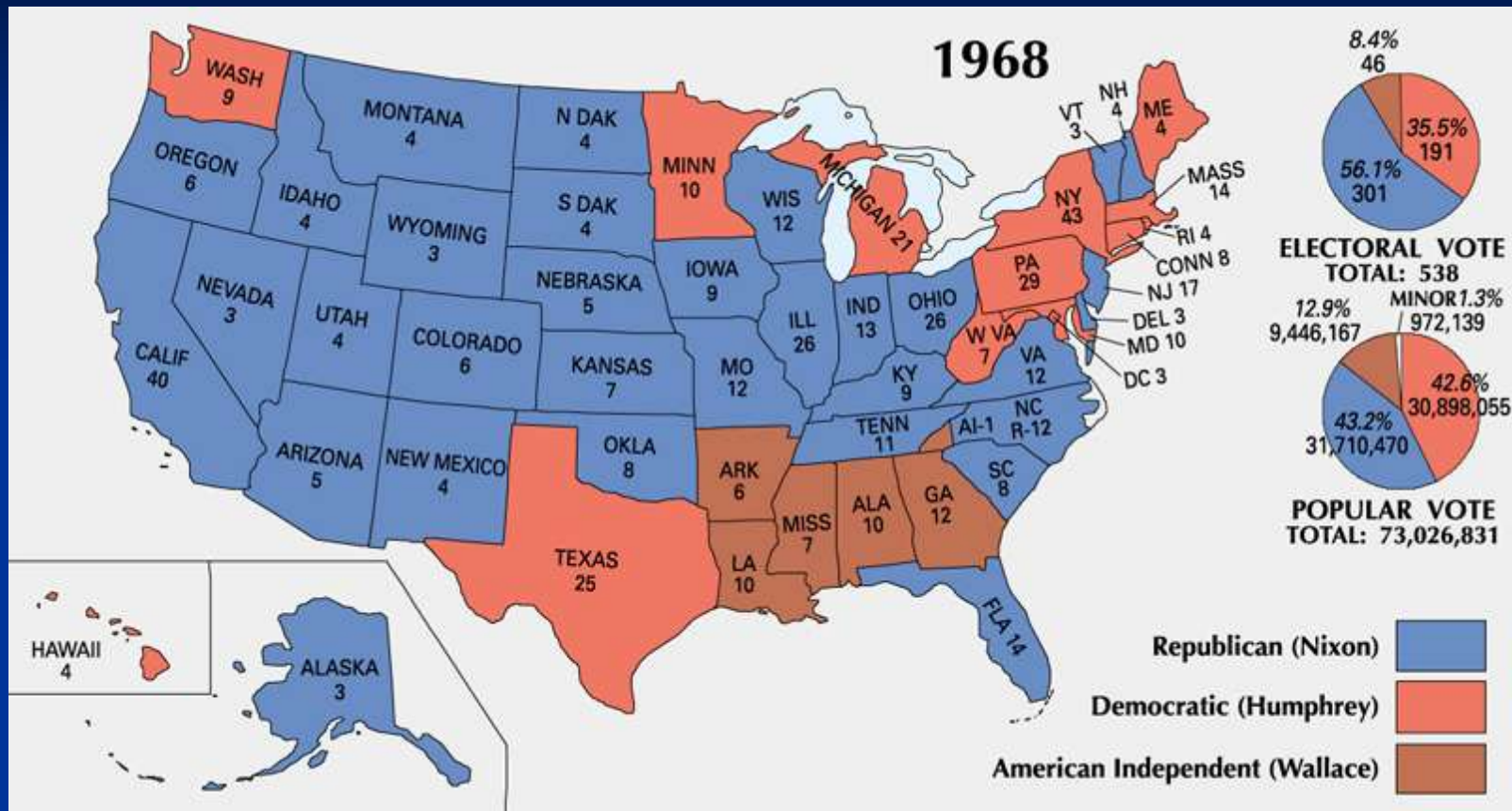


# Nixon and Watergate

# The Election of 1968



- Richard Nixon only narrowly won the 1968 election, but the combined total of popular votes for Nixon and Wallace indicated a shift to the right in American politics.
- The 1960's began as an era of optimism and possibility and ended in disunity and distrust.
- The Vietnam war and a series of assassinations and crises eroded public trust in government and produced a backlash against liberal movements and the Democratic party.

