

Martha Has Her Say

Washington

Martha Mitchell said yesterday that acting FBI director L. Patrick Gray's assertion that her husband refused FBI agents permission to interview her about the Watergate affair was "stupid" and "far-fetched."

Gray, defending his handling of the Watergate burglary and bugging investigation at a Senate confirmation hearing Thursday, said his senior agents wanted to question Mrs. Mitchell last

September because of news reports she was planning to "tell all" in a book about behind-the-scenes Washington.

Gray said he approved approaching Mrs. Mitchell through her husband, former Attorney General John N. Mitchell, but that he denied permission. "He said we were not going to interview her and that was that," Gray said.

President Nixon's nominee to succeed J. Edgar Hoover as permanent FBI director said Mrs. Mitchell was not questioned out of "a sense of

courtesy, decency and dignity."

But Mrs. Mitchell, interviewed in New York City just before she embarked on a Caribbean cruise, disputed Gray's testimony.

"If they wanted to question me, they would have," she said. "That's the stupidest thing I ever heard. That's far-fetched."

Gray quoted Mitchell as saying the reports of his wife's plans to write a book were "not so."

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