

Impact of the watergate scandal on journalism



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The Watergate scandal caused major confusion in the United States and ended Nixon's Presidency. On June 17, 1972, The DNC Headquarters in Washington, D. C. was broken into. Soon after, five men were arrested and the investigators discovered a connection between the cash that was found on them at the time and the Nixon re-election campaign committee. The Watergate Scandal forever changed the United States Presidency as well as how Americans saw investigative journalism and the role of the press in bringing Nixon's actions to light.

Several major presidential actions happened during the investigation in late 1973, that justified the House to start an impeachment process against Nixon in February 1974. During the impeachment process, the Supreme Court unanimously stated that Nixon was obligated to release the tapes to the public. When the investigators went back to watch the tapes, they discovered the gap, " when the White House handed over some of the tapes, there was an 18-minute gap in one of the tapes" (Luigi par. 15). The gap in the tape proved to the investigators that something happened that was trying to get covered up, especially that the time that was taken out, was the exact time of the break-in. Nixon's Administration had many attempts to sidetrack the investigators during the investigation. There were articles to the House of Representatives, that were approved by the Judiciary Committee, that accused Nixon of obstruction of justice, abuse of power, and disrespecting Congress during his impeachment. With the public knowing that Nixon tried to cover it up what he did, the all political uphold he had was completely gone. Nixon resigned from office on August 9, 1974, " Richard Milhous Nixon became the first-ever American president to resign" (Luigi par.

16), he would have left office anyway, either by getting impeached by the House or removed by trial. Two phones in the headquarters' offices were wiretapped, " The five arrested men had connections to President Richard Nixon's re-election campaign and were caught attempting to wiretap telephones and trying to steal classified documents" (Luigi par. 5). After midnight on June 17, 1972, security noticed that something looked off, till he realized that tape covering the latches on some of the complex's doors, which allowed the doors to stay unlocked. Nixons and his organization did everything they could to not let the scandal get out to the public so it couldn't ruin his re-election.

The Watergate Scandal was one of the most important stories journalists have ever covered. The two journalists that worked on the case were Bob Woodward and Carl Bernstein were essentially the only people that knew all the details of the scandal and what actually happened. Woodward and Bernstein, " played a key role in helping bring down President Richard Nixon, who resigned in August 1974" (Times par. 3) they did all the research that established the facts. The Post put the best of the best on the case, so they assigned the best pair they had, " the pair was assigned to cover the June 17, 1972, break-in at the Democratic headquarters inside the Watergate" (Times par. 2). One of investigative journalists' most public and popular cases' was the Watergate Scandal, that really showed people how the relationship of the people, government, and press is totally different. The type of reporting that was needed to cover this case was very intense and very specific, " Watergate marked the birth of a different kind of reporting -- more aggressive and much less respectful of the establishment" (Times par.

1), all of the journalists' information had to be accurate and correct at all times. The scandal not only concerned the confidence in the government, but also influenced a whole new generation of journalists and the media itself. The public and news reporters had to be more careful in how they put out information, especially about the President, it is a very opinionated topic and they have to stay the most neutral to the public. Causing the government to make government meetings and records more accessible to the public so there couldn't be any more cases like this happen again . The case was so well-known and so important that " an entire generation went into journalism because of the two men " (Times par. 3), people want to be the first to know things, and to be that type of person they had to get into investigative journalism.

Although the media was not the reason for the impeachment they had apart in it, journalists had the first suspicion that something was going on in the White House. It was only known that one thing happened until the investigations came out and found out that, " the scandal was not one big incident, but rather it was a collection of incidents revolving around the above-mentioned break-in"(Luigi par. 4). Most of the public couldn't completely understand the scandal and what all went down, because the reports out there, weren't all factual. The people that wanted to be there and wanted to be able to have all the evidence possible, would do anything to get that information, " ' I worked the police beat all night," Woodward says, " and then I'd go home - I had an apartment five blocks from the Post. I'd show up in the newsroom around 10 or 11 and work all day too. People complained I was working too hard' "(Perry par. 10). A few days after the

break-in it was released that the burglars were given thousands of dollars by Nixon to not say anything, " Nixon raised " hush money" to stop FBI investigations as well as destroying evidence and firing staff members that would not cooperate" (Luigi par. 6). It was then known that the reports put out by the people that were there were the most true and since there is so much competition in the media industry there is always information about everything world wide.

On June 17, 1972, the Watergate Scandal occurred, causing President Nixon to be impeached on May 9, 1974, which has changed Presidency, investigative journalism, and the importance of the press since then. The first resignation of a President in history caused many people nervous about how much authority the President has and if he/she is using it in the right way. Ever since the Watergate Scandal surfaced, people started to wonder what is actually going on in our White House and what our President and their Administration are doing. Now, people have to be very considerate in who they choose to be the President, and who has the leadership and power over our country.

Works Cited

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