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## Cast of Characters

### *White House*

Richard M. Nixon: 37th president of the United States

Spiro T. Agnew: 39th vice president of the United States

Alexander P. Butterfield: deputy assistant

Dwight L. Chapin: appointments secretary

Kathleen A. Chenow: “plumbers” secretary

Kenneth W. Clawson: deputy director of communications

Charles W. Colson: special counsel

John W. Dean III: counsel

John D. Ehrlichman: assistant for domestic affairs, liaison to FBI

Fred F. Fielding: associate counsel

Leonard Garment: counsel

Alexander M. Haig, Jr.: chief of staff

Harry R. “Bob” Haldeman: chief of staff

Henry A. Kissinger: assistant for national security affairs

Egil “Bud” Krogh, Jr.: co-director of the “plumbers”

Richard A. “Dick” Moore: special counsel

Rose Mary Woods: executive secretary

David R. Young: co-director of the “plumbers”

Ronald L. Ziegler: press secretary

### *Committee for the Re-election of the President (CRP)*

John N. Mitchell: director; former attorney general

Clark MacGregor: director

Jeb Stuart Magruder: deputy director

Maurice H. Stans: finance committee chairman

Kenneth H. Dahlberg: Midwest finance chairman

Millicent “Penny” Gleason: security officer

Judith G. Hoback: assistant to Hugh Sloan

Frederick C. LaRue: special consultant  
Robert C. Mardian: political coordinator; former assistant attorney  
general  
Powell Moore: director of press and information  
Robert C. Odle, Jr.: director of administration and personnel  
Herbert L. “Bart” Porter: director of scheduling  
DeVan L. Shumway: director of public affairs  
Hugh W. Sloan, Jr.: finance committee treasurer

*Watergate Burglars and Co-conspirators*

E. Howard Hunt, Jr.: White House consultant; “plumber” and former  
CIA officer  
G. Gordon Liddy: finance counsel, CRP; “plumber” and former FBI  
agent  
James W. McCord, Jr.: burglar; chief of security, CRP; former CIA officer  
Alfred C. Baldwin III: lookout; security guard, CRP; former FBI agent  
Bernard L. Barker: burglar  
Virgilio R. Gonzalez: burglar  
Eugenio R. Martinez: burglar  
Frank A. Sturgis: burglar

*Department of Justice*

Richard G. Kleindienst: attorney general  
Elliott L. Richardson: attorney general  
Henry E. Petersen: assistant attorney general, Criminal Division  
Donald E. Santarelli: associate deputy attorney general

*Federal Judges*

George E. MacKinnon: U.S. Court of Appeals, Washington, D.C.  
John J. Sirica; chief judge, U.S. District Court, Washington, D.C.

*Federal Prosecutors*

Harold H. Titus, Jr.: U.S. attorney for the District of Columbia  
Earl J. Silbert: assistant U.S. attorney, chief Watergate prosecutor  
Donald E. Campbell: assistant U.S. attorney  
Seymour Glanzer: assistant U.S. attorney

*Watergate Special Prosecution Force*

Archibald Cox: special prosecutor  
Leon Jaworski: special prosecutor

*Federal Bureau of Investigation, Headquarters, 1969–1972*

John Edgar Hoover: director

Clyde A. Tolson: associate director

Cartha D. “Deke” DeLoach: deputy associate director

William Mark Felt: deputy associate director

John P. Mohr: assistant director, Administration

Alex Rosen: assistant director, Investigations

William D. Soyars, Jr.: assistant to W. Mark Felt

William C. Sullivan: deputy associate director

*Federal Bureau of Investigation: Headquarters, 1972–1973*

L. Patrick Gray III: acting director

William D. Ruckelshaus: acting director

Clarence M. Kelley: director

William Mark Felt: acting associate director

Daniel M. “Mack” Armstrong: special assistant to Gray

Charles W. Bates: assistant director, General Investigative Division

Thomas E. Bishop: assistant director, Crime Records Division

Charles Bolz: chief, Accounting and Fraud Section, General  
Investigative Division

Wason G. Campbell, assistant to W. Mark Felt

Jack L. Conmy: aide to Ruckelshaus

Dwight Dalbey: assistant director, Office of Legal Counsel

Paul V. Daly: special agent

Robert E. Gebhardt: assistant director, General Investigative Division

Barbara L. Herwig: special assistant to Gray

David D. Kinley: executive assistant to Gray

Richard E. Long: chief, Accounting and Fraud Section, General  
Investigative Division

