



FROST/NIXON

by **PETER MORGAN**
directed by **LOUIS CONTEY**

STUDY GUIDE

prepared by
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— STUDY GUIDE —

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About the Playwright: Peter Morgan

Peter Morgan was born April 10, 1963, in London, England. He holds a degree in fine arts from the University of Leeds. Morgan is the author of numerous screenplays. With David Frears he has written *The Deal* and *The Queen*. For television, he wrote, *Mickey Love*, *The Jury* and *Longford*. For film, wrote *Martha*, *Meet Frank*, *Daniel and Laurence*; *The Last King of Scotland*; and the *Other Boleyn Girl*. *Frost/Nixon* was his first



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stage play; he also wrote the screenplay for the film. He was nominated for an Academy Award for the screenplays of *Frost/Nixon* and *The Queen*. He also has been nominated for numerous other screenwriting awards. He won British Academy of Film and Television Arts awards for the movie *The Last King of Scotland* and the television program *Longford*. He won a Golden Globe award for *The Queen*. He wrote the screenplay for the upcoming *Hereafter* and co-wrote the screenplay for the soon-to-be-filmed *Tinker, Tailor, Soldier, Spy* with John le Carré, the novel's author.

“It will be a sort of intellectual ‘Rocky.’”

— Peter Morgan, describing to David Frost his idea for a play about Frost's interviews with former President Richard Nixon

About the Play: Production History

Frost/Nixon premiered at the Donmar Warehouse, London, in August 2006. It moved to Broadway in 2007. Both productions starred Frank Langella as former president Richard Nixon and Michael Sheen as broadcaster David Frost. The actors reprised their roles for the film, which was released in December 2008 and directed by Ron Howard. A national tour starring Stacy Keach as Nixon and Alan Cox as Frost played in Los Angeles, Sacramento, Seattle, Cincinnati, Houston, Boston, Dallas and Washington, D.C. Productions also have been staged in Memphis and Boca Raton, Fla.

About the People: Richard Nixon



Shelves have been dedicated to books on Richard Milhous Nixon and his presidency. His life and presidency are marked by great contrasts. He rose in politics by capitalizing on fears of communism, yet his great foreign-policy successes as president were opening relations with the People's Republic of China and the Soviet Union during the Cold War. However, these successes are overshadowed by his abuses of presidential power and the scandal relating to the break-in at the Democratic National Committee headquarters in the Watergate building by five men on the Committee to Re-elect the President. Nixon resigned during the scandal; he was the first president to resign from office. His reputation never fully recovered.

Nixon was born Jan. 9, 1913, in Yorba Linda, Calif. He grew up in a working-class family and had four brothers: Harold, Francis, Arthur and Edward. His father, Frank, was demanding, and his mother, Hannah Milhous, was a self-controlled Quaker. His early life was marked by the deaths two of his brothers: Nixon was 12 when Arthur died at age 7, to tubercular encephalitis, and he was 20 when his eldest brother, Harold, died at age 23, from tuberculosis. His mother claimed that his guilt that he was alive stirred in Nixon the desire to make his parents proud.

The family was often in a financially precarious situation during the Great Depression. His father owned and operated a grocery store and his mother was a housewife. Though Nixon excelled in school, he was a loner. He lost his campaign to be senior class president of his high school. He had scholarships to Yale and Harvard Universities but enrolled at nearby Whittier College because of the family's finances. He was a debater, actor and football player. When the college's exclusive fraternity, the Franklin Society, denied him admission, he created the Orthogonians as a club for working-class students. He would carry this resentment of the privileged the rest of his life. After graduating from Whittier in 1934, he went to the Duke University School of Law and became the Duke Bar Association president. Although he graduated third in his class in 1937, he was rejected by East Coast law firms and went to work at a law firm in Whittier.

At this time, he began pursuing Thelma Catherine Ryan, who was better known as Pat, a nickname her father had given her. Pat was born March 16, 1912 in Ely, Nevada. Like Nixon, her family had suffered during the depression. It was a two-and-a-half year courtship, in which he often would drive her to Los Angeles and wait while she was on dates with other men. They married June 21, 1940. However, the pressures of political life seemed to take their toll on the marriage, and many noted

that Nixon was not publicly affectionate with his wife. They had two daughters: Patricia (Tricia), born Feb. 21, 1946, and Julie born July 5, 1948. Julie married Dwight David Eisenhower II, a grandson of former President Dwight D. Eisenhower, in 1968. Tricia married Edward Finch Cox in the White House rose garden in 1971.

When the Republicans asked Nixon to run for the U.S. House of Representatives in 1946, he seized on the growing fear of Communism as part of his campaign against the incumbent Democrat, Jeremiah "Jerry" Voorhis. This included an ugly campaign in which Nixon's campaign distributed flyers distorting Voorhis' record as being pro-Communist. The tactics were successful, and, as the freshman Congressman from California, he sat on the House Committee on Un-American Activities. As part of the HUAC, as the committee was known, he made a name with his vigorous pursuit of Alger Hiss, a lawyer and civil servant accused of spying for the Communists. After two contentious trials, Hiss was found guilty of perjury and sentenced to five years in prison. In his 1950 campaign for the U.S. Senate, the Nixon campaign similarly painted his Democratic opponent, Helen Gagahan Douglas, as soft on Communism. Later analysis showed the campaign distorted her voting record, but Nixon already had won the election.

In 1952, Nixon was tapped to be Dwight Eisenhower's vice-presidential running mate. He was almost dropped from the ticket when he was accused of having a private campaign fund for personal use. Nixon, who would often circumvent the press by addressing the public directly, gave a televised speech on Sept. 23 to try to rehabilitate his image by revealing his financial circumstances. He listed the family debts and income but stated that the one item he had been given, which he intended to keep, was the black and white cocker spaniel which his daughter Tricia had named Checkers. The speech came to be known as the Checkers speech and it succeeded in bringing him back from the brink of a scandal and he remained on the ticket. This event marked the beginning of the, at best, uneasy and, at worst, outright contentious relationship he would have with the press.

After two terms as vice president, Nixon ran against Massachusetts Sen. John F. Kennedy for the office of president. In 1960, they participated in the first televised presidential debates. Nixon, who refused to wear make up, looked awkward on camera when compared to Kennedy. Those who listened to the radio debate thought Nixon won, while those who watched the debate on television thought Kennedy won. It was the beginning of a new era for the role television would play in presidential politics. Though Kennedy was elected by only approximately 100,000 votes, Nixon refused to press for a recount lest he look like a sore loser.

In 1962, Nixon ran for governor of California against Pat Brown and lost. It seemed to be the end of his political career, and he became a Wall Street lawyer. He did not run against President Lyndon Johnson in 1964, instead he campaigned for Republican candidates nationwide. By the time he announced his candidacy for

president in 1968, most Republican candidates owed him a favor, and he won the nomination. Nixon portrayed himself as the candidate of stability. The Vietnam War was becoming increasingly unpopular; the Rev. Martin Luther King, Jr., and Robert Kennedy were assassinated in April and June, respectively; race riots in the South were escalating. He beat Democratic candidate Hubert Humphrey by approximately 500,000 votes.

In 1972, running against Sen. George McGovern of South Dakota, Nixon was re-elected by a landslide. But his re-election success was to be short-lived as the Watergate cover-up began to unravel.

Nixon's domestic policy is not considered his major achievement as president, but there were several major domestic issues in which he was influential: His administration set up biracial state committees to implement school desegregation in the South. He sent the Clean Air Act of 1970 to Congress. He created the Department of Natural Resources and the Environmental Protection Agency. He created the Presidential Task Force on Women's Rights. He also asked the Justice Department to try gender discrimination suits under Title VII of the Civil Rights Act.

Nixon's foreign policy is best known for opening relations with the People's Republic of China and signing the Strategic Arms Limitation Treaty (SALT), both in 1972. SALT was the first pact to limit nuclear weapons with the Soviet Union. He also continued the ultimate exit of the United States from the Vietnam War, but even that was not without controversy because of Nixon's decision to bomb Cambodia.

Despite the administration's numerous policy successes, Nixon's presidency always will be marred by the events surrounding the cover-up of the June 17, 1972, break-in of the Democratic National Committee headquarters.

In May 1969, *The New York Times* published an article revealing secret bombings in Cambodia. Nixon was furious and, trying to track the source of the leaks, ordered more than a dozen FBI wiretaps. He believed more leaks would threaten his secret diplomatic negotiations with China, the Soviet Union and peace talks with North Vietnam.

