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PLP 12
January 12, 2020

THE WATERGATE SCANDAL

A Research Paper

THESIS

The Watergate scandal has very clearly had a ripple effect on the 2019 Impeachment trials, specifically political reform, and journalism.

EVIDENCE

1. The Court's curb on executive power remains crucial today, they proved that not even the president is above the law. This has affected today's impeachment trials. (2019 impeachment trial)
2. Lawyers and Attorneys for the first time were viewed in a negative way. Most law schools after the scandal implemented an ethics course, and the bar rewrote its responsibility code. (Political reform + public's trust)
3. Carl Bernstein and Bob Woodward (journalists at Washington Post covering scandal), created what became known as the culture of celebrity journalists. (Effects on journalism)

COMMUNICATION UPDATE

So far I have organized all the documents I found from the hearing and have listened to quite a few Nixon tapes. I am working on finding the most compelling clips from those tapes to make a quick video. As far as the documents, I am still trying to find the best way to prove to my classmates the significance of them. I am debating on making a quick lesson plan including some activities and hands on artifacts like those documents. I have also found Nixon's opening testimony from the hearing so I will recreate those and highlight the parts I find important so I can pass them around the class during my presentation.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

BASIC FACTS	2
NAMES NAMES NAMES!	3
DISTRUST IN THE NATION	4
SIGNIFICANCE: WHAT CHANGED?	5
NIXON TAPES: QUOTES	5
CONFIDENTIAL DOCUMENTS	6
THE TIMELINE	9
THE SIXTIES AND EARLY SEVENTIES: A TIMELINE	10
DONALD TRUMP: THE IMPEACHMENT	11
POST WATERGATE REFORMS	11
WORKS CITED	12

Source #1: <https://www.history.com/topics/1970s/watergate>

BASIC FACTS

- Watergate breakin happened early June 17th 1972
- 7 burglars were arrested in DNC (Democratic National Committee)
- Stole documents, wire tapped offices
- Later the group was found to be members of Nixon's Committee to Re-elect the President (CREEPS)
- They found White House phone number on burglars. That's when they became suspicious.
- Soon after they learned 4 out of the 5 men were formerly involved in CIA activities with Fidel Castro.
- Nixon used money people donated to his Committee as hush money (used millions).
- Nixon and his team instructed the CIA to intervene in the FBI's investigation (that didn't work too well).
- More serious crime than the breakin, was an abuse of presidential power and a deliberate obstruction of justice.
- Five of the buglars pleaded guilty to avoid trial. The other two were convicted in January 1973.
- Turns out Howard Hunt and G. Gordon Liddy had planned this whole scheme, both are the head of the Committee to Reelect the President (CRP), Nixon's campaign committee.
- October of 1972, the FBI had linked the scandal to President Nixon.
- During a court hearing White House counsel, John Dean admits to discussing Watergate with the President. This leads to the discovery of the Nixon Tapes.
- tapes held recordings from multiple meetings in the Oval Office where Nixon discussed covering up Watergate.
- Nixon struggled to protect the tapes during the summer and fall of 1973.
- On August 5, Nixon released the tapes.
- Nixon resigned before being impeached on August 8th.
- After JFK, MLK and many other national leaders being assassinated a few years before, the American people felt hopeless. Watergate did not make the situation any better.

Source #2: <https://www.history.com/news/watergate-where-are-they-now>

NAMES NAMES NAMES!

- James McCord: buglar, former FBI + CIA agent, was convicted on charges of conspiracy, burglary and wiretapping, but only served four months of his original sentence of one to five years.
- Virgilio Gonzalez: Buglar, Cuban Refugee, Locksmith, anti-Fidel Castro activist, been told the Watergate operation would advance Cuban liberation, spent year in prison.
- E. Howard Hunt: Former CIA operative, organizer of watergate, part of the “Plumbers”, investigators found his phone number in address books belonging to the Watergate burglars, was convicted of burglary, conspiracy and wiretapping, and served 33 months in prison.
- Gordon Liddy: organizer of scandal, former FBI agent who served as general counsel for the Committee to Re-elect the President, was convicted of conspiracy, burglary and bugging the Democratic National Committee headquarters, and spent four and a half years in prison.
- Charles ‘Chuck’ Colson: organizer of scandal, Advisor of President, ran a smear campaign seeking to discredit the government contractor who leaked the Pentagon Papers.
- Donald Segretti: former military prosecutor, was an operative for the Committee to Re-elect the President, made smear campaign about senator Henry M. Jackson fathering a child with a teenager, pled guilty to charges of distributing illegal campaign literature, spending four months in prison.
- John Ehrlichman: Nixon’s advisor for domestic affairs, head of “plumbers”, in charge of covering up scandal, convicted of perjury and conspiracy to obstruct justice, serving 18 months in prison, resigned in 1973.

