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Mitchell Takes Leave From His Law Firm

By Philip Greer

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NEW YORK, May 11— Former Attorney General John N. Mitchell, under indictment by one grand jury and a witness before two others, today took leave of absence from his law firm to devote his time and attention to his personal affairs.

A terse announcement issued by the firm, Mudge, Rose, Guthrie, Alexander and Mitchell, said he has also asked that his name be removed from the firm's name.

Yesterday Mitchell and former Commerce Secretary Maurice H. Stans were indicted by a federal grand jury here for perjury, conspiracy and obstruction of justice. Harry L. Sears, former Republican majority leader of the New Jersey Senate, and Robert L. Vesco, accused by the Securities and Exchange Commission of a \$224 million fraud, were also charged with trying to obstruct the SEC investigation of Vesco.

In addition to the New York action, Mitchell has appeared before a federal grand jury in Washington probing the Watergate scandal and before a grand jury in Florida looking in

campaign violations that allegedly took place in that state's democratic primary last year.

Mitchell joined the Mudge, Rose firm in 1967, about a year after he had met President Nixon, who was then senior partner at the firm. He is widely regarded as an expert in state and local government financing. He left Mudge, Rose after managing Nixon's successful campaign for the White House in 1968 to become attorney general, a post he resigned in February, 1972. At that time, he returned to the firm and signed on as chairman of the Committee to Re-elect the President. He resigned from that job last July.

According to the charges filed here, Mitchell and Stans worked with Sears and Vesco to arrange a secret \$200,000 cash contribution to the Nixon campaign last year. In return, the indictment said, they attempted to head off the SEC investigation of Vesco's financial empire. In March and April, the grand jury said, both Mitchell and Stans lied when asked about their roles in the secret payment.