

# HOUSE OF CARDS

## THE REPORTERS WHO TOOK ON A PRESIDENT

LOOKING BACK, IT'S ALMOST AMAZING TO THINK THERE WAS A TIME WHEN PEOPLE IN THE UNITED STATES SAID WATERGATE, AND THOUGHT PRIMARILY ABOUT A HOTEL IN WASHINGTON DC. AS THE WORLD OBSERVES FOUR DECADES SINCE THE FAMOUS MOVIE CENTRED ON THE WATERSHED MOMENT FOR POLITICS AND PRINT JOURNALISM ALIKE, **CHRIS WRIGHT** RECONSTRUCTS A CHAIN OF EVENTS THAT BEGAN WITH A SMALL WEEKEND NEWS EVENT — AND WENT ON TO CHANGE THE COURSE OF WESTERN HISTORY



PHOTO: GETTY IMAGES

THE WATERGATE SCANDAL ROCKED THE WORLD. RICHARD NIXON, 37<sup>TH</sup> PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES, RESIGNED IN 1974 UNDER A LOOMING THREAT OF IMPEACHMENT





ABOVE: NIXON AT CAMP DAVID SOON AFTER HE HAD BEEN RE-ELECTED. AT THIS POINT, THE WATERGATE BURGLARS HAD NOT YET BEEN PUT TO TRIAL

In his memoirs, Nixon writes, "I decided that we must begin immediately keeping track of everything the leading Democrats did. Information would be our first line of defence."

Nixon and bugging were bedfellows well before Watergate. In early 1969, he was enraged by leaks about the secret bombing of Cambodia and approached the director of the Federal Bureau of

## "FROM THE OUTSET OF HIS PRESIDENCY, NIXON SEEMED OBSESSED BY THE FEAR OF BEING A ONE-TERM PRESIDENT"

Investigation (FBI), J Edgar Hoover, who said wiretaps were the most effective answer.

They placed taps on 13 US officials at the White House, State and Defense departments, and several reporters. But crucially, Nixon's administration then even sidestepped the FBI itself, conducting wiretaps and, ultimately, break-ins on its own.

The seeds of Watergate and its cast of characters were sown in 1971, and three moments in particular were pivotal. Early that year a new campaign organisation was set up called the Committee to Re-Elect the President, or CRP, which the world would come to know as "CREEP". It was separate from the Republican Party itself and was set up in offices across the street from the White House; CRP would eventually be chaired by John Mitchell, who resigned from his role as US Attorney General in order to run it.

Also in 1971, Nixon's paranoia and use of surveillance intensified with the leak of the so-called Pentagon Papers, a highly detailed account of American involvement in Vietnam which was leaked to the *New York Times* and later other newspapers by a man called Daniel Ellsberg. Nixon's

attempts to punish Ellsberg were wide-ranging, and included attempts to find dirt on him, for which a man called E Howard Hunt was hired. Hunt was a spy of many decades' service.

The efforts to get Ellsberg were the genesis of the formation of a White House special investigations unit, which would come to be known as "the plumbers" (since their main role was to plug leaks). An early recruit was G Gordon Liddy. One of the first acts of this group was to try to get psychiatric records for Ellsberg, and when his psychiatrist refused to hand them over, they decided to go and steal them. There's a memo about this operation that appears to have been approved by John Ehrlichman, Nixon's right-hand man; one could call this the beginning of the activity that would culminate in Watergate.

Hunt, who had been involved in the Bay of Pigs fiasco in the early 1960s, recruited a number of Cuban exiles who broke in on September 3, 1971, only for the break-in to go wrong and yield no sign of Ellsberg's files. When that failed, Liddy briefly pitched an idea of putting LSD into Ellsberg's soup at a public dinner to discredit him (this, mercifully, did not get far).

"They had acquired a taste for corruption and convinced themselves that it was what the boss wanted," writes Emery. "The next, still more dangerous, moves were increasingly inevitable."

There was a third momentous decision in 1971. Having ordered a taping mechanism that existed before he took office to be ripped out, Nixon now ordered that almost all his conversations be tape-recorded. From February 1971, they were.

By early 1972 most of the cast of Watergate was in place. In addition to Ehrlichman, Haldeman and Mitchell, other key lieutenants to Nixon included John Dean, White House Counsel, and Charles Colson, an absolute bruiser who had served in the US Marines and had a motto written on his wall: "If you've got 'em by the balls, the hearts and minds will follow." At the CRP, retired CIA officer James McCord became a full-time member on January 1,

COMMITTEE TO RE-ELECT THE PRESIDENT



**G GORDON LIDDY**  
Member of the White House "plumbers"



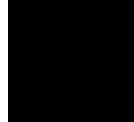
**JOHN EHRLICHMAN**  
Nixon's Chief Domestic Advisor



