

# Nixon Didn't Do It, Mitchell Says

New York

Newsweek magazine reported yesterday that former Attorney General John Mitchell has attempted to absolve President Nixon from any part in the Watergate scandal.

"This was not the President's doing," Mitchell told Newsweek. "None of it."

Newsweek also reported that Senate investigative sources said former Nixon aide John Ehrlichman is heading a White House group seeking to place the "responsibility" for the Watergate break-in and coverup on Mitchell and John Dean III, the former counsel to the President.

The magazine said the "Ehrlichman group"

planned its move after James McCord, who was convicted in the break-in, refused to go along with the coverup "game plan."

The magazine also reported in this week's edition, published yesterday, that Mitchell told friends he regrets what he sees as a plot to smear him.

Mitchell's friends said part of the plot was "to make sure he was indicted" before testifying to the Senate Watergate panel.

Mitchell, who was Mr. Nixon's campaign manager until two weeks after the Watergate break-in, was indicted recently by a federal grand jury for allegedly influencing a federal probe of Robert Vesco, a financier who made a \$250,000 secret campaign contribution to the Committee for the Re-election of the President.

The Newsweek report follows similar comments made by Mitchell Friday night that someone is trying to make him the scapegoat for burglary at the Democratic National Headquarters at the Watergate complex in Washington.

"Someone is trying to make me the fall guy," Mitchell said in a telephone conversation, "but it isn't

going to work."

Mitchell did not identify any individuals in his conversation that was initiated by his wife, Martha.

*United Press*