

John Won't Tell Where Martha Is

Washington

"She's in heaven, like all angels," John N. Mitchell quipped yesterday as he arrived to testify before the Senate Watergate committee without his wife, Martha.

"She decided to stay away," the former attorney general told reporters who crowded around him outside the senate caucus room. "She's in town, but not in Washington."

There had been widespread speculation that the

irrepressible Martha, one of the first to cry "dirty politics" in the Presidential campaigns last year, might accompany her husband to the Watergate hearings as other witnesses' wives had done.

But she didn't show up, and Mitchell sidestepped all questions on her whereabouts.

Asked if she is in Washington, he replied, smiling, "I hope not."

And asked if she is somewhere in the south, he said "with that accent she'll always be in the south."

Someone wanted to know if he had asked his wife to stay away, and he replied: "I've never seen her refrain from anything in my life."

Someone else suggested that Mrs. Mitchell might have taken the spotlight from her husband. "This is one occasion where you don't mind being upstaged," Mitchell said, grinning.

Mrs. Mitchell complained publicly about her husband's role in politics after he left the Justice Department in early 1972 to head President Nixon's re-election campaign.

When he quit that job a year ago, less than a month after the June 17 break-in and bugging at Democratic National headquarters in the Watergate, he said it was at his wife's insistence.

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