# The Election of 1968



- Nixon campaigned as a champion of the "silent majority," the hardworking Americans who paid taxes, did not demonstrate, and desired a restoration of "law and order."
- He vowed to restore respect for the rule of law, reconstitute the stature of America, dispose of ineffectual social programs, and provide strong leadership to end the turmoil of the 1960's.

# Daniel Ellsberg and the Pentagon Papers

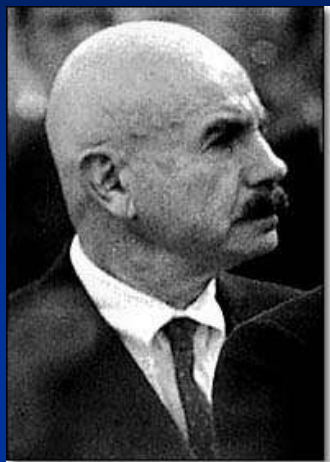


- Daniel Ellsberg was an employee of the Defense Department who leaked a classified assessment of the Vietnam War in 1971.
- The 7,000 page document came to be known as the Pentagon Papers.
- They cast doubt on the justification for entry into the war and revealed that senior government officials had serious misgivings about the war.
- When the *New York Times* and *Washington Post* began to publish the Pentagon Papers, the Nixon Administration sued them.
- The Supreme Court ruled that the papers could continue to publish the documents.

