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Mrs. Mitchell Tells Little on Watergate

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NEW YORK, May 3 — Martha Mitchell, who has told numerous telephone friends that she can tell a great deal about the Watergate case, testified about the case today and, according to lawyers questioning her, told almost nothing.

Her deposition was taken in the \$6.4-million damage suit filed by the Democratic Party against various principals in the Watergate case. Her appearance was requested by attorneys for James W. McCord Jr., the one-time security chief for the Committee to Re-Elect the President.

She was asked a series of questions according to attorneys present at the deposition, Mrs. Mitchell's testimony was more amusing than illuminating.

Asked for instance, as to whether she had conversations after the arrest of the Watergate intruders on June 17, 1972, with such Republican Party figures as Frederick LaRue, Charles Colson, John Ehrlichman, H. R. Haldeman, John Dean, and so forth. To each name, she would answer, "No."

Her testimony took several hours, filled with brief questions and long, rambling answers, most of them relating to her claims that she was imprisoned by McCord's agents for three days in California, the lawyers said.

At the outset of the questioning, Mrs. Mitchell invoked her rights in terms of not answering questions in connection with her hus-

band, former Attorney General John N. Mitchell.

Occasionally, she would mention her husband briefly, as for instance when she told the attorneys that, after she had belatedly learned of the Watergate arrests, she told her husband that she wanted them both out of the campaign.

An observer quoted Mrs. Mitchell's husband answer as, "Darling, hold on for a few more months and then I'll take you back to New York."

Mrs. Mitchell brought her own Bible to the deposition-taking. Customarily, a person giving a deposition swears to the truth of their testimony to a notary public.

Asked by reporters if she believed President Nixon to be involved in the scandal, Mrs. Mitchell said:

"I trust he had nothing to do with it. I pray to God he had nothing to do with the dirty business. He has always assured me he has not been involved."

She also said the whole scandal is "a pretty dirty business."

Much of her deposition comprised her telling how much she disliked the bodyguards that McCord had arranged for her.

On one occasion at the Waldorf-Astoria Hotel here, she said one of the bodyguards walked into her suite, which was filled with dignitaries, took off his shoes and socks and walked around barefoot.

She referred to the guards several times as "kooks" and "creeps."

Mrs. Mitchell said she disliked McCord and thought he might even be a "double agent," the attorneys said, and particularly disliked his spending an afternoon in their Watergate apartment with electronic equipment, looking for any possible bugging devices.

She repeated her oft-told story, which has been denied just as often, that she was imprisoned in a California hotel after the Watergate break-in, her phones ripped from the wall.

After her deposition was nearly over, one of the attorneys reminded her that she had told the press that she wanted to tell her story to the Senate committee headed by Sen. Sam J. Irvin Jr. (D-N.C.).

"Mrs. Mitchell," the attorney is said to have asked, "have you told us today everything that you were intending to tell the Ervin committee?"

Mrs. Mitchell's answer was affirmative.



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Martha Mitchell tells newsmen that she never gives sidewalk interviews, as she leaves her New York apartment to testify about her knowledge of the Watergate.