

The Watergate scandal

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Abstract

In this report, an overview of the Watergate affair in the United States will be given. Starting June 17, 1972 with the burglary on the headquarters of the Democratic National Committee at the Watergate complex and ending with the resignation of President of the United States Richard Nixon.

The burglary is well covered by *Washington Post* reporters Bob Woodward and Carl Bernstein. Also with the help of their secret source *Deep Throat*, who occurs to be Mark Felt, a high-ranked FBI-official.

Watergate appears to be a part of a broad campaign of spying and sabotage by the Nixon Administration. It took a while before the story made an impact on the American people. In November 1972 President Nixon got reelected without problems, in spite of the Watergate story. The White House kept denying and ignoring the accusations.

In 1973 official investigations were initiated by the Senate Watergate Committee and a special prosecutor. The Watergate story remained a stain on Nixon's presidency and there was commotion in the White House, several aides resigned or got fired.

A Watergate-breakthrough was the disclosure of the existence of a taping system in the White House. The White House refused to release the tapes, but the Supreme Court ordered to release them. These tapes proofed that Nixon had known about Watergate and the cover-up right from the beginning. The only thing he could do at this point was resign because he lost all political support. At noon on August 9, 1974 he resigned officially as President of the United States.

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Introduction

Watergate, one of the most well-known and sensational political events in the United States of the 20th century. An event leading in the end to the resignation of the President of the United States Richard Milhouse Nixon. The first and until now only time a President had to resign from his office. A story about burglary's, eavesdropping, *Plumbers*, secret funding and abuse of power by the White House.

But Watergate is also a story about reporters Woodward and Bernstein looking for the truth, with the help of *Deep Throat*, their secret source. A clear example of persevere journalism.

In this report I will give an overview of the Watergate scandal and the reporting by *The Washington Post*. By means of a literature research, I ground the story of Watergate. This report is a historical, chronologic reflection aiming at the different main characters and stories in the Watergate affair.

Strategy

By conducting a literature research, I learned about the backgrounds of the Watergate scandal. An important source is The Washington Post, the leading newspaper in the United States investigating the Watergate affair. In particular, the Post-reporters Carl Bernstein and Bob Woodward are important, they covered the most of the Watergate story. In 1974 they wrote a book about Watergate: *All the President's men*. Another journalist, Timothy Crouse, wrote *The boys on the bus*, a story about the reporters following the 1972 campaign for the presidential elections. He mentioned the Watergate story becoming a minor issue in the months before the elections in November. The sources gave me a wide overview of the Watergate events, from the burglary in June, 1972 until the resignation of President Nixon in August, 1974. Another source was *Vanity Fair*, this magazine revealed the long hidden identity of secret source *Deep Throat*.

The Watergate scandal

The Watergate complex

The Watergate complex is located at Virginia Avenue in Washington D.C.. The name Watergate is famous and not just because of the stunning architecture. The name Watergate refers to the scandal in the early seventies that caused the resignation of, at that time President of the United States, Richard Milhouse Nixon.

The Watergate complex, as seen in figure 1, consists of multiple buildings: some apartment buildings, a retail center, a hotel and two office buildings. The complex is situated



near the river Potomac and faces the Theodore Roosevelt Island. It is a “futuristic complex, with its serpent’s-teeth concrete balustrades and equally menacing prices.”¹ One of the office buildings is the scene of the beginning of the Watergate story. In 1972 on the sixth floor of the building the Democratic National Committee was located.

Figure 1 - The Watergate complex²

Burglary

The Watergate scandal unfolds itself after the arrest of five men in the office building of the Watergate complex at 2.30 a.m. on June 17, 1972. The five burglars wore rubber gloves and carried more than 2000 dollars in cash. They carried “a walkie-talkie, 40 rolls of unexposed film, two 35-millimeter cameras, lock picks, pen-size tear-gas guns, and bugging devices”³ with them. The Washington Post reported that one prosecutor in court describes the burglary as a professional operation.⁴

¹ Bernstein, C., & Woodward, B. (1974). *All the President’s men*. (pp. 14). New York: Pocket Books.

² The Watergate complex. Retrieved April 7, 2009, from <http://static.howstuffworks.com/gif/watergate-1.jpg>

³ Bernstein, C., & Woodward, B. (1974). *All the President’s men*. (pp. 14 – 15). New York: Pocket Books.

⁴ Lewis, A. E. (1972, June 18). 5 held in plot to bug Democrats' office here. *The Washington Post*. Retrieved March 22, 2009, from <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2002/05/31/AR2005111001227.html>

25.000 dollars

Two days after the burglaries Washington Post-reporters Bob Woodward and Carl Bernstein revealed that one of the five arrested men, James McCord, was working as a security coordinator for the Committee for the Re-Election of the President.⁵ At that time the White House presidential press secretary Ronald Ziegler stated that the break-in at the Watergate office was “‘a third-rate burglary attempt’ not worth of further White House comment.”⁶ Nixon made his first official comment on the break-in at June 22, saying “the White House has had no involvement whatever in this particular incident.”