**JOHN DEAN**  
White House Counsel



**CHARLES COLSON**  
Nixon's Special Counsel



**JAMES McCORD**  
Security coordinator of CRP



**G GORDON LIDDY**  
Member of the White House "plumbers"



**JOHN EHRLICHMAN**  
Nixon's Chief Domestic Advisor



**JOHN DEAN**  
White House Counsel



**CHARLES COLSON**  
Nixon's Special Counsel



**JAMES McCORD**  
Security coordinator of CRP



**JEB MAGRUDER**  
Deputy director of CRP

From the moment Richard Milhous Nixon took office as President of the United States in 1969, he put a premium on knowing all about the opposition. "Information and money," writes Fred Emery in *Watergate: The Corruption of American Politics and the Fall of Richard Nixon*, one of the principle sources for this article. "These two indispensable political commodities were immediately pinpointed by Richard Nixon as cardinal to his re-election four years later."

Even before his inauguration in 1969, Emery writes, Nixon wrote clear instructions to Bob Haldeman, his chief of staff, instructing him to build up funds, including "a private fund for secret political purposes. The Nixon men were to run up huge amounts by methods close to extortion. This approach contributed greatly to Watergate and to the abuses associated with its initial cover-up."

Emery also notes how Nixon — who would contest

five elections in total, including two as vice-president, and who in 1960 lost to John F Kennedy by a mere 113,000 votes — seemed driven by a fear of losing, perhaps because when he took office both houses of Congress were controlled by the opposition. "Nixon never seemed to have accepted that he had finally won. From the outset of his presidency, Nixon seemed obsessed by the fear of being a one-term president," Emery writes.

PHOTOS: GETTY IMAGES (MAIN); CORBIS (HOWARD HUNT, GORDON LIDDY)



around the time Liddy was put in charge of intelligence gathering for the organisation. Another key man was Jeb Magruder, the deputy director of the CRP.

Wild ideas came and went. One was to firebomb the Democratic Brookings Institution and get secret documents from within it; Hunt and Liddy developed a plan to buy a fire engine, dress a load of Cubans in fireproof gear, and make sure

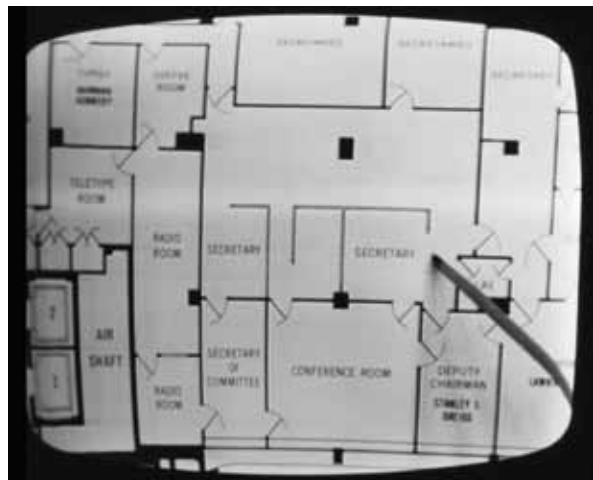
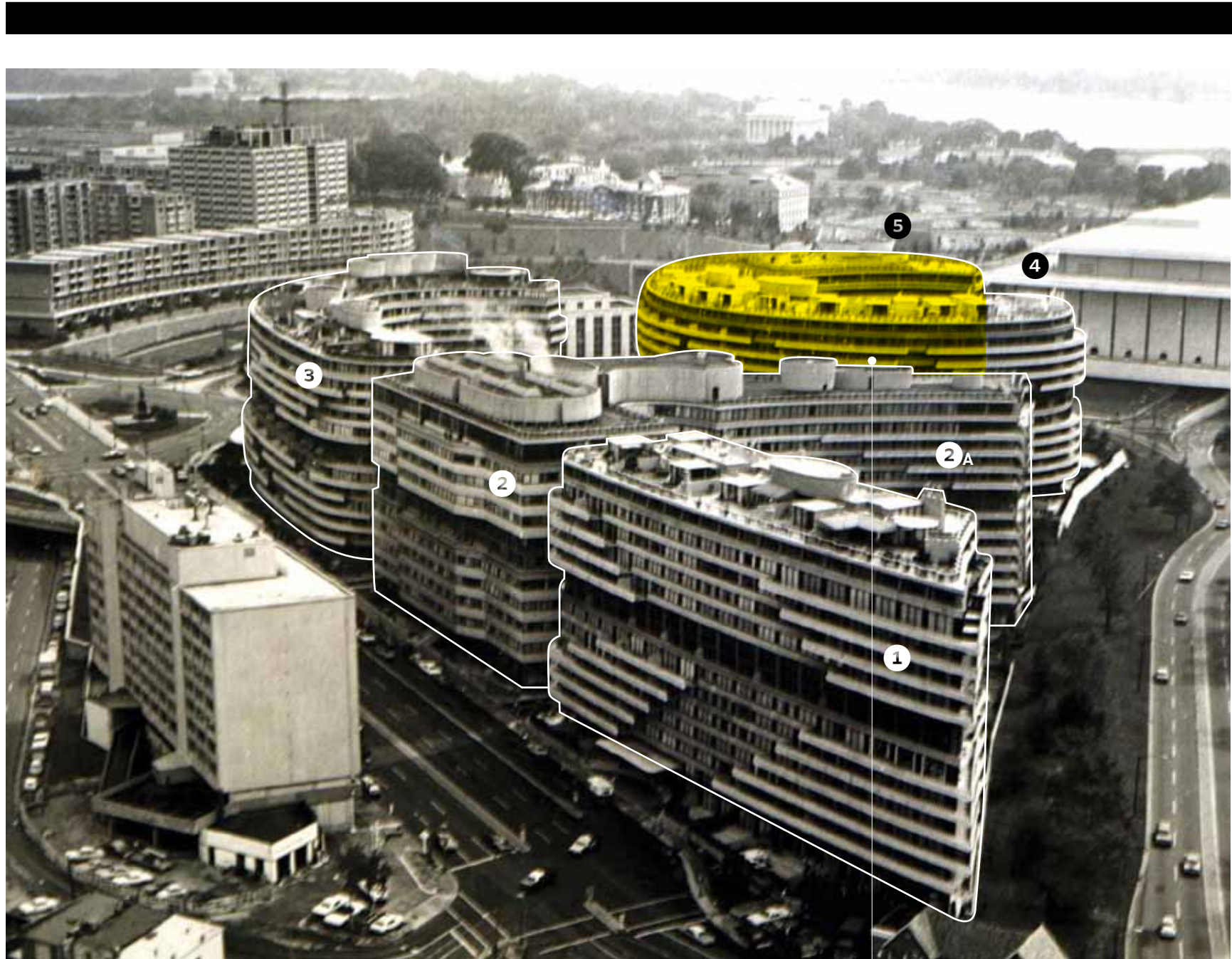
## WILD IDEAS CAME AND WENT. ONE WAS TO FIREBOMB THE DEMOCRATIC BROOKINGS INSTITUTION AND GET SECRET DOCUMENTS FROM INSIDE