In 1971, Daniel Ellsberg, a former U.S. Marine and military analyst, gave the *New York Times* a report titled "United States-Vietnam Relations, 1945-1967," which had been commissioned by Robert McNamara, the former secretary of defense. The paper ran a series of articles based on the report, further eroding support for the increasingly unpopular war. Though the leak of these "Pentagon Papers," as they were called, reflected on the Kennedy and Johnson administrations, Nixon—always leery of the press—became even more paranoid about information leaks to the press. In response to these fears a White House unit was created to stop further leaks. "The Plumbers Unit," as this special investigative unit came to be known, broke into the

office of Ellsberg's psychiatrist, looking for information to discredit Ellsberg. The Plumbers disbanded shortly thereafter, but many members would work for the Committee to Re-elect the President and be involved in the Watergate break-in.

There is no evidence that Nixon authorized the break-in of the Democratic committee's offices. However, six days after the five men were arrested he approved Chief of Staff H.R. Haldeman's plan to make it appear to FBI investigators that the break-in had been authorized by the CIA, and to have the CIA pressure the FBI to stop its investigation. Nixon was afraid that if the public learned anyone in the administration was linked to the break-in, he would lose the election. The president's personal attorney, Herbert Kalmbach, and other campaign advisers paid hush money to the Watergate burglars.

The details of Watergate unraveled in newspapers, particularly *The Washington Post*, and on national television during the Senate Watergate hearings. On March 23, 1973, James McCord Jr., one of the five Watergate burglars and an electronics expert and a former CIA agent, implicated the White House in the cover-up. Over several days of testimony in April, John Dean, the White House counsel, revealed details of the burglary of Ellsberg's psychiatrist's office, which had not yet been linked to Watergate. On July 16, Alexander Butterfield, Nixon's deputy assistant, revealed that the Oval Office had a taping system. On July 23, special prosecutor Archibald Cox subpoenaed the tapes. Two days later, Nixon refused to surrender them. On April 29, 1974, Nixon addressed the nation on television and offered to release edited transcripts of the tapes, but he misjudged the American public, which was incensed over the scandal. On July 24, the U.S. Supreme Court ordered Nixon to turn over the tapes. Later that month, the House Judiciary Committee passed three articles of impeachment, including obstruction of justice, abuse of power and violating his presidential oath. Nixon resigned on Aug. 8, 1974, rather than face impeachment proceedings in Congress.

Pat Nixon died on June 23, 1993, of lung cancer; a lifelong smoker, she never permitted anyone to photograph her smoking. Richard Nixon died on April 22, 1994, four days after suffering a stroke.

"I have never been a quitter. To leave office before my term is completed is abhorrent to every instinct in my body, but as president, I must put the interest of America first."

—Richard Nixon's resignation speech, Aug. 8, 1974

About the People: David Frost

David Paradine Frost was born April 7, 1939, in Tenterden, England. He was the only son of a poor Methodist minister, the Rev. W.J. Paradine Frost, and his wife,



Mona, born after two sisters. He went to Gillingham Preparatory School, then Wellingborough Grammar School, both state-funded schools. He was religious and preached occasionally for his father and at other Methodist churches. He was an avid football and cricket player; he regularly played with staff and at charity events after he became famous. He was awarded a scholarship to Gonville and Caius College at Cambridge University. While at Cambridge, Frost was more active in extracurricular activities than in his studies. He was editor of the literary magazine *Granta* and part of the comedy group Footlights comedy troupe.

As Footlights had for many of its members, Frost's work with the group helped launch him into television. He worked for ITV regionally before 1962, when he became the host of the satiric television program *That Was The Week That Was* on BBC. Though the BBC pulled the contentious but successful show less than a year later, *TW3*, as it was known, launched Frost's career.

He then hosted a series of television programs, including the satiric *The Frost Report* (which featured a young John Cleese, later a member of *Monty Python's Flying Circus*) and *The Frost Programme*, where he became known as an interviewer of famous and sometimes controversial individuals. He also had television programs in the United States and Australia. He won two Emmys for the *David Frost Show*, in 1970 and 1971, and the BAFTA Fellowship. Between 1993 and 2005, he had a BBC current-events program called *Breakfast with Frost*.

Frost is not just a television interviewer, though: He is an author, speaker television and film producer and co-founder of two British television networks, LWT and TV-am.

In addition to Richard Nixon, Frost has interviewed six other presidents: Gerald Ford, Jimmy Carter, Ronald Reagan, George H.W. Bush, Bill Clinton and George W. Bush. He also has interviewed the eight most recent British prime ministers: Harold Wilson, Edward Heath, James Callaghan, Margaret Thatcher, John Major, Tony Blair and both Gordon Brown and David Cameron when they were still Members of Parliament.

In the U.S., Frost remains best known for his 1977 interviews of former President Nixon. At the time of the interviews, he was perhaps best known as a talk-show host and not thought of as a serious journalist. However, he had done substantive interviews with a variety of world and American political figures. For example, he interviewed the 1968 presidential candidates for American television: Robert Kennedy, Richard Nixon and George Wallace. However, questions he put to the candidates such as "What is a distinguishing American characteristic?" and "What is the root of the American malaise?" may not have been perceived as sufficiently hard-hitting.

In his personal life, Frost was known for liaisons with beautiful and famous women. He also is known for remaining friendly with past girlfriends. He dated actress Janette Scott, who ended her relationship with Frost to marry singer Mel Tormé; singer and actress Diahnn Carroll; and socialite Caroline Cushing. He married actress Lynne Frederick, the widow of Peter Sellers, in 1981; they divorced the next year. He married Lady Carina Fitzalan-Howard on March 19, 1983; they have three sons.

He was appointed to the Order of the British Empire in 1970. He was knighted in 1993, becoming Sir David Frost.

Other Players



John Birt was born December 10, 1944, in Liverpool, England. He graduated from St. Catherine's College, University of Oxford, after which he joined the independent British television network ITV. He produced the Frost/Nixon interviews for his friend and colleague David Frost. In 1982, he became producer of London Weekend Television (LWT) and in 1987 was appointed Deputy Director General of the BBC. His tenure at the BBC was not without controversy, as he cut staff and reorganized. He retired in 2000. He was an adviser to Tony Blair between 2001-2005. He was invested as a knight in 1998.

John "Jack" Vincent Brennan was born Aug. 16, 1937. He graduated from Providence College in Rhode Island in 1959. A Marine, he saw combat in Vietnam and was awarded a Bronze Star and the Purple Heart after the battle for Khe Sanh. He became an aide to President Nixon in 1968. He accompanied Nixon on his historic visit to the People's Republic of China in 1972, and he was on the helicopter that took the Nixon family to San Clemente after Nixon's resignation. Brennan was Nixon's chief of staff during the time of the

Frost/Nixon interviews. He retired as a Marine colonel. He was in contact with Peter Morgan about the script. He also spoke with Kevin Bacon, who played him in the film, and visited the film set.



Caroline Cushing was born in Ascot but attended Swiss boarding schools. She was the former wife of socialite Howard Cushing and was instrumental in securing financial backers for the Frost/Nixon interviews — she had been dating Frost for several years at the time of the interviews. She described her first date with Frost as flying to Zaire for the George Foreman-Muhammad Ali fight now known as “The Rumble in the Jungle,” where Frost was going to as host of the fight. Their relationship ended after the interviews and Cushing remained in California. In Los Angeles, she wrote for the *Herald Examiner*. She later worked as editor of a variety of periodicals including *Vanity Fair*, *The New Yorker* and *Talk Magazine*. She is the co-founder of C4 Consulting, a marketing and media relations firm. She remains good friends with Frost and his wife. She is now married to Bill Graham, the son of the late Katherine Graham, publisher of *The Washington Post*.

Evonne Goolagong was born July 31, 1951, in Griffith, New South Wales, Australia. The Australian Aboriginal tennis player won the Australian open four consecutive years between 1974 and 1977. She won Wimbledon first in 1971 and again in 1980 after she had become a mother. She won the French Open in 1971. The U.S. Open was the only title that eluded her. She was inducted into the International Tennis Hall of Fame in 1988, Australian Tennis Hall of Fame in 1994, and was named a Sport Australia Hall of Fame Legend. She married amateur tennis player and English businessman Roger Cawley, a former British Junior Champion tennis player, on June 20, 1975. Her family name means “tall trees standing by still water.” She has two daughters, Kelly Inalla and Morgan Kiema.



