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Mitchell, Last Watergate Prisoner, Is Freed on Parole

Special to The New York Times

MONTGOMERY, Ala., Jan. 19 — Former Attorney General John N. Mitchell was released on parole from a Federal prison at Maxwell Air Force Base near here today after serving 19 months of a two-and-a-half- to eight-year sentence for conspiracy and obstruction of justice in the Watergate scandals. He was the last of those convicted in the scandals to be released.

Mr. Mitchell, 65 years old, spoke briefly to reporters just after dawn as he left the prison camp, which is occupied by some 300 minimum-security inmates.

His voice shook somewhat as he said that he appreciated the "thousands of letters" of support he had received. Then he told reporters, "Henceforth, don't call me, I'll call you."

As he spoke, some of his fellow inmates shouted, "Give 'em hell, Mitchell."

Mr. Mitchell then stepped into the waiting auto of a former United States Attorney, Ira de Ment, who is now in private practice in Montgomery.

Mr. Mitchell was driven to the Montgomery airport, where he was given priority seating in first class on a 7:30 A.M. commercial flight. About 30 minutes later, in Atlanta, he was assisted by the airline in changing planes without going through the terminal, where some 25 reporters waited. He then flew to Washington.

Former Senator Sam J. Ervin Jr., Democrat of North Carolina, who headed the Senate Watergate investigation, was in Atlanta today. He told reporters, "I came away with a certain amount of admiration for Mitchell. He tried to protect the White House and the President."

Mr. de Ment, who as a United States Attorney worked for Mr. Mitchell in his tenure as Attorney General, said that Mr. Mitchell had indicated he planned to write a book and do some "consulting" in Washington. The former Attorney General is barred from practicing law.

'Simply Wants Some Privacy'

"We did not discuss the Watergate case," Mr. de Ment said of his discussions with Mr. Mitchell. "He simply wants some privacy."

Mr. de Ment was a monthly visitor to Mr. Mitchell while he was serving the sentence. Another occasional visitor was Winton M. Blount, a Montgomery contractor who was Postmaster General in the first Nixon Cabinet.

A few weeks ago, Mr. Mitchell was visited by Elliot L. Richardson, who resigned as Attorney General in protest of White House interference in the Watergate investigation. Mr. Richardson, now an Ambassador-at-Large, was here to speak to a class of officers at the Air Force base.

Wayne Greenhaw, a free-lance writer

here who teaches a night class in creative writing at the prison, said that he saw Mr. Mitchell frequently at the facility but that the former Attorney General rarely spoke.

Mr. Greenhaw said that some of his students, however, indicated that Mr. Mitchell had been willing to offer informal legal advice to the inmates.

Mr. Mitchell entered the Maxwell prison on June 21, 1977. He received a five-month medical furlough for treatment of an arthritic condition in his hip, but he returned to the prison in May 1978.

Watergate Convicts All Free

WASHINGTON, Jan. 19 (AP) — With the release of Mr. Mitchell today in Alabama, there are no Watergate convicts in the Federal prison system for the first time in six years.

Beginning with the January 1973 jailing of G. Gordon Liddy, 25 men served terms ranging from 25 days to 52½ months. Some, like Mr. Mitchell and Mr. Liddy, remain on parole and must report regularly to a parole officer.

A total of 39 persons were charged with crimes arising out of the Watergate scandals.

A total of 48 persons and at least 20 corporations pleaded guilty. Thirteen men were convicted in trials and six were acquitted. Fines only were levied against 22, nine were given probation or suspended sentences and charges were dismissed or convictions reversed against seven.

The sentences of at least nine were reduced once the men were in prison. Mr. Liddy's sentence was reduced by Presidential order.