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MINDS



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## Episode #283

# Nixon & The Watergate Scandal

## 26th July, 2022

[00:00:00] Hello, hello hello, and welcome to English Learning for Curious Minds, by Leonardo English.

[00:00:12] The show where you can listen to fascinating stories, and learn weird and wonderful things about the world at the same time as improving your English.

[00:00:21] I'm Alastair Budge, and today we are going to be talking about Richard Nixon and the Watergate [Scandal](#)<sup>1</sup>.

[00:00:29] On August 8th of 1974, in the White House Oval Office, a tired looking President Richard Nixon [stared](#)<sup>2</sup> into the camera and announced his [resignation](#)<sup>3</sup> to the American people.

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<sup>1</sup> an event that caused a public feeling of shock and anger

<sup>2</sup> looked in a fixed way

<sup>3</sup> the act of quitting his position

## Nixon & The Watergate Scandal

[00:00:43] With this, he became the first and only, [to date](#)<sup>4</sup>, American president to [resign](#)<sup>5</sup> in office.

[00:00:50] And the reason for this, the so-called Watergate [scandal](#), would have a lasting impact on American politics, trust in [institutions](#)<sup>6</sup>, and even leave a mark on the English language.

[00:01:03] So, let's get right into it, and look at the [scandal](#) that [brought down](#)<sup>7</sup> a president.

[00:01:11] The man at the centre of the Watergate [scandal](#) was Richard Milhous Nixon.

[00:01:17] He was born into a [modest](#)<sup>8</sup> Quaker family in January of 1913 in California.

[00:01:24] After finishing his studies at law school, he served as a Navy lieutenant commander in the Pacific during World War Two, and was then [elected](#)<sup>9</sup> to the House of Representatives as a Republican in 1946.

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<sup>4</sup> until now

<sup>5</sup> quit

<sup>6</sup> established organisations, public services

<sup>7</sup> caused him to lose his position

<sup>8</sup> ordinary, simple

<sup>9</sup> chosen for it by voting

## Nixon & The Watergate Scandal

[00:01:39] With the Cold War developing, Nixon became a national figure after working on the case of Alger Hiss, an American who was accused of having been a soviet [spy](#)<sup>10</sup>.

[00:01:52] This proved his anti-communist [credentials](#)<sup>11</sup>, and helped him make the jump from Congressman to Senator, which he did in 1950, when he was [elected](#) as the Senator for California.

[00:02:06] During this rise to national [prominence](#)<sup>12</sup>, he got a name for himself as someone who was prepared [to play dirty](#)<sup>13</sup> to [get ahead](#)<sup>14</sup>, someone who was prepared to do whatever it took to advance his personal interests.

[00:02:21] In the campaign to become Senator for California, he fiercely attacked his rival, Helen Gahagan Douglas, [portraying](#)<sup>15</sup> her as a communist, producing [misleading](#)<sup>16</sup> [pamphlets](#)<sup>17</sup> about her voting record, and even claiming Douglas was “pink right down to her underwear”.

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<sup>10</sup> a person who was secretly helping the enemies by providing information

<sup>11</sup> qualities, qualifications

<sup>12</sup> the state of being important and famous

<sup>13</sup> act in dishonest or not fair ways

<sup>14</sup> be successful

<sup>15</sup> presenting, describing

<sup>16</sup> giving a false or wrong impression

<sup>17</sup> very small books containing information or opinions, leaflets

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[00:02:40] All of these dirty tactics earned him the nickname ‘[Tricky](#)<sup>18</sup> Dick’.

[00:02:46] I should clarify here that “[tricky](#)” means [deceitful](#)<sup>19</sup> or [dishonest](#)<sup>20</sup>, it doesn’t mean difficult or hard in this context, and Dick is simply a short version of Richard.

[00:02:59] Anyway, [Tricky](#) Dick was becoming a [household name](#)<sup>21</sup>, known as someone who was fiercely anti-communist and would be prepared to go to any lengths to [further](#)<sup>22</sup> American interests.

[00:03:12] It was no surprise, then, when he was chosen, at the age of just 39, to be Dwight Eisenhower’s [running mate](#)<sup>23</sup> in the 1952 presidential [election](#)<sup>24</sup>, and he would go on to serve as his Vice President for eight years, until 1960, during which he completed various diplomatic trips abroad and [earned](#)<sup>25</sup> himself a reputation as a bit of a foreign policy expert.