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Irving Paul “Swiftly” Lazar was the agent who represented Nixon after he left the White House; he negotiated the financial terms of the Frost/Nixon interviews and Nixon’s memoirs. Five-foot, 3-inches tall and bald, his list of clients included George Kaufmann, Ernest Hemingway, Truman Capote, Noel Coward, Clifford Odets, Tennessee Williams, Neil Simon, Lillian Hellman, Ira Gershwin, Johnny Mercer, George Cukor, Edna Ferber and Vladimir Nabokov. He sold *The Sound of Music* to 20th Century Fox

for Richard Rogers for \$1,250,000. He was born in 1908 in Stamford, Conn., to German Jewish immigrants. The family moved to Brooklyn and he grew up the eldest of five boys in a tenement in the Brownsville neighborhood. Lazar said he learned his sparring skills in the rough neighborhood. He worked as an agent for MCA and served as an administrative assistant in the Army Air Corp. For over 30 years he hosted a star-studded Oscar night party in Hollywood. He died of kidney failure at age 86 on December 31, 1993.



James Reston, Jr., was born in 1941 in New York City and raised in Washington, D.C. He attended the University of North Carolina in Chapel Hill and received a bachelor's degree in philosophy. He was an assistant to U.S. Secretary of the Interior Stewart Udall from 1964-1965 and in the U.S. Army from 1965-1968. His father, who was a journalist at *The New York Times*, was on President Richard Nixon's enemies list. He is married and has three children. A writer and historian, he has written numerous books and articles for national magazines. In 1976, when David Frost asked him to join his team preparing for the Nixon interviews, Reston was working on a novel and teaching creative writing at the U. of N.C. His book *The Conviction of Richard Nixon: The Untold Story of the Frost/Nixon*

Interviews is his account of the events surrounding the interviews based on his journals, which were also used by Peter Morgan in writing *Frost/Nixon*.

Born in 1930, **Manolo Sanchez** was a Cuban refugee who, along with his wife Fina, became a Nixon family servant in 1962. The Sanchez couple had been referred to the Nixon's by family friend Bebe Rebozo. In 1968, Nixon sponsored the Sanchezes for U.S. citizenship. Sanchez would offer details about the presidential breakfast, but never substantive information about the president to the press corps. He enjoyed fishing at the president's home in Key Biscayne. In the Fawn Brodie biography, she describes an evening when Nixon took Sanchez to the Lincoln Memorial because he learned Sanchez had never been there. Sanchez remained with Nixon after his departure from the White House.



Robert "Bob" Zelnick was a reporter with a law degree when he was tapped to be part of David Frost's team for the Frost/Nixon



interviews. He had started his career as a freelance journalist in 1967 in Vietnam. His role was to be the “Washington Bureau Chief” in the preparation and organization of materials in preparation for the interviews. He also pretended to be Nixon and provide answers as they practiced questions they thought would be asked the next day. He went on to work at *The Christian Science Monitor*, NPR and then to cover politics ABC news for 21 years. His personal politics became more conservative. He has written a book critical of affirmative action called *Backfire: A Reporter’s Look at Affirmative Action*. He resigned from ABC over details related to his writing of a biography of Al Gore for a conservative publisher, which Zelnick attributed to a liberal media conspiracy in an op-ed piece in *The Wall Street Journal*. He is a professor at Boston University College of Communication.

Getting the Frost/Nixon Interviews On The Air

“The Nixon-Frost interviews, far and away the best piece of journalism to pop before our eyes on the TV screen in a very long time, couldn’t get on any of the networks. Nevertheless the segments have commanded large viewing audiences and been so newsworthy that the networks have been put in the embarrassing position of having to report on the very same material they refused to put on the air ... Frost not only asked the right questions the right way at the right time, but, and this is rare among television magpie news performers, knew when to shut up and listen. You would think, then, CBS with its traditions would have bought the Nixon-Frost program.”

— *Nicholas von Hoffman in The Washington Post*

David Frost had more problems than just succeeding in getting the interview with former President Richard Nixon in 1977. He also had to raise the funds to pay Nixon the unprecedented amount of \$600,000, plus 20 percent of the profit. NBC also had vied for the Nixon interview, offering up to \$400,000 before dropping out of the bidding. However, profit sharing was unheard of for such an interview. To raise the money needed to pay Nixon and produce the series, Frost put together a group of 19 investors; they founded a joint venture with Frost and shared in the series’ profit.

The American networks were understandably upset at being outbid and, in spite of their willingness to pay for interviews, complained about Frost’s checkbook journalism. As a result of the bidding war, none of the major networks wanted to carry the interviews.

To distribute the series of four interviews, Frost worked with Syndicast Services, Inc., to strike barter deals with individual television stations nationwide. The agreement was that the stations would pay nothing to air the interviews but would be required

to air six minutes of commercials already sold by Syndicast and could sell six minutes of local commercials.

“Despite a high demand for advertising time on television this year, there has been no rush by national advertisers to place commercials in David Frost’s forthcoming series of interviews with former President Richard M. Nixon.”

— *Les Brown*, *The New York Times* (February 14, 1977)

Finding companies willing to advertise during the interviews also proved tricky. In the end, national advertisers included Datsun, Radio Shack, Hilton Hotels, Weed Eater and Alpo. Advertising air time was sold for \$125,000 a minute. Some local stations reported difficulty selling their advertising time.

Even selling to stations individually, more than 150 stations carried the interviews, reaching about 92 percent of the American public. According to *The New York Times*, the Watergate program, which aired May 4, 1977, alone drew 45 million American viewers, the largest audience ever for a news interview.

A Newsweek/Gallup survey reported that more than 69 percent of people who saw or heard the interviews thought Nixon was guilty of obstructing justice or other crimes. Plus, 59 percent felt he was covering up some things. However, the poll also found that 28-38 percent felt more sympathetic to Nixon after the interviews.

David Frost: We are seeking advertisers who realize it is history, but it’s controversial history. So we are seeking advertisers with courage, and these people have courage. But we are...

Mike Wallace: Weed Eater has courage?

David Frost: Weed Eater has courage.

— *Excerpt from the Mike Wallace interview of David Frost on CBS’ 60 Minutes about the interviews* (May 1, 1977)

The Interviews

“Richard Nixon has had the last laugh in his long and bitter feud with the press. By selling his story of his presidency and its disastrous end to David Frost and friends he has rejected the news business in favor of show business.”

—*Charles B. Seib in The Washington Post after the Frost/Nixon Interviews were announced*

Beginning March 23, 1977, David Frost sat down and interviewed former President Richard Nixon for 28 hours over 12 days held over four weeks. It was agreed that the interviews would cover domestic and foreign policy, the Watergate break in and subsequent investigation and Nixon the man. These would be edited into four programs. The Watergate segment, which aired May 4, 1977, drew the largest world audience for a news interview. It was watched by 45 million Americans and remains to this day the largest audience for a political interview.

The interviews could not take place in Nixon's home in San Clemente, Calif., because the transmissions from a nearby U.S. Coast Guard station interfered with the film equipment. Instead, they were held in the home of Republicans Martha Lea and Harold Smith, in nearby Dana Point. The couple was compensated for the use of their home. They would leave during the day and receive a call when filming was finished and they could return. The Frost and Nixon teams used the entire home while they were there. For example, Nixon ate by himself in the master bedroom, and the Nixon team prepped in the den. The Smiths still live in house.

The Frost/Nixon interviews were not without controversy. Some questioned whether an Englishman had sufficient understanding of and interest in American politics to be a good interviewer. Although Frost retained complete editorial control, questions also circled about Nixon profiting from the interview. Nixon was paid \$600,000 plus 20 percent of the profit. Frost was criticized for checkbook journalism, though NBC had offered \$300,000 to be able to interview the former president before dropping out of the bidding. To add to the difficulties, none of the major U.S. networks wanted to buy the interviews. Frost had to sell the programs to individual television stations, find financial backers and find half the advertisers.

Media Response to the Frost/Nixon Interviews

The Frost/Nixon Interviews were ground-breaking in many ways. A past president had never sat for 28 hours of interviews and certainly not one as controversial as former President Richard Nixon. In addition, journalists in England and America questioned David Frost's ability to ask substantial questions of Nixon that might reveal anything new. *The New York Times* called Frost a "news entertainer." After the interviews aired, many skeptics changed their view.

Before the Interviews

"Richard Nixon has had the last laugh in his long and bitter feud with the press. By selling his story of his presidency and its disastrous end to David Frost and friends he has rejected the news business in favor of show business."

— *Charles B. Seib, The Washington Post (August 18, 1975)*

"I had a heartening dream in which the program could not get started because both of the protagonists were unable to unstick their sweaty palms from the handshake that presumably began it all." — *Dennis Potter, The Sunday Times*

After the Interviews

"The programs undoubtedly will make news. They just might make history." — *Merrill Paunit, TV Guide (Apr. 30-May 6, 1977)*

"He (Nixon) is alternately haughty, patronizing, incisive, rambling, peevish — and, finally, subdued. Under Frost's barrage, Richard Nixon's Watergate defenses are shattered."