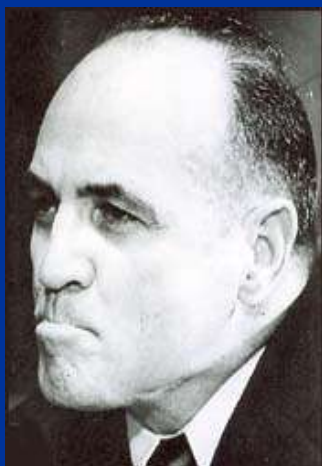
# The White House Plumbers



Howard Hunt



G. Gordon Liddy



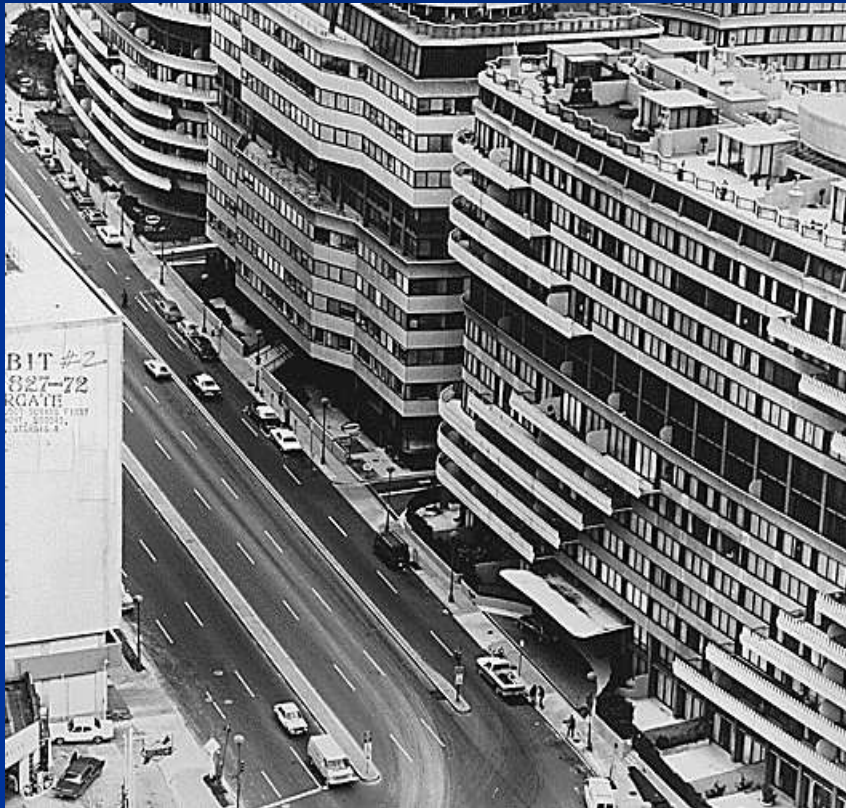
James McCord



Chuck Colson

- After the release of the Pentagon Papers, the White House created a unit to ensure internal security.
- This unit was called the Plumbers because they stopped leaks.
- In 1971 they burglarized the office of Daniel Ellsberg's psychiatrist, seeking material to discredit him.
- It was later revealed that Nixon's domestic advisor John Ehrlichman knew of and approved the plan.

# The Watergate Break-in



- When initial polls showed Nixon in the Election of 1972, the Plumbers turned their activities to political espionage.
- On 17 June 1972, 5 men were arrested while attempting to bug the headquarters of the Democratic Party inside the Watergate building in Washington D.C.
- One of the men arrested, James McCord, was the head of security for the Republican Party.
- The Nixon campaign denied any involvement.

# Woodward, Bernstein and the *Washington Post*



- Watergate came to public attention largely through the work of Bob Woodward and Carl Bernstein, investigative reporters from the *Washington Post*.
- Despite enormous political pressure, *Post* editor Ben Bradlee, publisher Katherine Graham, Woodward and Bernstein, aided by an enigmatic source nicknamed “Deepthroat” kept the story in the public consciousness until Nixon’s resignation.

