

Acquitted Ex-Officials

John Newton Mitchell

Throughout the 48 days of the trial, as witness after witness took the stand, he sat there impassively staring straight ahead or scribbling on a yellow lawyer's pad in front of him. Once

Men only he laughed,
in the when a witness
News said, "When John Mitchell said drop it, you dropped it."

When he was not in court, John Newton Mitchell slipped in and out of the Essex House at odd times, so that the guests and other residents seldom saw him. He lives alone there, being separated from his wife.

The President of the United States was no longer at the other end of the telephone, and for a man who was once friend and strategist of the President, once Attorney General of the United States, the days must have been long and lonely ones, spent as they were in the company of his lawyers, who were really his servants, or in staring out in the courtroom upon strangers who would decide his future.

In the Essex House, Mr. Mitchell lives under an alias, although that is not really necessary since the permanent residents, such as Mrs. Henry Peterson, who has lived there 24 years, are all in favor of respecting his privacy.

Edward West, who runs the laundry concession at the hotel (Mr. Mitchell does not take starch in his shirts), said that he "seems to be a nice man; he always greets people with a 'how have you been?'" That's it, though, "how have you beens?" to other strangers in his hotel; that and visits from his youngest child, a daughter, Marty, 13, who attends private school in the suburbs, an hour by car from the Essex House, and who visits her father several times a week.

Sees Friends in Evenings

Sometimes, but only after 6 P.M., there is Scotch in his Essex House apartment with friends. Then John Mitchell is said to be relaxed, wearing his yellow cardigan sweater, which in better days was his golfing sweater. When he worked in his home in Washington, there was always nearby a half-gallon jug of Dewar's Scotch whiskey mounted in a wooden cradle for easy pouring. But now John Mitchell is mostly alone.

In what must seem to him a lifetime ago, in November, 1968, a black limousine drew up in front of the South Portico of the White House. President Johnson and his wife were there to greet President-elect and Mrs. Richard M. Nixon, and out of the car, along with the Nixons, stepped a dour, dark-browed, full-faced man, who was Mr.

Mitchell, close to all that power, about to become the nation's highest law enforcement officer.

His figure in Washington, then, before Watergate, was of pre-eminent power, although friends said that he was philosophical about being cast, in the early days of the Nixon Administration, as the heavy.

All he would say in those days of the President was that "I think he [Mr. Nixon] values my judgment," an understated line delivered between puffs on his pipe.

From 'Everything' to 'Nothing'

His wife Martha much later summed it this way: "Four years ago we had everything, and now we have nothing."

When he was indicted, his name was stricken from the roster of the Broad Street law firm of Mudge Rose Guthrie & Alexander, where Mr. Mitchell had become rich. He still receives an income from the firm, which purchased back from him his partnership, but most of the money goes toward legal fees, and his wife, who lives alone in a large apartment on Fifth Avenue or in Washington, where she is helping to write a book, complains sometimes that she receives no financial support from him.

John Mitchell was never a gregarious man. In his law firm, where he met Mr. Nixon between the President's various attempts at running for office, he was not a popular partner, but he was a successful one, winning national recognition as a specialist in municipal and state financing.

John Mitchell was born in Detroit on Sept. 15, 1913, and later attended Fordham University and Fordham Law School. During World War II, he served in the Navy as commander of motor torpedo boats in the Pacific, and one of his junior officers was John F. Kennedy. He and his wife, the former Martha Buell, have one child, and Mr. Mitchell has a daughter and son from a previous marriage.

Mr. Mitchell took office as Attorney General on Jan. 22, 1969, and served until he resigned to run President Nixon's re-election campaign, a post he gave up not long after the arrest of the Watergate burglars in June, 1972.

His personal relationship with the President is said to be over, but his lawyers contend he never sought immunity from the Federal prosecutors, and until the end he will insist, as he did before the Watergate committee, that whatever he did he did to get Mr. Nixon re-elected—and that that was very important for the country.

Maurice Hubert Stans

"The defense calls Maurice Stans." The former Commerce Secretary stood up and walked to the witnesses who preceded him, Mr. Stans turned to face the jury. He seemed relieved at last to tell his story. He spoke in a rambling folksy way. It was the 39th day of Maurice Hubert Stans's conspiracy-perjury trial.

For weeks he had sat silently at the defense table, a slight smile set on his face. He seemed serene. During most of the trial, he took notes on a yellow pad. He felt no bitterness about his situation nor any apprehension about the outcome of his trial, his associates said.

Once on the witness stand, he was animated and smiling. He wore a dark-blue business suit, with an American flag pin in his lapel. He told of how he had lived in a small town in Minnesota and how his father was a house painter.

"We had a home, but it did not have running water," he said. "My room was on the second floor, which was unfinished, so I slept under the rafters, and when it was below zero outside, it was below zero inside."

Early School Years

He told how he attended night school first at Northwestern University and later at Columbia. But he said he had never been graduated because he had to work. Soon after, he became an accountant.

He explained to the jurors that he left President Nixon's Cabinet to become chairman of the Finance Committee to Re-elect the President and subsequently raised \$55-million for Mr. Nixon. He said he had a "pitch" that he used to raise money for the President.

And this was projected as he spoke to the jury, in contrast to the testimony of his co-defendant, John N. Mitchell, who spoke directly to his lawyers, rather than to the panel. Throughout most of this trial Mr. Stans and Mr. Mitchell have hardly spoken to each other.

Mr. Stans maintained that a \$200,000 cash contribution from Robert L. Vesco, a New Jersey financier, was to be kept secret because "privacy was his constitutional right under the law. There was no payoff, no quid pro quo," he declared.

After being on the witness stand for three days, Mr. Stans's demeanor began to

crack when he conceded to the prosecutor, under cross examination, that there were indeed discrepancies between his grand jury and trial testimony.

These were not lies, he in "hazy" recollection brought on because of his wife's illness. His wife, Kathleen, he said, had been critically ill, suffering from a rare blood disease that was then in remission. She was near death in November, 1972. Four months later, he appeared before the grand jury, which later accused him of lying to them.

"I put people in wrong places, events in wrong dates, and confused situations," the 66-year-old Mr. Stans said, making a direct plea to the jurors. His face was ashen.

Many have wondered why Mr. Stans took that initial step to leave the Cabinet to help run Mr. Nixon's campaign, a step that led him to the United States District Court here. "The President asked me," he once told a friend.

Mr. Stans first came to Washington in 1933 to serve on a Congressional budget-review panel. He later served as a consultant and deputy to the Postmaster General before going to the Bureau of the Budget in 1958 as first deputy and then director until the end of President Eisenhower's second term.

Out of Government in 1961, Mr. Stans became a senior partner in an investment banking firm that later merged with a brokerage firm.

After Mr. Nixon's election, in 1968, Mr. Stans returned to the Government, although not in the post he reportedly preferred, that of Secretary of the Treasury.

Then again in 1972, he agreed to take on the job of raising money, and he was very successful. In his own words before the Senate Watergate committee last summer, he raised "the largest amount of money ever spent in a political campaign, 'something in the neighborhood of \$60-million.'"

One man who has known Mr. Stans slightly for 20 years tried to recall a single anecdote involving him, and failed. Aside from a lifelong passion for big-game hunting, there has been little about Maurice Stans that made good copy. But he does have an undoubted ability as a fund-raiser.