



WATERGATE

**A STUDENT
EXPLORATION
THROUGH
PRIMARY
SOURCES**

The Break in

BACKGROUND

In the early morning hours of Saturday, June 17, 1972, Frank Wills discovered a piece of tape over a basement-door lock in the Watergate apartment and office complex in Washington, D.C. Wills, a night watchman at the complex, removed the tape and left to get a cup of coffee. When he returned less than an hour later, he found the same lock had been retaped, so he called police.

Plainclothes officers responded to the call, and they soon confronted five burglars in the offices of the Democratic National Committee on the sixth floor of the building. The burglars wore business suits and thin rubber gloves, and they carried cameras, film, a walkie-talkie, lock, picks, electronic surveillance equipment, and stacks of hundred-dollar bills. Although they offered false identifications at first, it was soon discovered that they worked for the Committee to Re-Elect the President, popularly known as CREEP. They were in the Watergate complex to install electronic bugging equipment in telephones that would have transmitted Democratic campaign strategy back to CREEP.

Most newspapers downplayed or ignored the initial story of the break-in, but the *Washington Post* ran a story on the front page of its Sunday edition. The *Post*'s story was written by Bob Woodward, who with his colleague Carl Bernstein, soon began an in-depth investigation of the curious circumstances surrounding the Watergate burglary.

In response to the story, John Mitchell, President Nixon's campaign manager, denied that the burglary was part of a spying operation by the president's men. Ronald Ziegler, the president's press secretary, said, "I am not going to comment on a third-rate alleged burglary attempt." And, within days of the break-in, President Nixon himself denied the White House had been involved.

The Break in

EXHIBIT A



"He says he's from the phone company . . ."

ONEAD
© 1974 by ONEAD Inc.

LEFT RETURN

6-16-72

5:00 PM 5:30 AM
5:40 PM 6:00 AM
6:25 PM 6:50 AM
7:00 PM 7:00 AM

Dem. Committee for our club
Plan to buy 100 lbs
all of them
all items returned
unusable
fill in
bags

LEFT RETURN
5:20 AM 6:20 AM

out of
George and B-1-B-2-B-3
were
unpack through Paul
B-1-B-2-B-3
under Rubin & see internet
B-1-B-2-B-3

EXHIBIT B The Break in

LEFT RETURN
12:05 1:20 AM

left on
left on
left on
left on
left on

8:00 9:00

make
check
make
check
make
check



10:30 AM 12:00 AM
1:17 AM 5 AM

left on
left on
left on
left on
left on
left on
left on
left on
left on
left on

12:00 AM
12:10 AM
12:20 AM
12:30 AM
12:40 AM
12:50 AM

make
check
make
check
make
check

11:00 PM
11:10 PM
11:20 PM
11:30 PM
11:40 PM
11:50 PM

make
check
make
check
make
check

The Break in

EXHIBIT B



Government Exhibit 133: Chapstick Tubes with Hidden Microphones, ca. 1972

Investigations Begin

BACKGROUND

In the early days following the Watergate break-in, hardly anyone in the country suspected that there was a direct link between the burglary and the White House. But details of the brewing scandal began to emerge in the pages of the *Washington Post*, shortly before and for a long time after, the 1972 election.

Bob Woodward and Carl Bernstein were two young reporters at the *Post* who pursued the story. In the process, they logged thousands of investigative hours and followed hundreds of leads, including anonymous sources. The two reporters began to slowly link Nixon's advisers, and eventually Nixon himself, to a cover-up of the White House's involvement in the burglary.

Soon, other groups also began to pursue more information about Watergate. A number of newspapers and magazines aggressively covered the story, and a grand jury convened to investigate the ramifications of the break-in. After the initial grand jury investigations in September 1972, only two White House aides, Gordon Liddy, E. Howard Hunt, and the five burglars – James McCord, CREEP's director of security; and four Cubans who had been recruited for the job – were indicted (charged with a crime). Both Liddy and Hunt had initially avoided arrest, but later pleaded guilty to involvement in the burglary.