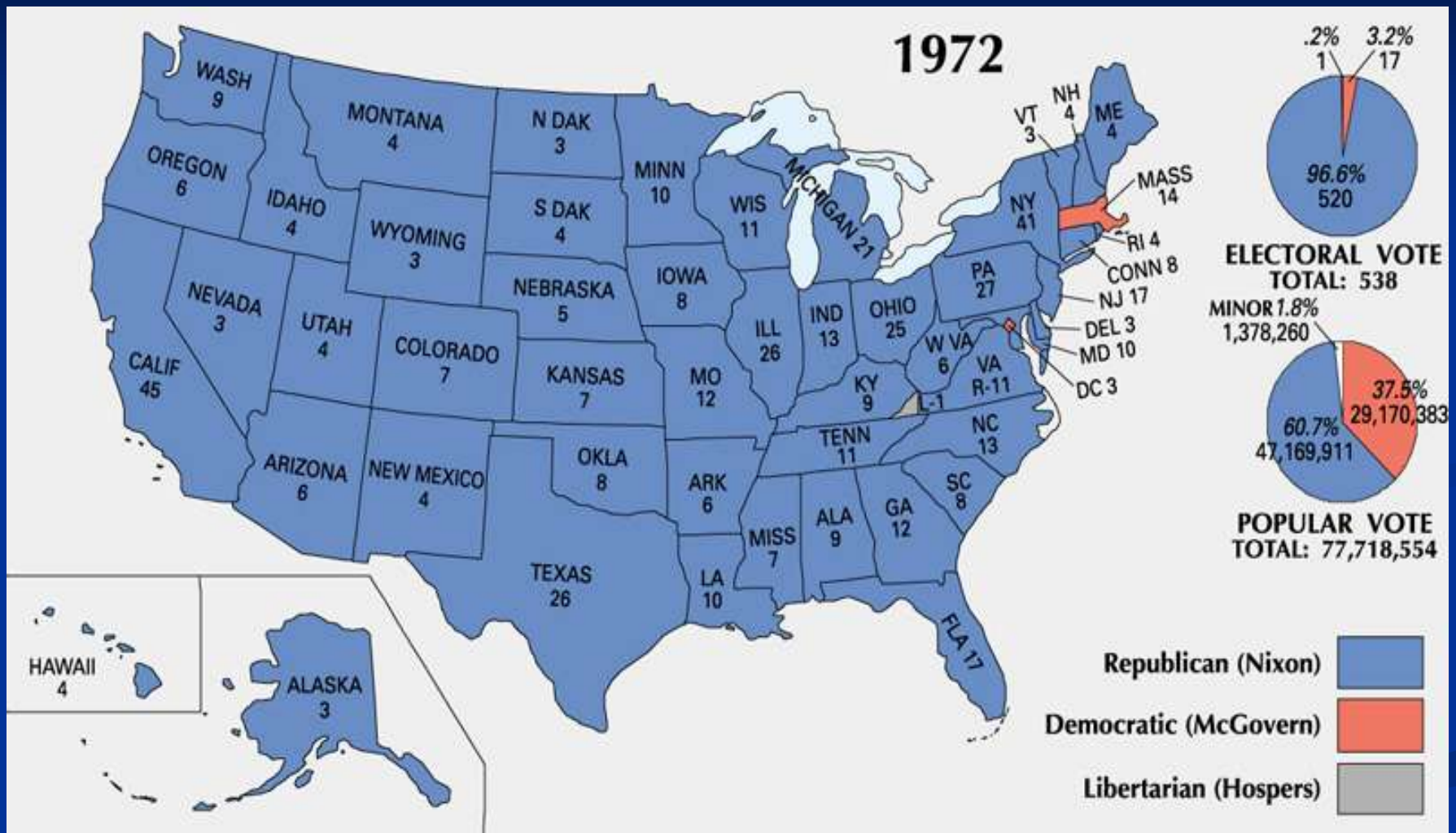
# Watergate Enters the Nixon Campaign



- The break-in was eventually tied to the Nixon reelection campaign through a \$25,000 check from a Republican donor that was laundered through a Mexican bank and deposited in the account of Watergate burglar Bernard Barker.
- Later it was discovered that Former Attorney General John Mitchell, head of Nixon's "Committee to Re-Elect the President," (CREEP) controlled a secret fund for political espionage.
- Mitchell would later go to prison for his role in the scandal



# The Election of 1972



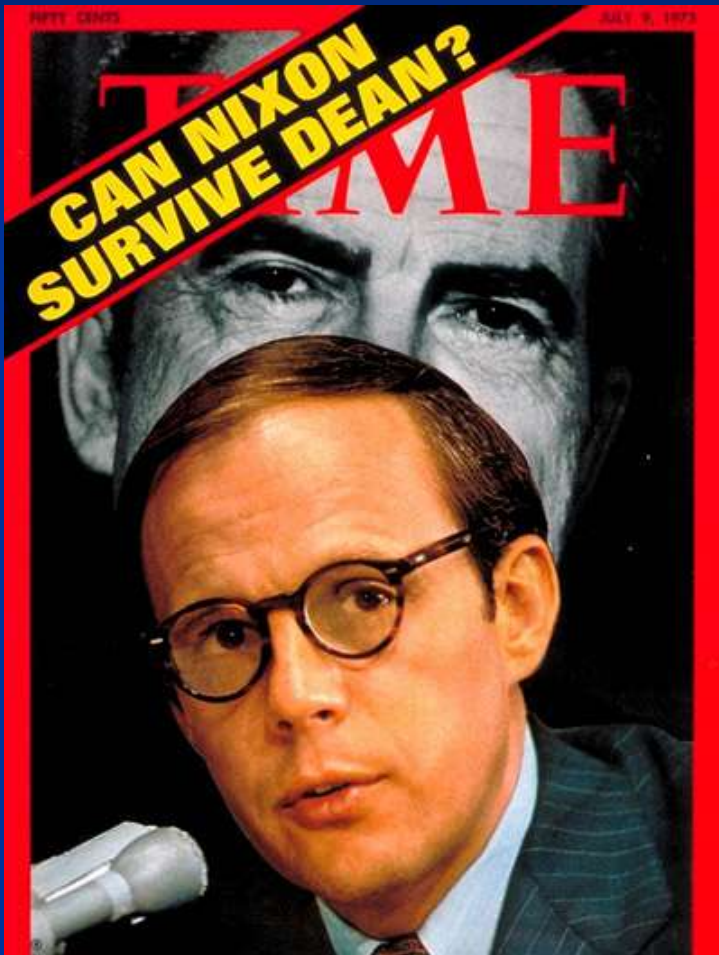
- Despite the growing stain of Watergate, which had not yet reached the President, Nixon won by the largest margin in history to that point.

