

Meddling

By Vera Glaser and Malvina Stephenson

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Washington

ATTORNEY GENERAL John N. Mitchell slept like a baby through his wife's biggest moment, he confessed in an exclusive interview.

When John awakened to learn Martha had been burning up the telephone wires to the Arkansas Gazette at 2 a.m., "I just laughed and laughed and laughed," he said. "She got mad at me."

Mrs. Mitchell's wee-hours demand that the paper "crucify" Senator J. William Fulbright has turned official Washington into a mass of twitching ganglia.

If President Nixon is irked at Martha's outspoken reaction to the Carswell defeat, "no one has brought it to her attention or mine," the Attorney General reported.

Martha's fiery remarks have drawn "sack loads" of mail to their Watergate apartment and her husband's office, he said, with the letters running "300-to-one complimentary."

Speaking invitations by the hundreds have

swamped her, but so far Martha has accepted none. Is it because Mitchell won't let his bouncy blonde wife go on the stump?

"Dear, we don't put it that way," he replied. "Hopefully, I can persuade her not to. I'd rather have more time with her at home."

When the Attorney General took time out of his busy day to give a husband's view of what makes Martha tick, other big names crept into the conversation.

President Nixon "did not blow his stack" when he walked into the White House press room and accused Carswell's foes of "vicious assaults" and "hypocrisy," Mitchell emphasized.

"It was by design. He knew exactly what he was saying. He thought the American public was entitled to know. I know how he felt because I was with him Wednesday night and Thursday."

Mitchell doesn't think the Republicans can win Senate control entirely on the Carswell issue, although it will have an effect "in some parts of the country."

Mitchell, however, tried to confine the talk to the love of his life, Martha. It is the second marriage for both.

One of the first things that attracted him to her "certainly wasn't her political judgment. It was her total personality. She gets a charge out of most things in life."

Although Mitchell has some reservations about her phone call and said Martha has had second thoughts, neither is upset about it.

So far, he regards most of Martha's salvos as "within the bounds of propriety." She set off an earlier tizzy by terming peace marchers "liberal Communists" and comparing them to the Russian Revolution.

Mitchell declined to confirm a published report which quoted him as saying the President has told Martha to "give 'em hell."



HER TOTAL personality, not her political judgment, attracted the Attorney General to his wife, Martha



AP Wirephotos and UPI Telephoto

A SCOTCH and water, his pipe and a rambling chat with Martha is what John Mitchell enjoys after a long hard day at Justice

Martha---'She's Fun'

San Francisco Chronicle 21
☆☆ Mon., Apr. 20, 1970

All he would say is that Mr. Nixon has kidded Martha about her spoutings.

Martha boasts that he and her husband "agree on everything," but Mitchell counters, "I'm not sure that's true."

For instance, he thinks Martha is a little too much of a feminist.

The Mitchells' relationship appears to be close. Although he professes never to come home tired or grumpy, he obviously delights in Martha's warm greeting.

"She gives me a big glass of Scotch, ice and water. We sit down and talk about her day, my day, and the world in general. We talk government, not

politics," he said.

Mitchell added to the confusion about the role of Kay Woestendieck, his wife's new aide, who has been variously described as a social secretary and press secretary. According to the Attorney General, she is "a confidante."

When asked if Martha's outspoken comments are fun and games or intended as political strategy, Mitchell became dead serious.

"There is great appeal in some things she says for a great many people. It's not political strategy. It's her own way of expressing Martha. She has been outspoken all of her life and always will be."



Kay Woestendieck