Edward S. Miller: assistant director, Domestic Intelligence Division

Charles A. Nuzum: supervisor, Accounting and Fraud Section,  
General Investigative Division

William D. Soyars, Jr.: assistant director, Computer Systems Division

Leonard M. “Bucky” Walters: assistant director, Inspection Division

*Federal Bureau of Investigation, Washington Field Office, 1972–1973*

Robert G. Kunkel: special agent in charge

John J. “Jack” McDermott: special agent in charge

Angelo J. Lano: case agent, Watergate

Robert E. Lill: special agent  
Paul P. Magallanes, special agent  
Daniel C. Mahan: special agent  
John W. Mindermann: special agent

*Central Intelligence Agency*

Richard M. Helms: director  
Vernon A. "Dick" Walters: deputy director

*Congress*

Sam J. Ervin, Jr.: senator (D-North Carolina); chairman, Select Committee on Presidential Campaign Activities (Watergate Committee)  
Howard H. Baker, Jr.: senator (R-Tennessee); ranking member, Watergate Committee  
Robert C. Byrd: senator (D-West Virginia); member, Judiciary Committee  
Lucien N. Nedzi: representative (D-Michigan); chairman, Special Subcommittee on Intelligence, Armed Services Committee

Samuel Dash: majority counsel, Watergate Committee  
Fred D. Thompson: minority counsel, Watergate Committee  
Scott Armstrong: investigator, Watergate Committee  
Terry F. Lenzner: investigator, Watergate Committee

*Journalists*

Jack Anderson: syndicated columnist  
E. J. Bachinski: police reporter, *Washington Post*  
David Beckwith: correspondent, *Time* magazine  
Carl Bernstein: reporter, *Washington Post*  
Benjamin C. Bradlee: executive editor, *Washington Post*  
Richard M. Cohen: reporter, *Washington Post*  
Patrick Collins: reporter, *Washington Daily News*  
John M. Crewdson: reporter, *New York Times*  
Leonard Downie, Jr.: deputy metro editor, *Washington Post*; later, executive editor  
Rowland Evans, Jr.: syndicated political columnist  
Hays Gorey: correspondent, *Time* magazine  
Richard C. Harwood: national editor, *Washington Post*  
Seymour Hersh: reporter, *New York Times*

Robert L. Jackson: reporter, *Los Angeles Times*  
William G. Lambert: investigative reporter, *Life* magazine  
John A. Limpert: editor, *The Washingtonian* magazine  
Brendan Lyons: reporter, Albany (NY) *Times Union*  
James Mann: reporter, *Washington Post*  
Jack Nelson: reporter, *Los Angeles Times*  
Robert D. Novak: syndicated political columnist  
Jeremiah O’Leary: reporter, *Washington Star*  
Ronald J. Ostrow: reporter, *Los Angeles Times*  
Robert H. Phelps: Washington editor, *New York Times*  
Harry M. Rosenfeld: metro editor, *Washington Post*; editor, Albany  
(NY) *Times Union*  
Walter F. Rugaber: reporter, *New York Times*  
Howard Simons: managing editor, *Washington Post*  
Edward L. Smith: in-house editorial counsel, *Newsweek*  
Sandy Smith: correspondent, *Time* magazine  
John F. Stacks: news editor, Washington bureau, *Time* magazine  
Laurence Stern: reporter, *Washington Post*  
Barry Sussman: city editor, *Washington Post*; special Watergate editor  
Tad Szulc: reporter, *New York Times*  
Sanford J. Ungar: reporter, *Washington Post*  
Bob Woodward: reporter, *Washington Post*

#### *Nongovernment Lawyers*

Joseph A. Califano, Jr.: outside counsel, the *Washington Post* and the  
Democratic National Committee; name partner, Williams, Connolly  
& Califano  
John F. Dowd: in-house editorial counsel, *Time* magazine  
J. Alan Galbraith: attorney, Williams, Connolly & Califano  
Roswell L. Gilpatric: partner, Cravath, Swaine & Moore  
Herbert W. Kalmbach: personal attorney to President Nixon  
Kenneth W. Parkinson: counsel, CRP  
Stephen H. Sachs: counsel to L. Patrick Gray III  
John P. Sears: former deputy counsel, White House  
Donald H. Segretti: attorney hired by Dwight Chapin for campaign  
“dirty tricks”  
Edward Bennett Williams: outside counsel, the *Washington Post*; name  
partner, Williams, Connolly & Califano