they were the first responders so as to get in and raid the vault.

While that didn't happen, Liddy did pitch a bizarre plan to Dean, Mitchell and Magruder in January 1972. His operation was code-named Gemstone, and among its salient proposals were: kidnap demonstration leaders before the Republican convention, drug them and spirit them to Mexico; assign a chase plane to pursue the Democratic nominee's aircraft to bug its data communications; lure Democrats to prostitutes and eavesdrop on their pillow talk; sabotage the Democratic convention's air conditioning; and plant bugs. Mitchell would later say, "I should have thrown Liddy out of the window."

But he didn't, and though most of Liddy's wild plans were downscaled, they did lead to the Watergate break-ins.

There's one other useful bit of context: none of this was remotely necessary. Nixon had a huge lead in the polls. He couldn't have lost the 1972 election if he'd tried. Had he only believed this and focused on government, none of what followed would have happened.



ABOVE AND LEFT: IN EARLY 1973, THE WATERGATE TRIALS BEGAN. COURTROOM EVIDENCE INCLUDED PHOTOS OF THE WATERGATE COMPLEX IN WASHINGTON (ABOVE) AND THE FLOOR PLAN OF THE DNC HEADQUARTERS IN THE WATERGATE COMPLEX (LEFT)

PHOTOS: AFP (MAIN); GETTY IMAGES (ROOM PLAN); CORBIS (JACK ANDERSON)

- 1 WATERGATE WEST
- 2 WATERGATE HOTEL AND OFFICE BUILDING (HOTEL PORTION)
- 2A WATERGATE HOTEL AND OFFICE BUILDING (OFFICE PORTION)
- 3 WATERGATE EAST
- 4 WATERGATE SOUTH
- 5 WATERGATE OFFICE BUILDING

THE DEMOCRATIC NATIONAL COMMITTEE'S (DNC) HEADQUARTERS WERE LOCATED ON THE SIXTH FLOOR

## SUNDAY MAY 28, 1972

Richard Nixon is in Moscow. It is a landmark moment: he is taking part in the first ever summit between American and Soviet presidents to be held in the Russian capital. He addresses the Soviet people in a televised speech. "Time and again people have vanquished the source of one fear only to fall prey to another," he tells them. "Let our goal now be a world without fear."

It is Nixon at his best: high policy, thawing dangerously bad relations with the Soviet Union just as he also sought to do, with some success, with China. By now he has also begun to end American involvement in Vietnam. And this Moscow trip will produce the first Strategic Arms Limitations Talks, or SALT, treaty, to reduce the pace of the nuclear arms race.

But half a world away, we are also seeing Nixon at his worst. On this same day, a group of people break in to the Democratic National Committee (DNC) headquarters in the Watergate complex in Washington DC. This is, in fact, their third attempt in three days, having lacked sufficient competence to get in on the Friday and Saturday. Even this time, one of them manages to get caught, but is simply told to leave and is not arrested; the rest of them photograph documents and plant listening devices inside the phones.