The many investigations into the Watergate scandal ultimately revealed that it was about more than just a burglary. Woodward and Bernstein and others obtained evidence that White House officials were responsible for a series of efforts to ensure Nixon was reelected. They planned to discredit and sabotage several Democratic presidential contenders, and pledged to do "whatever was necessary" to stop government leaks to the press. They also extorted (illegally used their official position to obtain) millions of dollars in campaign contributions from corporations seeking government favors, and even tried to get the Internal Revenue Service to, in Nixon's words, "pressure our enemies." As news stories increasingly connected top presidential officials with such sordid activities, the White House issued stronger denials and put pressure on the *Washington Post* and others to back off.

Investigations Begin

EXHIBIT A



HIS OWN WORST ENEMY

Congressional Hearings

BACKGROUND

In March 1973, the grand jury investigating the burglary convicted Liddy, Hunt, and the five burglars and sentenced them to 20, 35, and 40 years in prison, respectively. Soon thereafter, L. Patrick Gray, the acting director of the FBI, resigned after admitting he had destroyed Watergate evidence. In May 1973, North Carolina senator Sam Ervin, chair of the Senate Select Committee on Presidential Activities, convened hearings on Watergate. The hearings were televised across the nation and were watched with great fascination by large numbers of Americans.

Former White House counsel John Dean, fired in April by Nixon, testified before the committee in June. He revealed that former Attorney General John Mitchell – who became Nixon’s 1972 presidential campaign manager – had ordered the Watergate break-in and that the White House was covering up its involvement. Dean also testified that the president had authorized payments of hush money to the burglars to keep them quiet, a charge vehemently denied by Nixon’s aides. On July 16, 1973, the startling testimony of White House aide Alexander Butterfield testified that Nixon had ordered a taping system installed in the White House to automatically record all conversations – something only a handful of people had known about. Now, the hearing’s key questions – what did the president know, and when did he know it – could be answered by listening to the tapes.

Special prosecutor Archibald Cox, who had been appointed to investigate the Watergate break-in, immediately subpoenaed (summoned to court) eight tapes from the White House to confirm Dean’s testimony. Nixon refused to give them up, claiming they were vital to national security. Nixon then offered to provide a summary of the tapes to Cox. Cox said that wasn’t good enough, and so Nixon had him fired in October 1973. Cox’s dismissal prompted an outpouring of protest, which included 350,000 angry telegrams sent to Congress and the White House. Nixon responded to the unexpected protests by appointing another special prosecutor, Leon Jaworski, and then turning over the subpoenaed tapes. By this time, many of Nixon’s top aides had been indicted for crimes related to Watergate.