— *Ed Magnuson, Time (May 9, 1977)*

"Covering this story was a little like covering a bullfight from inside the matador's camp. The matador was talking, carefully, and the bull was unavailable for interviews. The result reveals the incredible number of Nixons that exist inside the former President. The shows are a kind of video psychobiography."

— *John Stacks, on covering the Frost team's preparation for the interviews for Time, Time (May 9, 1977)*

"An unusual blend of journalism, history, and teledrama, the interviews show Nixon emotionally trying to explain his Watergate disgrace and proudly talking about his triumphs in foreign affairs." — *David M Alpern with Hal Bruno, Martin Kasindorf and Nancy Stadtman, Newsweek (May 9, 1977)*

"I burst with pride for you last night. You were superb. Bravo!"

— *Barbara Walters, in a cable to Frost after the program aired*

Key Figures of the Nixon Era



Spiro Agnew, Vice President to Richard M. Nixon, resigned after pleading no contest to a charge of Federal income tax evasion; his resignation had no connection to Watergate.

Oliver F. “Ollie” Atkins was Nixon’s official White House photographer.

Alfred C. Baldwin, III was a former FBI Special Agent who had retired and he was recruited by James McCord to work for the Committee to Re-elect the President. He was installed in a room in the Howard Johnson Hotel across from the Watergate building. It was Baldwin’s job to listen to the wiretapped phone conversations from the Democratic National Committee Headquarters in the Watergate building and take notes of those conversations. He cooperated with the Watergate investigation to avoid prosecution.

Bernard L. Barker was one of five arrested in the Democratic Party National Headquarters at the Watergate Office Building on June 17, 1972. Barker was born in Havana, Cuba, March 17, 1917, to American parents. He was the President of Barker Associates, Inc. of Miami, a real estate firm. His company’s bank accounts were used to distribute funds used by the Watergate burglars. He was indicted by a Federal Grand Jury on September 15, 1972 on one count of Interception of Communications and one count of Conspiracy as well as two counts of violation of the District of Columbia Code. He pled guilty on January 15, 1973, and was sentenced to a term of 18 months to 6 years in Federal custody.

Robert H. Bork, White House Solicitor General, was made Acting Attorney General on October, 20 1973, after Ruckelshaus was fired for refusing the President’s order to dismiss Special Prosecutor Cox and dissolve the Office of the Special Prosecutor, both of which Bork did on that same day.

Leonid Brezhnev (1908-1989) was the Ukrainian-born Soviet leader and son of a steelworker who was the leader of the Soviet Union for 18 years. He met with Nixon and signed the Strategic Arms Limitation Treaty (SALT) in 1972.



Alexander P. Butterfield was administrator of the Federal Aviation Administration and a former White House aide. He testified that the White House and Executive Office Building were recorded beginning in the spring of 1971 for “posterity’s sake” under the President’s authority.

J. Fred Buzhardt was appointed White House Special Counsel for Watergate matters on May 10, 1973. He resigned from the White House on August 16, 1974.

John Bowden Connally, Jr. was the Governor of Texas. He became Secretary of the Navy under President Kennedy and became Secretary of the Treasury under President Nixon. Under Connally the U.S. left the gold standard. He eventually switched political parties, becoming a Republican after years as a Democrat.

Dwight L. Chapin was former Appointments Secretary to President Nixon. He was a close associate of H.R. Haldeman and worked for Haldeman at the J. Walter Thompson Advertising Agency in Los Angeles, Calif., prior to coming to the White House. On February 28, 1973, he resigned his post and returned to the business world. On November 29, 1973, he was indicted on four counts of making false statements before a Federal Grand Jury. He was convicted on April 5, 1973, on two counts and sentenced to 10-30 months in Federal custody. He appealed.

Kathleen Chenow was a White House Secretary. She confirmed existence of a “Plumbers Unit” made up of Young, Liddy, Hunt and Krogh for Watergate investigators.



Charles W. Colson was special Counsel to the President from 1969 until February 1973. Known as a trouble-shooter, Colson brought E. Howard Hunt to the White House as a consultant. On March 1, 1974, he was one of seven indicted by a Federal Grand Jury in Washington, D.C., for “conspiring to impede the investigation of the Watergate break-in at the Democratic National Headquarters.” The charges were dropped after he pled guilty to Obstruction of Justice in the Ellsberg case on June 3, 1974.

Archibald Cox was a former Solicitor General and Harvard professor. He became Special Prosecutor in the Justice Department prosecution of the Watergate break-in and related investigations.

John W. Dean III was former Chief Counsel to the President and Deputy Associate Attorney General of the United States. He was Counsel for the President from July 1970 until April 30, 1973. He was the liaison between the White House and the FBI during the Watergate investigation. He sat in on all interviews of White House personnel and received memos from then acting Director L. Patrick Gray. He resigned April 30, 1973. He admitted to withholding and destroying documents from the safe of E. Howard Hunt. On October 19, 1973, he was indicted on one count of Conspiracy to Obstruct Justice and he pled guilty to this charge on November 30, 1973. He was the principal witness accusing President Nixon of illegal activities. He was granted immunity from further prosecution for agreeing to further testimony.



John M. Doar was former Assistant Attorney General during the Kennedy Administration. On December 20, 1973, he was named as Special Counsel to the House Judiciary Committee for the purpose of conducting an inquiry into possible grounds for the impeachment of President Nixon.

Anatoly Dobrynin was the Soviet Ambassador to the United States between 1962 and 1986; many historians credit him with helping to end the Cuban missile crisis. He died April 8, 2002 at age 90.



John D. Ehrlichman was former Chief Counsel to the President and Assistant to the President for Domestic Affairs. He was a classmate of H.R. “Bob” Haldeman. He served in President Nixon’s unsuccessful 1960 presidential campaign and as tour director for the 1968 campaign. He created the in-house investigative unit titled “The White House Special Investigations Unit” which was later known as the “Plumbers Unit” because they were trying to stop leaks. He was alleged to have approved the burglary of psychiatrist Dr. Fielding’s office for records on his patient Daniel Ellsberg. He resigned April 30, 1973. On March 1, 1974, he was one of seven indicted by a Federal Grand Jury in Washington, D.C. Charges against him included one count of Conspiracy to Obstruct Justice, one count of making a false statement to the FBI, two counts of making false statements to a Grand Jury and one count of Obstruction of Justice. He pled not guilty to all counts of the indictment.

Daniel Ellsberg was a former Marine and military analyst. In 1971 he gave a report commissioned by Robert McNamara entitled, “United States-Vietnam Relations 1945-1967” to *The New York Times*, which did a series of articles based on the report, further eroding support of the increasingly unpopular war in Vietnam. They would become known as the “Pentagon Papers.” One of the first activities of the White House’s so-called “Plumbers Unit” was to break into the office of Ellsberg’s psychiatrist to look for information to discredit him.

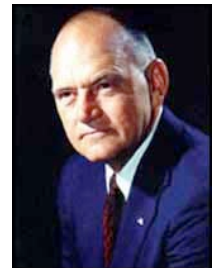
Sam J. Ervin (D-NC) was Head of the Senate Investigation of Watergate.

Fred Fielding was Associate Counsel for President Nixon and a deputy to John Dean.

Frank Gannon worked in the White House from 1971-1974. He accompanied the Nixons after the president’s resignation to San Clemente. He was one of the writers assisting Nixon on his memoirs and provided research for Nixon as he prepared for the Frost/Nixon interviews.

Virgilio Ramon Gonzalez was one of five individuals who were arrested inside the Democratic National Party Headquarters at the Watergate Office Building on June 17, 1972. He was a naturalized citizen and native of Cuba who had a locksmith business in Florida and was reported to be a former member of the Cuban Secret Service. He was alleged to have associations with the CIA, but the CIA denied the allegation. On September 15, 1972, a Federal Grand Jury indicted him for Conspiracy and Interceptions of Communications as well as burglary and violations of District of Columbia Code. He pled guilty on January 15, 1973, and was sentenced to from 1-6 years in the custody of the Attorney General on November 9, 1973.

L. Patrick Gray III served as Acting Director of the FBI between May 2, 1972, and April 27, 1973. Nixon nominated him to become permanent director but the Senate did not confirm him after he admitted he destroyed documents related to the Watergate investigation. It was his Deputy Director at the FBI, Mark Felt, who recently admitted to being “Deep Throat,” the source of information to *The Washington Post* journalists.



Andrei Gromyko (1909-1989) was a career Russian diplomat. He was active in preparing the meeting between Brezhnev and Nixon.

General Alexander Haig took over as White House Chief of Staff in 1973 after Haldeman's resignation.

