



Watergate: The Scandal That Brought Down a President

Charles River Editors

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*Includes pictures.

*Profiles the important participants in the Watergate scandal and their recollections of what happened.

*Includes footnotes and quotes about Watergate, as well as quotes from some of the Nixon tapes.

*Includes Nixon's resignation address.

*Includes a bibliography for further reading.

Increasingly and mistakenly viewed as a single scandal within the United States government, what is commonly referred to as the Watergate scandal serves as an overarching term for a series of scandals beginning in 1971 and extending through 1974. But more than any other, it refers to the specific break-in at the Watergate Hotel and office complex in Washington, D.C. The crisis, originating in a secretive battle between the two major political parties, the Nixon White House's paranoia, and the ensuing conflict concerning the release of confidential information to the public, induced senior government officials into committing crimes (most notoriously petty burglary) and coverups for the purposes of character assassination and inter-political espionage, and it ultimately resulted in the first and only resignation of a sitting American president, Richard Milhous Nixon. Watergate has since become so synonymous with scandal that "gate" is typically added to the end of words associated with scandals even today, and the Watergate complex still remains well known ("Even today, it is home to former Senator Bob Dole, and was the place where Monica Lewinsky laid low.")

In the wake of the seemingly peculiar burglary, gradual media and judicial pursuits of the thread of scandals led from one thing to another over the following years until it began to culminate with Congressional impeachment proceedings and a momentous showdown between the President and the Supreme Court over the release of presidential tapes, a moment in which Nixon seriously considered defying the Court and initiating a constitutional crisis. When he at last surrendered them, excerpts were blatantly missing, most famously an 18 minute stretch. Given the flurry of activities, it has only been in recent years that historians have gained a full measure of the nation's perilous status during the intense battle between the various branches of the federal government, and the American public's view of government in general took a decidedly negative turn, resulting in social and political disillusionment and distrust of the government that still resonates today. If anything good came out of the Watergate scandal, it was that "in its wake, Watergate spawned a reform-minded Congress."

For the last 40 years, President Nixon has been mostly reviled, and understandably, he's ranked among the country's worst presidents, but this view of the President and the Watergate scandal was not and still is not necessarily unanimous. A growing number of Republicans, led by conservatives such as former Nixon speechwriter Pat Buchanan, describe the bringing down of the president as a quasi-coup generated by the press and liberal social forces from within the anti-war movement, which gravitated to the release of information on Vietnam, an increasingly unpopular war, and tapping the widespread campus unrest throughout the country. Paul Johnson, in his book, *Modern Times: A History of the World from the 1920s to the Year 2000*, referred to the whole affair as nothing more than "this Watergate witch hunt."

Watergate: The Scandal That Brought Down a President chronicles the controversial events that led to Nixon's resignation and the impact the scandal has had on American politics ever since. Along with pictures of important people, places, and events, you will learn about Watergate like you never have before, in no time at all.

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