WATERGATE Essay, Research Paper

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Sex, drugs, money, power, you name it and there is a scandal for it, but

look back and you will see that from all the scandals there have been,

Watergate was among the worst. The Watergate scandal had everything.

From Nixon disgracing the presidency by lying to the country and abusing

his power, to his committees being involved in illegal acts and a big cover up.

All leading to little side roads of corruption and lies. Watergate is by far one

of the worst presidential scandals in the history of the United States.

In the story of Watergate, five burglars were found breaking into

democratic offices at the Watergate complex in Washington DC. The

break-in was passed off as just another burglary, but when the burglars were

found to have connections with the CIA, questions were starting to be asked.

Then when the phone number of Howard Hunt was found in one of the

burglars phone books, it made people think, ?Why would one of the burglars

have the phone number of one of the presidents men?? Then there is Richard

Nixon, the man of the hour, plays the role of the president of the United

States of America. The man that was voted into office by the people, and the

man that swore to serve the people. When Watergate was uncovered, it

revealed that the president was a liar and a cheat. The president lied to our

country, lied about his involvement, concealed self incriminating evidence,

abused his power, and planed to have the CIA stop the FBI investigations.

He was also deeply involved with the cover up and still lied about his

involvement.

During the times of the unraveling of Watergate, questions were asked

about connections with the White House and the president, but when the

president was asked about it at a press conference he assured Americans that

?The White House has no involvement whatever in this particular incident.?

He was lying to the country like it was part of his job (Dorman 158). The

lying did not end there, it went on and on for months, and as the scandal kept

unraveling, ?President Nixon and White House, and creep officials were

deliberately misleading the public about the significance of the Watergate

affair? (158). As Watergate was becoming a front-page article in the

newspapers, new evidence was being uncovered. One piece of evidence that

changed the peoples ideas of our president was the tapping of every

conversation in the oval office ?since about the 18th month of president

Nixon?s term? (Kutler 368). Those tapes would soon prove that the president

was deeply involved in the scandal. During the trials, ?the Nixon

administration claimed that the March 21st, 1973 meeting was the first Nixon

had heard of the cover-ups?, but after the tapes were heard it was discovered

that Nixon was involved from the beginning (Heritage 36). The Nixon tapes

brought out much controversy. The tapes alone could prove the president

innocent or guilty, whichever one it was, Nixon refused to hand over the

tapes. the courts then demanded the tapes, and Nixon still would not give

them up.

After much struggle Nixon agreed to give a transcript of the tapes.

The transcripts brought to light a significant amount of evidence against

Nixon. The transcripts revealed payoffs, affiliation with the burglaries, and

the OK?s to the cover-up, But most important ?the transcripts showed that

Nixon had lied repeatedly after he had denied knowing anything about the

conspiracy? (27). After much struggle, the courts finally got the tapes from

Nixon, It was Archibald Cox that issued the subpoena for the tapes, and that

started the bloodbath we now know as the Saturday night massacre. ?The

night of October 20,1973, possibly the most tumultuous in American political

history, when the special Watergate prosecutor and the nations two top law

officers lost their jobs within the space of an hour and a half.? (Heritage 38).

Soon the country would find a new problem with the tapes. ?When the

presidents lawyers were going over the tapes, they came along an 18 minute

gap during a conversation with Nixon and Haldman? (34). Three weeks later,

the gap was discovered,

Rosemary Woods (Nixon?s secretary) testified that while

transcribing the tape, she had accidentally erased perhaps five

minutes when interrupted by a phone call, she said she had

pressed the ?Record? button instead of the ?Stop? button and

then kept her foot on the machines control pedal while speaking

into the phone. (34)

?Not everyone accepted this explanation; The maneuver would have been

difficult to perform because of the distance between the recording machine

and the telephone in her office? (34).

Watergate was unraveling, and the story kept getting bigger. Nixon

was just having to much fun in the white house. Before he was busted, ?He

ordered the FBI to place wire taps on the phones of thirteen government

officials, and four prominent reporters? (Fremon 28). Nixon was abusing his

powers to the extent, and to him there seemed to be nothing wrong with it.

Nixon needed the FBI to stop the Watergate investigation.

Former attorney general John Michell knew that the FBI had a

long-standing agreement with the CIA that neither agency would

jeopardize the other?s operations. If the FBI could be convinced

that the CIA had somehow been involved in financing or

carrying out the Watergate burglary, the investigation could be

curtailed on the ground of protecting ?national security.?

Dorman 159)

Nixon then told the chief of staff:

You call them [the CIA director, Richard M. Helms, and his

deputy, Lt. Gen. Vernon A. Walters] in. . . . Play it tough. That?s

the way they play it and that?s the way were gona play it. . . .

Say: ?Look, the problem is that this will open the whole, the

whole Bay of Pigs thing. . . . and that they should call the FBI in

and say that we wish for the country, don?t go any further into

this case?– period! (Heritage 27)

President Nixon was also deeply involved with the cover-up. When he

was told about the burglary, he gave his full support to the cover-up plan.

?On March 21, 1973 the president had a meeting with John Dean, and the

president agreed that one million dollars should be raised to silence the

burglars? (Kutler 247-257). The president also agreed in a March 21, 1973

meeting with John Dean, to get money to payoff Mr. Hunt (Heritage 34).

