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Mitchell Retains Prosecutor's Friend

By DENNY WALSH

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The man whom former Attorney General John N. Mitchell has retained as counsel, William G. Hundley, has 22 years of experience in criminal law, the first 15 as a hard-nosed Justice Department prosecutor and the last seven as an effective Washington defense lawyer.

Mr. Hundley's talent trial lawyer is greatly respected, but no ranks him higher than does his close personal friend, Henry E. Petersen, Assistant Attorney General in charge of the Justice Department's Criminal Division and the man who heads the Government's investigation and prosecution of the Watergate case. Mr. Mitchell, in turn, has high regard for Mr. Petersen's judgment.

A likeable, red-faced Irish man who grew up in Brooklyn, where the Democrats dominate political life, Mr. Hundley has often remarked:

"I didn't know what a Republican looked like until I was 18 years old."

Now one of the top Republicans in the country has turned to Mr. Hundley, a Democrat, for help.

Mr. Mitchell is familiar with his new counsel's capabilities through his representation of Republican Gov. Arch A. Moore Jr. of West Virginia in the settlement of a recent Federal tax problem, and of Victor Frenklin, a Baltimore contractor named in a presentment three years ago by a special Federal grand jury that wanted him indicted on fraud charges. Mr. Mitchell, however, refused to let the United States Attorney in Maryland sign the indictment.

Mr. Hundley was a pioneer of the Government's assault on organized crime. He became the first chief of the Justice Department's organized crime and racketeering section in 1958, and held that position for a brief period early in the Kennedy Administration. He left the department to become chief of security for the National Football League in 1966. A year later he entered private practice and acquired the league as a client.

During the last several years that he headed the section, Mr.

Petersen was his deputy, and it was during this time that the two developed a warm friendship and mutual respect. Since Mr. Hundley left the Government, he and Mr. Petersen have kept in close touch and are weekend golf partners on a regular basis.

In the first half of the Nixon Administration's first term, when Mr. Petersen served as deputy to then Assistant Attorney General Will Wilson, he thought seriously of resigning and entering Mr. Hundley's law firm.

Mr. Hundley's clients also include Time Inc., for whom he represented Life magazine's investigative reporting team during the six years of its existence from 1967 to 1973, when Life went out of business.

When Mr. Mitchell took over as Attorney General in 1969, Mr. Petersen headed the organized crime section. He was soon promoted to Deputy Attorney

General in the Criminal Division, and Mr. Mitchell came more and more to rely on him for advice and counsel, especially in politically sensitive areas. Mr. Wilson was upset more than once by the fact that Mr. Mitchell took Mr. Petersen with him to Congressional hearings at which the Attorney General testified.

Finally, after scandal forced the resignation of Mr. Wilson in October of 1971, Mr. Petersen was elevated to his present post.

Mr. Petersen has expressed admiration for Mr. Mitchell, not only as a tough prosecutor but as a man of integrity.

One of those to whom Mr. Petersen has voiced these feelings about Mr. Mitchell is Mr. Hundley.

With Mr. Mitchell's hiring of Mr. Hundley today for representation in a case being prosecuted by Mr. Petersen, the

Watergate affair has brought them together in odd juxtaposition.

Earlier this week, Attorney General Richard G. Kleindienst disqualified himself from participation in the Watergate case to avoid being in the position of having to prosecute former colleagues in the department. By order of President Nixon, Mr. Petersen assumed command of the Watergate matter.

Mr. Hundley is 47 years old. He is married, has six children and lives with his family in Vienna, Va.