Harry Robbins “Bob” Haldeman was one of Nixon's most trusted advisors, having served on the 1960 presidential campaign and as Chief of Staff in the 1968 presidential campaign. He came to the White House as Chief of Staff immediately after the inauguration and served until his resignation on April 30, 1973. Prior to working for the president he worked at the Los Angeles ad agency J. Walter Thompson. On March 1, 1974, he was one of seven indicted a Federal Grand Jury in Washington, D.C. on one count of Conspiracy to Obstruct Justice, one count of Obstructing Justice and three counts of Perjury related to the investigation of the Watergate break-in at the Democratic National Headquarters. Haldeman entered a not guilty plea to all counts on March 9, 1974.



by

George A. Hearing was a Tampa, Florida, accountant who was indicted by a Federal Grand Jury in Tampa on May 4, 1973, on charges of printing and conspiring to distribute a false letter during the 1972 presidential campaign.

Richard McGarrah Helms was Director of the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) between 1966 and 1973.



E. Howard Hunt, Jr., was born October 9, 1918. He was a former CIA agent who had retired in 1970 with more than 20 years of service. He was hired as a White House consultant through Charles Colson. Hunt had assembled the Cuban-American members of the Watergate burglary team who were prior CIA contacts. Hunt was also involved various problematic White House matters including the ITT affair, the Ellsberg case, and collecting intelligence on Senator Edward Kennedy after the Chappaquiddick scandal. Hunt allegedly demanded funds from the Committee to Re-Elect the President and the White House in order to maintain silence about his activities. When his wife died in a December 8, 1972, plane crash in Chicago, the FBI recovered \$10,000 in \$100 bills in her purse. He was indicted by a Federal Grand Jury in Washington D.C., on September, 15, 1972, on charges of Interception of Communications, Conspiracy and Burglary. On January 11, 1973, he pled guilty to all counts and on November 9, 1973, he was sentenced to 20 months to eight years and a \$10,000 fine.

Leon Jaworski was the Houston attorney who, on November 1, 1973, was named new Special Prosecutor after Bork, at the President's behest, had removed Cox as Special prosecutor.

Herbert W. Kalmbach was President Nixon's personal attorney. He was born October 19, 1921, in Ft. Huron, Mich., and graduated from the University of Southern California Law School. He was the Associate Finance Chairman of the 1968 Nixon presidential campaign. His involvement in the Watergate scandal appears to have been obstruction of justice through providing money to silence the seven original defendants and to be used in illegal campaign activities. On February 25, 1974, he was charged and pled guilty to violations of the Federal corrupt practices act and a misdemeanor count of promising an Ambassadorship in return for campaign contributions.

Clarence M. Kelley was named Director of the FBI, replacing Acting Director Ruckelshaus.

Kenneth "Ken" Khachigian was a speech writer for Richard Nixon and later Ronald Reagan. He also assisted Nixon with his memoirs and led the preparation for the Frost/Nixon Interviews. He is also an attorney and has worked as a consultant and political strategist.



Henry Kissinger was born April 27, 1923, in Furth, Germany, to middle class Jewish parents. They fled the Nazi regime and settled in New York City. Kissinger served in the Army as an intelligence officer and interpreter. He became a professor of political and international affairs at Harvard University. He was a part time adviser to both the Kennedy and Johnson administrations. In 1968 Nixon appointed him National Security Adviser. Both Nixon and Kissinger preferred behind the scenes diplomacy. In 1973 Kissinger was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize with Le Duc Tho for the secret negotiations that led to the end of the Vietnam War. Kissinger is still recognized as a great statesman. His relationship with Nixon was complicated and Nixon sometimes resented the praise Kissinger received for foreign policy that Nixon felt was due to the administration.

Richard G. Kleindienst was Deputy Attorney General from 1969 until he took the post of Attorney General, succeeding John Mitchell, on June 12, 1972. He resigned that office on April 30, 1973. He was convicted of misdemeanor perjury for his testimony during his Senate confirmation hearings.



Egil E. Krogh, Jr. joined the White House as an Aide to John Ehrlichman in 1969. He was later made the head of the “White House Special Investigations Unit” also known as the “Plumbers Unit.” This unit was created to investigate the leak in the Pentagon Papers matter. He accepted responsibility for the burglary of Daniel Ellsberg’s psychiatrist, Dr. Lewis Fielding’s, office. When he resigned on May 9, 1973, he was the Under Secretary of Transportation. On November 30, 1973, he pled guilty to one count of violating the civil rights of Dr. Lewis Fielding, during the September 3-4, 1971, break-in. He was sentenced on January 24, 1974, to serve six months in the custody of the Attorney General.

Frederick C. LaRue came to Washington D.C. in 1969 as a Special Assistant to the President. He became an assistant to John Mitchell when the Committee to Re-Elect the President was formed. On July 18, 1973, LaRue told the Senate Watergate Committee that he participated in the Watergate cover up and helped deliver cash intended to go to the seven defendants in the Watergate burglary trial. He was also present at key meetings when the CRP discussed electronic surveillance of the Democratic National Committee as well as other illicit campaign tactics. On June 27, 1973, LaRue pled guilty to one count of Conspiracy to Obstruct Justice.

George Gordon Liddy was an FBI agent between September 1957 and September 1962. He was employed as an Assistant District Attorney in New York State and a Special Assistant to the Secretary of the Treasury for Law Enforcement Matters. He was Special Assistant on the Domestic Council in the White House before leaving in December 1971 to work on the Committee to Re-elect the President, where he served

as Legal Counsel, then Legal Counsel to the Finance Committee. With Hunt, Liddy was one of the creators of the plan to electronically monitor the Democratic National Committee Headquarters at Watergate. Attorney General John Mitchell admitted to Liddy discussing the wiretapping plan with him but denied that he authorized the plan. Liddy refused to cooperate with the FBI, the special prosecutor, the courts and Congressional Committees. On September 15, 1972, Liddy was charged with Interception of Communications, Conspiracy and Burglary. After a trial he was found guilty on all counts. On March 23, 1973, he was sentenced to serve six to eight months to no more than 20 years and charged a \$40,000 fine. He was also indicted on one count of conspiracy to violate the civil rights of Dr. Fielding in the Ellsberg case and was charged with refusing to testify before a House Committee.

Jeb Stuart Magruder was an aide to Haldeman and White House Communications Director Herbert G. Klein between 1969-1971. He left to become Deputy Director of the Committee to Re-elect the President (CRP) under John Mitchell. He volunteered in the election campaigns of President Nixon, Senator Barry Goldwater and Representative Donald Rumsfeld. He was Planning Director for the Department of Commerce at the time of his indictment. On August 16, 1973, Magruder plead guilty to one count of Conspiracy to Obstruct Justice and was sentenced on May 21, 1974, to ten months to four years in Federal custody.

Robert C. Mardian was the former Assistant Attorney General for the Internal Security Division of the Department of Justice. He became a Campaign Coordinator and Political Consultant for the Committee to Re-Elect the President. On March 1, 1974, he was indicted by a Federal Grand Jury in Washington, D.C., on one count of Conspiracy to Obstruct Justice relating to the investigation of the Watergate break-in at the Democratic National Headquarters. He admitted to the FBI that he held logs from FBI wiretaps of White House aides and reporters as part of the effort to find the source of leaks of classified information. He also testified that G. Gordon Liddy briefed him and LaRue about the Ellsberg and Watergate break-ins.

Eugenio Rolando Martinez was one of the five apprehended at the Watergate office building on June 17, 1972. A Cuban immigrant, he received a visa in 1959 and was naturalized in 1970. He was employed at the Miami real estate firm of Bernard Barker, who was also apprehended during the break-in. On September 15, 1972, he was indicted on charges of Interception of Communications, Conspiracy and Burglary. He pled guilty on January 15, 1973, and was sentenced November 9, 1973, to one to six years in the custody of the Attorney General. He also was charged with conspiracy to violate the civil rights of Dr. Lewis Fielding by burglarizing his office in the Ellsberg case.

James Walter McCord Jr. worked for the FBI from October 1948 to February 1951 and with the CIA from 1951 to his retirement in May 1970. He was one of five individuals arrested inside the Democratic National Committee Headquarters in the Watergate Complex on Jun 17, 1972. He was the head of McCord Associates, a security consulting company. He was employed as the Security Chief of the Committee to Re-Elect the President. McCord wrote a letter alleging a cover up in the Watergate case and that perjury had been committed during the trial. McCord implicated Nixon in the alleged offers of Executive Clemency in exchange for guilty pleas and he outlined covert payments from Caulfield and Dean. He also was critical of the FBI's investigation. He was indicted by a Federal Grand Jury on September 15, 1972, for Interception of Communications, Conspiracy and Burglary. He pled not guilty at trial but was found guilty on all counts. On November 9, 1973, he was sentenced to one to five years in the custody of the Attorney of General.