There are eight men in the group. Two are employees of Nixon's campaign organisation, the CRP, which is in full swing trying to ensure Nixon does not lose this November's election. And the other six are paid for with CRP funds.

## TUESDAY JUNE 6, 1972

Senator George McGovern wins the California primary in the Democrats' presidential nomination process, effectively winning the contest. He will face Nixon in the election.

By now, it has become clear that the bugs planted the previous week aren't working. One appears useless, and the other not used by the man they wanted to tap. Plans are made to go back in, this time with more of an emphasis on photographing material.

## FRIDAY JUNE 16, 1972

Several burglars of Cuban origin arrive at Washington National Airport and promptly bump into one of Washington's leading columnists, Jack Anderson, who recognises one of them. They drive to the Watergate Hotel and check in under aliases. Liddy, on his way there, jumps a traffic light and is pulled over, but gets away with a verbal warning.

## SATURDAY JUNE 17, 1972

In the early hours of the morning, a lookout confirms that the DNC is dark, and the operation begins. The plan is to go through a door that McCord had earlier taped open at garage level, but the team finds it closed; they break in, and, oddly, tape the lock open again.

The security guard who discovered the tape the first time makes an inspection and finds the second one, deciding to call the police. Crucially, an unmarked car responds, so the burglars' lookout does not notify them. The police find the burglars in the DNC offices. The burglars have keys to their hotels across the street with them, and when the police search those rooms, they find a haul of incriminating material.

The key embarrassment for the government is that one of the men arrested is McCord, who is on the CRP staff and whose fingerprints are on file with the FBI.

On Saturday morning, the various players act differently: Liddy and Hunt, not arrested but up to their necks in trouble, sleep (though by this time, they have already fled the



**GEORGE MCGOVERN**  
*US Senator, opposed Nixon in 1972 presidential election*



**JACK ANDERSON**  
*One of Washington's leading columnists*



Watergate Hotel). The FBI, having been summoned by local police puzzled by the surveillance equipment they have found, prepare warrants for rooms 214 and 314 of the Watergate Hotel, where the men had been staying. Liddy, once awake, begins shredding files at the CRP offices. Then, he goes to the White House in order to find a secure line to call his superiors, Mitchell and Magruder, who are in California; he reaches Magruder at a Beverly Hills hotel.

Accounts vary about what happened next, but someone then calls the US Attorney



**BOB WOODWARD**  
Washington Post reporter



**CARL BERNSTEIN**  
Washington Post reporter

**"THIS WAS NOT JUST HARD-NOSED POLITICS, THIS WAS A CRIME THAT COULD DESTROY US ALL. THE COVER-UP, THUS, WAS IMMEDIATE AND AUTOMATIC"**

General, Richard Kleindienst, to try to get McCord released before anyone figures out who he is. Liddy tracks Kleindienst down at the Burning Tree Golf and Country Club, and tells him the whole story. Kleindienst, angry, refuses help, but also doesn't tell the police or FBI.

Having obtained the necessary warrants, the police and FBI search the Watergate hotel rooms and find a stash of hundred-dollar bills with sequential serial numbers, as well as a briefcase containing the burglars' true identification documents, two address books, and several things incriminating Hunt — mortally embarrassing, since Hunt had been on the White House payroll.

Nixon, meanwhile, is in the Bahamas, having a lovely day of fresh air and exercise. Haldeman is on a Key Biscayne beach when he spots press secretary Ron Ziegler running along in a pair of trunks carrying

a roll of news agency copy reporting the break-in.

At 9am this same day, Bob Woodward's phone rings: it is the city editor of the *Washington Post* asking him to come to work to help with the paper's coverage of the burglary.

He gets to the office and sees another reporter is on the story: Carl Bernstein. "Oh God, not Bernstein," Woodward thinks, as he recalls several office tales about Bernstein's ability to push his way into a good story and get his byline on it. Bernstein is no more enthralled to see Woodward. "Bob Woodward was a prima donna who played heavily at office politics," he thinks, noting that, "One office rumour had it that English was not Woodward's first language."

The two will later write in the 1974 book *All The President's Men*: "Bernstein looked like one of those counterculture journalists that Woodward despised. Bernstein thought that Woodward's rapid rise at the *Post* had less to do with his ability than his Establishment credentials."

At the *Post*, the tip about the break-in goes not to Woodward or Bernstein but to police reporter Alfred Lewis, considered at the *Post* to be "half cop, half reporter," they write. His name will be on the first *Post* story about the break-in, on its Sunday front page. But two other people were also involved in filing for the story that day: Bob Woodward and Carl Bernstein.

Woodward attends the courtroom where bail is set: US\$30,000 for McCord, US\$50,000 apiece for the other four men. Asked their occupations, one answers, "anti-communist". Woodward overhears McCord tell the judge he is retired from the CIA.

