

VIP

# Paying Martha Mitchell's Bills

By Maxine Cheshire

It probably won't surprise anyone, but Martha Mitchell's phone bills sometimes ran into five-figures.

That disclosure comes from someone close to former Attorney General John Mitchell, who says Mitchell has continued to pay her living expenses as they occurred during their separation.

The subject of Mrs. Mitchell's finances is one that is going to be widely reported in coming weeks.

Sources close to her claim that she is "flat broke" and would have been left stranded in Phoenix recently if someone hadn't come to her rescue.

A free-lance writer helped her out with an advance of \$250. The money was given in exchange for a television interview.

Mrs. Mitchell's lawyer, Melvin Belli, has process servers looking for Mitchell so that a flat amount of monthly support payments can be legally established in court.

So far, Mitchell's whereabouts are unknown.

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"It's just going to cost him more in the long run," says Belli.

In the meantime, a spokesman for Mitchell claims that he has been providing for her adequately already. "My God, those telephone bills alone . . ." he moaned.

Mrs. Mitchell may be anticipating the day when she will have to pay her phone bills herself.

Calling one reporter repeatedly last week, she always called collect.

If a lobbyist could promise to take a client to lunch on Capitol Hill with Sen. Edward M. (Ted) Kennedy (D-Mass.) the coup might be worth hundreds of thousands of dollars in retainer fees.

So it will be interesting to see how high the bidding gets on May 18 when the National Cathedral School for Girls auctions off a meal for four with Kennedy in the Senate Dining Room.