**leak**





## Introduction

*With a story as enticing, complex, and competitive and quickly unfolding as Watergate, there was little tendency or time to consider the motive of our sources. What was important was whether the information checked out and whether it was true. . . . The cliché about drinking from a fire hose applied. There was no time to ask our sources, Why are you talking? Do you have an ax to grind? Why don't you blow the whistle publicly, stand up there and tell all you know? This was the case with Mark Felt.*

*. . . His words and guidance had immense, at times even staggering, authority. The weight, authenticity and his restraint were more important than his design, if he had one.*

—Bob Woodward, *The Secret Man*

What motivated W. Mark Felt, a.k.a. “Deep Throat,” to leak to a cub reporter at the *Washington Post*? Nearly forty years after the Watergate break-in, Felt’s “design” is the only significant question unresolved.

When *All the President's Men* introduced the public to Deep Throat, in the spring of 1974, authors Bob Woodward and Carl Bernstein fostered an impression of his motive: Deep Throat was a selfless, high-ranking official intent on exposing the lawlessness of the Nixon White House. He “was trying to protect the office [of the presidency],” they wrote, “to effect a change in its conduct before all was lost.” This depiction of Mark Felt as a principled whistle-blower became practically indelible after Hal Holbrook’s “neurotically loaded” portrayal of Deep Throat in the 1976 screen adaptation of the book.<sup>1</sup>

One of the more telling aspects of *The Secret Man*, Woodward’s 2005 portrait of his relationship with Felt, was how he backed away from that Hollywoodized depiction. In his second take on Deep Throat, Woodward wrote that Felt “never really voiced pure, raw outrage to me about Watergate or what it represented.” Woodward was able to parse Felt’s motive only after the Watergate “fire hose” had petered out—that is,

after Nixon's resignation. At that point, he deduced that Felt's motive was more pedestrian than principled: Far from defending the office of the presidency, Felt leaked because he "believed he was protecting the [FBI]" from the Nixon White House. Felt's disclosures, in other words, helped create the public and political pressure necessary to hold the president and his staff accountable, while insulating Felt's revered FBI from a White House determined to manipulate and control it—as evinced by the appointment of L. Patrick Gray III, an alleged Nixon crony, to succeed J. Edgar Hoover as FBI director in May 1972.<sup>2</sup>

There has long been a third, less honorable, explanation of Felt's motive: that he acted neither out of principle nor institutional pride, but out of pure pique. According to this view, he was a deeply embittered man, coldly furious at Nixon for having passed him over for the FBI directorship when Hoover died, and at the White House in general for what it was trying to do to the organization Hoover had built over four decades. The Watergate break-in, which occurred just a few weeks after Gray's appointment, was serendipitous for someone seeking retaliation.<sup>3</sup>

None of these competing explanations has ever really taken hold to the exclusion of the others. Even on the surface, each seems less than totally persuasive, and, on closer inspection, each has a flaw sufficient to discount it entirely.

The problem with the Hollywoodized explanation is that Felt himself authorized illegal, surreptitious entries into the homes of people associated with the Weather Underground, a domestic terrorist group, during 1972–1973. At the same time that he was supposedly mortified by the White House's law breaking, he was busy sanctioning similar behavior by FBI agents.<sup>4</sup>

Woodward's 2005 explanation has defects as well. Although Hoover's death gave Richard Nixon a rare opportunity to put his own man at the top of the FBI, the notion that the White House would thereafter be able to manipulate the Bureau at will is preposterous. Hoover's FBI was notoriously hidebound and could not be remade overnight. Indeed, forty years later we are still living with the Bureau's insular, peculiar, and highly resistant culture. Nor did Felt have to act to protect the integrity of the FBI's Watergate investigation. Although very early on Nixon tried to rein it in by making unfounded claims about national security and CIA equities, that effort quickly collapsed and the Bureau's investigation was never circumscribed thereafter, despite some improprieties by the then-acting director, Pat Gray. Not even Felt ever publicly subscribed to the notion that the White House had interfered successfully with the Bu-

reau's probe, though, to be sure, it hindered the inquiry insofar as possible and exploited several courtesies to further the cover-up. In his 1979 memoir, Felt asserted that the attacks on the FBI for "dragging [its] feet" on the Watergate inquiry were unfair. "No one," wrote Felt, "could have stopped the driving force of the investigation without an explosion in the Bureau—not even J. Edgar Hoover."<sup>5</sup>

