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John N. Mitchell on way to appear at a pretrial hearing for the "Gainesville 8" in Pensacola, Fla.

'Gainesville 8' Bug Denied by Mitchell

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PENSACOLA, Fla., April 25 (AP)—Former Attorney General John N. Mitchell today denied any knowledge of government surveillance of the so-called "Gainesville Eight." He made the statement when he arrived to testify at a pretrial hearing for the antiwar activists accused of plotting to disrupt the 1972 Republican National Convention.

Mitchell added as he stepped off an airplane, "In fact I'm not even sure who the Gainesville Eight are."

Mitchell was called to appear as a witness for the men at their pretrial hearing.

Defense attorneys for the eight men—seven members of the Vietnam Veterans Against the War and one VVAW supporter—claim the government illegally used Watergate-style bugging techniques to gather information that led to their indictments.

Until hours before Mitchell's scheduled appearance, his attorney, William Hundley, objected to the defense subpoena.

"We wanted to avoid a long trip to Pensacola," said Hundley. "But if the judge insists, the judge insists."

U.S. District Court Judge Winston E. Arnow did insist, but he said the possibility was "farfetched" that there actually was "an electronic surveillance of the VVAW by private people," as the defense contends.

The subpoena left Mitchell little time to himself between federal courtrooms. On Monday he testified before a federal grand jury in New York investigating financier Robert L. Vesco's \$200,000 cash contribution to President Nixon's re-election campaign.

The "Gainesville Eight," so named because the alleged plot was said to have been planned in Gainesville, Fla., are charged with conspiracy to disrupt the GOP convention with bullets, bombs and high-powered slingshots.

The eight are VVAW members Scott Camil, 26, Stanley K. Michelson Jr., 23,

both of Gainesville; John Kniffen, 25, William J. Patterson, 24, both of Austin, Tex.; Peter J. Mahoney, 23, New York City; Alton C. Foss, 25, Hialeah, Fla.; Donald P. Perdue, 23, Hollywood, Fla.; and John Briggs, 20, of Gainesville, described as a supporter but not a member of the VVAW.

VVAW members were active in organizing marches and demonstrations at both the Republican and Democratic conventions last summer at Miami Beach.