

Mrs. Nixon's Aide Disputes Mrs. Mitchell

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By CHARLOTTE CURTIS

Mrs. Richard M. Nixon's press secretary denied yesterday Mrs. John N. Mitchell's testimony that "lies" and rumors galore" about her had been leaked by the White House to the press after the Watergate bugging came to light last June or that Mrs. Nixon had ever said that Mrs. Mitchell was "very, very ill."

"The Mitchells and the Nixons have been good friends for years," said Helen Smith, the press secretary. "Mrs. Nixon is fond of Mrs. Mitchell. She understands and is in complete sympathy with Mrs. Mitchell."

The denials grew out of Mrs. Martha Mitchell's testimony in the \$6.4-million civil suit brought by Democrats against officials of the Committee for the Re-election of the President. In the deposition, made public yesterday, Mrs. Mitchell said:

"I have been at the mercy of the White House for four years, who (sic) have treated me abominably, half-crucified me, have sent lies out through the press and, as you gentlemen well know, have started rumors galore about me."

She said, too, that leaks came from "Lucy Winchester [Mrs. Nixon's social secretary], even down to Mrs. Nixon, who had a press conference and said that she understood that Mrs. Mitchell was vary, very ill."

According to Mrs. Smith, no such press conference was held. If it had been, she added, such remarks would have been published and therefore easily traceable.

Lawyer Comments

Henry B. Rothblatt, lawyer for James W. McCord Jr., a convicted Watergate conspirator, said after Mrs. Mitchell testified that her rambling 73-page deposition was "interesting" but "not very helpful to the case."

But the testimony does suggest that Mrs. Mitchell knew there was more to the Watergate scandal after the bugging was discovered, that she was "shut up" in California to keep her from telling what she knew, as she has claimed, and that she may still know more than she has revealed.

When Bernard Fensterwald Jr., also McCord's attorney, asked her whether she had complained to her husband about "orders" for her rough treatment in California or asked and received any explanation from him, Plato Cacheris, her counsel, said, "That is privileged."

In recent conversations, however, Mrs. Mitchell, in response to questions, said, "If my husband agreed to that [anything to do with the California episode], it was under pressure."

Operates on 'Intuition'

In the deposition, Mrs. Mitchell repeated that she knew nothing about Watergate and said she "had no access" to any type of material.

"I operate on women's intuition, and perhaps my intuition has been the big thing that has gone along with me so long



The New York Times/Barton Silverman

Mrs. John N. Mitchell talking to newsmen here Thursday

that I realized that there were things that weren't proper, that were going on, but I could not

Following are other highlights of the deposition:

¶On Watergate—"If I had any personal knowledge of the Watergate, gentlemen, I would have done something about it a long time ago. As I stated, not very long ago, the only thing I knew about Watergate was that it leaked."

¶On Democrats at the Watergate—"I didn't even know the Democrats were over there. And I have since found out that the Democrats had a very, very small office in the Watergate. Had I known they were there I probably would have gone over and called on them."

¶On her own files—"My files are still all in storage. I don't have anything in them. You're all welcome to go through them. You will enjoy my mail."

¶On answering mail—"I have done three-quarters of the Hill's mail. There is not a Senator or Congressman on the Hill I haven't done most of his work for him, believe me."

¶On McCord—"... I told the F.B.I. that I would appreciate if they would check this gentleman out because I didn't like the looks in his eyes."

¶On McCord's arrangement for bodyguards for her—"He hired three or four, of whom I was not sure whether it was the little Katzenjammer kids at the White House that were causing me all the trouble or whether it was Mr. McCord himself himself that had decided they were going to ascend on me these horrible creatures."

¶On Alfred C. Baldwin, who served as Mrs. Mitchell's bodyguard before joining those who bugged Democratic headquarters at Watergate—"Al Baldwin is probably the most gauche character I have ever met in my whole life. ... Mr. Baldwin proceeded to take off his shoes and socks and walk around in front of everybody in New York City barefoot. Not only that, but Mr. Baldwin had the dis-

position of trying to get himself into every conversation. He made no bones about telling me that he was a Democrat, that he had Democratic friends."

¶On where she was when she heard about the break-in at Democratic headquarters—"I was in bed reading the paper. ... That was on a Monday morning, at 10 o'clock Monday morning ... It came as a very drastic surprise to me."

¶On her treatment by the Re-election committee "... I wasn't even on the rostrum at the re-election committee. They didn't even give me that honor. They didn't even put my name on this."

¶On being accused of using Government cars—"Well, anybody in their right mind—Mrs. Ramsey Clark, as a matter of fact, when she briefed me at the State Department before I took over in her little place, said, 'Now, Martha, you've got a car to use officially, unofficial times, and you've got a secretary'.... So I told the committee, I said, 'All right, I'm getting out of the Justice Department I don't want any part of Justice. They can keep their darned old cars.' I'm not going to be crucified for something that I have a perfect legal right to do, and yet, they're crucifying me for it."