

Defendants' Reaction

Washington

There were few tears, and only one open display of anger, as four members of the Nixon administration were found guilty yesterday of taking part in a criminal conspiracy to obstruct justice in the Watergate scandal.

Moments after the verdicts were announced, Mrs. Robert Mardian, wife of one of the convicted defendants, stuck out her tongue and sounded a Bronx cheer, in the direction of Judge John Sirica.

But while Mrs. Mardian was the only one to react angrily at the outcome of the Watergate trial, it was obvious that all the defendants and their wives were shocked by the verdicts.

Later, after consulting with their attorneys, the four convicted men announced that they would appeal the verdicts, probably within the next ten days.

As the jury filed into the deathly quiet courtroom just before 4 p.m., the defendants stood impassively. The jury foreman, John A. Hoffar, a registered Republican, handed a thick brown envelope to the clerk of court, James Capitanio.

As the clerk intoned "guilty . . . guilty . . . guilty . . . guilty . . . guilty," John Mitchell, a former attorney general and close friend of former President Nixon, flushed deeply.

Then, leaning down, he whispered to his attorney, William Hundley: "Don't take it so

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hard."

And as the clerk announced that a fifth defendant, Kenneth Parkinson, had been acquitted, Mitchell mouthed the words: "Congratulations. Good, Ken."

Later, asked his reaction to his conviction Mitchell, with just a trace of a smile, said: "Do I have any reaction? Can't you guesstimate? Do I have to tell you?"

Asked if he planned to take a vacation, the former attorney general said: "I'm going to the moon, I think."

Parkinson brushed a few tears from his eyes as the clerk announced his acquittal. And Mrs. H.R. Haldeman, whose husband was convicted, put her arms around Mrs. Parkinson and whispered: "I'm so glad for you."

Later, after walking out of

the courtroom, his arm around his wife, Parkinson said: "Obviously, I'm thrilled. I feel great. I've always had great faith and hope and it worked out."

Asked about his future plans, he smiled and said: "I'm going to go home and take a hot bath."

For long minutes after the verdicts were announced and the court was adjourned, Robert Mardian, a former Justice Department official, continued sitting at a table.

He appeared stunned and unable to move.

He finally left the court when his wife came up to him and whispered in his ear. He refused comment on his conviction, merely shaking his head no.

As a clerk announced the conviction of Haldeman, who once was former President Nixon's chief of staff, his wife sat with her head



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ROBERT MARDIAN (LEFT) AND HIS ATTORNEY
An artist caught Mardian's reaction to the verdict

bowed and her eyes squeezed shut.

Then, opening her eyes, she turned to Mrs. John Ehrlichman, the wife of another convicted defendant, and the two women smiled at each other.

Later, as he emerged from the courthouse and stood in the misty rain, Haldeman faced a barrage of television cameras as he said that only one human being in the whole world knew the facts about the Watergate affair.

"That person is me and I know that legally and morally I'm totally and absolutely innocent. I have the full conviction that ultimately the truth will be known."

Susan Haldeman, a law student who attended every

session of her father's long trial, burst into tears briefly as she left the courtroom.

The Ehrlichmans, their arms around each other, walked from the courtroom to a nearby office, where they promptly telephoned four of their five children in California and the state of Washington to tell them of the verdicts.

Later, as his wife watched, Ehrlichman emerged for a long, ram-

bling news conference in which he said he felt he had not had a fair trial.½

"If there ever has been a political trial in this country," he said, smiling slightly, "this was it."

He said he was convinced from the outset that he would be unable to get a fair trial in the District of Columbia and that "nothing that has happened today has changed my mind."

He said the turning point in the trial came when Judge Sirica ruled that former President Nixon would not be required to testify or give a deposition.

Asked if he felt that Mr. Nixon should have voluntarily come forth as a witness, Ehrlichman replied: "No, it's not reasonable or fair to expect him to come forward voluntarily. It was up to the judicial process to bring him forward."

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Mrs. H. R. Haldeman (right) and daughter, Susan, as Haldeman talked to reporters after the verdict

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