But the burglary had an aftermath and in August it turned out that one of the suspects had received a 25.000 dollars-check. Originally this money was for Nixon’s reelection campaign because it was first handed out to Maurice Stans, chief fundraiser for the reelection of Richard Nixon.⁷ Inexplicably this check had reached the bank account of one of the suspects, probably via Stans.⁸

Shortly after the burglary Howard Hunt, a former CIA agent and a consultant working in the White House, became suspicious. His name was in the address book of one of the arrested men.⁹ It came out that he and former FBI agent Gordon Liddy were deeply involved with Watergate. On the 17th of June they were in a hotel room opposite of the Watergate building guiding the five burglars through the office via walkie-talkies. So that night there was a team with seven members: five in the Watergate office and two men at the opposite of the street. In the end Liddy and McCord were convicted of burglary, conspiracy and bugging the Democratic Party’s headquarters in the Watergate complex in January 1973.¹⁰ The five other men, including Hunt¹¹, had pleaded guilty earlier.¹²

⁵ Bernstein, C., & Woodward, B. (1972, June 19). GOP security aide among five arrested in bugging affair. *The Washington Post*. Retrieved March 22, 2009, from <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2002/05/31/AR2005111001228.html>

⁶ Bernstein, C., & Woodward, B. (1974). *All the President’s men*. (pp. 26). New York: Pocket Books.

⁷ Bernstein, C., & Woodward, B. (1974). *All the President’s men*. (pp. 44). New York: Pocket Books.

⁸ Bernstein, C., & Woodward, B. (1972, August 1). Bug suspect got campaign funds. *The Washington Post*. Retrieved March 24, 2009, from <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2002/06/03/AR2005111001229.html>

⁹ Bernstein, C., & Woodward, B. (1974). *All the President’s men*. (pp. 22). New York: Pocket Books.

¹⁰ Bernstein, C., & Woodward, B. (1974). *All the President’s men*. (pp. 240). New York: Pocket Books.

¹¹ Bernstein, C., & Woodward, B. (1974). *All the President’s men*. (pp. 231). New York: Pocket Books.

¹² Meyer, L. (1973, January 31). Last two guilty in Watergate plot. *The Washington Post*. Retrieved April 1, 2009, from <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2002/05/31/AR2005111001234.html>

Scoops

Journalist Bob Woodward used a secret source named *Deep Throat*. With his help and an amount of perseverance Woodward and Bernstein revealed some important facts about the Watergate scandal in the months just after the break-in. It turned out among other things that Attorney General John Mitchell maintained “a secret Republican fund that was used to gather information about the Democrats.”¹³ Mitchell denied the imputation at that point.¹⁴

Another revelation was that the Watergate burglary was only a part of a “broader scheme.”¹⁵ For the first time they considered the possibility that President Nixon was highly involved in the Watergate scandal.¹⁶

Early October, 1972, Woodward met with Deep Throat. The secret source confirmed a whole list of activities “used against the political opposition: bugging, following people, false press leaks, fake letters, canceling campaign rallies, investigating campaign workers’ private lives, planting spies, stealing documents, planting provocateurs in political demonstrations.”¹⁷ It resulted in a huge scoop in *The Washington Post* of October 10, 1972. The reporters wrote that officials of the Committee for the Re-election of the President and the White House directed a massive and unprecedented large campaign of “political spying and sabotage conducted of behalf of President Nixon’s re-election”.¹⁸ At that point the White House refused to comment on the story.¹⁹ With this story, almost four months after the break-in, “the spreading stain of Watergate had finally seeped into the White House.”²⁰

Reelection

In the meantime the presidential elections of November 1972 were near. In spite of Watergate Nixon won the elections with a massive lead on Democratic candidate George McGovern.²¹

After Nixon’s reelection the Watergate scandal continued. In April 1973 it occurred

¹³ Bernstein, C., & Woodward, B. (1974). *All the President’s men*. (pp. 103). New York: Pocket Books.

¹⁴ Bernstein, C., & Woodward, B. (1972, September 29). Mitchell controlled secret GOP fund. *The Washington Post*. Retrieved March 24, 2009, from <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2002/06/03/AR2005111001231.html>

¹⁵ Bernstein, C., & Woodward, B. (1974). *All the President’s men*. (pp. 113). New York: Pocket Books.

¹⁶ Bernstein, C., & Woodward, B. (1974). *All the President’s men*. (pp. 129). New York: Pocket Books.

