

Martha Mitchell Defends Husband

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By Helen Thomas

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Martha Mitchell said yesterday her husband John Mitchell would "go to jail for Richard Nixon."

"He's protecting the President of the United States," she declared in an early morning telephone conversation.

Mrs. Mitchell said she had a number of "reasons" to express those views but she declined to be specific.

"I don't know why, but maybe it's because he had so much faith in Nixon, even after all this," she said.

Mrs. Mitchell declined to say from where she was calling. Thursday, she was seen leaving her New York City apartment house with travel luggage. Mitchell apparently stayed behind.

As to how her husband is bearing up after being implicated in the Watergate scandal, Mrs. Mitchell said, "He's a hurt person. My husband had more integrity on Wall Street than anyone else. He feels everybody's got their tail between their legs and is running now."

She said her husband had lost a "helluva lot of weight" in the past few months, and had been preparing for his defense.

She once again said she would be "perfectly willing" to testify before the Senate's Watergate investigating committee, but added "they don't want me."

Mrs. Mitchell said that "anyone who says my husband was fired" from the Committee to Re-Elect the President is wrong. "He quit because of me," she said.

She recalled that when her husband went to the Westchester Country Club in Rye, N.Y., to bring her back to Washington last June after she had given him an ultimatum to quit politics, they sat down together and drew up a list of six names of possible candidates to replace him as Mr. Nixon's campaign manager. She said Mr. Nixon telephoned "and tried to make me feel better."

"My husband talked to the President by telephone every night when he was in Washington—when he was Attorney General and when he was at the committee," she said.

She also disclosed that Mitchell "still takes up" for H.R. Haldeman, the dis-

missed White House chief of staff. John D. Ehrlichman, Mr. Nixon's former domestic adviser, she said, however "was so nasty to John, it was unbelievable."

Because of Ehrlichman, Mrs. Mitchell said, her husband wanted to quit as head of the Justice Department two years after he was in office. "I persuaded him to stay on because I thought he was doing a good job," she said.