Over in California, the various senior government figures with knowledge of the Watergate incident meet for a discussion in Mitchell's LA suite that evening.

Magruder will later write: "At some point that Saturday I realised that this was not just hard-nosed politics, this was a crime that could destroy us all. The cover-up, thus, was immediate and automatic; no one ever considered that there would not be a cover-up."



PHOTOS: CORBIS (MAIN), BOTTOM RIGHT

**ABOVE:** BOB WOODWARD (PICTURED LEFT) AND CARL BERNSTEIN, THE WASHINGTON POST JOURNALISTS WHOSE NAMES ARE INEXTRICABLY LINKED TO WATERGATE. ALTHOUGH NIXON WAS RE-ELECTED IN 1972 (RIGHT), WHEN INCRIMINATING EVIDENCE EVENTUALLY CAME TO LIGHT, HE RESIGNED FROM OFFICE — BECOMING THE FIRST US PRESIDENT TO DO SO





## SUNDAY JUNE 18, 1972

The first *Washington Post* article appears. Its headline reads, "5 Held in Plot to Bug Democrats' Office Here". *Associated Press* has something more: it has noticed that McCord is the security coordinator of the CRP.

Nixon flies back to the US mainland to his residence in Key Biscayne. He claims the first he hears of Watergate is a story in the *Miami Herald* when he lands: "Miamians Held in DC try to Bug Demo Headquarters". He writes, "It sounded preposterous; Cubans in surgical gloves bugging the DNC! I dismissed it as some sort of prank."

Mitchell, now the president's campaign manager, issues a statement saying: "This man and the other people involved were not operating on either our behalf or with our consent."

Unconvinced, DNC chairman Lawrence F O'Brien says the break-in has "raised the ugliest question about the integrity of the political process that I have encountered in a quarter century of political activity".

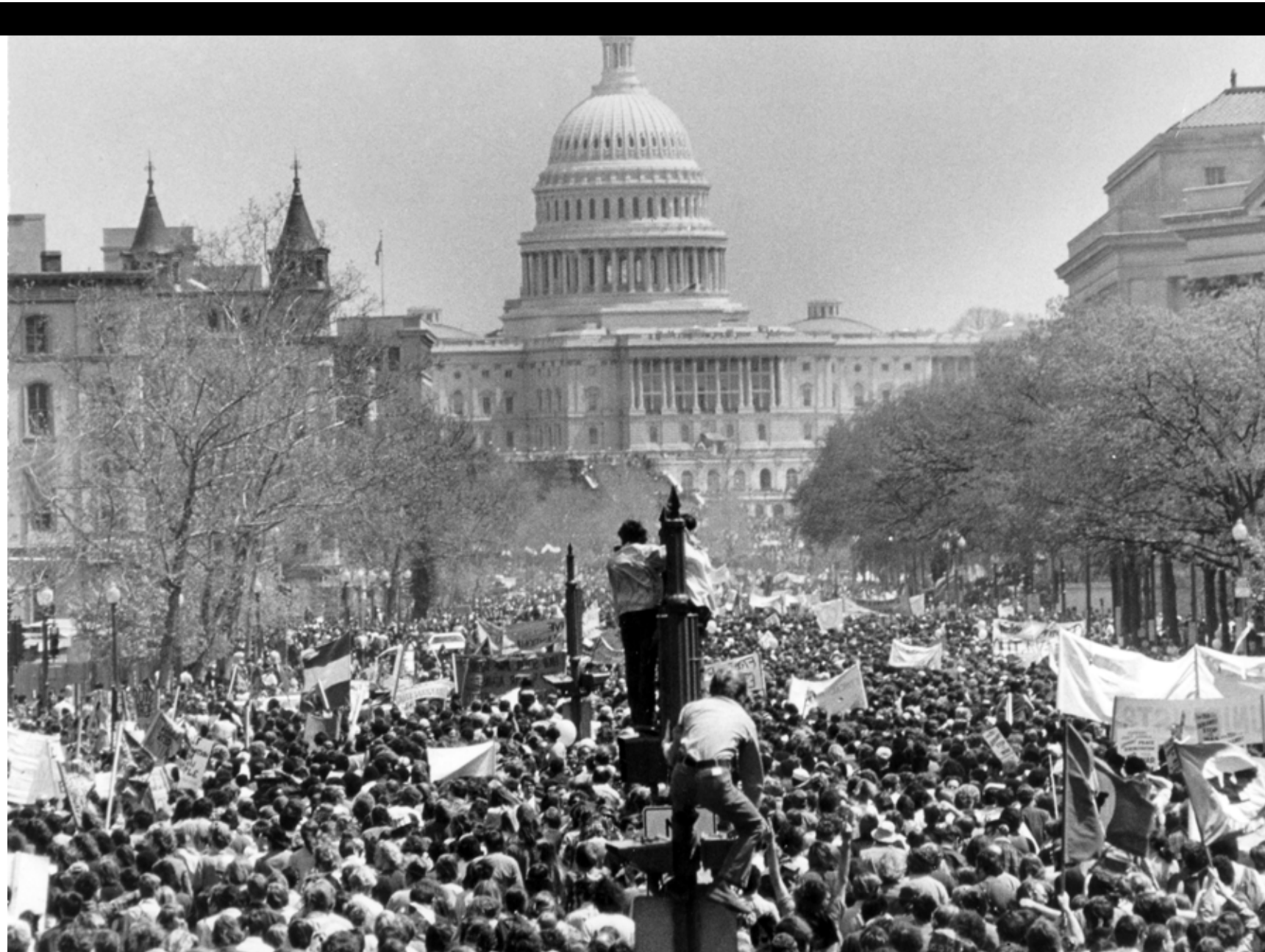
Today, Woodward and Bernstein are the only reporters assigned to following up the story, and their activity gives an indication of just how much grunt work will be involved in the investigation. There is no answer at McCord's consulting agency, nor his home, but they know the address of his business is a large office building in Rockville, Maryland. They find a directory listing the building's tenants — so they split the names between them and begin calling every single one at home. One person dimly remembers somebody called Westall, or something like that, who knew McCord. So the journalists find a telephone directory and call every single person they can find with a name that sounds like Westall. Eventually they find Harlan A Westrell. This call leads to other names, then others, the vast majority of them dead ends.

