

Mitchell Testifies He Heard Watergate Plot

He Hints Others Planned It

N.Y. Times Service

Washington

Former Attorney General John N. Mitchell appeared before a federal grand jury yesterday and said afterward that plans to spy on the Democrats had been pressed upon him repeatedly last year.

"I have heard discussions of such things as eavesdropping," Mitchell told reporters. "They've always been cut off at all times, and I would like to know who it was that kept bringing them back and back and back."

Mitchell confirmed in substance a New York Times report quoting him as telling friends that he had met on three occasions early last year with two officials of the Committee for the Re-election of the President.

Jeb Stuart Magruder, then deputy director of Mr. Nixon's political organization, and G. Gordon Liddy, one of seven men convicted in the Watergate plot, were said to have proposed bugging the Democrats. Mitchell said he turned them down.

SUSPICION

The former attorney general seemed to suggest in his remarks yesterday that he suspected someone else had ordered the two men to return with the eavesdropping proposals despite his asserted resistance to them.

Mitchell, who spent nearly three hours testifying before the grand jury, said upon

leaving the U.S. court house here that he had "never approved any bugging plans during any period during the campaign."

When asked why he waited until now to acknowledge having heard discussion of bugging activity, he replied only that it "involves a large number of subject matters that are being investigated by the grand jury"

Mitchell, a former law

See Back Page

From Page 1

partner of the President's who served as manager of the Nixon campaign until about two weeks after the Watergate plot was discovered, said he had testified "fully and freely and openly."

His attorney, William G. Hundley of Washington, said Mitchell had not invoked his Fifth Amendment rights against self-incrimination during the session and had not left the grand jury room to consult with him.

Mitchell was subpoenaed by the 23-member panel here after reports that Magruder has told the authorities the bugging was approved by the former attorney general and by John W. Dean III, counsel to the President.

Magruder is expected to testify before the grand jury, but he has not been seen in the courtroom.

He was encountered on a Washington street yesterday by a reporter who described Magruder as "agitated" and "very tense." He was said to have hurried away with his lips trembling when asked a question.

In addition to telling federal prosecutors at a meeting Saturday that Mitchell and Dean had authorized the bugging, Magruder is reported to have said the two

officials arranged "hush money" for the convicted conspirators.

MEETINGS

Mitchell is said to have conceded in private conversations that he had met with Magruder and Liddy at his office in the Justice Department on Jan. 24 and Feb. 4, 1972, and again in March, after he left the department.

The former attorney general — he held the cabinet post until March 1, 1972 — told reporters after his grand jury appearance yesterday that bugging proposals were met with "an absolute, final disapproval" from him.

But Mitchell's present position has raised questions about his public silence on the bugging proposals and about the impression he had created earlier that he was totally ignorant of the Watergate affair.

Attorney Hundley said he was confident the government would conclude that Mitchell was guilty of "no criminal violations." He said he did not believe Mitchell had committed perjury.

SCANDAL

Other developments in the spreading scandal included the following:

- Herbert W. Kalmbach, President Nixon's personal attorney, appeared at the courthouse for the second consecutive day. It was assumed that he testified before the grand jury, but Kalmbach would not confirm this.

- James W. McCord Jr., a convicted conspirator now said to be cooperating with the grand jury and a senate investigating committee, filed a \$1.5 million civil lawsuit against the re-election committee and three of its officials.

- The chief counsel of the Senate committee, Samuel

Dash, met Thursday night with the principal assistant U.S. Attorney, Earl J. Silbert, to discuss the Watergate investigation. No details of the meeting were disclosed.

- Chief Judge John J. Sirica of the U.S. District Court denied "without prejudice" a motion dealing with grand jury testimony by a Washington attorney, Peter H. Wolf.

Wolf wanted the judge to rule on whether the lawyer can be forced to reveal the name of a client who, he said Thursday, hid about eight cartons of documents dealing with the Watergate affair and Republican finances.

The documents were removed from the White House complex a day after the Watergate break-in, Wolf said his client had informed him, and were returned to the re-election committee shortly before last year's election.

Sirica ruled in effect that he would wait until Wolf is called before the grand jury next Tuesday, is asked to name the client, and refuses. The lawyer would then be brought before the judge for a decision.



AP Wirephoto

JOHN MITCHELL AFTER FACING FEDERAL GRAND JURY
Former attorney general said he 'never approved any bugging plans'