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<sup>18</sup> using tricks, trying to fool people

<sup>19</sup> keeping the truth hidden to get advantages

<sup>20</sup> not honest or fair

<sup>21</sup> a famous person

<sup>22</sup> promote, advance

<sup>23</sup> the person that he had chosen to help him

<sup>24</sup> the formal choice of a person for a political office by vote

<sup>25</sup> gained, received

## Nixon & The Watergate Scandal

[00:03:39] We should note here, that on the [campaign trail](#)<sup>26</sup> in 1952, Eisenhower left all of the 'negative campaigning' to [Tricky](#) Dick.

[00:03:49] By negative campaigning, I mean spreading what we might today call 'fake news' about political opponents, and sometimes known as '[mudslinging](#)<sup>27</sup>' - all the stuff that Nixon had got a name for already during the campaign to become Senator for California.

[00:04:05] Anyway, life as Eisenhower's number two must have had an effect on Nixon and given him a taste of power. In 1960 he decided [to have a crack](#)<sup>28</sup> at the top job, and ran for President.

[00:04:20] But, 1960 would not be it for Nixon.

[00:04:24] He [narrowly](#)<sup>29</sup> lost out to a younger, much more handsome and more [charismatic](#)<sup>30</sup> candidate, the Democrat John F. Kennedy, who was only 43 when he became president.

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<sup>26</sup> the series of appearances that a politician makes at different locations during a political campaign

<sup>27</sup> the use of not fair insults and accusations in order to change the opinions of people about an opponent

<sup>28</sup> make an attempt, give it a try

<sup>29</sup> only by a small amount

<sup>30</sup> attractive and impressive

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[00:04:35] The White House would have to wait, and **Tricky** Dick needed to take a step back to **plot**<sup>31</sup> his next move.

[00:04:44] That would come in 1962, when he **contested**<sup>32</sup> the race for Governor of his home state of California.

[00:04:51] But he lost, and many, reportedly including Nixon himself, thought his political career was over.

[00:04:59] Immediately afterwards, he did the traditional thing politicians do when they're trying to figure out their next moves: take a trip to Europe, spend more time with their family, and then, in Nixon's case, return to the United States and become a senior partner at a **prestigious**<sup>33</sup> New York law firm.

[00:05:19] But many political '**pundits**<sup>34</sup>', political commentators, sensed that Nixon wanted to be back in the game - presidential politics, that is.

[00:05:29] The problem was that back in 1962, when he unsuccessfully ran for Governor, Nixon had **ruled himself out**<sup>35</sup> of the 1964 **election**.

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<sup>31</sup> secretly plan

<sup>32</sup> took part in the competition for

<sup>33</sup> respected and admired

<sup>34</sup> commentators, specialists

<sup>35</sup> excluded himself from, made himself unavailable for

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[00:05:40] He'd even claimed that his concession speech - the speech losing politicians make to accept defeat - he claimed that it would be "my last press conference."

[00:05:52] So when his former rival President Kennedy was [assassinated](#)<sup>36</sup> in 1963, Nixon [kept to his word](#)<sup>37</sup> and supported the Republican candidate Barry Goldwater [from the sidelines](#)<sup>38</sup>.

[00:06:05] Nixon could only watch as Kennedy's Vice President and successor, Lyndon B. Johnson, won a [landslide](#)<sup>39</sup> victory and [wiped out](#)<sup>40</sup> the Republicans.

[00:06:16] But [Tricky](#) Dick was, even back then, planning his next run at the White House and [plotting](#)<sup>41</sup> for the future.

[00:06:23] Nixon just couldn't resist the pull of the Presidency and would, as we will learn in a few moments, do just about anything - legal, illegal, and indeed, very illegal - to win power and keep it.

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<sup>36</sup> killed for political reasons

<sup>37</sup> did what he had said or promised

<sup>38</sup> without taking part directly

<sup>39</sup> having a great majority of votes

<sup>40</sup> defeated them very easily

<sup>41</sup> making secret plans



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[00:06:39] With the Democrats divided about war in Vietnam and [tension](#)<sup>42</sup> [bubbling](#)<sup>43</sup> in the country over civil rights, Nixon felt he had a [shot](#)<sup>44</sup> - a chance - at winning in 1968.