It is not glamorous. It is miserable head-pounding monotony. But it is this work ethic that will eventually bring down the president.



PHOTOS: GETTY IMAGES (MAIN); AP (RIGHT)

**ABOVE:** A LARGE ANTI-WAR RALLY OPPOSED TO THE VIETNAM WAR HEADS TOWARDS THE CAPITOL BUILDING IN 1971, DURING NIXON'S FIRST TERM  
**LEFT:** THIS PARKING GARAGE WAS THE MAIN PLACE WHERE WOODWARD AND THE SECRETIVE "DEEP THROAT" WOULD MEET



## MONDAY JUNE 19, 1972

The first of many landmark front pages in the *Washington Post* appears under the byline Woodward and Bernstein: "GOP Security Aide Among Five Arrested in Bugging Affair." The man in question is McCord.

In the early hours of the morning Woodward had been called by a colleague saying he'd heard that Hunt's name was in two address books of people arrested at the break-in. Later, Woodward tracks Hunt down

**IT IS NOT GLAMOROUS. IT IS MISERABLE MONOTONY. BUT IT IS THIS WORK ETHIC THAT WILL BRING DOWN THE PRESIDENT**

at a public relations firm called Mullen. Why, he asks Hunt, is his name and number in those address books? "Good God!" says Hunt. He offers no comment and hangs up. Woodward later learns that Hunt is ex-CIA.

It is believed that this incident is the first in which Woodward speaks to the man who will become one of the most famous sources in the history of journalism, known for over 30 years as Deep Throat — before being unmasked in 2005 as FBI associate director Mark Felt.

The methods of approaching the source will become increasingly clandestine as the stakes rise. Woodward would signal he wanted a meeting by placing a flowerpot with a red flag on the balcony of his apartment; when Deep Throat wanted a meeting he would make a mark on page 20 of Woodward's *New York Times*, circling the page number and drawing clock hands to indicate the time.

Nixon claims it is only today that he first hears that someone on the CRP payroll was

involved in the break-in. Other sources reckon it must have been Sunday; he is believed to have called Colson twice that day and smashed an ashtray in anger. Either way, by today, he is plotting how to keep the scandal covered up and planning attacks against the Democrats.

Also today, Dean meets Liddy, and swiftly begins arranging hush money payments to keep the burglars quiet. Several people, including Magruder, spend the evening burning documents; McCord, from jail, calls his wife to do the same. She burns so much that the sitting room has to be repainted.

## TUESDAY JUNE 20, 1972

As Woodward's story on Hunt runs, the players are all back in town. And, as Emery puts it, "the more structured phase of the cover-up began". The first top Watergate meeting happens at 9am in Ehrlichman's office with him, Haldeman, Mitchell, Kleindienst and Dean.

Afterwards, Dean receives the contents of Hunt's safe in the White House, which include McCord's leftover bugs, a folder with material on Ellsberg, and a host of other things. Most of it ends up in Dean's safe, and is later handed to L Patrick Gray, the new head of the FBI; Gray keeps most of these documents for six months then burns them, which will cost him his job.

Today Ehrlichman and Haldeman talk to Nixon about Watergate, though we will never know what they discuss because there are 18 and a half minutes missing from the tape of this conversation. This gap will erode Nixon's credibility beyond repair. However, a tape survives of a meeting later that day in which Nixon asks, "You got anything more on the Mitchell operation?" This appears to suggest he knew even then about Watergate.

