffic.

For use in gathering information at the Democratic National Convention at Miami Beach, Hunt and I had an option to lease a large houseboat moored within line of sight of the Fontainebleau. This would enable it to be used as a communications center for CRYSTAL—electronic surveillance. With a lush bedroom featuring a large mirror over the big king-sized bed, the houseboat would double as headquarters for SAPPHIRE because it was from there that our prostitutes were to operate. They were not to work as hookers but as spoiled, rich, beautiful women who were only too susceptible to men who could brag convincingly of the importance of what they were doing at the convention. The bedroom would be wired for sound.

I presented a plan for four black-bag jobs, OPALS I through IV. They were clandestine entries at which microphone surveillances could be placed, as well as TOPAZ: photographs taken of any documents available, including those under lock. One entry would be held in reserve for any target of opportunity Mitchell wished to designate.

Next I presented plans for GARNET: counterdemonstrations by groups that would be perceived by most Americans to be repulsive as they advocated the candidacy of Democratic candidates of our selection.

The largest disruption operation, TURQUOISE, was reserved for the Democratic National Convention itself. We had paid well to acquire the entire blueprints for the convention hall and all its support machinery. The plan called for a commando team of Cubans to slip into the hall and sabotage the air-conditioning units by destroying the compressors and introducing grit into the bearings of the blowers. Even John Mitchell smiled as I asked them to imagine those Democrats when, in the 100° Miami summer weather, all the air conditioning went out and the temperature inside the hall reached 110° or more.

When I had finished, John Mitchell said, "Gordon, a million dollars is a hell of a lot of money. I'd like you to go back and come up with something more realistic."

"Yes, sir," was all I said. I walked out with fire in my eyes. I unloaded on both Dean and Magruder. "What's going on?"

Magruder was solicitous. "It may be that there just isn't the money for intelligence and dirty tricks they thought would be available. You're going to have to cut out the most expensive stuff. Try half a million."

In a second meeting with Mitchell, Liddy presented a cutdown version of his plan (hookers, but no houseboat, for example). Mitchell said he'd have to "think about it." At this point, writes Liddy, John Dean interposed an objection—not, as Dean has said, that such matters should not be discussed in the Attorney General's office, but that "I don't think a decision on a matter of this kind should come from the Attorney General's office. I think he should get it from somewhere else—completely unofficial channels." Liddy seethed, since that would delay a decision.

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Plotting to Kill Jack Anderson

On a brisk February day shortly thereafter, Howard Hunt and I had lunch with a physician retired from CIA, an expert on what Hunt called "the unorthodox application of medical and chemical knowledge." Hunt introduced me under my operational alias, "George Leonard." We lunched in the Hay Adams Hotel, just across Lafayette Park from the White House. The purpose of the luncheon, Hunt had explained to me previously, was to prepare, for the approval of Hunt's "principal," a plan to stop columnist Jack Anderson. Hunt and I often used the term "my principal" rather than identify our superiors. I, at least, had several. Hunt, to my knowledge, had only one: Chuck Colson.

Anderson, Hunt reported, had now gone too far. As the direct result of an Anderson story, a top U.S. intelligence source abroad had been so compromised that, if not already dead, he would be in a matter of days. That was too much. Something had to be done.

We did not mention Anderson's name explicitly. Hunt urged the use of LSD on the steering wheel of the "target's" automobile to cause him to hallucinate at a public function and thus be discredited. The doctor shot down that idea on the ground that CIA experience with the drug had demonstrated the unpredictability of individual reaction.

I took the position that, in a hypothetical case in which the target had been the direct cause of the identification and execution of one of our agents abroad, halfway measures were not appropriate. I urged as the logical and just solution that the target be killed. Quickly.

My suggestion was received with immediate acceptance. Hunt asked whether a massive LSD dose might not cause such disruption of motor function that the driver of a car would lose control of it and crash. The doctor repeated his earlier negative advice on the use of LSD. Besides, though LSD *can* be absorbed through the skin, our hypothetical target might be wearing gloves against the winter cold, or be chauffeur-driven.

I submitted that the target should just become a fatal victim of the notorious Washington street-crime rate. No one argued against that recommendation and, at Hunt's suggestion, I gave the doctor a \$100 bill, from Committee to Re-Elect the President intelligence funds, as a fee for his services. Afterward, Hunt and I decided to suggest that the assassination of Jack Anderson be carried out by Cubans already recruited for the intelligence arm of the Committee to Re-Elect the President.