[00:06:52] This feeling grew when the [incumbent](#)<sup>45</sup>, or sitting, President, the Democrat Lyndon Johnson, shocked everyone and announced that he would not be seeking [reelection](#)<sup>46</sup>.

[00:07:05] And the [turbulence](#)<sup>47</sup> continued.

[00:07:07] The assassinations of both civil rights leader Martin Luther King Jr. and the potential Democratic [nominee](#)<sup>48</sup> Robert F. Kennedy - the younger brother of the already assassinated John F. Kennedy - [sparked](#)<sup>49</sup> violence and [rioting](#)<sup>50</sup> across 130 American cities and resulted in 46 deaths, 20,000 arrests, and more than \$100 million of damage.

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<sup>42</sup> a worrying situation that caused anxiety and nervousness

<sup>43</sup> become more intense and reaching the point of being expressed

<sup>44</sup> chance

<sup>45</sup> holding office at that time, sitting

<sup>46</sup> to be chosen by the people's vote again, to be elected again

<sup>47</sup> a state of conflict or confusion

<sup>48</sup> a person who was selected as a candidate

<sup>49</sup> started

<sup>50</sup> wild and violent disturbance of the peace or protests by a large number of people

## Nixon & The Watergate Scandal

[00:07:32] America was [on the edge](#)<sup>51</sup>, and the country was ready for someone to bring back some normality.

[00:07:39] And after winning the Republican [nomination](#)<sup>52</sup> Nixon [capitalised](#)<sup>53</sup> on this [tension](#), and decided to run for President on a “law and order” [ticket](#)<sup>54</sup>, a “law and order” message.

[00:07:53] This message, combined with criticism of the Democrats' foreign policy record, won him the presidency by a narrow [margin](#)<sup>55</sup>.

[00:08:02] [Tricky](#) Dick was back - and finally, he was in the White House.

[00:08:07] Now, before we get into the Watergate [scandal](#) itself, the act of Nixon's presidency that he is most famous for, in the interests of balance it is worth talking briefly about his first term as President.

[00:08:22] Now, remember that Nixon was a bit of a foreign policy expert?

[00:08:26] Or he had that reputation after his trips to Asia during his time as Vice President?

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<sup>51</sup> very worried and confused

<sup>52</sup> suggestion for that position

<sup>53</sup> took advantage of

<sup>54</sup> message

<sup>55</sup> difference, amount of votes

## Nixon & The Watergate Scandal

[00:08:32] Well, Nixon's Presidency is best remembered - besides Watergate, of course - for 'opening up' China, reducing [tensions](#)<sup>56</sup> with the USSR and establishing the European Protection Agency in 1970.

[00:08:47] He met with the Soviet leader Leonid Brezhnev and [negotiated](#)<sup>57</sup> limits on nuclear weapons, and then, in January of 1973, he made an agreement with North Vietnam to [pull out](#)<sup>58</sup> American troops.

[00:09:02] So, his presidency was not without its achievements.

[00:09:07] But for all of these positive legacies, he would be forever remembered for the Watergate [Scandal](#).

[00:09:15] You might be thinking, after such a long and perhaps unlikely political [comeback](#)<sup>59</sup>, after such a long and difficult road to the Oval Office, and some [initial](#)<sup>60</sup> policy successes, why, and how, did Nixon throw it all away?

[00:09:32] As is often the case with politicians, the origins of Watergate can be [boiled down](#)<sup>61</sup> - or, simplified, we might say - to one word: [reelection](#).

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<sup>56</sup> worrying situations that caused anxiety and nervousness

<sup>57</sup> tried to reach an agreement by talking

<sup>58</sup> remove

<sup>59</sup> return

<sup>60</sup> that happened at the beginning

<sup>61</sup> simplified

## Nixon & The Watergate Scandal

[00:09:44] Paranoid about being [reelected](#)<sup>62</sup> in the 1972 [election](#), Nixon was desperate to [cling onto](#)<sup>63</sup> power and willing to do whatever it took to stay in the White House.

