

The Warbler of Watergate

*I love its gentle warble,
I love its gentle flow,
I love to wind my tongue up,
And I love to let it go.*

THIRTY years later, the blurb in the Pine Bluff, Ark., high school yearbook under the picture of the pretty blonde remains apt. Letting go after the march on Washington, Martha Mitchell told a television interviewer: "As my husband has said many times, some of the liberals in this country, he'd like to take them and change them for Russian Communists." Since Martha Mitchell's husband is the Attorney General of the U.S., the remark caused a certain furor. John Mitchell, at a press conference, set the record straight: "If you will transpose the word 'liberal' into 'violence-prone militant radicals,' I would be delighted to change them for some of the academically inclined Marxist Communists."

Born and raised in Pine Bluff, Martha graduated from the University of Miami and taught school in Mobile, Ala. She quit teaching after only one year because, she says, "I despised it." During World War II, she married Clyde Jennings, but the marriage ended in divorce, as did Mitchell's first marriage. Martha and John met on a weekend in New York in the early '50s and were married several months later. While Mitchell was a \$250,000-a-year Manhattan attorney, they lived in Rye, N.Y. Now they are ensconced in a \$140,000 duplex in Washington's fashionable Watergate apartments.

High-strung, gregarious and still pretty in her late 40's, Martha clearly enjoys her role as the wife of Nixon's closest domestic adviser. Friends report that she invariably keeps the Attorney General waiting while she primps for

an evening out, and that he greets her appearance with an unruffled "Hi, gorgeous." The most vocal of all the Cabinet members' wives, Mrs. Mitchell does not hesitate to offer her tart views, as she demonstrated in a recent interview with *TIME* Correspondent Dean Fischer:

On Protest: "Any time you get somebody marching in the streets, it's catering to revolution. It started with the



MARTHA MITCHELL

colored people in the South. Now other groups are taking to the streets. We could have worked out the integration battle without allowing them to march. My family worked for everything we had. We even have a deed from the King of England for property in South Carolina. Now these jerks come along and try to give it to the Communists."

On Law and Order: "Man has been given his freedom to a greater extent than ever, and that's quite wrong. Adults like to be led. They would rather re-

spond to a form of discipline. People say they want freedom; yet they tie themselves up completely with drugs."

On Discipline: "For 20 years, there has been no discipline of children. You don't inhibit them even if they are threatening to break up the whole house. Now we are reaping the results. Margaret Mead caused a lot of the trouble. She advocates taking drugs and early marriages. She and those other spooks just want to get their names in the paper. A few years ago, if you did something wrong, you were sent to the principal's office. Today the Roman Catholic schools are about the only ones that have discipline." For that reason, the Mitchells, who are not Roman Catholics, send their daughter Marty, 8, to the exclusive Stone Ridge Country Day School in Bethesda, Md., which is run by nuns of the Sacred Heart order.

On Life in Washington: "It's quite a comedown in many ways. We're not living on the same means that we had in Rye, N.Y. I had to sell my stock, and now we are having to dip into the till. I think the Government should give us free housing. We'll be happy to go back and make some money."

On Life with John: "I first met John in New York about 15 years ago. I was so impressed with his suaveness and intellect, the minute I looked at him I knew he was an extremely outstanding person. He loves to sit with me and work. Most women, when their husbands walk in the door, start complaining about their chores and children. But I don't think any woman should burden her husband in that way. No matter what my husband is doing, he's dedicated. He's happiest when he feels he is achieving. He's terribly disappointed that his golf handicap has gone way up. He's very easy to please. Nothing bothers him."