¹⁷ Bernstein, C., & Woodward, B. (1974). *All the President’s men*. (pp. 135). New York: Pocket Books

¹⁸ Bernstein, C., & Woodward, B. (1972, October 10). FBI finds Nixon aides sabotaged democrats. *The Washington Post*. Retrieved March 24, 2009, from <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2002/06/03/AR2005111001232.html>

¹⁹ Bernstein, C., & Woodward, B. (1974). *All the President’s men*. (pp. 145). New York: Pocket Books.

²⁰ Bernstein, C., & Woodward, B. (1974). *All the President’s men*. (pp. 158). New York: Pocket Books

²¹ Broder, D. S. (1972, November 8). Nixon wins landslide victory; Democrats hold Senate, House. *The Washington Post*. Retrieved March 24, 2009, from <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2002/06/03/AR2005111001233.html>

that the break-in at the Watergate complex was not the first offence of the burglars. Liddy and Hunt, the two men guiding the five burglars through the Watergate complex, had also supervised the burglary of the office of Daniel Ellsberg's psychiatrist.²² Ellsberg was a former analyst of the Defense Department. In 1971 he leaked top-secret Pentagon papers to the *New York Times*. The goal of the burglary in September 1971 was to find something that could be used to discredit Ellsberg.

Hunt and Liddy were members of the so-called *Plumbers*, "a secret White House team investigating leaks to the news media."²³ It turned out that besides Hunt and Liddy there were two other Plumbers. The White House did not deny that there was a team operating investigating leaks to news media, but they disaffirmed that either Hunt or Liddy were part of the Plumbers.²⁴

Investigations

Besides the covering of Watergate by the media two official investigations began in 1973. The first one was conducted by the Senate Watergate Committee. This investigation was directed by Senator Sam J. Ervin of North Carolina. Ervin was "a 76-year old constitutional scholar and a formidable power on Capitol Hill."²⁵ He was chairman of a committee of seven people for investigating Watergate and the 1972 presidential campaign. The hearings of this committee started on May 17, 1973.²⁶ Special prosecutor Archibald Cox, a Harvard Law School professor, directed the second investigation. Cox was asked to investigate the break-in at the Democratic National Headquarters, all the offences that came up in the reelection campaign and any other allegations involving Nixon or White House employees.²⁷

White House

At the end of April, 1973, there was commotion in the White House. Two chief White House advisers, H.R. Haldeman and John Ehrlichman, resigned because of Watergate. Also Attorney General Richard Kleindienst resigned and White House counsel John Dean got fired.²⁸ The Post reported that "the dismantling of the White House command staff ... was the most

²² Bernstein, C., & Woodward, B. (1974). *All the President's men*. (pp. 307). New York: Pocket Books

²³ Bernstein, C., & Woodward, B. (1974). *All the President's men*. (pp. 207). New York: Pocket Books

²⁴ Bernstein, C., & Woodward, B. (1974). *All the President's men*. (pp. 220). New York: Pocket Books

²⁵ Bernstein, C., & Woodward, B. (1974). *All the President's men*. (pp. 246 - 247). New York: Pocket Books

²⁶ Bernstein, C., & Woodward, B. (1974). *All the President's men*. (pp. 316). New York: Pocket Books

²⁷ Lardner Jr., G. (1973, May 19). Cox is chosen as special prosecutor. *The Washington Post*. Retrieved March 25, 2009, from <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2002/05/31/AR2005111001236.html>

²⁸ Bernstein, C., & Woodward, B. (1974). *All the President's men*. (pp. 309 - 310). New York: Pocket Books

devastating impact that the Watergate scandal has yet made on the administration.”²⁹ More noise came out of the White House in the early summer of 1973. John Dean, the recently fired counsel of the President, explained to the investigation committee that he discussed aspects of the Watergate cover-up with the President or in his presence. According to Dean it happened on at least 35 occasions between January and April of 1973.³⁰ If Dean’s statement was right it mend that President Nixon was aware about and highly involved in the cover-up of Watergate. Until now Nixon had denied everything.

Tape recordings

Another stunning disclosure was revealed on July 13, 1973. That day the investigation committee interviewed presidential aide Alexander Butterfield. He told the committee that there was a secret taping system in the White House.³¹ This system recorded all conversations, meetings and phone calls of the President.³² There were only a few people who knew about the taping system: some important staffers, under which Haldeman and Butterfield, some Secret Service agents who maintained the system and the President himself.³³

The existence of the secret taping system mend that there could be proof on tape that the President knew and was highly involved in the Watergate cover-up, which mend that the earlier statement of John Dean could be correct. But at this point in time the White House refused to release the tape recordings. The White House was heading for a confrontation with the investigators.