"Suppose," said Hunt, "my principal doesn't think it wise to entrust so sensitive a matter to them?"

I thought of that U.S. agent abroad, dead or about to die. If Hunt's principal was worried, I had the answer. "Tell him," I said, "if necessary, I'll do it." [Hunt later told Liddy to "forget" the Anderson plot.]

Near the end of April, Magruder sent word that he wanted to see me. "Gordon, do you think you could get into the Watergate?" I said, "Yes. It's a high-security building, but we can do



Pitching spying schemes to Magruder (left), Dean and Mitchell

it." "How about putting a bug in [Democratic National Chairman Larry] O'Brien's office?"

"All right, we can do that."

"The phones too?"

"That's easy."

"Get in there as soon as you can, Gordon. It's important."

The First Watergate Break-In

The plan to break into Democratic national headquarters in an office in the Watergate Hotel complex was worked out by Liddy and Hunt, who recruited five Cuban Americans to help. Liddy also enlisted James McCord, chief of security at the Committee to Re-Elect the President, as the electronics expert. A break-in attempt in May 1972 succeeded, but the key listening device planted by McCord and the Cubans did not seem to be working. Liddy's superiors grew impatient.

On Monday, 12 June, Magruder called me up to his office again. He suddenly became agitated and exclaimed, "Here's what I want to know." He swung his left arm back behind him and brought it forward forcefully as he said, "I want to know what O'Brien's got right here!" At the word *here* he slapped the lower left part of his desk with his left palm, hard. "Take all the men, all the cameras you need. *That's* what I want to know!"

When Magruder said "Here!" he was referring to the place he kept his derogatory information on the Democrats. Whenever he had called me in to verify some rumor about, for example, Jack Anderson, it was from there that he withdrew whatever he already had on the matter. *The purpose of the second Watergate break-in was to find out what O'Brien had of a derogatory nature about us, not for us to get something on him or the Democrats.*

Gordon Strachan [assistant to H.R. Haldeman, Nixon's Chief of Staff] called me to the White House and told me that the original submissions from the electronic surveillance were unsatisfactory. I assumed he was speaking for Haldeman, so I repeated what McCord had told me of the technical problem and that we intended to correct it by going back in shortly.

On Thursday, 15 June, I went to the meeting with Mitchell.* At one point, I told him: "General, we've identified the exact suite McGovern's going to be using during the convention, and we've got a little surprise cooked up for him. Just as the press arrives for one of his interviews, we're gonna have a bunch of really filthy zonked-out hippies swarm in there, all wearing McGovern buttons and carrying his signs. Then, just as the television and press get their cameras going, and with McGovern standing there, helpless, every dirty hippie there is gonna whip it out and take a leak, right there in front of everybody. They'll never be able to get the stink out of the carpet so he'll have to move, and no way they'll be able to keep quiet why."

Everybody laughed—*except* John Mitchell. I knew, of course, that the Republican convention had been moved from San Diego to Miami. What I *didn't* know was that after the Democrats moved out and the Republicans moved in, John Mitchell would be staying in the suite just vacated by George McGovern.

Mitchell didn't *laugh*, he *roared*: "God damn it, Liddy; that's where *I'm* staying. You better *not* have any hippies pissing all over my rug!" When I rose to leave, Mitchell said, with a twinkle in his eye, "I mean it; keep those weirdos out of my room."

"Yes, sir." I smiled and left to tell Howard Hunt to call off "Pissers for McGovern."

The Ill-Fated Second Entry

About 11 o'clock McCord came in [to Room 214 of the Watergate Hotel] and said that he'd already taped the garage-level doors by the simple expedient of going in the lobby and down the stairwell. He now wanted to go back to the observation post.

*Liddy claims that at this meeting he placed on Mitchell's desk an envelope containing transcripts of intercepted Watergate conversations. Mitchell has testified that he never saw such transcripts.

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With Hunt (right) and former CIA expert plotting a murder at lunch

At about 12:45 a.m. McCord phoned to say "It's clear" and that he was on his way over. Within a few minutes McCord, Barnard Barker and Eugenio Martinez were back wearing troubled expressions. McCord said that when they had gotten down to the garage-level doors they found that the tape he had put across the locks earlier had been removed. Hunt wanted to abort. McCord said Virgilio Gonzalez was unlocking the doors from the garage side so we could go forward or not, however it was decided.

