

Mrs. Mitchell Asks Paper to Crucify Fulbright for Vote

per 4/10/70

Attorney General John N. Mitchell's outspoken wife, Martha, telephoned an Arkansas newspaper yesterday to criticize Sen. J. W. Fulbright (D-Ark.) for voting against the Carswell nomination.

"I want you to crucify Fulbright and that's that," Mrs. Mitchell said in one of three telephone conversations with the Arkansas Gazette between 1:50 a.m. and 3 a.m. EST.

She said of Fulbright:

"He makes me so damn mad I can't stand it. He could have done a great deal for the whole vote."

Mrs. Mitchell, a native of Arkansas, said that Fulbright was "not representing the people" of the state in voting against Judge G. Harrold Carswell for a seat on the U.S. Supreme Court.

This latest in a series of controversial Martha Mitchell comments on the political scene was the talk of Little Rock yesterday. The Gazette printed her remarks in its final edition yesterday morning. The response in Arkansas was reported to be more amused than serious.

In Washington, Sen. Fulbright said that Mrs. Mitchell has a right to her views, but added that she was "a little unrestrained" in her language. Asked about Mrs. Mitchell's



MARTHA MITCHELL
... "crucify Fulbright"



SEN. FULBRIGHT
... "a little unrestrained"

appeal to the paper to crucify him, Fulbright said, "She overstates the case a little. It was just a manner of speech."

Sen. Fulbright's wife, Betty, commented that "she certainly lost her cool, didn't she?" Mrs. Fulbright said, "I don't want to start a back-and-forth sort of thing, but I think it's sort of foolish of her."

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MITCHELL, From A1

Just before the Senate voted last year to reject the nomination of Judge Clement Haynsworth to the high court, Martha Mitchell telephoned Betty Fulbright and reportedly threatened to speak against the senator's re-election if he failed to support Haynsworth. Fulbright is not up for re-election until 1974.

Mrs. Fulbright said yesterday that during last year's phone call, Mrs. Mitchell "told me I wasn't a Southerner. I told her I thought I was a resident longer than she. I also told her, 'I don't try to run my husband's business, Mrs. Mitchell.'"

The Gazette reported that in yesterday's telephone calls, Mrs. Mitchell quoted the Attorney General as saying he had heard that Fulbright was not planning to run for re-election, and that this probably played a role in his decision to vote against Carswell.

Fulbright said yesterday any statement about his 1974 plans would be "premature." His wife said he "hasn't told me. I'm glad (Mitchell) has such advanced notice."

Despite the telephone calls from the wife of the Attorney General, she said, "we may be here longer than she is."

There was no comment yesterday afternoon from Mrs. Mitchell, and none from her husband's office at the Department of Justice. Earlier, Mrs. Mitchell told The Washington Star that she had made the calls and said: "I'm sick of all this mess. If I don't have the right to ask the people of Arkansas what they think, it's just too bad."

According to the Gazette, the first telephone call was received at 12:50 a.m. CST (1:50 a.m. Washington time) by John Woodruff, a 28-year-old reporter on the late shift in the news room. The

caller did not identify himself, but said she would like to submit a letter for the Gazette's letters to the editor column.

When she gave her name at the end of the letter, Woodruff asked if this was "the" Martha Mitchell. She said yes.

After Woodruff reported the call to his editors, a team of editors and reporters worked to confirm the identity of the caller. In the meantime, another call came in from Mrs. Mitchell, apparently to verify the first call. The connection was unexplainedly cut before the Gazette could get a verifying phone number.

In a third call, about 2 a.m. CST, Mrs. Mitchell gave a telephone number. The Gazette was able to verify to its satisfaction that Mrs. Mitchell was the caller, and told her that her "letter to the editor" would appear on page one.

In another controversy involving an anti-Carswell vote in the Senate, aides to Sen. Margaret Chase Smith (R-Maine) said that she had placed an angry telephone call just before the vote to presidential counsellor Bryce Harlow because of false reports that she would support Carswell.

The senatorial offices of Republicans Marlow Cook of Kentucky and Richard Schweiker of Pennsylvania reported receiving calls from the White House saying that Mrs. Smith would vote for Carswell and suggesting they do likewise.

When Mrs. Smith heard about the calls, she made a call of her own to Harlow. According to her aides, she said the calls were a misrepresentation of her position and an attempt to use the misrepresentation to influence other senators. A few minutes later, she voted against the confirmation of Judge Carswell.