The only thing investigators Ervin and Cox could do at the moment was issuing subpoenas for the tapes on a presidential counsel and lawyer. Ervin and Cox believed that the material was essential for their investigation. Nevertheless, the President refused to hand over the tape recordings and the disagreement remained. The Post wrote on July 24, 1973 that “the stage was set for a great constitutional struggle between a President determined not to give up executive documents and materials and a Senate committee and a federal prosecutor who are

²⁹ Stern, L., & Johnson, H. (1973, May 1). 3 Top Nixon aides, Kleindienst out; President accepts full responsibility; Richardson will conduct new probe. *The Washington Post*. Retrieved April 1, 2009, from <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2002/05/31/AR2005111001235.html>

³⁰ Bernstein, C., & Woodward, B. (1973, June 3). Dean alleges Nixon knew of cover-up plan. *The Washington Post*. Retrieved March 25, 2009, from <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2002/05/31/AR2005112200792.html>

³¹ Bernstein, C., & Woodward, B. (1974). *All the President’s men*. (pp. 330). New York: Pocket Books

³² Meyer, L. (1973, July 17). President taped talks, phone calls; lawyer ties Ehrlichman to payments. *The Washington Post*. Retrieved March 25, 2009, from <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2002/06/03/AR2005112200794.html>

³³ Bernstein, C., & Woodward, B. (1974). *All the President’s men*. (pp. 331). New York: Pocket Books

determined to get them. The ultimate arbitration, it was believed, would have to be made by the Supreme Court.”³⁴

Not a crook

After long negotiations there was a sort of solution. The White House offered to hand over written summaries of the tape recordings. Ervin of the committee accepted the deal, but special prosecutor Cox did not agree. President Nixon was not pleased by the rejection of Cox. In October 1973 he ordered Elliot Richardson, the Attorney General, to dismiss special prosecutor Cox. Richardson refused, he rather resigned as well as his deputy William Ruckelshaus.³⁵

Robert Bork the new Attorney General came in order and he finally fired Cox. Because of these resignations and the discharge an end came to the investigation of the Watergate scandal by special prosecutor Cox, his office was abolished.³⁶ This event was later labeled *Saturday Night Massacre*. Not everybody was pleased with the unexpected resignation of the two Attorney Generals and the firing of prosecutor Cox. There were people who demanded impeachment of President Nixon.³⁷ He was forced to find a new special prosecutor. It became lawyer Leon Jaworski.

Because of all the rumor about his involvement with Watergate and the criticism about Cox' dismissing, the President wanted to defend himself. On November 17, 1973 he gave a press conference at Disneyworld in Florida for *Associated Press* editors.³⁸ At that conference, broadcasted on national television, he gave the famous statement: “I'm not a crook. I've earned everything I've got.”³⁹

18 ½ minute gap

Three days after his statement another disappointment appeared for Nixon. His lawyers informed a federal judge that one of the important tapes missed 18 ½ minute of the

³⁴ Kilpatrick, C. (1973, July 24) President refuses to turn over tapes; Ervin committee, Cox issue subpoenas. *The Washington Post*. Retrieved March 25, 2009, from <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2002/06/03/AR2005112200796.html>

³⁵ Bernstein, C., & Woodward, B. (1974). *All the President's men*. (pp. 333). New York: Pocket Books

³⁶ Kilpatrick, C. (1973, October 21). Nixon forces firing of Cox; Richardson, Ruckelshaus quit. *The Washington Post*. Retrieved March 25, 2009, from <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2002/06/03/AR2005112200799.html>

³⁷ Witcover, J. (1973, October 21). Pressure for impeachment mounting. *The Washington Post*. Retrieved March 25, 2009, from <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2002/06/03/AR2005112200800.html>

³⁸ Bernstein, C., & Woodward, B. (1974). *All the President's men*. (pp. 334). New York: Pocket Books

³⁹ Kilpatrick, C. (1973, November 18). Nixon tells editors, 'I'm not a crook'. *The Washington Post*. Retrieved March 25, 2009, from <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2002/06/03/AR2005112200801.html>

recording.⁴⁰ White House chief of staff Alexander Haig could not explain clearly at the court why there was a part erased and he spoke about “some sinister force”. For some strange reason there was a humming noise that makes the tape useless for 18 ½ minutes. The tape contained a discussion about Watergate between Nixon and his former chief of staff Haldeman on June 20, 1972.⁴¹

Nixon's last months

In Nixon's annual State of the Union Message on January 30, 1974, he referred to the Watergate affair⁴²: “I would like to add a personal word with regard to an issue that has been of great concern to all Americans over the past year. I refer, of course, to the investigations of the so-called Watergate affair. As you know, I have provided to the Special Prosecutor voluntarily a great deal of material. I believe that I have provided all the material that he needs to conclude his investigations and to proceed to prosecute the guilty and to clear the innocent. I believe the time has come to bring that investigation and the other investigations of this matter to an end. One year of Watergate is enough.”⁴³

In spite of Nixon's statement that one year of Watergate was enough, the affair continued. On the one hand investigated by the Senate Watergate Committee, directed by Ervin, and on the other hand the affair was investigated by special prosecutor Jaworski. They believed the White House had to turn over more tapes and transcripts. Nixon refused, stating that he made mistakes but broke no laws and that he had not known about the cover-up until March 1973. He refused to release more tapes to Ervin and Jaworski because it could harm his assistants.