The decision was up to me. I knew that lock-taping was a common, if disapproved practice of maintenance personnel in large buildings. That should not have alarmed the guard, who could be expected to remove it. I decided to send the men in.

The team of five did go through that garage-to-stairwell door and on up the stairs—failing to remove the now-functionless tape from the door. This was fatal since it was only after finding the same door taped a second time that the guards called the police.

Just after 2 a.m. there was a transmission over the radio: "There's flashlights on the eighth floor." I repeated the news to Hunt. We agreed that it was probably one of the two guard forces making a 2 a.m. door check.

Another transmission seemed to support our theory: "Now they're on the seventh floor."

There was a pause, then came the query, in a wondering tone: "Hey, any of our guys wearin' hippie clothes?"

It was only then that Hunt and I realized that something was very wrong.

"Negative. All our people are in business suits. Why?"

"They're on the sixth floor now. Four or five guys. One's got on a cowboy hat. One's got on a sweatshirt. It looks like . . . guns! They've got guns. It's trouble!"

I hit the mike switch: "Are you reading this? Come in! That's an order!" That brought the last transmission we were to receive from the entry team. A whispered voice said, simply and calmly: "They got us."

Hunt and I walked easily past the desk to the front door and the street. The place was swarming with police and squad cars.

It was about 3 a.m., when I eased my way into the bedroom, trying not to awaken Fran. After a moment she stirred.

"Is that you?"

"Yes."

"Anything wrong?"

"There was trouble. Some people got caught. I'll probably be going to jail."

The Cover-Up Begins

I went to a secure phone in the Sit Room [White House Situation Room]. When the White House operator got Jeb Magruder in California, I told him that I had an urgent message for John Mitchell that had to be delivered before his noon press con-

ference and over a secure phone. In the Situation Room I had access to a KYX scrambler. The Situation Room personnel told me that the closest KYX to Magruder was at an Air Force missile base nearby, and I told Magruder to go there.

"Why? I can't just go wandering off to some missile base and ask to use the scrambler on your say-so. Be reasonable!"

Good old Magruder. If the plane was crashing he'd object to the inconvenience of putting on a parachute.

"Listen, Jeb, Goddamn it. Get your ass to a secure phone and call me, or I guarantee by noon Mitchell will be building you a new one." I hung up.

Magruder called me back in a short while. "I haven't got long. What's the problem?"

I told him that five of my men had been arrested in the Watergate and that it could compromise the committee.

"You mean it can be traced?" Magruder reacted with horror in his voice. "How can that be, Gordon? You said . . ."

"Because one of them's Jim McCord, that's why. He's under an alias, but I don't know how long it'll hold up."

"You used McCord? Why, Gordon? Why?"

"Listen, Jeb, this is not time for recriminations. I take responsibility, O.K.? But that's not the problem now. The problem is Mitchell's got a press conference out there at noon. He could get questions on this. He's got to know and have a statement ready or he could be sandbagged."

I was called to the phone [again]. Magruder had a message for me from Mitchell.* I was to find Dick Kleindienst, the Attorney General, and ask him to get McCord out of jail immediately. "Tell him 'John sent you' and it's a 'personal request from John.' He'll understand."

I didn't argue. From experience as a prosecutor I knew that the number of people involved in trying to effect a request like that could only make matters worse. But an order from John Mitchell to pass along a message was not to be disobeyed. I found Kleindienst at the Burning Tree golf course, seated at a table in the middle of the dining room, lunching with others. I caught his eye and gestured to him. He caught my signal and made his way to me. I told him that I had a personal message from John Mitchell and we'd need privacy. Kleindienst nodded toward a locker area. Kleindienst asked: "What's this about John?"

I asked Kleindienst whether he'd heard of the arrests in the Watergate, and he said, "Yeah, Henry Petersen [Assistant Attorney General] called me this morning. What about it?"

I told him that the break-in was an operation of the intelligence arm of the Committee to Re-Elect the President; that the men arrested were our people working under my direction. I told him that all were arrested under aliases but that one, James McCord, was also on the regular committee payroll under his true name.

"Jesus Christ!" interjected Kleindienst.