Congressional Hearings

EXHIBIT A

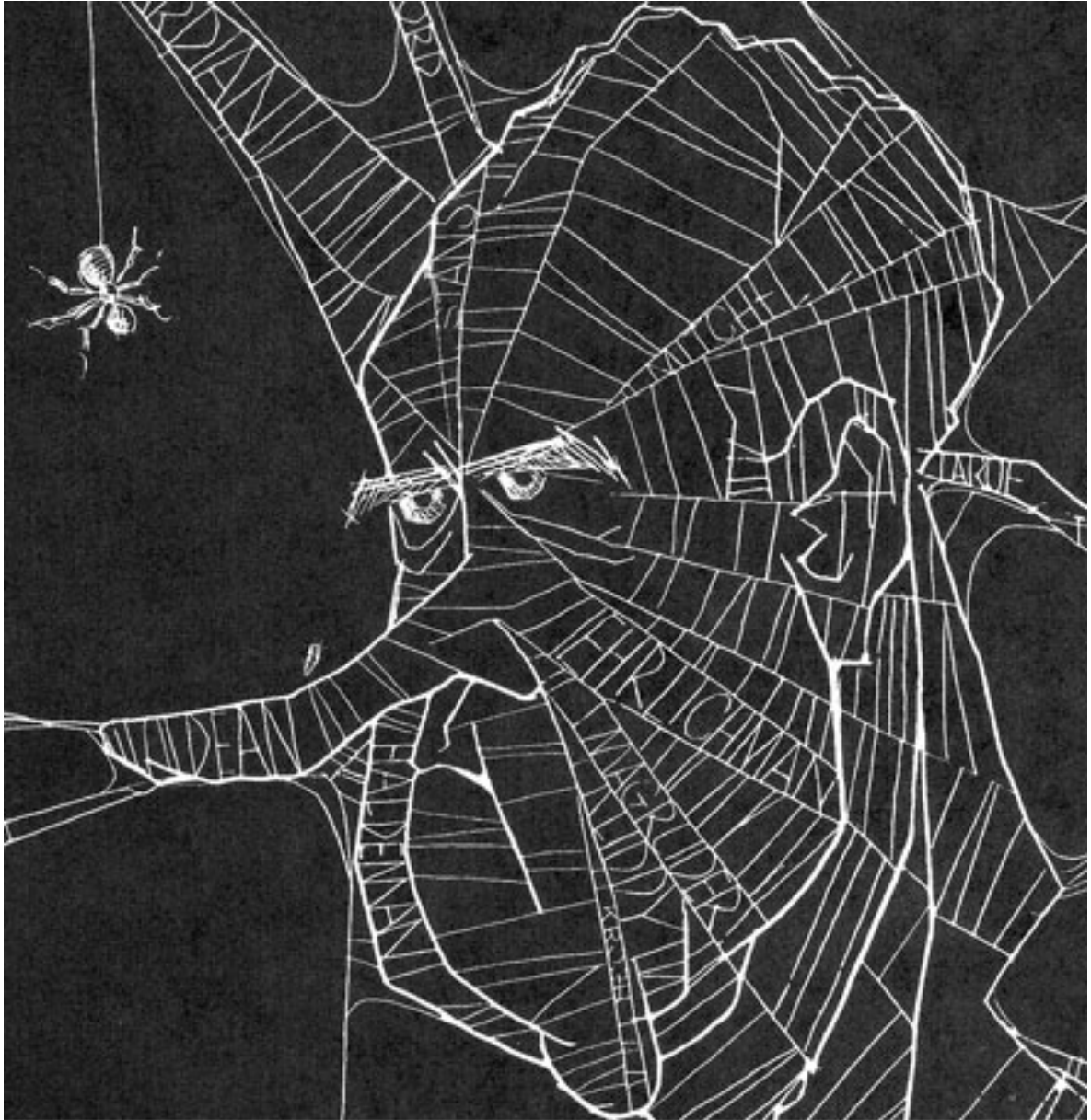
In view of my increasing involvement in the Watergate matter, my impending appearance before the grand jury and the probability of its action, I request an immediate and indefinite leave of absence from my position on your staff.

Sincerely,
John Dean

John Dean Letter of Resignation written by Nixon, Dean did not take it.

Congressional Hearings

EXHIBIT B



Secret Tapes

BACKGROUND

When President Nixon finally turned over the secret tapes to Judge Sirica, some of the conversations requested by the special prosecutor were missing. One tape had a mysterious gap of 18 1/2 minutes, which experts said resulted from five separate erasures. Nixon's aides denied that any intentional erasures had occurred and blamed the 18 1/2 - minute gap on an accidental erasure by Nixon's secretary, Rose Mary Woods. Woods told Judge Sirica she had accidentally erased the tape while she was transcribing it, but her description was rather implausible and accounted for only 5 minutes of erasure, leaving 13 1/2 minutes of missing tape unaccounted for. Americans increasingly believed the missing conversations were part of a larger White House effort to hide damning evidence.

Seven top White House officials – including Mitchell and Colson – were indicted in March 1974 by a grand jury for their role in the Watergate cover-up. Though Nixon was not indicted with his top aides, special prosecutor Leon Jaworski gave Sirica a secret report and bulging briefcase of evidence against the president and asked him to send it to the House Judiciary Committee, which was considering impeachment charges against the president.

Then, Jaworski requested 42 more tapes from Nixon. Instead of releasing the tapes themselves, at the end of April Nixon released transcripts of the tapes prepared by White House aides, who had edited out all irrelevant material. Their release caused a sensation: the Government Printing Office sold 800 copies in three hours on May 1, 1974, and paperback books rushed into print sold millions of copies. The transcripts were somewhat sanitized for public consumption; wherever vulgarities existed on the tape, the aides wrote, “expletive deleted” on the transcripts. The transcripts revealed an overwhelming desire among Nixon and his aides to punish political opponents, and to thwart the Watergate investigation. Now, even Nixon's most steadfast supporters began to suggest that he needed to step down. Two months later, Jaworski requested 64 more tapes as evidence in the cases against the indicted White House officials. Nixon refused to comply, but the Supreme Court voted 8-0 in July 1974 that he had to turn over the tapes.