[00:09:56] He was so desperate, in fact, that he even put together a special team of advisers to make sure he was [reelected](#), imaginatively called the 'Committee to Re-Elect the President'.

[00:10:09] Put very simply, CREEP, as it became known, started the Watergate [scandal](#) by ordering a [break-in](#)<sup>64</sup> at the Democratic National Committee's headquarters, the DNC headquarters, at the Watergate [complex](#)<sup>65</sup> in Washington D.C.

[00:10:25] They [bugged](#)<sup>66</sup> phone lines, they put recording devices on Democratic phone lines, they stole important documents to try to '[dig up dirt](#)<sup>67</sup>', or find out useful information, on Nixon's Democratic rival, George McGovern, for the upcoming [election](#) in 1972.

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<sup>62</sup> chosen by the people's vote again

<sup>63</sup> hold on too, keep having

<sup>64</sup> illegal entering

<sup>65</sup> group of similar buildings or facilities

<sup>66</sup> hid very small recording devices in them in order to listen to or record their conversations secretly

<sup>67</sup> discover damaging information about them

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[00:10:44] Obviously this was illegal - there's nothing wrong with trying to find out information about your rival, but there is something very wrong with breaking into a hotel and secretly listening to your rival's phone calls.

[00:10:57] And they might have [got away with it](#)<sup>68</sup>, had it not been for a [keen-eyed](#)<sup>69</sup> security guard.

[00:11:04] In the early hours of June 17th, of 1972, a security guard named Frank Wills noticed that there was something [fishy](#)<sup>70</sup> going on, there was suspicious activity in the Watergate building, where the Democratic National Committee headquarters were.

[00:11:21] There was [tape](#)<sup>71</sup> put on the locks of the doors, which allowed them to close but didn't lock.

[00:11:27] The security guard removed the [tape](#), but when he returned he found that someone had put the [tape](#) back on to the locks.

[00:11:36] He called the police, who went into the DNC offices and found and [arrested](#)<sup>72</sup> five men, the police caught them [red handed](#)<sup>73</sup>.

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<sup>68</sup> didn't face the consequences

<sup>69</sup> having the ability to notice and recognise things, very observant

<sup>70</sup> suspicious

<sup>71</sup> a narrow strip or binding, used to hold or fasten something

<sup>72</sup> caught

<sup>73</sup> in the act

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[00:11:46] These five men, it [turned out](#)<sup>74</sup>, were high-ranking members of CREEP, Nixon's committee for [reelection](#).

[00:11:55] Of course, they didn't admit to this immediately, the connection between the [burglars](#)<sup>75</sup> and the White House was not immediately obvious, but it was quickly made when a copy of the CREEP phone number was found on one of the [burglars](#).

[00:12:11] The White House, of course, [distanced itself](#)<sup>76</sup> from what one spokesman called a 'third rate [burglary](#)<sup>77</sup>' attempt, and then, in an August speech, Nixon [assured](#)<sup>78</sup> the American people that he and the White House had nothing to do with the [break-in](#).

[00:12:28] This promise seemed to have done its job, as in November of 1972 [Tricky](#) Dick, or rather President Richard Nixon, was [reelected](#) in a [landslide victory](#)<sup>79</sup>.

[00:12:41] But the story didn't stop there.

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<sup>74</sup> it proved to be the case

<sup>75</sup> the people who had illegally entered the building

<sup>76</sup> said it wasn't involved

<sup>77</sup> the act of illegally entering the building

<sup>78</sup> told them that it was certain

<sup>79</sup> a result in which he had the great majority of votes

## Nixon & The Watergate Scandal

[00:12:44] And as it **turns out**<sup>80</sup>, it would be the very committee that Nixon had put together to **ensure**<sup>81</sup> his **reelection** that would be his **downfall**<sup>82</sup> and cause him to be **booted out**<sup>83</sup>, **kicked out**<sup>84</sup> of office.

[00:12:59] While the White House claimed to know nothing about the **break-in**, behind closed doors, this committee was trying **to cover its tracks**<sup>85</sup>, stop the investigation into the **break-in**, and **distance itself**<sup>86</sup> from the five **burglars** who were arrested that night in June 1972.

[00:13:17] They destroyed evidence and burned transcripts taken from a previous failed **wiretap**<sup>87</sup> at the DNC headquarters.