I told Kleindienst that the message I was to deliver was from John Mitchell, and he interrupted to ask if I had received it from Mitchell directly. I told him I had not; that it came through Magruder. I was very uncomfortable because I knew the message was a bad idea, so I said, "I don't know how you can do this, but I'm supposed to tell you that it's a 'personal request from John.' Anyway, he wants you to help get McCord out of jail right away—before it's found out who he really is."

Kleindienst looked stunned. I said, "I know. There's no way you can even try without it getting out. Then what happens to you?"

Kleindienst exploded. "Me? What happens to the President if I try a fool thing like that? Jesus Christ! What did you people think you were doing in there?"

I started to explain, but Kleindienst waved me off. "God," he said, "this is terrible. I can't imagine John Mitchell asking me to do a thing like that." Then, abruptly, his speech grew crisp again. "You tell whoever it was that John Mitchell knows me well enough to call me himself if he has anything more like that to say to me. And tell them I can't do it—won't do it. For the President's

*This account conflicts with the testimony of Magruder, who claimed that this telephone call had been made by Robert Mardian, former head of the Justice Department's Internal Security Division.

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sake I'm going to handle this one just like any other case."

Kleindienst's words articulated forcefully and concisely the unspoken attitude and criterion that I had found myself applying instinctively to Watergate: "Never mind what happens to me. What happens to the President if I do that?"

Walking with John Dean

On 12 June, John Dean let me know he wanted to see me in his office in the Old Executive Office Building. He was waiting in the hall. He was nervous, saying only, "Let's go for a walk."

It was obvious that Dean didn't want to be seen with me if he could avoid it. His attitude meant I was hot. We walked into the park and sat down. Turning to Dean I said: "Am I correct in assuming that you're the damage control action officer for this problem?"

Dean looked a bit puzzled by that, but said, "Yes, Gordon; you could put it that way."

"I'm not playing games, John; it's just that I have to know how much you need to know. If you're the action officer, then you need to know it all. D'you follow me?"

Dean nodded his head.

"O.K. The first thing I want to say is that I was commanding the aircraft carrier when it hit the reef. I accept full responsibility. All of the people arrested are my men. You remember the intelligence operation you recruited me for and those meetings in the AG's office?"

Dean didn't like being reminded. He cut me off with "Gordon, there's something I've got to know right away. Did anyone in the White House know you were going there—I mean specifically?"

I remembered a conversation I'd had with Gordon Strachan about repairing a defective transmitter planted in the Watergate.

"Gordon Strachan," I said. "I don't know that he knew the exact day we were going back in there, but . . ."

"Back in?"

"Yeah."

"How about Colson? Did he know?"

"Not unless Hunt told him, and I have no reason to believe he did."

Dean looked relieved, and I continued: "Look, if they're worried over there that someone called over from the White House and said 'go in,' or 'go back in' the Watergate, you're talking to the wrong guy. Magruder sent us in there. He was the one pushing for it. Who, if anybody, was pushing Magruder from the White House you'll have to ask him. I don't know. They certainly didn't call me. Strachan knew I was going back in, but he didn't give me the order, Magruder did."

Dean looked at me closely. "Did Magruder authorize you to use McCord?"

"No. That was my mistake. I promised there'd never be any link. I meant it when I said it. By the time the program finally got approved, McCord was the only game in town and I used him. I shouldn't have. Magruder never knew about McCord."

Dean rose to leave and I stopped him. "Wait a minute, John. You've got to know something else."

Reluctantly, Dean sat back down.

"McCord's all right. He's a professional—FBI and CIA. So are the Cubans. They won't talk. But on a worst-case basis, you've got to know what they *could* say."

I told Dean about the Fielding entry to get Daniel Ellsberg's psychiatric file. He turned white.

"Jesus," he said. Then "Anything more?"

"No. But I think it's imperative we get them bailed out. That D.C. jail's a hellhole, especially in summer, and they were promised that kind of support . . ."

"What kind of support?"

"The usual in this line of work. Bail, attorney's fees, families taken care of . . ."

Then Dean said something he later claimed he did not say. "That goes without saying. Everyone'll be taken care of." The look on his face was decidedly troubled. Well he might be. He knew that without me no investigation could reach higher. I knew I would never talk, but he and those above him couldn't be absolutely sure of that. Except one way. It occurred to me that people who would seriously consider the use of drugs against Ellsberg and the killing of Jack Anderson might well decide to go ahead with an assassination in my case. The stakes were immensely higher and, after all, it *was* my fault.