“If I had any advice for my kids, it would be never—to never, ever—defer your moral judgments to anybody.” -Enrlichman

- John Dean: White House counsel from 1970 to 1973, tried to coverup scandal, Nixon fired him, one of the first administration officials to reveal the cover-up, spent 4 months in prison.

- H.R. Haldeman: Nixon administration White House chief of staff—known as the “gatekeeper” to the Oval Office, resigned on April 30, 1973, convicted of perjury, conspiracy and obstruction of justice for his attempts to cover up the Watergate scandal.
- John Mitchell: director of the Committee to Re-elect the President
- Jeb Stuart Magruder: A White House communications adviser, Magruder played a key role in planning the Watergate break-in, and later covering it up.
- Alexander Butterfield: deputy White House chief of staff to President Nixon from 1969 to 1973, Butterfield controlled the secret taping system Nixon had installed in the Oval Office.
- Archibald Cox: Special prosecutor to investigate the Watergate scandal. Cox was fired after insisting President Nixon give him unrestricted access to tapes of conversations leading up to the break-in at the Democratic National Committee Headquarters.
- Robert Bork: conservative judge, solicitor general and acting attorney general in the Nixon administration.
- Mark Felt: Known as “Deep Throat,” helped Washington Post reporters Carl Bernstein and Bob Woodward tie Nixon to scandal.
- Sam Ervin: Chairman of the Senate Watergate committee
- Howard Baker: Republican senator from Tennessee.

Source #3:

<https://www.federaltimes.com/smr/50-years-federal-times/2015/12/01/watergate-scandal-public-distrust-of-government-begins/>

DISTRUST IN THE NATION

- The suffix “-gate” is known for describing any mass deceptive scandals (Ronald Reagan's Iran-gate, Bill Clinton's Monica-gate and New Jersey Gov. Chris Christie's bridge-gate). The suffix originated for watergate. Shows significance. More than 200 scandals have had “gate” attached to them!
- Redefined government's relationship with media.

- "The scandal continues to reverberate today throughout the political spectrum. We still live in the era of Watergate" -public affairs professor Julian Zeilzer.

Source #4:

<https://constitutioncenter.org/blog/the-legacy-of-watergate-five-important-changes-after-the-scandal/>

SIGNIFICANCE: WHAT CHANGED?

- Supreme Court: Proved that not even the president is above the law. "the fundamental demands of due process of law in the fair administration of justice." -Court
- The Court's curb on executive power remains crucial today.
- Legal Reform: Lawyers and Attorneys for the first time were viewed in a negative way. Most law schools after the scandal implemented an ethics course, and the bar rewrote its responsibility code.
- Journalism: Carl Bernstein and Bob Woodward (journalists at Washington Post covering scandal), created what became known as the culture of celebrity journalists.

Source #5: <https://www.history.com/news/nixon-secret-tapes-quotes-scandal-watergate>

NIXON TAPES: QUOTES

- Nixon's recorded conversations with National Security Advisor Henry Kissinger showing their dislike for the first female prime minister of India.
- "This is just the point when she is a bitch," Nixon said. Kissinger responded that "the Indians are bastards anyway," and agreed that Gandhi was "a bitch." Nixon added, "we really slobbered over the old witch."
- "Goddamn it, get in and get those files. Blow the safe and get it.": An order to break into the Brookings Institution, a think tank in Washington, D.C.