Also today, the DNC files a US\$1 million civil damage suit against the CRP and chairman O'Brien says the facts are "developing a clear line to the White House." He is more right than probably even he suspected.



**MARK FELT (ALSO KNOWN AS "DEEP THROAT")**  
FBI associate director



**LAWRENCE F O'BRIEN**  
Democratic National Committee chairman





## WEDNESDAY JUNE 21, 1972

By now the president's men have a strategy: paint Liddy as having acted completely alone. Under this plan Liddy will confess, and the Nixon campaign will ask for compassion for "a poor misguided kid who read too many comic books," as Haldeman puts it on the tapes. The idea is to imply guilt at a low level, far below the president. Nixon says, that day, "The main concern is to keep the White House out of it."

The problem is explaining where Liddy's money came from. This same day, they try to get the FBI on board.

## THURSDAY JUNE 22, 1972

Watergate is already slipping out of the news. There is a press conference, in which Nixon says, "The White House has had no involvement in this particular incident." There is not a single follow-up question.

Decades later, a tape from today between Nixon and Haldeman will be released. Haldeman says, "The great thing about it is that the whole thing is so totally f....d up, so badly done that nobody believes..."

Nixon continues, "that we could have done it."

Haldeman says, "That's right. It's beyond comprehension."

Later that day the FBI begins interviewing high officials, starting with Colson. By now, the FBI has found that US\$114,000 of cheques had passed through burglar Bernard Barker's account: these will turn out to be Nixon campaign contribution cheques that Liddy had laundered the previous year. If these illegal donations become public and are linked to the CRP and the burglars, it will be impossible to claim Liddy was acting alone.



**BERNARD BARKER**  
One of the Watergate burglars

PHOTOS: GETTY IMAGES (MAIN); CORBIS (BERNARD BARKER)

## FRIDAY JUNE 23, 1972

If there is a smoking gun in Watergate, it is the recorded conversation Haldeman and Nixon have this morning.

In it, Haldeman clearly explains what has happened, and Nixon asks if the money is traceable to the CRP. He is told that it is. The discussion lasts an hour and a half.

It will be more than two years before a transcript of this conversation is made public, but when it is, as Emery writes, it will "undo all Nixon's avowals of innocence and ignorance".

By the end of the day Nixon appears to have managed to get both the CIA and the FBI on his side. He later writes in his memoirs, "As far as I was concerned, this was the end of our worries about Watergate."

McCord, released on bail, goes home and is amazed to find all his bugging equipment in his van. He begins to get rid of it.

Today, a secret hearing of testimony begins in a new criminal case: the break-in and bugging at the Watergate.

## FRIDAY JUNE 30, 1972

By now things appear to have quieted down in the media, but Nixon is still talking about it. Today he is caught on tape discussing presidential pardons for the burglars. Specifically, he says, "I'll pardon the bastards." They also talk about hush payments for the burglars.

The money was from secret campaign donations, which were plentiful. As Emery says, "It helped that the Nixon campaign coffers were so overflowing with dirty funds that there was hush money in abundance. Pay-offs would eventually reach nearly half a million dollars."

Herbert Kalmbach — Nixon's personal lawyer and a fundraiser — calls Maurice Stans, finance chairman of the CRP, who promptly brings round a package of US\$75,100 in hundred-dollar bills with no receipts. The hush money operation is underway.



**MAURICE STANS**  
Finance chairman of CRP

## SATURDAY JULY 1, 1972

Mitchell resigns from the CRP, "for family reasons". Or as Emery concludes, "Nixon and Haldeman realised Mitchell would most likely become the target of both the investigation and the media. Mitchell was too close to Nixon for comfort."

## THURSDAY JULY 6, 1972

Another glamorous day for the star journalists. They spend the entire afternoon in the Library of Congress sorting through every single request for a book from the White House since July 1971, just to try to prove that Hunt got a book out about Kennedy.

## FRIDAY JULY 7, 1972

Hunt, who had not been seen in weeks and had been sought by 150 FBI agents, reappears. But by now, public interest in Watergate appears to have died.

## TUESDAY JULY 25, 1972

Although the *Post* is the most celebrated newspaper in relation to Watergate, other publications, notably *Time* and the *New York Times*, did plenty. Today the *New York Times* reports that at least 15 calls had been made from Barker, one of the Watergate burglars, to the offices of the CRP.



## MONDAY JULY 31, 1972

By now attention has turned to the origins of US\$89,000 that had gone through Barker's bank account earlier that year through four cashier cheques, a fact that had come to light following a comment by a US district attorney general at a bond hearing. Today, Bernstein heads to Miami to chase it up. He spends most of the day being messed around trying to get hold of a local state attorney but eventually finds records of an additional cheque, for US\$25,000, to the order of someone called Kenneth Dahlberg. Later, almost on deadline, Bernstein learns that Dahlberg headed the Midwestern campaign for Nixon at the previous election. Woodward finds Dahlberg in Minneapolis; Dahlberg tells him that he gave that cheque to Stans, the finance director of the CRP.