"Look, John. I said I was the captain of the ship when she hit the reef and I'm prepared to go down with it. If someone wants to shoot me just tell me what corner to stand on and I'll be there. O.K.?"

Dean searched my face to see whether I was joking. I wasn't and he could see that. "Well, uh," he stammered, "I don't think we've gotten *there* yet, Gordon."

Then Dean said, "Where's Hunt these days?"

"Lying low. The reporters are after him. Why?"

It was at this moment, and not later, on the telephone after talking to [Nixon's chief domestic adviser, John] Ehrlichman, that Dean said: "Well, for that reason, and what you've told me [which I took to be a reference to the Ellsberg matter], I think he'd be better off out of the country. Does he have some place he can go?"

"Most of his family's in Europe right now. He could join them, I suppose."

"Good. Have him do that. The sooner the better. Today, if possible."

I stuck out my hand. "Sorry about the way things turned out, John."

Dean took my hand and shook it listlessly. "Yeah," he said. "It sure is a mess."

On Saturday, 6 January, two days before my trial was to start, I received a telephone call while in my bedroom: "Gordon, I think you'll recognize my voice."

I did. It was John Dean.

"Gordon, I want to assure you. Everyone's going to be taken care of—everyone."

"Oh?" Dean was repeating almost verbatim his assurances of 19 June, but now he went into detail.

"Absolutely. First, you'll receive living expenses of \$30,000 per annum. Second, you'll have a pardon within two years. Three, we'll see to it you're sent to Danbury prison. And fourth, your legal fees will be paid."

Boy, I thought, with the trial only 48 hours away, they're not taking any chances.

Waiting to Kill—or Be Killed—in Prison

In his 4½ years behind bars, Liddy shuttled in and out of eight prisons. After being baited by black inmates both for being white and for his Watergate work for Nixon, Liddy won the respect of many fellow convicts by providing effective legal advice and by showing that he too was tough.

In prison, it made sense to be careful. I decided to tune up my will so as to be ready for anything. The first thing I did was limit my food intake to 600 calories per day. This induced sharp hunger day and night. The discipline was excellent and worth the severe weight loss. I increased the number of push-ups I did daily from 100 to 200 (in sets of 100) added jumping jacks, jogging along the exterior of the cells and sit-ups. Things were going very well, too well, I decided. I needed more stress to bring my will to maximum power. I turned to my old reliable method of ordeal by fire. This test would have to exceed all others in destruction of tissue and time of severe pain.



Dean to Liddy: "It sure is a mess"

CONTINUED

I selected a particularly strong-willed black bank robber named Tex. Ready with a box of wooden matches, I got him into a discussion of the subject and pressed him to the point where he challenged me. Because I had been warned never again to indulge that practice near or on finger joints and my palm was already burned out, I had to use my forearm.

"Strike a match," I said to Tex, and locked my eyes into his. He struck it and held it out. I put the outside of my left forearm directly over the flame. As the fire burned through my flesh and melted it back into a blackened depression, a look of horror came over Tex. The match burned down and scorched his fingers before he dropped it. He looked at the burn unbelievably, then looked ill, got up, and left.

All the nerves in the roughly oval 1½ in. by 2 in. area had been destroyed. There was just a deep ache in the center with the severe burning sensation confined to the less destroyed circumference. The burn was treated in the prison hospital. Finally satisfied that my will remained invincible, I was ready.

Back at the D.C. jail I recalled that Dean had responded to my offer to permit my life to be taken by saying that we had not yet reached that point. That led me to the thought that the White House might be concerned that Hunt, also in the D.C. jail, might talk to the grand jury. Dean might now suggest to the President that *Hunt* would have to be killed. In that event it was reasonable to expect orders to execute such a decision.

By now I knew that the fee for a killing in the D.C. jail was two "boxes" [cartons of cigarettes]. I'd be an immediate suspect were *Hunt* to be killed, so it would have to be a contract sanction, and I'd have to arrange an airtight alibi. That would be easy; just have myself put back in deadlock [a maximum security cell] prior to the event. I sought the advice of a gangland figure I knew and could trust.

My friend was sharp and quickly nodded his understanding, but jumped to the conclusion I was referring to McCord, now free on bond. He offered immediately to have McCord shot. I had to explain that I appreciated his offer but had someone else in mind.

