

Conflict on Mitchell Story

Washington

Robert C. Mardian testified yesterday that coverup codefendant John N. Mitchell acknowledged approving funds for the Watergate break-in one week after the burglars were arrested.

It marked the second time that Mardian's testimony conflicted with testimony given by the former attorney general.

Mardian, appearing on his

own behalf, also insisted that he took no part in the coverup. He asserted, "I conceived my role as that of any lawyer."

The former assistant attorney general said he was assigned by Mitchell to handle Watergate matters for the 1972 Nixon reelection committee.

On June 24, 1972, seven days after the break-in at Democratic National Com-

mittee headquarters, Mardian said he met with Mitchell and deputy campaign director Jeb Stuart Magruder to find out how much money had been given to Watergate burglar G. Gordon Liddy.

Mardian described his surprise at Magruder's disclosure that Liddy had spent as much as \$40,000, and "Mitchell expressed equal surprise at that amount."

Mardian quoted Magruder

as saying to Mitchell, "But you approved a budget of \$250,000" for Liddy's operation.

"Yes," Mardian quoted Mitchell as declaring, "but the campaign hasn't even started yet."

Mitchell testified earlier that he turned back Magruder's attempts to get Liddy's political intelligence plan approved.

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