In March 1974 special attorney Jaworski charged former White House aides Haldeman and Ehrlichman. Also former Attorney General Mitchell and four other staffers were charged. Jaworski accused them for conspiracy to obstruct justice.⁴⁴ Also there was the question of indicting President Nixon. But Jaworski refused because he was afraid that indicting the sitting President was not valid.

⁴⁰ Bernstein, C., & Woodward, B. (1974). *All the President's men*. (pp. 333 - 334). New York: Pocket Books

⁴¹ Lardner Jr., G. (1973, December 7). Haig tells theories on erasure. *The Washington Post*. Retrieved March 25, 2009, from <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2002/06/03/AR2005112200802.html>

⁴² Bernstein, C., & Woodward, B. (1974). *All the President's men*. (pp. 336). New York: Pocket Books

⁴³ Nixon, R. (1974, January 30). State of the Union. *The American Presidency Project*. Retrieved 25 March, 2009, from <http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/?pid=4327>

⁴⁴ Bernstein, C., & Woodward, B. (1974). *All the President's men*. (pp. 335). New York: Pocket Books

The transcripts

1254 pages of transcripts of conversations between President Nixon and his staffers in the period between September 1972 and April, 1973. Nixon hoped to indulge a bit to his critics with the release of these transcripts on April 30, 1974. The Washington Post described them as “explosive in their revelations about the President’s role in Watergate.” According to the White House this release completely absolved Nixon, but the Post did not see it like this: “The conversations show the President discussing at length raising blackmail money; discussing the merits of offering clemency or parole; suggesting how to handle possible perjury or obstruction of justice charges; urging the adoption of a ‘national security’ defense for potential White House defendants.”⁴⁵

In the following month the investigation quickened. A federal court ruled that The White House had to release the tapes and Jaworski was in favor with this judgment. But Nixon refused again and appealed this decision to the Supreme Court. Due to all the rumors about his possible role in the Watergate scandal, Nixon began losing political favor. In June reports came out which stated that all the member of the House Judiciary Committee were prepared to vote for impeachment.⁴⁶ Unfortunately for Nixon also the Supreme Court ordered unanimously that the White House must turn over the tapes.⁴⁷ At the end of July, on top of the decision of the Supreme Court, a majority of the House Judiciary Committee officially recommended to the House that president Nixon has to be impeached and removed from office.⁴⁸

With the release of the long hidden tapes, early August, 1974, and with the recommendation of the House Judiciary Committee the future of President Nixon looked bleak. The release of the recordings was important. In particular the recording of June 23, 1973, that showed indisputable evidence that Nixon had known about the cover-up from the start. More strongly, the president played a leading role in the cover-up, in spite of his statements of innocence. Because of this tape, also known as the *Smoking Gun Tape*⁴⁹, Nixon loosed his last support. Even his staff told Nixon that resigning was the best thing he could do

⁴⁵ Johnson, H. (1974, May 1). President hands over transcripts. *The Washington Post*. Retrieved March 25, 2009, from <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2002/05/31/AR2005112200803.html>

⁴⁶ Bernstein, C., & Woodward, B. (1974). *All the President’s men*. (pp. 335). New York: Pocket Books

⁴⁷ MacKenzie, J.P. (1974, July 25). Court order Nixon to yield tapes; President promises to comply fully. *The Washington Post*. Retrieved March 26, 2009, from <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2002/06/03/AR2005112200805.html>

⁴⁸ Lyons, R., & Chapman, W. (1974, July 28), Judiciary Committee approves article to impeach President Nixon, 27 to 11. *The Washington Post*. Retrieved March 26, 2009, from <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2005/06/16/AR2005061601012.html>

⁴⁹ Transcript of the *Smoking Gun Tape*. Retrieved March 26, 2009, http://nixon.archives.gov/forresearchers/find/tapes/watergate/trial/exhibit_01.pdf

at that moment. It was almost certain that he had to face impeachment because he lost all support in Congress.