[00:13:25] Yes, CREEP had actually broken into the DNC before, and on the night they were caught, they were actually returning to try and fix a **faulty**<sup>88</sup> **wiretap**.

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<sup>80</sup> was proved to be the case

<sup>81</sup> make certain to happen

<sup>82</sup> cause for his loss of power and status

<sup>83</sup> forced to leave his position

<sup>84</sup> forced to leave his position

<sup>85</sup> to hide their activities

<sup>86</sup> show that it wasn't involved

<sup>87</sup> the act of secretly using recording devices

<sup>88</sup> not working properly

## Nixon & The Watergate Scandal

[00:13:37] From the very night the police caught the [burglars](#), Nixon and his staff began what we might call today a 'disinformation campaign', providing fake [alibis](#)<sup>89</sup>, distancing themselves from the [burglary](#), and paying people off with 'hush money'<sup>90</sup> - payments to [ensure](#) someone's silence.

[00:13:58] Crucially, on June 23rd of 1972, less than a week after the [break-in](#), Nixon ordered that the FBI be told, "Don't go any further into this case, [period](#)<sup>91</sup>!"

[00:14:12] This order would later be revealed in what became known as the 'Nixon [tapes](#)<sup>92</sup>'.

[00:14:18] Nixon recorded all conversations in the Oval Office, and it would [transpire](#)<sup>93</sup> that he had some pretty [incriminating](#)<sup>94</sup> conversations, some conversations that showed he knew exactly what was going on.

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<sup>89</sup> proofs that they weren't there at the time of the crime

<sup>90</sup> money given to buy people's silence

<sup>91</sup> no further discussion needed, full stop

<sup>92</sup> cassettes, recordings

<sup>93</sup> become known

<sup>94</sup> making them seem guilty of crimes



## Nixon & The Watergate Scandal

[00:14:31] While Nixon tried to [brush the official investigation under the carpet<sup>95</sup>](#), two young reporters at the Washington Post called Bob Woodward and Carl Bernstein wouldn't let it go.

[00:14:43] Their original reporting on the [scandal](#) has been described as “maybe the single greatest reporting effort of all time” and played a big role in [shaping<sup>96</sup>](#) public opinion.

[00:14:56] A lot of their information came from an [anonymous<sup>97</sup>](#) source known only as ‘Deepthroat’ who they met in secret and, it later turned out, had been a high ranking FBI agent involved in the investigation from the start.

[00:15:11] Deepthroat revealed that Nixon's [coverup<sup>98</sup>](#) was far more serious than the [break-in](#) itself.

[00:15:18] As he became increasingly [paranoid<sup>99</sup>](#) that he would be connected to the crime, Nixon then asked the CIA to block the FBI investigation, and remember he had already tried to tell the FBI to stop the investigation in the first place.

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<sup>95</sup> keep it secret

<sup>96</sup> affecting, influencing

<sup>97</sup> whose name was not known

<sup>98</sup> attempt or try to keep it secret

<sup>99</sup> extremely nervous and worried

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[00:15:35] Now, [breaking in](#)<sup>100</sup>, stealing documents, and using [wiretaps](#)<sup>101</sup> was one thing, but [obstructing justice](#)<sup>102</sup> was another, much more serious crime.

[00:15:46] [Tricky](#) Dick was [getting in over his head](#)<sup>103</sup> - that's to say, getting himself involved in a situation he couldn't get himself out of.

[00:15:56] Several of the [burglars pleaded](#)<sup>104</sup> guilty - encouraged, or most likely [threatened](#)<sup>105</sup> to do so by Nixon's team - in order to avoid a trial, but facing growing [media scrutiny](#)<sup>106</sup> some began to [crack under the pressure](#)<sup>107</sup>.

[00:16:11] In July of 1973, Alexander Butterfield, Nixon's deputy assistant, [testified](#)<sup>108</sup> in court that Nixon recorded all of his conversations.