John N. Mitchell was Attorney General of the United States from 1969 to 1972. He became Director of the Committee for the Re-Election of the President on March 1, 1972, a post he would resign on July 1, 1972. He and Nixon had both been partners in the New York law firm Mudge, Rose, Guthrie, Alexander and Mitchell. The Senate Watergate Hearings revealed testimony that Mitchell was involved in plans for illicit campaign tactics against the Democratic Party while he was still serving as Attorney General, and that he approved the electronic surveillance plan. On March 1, 1974, he was one of seven indicted by a Federal Grand Jury in Washington, D.C. on charges of Conspiracy to Obstruct Justice, making false statements to a Federal Grand Jury, perjury, making false statements to the FBI, and Obstruction of Justice related to the Watergate break-in at the Democratic National Headquarters. He was also tried and acquitted on charges of obstruction of justice in the Robert Vesco case for allegedly attempting to influence the Securities and Exchange Commission along with Commerce Secretary, Maurice H. Stans.

Lawrence O'Brien was the Chairman of the Democratic National Headquarters. His office was among those wire tapped in the Watergate building.

Spencer Oliver was executive director of the Association of State Democratic Chairmen. His office at the Democratic National Headquarters was also bugged.

The Shah of Iran, Mohammad Reza Pahlavi was the monarch of Iran from September 16, 1941 until the Iranian revolution on February 11, 1979. He fled Iran with his family and lived in exile after increasing attacks for being too Western. These attacks were lead by the Muslim traditionalist movement lead by the Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini, who was at that point in exile in France. Khomeini returned to Iran and became leader after the Shah fled.



Kenneth W. Parkinson was a politically active Washington, D.C., attorney who was hired by the Committee to Re-Elect the President immediately following the Watergate break-in arrests. On March 1, 1974, he was one of seven indicted by a Federal Grand Jury in Washington, D.C. for “conspiring to impede the investigation of the Watergate break-in at the Democratic National Headquarters.” He sat in on FBI interviews of CRP employees. On March 1, 1974, he was indicted by a Federal Grand Jury on one count of Conspiracy to Obstruct Justice and a count of Obstruction of Justice.

Henry E. Petersen was chief of the Justice Department’s criminal division in June 1972. He was in charge of the Watergate investigation until May when Archibald Cox was appointed Special Prosecutor.

Herbert L. Porter was Scheduling Director for the Committee to Re-Elect the President. He testified at the Senate Watergate Committee Hearing on June 9, 1973, that Magruder asked him to lie about what happened to \$100,000 in cash given to G. Gordon Liddy and that he told this false account to the FBI and the Watergate Federal Grand Jury. On January 28, 1974, he pled guilty to one count of making false statements to FBI agents. He was sentenced on April 11, 1974, to serve 30 days of a 5-15 month sentence.

Ray Price was a Nixon speechwriter who was also helping Nixon with his memoirs.

Charles “Bebe” Rebozo was a Florida Millionaire and close personal friend of Richard Nixon.

Elliott L. Richardson was Attorney General after Kleindienst’s resignation. Richardson resigned October 20, 1973, after he refused to dismiss Special Prosecutor Archibald Cox at President Nixon’s direction.

Peter W. Rodino (D-NJ), House Judiciary Committee Chairman, appointed Doar as Special Counsel to investigate grounds for the impeachment of President Nixon.



William D. Ruckelshaus was appointed Acting Director of the FBI after Gray resigned after hearings revealed Dean sat in on interviews and Hunt destroyed files on his watch. He was later appointed Deputy Attorney General but was fired from that role because he refused the President’s order to fire Special Prosecutor Cox and dissolve the office of the Special Prosecutor.

Diane Sawyer worked as one of the researchers for Nixon’s preparation for the interviews, was assisting with his memoirs and came to a few of the Frost/Nixon tapings. She subsequently became a journalist on CBS and later ABC.

William B. Saxbe, Senator from Ohio, was named by Nixon to become Attorney General after the President fired Ruckelshaus.

Donald H. Segretti was the California attorney hired by fellow University of Southern California classmates and Nixon White House staffers Dwight Chapin (Appointments Secretary to President Nixon) and Gordon Strachan (Assistant to Haldeman). He testified he was hired by them and paid out of campaign contributions to perform certain jobs he considered “similar to college pranks” that were intended to create discord between the Democratic candidates. He was given \$45,000 for expenses and paid a \$16,000 per year salary. On September 27, 1973, he was indicted by a Federal Grand Jury in Washington, D.C., on charges of illegal distribution of false campaign literature. On October 1, 1973, he pled guilty and was sentenced to a suspended sentence of six months in the custody of the Attorney General and three years probation.

John J. Sirica was the United States District Judge who presided over the Watergate trials.

Gordon Strachan worked in President Nixon’s law firm in New York for two years before joining the White House staff in August 1970. He was Assistant to White House Chief of Staff H. R. Haldeman, a role in which he was the liaison between Haldeman and the Committee to Re-Elect the President. He became General Counsel for the United States Information Agency, a position he held from January 1973 until his resignation on April 30, 1973. Magruder testified that Strachan was briefed on the planned break-ins and wiretapping and that he received “Gemstone” documents from the CRP to give to the White House. Strachan testified that Haldeman told him on June 20, 1972, to “make sure our files are clean” and that he destroyed documents from the CRP as a result. He also testified that he returned \$350,000 cash held in the White House to LaRue — money that LaRue testified was given to Watergate defendants. On March 1, 1974, he was one of seven indicted by a Federal Grand Jury in Washington, D.C. on counts of conspiracy to obstruct justice, obstruction of justices and making false statements to a Federal Grand Jury.

Frank Anthony Sturgis was one of the five subjects arrested during the Watergate burglary on June 17, 1972. He was the operator of the Hampton Roads Salvage Company and a friend of fellow Watergate defendants Bernard Baker and Eugenio Martinez. He lost his U.S. citizenship when he enlisted in the Cuban Army. He was involved in anti-Castro activities and the International Anti-Communist Brigade. He refused to cooperate with FBI agents investigating Watergate. He was indicted by a Federal Grand Jury on September 15, 1972, on counts of Interception of Communications, Conspiracy and Burglary. He pled guilty on January 15, 1973, and was sentenced to serve one to four years on November 9, 1973.



Chairman Mao Tse Tung (1893 - 1976) was the son of prosperous peasants. In 1921, he was a founding member of the Chinese Communist Party (CCP). After the civil war, on October 1, 1949, he established the People's Republic of China and became Chairman of the party and the state. He removed the warlord system of farms and changed marriage laws that were punitive to women, but he also actively removed enemies and individuals who were not deemed sufficiently revolutionary. His economic policies led to the death of 30 million Chinese from starvation. At the time of the February 1972 visit of President Richard Nixon, China was just emerging from some of the darkest years of the Cultural Revolution. Many of the harshest policies would not be eased until after his death in 1976. He had an unscheduled meeting with President Richard Nixon during the president's visit to China.

Robert Vesco was a financier who was charged in a U.S. Securities and Exchange Commission investigation and in a civil lawsuit of embezzling \$224 million. It was later charged that Mitchell and Secretary of Commerce Maurice H. Stans attempted to influence the Securities and Exchange Commission investigation.

General Vernon A. Walters was the Deputy Director of the CIA from 1972 to 1976. Haldeman and Ehrlichman asked Walters to tell the FBI to discontinue their Watergate investigation, which he did, but his supervisor Helms had him rescind that advisory to the FBI. He said Dean asked him to pay off Watergate burglars with CIA funds and he refused and threatened to resign if he called again.

David R Young, Jr. was special assistant at the National Security Council and an administrative assistant to Henry Kissinger. He became part of the White House "Plumbers Unit" and resigned and was spared prosecution because of his cooperation.

Key Groups and Issues Mentioned in *Frost/Nixon*

White House Plumbers Unit — After the leak of the "Pentagon Papers," Nixon became increasingly concerned about leaks to the press. He started the White House "Plumbers Unit," as it came to be known for their efforts to stop leaks. They broke into the office of Daniel Ellsberg's psychiatrist looking for information to discredit him. The "Plumbers Unit" disbanded shortly thereafter but many members would work for the Committee to Re-Elect the President (CRP) and had involvement in the Watergate break-ins.

Committee to Re-elect the President (CRP) was the organization that was established to help re-elect Richard Nixon. It was also the organization through which the break-ins to the Watergate offices of the Democratic National Committee was planned and executed.

Milk Fund Scandal — Nixon let the milk producers know he was considering cutting government milk subsidies until the dairy lobby started making contributions to his re-election fund ultimately totaling \$2 million.