Resignation

And that was what he did. President Nixon announced his resignation on August 8, 1974, live on national television, stating among other things “by taking this action, I hope that I will have hastened the start of the process of healing which is so desperately needed in America.”⁵⁰ At noon on August 9, Nixon’s resignation became official. His successor was Vice President Gerald Ford, he completed the remaining years of Nixon’s term. Ford did Nixon a great favor to grant him on September 8, 1974, saying: “by these presents do grant a full, free, and absolute pardon unto Richard Nixon for all offenses against the United States which he, Richard Nixon, has committed or may have committed or taken part in during the period from January 20, 1969 through August 9, 1974.”⁵¹

⁵⁰ Kilpatrick, C. (1974, August 9). Nixon resigns. *The Washington Post*. Retrieved March 26, from <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2002/06/03/AR2005033108821.html>

⁵¹ Ford, G.R. (1974, September 8). Proclamation 4311, granting a pardon to Richard Nixon. Retrieved March 26, 2009, from <http://www.ford.utexas.edu/LIBRARY/speeches/740061.htm>

Media and impact

The Washington Post

The Washington Post attracted attention in the Watergate story because its investigation of the story was important. Journalist Timothy Crouse wrote in his novel *The boys on the bus* (1973) that the Senate and the court “might not have been moved to explore the ugly ramifications of the break-in” if it had not been for The Washington Post’s determination to make sense of the Watergate.⁵²

Carl Bernstein and Bob Woodward were the two Post-reporters covering most of the Watergate events for the newspaper. In the end they became famous and not only for their discoveries. An additional reason is that they wrote a bestselling book about Watergate called *All the President’s men* and more important is that the book was filmed in 1976 with Dustin Hoffman (Carl Bernstein) and Robert Redford (Bob Woodward) in the leading roles.⁵³

In June, 1972, both reporters worked at the metropolitan staff and their career could use a boost. The best stories, the front-page articles, were mostly covered by the national staff. But this started as a local police story and it was given to the metropolitan staff. Woodward and Bernstein “jumped on the Watergate story as if it were the last train to salvation.”⁵⁴

Impact

The stories published by The Washington Post were heavy allegations against the White House and other authorities. Because of this the Watergate-story was dangerous. “The Post was, in effect, making its own charges.”⁵⁵ At first the Watergate story was not mentioned by the American people. Although Bernstein and Woodward had “traced a plot to sabotage the Democratic party right into the inner sanctums of the White House. Yet somehow the Watergate affair failed to sink in.”⁵⁶ The biggest problem for them was that only a few news organizations joined them in investigating the Watergate affair. The most other publications about Watergate were in the *Los Angeles Times*, *The New York Times* and in *Time* magazine.

Other media refused to print most stories of The Post for several reasons. To begin with, rivalry was present between different media. Secondly, some media feared the White House or were in favor for Nixon.⁵⁷ Most of the time the White House refused to react on the stories or they called it stories based on innuendo, unsubstantiated charges, third-person

⁵² Crouse, T. (1973). *The boys on the bus*. (pp. 290). New York: Random House

⁵³ <http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0074119/>

⁵⁴ Crouse, T. (1973). *The boys on the bus*. (pp. 291). New York: Random House

⁵⁵ Bernstein, C., & Woodward, B. (1974). *All the President’s men*. (pp. 90). New York: Pocket Books.

⁵⁶ Crouse, T. (1973). *The boys on the bus*. (pp. 295). New York: Random House

⁵⁷ Crouse, T. (1973). *The boys on the bus*. (pp. 297). New York: Random House

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hearsay and anonymous sources.⁵⁸ According to the White House The Washington Post was practicing “shabby journalism”.⁵⁹ The result of all this was that the Watergate story got suppressed and The Post got isolated, “which was precisely what the Administration wanted.”⁶⁰ In spite of this heavy opposition, the Washington Post kept supporting their reporters.⁶¹

⁵⁸ Bernstein, C., & Woodward, B. (1974). *All the President's men*. (pp. 164). New York: Pocket Books

⁵⁹ Bernstein, C., & Woodward, B. (1974). *All the President's men*. (pp. 186). New York: Pocket Books

⁶⁰ Crouse, T. (1973). *The boys on the bus*. (pp. 299). New York: Random House

⁶¹ Bernstein, C., & Woodward, B. (1974). *All the President's men*. (pp. 192). New York: Pocket Books

Main Characters

Richard Nixon

The 37th president of the United States is Richard Milhouse Nixon.⁶² He governed the country from 1969 until 1974. Nixon, see figure 2, was born in 1913 in the state of California. In 1960 he did his first try to become president, but he lost hardly from Democratic candidate John F. Kennedy.

In 1968 his party, the Republicans, nominated him again for presidency. In that year he won the presidential elections from Democrat Hubert Humphrey. It was a close race; although Nixon earned the most electoral votes (301 against 191 for Humphrey) he outreached Humphrey only by half a million votes in the United States.⁶³



Figure 2 - Richard Nixon. Retrieved March 24, 2009, from <http://www.visitingdc.com/president/richard-nixon-picture.htm>

In 1972 Nixon's possible reelection came up. Again he won and this time with a massive lead on Democrat candidate George McGovern (520 against 19 electoral votes). So Nixon stayed for a second term. But in June of 1972, when the campaign for the reelections was running, the Watergate scandal unfolded itself. The arrested burglars at the Watergate complex were traced back to the Committee to Re-elect the President. Some officials of Nixon's administration resigned. Nixon himself denied that he had anything to do with the scandal, but there were tape recordings that revealed his attempts to divert the investigation of his role in the Watergate scandal.

