

Martha: Nixon Knew Everything

By Helen Thomas

SAN CLEMENTE (UPI) — Martha Mitchell, disputing both her husband and President Nixon, claims the two men talked frequently in the summer of 1972 while the Watergate cover-up was building and that Nixon knew about "the whole goddamn thing."

Mrs. Mitchell, the wife of former Attorney General John Mitchell, also said, in telephone interviews Thursday and Friday from her New York City apartment, that her husband was "a goddamn fool" for shielding the President in his testimony before the Senate Watergate Committee.

Mitchell supported Nixon's claim of uninvolved in Watergate in hopes that the President will come to his rescue if he is convicted of any crime, she said, adding "he thinks he would give him clemency for what he has done for him."

Mitchell is scheduled to go on trial Sept. 11 in New York on charges of obstructing justice and attempting to defraud the government in connection with a \$200,000

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contribution to the Nixon re-election campaign.

Nixon and Mitchell have indicated they had little contact last summer. Mrs. Mitchell offered a different view.

"Nixon was aware of the whole goddamned thing," she asserted. "For God's sake, he used to call John at 2 o'clock in the morning. And he said he didn't call his attorney general? He called him every night."

"Why did they go out on the Sequoia (the presidential yacht) every night last summer during re-election?" she asked.

'Strategy Book'

Mitchell left the Justice Department March 1, 1972, to serve as Nixon's campaign manager and quit that post two weeks after the June 17, 1972, break-in at the Democrats' Watergate headquarters.

He told the Senate committee that he didn't inform Nixon about the cover-up because he feared the President would blow the story wide open and jeopardize his re-election chances. But he

also said Nixon never asked him whether top administration or campaign officials were involved in a cover-up and that he would have given him all the information if the President had inquired.

Nixon said at a news conference here last Wednesday that Mitchell was right to think he would "blow my stack" if he learned about the cover-up and that he never asked Mitchell about news reports because all investigative reports gave him no indication that Mitchell or other officials were involved.

Mrs. Mitchell said Nixon not only knew intimate details of the Watergate operation in the summer of 1972, which her husband had told him, but that she had read a Nixon-written "campaign strategy book" and hinted that it included plans for Watergate-style maneuvers.

'Suffering'

"I saw the leather-bound campaign strategy book for 1972 that was written by Nixon and (H. R.) Halde-man," the former White House chief of staff, she said.

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