The revenge theory, for its part, not only seems borrowed from a bad Washington potboiler, but also assumes that Felt was willing to risk his career for an intangible, rather insignificant reward. Leaking put Felt in a dangerous position, as Woodward observed in *The Secret Man*: "Technically, it was illegal to talk about grand jury information or FBI files; or it could have been made to look illegal." As a lawyer, Felt surely understood the adage that the wheels of justice may grind slowly, but they grind extremely fine. If he wanted revenge, why act before the criminal and civil processes had played themselves out, possibly achieving his ends for him?<sup>6</sup>

Contrary to the widely held perception that the *Washington Post* "uncovered" Watergate, the newspaper essentially tracked the progress of the FBI's investigation, with a time delay ranging from weeks to days, and published elements of the prosecutors' case well in advance of the trial. Keeping the story in the news was meaningful and important, of course, especially when that newspaper was the *Post*. Owing to its prized readership, it had an influence that far outstripped its circulation. Every important official in Washington and every reporter based there read the *Post*, which meant the newspaper was an elite publication in that it helped define the news in and coming out of Washington. Its articles surely had an impact on Judge John J. Sirica, in whose courtroom the burglars were tried in January 1973 and the cover-up conspirators in October 1974. The stories also undoubtedly influenced the U.S. Senate, which in January 1973 formed a select committee, chaired by Sam Ervin (D–North Carolina), to probe the 1972 campaign. Perhaps most significantly, the Nixon administration reacted initially to the *Post*'s stories by denying and dissembling, creating an epic credibility gap with the media and eventually the public from which the White House never recovered.<sup>7</sup>

Still, the main effect of Deep Throat's leaks was merely to accelerate the scandal by perhaps six months or a year, as former White House counsel Leonard Garment once observed. Felt helped the *Post* print "eye-popping stories, preceding disclosures by law enforcement . . . that built momentum and drew in the rest of the press at a time when Watergate might otherwise have faded from public view." But unless Felt's judgment was

impaired by sheer rage, he took an extraordinary risk for an inordinately small payoff—and one that contradicted his politics to boot. Any disclosures before November 1972 stood to benefit only George McGovern, and Felt harbored nothing but disdain for the Democrat dubbed the candidate of “acid, amnesty, and abortion.”<sup>8</sup>

By 2010, Woodward had begun to ascribe “multiple motives” to Felt, apparently in recognition of the uncertainty and contradictions that have simmered since 2005. This new admixture is one part principle; one part personal pique over having been passed over for the directorship; and one part outrage over the White House’s efforts to control and abuse the FBI. Felt “knew there was a cover-up . . . and did not trust the acting FBI director, Pat Gray. He knew the Nixon White House was corrupt. At the same time, he was disappointed that he did not get the directorship.” But merely combining three weak explanations does not result in a credible one.<sup>9</sup>

What, then, can possibly explain Felt’s urgency and the risks he took? Woodward maintains that Felt was a “secret man,” impenetrable and unfathomable. Yet now that Deep Throat’s identity is beyond dispute, going back to find his motive is imperative. And there exists a tried and true technique for doing so. When counterintelligence officers suspect a person of being a double agent, they fashion a ledger of everything that person knew, when, and how that person acted on the information. At the end there is a final tally, and that is supposed to reveal in whose interests the suspected double agent was genuinely working all along.

This book is akin to Felt’s ledger, because understanding his design, even at this late date, matters greatly to our historical understanding. As Christopher Hitchens wrote in his review of *The Secret Man*, Watergate “ranks as the single most successful use of the news media by an anonymous unelected official with an agenda of his own.” Without a consensus about what that agenda was, there is a gaping hole at the center of the narrative.<sup>10</sup>

The story of the break-in at the Democrats’ headquarters and the subsequent cover-up are terrific yarns. But the meta-narrative about the forces at work *behind* the scandal that brought Nixon down, as *The Washingtonian*’s John Limpert once pointed out, “tells you an awful lot more about how things happen in Washington.”<sup>11</sup>