With all this proof against him, it is almost certain that he has to face impeachment. On the 8th of August, 1974, he announces on national television his resignation on the 9th of August. His resignation letter can be seen in figure 3. Nixon is the only president ever who had to resign from his presidency.

After his resignation he wrote several books. In 1994 he died as a result of a stroke.⁶⁴

⁶² Kilpatrick, C., & Oberdorfer, D. (1969, January 21). Richard M. Nixon becomes President with 'sacred commitment' to peace. *The Washington Post*. Retrieved April 1, 2009, from <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2002/06/14/AR2005111001225.html>

⁶³ Results 1968 Presidential Election. Retrieved April 1, 2009, from <http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/showelection.php?year=1968>

⁶⁴ Biography of Richard M. Nixon. Retrieved March 22, 2009, from <http://www.whitehouse.gov/about/presidents/richardnixon/>

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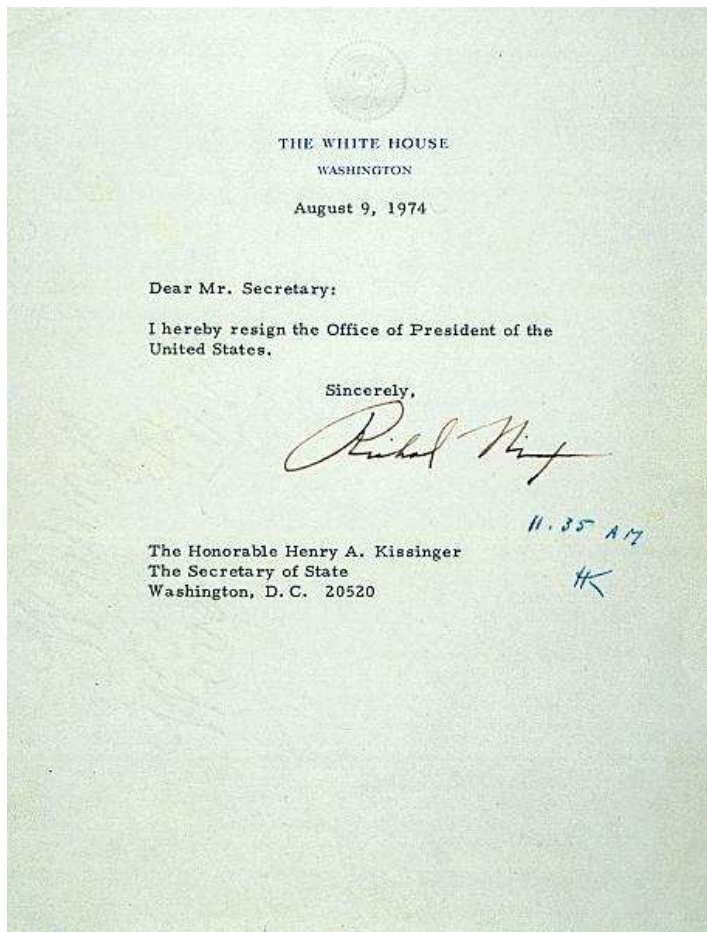


Figure 3 - Richard Nixon's letter of resignation.⁶⁵

Bob Woodward

In June 1972 journalist Bob Woodward, depicted in figure 4, worked for only nine months at the Washington Post when he wrote, together with Carl Bernstein, about the Watergate scandal. “Woodward, twenty-nine, was a handsome, soft-spoken, neatly dressed Midwesterner, a former Young Republican who had gone to Yale and spent five years in the Navy.”⁶⁶ At the Post he was on the metropolitan staff.

The Watergate story was the first time Woodward and Bernstein worked together.⁶⁷ In the nine months before Watergate Woodward had done some minor stories. He had “earned a reputation as a tireless worker, the office grind. But many of his colleagues claimed that he couldn’t write his way out of a paper-bag.” Before working at The Post Woodward was a reporter for the *Montgomery County Sentinel*.⁶⁸ The Washington Post won the Pulitzer Prize

⁶⁵ Richard Nixon’s letter of resignation. Retrieved March 22, 2009, from http://www.archives.gov/exhibits/american_originals/resign.jpg

⁶⁶ Crouse, T. (1973). *The boys on the bus*. (pp. 290). New York: Random House

⁶⁷ Bernstein, C., & Woodward, B. (1974). *All the President’s men*. (pp. 13, 15). New York: Pocket Books.