# The Watergate Investigations: Judge John Sirica



- Watergate came to be investigated by a Special Prosecutor, a Senate committee, and by the judge in the original break-in case.
- Judge Sirica refused to believe that the burglars had acted alone.
- In March 1973, defendant James W. McCord sent a letter to Sirica confirming that it was a conspiracy.
- Sirica's investigation transformed Watergate from the story of a "third-rate burglary" to a scandal reaching the highest points in government.

# Senate Investigation and the Oval Office Tapes



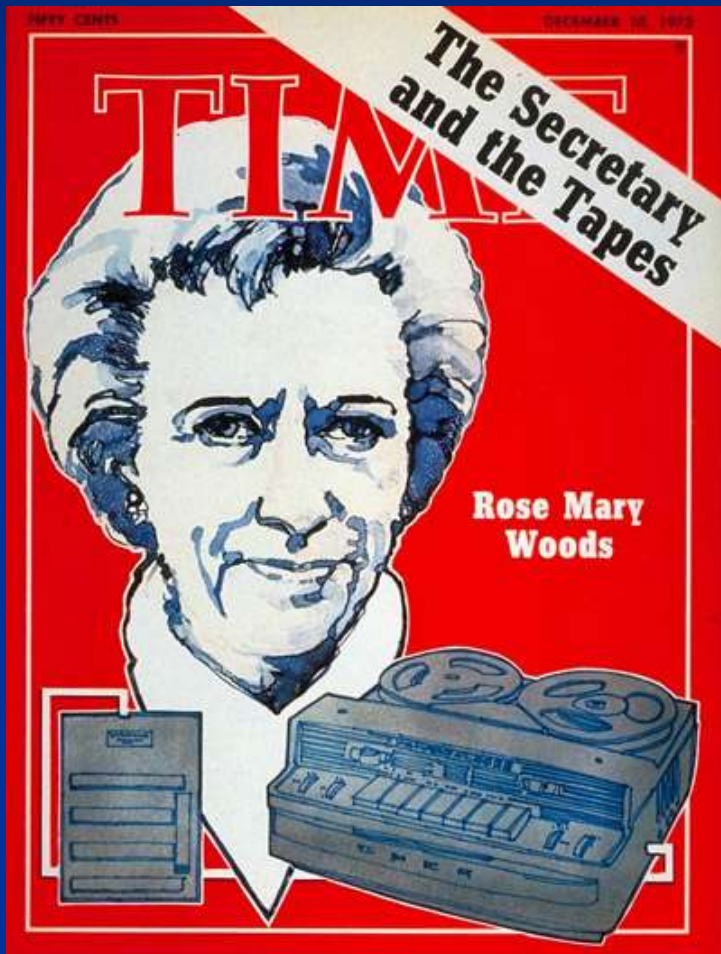
- The Senate began hearings into Watergate in May 1973.
- The hearings were televised in their entirety.
- They focused on when the President knew of the break-in.
- In June 1973, former White House legal counsel John Dean delivered devastating testimony that implicated Nixon from the earliest days of Watergate.

