
John Mitchell Leaves Jail In a Huff

Washington

John N. Mitchell shed prison number 24171-157 in Alabama yesterday and made it clear to everyone that 19 months of imprisonment haven't mellowed him or blunted his sarcasm.

"Henceforth, don't call me, I'll call you," the former attorney general instructed reporters at the prison gates of Maxwell Air Force Base, near Montgomery, after his release on parole.

He refused to answer reporters' questions, but managed to throw out a zinger:

"I would like to congratulate you fellows," he said. "This is the last time you'll have to get up early

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in the morning to come on out here. You know you've had to do that every time these public servants in here" — pointing back toward the prison — "have given you the word."

From Alabama, Mitchell flew to Washington in the first-class section of a commercial airliner. At National Airport, he remained aboard while reporters and photographers were held at a distance by airline personnel. He finally got off the plane without hearing a question, much less answering one.

The airline also gave him special treatment, when he changed planes in Atlanta. He didn't have to walk the long corridors, as do other passengers. A station wagon took

him from one terminal to the other.

Only one person who was not a reporter awaited him at Washington's airport. It was a blonde woman in a Lincoln Continental, registered to Mary Gore Dean of Maryland.

Dean and Mitchell dated frequently during his medical furlough from prison, and there are reports they will marry if they haven't already done so.

Dean is a member of a prominent Maryland family and is listed in Washington's Social Register.

Mitchell's wife, Martha, died while he was in prison.

Mitchell holds some records in the Watergate saga: He was the 25th and last Watergate figure to

enter prison, and he was the last one out. At 65, he is the oldest.

He also had the longest furlough of any of the Watergate prisoners. Five of his 19 months of prison time were spent in hospitals for two major operations or for recuperation. Mitchell had a section of an abdominal artery replaced, and received a plastic hip socket.

Mitchell was originally sentenced to 2½ to eight years. Judge John Sirica later reduced this sentence to one to four years.

Attorney General Griffin Bell said in Salt Lake City that "I would have released him four months ago" by giving Mitchell credit for medical furloughs as time served, "...but I had no authority to change it."

Mitchell was convicted of conspiring with former President Nixon's chief aides, H.R. Haldeman and John D. Ehrlichman, to cover up White House involvement in the Watergate affair, of the coverup itself and of perjury. Mitchell fought his conviction in the Supreme Court, but he lost.

Before he became manager of Nixon's presidential campaign in 1968, Mitchell was one of the country's leading municipal bond lawyers. But he has been disbarred and can no longer practice law.

Mitchell is reported to have been working on a book, but otherwise nothing is known of his plans. Friends indicated he'll try to keep it that way.

Associated Press