

Martha Mitchell Terms Report Of Week in Hospital 'Nonsense'

NYTimes

By CHARLOTTE CURTIS MAY 14 1973

Mrs. John N. Mitchell was reportedly secreted in a mental hospital last week, but yesterday, sounding as ebullient as ever, the former Attorney General's wife denied it.

"Anybody who says that why they're just as crazy as can be," she said by telephone. "I'm right here at home. I went to see some friends of mine. I'm trying to live a private life now. Martha Mitchell has a right to privacy now, and I'm going to demand it."

Mrs. Mitchell, who telephoned The Times in response to queries concerning her whereabouts, said that she had spent a "pleasant week" at "somebody's house, I don't have to tell you who," that she had "a perfect right to find my little hideaways," and that she came home yesterday "because it's Mother's Day."

The call apparently was made from the Mitchells' Manhattan apartment building. An observer reported seeing Mrs. Mitchell enter the building

shortly before the telephone call was made. She appeared to be in good spirits.

Despite Mrs. Mitchell's denial, a source at the hospital where she was supposed to have stayed said that the former Attorney General's wife did arrive at the institution shortly after midnight last Monday.

The sources said she was "extremely docile" and "possibly drugged" when she arrived with an unidentified escort. She refused to sign herself in, the source said, but she was admitted nonetheless.

"That's nonsense," Mrs. Mitchell said while a male voice could be heard laughing in the background. "If I want to get lost for six months, that's all right. Just tell them I was in Portugal, what the heck."

Mrs. Mitchell also denied a Time magazine article, re-

Continued on Page 20, Column 7

SPECIAL GERMAN. Learn the basics. Three evenings. (May 15, 16, 17 at 6 P.M.) The New School. OR 5-2700.

Continued From Page 1, Col. 8

leased yesterday, that said she was distraught, unable to sleep and had suffered a nervous breakdown. Time reported that she entered the hospital voluntarily.

"That's crazy," Mrs. Mitchell said, "but let them say what they want. That's not so."

Mrs. Mitchell's two closest friends—Winzola McLendon, a former Washington reporter with whom she is doing a book, and a New York housewife—apparently knew where Mrs. Mitchell was last week but would not say.

"I talked with her yesterday, no Wednesday," the New York friend told The Times on Friday. "She's O.K. I know she told reporters to come looking for her if they couldn't find her, but she's O.K. Really she is."

Mrs. McLendon seemed less sure. On May 5, at a Washington meeting, Mrs. McLendon said the stress and strain of giving a deposition in the \$6.4-million civil suit against officials of the Committee for the Re-election of the President and the mounting evidence concerning her husband's possible involvement in the Watergate scandal might be too much for Mrs. Mitchell.

"She just might have a nervous breakdown," Mrs. McLendon said then.

By Tuesday, however, Mrs. McLendon was saying, "She's fine and I can't say another word."

Mrs. McLendon could not be reached yesterday. Telephone callers were told that she had gone to Europe. Mr. Mitchell could not be reached for comment either.



The New York Times

Mrs. John M. Mitchell at her last public appearance here on May 3. She went to a lawyer's office on West End Avenue to give a deposition.