President Nixon also made some statements to the public, saying that there

was no White House involvement with Watergate. In one statement he said:

Within our own staff, under my direction, Counsel to the

president, Mr. Dean, has conducted a complete investigation of

all leads which might involve any present members of the White

House or anybody in the government. I can say categorically that

no one in the White House staff, no one in this administration,

presently employed, was involved in this very bizarre incident.

(Dorman 167)

Actually, Dean had conducted no such investigation and had given him no

such assurances (168).

Without question, the most notorious examples of dirty politics

in the nations history occurred during president Nixon?s 1972

re-election campaign. An astonishing array of illegal and

unethical activities was carried out on Nixon?s behalf.

(Dorman 112)

Nixon, having a high role in the scandal, was nothing compared to his

committees. Nixon?s committees were deeply involved with the whole

scandal and other unethical acts. During the 1972 election, they were

involved in illegal acts like, smear campaigns, and they attacked and harassed

political enemies, and they were involved in the famous Watergate break-in.

Also the committees had a great role in the cover-up. They destroyed

evidence, paid people off, and lied to the country. It could be said that

Nixon?s committees were more corrupt than him.

When Nixon was running for president in 1972, ambitious plans were

prepared for spying on the democrats. ?For four years the White House used

the power of the presidency to attack on political enemies. They spied on &

harassed anyone who did not agree with Nixon?s policies? (Heritage 32).

Nixon also had an enemies list that included the names of about 21

organizations and some 200 individuals (32). Someone had to take care of

these people, so ?CREEP ordered the establishment of several secret teams

assigned to carryout political espionage and harassment operations against the

democrats. Placed in charge of one such team was a young California lawyer

named Donald H. Segretti? (Dorman 113). Segretti himself signed up some of

his own men, one was Robert M. Benz, who hired seven others to help him

out, one of his helpers was Douglas Kelly (114). Douglas Kelly helped handle

a big political enemy by the name of, Senator Edmund Muskie, of Maine.

Senator Muskie got it pretty bad from CREEP.

?At a Florida rally for Democratic contender George Wallace of

Alabama, they distributed more than one thousand anti-Wallace

cards that purported to come from the Muskie Camp. One side,

the cards read, IF YOU LIKED HITLER, YOU?LL JUST

LOVE WALLACE. On the other side, they read, CAST

YOUR VOTE FOR SENATOR EDMUND MUSKIE.? (116)

When in fact the Muskie organization had nothing to do with the cards.

During another occasion, ?Kelly sneaked into a Muskie news conference and

released two white mice whose tails were bedecked with ribbons reading,

MUSKIE IS A RAT FINK? (115). ?Kelly also once hired a young woman

to run naked outside Muskie?s hotel room while shouting, ?I love Ed

Muskie? ? (115). The attacks didn?t stop there. they went on and on. Segretti

and Benz even got Senator Humphrey one good time. They went and

distributed phony invitations, to black communities in Milwaukee, to a free

all you can eat lunch with beer and wine, and several special guests. when in

fact the supposed lunch was non existent (118).

Nixon?s committees were also deeply involved in the cover-up and

destroyed allot of evidence. ?Within hours of the burglars? arrest, G. Gordon

Liddy showed up at the CREEP office and began destroying his confidential

files on the political-spying operation? (150). Also, Howard Hunt?s safe in his

office was drilled open and it contained, among other things, bugging

equipment, a revolver, a psychological profile of Daniel J. Ellsberg, leakier of

the pentagon papers, a state department cable that had been faked to make it

appear that president John F. Kennedy had ordered the murder of president

Ngo Dinh Diem of South Vietnam (Heritage 30). John Ehrlichman (the

presidents chief domestic affairs advisor) told John Dean to throw the

?sensitive materials? over the Potomac river and at night to shred the

paperwork (30).Also, L. Patrick Gray, acting FBI director destroyed the

documents from Hunts safe and withheld word of there existence (Dorman

157). Nixon?s chief aid, H. R. Haldman, also destroyed files which might

prove to be potentially dangerous (157).

As more problems came along, more pressure was being put on the

men in jail to keep quiet. CREEP agreed to pay the men about 400,000

dollars total, after a five month period, of hush money. CREEP did not have

that much money, so they put a down payment of 40,000 dollars, which was

to be divided amongst the men (170).

Although Hunt was incensed at receiving only partial payment,

he made no new threat to expose the cover-up. The day after the

payment was made, Mitchell met at the white house with Dean,

Haldeman, and John Ehrlichman. he told them that Hunt was

?not a problem any more? (192)

The Nixon committees also repeatedly lied to the country. John

Mitchell issued a statement and flat out lied to the country.

We have learned from news reports that a man identified as

employed by our campaign committee was one of five persons

arrested at the Democratic National committee headquarters.

The person involved is the proprietor of a private security

agency who was employed by our committee months ago to

assist with the installation of our security system. He has, as we

understand it, a number of business clients and interests and we

have no knowledge of those relationships. we want to emphasize

that this man and the other people involved were not operating

either in our behalf or with our consent. (158)

The lies went on and on, and the truth kept leaking out. The president

and his comities were being exposed, and the presidency was disgraced and

all trust in the government was lost. Some say, ?Had a uniformed officer in a

marked car appeared and Hunt gotten the warning earlier, he probably would

have been able to alert McCord and the Miamians in time for them to

escape. The Watergate scandal–and its subsequent enrichment of our

language–would never have happened.? (Heritage 42).

However, it did happen, and anyone old enough to read at that time, will

never forget the story of Watergate. The story of lies and corruption in the

government. The scandal that will forever be known as by far one of the

worst scandals in the history of the United States Of America.

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