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Transcript of Mitchell's News Conference

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WASHINGTON, April 20—
Following is a transcript of the news conference held today by former Attorney General John N. Mitchell after his appearance before a Federal grand jury investigating the Watergate Case:

Q. Mr. Mitchell, did you swear under oath before the grand jury that you had no prior knowledge of the bugging incident? A. I have done that twice and I did today. I testified fully and freely and openly and that's about the story.

Q. Mr. Mitchell, can you tell us, were bugging plans, plans, that is to say, to bug the Watergate, or any other place during the campaign, ever discussed in your presence? A. I don't think we ought to get into the specifics of those questions. That's the testimony for the grand jury.

Q. Well, without getting specific, were bugging plans ever brought up in your presence? A. Let me put it this way for you: that I never

approved any bugging plans during any period during the campaign.

Q. Well, when did you learn about them, sir? A. Bugging? When I got to be Attorney General in the Justice Department.

First Heard June 17

Q. With reference to the Democratic campaign, when did you first hear? A. On June 17 [the date of the Watergate burglary].

Q. Were discussions of bugging ever held in your presence with G. Gordon Liddy or Jeb Stuart Magruder? A. Let me say what I said before. No such operations were ever approved by me at any time under any circumstances.

Q. Mr. Mitchell, The New York Times says this morning that friends of yours said that you did attend three meetings in January, February and March of 1972 at which plans for bugging were discussed and that you didn't approve such plans. Could you state just exactly what

your connection was with the bugging discussions? A. Yes. They were just an absolute, final disapproval.

Q. Have you heard discussions of bugging plans? A. I have heard discussions of such things. They've always been out cut off at all times and I would like to know who it was that kept bringing them back, and back, and back.

Q. Was it February, 1972, or March, 1972, that you first heard about this in connection with the campaign? A. Would you also like to try for January, February and March?

Q. Well, if it was January or February then I don't understand because in the I.T.T. or the Kleindienst confirmation hearings last year you said under oath that you hadn't taken part in any campaign activities until March 1. A. I don't think you're reading your record correctly. You go back and that referred to a prior year.

Q. It is also alleged that

you had some connection with paying money to the seven Watergate defendants, either to procure their silence or for other reasons. Had you anything to do with money that went to the defendants? A. I have never met any of the defendants. I've never met any of their counsel and I've never handled any money.

Q. Are you saying you never met James McCord? A. Not after June 17.

Q. Do you think the Administration is trying to make you into a scapegoat? A. I would certainly hope not.

Q. Once again, did you have any connection with payment of money? A. I answered your question fully and completely.

Q. Why did you wait until now to talk about having listened to discussions? Why didn't you tell about that months ago? A. Well, that involves a large number of subject matters that are being investigated by the grand jury and I think I'll leave it right there.