Secret Tapes

EXHIBIT A



Secret Tapes EXHIBIT B



Rosemary Woods demonstrating how she may have erased tape recordings

SATURDAY NIGHT MASSACRE

BACKGROUND

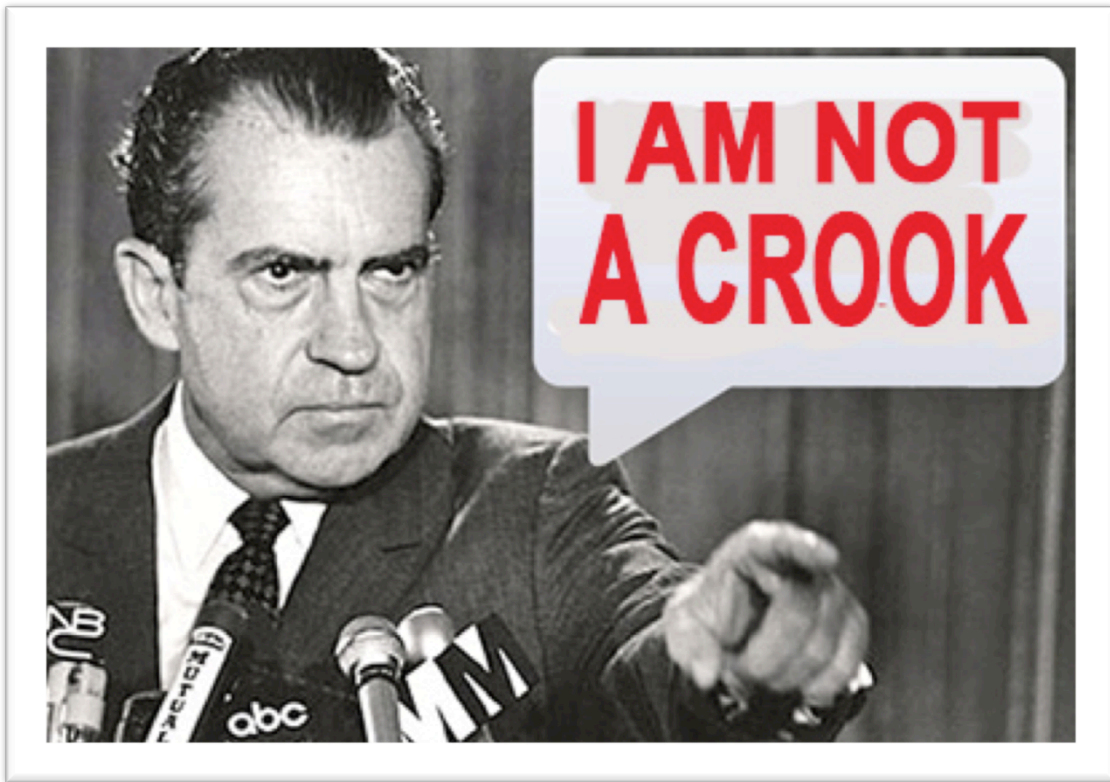
One of the most controversial episodes of the Watergate scandal, the so-called “Saturday Night Massacre” came on October 20, 1973, when embattled President Richard Nixon fired Special Prosecutor Archibald Cox and accepted the resignations of Attorney General Elliot Richardson and Deputy Attorney General William Ruckelshaus.

The “massacre” stemmed from an inquiry into the notorious June 1972 break-in at the Watergate complex, in which five Nixon operatives were caught trying to bug the Democratic National Committee headquarters. Archibald Cox, a Harvard law professor and former U.S. solicitor general, was tapped to investigate the incident in May 1973. He soon clashed with the White House over Nixon’s refusal to release over 10 hours of secret Oval Office recordings, some of which implicated the president in the break-in. On October 20, 1973, in an unprecedented show of executive power, Nixon ordered Attorney General Elliot Richardson and Deputy Attorney General William Ruckelshaus to fire Cox, but both men refused and resigned their posts in protest. The role of attorney general then fell to Solicitor General Robert Bork, who reluctantly complied with Nixon’s request and dismissed Cox. Less than a half hour later, the White House dispatched FBI agents to close off the offices of the Special Prosecutor, Attorney General and Deputy Attorney General.