ITT Scandal — International Telephone and Telegraph offered to pay a substantial amount of money toward the 1972 Republican Convention if it was to be held in San Diego. When the scandal was revealed the convention moved to Miami Beach.

The Pentagon Papers — In 1971 former Marine and military analyst Daniel Ellsberg gave a report commissioned by Robert McNamara entitled “United States-Vietnam Relations 1945-1967” to *The New York Times*, which did a series of articles based on the report, further eroding support for the increasingly unpopular war in Vietnam. They came to be known as the “Pentagon Papers.” Their leak to the press contributed to Nixon’s increasing fears about White House leaks.

Brookings Institute — *The Washington Post* journalists Bob Woodward and Carl Bernstein found out that, as part of the Plumbers Unit, Colson thought about firebombing the Brookings Institute, but the plan was never carried out.

Détente — From the French word meaning “relaxing” or “easing,” it describes the Cold War policies of a softening of relations between the U.S. and the Soviet Union. A series of summits and meetings between the two countries was part of that easing in relations.

Enemies List — Charles Colson’s office kept a list of opponents and political enemies. On Wednesday, June 27, 1973, Dean presented it as an exhibit to the Ervin Committee. It was a list of names of those the White House thought might be unfriendly to them.

Ervin Committee is the name also given to the Senate Investigation Committee chaired by Sam J. Ervin (D- NC).

The Huston Plan was the plan put together by White House aide Tom Charles Huston. The plan called for expanded domestic surveillance of “left-wing radicals” and the “anti-war movement” by means of illegal wiretapping, burglary and the opening of domestic mail. Nixon ratified the proposals in 1970 and they were submitted to the heads of the FBI and CIA and the National Security Agency. Under pressure from Attorney General John Mitchell and J. Edgar Hoover, the plan was abandoned, but some of its provisions were implemented. The existence of the Huston

plan was revealed as part of the Senate Watergate investigation. Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act (FISA) courts were created in response to this threat of abuses of presidential power that might violate the Fourth Amendment.

Obstruction of Justice

U.S. Code Title 18, Chapter 73 § 1512 Tampering with a Witness, victim or informant
Excerpt below:

(b) Whoever knowingly uses intimidation, threatens, or corruptly persuades another person, or attempts to do so, or engages in misleading conduct toward another person, with intent to —

- (1)** influence, delay, or prevent the testimony of any person in an official proceeding;
- (2)** cause or induce any person to—
 - (A)** withhold testimony, or withhold a record, document, or other object, from an official proceeding;
 - (B)** alter, destroy, mutilate, or conceal an object with intent to impair the object’s integrity or availability for use in an official proceeding;
 - (C)** evade legal process summoning that person to appear as a witness, or to produce a record, document, or other object, in an official proceeding; or
 - (D)** be absent from an official proceeding to which such person has been summoned by legal process; or
- (3)** hinder, delay, or prevent the communication to a law enforcement officer or judge of the United States of information relating to the commission or possible commission of a Federal offense or a violation of conditions of probation, supervised release, parole, or release pending judicial proceedings; shall be fined under this title or imprisoned not more than 20 years, or both.

“Gemstone” documents — The code name given to certain transcripts of the wiretap logs from the Democratic National Committee Headquarters. Jeb Magruder claimed he gave these to John Mitchell at the White House on June 9, 1972, along with photos taken inside the DNC headquarters. Mitchell denied Magruder’s claims.

Timeline: The Nixon Presidency

November 5, 1968 Richard Nixon is elected the 37th president of the United States. He receives only 43.4 percent of the popular vote.

January 20, 1969 Nixon is inaugurated.

May 12, 1969 White House aides install wiretaps after the leak about the secret bombing of Cambodia results in an article in *The New York Times*.

July 23, 1970 Nixon approves the Huston Plan, which widely expands intelligence gathering. He rescinds it five days later.

June 13, 1971 *The New York Times* publishes the Pentagon Papers.

February 21-28, 1972 Nixon travels to the People's Republic of China for talks with Mao Zedong, chairman of the Chinese Communist Party.

May 22-29, 1972 Nixon visits the Soviet Union for talks with Leonid Brezhnev, the general secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist Party. Their talks lead to the signing of the Strategic Arms Limitation Treaty (SALT), the first pact to limit nuclear weapons.

June 17, 1972 Five men — James McCord Jr., a former CIA agent, and Cuban-Americans Bernard Barker, Frank Sturgis, Eugenio Martinez and Virgilio Gonzalez — are arrested in the Democratic National Committee (DNC) headquarters in the Watergate building.

June 20, 1972 Nixon discusses the arrests with H.R. Haldeman, his chief of staff. Later, it is discovered that 18½ minutes of the tape of this conversation erased.

September 15, 1972 A federal grand jury indicts G. Gordon Liddy, Howard Hunt, both part of the White House Plumbers Unit, and the five Watergate burglars.

November 7, 1972 Nixon is re-elected president with 60.8 percent of the popular vote.

January 1973 Guilty pleas are entered by the five men who broke into the Democratic Committee offices. Liddy and Hunt are tried for their involvement and found guilty.

March 21, 1973 Nixon and John Dean, the White House counsel, discuss the continued silence of the burglars and discuss hush money and clemency. Hunt's attorney receives \$75,000 later that day.

April 15, 1973 Nixon announces the resignations of Haldeman, Chief Domestic Advisor John D. Ehrlichman and Attorney General Richard Kleindienst. Dean's dismissal also is announced.

May 17, 1973 The Senate Watergate Committee begins televised hearings.

May 18, 1973 Archibald Cox is named the special prosecutor for any legal issues related to Watergate.

June 1973 Dean testifies before the Senate Watergate Committee and accuses the president of being involved in the cover-up.

July 18, 1973 The presidential taping system is dismantled.

July 23, 1973 Cox subpoenas the recordings of nine presidential meetings.

July 25, 1973 Nixon refuses to turn over the recordings, citing executive privilege.

August 29, 1973 Judge John J. Sirica, chief judge for the U.S. District Court for the District of Columbia, rules the president must surrender the tapes. The White House says it will appeal.

October 10, 1973 Vice President Spiro Agnew resigns after admitting to unrelated tax-evasion charges.

October 12, 1973 The U.S. Court of Appeals rules the White House must turn over the tapes. Nixon names Rep. Gerald R. Ford of Michigan, the House Minority Leader, as Vice President.

October 20, 1973 Nixon orders Attorney General Elliot Richardson to fire Cox. He refuses and resigns. William Ruckelshaus, the deputy attorney general, also refuses and resigns. Robert Bork, the solicitor general, becomes the acting head of the Justice Department and carries out the order. This becomes known as the Saturday Night Massacre.

October 23, 1973 Twenty-two bills are introduced in Congress calling for an impeachment investigation.

November 1, 1973 Leon Jaworski is named the new special prosecutor.

November 3, 1973 Fred Buzhardt, the Special White House Counsel for Watergate Matters, and Leonard Garment, acting counsel to the president, fly to Key Biscayne, Fla., to meet with Nixon and recommend he resign.

November 21, 1973 White House attorneys disclose that 18½ minutes on the June 20, 1972 tape is missing.

March 1, 1974 The federal grand jury indicts seven men in the cover-up: Haldeman; Ehrlichman; John Mitchell, a former attorney general and the head of Nixon's re-election committee; Robert Mardian, former assistant attorney general and counsel to for the committee to re-elect the president; Charles Colson, a former special counsel for Nixon; Gordon Strachan, an aide to Haldeman; and Kenneth Parkinson, counsel

to the re-election committee. Nixon is named an un-indicted co-conspirator, although this is kept secret.

April 29, 1974 Nixon appears on television and announces he will turn over the edited transcripts and make them public; he does so the following day, but still refuses to turn over the tapes subpoenaed by the special prosecutor.

June 10-19, 1974 Nixon visits the Middle East.

June 25-July 3, 1974 Nixon attends a summit meeting in the Soviet Union.

July 24, 1974 The U.S. Supreme Court rules unanimously that the president must turn over all 64 tapes.

July 27-July 30, 1974 The House Judiciary Committee passes three articles of impeachment, including obstruction of justice and abuse of power.

August 9, 1974 Nixon resigns. Vice President Gerald Ford is sworn in as president.

Timeline: Television's Impact on Politics

Before the advent of the 24-hour news cycle, now a part of our everyday experience, the impact of television on politics and the relationship of politics and media was still a brave new world.

1934 The Federal Communications Act requires radio and televisions to give or sell equal time to all legal candidates for political office.

1947 NBC debuts *Meet the Press* as a program to interview politicians and cover politics.

1952 General Dwight D. Eisenhower is the first presidential candidate to use television advertisements in his campaign. Illinois Governor Adlai Stevenson, his Democratic opponent, refuses to use electronic campaigning.

