

# [Watergate1 essay](https://assignbuster.com/watergate1-essay/)

The “ Watergate Scandal” and constitutional crisis that began on

June 17, 1972 with the arrest of five burglars who broke into the

Democratic National Committee (DMC) headquarters at the Watergate

office building in Washington D. C. It ended with the registration of

President Richard M. Nixon on August 9, 1974. (Watergate)

At approximately 2: 30 in the morning of June 17, 1972 five men

were arrested at the Watergate Complex. The police seized a walkie

talkie, 40 rolls of unexposed film, two 35 millimeter cameras, lock

picks, pensized teargas guns, and bugging devices. (Gold, 75)

These five men and two co-plotters were indicated in September

1972 on charges of burglary, conspiracy and wire tapping. Four months

later they were convicted and sentenced to prison terms by District

Court Judge John J. Sercia was convinced that relevant details had

not been unveiled during the trial and offered leniency in exchanged

for further information. As it became increasingly evident that the

Watergate burglars were tied closely to the Central Intelligence

Agency and the Committee to re-elect the president. (Watergate)

Four of these men, that were arrested on the morning of June 17, 1972,

came from Miami, Florida. They were Bernard L. Barker, Frank A.

Sturgis, Virgillio R. Gonzalez, and Eugenio R. Martinez. The other

man was from Rockville, Maryland named James W. McCord, Jr. The two

co-plotters were G. Gordon Liddy and E. Howard Hunt. (Watergate)

The senate established and investigative committee headed by

Senate Sam Ervin, Jr., to look into the growing scandal. As they were

investigating, they related that the famous break-in was far more

involved than what everyone had expected. (Watergate) The White Houses

involvement of that morning first became evident when James McCord

wrote a letter to Judge Sirca. In this letter McCord explained that

he wanted to disclose the details of Watergate. He made it apparent

that he would not speak to a Justice department official of an FBI

agent. Although his letter did unveil details, it made server

chargers. McCord justified that “ Political pressure” (Westerfled 36)

had generated many defendants to plead guilty and remain silent. He

also claimed that there had been whiteness at the trail who had

committed perjury in order to protect the people who headed the

brake-in. McCord declared that he, his family, and his friend may be

in danger if he spoke out. (Westerfled 36-37)

The Senate Watergate Committee saw their chance to unravel the

mystery of this scandal. The offered James McCord a chance to speak

publicly. In his first meeting with representatives of this committee

he named two more people that he claimed were involved in the burglary

and cover-up. Theses two men were John Dean and Jeb Margruder.

Margruder was the second-in-charge of the CRP and Dean was a White

House aid. After hearing these substantial accusations the Senate

Watergate Committee promptly subpoenaed John Dean and Jeb Margruder.

After the next session with James McCord he took the whiteness

stand and explained how Liddy had promised him an executive pardon if

he would plead guilty. This began to question the a White House

involvement since only the president could present such a pardon.

(Westerfled, 40) Jeb Margruder was the next witness to testify. He

admitted his own perjury to the Grand Jury and verified what McCord

had said. While on the stand he also revealed another name to add to

the list of those involved, John Mitchell. (Gold, 246-247)

The next witness scheduled to appear was John Dean. In Dean’s

testimony he exposed that the Watergate burglary had been only a part

of a greater abuse of power. He said that for four years the White

House had used the powers of the presidency to attack political

enemies. They spied on and harassed anyone who did not agree with

Nixon’s policies. If a reporter wrote stories criticizing the White

House they would be singled out for tax investigations. The White

House also kept an “ Enemies List” (Westerfled 43) of people that the

presidents men wanted revenge on. After being fired, dean kept

official documents that supported his statements. (Westerfled 43-44;

John Dean said, is his opening statements, that he had discussed

the cover-up with president Nixon in several meetings. At the first

meeting, in September 1972, he told the president how he and other

members of the White House had handled the cover-up so far. Dean

claimed that in another important meeting with Nixon, on March 21,

1973, the president agreed $1 million should be raised to silence the

burgalers. However Dean said that he dealt with the president mostly

through H. R. Haldman and John Ehrlichman. (Gold 266-308; Westerfled

Dean faced the committee for four days of Questioning, after his

opening statement. During these four days the republicans focused on

what happened in these meetings between Dean and the president, which

was the only evidence the president. The question that Senator baker

asked and was being wondered throughout the nation was, what did the

president know and when did he know it? (Westerfled, 43) The Nixon

administration tackled Dean’s reports of the two meetings. They

claimed that the March 21, 1973 meeting was the first Nixon had heard

of the cover-ups. The White House’s version was they the president

had rejected the burglars’ blackmail. (Hearings 02)