# Senate Investigation and the Oval Office Tapes



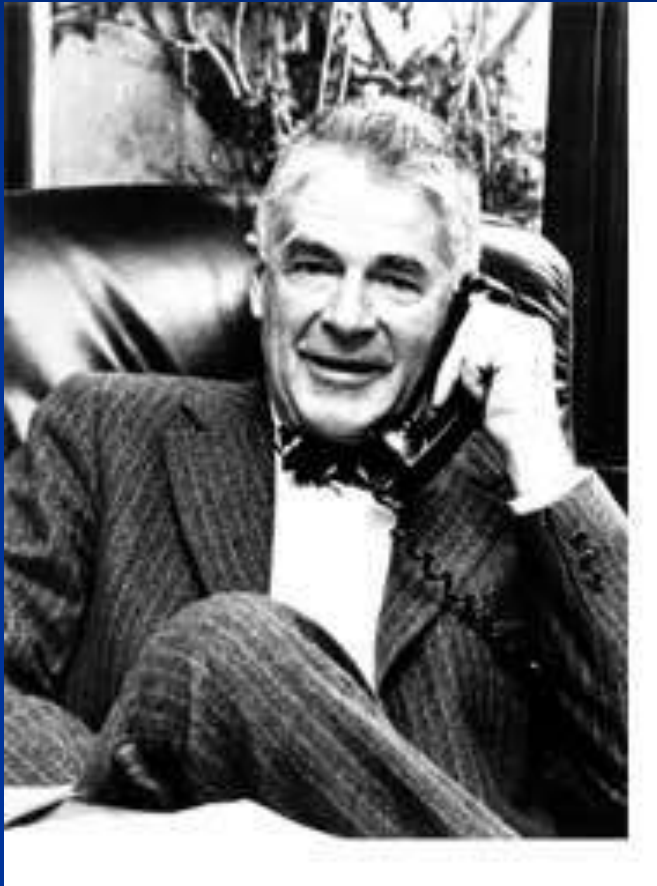
- The Administration was eager to discredit Dean and his testimony so it began to release factual challenges to his account.
- When former White House aide Alexander Butterfield was asked about the source of the White House information, he revealed the existence of an automatic taping system that Nixon had secretly installed in the Oval Office.
- These tapes would become the focus of the investigation.

# The Smoking Gun Tapes



- When the Supreme Court forced Nixon to surrender the tapes.
- Nixon was implicated from the earliest days of the cover-up:
  - authorizing the payment of hush money
  - attempting to use the CIA to interfere with the FBI investigation.
- One tape has an 18 ½ minute gap.
- Nixon's secretary Rosemary Woods demonstrated how she could have inadvertently erased the tape, but no one bought it.
- "The smoking gun tapes," were released in August 1974, just after the House Judiciary Committee approved Articles of Impeachment against Nixon.

# The Saturday Night Massacre



Archibald Cox

- The Administration reached an agreement with the Senate Watergate Committee that its Chairman would be allowed to listen to tapes and provide a transcript to the Committee and to Special Prosecutor Archibald Cox.
- The deal broke down when Cox refused to accept the transcripts in place of the tapes.
- Since the Special Prosecutor is an employee of the Justice Department, Nixon ordered Attorney General Elliot Richardson to fire Cox.

# The Saturday Night Massacre



Robert Bork

- When Richardson refused, he was fired.
- Nixon ordered Deputy Attorney General William D. Ruckelshaus to fire Cox .
- When he refused, he was fired.
- Nixon then ordered Solicitor General Robert Bork (who was later nominated for the Supreme Court by Reagan) to fire Cox and he complied.
- The *Washington Post* reported on the “Saturday Night Massacre.”

# Nixon Resigns



- On 27 July 1974, the House Judiciary Committee approved Articles of Impeachment against Nixon.
- The House was to vote on the matter soon.
- Nixon conceded that impeachment in the House was likely, but he believed that the Senate vote to remove him would fail.
- On 5 August 1974, when the “smoking gun tape” became public, a delegation from the Republican National Committee told Nixon that he would not survive the vote in the Senate.
- On 9 August 1974, Richard Nixon became the first American president to resign.



# Aftermath



Ford announcing the pardon

- More than 30 government officials went to prison for their role in Watergate.
- Richard Nixon was not one of them.
- In September 1974, President Gerald Ford gave Nixon a full pardon.
- Woodward and Bernstein won the Pulitzer Prize.
- They collaborated on 2 books, *All the President's Men* and *The Final Days*.
- In 1976 *All the President's Men* was adapted into an Oscar winning film.
- The identity of Deepthroat was kept secret until W. Mark Felt unmasked himself in 2005.



## Citations

Slide 2: [http://www.teachersparadise.com/ency/en/media/3/38/electoralcollege1968\\_large.png](http://www.teachersparadise.com/ency/en/media/3/38/electoralcollege1968_large.png)

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