Woodward passes the story to city editor Barry Sussman right on the second edition deadline. He puts down his pen and pipe. "We've never had a story like this," he says. "Just never."

## TUESDAY AUGUST 1, 1972

The *Washington Post* prints its crucial connection with this opening line: "A US\$25,000 cashier's check, apparently earmarked for the campaign chest of President Nixon, was deposited in April in the bank account of Bernard L Barker, one of the five men arrested in the break-in and alleged bugging attempt at Democratic National Committee headquarters here June 17."

The story, under the headline "Bug Suspect Got Campaign Funds", is a Watergate landmark. For the first time, a link is clear — and has now been made public — between the Watergate break-in and the CRP.

Today Woodward asks that all Watergate stories carry both his and Bernstein's names. They have started to trust one another. Their combined byline



PHOTOS: GETTY IMAGES

quickly comes to be known internally as Woodstein.

Pretty much permanently assigned to the story, they keep a master list of several hundred names that must be called at least twice a week, and have filled four filing cabinets. "The two fought, often openly," their book says. "Sometimes they battled for 15 minutes over a single word or sentence."

They spend much of the month going through a list of CRP campaign officials, more than a hundred of them in all, and visiting the homes of all of them after hours in Woodward's 1970 Karmann Ghia, finding many of them frightened and unwilling to talk.

## TUESDAY AUGUST 22, 1972

On this day, Nixon is formally nominated for a second term by the Republican Party.

## SATURDAY AUGUST 26, 1972

A report is released referring to a secret slush fund of up to US\$350,000. Produced by the US General Accounting Office, the report revolved around financial irregularities in the Nixon re-election campaign.

ABOVE: NIXON AIDE JOHN DEAN — WHO WAS AT THE TIME WHITE HOUSE COUNSEL — TESTIFIES BEFORE THE SENATE COMMITTEE CONDUCTING HEARINGS ON THE WATERGATE BREAK-IN AND THE DUBIOUS CONDUCT OF THE NIXON ADMINISTRATION

## TUESDAY AUGUST 29, 1972

At his home in San Clemente, California, Nixon addresses the issue of campaign funds, saying his staff have done nothing wrong. Apparently without irony, he says, "What really hurts is if you try to cover it up."

## FRIDAY SEPTEMBER 15, 1972

Hunt, Liddy and the Watergate burglars are indicted by a federal grand jury.

## FRIDAY SEPTEMBER 29, 1972

Another big *Washington Post* splash: Mitchell, while US Attorney General, had controlled a secret fund to finance intelligence-gathering operations for the Republicans against the Democrats. "Mitchell Controlled Secret GOP Fund" is the headline.

## TUESDAY OCTOBER 10, 1972

The *Post* reports that FBI agents have established that the Watergate break-in is part of a huge campaign of political spying and sabotage on behalf of Nixon and his re-election campaign. "FBI Finds Nixon Aides Sabotaged Democrats," says the paper.

## SATURDAY NOVEMBER 11, 1972

The growing scandal has made absolutely no difference to Nixon's campaign. The result had been seen as a foregone conclusion as early as August. He takes more than 60 percent of the vote — and is re-elected President of the United States. ●

## THE NIXON TAPES



The notorious Nixon tapes were recorded on a system installed in February 1971. Small microphones were placed in the Oval Office desk, and the fireplace in that room; the Cabinet Room; and later Nixon's office in the Old Executive Office Building next to the White House, in his office telephones, in a phone in the Lincoln Sitting Room, and eventually in the Camp David retreat as well.

The voice-activated recordings were produced on Sony TC-800B open-reel tape recorders, which ran until Nixon ordered them turned off in July 1973. This system would go on to record about 3,500 hours of conversations (Emery reckons 5,000), some of which would prove to be very interesting indeed.

Very few people knew of the taping system; it was certainly a surprise to many of the men who were incriminated by it. Only when a Senate Committee interviewed White House aide Alexander Butterfield on July 13, 1973 did its existence become public. The court subpoenaed eight tapes, initially to confirm the testimony of Dean. It would take a year and a Supreme Court fight for them to be released.

When eventually they were, there was an 18 and a half minute gap in a recording on June 20, 1972 between Nixon and Haldeman. Nixon's secretary Rose Mary Woods claimed the blame for this, saying that when she was transcribing them, she accidentally recorded over a portion of it. She was later asked to replicate the position she was sitting in to press the wrong button, reaching far back over her left shoulder for a telephone while her foot applied pressure to a pedal controlling the transcription machine. This became known as the Rose Mary Stretch.

The tapes also brought into the language the phrase "expletive deleted", which was used to replace Nixon's frequent swearing when the tapes were transcribed. The transcripts dramatically rocked Nixon's public image. After a while, protestors would hold up signs outside the White House saying: "IMPEACH THE (EXPLETIVE DELETED)".

Today the tapes sit in a climate-controlled vault of the National Archives.