- “you could blackmail Johnson on this stuff,”
- “Kennedy was cold, impersonal, he treated his staff like dogs.”
- What would Vietnam have looked like if the war had ended earlier? “It wouldn’t have been too bad,” Nixon guessed. “Sure, the North Vietnamese would have probably slaughtered and castrated two million South Vietnamese Catholics, but nobody would have cared.”
- “Going after all these Jews. Just find one that is a Jew, will you.”
- "I would have made a good Pope."
- "When the President does it, that means it's not illegal." —President Richard Nixon, in a 1977 interview with David Frost
- "You don't know how to lie. If you can't lie, you'll never go anywhere."
- "I was not lying. I said things that later on seemed to be untrue." Nixon, reflecting on the Watergate scandal in 1978
- "This is a great day for France!" President Richard Nixon while attending the funeral of French President Charles de Gaulle in 1970.
- "I'm not for women in any job. I don't want any of them around. Thank God we don't have any in the cabinet."

Source #6: <https://vault.fbi.gov/watergate>

CONFIDENTIAL DOCUMENTS

The White House under Nixon worked to cover-up this connection, and subsequent revelations led to articles of impeachment being drawn up against Nixon and his subsequent resignation in 1974. These files, released many years ago, document the FBI’s investigation into the break-in and related issues between 1972 and 1979. (Link includes all documents)



FEDERAL BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION

**WATERGATE
(SUMMARY)**

PART 1 of 2

FILE NUMBER : 139-4089

President Nixon's grand jury testimony:

13

1 to contributors to the other side.

2 "Larry O'Brien," and then his notes say, "Better
3 they drop him now because" -- I don't know what the note
4 means. It possibly means that I said on Larry O'Brien,
5 don't go forward with him now because it would be too
6 politically hot to do so.

7 Nevertheless, later on there is something to
8 indicate that there is a suggestion that we go forward.

9 Then the next notation, "Check McGovern IRS
10 files." Now this, understand, is Mr. Ehrlichman's notes. I
11 should point out that I can never recall suggesting Mr.
12 McGovern, Senator McGovern's files be checked. What I do
13 recall is only a suggestion that the McGovern contributors
14 might be checked.

15 BY MR. HOROWITZ:

16 Q So, if I understand, sir, when you discussed using
17 "our powers," that was to use the powers in the White House
18 to get the Internal Revenue Service to audit Mr. O'Brien,
19 is that right?

20 A You are putting words in my mouth there that I
21 did not say. What I am saying is, and I am looking at these
22 notes -- I am refreshing my recollection about an event that
23 occurred two years, three years ago, when I was engaged in
24 activities that in my view were far more important than this
25 type of activity, and from the notes and from my recollection

Source #7: <https://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-srv/politics/special/watergate/timeline.html>

THE TIMELINE

- 1968
- November 5 - Nixon defeats Humphrey and runs his first term.

- 1969
- January 21 - Nixon is inaugurated as the 37th president of the United States.

- 1971
- June 13 - Pentagon Papers (press publishes confidential Vietnam war papers)
- September 3rd- The “plumbers” (same group who broke into watergate hotel) break into a therapist's office to find files on Daniel Ellsberg, the former defense analyst who leaked the Pentagon Papers.

- 1972
- June 17 - Five men are caught trying to bug the DNC (watergate breakin).
- June 19- Former attorney general John Mitchell, head of the Nixon reelection campaign, denies being apart of scandal.
- August 1- A cheque for 25,000 lands in one of burglars bank account, it's a cheque from Nixon Campaign.
- October 10- FBI agents confirm the tie to the White House, now know that it was a plan to sabotage the dems.
- November 7- Nixon wins election for his second term. He wins by 60 percent, biggest win in history.

- 1973
- January 30 - Former Nixon aides G. Gordon Liddy and James W. McCord Jr. are convicted of conspiracy, burglary and wiretapping in the Watergate incident.
- April 30 - Nixon's top White House staffers, H.R. Haldeman and John Ehrlichman, and Attorney General Richard Kleindienst resign over the scandal. White House counsel John Dean is fired.
- May 18 - The Senate Watergate Committee begins hearings.
- June 3 - John Dean told investigators that he discussed the Watergate cover-up with President Nixon at least 35 times.
- June 13 - Watergate prosecutors find a memo talking about break-in of the psychiatrist's office.