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<sup>100</sup> entering the building illegally

<sup>101</sup> recording devices

<sup>102</sup> blocking or interfering with the process of justice

<sup>103</sup> getting himself involved in a situation he couldn't get himself out of

<sup>104</sup> stated formally in the court that they were

<sup>105</sup> forced to do it by warning them that they would be harmed if they didn't

<sup>106</sup> detailed examination or search by the media

<sup>107</sup> start talking because of being very stressed

<sup>108</sup> gave information in a law court

## Nixon & The Watergate Scandal

[00:16:23] For people who believed that Nixon was guilty, which of course he certainly was, these **tapes** were the **smoking gun**<sup>109</sup>, the evidence that unquestionably connected him to the crime, the crime of **obstruction of justice**<sup>110</sup>.

[00:16:39] The only question that remained for these people was how to get their hands on them.

[00:16:44] It wasn't only the journalists, Woodward and Bernstein, who were trying to **track down**<sup>111</sup> the **tapes**, but there was also a special investigation set up, the United States Senate Watergate Committee, which was tasked with finding out what happened.

[00:17:00] Pressure was building as 1973 went on, and the Nixon team tried to claim that the **tapes** were protected by Presidential privilege, which means the President can choose to **withhold**<sup>112</sup> confidential communication under certain circumstances.

[00:17:17] In fact, years later, in a series of interviews with the British journalist David Frost in 1977, Nixon put the presidential privilege argument very **bluntly**<sup>113</sup>, claiming: "When the president does it, that means that it is not illegal."

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<sup>109</sup> evidence

<sup>110</sup> blocking or interfering with the process of justice

<sup>111</sup> find, discover

<sup>112</sup> refuse to give or stop

<sup>113</sup> in a direct and simple way

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[00:17:35] But it was illegal, of course - very illegal, in fact - and Nixon knew it.

[00:17:41] As the [coverup](#) started to [unravel](#)<sup>114</sup>, Nixon [fired](#)<sup>115</sup> special prosecutor Archibald Cox, and on October 20th of 1973, officials from the Justice Department began [resigning](#)<sup>116</sup> in protest in what became known as the ‘Saturday Night [Massacre](#)<sup>117</sup>’.

[00:17:58] In response Nixon gave up some of the [tapes](#), but not all.

[00:18:03] By the start of 1974 he had lost control of the [scandal](#) and his [coverup](#) and [obstruction of justice](#) were becoming clearer.

[00:18:13] In early March, a grand jury [indicted](#)<sup>118</sup> seven of Nixon’s [aides](#)<sup>119</sup>, and the jury, nervous about how they should refer to the President, called him an “[unindicted](#)<sup>120</sup> co-conspirator.”

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<sup>114</sup> become known, clear up

<sup>115</sup> dismissed, ended their service

<sup>116</sup> quitting

<sup>117</sup> violent loss of many lives

<sup>118</sup> accused officially

<sup>119</sup> assistants

<sup>120</sup> not officially accused

## Nixon & The Watergate Scandal

[00:18:27] With nowhere to go, and his [aides indicted](#), in July the Supreme Court forced Nixon to [hand over](#)<sup>121</sup> the [tapes](#).

[00:18:35] Still, even then, Nixon tried everything that he could to avoid it - can you blame him?

[00:18:41] He'd literally recorded all of his [lawbreaking](#)<sup>122</sup>.

[00:18:46] Then, the House Judiciary Committee voted to [impeach](#)<sup>123</sup> Nixon for abuses of power, the cover-up, violations of the Constitution, and [obstruction of justice](#).

[00:18:58] For [Tricky](#) Dick, [the game was up](#)<sup>124</sup>, and he [handed over](#)<sup>125</sup> the complete [tapes](#) on August 5th of 1974.

[00:19:07] Knowing he was about to be [impeached](#)<sup>126</sup>, three days after [handing over](#)<sup>127</sup> the [tapes](#) he became the first, and still, to this day, the only U.S President to [resign](#) in office.

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<sup>121</sup> give

<sup>122</sup> illegal activities

<sup>123</sup> make a formal statement saying that the president was guilty of a serious crime

<sup>124</sup> his illegal activities could no longer continue

<sup>125</sup> gave

<sup>126</sup> formally accused of being guilty

<sup>127</sup> giving

## Nixon & The Watergate Scandal

[00:19:19] “By taking this action,” he said from the Oval Office, “I hope that I will have [hastened](#)<sup>128</sup> the start of the process of healing which is so desperately needed in America.”

