

Is Mitchell the Answer to Problem Which Once Faced Ramsey Clark?

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DURING Nixon's "law and order" campaign for the Presidency, he was often asked what the Federal Government could do about crime in the streets—which is, after all, something handled primarily by police on the spot (and so by local government).

He answered in a roundabout way: "During the Administration of Lincoln, Union armies were bogged down under a succession of do-nothing commanders. Then Lincoln put Grant in charge and things began to move. We will provide that kind of determined, aggressive leadership to the federal war on crime."

He was speaking on the Saturday before election, and his campaign against the do-nothing commander, Ramsey Clark, was at its most mystical. The attorney general, he implied, has magical powers to stop crime, and Clark had perversely refused to exercise those powers.

But it would all change with Nixon's election: "The attorney general selected will be a man experienced in law enforcement at the highest levels, whose national reputation will command the immediate respect of the nation's entire law enforcement community."

Who could this wonderman be? Experienced in law enforcement at the highest levels—Would Nixon actually make J. Edgar Hoover the attorney general? The FBI chief seemed to be the only man who would fit his description.

AND then he appointed John Mitchell, a man vastly experienced in the drawing up of municipal bonds, but with no experience in law enforcement at any level, even the lowest.

Mitchell had only one thing to recommend him that he had worked long and hard to get votes



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for Richard Nixon. Failure to do that was, apparently, what made Ramsey Clark a poor attorney general.

Still, though he could not "command the immediate respect" of lawmen, Mitchell was reputed to be bright and diligent. Perhaps he could learn something about law enforcement now that he was in charge of it.

That hope was blasted when it became obvious that Mitchell was spending more time in the White House, running the nation, than in his department, learning how to deal with its complexities.

Last Nov. 15, Mitchell almost sabotaged the D.C. police force as Mayor Daley had done in Chicago—he tried to bluster the New Mobe march out of existence. Luckily, wiser men intervened, and the D.C. force controlled the

march (which was given a last-minute permit) in its customary disciplined way. But during that weekend Mitchell leaned out of his Justice Department window and said it looked like the Russian Revolution down there in the streets.

Poor man—it was as close as or nation's highest law enforcement official had come to a civil disorder. No wonder he was frightened!

AND now we see the fruits of running a blatantly political and partisan Justice Department. Mitchell, assuming full authority tried to squelch the findings of a grand jury that had worked ten months on the alleged bribing of officials and their underlings for an overpayment on the garage to the Rayburn

Office Building. Some men, in and out of the grand jury, in and out of the prosecutor's office protested this move, and the New York Times published details of the jury's findings.

Mitchell remained adamant, and when a man's whole effort to this point has been the service of a candidate, and then of a President, it is natural to think political considerations weigh as much with him as legal ones.

Nixon's war on crime" begins to look like a selective battle—urging a crackdown on blacks who loot storefronts, but hushing up talk of corporation heads and congressmen where the theft of millions may be at stake.

General Grant did a good job for Lincoln out on the field, but his record as a President was dim. Nixon's General Grant, whatever wonders he worked as a campaign manager, is clearly a disaster as attorney general.

It is time for Nixon to keep one of his campaign promises and put a law enforcement man to the job of enforcing our laws.



RAMSEY CLARK



JOHN MITCHELL