Nixon’s attack on his own Justice Department came with grave consequences. More than 50,000 concerned citizens sent telegrams to Washington, and 21 members of Congress introduced resolutions calling for Nixon’s impeachment. In the face of overwhelming protest, Nixon relented and appointed Leon Jaworski as the new Watergate prosecutor. Jaworski resumed the investigation and eventually secured the release of the Oval Office recordings in July 1974, when the Supreme Court ruled the tapes did not fall under executive privilege.

SATURDAY NIGHT MASSACRE

EXHIBIT A



Scan here for video!



SATURDAY NIGHT MASSACRE

EXHIBIT B

"All the News That's Fit to Print"

The New York Times

LATE CITY EDITION
Monday, October 21, 1974
Pages: 1-12
Additional Article on Page 11

SECTION ONE

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10 CENTS

NIXON DISCHARGES COX FOR DEFIANCE; ABOLISHES WATERGATE TASK FORCE; RICHARDSON AND RUCKELSHAUS OUT *Kissinger Meets Brezhnev on Mideast Cease-Fire Plan*



Secretary of State Kissinger with Leonid S. Brezhnev yesterday in Moscow.

OUTCRY IN HOUSE

Impeaching Nixon Is Openly Discussed by Leadership

By RICHARD L. HADWIN
Special to The New York Times
WASHINGTON, Oct. 20—The first time tonight, members of the Democratic and Republican leadership of the House of Representatives began talking publicly and seriously about impeaching President Nixon.
Within minutes after the White House announced a steady withdrawal of the Austin Department, House leaders acknowledged that resolutions calling for impeachment would be going into the House when Congress reconvenes after the Victoria Day holiday.
Representative John J. Pickens of California, the Democratic whip, said that the House "has been an almost unanimous" member "beginning impeachment."
Representative John B. Anderson of Illinois, the Chairman of the House Republican



Attorney General Richardson and Special Watergate Prosecutor Cox.



Attorney General Richardson and Special Watergate Prosecutor Cox.

BORK TAKES OVER

Duties of Prosecutor Are Shifted Back to Justice Dept.

By ROBERT S. SHILLING
Special to The New York Times
WASHINGTON, Oct. 20—President Nixon, reacting angrily tonight to refusal to obey his orders, dismissed the special Watergate prosecutor, Archibald Cox, and named Mr. Cox's ally, assistant attorney general Elliot L. Richardson, as the Attorney General, and discharged William French Buckley III, the Deputy Attorney General.
The President's dismissal edged the nation closer to the constitutional restrictions he said he was trying to avoid.
Senior members of both parties in the House of Representatives were expected to be

TALKS BEING SPED

U.S. Responds Quickly to Personal Appeal by Soviet Leader

By RICHARD HADWIN
Special to The New York Times

Israel Reports Enlarging Of Foothold on West Bank

By TERENCE ANTON
Special to The New York Times
TEL AVIV, Oct. 20—Israel's "Tahar" the Israeli Army forces on the west bank of the Jordan pushed out to the east, East Coast pushed out to the west and south, working out directions today.
"Including 1000 soldiers, military personnel and equipment" their foothold there and fighting against the Egyptian military, a 100-mile wide Egyptian tank units.

Ervin at First Renounces, Then Accepts Tapes Plan

By RICHARD L. HADWIN
Special to The New York Times
WASHINGTON, Oct. 20—Ervin, who had

RICHARDSON QUILTS OVER ORDER ON COX

By RICHARD L. HADWIN
Special to The New York Times
WASHINGTON, Oct. 20—Richardson

NIXON RESIGNS

BACKGROUND

After the Supreme Court ruled in late July 1974 that Nixon must turn over the remaining tapes, the House Judiciary Committee adopted three articles of impeachment against the president. The charged him with misusing presidential power to violate the constitutional rights of U.S. citizens, obstruction of justice, and defying Judiciary Committee subpoenas.

In early August 1974, Nixon provided transcripts of the eight subpoenaed tapes. The tapes contained the “smoking gun” – the irrefutable evidence that Nixon had knowingly violated the law and that he had known about and had participated in the cover-up of the Watergate break-in from almost the very beginning – something he had steadfastly denied.

