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Mitchell Petitions Carter  
For Immediate Release

WASHINGTON, Oct. 19 — John N. Mitchell, complaining of hypertension and acute pain in a rapidly degenerating hip, petitioned President Carter today for immediate release from the Federal prison where he is serving time for his part in the Watergate conspiracy.

"I am in pain and am taking drugs," the former Attorney General wrote in a statement signed Oct. 13. He said that X-rays had shown deterioration of bone and cartilage in his right hip and that the only relief would be an operation to replace diseased bones with aluminum or plastic substitutes.

"I want the operation as soon as possible," Mr. Mitchell wrote. "Without in any way reflecting upon the Federal Bureau of Prisons, I do not want this delicate surgery performed within the prison system."

Mr. Mitchell entered the minimum security prison at Maxwell Air Force Base in Montgomery, Ala., last June. On Oct. 4, Federal District Judge John J. Sirica shortened his sentence, making him eligible for parole next June.

In a letter to Attorney General Griffin B. Bell, Mr. Mitchell's lawyer, William G. Hundley, said that his client has minimized his hip problem. He said that Mr. Mitchell was taking excessive amounts of Valium to relieve the pain.

"I am concerned," Mr. Hundley wrote, "that the constant pain, the need for surgery and the continued incarceration, coupled with all his other problems, could be too much even for a strong man like John Mitchell."