⁶⁸ About journalist & writer Bob Woodward. Retrieved March 22, 2009, from www.bobwoodward.com/about

in 1973 for the covering of Watergate story by Woodward and Bernstein.⁶⁹ A Pulitzer Prize is a famous annual American award for excellence in journalism and the arts.⁷⁰ Together with Bernstein Woodward wrote two books, *All the President's Men* (1974) and *The Final Days* (1976).

Carl Bernstein

Carl Bernstein, “dark disheveled hair and an aggressive, gregarious manner,”⁷¹ was born in Washington D.C. in 1944. At the age of sixteen Bernstein, depicted in figure 4, worked as a copy boy at the *Washington Star*. Three years later he dropped out of college to become a reporter for the *Star*. In 1966 he joined The Washington Post covering the court, the city hall, the people and neighborhoods of Washington D.C. and sometimes writing about classical music and rock. Bernstein was on the metropolitan staff.⁷² In 1972, at the age of twenty-eight, he started reporting about Watergate together with Bob Woodward.



One year later Bernstein won, together with Woodward, the Pulitzer Prize for the reporting about Watergate in The Washington Post. Together with Woodward he wrote two books about the Watergate scandal. In 1976 he left The Post and becomes a writer. He wrote several books, his latest is about Hillary Clinton.⁷³

Figure 4 - Carl Bernstein (left) and Bob Woodward. ⁷⁴

⁶⁹ A list of Pulitzer Prize winners in 1973. Retrieved March 22, 2009, from www.pulitzer.org/awards/1973

⁷⁰ About the Pulitzer Prize. Retrieved March 22, 2009, from www.pulitzer.org

⁷¹ Crouse, T. (1973). *The boys on the bus*. (pp. 291). New York: Random House

⁷² Bernstein, C., & Woodward, B. (1974). *All the President's men*. (pp. 15). New York: Pocket Books.

⁷³ About journalist and writer Carl Bernstein, retrieved March 22, 2009 from www.carlbernstein.com/about.php

⁷⁴ Picture of Carl Bernstein and Bob Woodward. Retrieved March 24, 2009, from <http://www.spiegel.de/international/0,1518,grossbild-476050-358918,00.html>

Deep Throat

Bob Woodward had close connections to a hidden source at the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI). The source hid under the name *Deep Throat*. Nobody knew who the hidden source was until the summer of 2005, when Mark Felt, depicted in figure 5, revealed in *Vanity Fair*⁷⁵ that he is Deep Throat. The Washington Post confirmed the story.⁷⁶ In 1972 Felt was the second ranked official at the FBI. He had an arrangement with Woodward that his identity would not be revealed. He and the reporter met each other mostly in underground parking garages.⁷⁷ Deep Throat was important for the reports about Watergate. But he was never quoted in the newspaper. The information from him was only to confirm information or to add some perspective to the findings of the two reporters.⁷⁸



Figure 5 - Mark Felt (Deep Throat)⁷⁹

⁷⁵ O'Connor, J.D. (2005, July). 'I'm the guy they called Deep Throat'. *Vanity Fair*. Retrieved March 26, 2009, from <http://www.vanityfair.com/politics/features/2005/07/deepthroat200507>

⁷⁶ Drehle, D. Von, (2005, June 1). FBI's no. 2 was 'Deep Throat'. *The Washington Post*. Retrieved March 26, 2009, from <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2005/05/31/AR2005053100655.html>

⁷⁷ Bernstein, C., & Woodward, B. (1974). *All the President's men*. (pp. 72). New York: Pocket Books.

⁷⁸ Bernstein, C., & Woodward, B. (1974). *All the President's men*. (pp. 71). New York: Pocket Books.

⁷⁹ Picture of Mark Felt. Retrieved April 6, 2009, from <http://blogs.suntimes.com/sportsprose/deepthroat.jpg>

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Logbook

No.	Activity	Starting date	Deadline	Estimated Workload (hours)	Actual Workload (hours)
1	<i>Making Project Plan</i>	02/03/09	07/03/09	5	5
	1,1 First draft	02/03/09	04/03/09	3	3
	1,2 Revision	06/03/09	07/03/09	2	2
2	<i>Pre-research</i>	08/03/09	16/03/09	25	45
	2,1 Orientation	08/03/09	16/03/09	4	5
	2,2 Internet search	08/03/09	16/03/09	11	15
	2,3 Book research	08/03/09	16/03/09	10	25
3	<i>Definition of research question...</i>			20	15
	3,1 First draft	13/03/09	16/03/09	13	10
	3,2 Revision	16/03/09	18/03/09	7	5
4	<i>First Draft</i>	18/03/09	27/03/09	60	50
5	<i>Final Version</i>	28/03/09	13/04/09	30	30
	Total hours			140	145