Until the tapes were forced out, the idea of such dealings and conversations in the White House seemed beyond belief. The tapes also revealed that the president and his advisors were petty and mean, constantly using vulgar and offensive expletives in their conversations. Republican Senate leaders called the tapes, “a shabby, disgusting, immoral performance.”

The backlash to the last set of tapes was overwhelming. Congressional Republicans – members of Nixon’s own party- concluded that Nixon was guilty and was a liability they could no longer afford. They told the president that his impeachment by the House of Representatives and his removal from office by the Senate were both foregone conclusions, and that he should resign.

Rather than face the near certainty of being forced from office, Nixon resigned on August 9, 1974. In his farewell address, he admitted making some “judgements” that “were wrong,” but he insisted that he had always acted “in what I believed at the time to be the best interests of the nation.” Then he climbed the stairs of the presidential helicopter, turned and gave one last victory salute to his staff, and flew off to political exile in California.

NIXON RESIGNS

EXHIBIT A



NIXON RESIGNS

EXHIBIT B



THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

August 9, 1974

Dear Mr. Secretary:

I hereby resign the Office of President of the
United States.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "Richard Nixon", is written in dark ink. The signature is fluid and characteristic of Nixon's handwriting.

The Honorable Henry A. Kissinger
The Secretary of State
Washington, D. C. 20520

11.35 AM

HK

Name: _____

Journalism Notes

Directions: Complete these questions as you investigate the role that Nixon had in the Watergate break in.

Break in

Background	1. What's Watergate?	
	2. Which office were they in?	
	3. Who did they work for?	
	4. What was Nixon's response?	
Exhibit A	1. What's objects do you see in the cartoon?	
	2. What is the cartoon communicating?	
	3. How does it portray Nixon?	
Exhibit B	1. What are the pieces of evidence?	
	2. What does this prove?	

Investigation Begins

Background	1. Right after the break in what did people of Nixon?	
	2. Who were the first ones to investigate Watergate?	
	3. Who was indicted for the crime?	
	4. How was this more than just a burglary?	
Exhibit A	1. Explain what is going on in the cartoon.	
	2. What is the cartoon communicating?	

	3. Who is Nixon's worst enemy?	
	4. How does this portray Nixon?	

Congressional Hearings

Background	1. Who destroyed evidence? What was his title?	
	2. According to John Dean, who ordered the break in?	
	3. According to Dean, what was Nixon's involvement?	
	4. What did Alexander Butterfield reveal?	
	5. Why did Nixon choose not to hand over the tapes?	
Exhibit A	1. Who wrote Dean's resignation?	
	2. Why does it say Dean will be resigning?	
Exhibit B	1. Explain what is going on in the cartoon.	
	2. How does this portray Nixon?	

Secret Tapes

Background	1. How long of a gap was missing in the tapes?	
	2. Who erased the tapes?	
	3. What did Americans believe?	
	4. Rather than give the tapes over, what did Nixon do?	
	5. What did the tapes conclude?	
	6. What did the Supreme Court decide?	

Exhibit A	1. What's objects do you see in the cartoon?	
	2. What is the cartoon communicating?	
	3. How does it portray Nixon?	
Exhibit B	1. What is this piece of evidence?	
	2. How plausible is this? Could this really have happened? Explain.	

SATURDAY NIGHT MASSACRE

Background	1. What happened on the Saturday Night Massacre?	
	2. Who did Nixon want to resign?	
	3. Which department did Nixon blame?	
	4. Who is the leader of that Department?	
Exhibit A	1. What is the evidence? (Don't just put video! What's going on in the video?)	
	2. What's Nixon's tone?	
	3. Does this prove his guilt? Why or why not?	
Exhibit B	1. What is going on in the world while this scandal is taking place?	
	2. Can a president realistically hold his position while this scandal goes down? What do you think?	

Nixon Resigns

Background	1. Why did Congress adopt three articles of impeachment?	
	2. What's the smoking gun?	
	3. What else did the tapes reveal?	
	4. What did Nixon say in his farewell address?	
Exhibit A	1. What's objects do you see in the cartoon?	
	2. What is the cartoon communicating?	
	3. How does it portray Nixon?	
Exhibit B	1. What is the evidence?	
	2. Why so short? Does this reveal anything?	