

Early Mitchell released

WASHINGTON (UPI) — Former Attorney General John Mitchell's attorney today asked President Carter to quickly release the convicted Watergate conspirator from prison because of a "compelling need for hip surgery."

The Justice Department reported the request for executive commutation on behalf of the 64-year-old

Mitchell was filed through Attorney General Griffin Bell. The final decision on such a move would rest with Carter.

Mitchell, confined to the minimum security prison at Maxwell Air Force Base near Montgomery, Ala., is "in constant pain and is taking too much valium (a form of pain killer) just to try to ease the pain," attor-

ney William G. Hundley said in a letter to Bell.

Hundley's letter to Bell was accompanied by an official petition for commutation of his sentence, which was turned over to pardon attorney John Stanish for consideration, the Justice Department said.

Mitchell, who has been in jail since early summer on his Water-

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Jim Rafael
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asked for surgery

gate cover-up conviction, would be eligible for parole next June 20 under a recent order by U.S. District Judge John Sirica.

Sirica reduced Mitchell's sentence — originally from 30 months to eight years — to from one to four years.

The judge also reduced the sentences of cover-up coconspirators H.R. Haldeman and John Ehrlich-

man.

Mitchell was suffering from his hip ailment during the publicized 1974 cover-up, Hundley wrote Bell.

"I believe and urge that John Mitchell's medical situation particularly warrants executive clemency," the letter said.

"The hip has gotten progressively worse over the past few years to the

point now where he is in constant pain and is taking too much valium just to try and ease the pain.

"You can look at the X-rays with an untrained eye, as I have, and see that one hip is almost totally deteriorated.

"I am really concerned about the constant pain, the need for surgery and the continued incarceration."