

The Next Witness-- Mitchell

WASHINGTON — (AP) — The Senate Watergate committee, which is on a 10-day July Fourth holiday, will hear former Attorney General John N. Mitchell, whom one investigator calls "a mystery witness" when it resumes Tuesday, July 10.

In public statements, Mitchell has denied involvement in the Watergate affair.

But he reportedly told Senate investigators at a closed-door meeting May 10 that he went along with paying hush-money to the defendants in the Watergate break-in case to prevent further embarrassment to the Nixon re-election campaign. Mitchell headed that campaign until two weeks after the June 17, 1972, break-in and continued to advise President Nixon afterward.

Mitchell insisted, however, that he rejected G. Gordon Liddy's plan to bug Democratic National Committee headquarters in the Watergate. His deputy, Jeb Stuart Magruder, has testified that Mitchell approved the plan.

Former White House coun-

sel John W. Dean III, grilled by the Senate committee for five days last week, repeatedly swore President Nixon knew of the Watergate cover-up. One of Mitchell's lawyers has said the former attorney general will not corroborate that.

But one Senate investigator said Mitchell's appearance before the Watergate panel may prove crucial.

"When we talked to him," the investigator said, "he didn't tell us anything we didn't know and certainly not everything he did know."

The interview took place the day Mitchell was indicted in New York in a campaign-financing case.

"He was shaking so hard a committee staffer had to help him light his pipe," one informant who was at the interview said.

"I just wouldn't try to predict what someone like that will say under cross-examination with all the cameras on him."