September 23, 1952 Vice-presidential candidate Richard Nixon addresses the public directly on television and delivers what comes to be known as the "Checkers Speech," trying to put to rest a scandal brewing about his alleged misuse of campaign funds.

1953-1954 The Army-McCarthy hearings become the first televised hearings in U.S. history. The hearings were convened to investigate allegations leveled by Senator Joseph McCarthy that communists had infiltrated the U.S. Army.

March 9, 1954 Edward R. Murrow repudiates Senator Joseph McCarthy and his methods on his CBS television program *See It Now*, eroding public opinion of the senator and the fairness of the Army-McCarthy hearings.

1957-1975 Film crews cover the Vietnam War for television, the first war to be documented on TV. The graphic images of the war, broadcast into Americans' living rooms, play a pivotal role in forming public opinion of the war.

1960 Presidential candidates John F. Kennedy and Richard M. Nixon meet in a series of four televised debates. Those who see the debates believe Kennedy won. Those who listen to the debates on radio believe Nixon won. It ushers in a new era of televised presidential politics.

November 22, 1963 Extensive coverage of the assassination of President Kennedy in Dallas, Texas, is broadcast live on television, as is his funeral. Lee Harvey Oswald, the suspect in Kennedy's assassination, is shot and killed by Jack Ruby during a nationally televised broadcast on November 24.

1964 President Lyndon B. Johnson's television campaign ad "Daisy Girl," which attacks Barry Goldwater, his Republican opponent, becomes a new standard in the kind of attack ad that will define future political campaigns.

1970s The Federal Election Campaign acts of 1971 and 1974, as well as amendments in 1976, limit individual campaign contributions but not those of groups. This leads to the creation of Political Action Committees, or PACs, which spend huge amounts on television advertising in future elections.

August 9, 1974 President Nixon announces his resignation live on national television.

1976 President Gerald Ford and Jimmy Carter, his Democratic opponent, take part in the first televised presidential debates since Nixon-Kennedy in 1960.

1979 The Cable Satellite Public Affairs Network (CSPAN) is created as a non-profit cable television station to provide coverage of the political process.

November 4, 1979- January 20, 1981 52 Americans are held hostage for 444 days when the U.S. Embassy in Tehran, Iran, is taken over by Iranian militants in support of the Iranian Revolution. President Carter's administration is sharply criticized for failing to recover the hostages, including a failed rescue mission in April 1980. Some analysts believe this crisis and its continual prominence in the news is a major reason Carter lost his re-election bid to Republican Ronald Reagan.

1986 Live television coverage of U.S. Senate proceedings begins.

1987 The Iran-Contra Hearings, assembled to investigate allegations of U.S. arms sales to Iran and funding of the Nicaraguan Contras during the Reagan administration, air on national television.

September 13, 1988 Democratic presidential candidate Michael Dukakis appears in a television campaign ad riding in an M-1 tank. The photo opportunity backfires and harms his campaign.

January 26, 1998 President Bill Clinton denies on live television that he has had a sexual relationship with Monica Lewinsky.

August 17, 1998 President Clinton goes on live television to admit he did have an inappropriate relationship with Lewinsky.

September 21, 1998 President Clinton's grand-jury testimony is televised live. He is impeached by the House of Representatives on December 19, 1998. He is acquitted by the Senate on February 12, 1999.

September 11, 2001 For the first time, Americans watch a terrorist attack on U.S. soil live on television. While news bulletins air about a plane hitting one of the World Trade Center towers, a second plane strikes the towers in New York City. The crash of a plane into the Pentagon and the collapse of the two towers all air on national television as they occur.

May 1, 2003 President George W. Bush lands on the flight deck of the aircraft carrier USS Abraham Lincoln and delivers a speech under a banner that reads "Mission Accomplished." He is later criticized because the war in Iraq did not end at that time. He later claims the banner referred to the end of "major combat operations" in Iraq.

January 19, 2004 Democratic presidential candidate Howard Dean, the former Vermont governor, screams into a microphone at a rally. The video of his scream is played repeatedly and undermines his potential candidacy. John Kerry, Massachusetts' junior senator, becomes the Democratic nominee.

August 29, 2005 Hurricane Katrina makes landfall in the Gulf of Mexico. News coverage of the devastation and unsafe conditions in New Orleans as well as the poor government response there and in other cities leads to criticism of the Bush administration and various government agencies, in particular FEMA, the Federal Emergency Management Agency.

September 24, 2008 On CBS, Katie Couric interviews Republican vice-presidential candidate, Sarah Palin. During the interview, Palin is asked to name what newspapers and magazines she reads. She is unable to specify any, damaging her in public opinion.

April 20, 2010 A gas explosion at BP's Deepwater Horizon oil rig in the Gulf of Mexico kills 11 workers — and starts the largest offshore oil spill in world history. Media coverage includes a live feed of oil spilling into the Gulf. There is round-the-clock coverage of the ecological damage and economic impact for Gulf residents. For President Barack Obama, who has been criticized for not seeming angry enough about the spill, the political ramifications remain unclear.

Discussion Questions

About the Play

1. Playwright Peter Morgan has said he imagined the play as a verbal prizefight. Using that analogy, when do you think Nixon lands blows in the interviews and when does Frost land blows? Do you think the end result of the interviews is a “knock out?”
2. *Frost/Nixon* was Peter Morgan's first stage play. In what way does his history as a screenwriter influence his work for the stage?
3. Reston invokes the Greek playwright Aeschylus at the beginning of the play. Why do you think Morgan wants us to think about Greek theater? Ancient Greek theater served a political as well as a religious function in Greek life; what role do you think the theater can or should play in American political life?

About the Production

1. During the interviews you see Nixon and Frost on the television sets at the sides of the theater and at times projected on the wall behind. What does this do to how you think about live theater that focuses on an event that was televised? What effect do the close-ups of the actors' faces have on the audience?
2. The set is used to represent multiple locations in the course of the play in part through the use of projections. What other images of the Nixon era does the design of the set evoke?
3. Costumes in particular help us recognize the time period of a play. What struck you about the costumes in the play? Are there distinct differences between the costumes of those in the Frost camp and those on Nixon's team? What do costumes tell us about the characters?

About the History

1. As with many plays that deal with historical subject matter, Peter Morgan has changed certain historical details. In the real interviews, Nixon's comment, "When the President does it; it's not illegal," actually referred to the Huston Plan to expand wiretapping, not to Watergate. The telephone call between Nixon and Frost on the night before the last interview did not happen. David Frost and others involved in the original interviews have commented both on the way the play diverges from history but also on how much they enjoyed the material. What do you think a playwright's obligations to the source material are? What is the role of art in illuminating historical events?
2. In the play Reston talks about the power of the close-up to minimize. What ideas does the play offer about the role of the media in politics?
3. In the modern media era we expect hot microphones, sound bites and gaffes to be broadcast with regularity. What do you think it did to the national understanding of the presidency to hear and read excerpts of the White House taping system?

Bibliography and Further Resources

Richard M. Nixon

Nixon – Stephen E. Ambrose

Richard Nixon, the shaping of his character – Fawn M. Brodie

The Friends of Richard Nixon – George V. Higgins

The Memoirs of Richard Nixon – Richard M. Nixon

Richard Nixon: speeches, writings, documents – ed. Rick Perlstein

The Nixon Presidency: twenty-two intimate perspectives of Richard M. Nixon – Kenneth W. Thompson

An Evening with Richard Nixon – Gore Vidal

Nixon agonists: the crisis of the self-made man – Gary Wills

The American Experience Documentary on Richard Nixon and companion website
http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/amex/presidents/37_nixon/index.html

The Nixon Presidential Library and Museum
<http://www.nixonlibrary.gov/>

David Frost

Will You Welcome Now . . . David Frost – Willi Frischauer

David Frost: An Autobiography: From Congregations to Audiences Pt. 1
– David Frost

The Interviews

Frost/Nixon: behind the scenes of the Nixon Interviews – David Frost with Bob Zelnick

“I gave them a sword”: Behind the scenes of the Nixon Interviews – David Frost

The Conviction of Richard Nixon: The Untold Story of the Frost/Nixon interviews
– James Reston Jr.

Frost/Nixon: The Complete Interviews on DVD

Watergate Era

The Presidential Transcripts with commentary from the staff of The Washington Post – Bernstein et al.

Abuse of power: The new Nixon tapes – Ed. Stanley Kutler

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Watergate: A Brief History with Documents – Oxford Wiley, Blackwell 2010

University of Texas at Austin Woodward and Bernstein Watergate papers
<http://www.hrc.utexas.edu/exhibitions/web/woodstein/>

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<http://foia.fbi.gov/foiaindex/waterga.htm>