- July 13 - Alexander Butterfield reveals in congressional testimony that since 1971 Nixon had recorded all conversations and telephone calls in his offices.
- October 20 - Saturday Night Massacre: Nixon fires Archibald Cox, Attorney General Richardson and Deputy Attorney General William D. Ruckelshaus resign.
- December 7 - missing 18 ½ tape recording from Nixon Tape.
- 1974
- July 24- Court decides Nixon must hand over all tapes.
- July 27 - House Judiciary Committee passes the first of three articles of impeachment, charging obstruction of justice.
- August 8- Richard Nixon resigns.

Source #8: <https://libguides.princeton.edu/c.php?g=84219&p=544091>

THE SIXTIES AND EARLY SEVENTIES: A TIMELINE

- 1961- Bay of Pigs Invasion
- 1962- Cuban Missile Crisis
- 1963- JFK assassinated in Dallas
- 1964- Congress passes Gulf of Tonkin resolution
- 1965- Congress passes Voting Rights Acts
- 1968- MLK assassinated
- 1969- Apollo 11 Lands first person on Moon, Woodstock
- 1970- National guard fires on students at Kent state uni
- 1972- Nixon goes to China
- 1973- Paris Peace Accord ends US involvement in Vietnam, Roe vs. Wade Legalizes abortion
- 1974- Nixon resigns
- 1976- Jimmy Carter elected as president

Source #9: <https://youtu.be/SUDMyYggegA>

DONALD TRUMP: THE IMPEACHMENT

- Nancy Pelosi: Speaker of The House of Representatives, announces decision to move forward with impeaching Trump.
- Being impeached does not mean being removed from office.
- To be removed from office the higher level, the senate would have to find you guilty as well.
- Bill Clinton and Andrew Johnson only two presidents to have been impeached, but nobody has ever been removed from whitehouse.
- Lower chamber (house) is controlled by Democrats, so likely hood trump was impeached was high.
- But the higher chamber (senate) is controlled by republicans (his own party).
- The only way trump will be removed from office is if the republicans vote non-partisan (against their party).
- Trump meddled in 2020 elections by getting help from Ukraine.
- He did this by pressuring Ukraine president to investigate one of his number one democratic competitor, Joe Biden and son Hunter.
- Whistleblower leaked phone call with Trump and Ukraine.
- Trumps Defense: insists nothing is wrong with a phone call, says president of Ukraine came forward and said nothing happened and republicans insist that a president is allowed to ask for an investigation even if it involves a foreign country and a political opposition.
- Republicans think the Impeachment is a “personal attack” on the president.
- What he did wrong: “apparent misuse of campaign funds, the president and his family openly profiting from public office, taxpayer dollars wasted on first-class flights and unnecessary office upgrades for Trump cabinet officials, personal and financial threats issued against political opponents, and collusion with a foreign adversary to undermine a U.S. election.”

Source #10 -

<https://www.americanprogress.org/issues/democracy/reports/2018/07/30/454058/lessons-from-watergate/>

POST WATERGATE REFORMS

- Watergate was so significant to politics, law and democracy’s that due to it there is now an extensive list of post scandal reforms.

- 1974 Amendments to the Freedom of Information Act: only properly classified information could be withheld on national security grounds and gave judges the power to determine whether information was properly classified
- Federal Advisory Committee Act of 1972 and Government in the Sunshine Act of 1976: “to ensure that advice by the various advisory committees formed over the years is objective and accessible to the public.”
- Inspector General Act of 1978: “in the wake of the Watergate scandal, as a means of ensuring integrity and accountability in the Executive Branch.”
- Civil Service Reform Act of 1978
- Ethics in Government Act of 1978
- Presidential Records Act of 1978
- 1974 Amendments to the Federal Election Campaign Act
- Foreign Corrupt Practices Act of 1977
- Privacy Act of 1974
- Tax Reform Act of 1976
- Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act of 1978
- War Powers Act of 1973
- Congressional Budget and Impoundment Control Act of 1974
- National Emergencies Act of 1976

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