I explained carefully that I had *not* yet received orders to kill *Hunt*, and that under no circumstances was he to be harmed without my specific authorization. That precaution out of the way, we decided quickly upon the method. *Hunt* received special meals because of his history of ulcers. His "diet tray" was served to him in his cell rather than in the mess hall on the first floor. Should I be ordered to kill *Hunt*, he would be served a special meal indeed. It would contain a lethal poison.

Hunt was going back and forth from the D.C. jail to testify before the Watergate grand jury. On Wednesday, 2 May, 1973, *Hunt* came back in an agitated state. I suspected the worst. We met in the small "card room" that the Cubans occupied at the end of the cell block. *Hunt* waited until we were all seated before he spoke.

"There's no sense holding out any longer," *Hunt* began, "they know everything."

"What do you mean, 'everything'?" I interrupted.

"I mean they've got it all. They know all about the Beverly Hills entry. They've got the ODESSA files."*

"How do you know?" I asked.

"They showed them to me."

"O.K. So they got the files. Why help the bastards?"

"Gordon, I may as well tell you. I'm not holding out any longer. There's no point. I'm cooperating with the prosecutors."

I stood and moved back from *Hunt*'s side as if from a loathsome thing. I started to say something, thought better of it, and walked out. I have never spoken another word to Howard *Hunt*.

It occurred to me that I might receive orders to silence *Hunt*

*ODESSA was the code name Liddy gave to his secret leak-plugging projects at the White House.

at any moment. I got hold of a guard and asked to be placed in deadlock. It would be a simple matter to send a coded message to my friend to poison *Hunt*, even from the depths of "the Hole," and just as simple for my supervisors to get the message to me. I waited, but because the message never came, *Hunt* lives.

Transferred to the federal prison at Danbury, Conn., I wrote to *Fran* regularly, as well as to other friends from the past. One of the letters was to a woman I had known. At the nightly inspection and reading of mail one of the guards held the letter back until my next letter to *Fran* came out from me. He then switched letters and envelopes.

When *Fran* got the wrong letter, she understood the guard's tactic immediately and it made her furious.

Liddy retaliated. He found a way to tap prison staff telephones, then embarrassed the officers with his knowledge of their sexual affairs and theft of prison property. At his final prison stop, the federal prison camp at Allenwood, Pa., Liddy enraged one group of convicts by persuading guards to turn off TV sets after midnight so he could sleep. The angry prisoners first harassed him, then even vowed to kill him.



Awaiting attack by jailhouse enemies

I had gotten a weapon, a stout handle with a piece of jagged, rusted metal still attached to one end, by jumping the fence into a restricted area and taking it from behind a tool shed. From the power plant I stole a short length of steel pipe and from the kitchen a table knife. I sharpened the table knife on cement, the way I had a similar one at Danbury when I learned from the authorities that an informer had told the FBI there was a contract out on me and I declined official protection in favor of my own method.

My enemies put out the word that they were going to attack me on the night of Thursday, 3 February, 1977. I was determined to fight it out and knew well that I'd have to kill.

One guard on duty that night who knew (as did everyone) of the planned attack, begged me to accept protection by spending the night in the hospital. He had been a Hungarian Freedom Fighter, immigrating to the U.S. after his country was invaded by Russia in the 1950s.

I put it to him this way: "If I run now, where do I stop? You should understand the results of weakness."

"But it's different, what happened in Hungary. That was between whole countries!"

"The principle is the same."

"Please. I cannot protect you. You may die."

"I don't want your protection. I can protect myself better than you can. If I die, I won't be alone." I showed the guard my weapons. I was smiling.

"You enjoy this!" he said.

"Yes."

"It's true what they say. You are a fascist!"

I lay down, fully dressed except for shoes, and arranged the covers over me. Lying alongside my body under the blanket was the big ax handle. I could sweep that handle out in a second and knock two men off their feet by striking directly at their knees. In my hand was the knife, and the pipe was under my pillow. I was ready.

A second guard asked if I wanted to go to the hospital.

"Don't worry about me," I said, "worry about them." I showed him my weapons and he shined his light on them, then looked up at me with a smile and said: "Shoot straight." I knew what he meant. Don't leave anyone alive as a witness. It was good advice and I intended to follow it.

The attack never materialized. No one wanted to be the first to die. They were afraid, never having learned what I taught myself: defeat the fear of death and welcome the death of fear. ■