For the first time in this intriguing scandal the president

himself had been accused. This was the greatest blow the Nixon White

House had sustained. “ polls showed that 70 percent of TV viewers

believed Deans version of the event” (Westerfled, 43). But who was to

be believed? It was John Deans Word against Richard Nixon’s. (Gold

669-670; Westerfled, 43) The committee then made a shocking discovery,

only a few weeks after Deans testimony. As the committee was managing

a routine aid, they asked him how the White House administration came

up with their version of what happened in the meeting s of Dena and

Nixon. His response was that the meetings had probably been recorded

Alexander Butterflied explained that the White House had been

equipped with a recording system. They were installed in his two

offices, the Oval Room “ The taping device was spring load to a voice

actuation situation.” (Gold 436) In Alexander Butterfields testimony

he said that the recording system was installed to help preserve all

documents. The only people who knew of these recording devices were

the president, Haledman, Kigbe, Butterfield, and the secret service

Now the committee had stumbled across exactly what they were

looking for, a way to prove the presidents innocence of guilt. The

tapes of the meeting s between Dean and Nixon were lying some where in

the White House. These tapes would show which of these men were lying

and if the president of the united States had been involved in a

criminal conspiracy. Although when the senate asked him for the tapes

On July 17, 1973 the Senate Committee went directly to the

president about their request. Congress wanted the tapes of all the

important meetings. President Nixon refused. The Committee decided

to subpoena the tapes that afternoon. (Westerfled 45) On the same day,

July 17, 1973, special Prosecutor Archibald Cox had also subpoenaed

the tapes. He declared that they were significant for the grand

jury’s criminal investigation. This was the first time anyone had

ever subpoenaed the president of the United States, and Nixon has two

subpoenas in one day. Although the White House claimed that neither

Congress nor the special prosecutor had the right to demand evidence

from the executive branch and refused to obey. (Westerfled 45)

This started a powerful struggle. The Senate Committee wondered

if they could find the president in contempt of congress which would

be a serious legal charge. But they didn’t know who would be a

serious legal charge. But they didn’t know who would arrest him since

the president controlled the Department of Justice, the FBI, and the

Armed Forces. The committee had to think quick and come up with

another way to get the tapes. Cox and the grand jury was going to sue

for the tapes in federal court. The committee decided to follow the

special prosecutor’s lead. (Westerfled 43) Both lawsuits went to Judge

John Sirca, the same judge who presided the trials of the Watergate

burglars. Judge Sirca charged the president to turn over the tapes to

the special prosecutor. When the White House Appealed the decision

the case went to the Federal Court of appeals. (Westerfled 43)

Another scandal in the White House shocked the nation. The Department

of Justice announced that they had been investigating Vice President

Spiro T. Anew for taking large bribes in return for government

contracts. He then resigned from office October 10, 1973. (Westerfled

On October 15, 1973 the court of appeals sustained Judge Sirca’s

ruling and demanded that the president give the subpoenaed tapes to

the Special Prosecutor, Archibald Cox. Nixon ordered Cox not to

subpoena any more tapes, although Cox said he would do so. Cox also

told him that if he refused he would find him in contempt of the

court. (Westerfled 45) Nixon was beyond furious. Cox was a employee

of the executive branch and questioning the authority of the

president. Nixon ordered Richardson’s deputy attorney general William

D. Ruckelshavs to fire Cox. He also refused and was fired. The

third-ranking Justice Department official, Solicitor General Robert H.

Bork, was now acting as Attorney General. He agreed to fire Cox.

This event was called the “ Saturday Massacre.” (Westerfled 48)

The nation raged in anger. So Nixon agreed to hand the tapes

over to Sirca’s court and appoint a new Special Prosecutor. The new

prosecutor was Leon Jaworski. Jaworski was a very well known lawyer

and accepted the offer on the one condition that Nixon could not fire

him. (Westerfled 48-49) As the presidents lawyers were going over the

tapes preparing them for the special prosecutor they made an alarming

discovery. During a conversation between Nixon and Haldman there was

an 18-minute gap. This made the nation lose even more faith in their

On April 11, 1974 Special Prosecutor Jaworski demanded the White

House turn over 69 more tapes. Once again the Supreme Court ruled

that Nixon had to supply the subpoenaed tapes. (Westerfled 51-54)

“ On July 27-30, the House Judiciary Committee, whose public hearings

had disclosed evidence of illegal White house activities, recommended

that Nixon be impeached on three charges: obstruction of Justice,

abuse of presidential power, and trying to impede the impeachment

process by defying committee subpoenas.” (Watergate) Millions of

people watched the committee vote on television. There were

twenty-seven votes for the impeachment and only eleven against it. He

was accused of misuse of his authority and also violating the

constitutional rights of citizens by ordering the FBI and Secret

Services to spy on American citizens. The last thing he was charged

with was refusing to obey congress’s subpoenas. Nixon had broken his

oath to up hold the law. (Watergate)

With the impeachment vote against him, Nixon would have to stand

trial before the U. S. senate. Two-thirds of the senate would have to

vote for impeaching the president. Nixon would be removed from

office. (Westerfled 46) On August 5, 1974 the White House released an

overdue transcript of the tapes. The recording was from June 23,

1972, only a week after the break-in. This tape told how Nixon

ordered Haldeman to tell the CIA to cease the FBI” s investigation of

Watergate. These tapes made it clear that Nixon was involved in the

cover-up from the beginning. (Westerfled 56)

At nine o’clock August 8, 1974 Nixon made his last speech as

president Richard M. Nixon. He only admitted loosing the support he

had from Congress. He said “ I have never been a quitter, to leave

office before my term is complete is abhorrent to ever instinct in my

body. But, as president, I must put the interest of America first.

America needs a full-time president and a full-time Congress.

Therefore, In shall resign the presidency effective at noon tomorrow.”

The next morning Nixon addressed a tearful White House staff.

He then boarded a helicopter and began his journey home to San

Clemente, California. (Westerfled 57) At noon the Vice President,

Gerald R. Ford, was inaugurated. He became the thirty-seventh

president of the United States. He told the American people in his

first speech “ Our long national nightmare is over.” (Westerfled 57)

Bibliography:

—

Bibliography

Gold, Gerald ed. Watergate hearings. New York: Bantam books, 1978.

Westerfled, Scott. Watergate. Englewood Cliffs: Silber Burdett,

1991.

“ Watergate”. Grolier Electronic Publishing. 1992.

The New grolier Multimedia Encyclopedia. Danbury, CT: Grolier

Electronic Publising Inc., 1993.

Microsoft Encarta. Microsoft Corporation: Funk & Wagnalls

Corporation, 1993.