[00:19:31] He might have been right that America needed healing, but he didn’t actually admit to any kind of [wrongdoing](#)<sup>129</sup> in his speech, claiming that he always thought he was doing what was best for the country.

[00:19:45] The presidency was passed to his Vice President, Gerald Ford, who some historians believe was offered the job on the condition that he would [pardon](#)<sup>130</sup> Nixon.

[00:19:56] Shortly after being [sworn in](#)<sup>131</sup> as President, Ford did indeed [pardon](#) Nixon of all crimes.

[00:20:03] Ford said that he wanted to [put the issue to bed](#)<sup>132</sup> - that is to say, end it - and told the American people that “our long national nightmare is over.”

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<sup>128</sup> made it happen sooner or more quickly

<sup>129</sup> illegal behaviour

<sup>130</sup> formally forgive

<sup>131</sup> accepted into office by making a formal promise to be honest or loyal

<sup>132</sup> end the issue

## Nixon & The Watergate Scandal

[00:20:15] Nixon's reputation might have been [tarnished](#)<sup>133</sup>, badly marked, but he didn't spend a day [behind bars](#)<sup>134</sup>, a day in prison.

[00:20:25] Not all his staff were so lucky.

[00:20:28] Nixon's Attorney General John Mitchell served 19 months in prison, while the [mastermind](#)<sup>135</sup> behind the Watergate [break-in](#), G. Gordon Liddy, a former FBI agent no less, did over four years.

[00:20:42] In terms of the legacy of Watergate, this very public [scandal](#), the Watergate [scandal](#), it changed American politics, society, and history forever.

[00:20:53] Americans were already increasingly divided and [distrustful](#)<sup>136</sup> of authority before Nixon even got the White House, so when he was publicly forced to [resign in disgrace](#)<sup>137</sup> many Americans concluded that politicians and presidents were all liars with something to hide.

[00:21:12] It's also why, many historians argue, Nixon's two successors - Ford, and then Democrat Jimmy Carter - were such weak and ineffective Presidents.

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<sup>133</sup> badly marked

<sup>134</sup> in prison

<sup>135</sup> the person who had planned and directed it

<sup>136</sup> not able or willing to trust

<sup>137</sup> in shame or dishonour

## Nixon & The Watergate Scandal

[00:21:24] After the expansion of Presidential power throughout the 1950's and 60's, Nixon, especially his claims that he couldn't be held responsible for his crimes, this was viewed as the [climax<sup>138</sup>](#) of what is known as the 'Imperial Presidency.'

[00:21:41] Thanks to the excellent reporting of Woodward and Bernstein, the press began concentrating much more on what Presidents and politicians were doing [behind the scenes<sup>139</sup>](#), making sure they were reporting on what was actually happening, not just what the White House was telling them.

[00:21:59] Congress, too, began [reasserting<sup>140</sup>](#) itself and trying to rebalance the [power dynamic<sup>141</sup>](#) between branches of government.

[00:22:07] Ultimately, as far as the American people are concerned, the people felt - and heard, literally, [on tape<sup>142</sup>](#) - that the President had lied to them.

[00:22:18] Nixon and Watergate's true legacy, therefore, is that it [solidified<sup>143</sup>](#) suspicion of politicians.

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<sup>138</sup> highest point, peak

<sup>139</sup> out of sight of the public, secretly

<sup>140</sup> making it stronger again

<sup>141</sup> the way in which power worked

<sup>142</sup> recorded on a cassette or tape

<sup>143</sup> made it stronger



## Nixon & The Watergate Scandal

[00:22:25] The belief that they lie and [deceive](#)<sup>144</sup>, and that they can't be trusted, was there for all to see and hear in Nixon's [nasally](#)<sup>145</sup>, [monotone](#)<sup>146</sup> voice as he looked at the camera and lied to the American people.

[00:22:40] And on a linguistic note, the Watergate [scandal](#) left a mark on the English language.

[00:22:46] Whenever there is any kind of [scandal](#), journalists like to add the [suffix](#)<sup>147</sup> of "gate" to the word, so there was Partygate, with Boris Johnson, or even Nipplegate, where part of Janet Jackson's breast was [exposed](#)<sup>148</sup> during the Super Bowl.

[00:23:03] But the most lasting legacy is, of course, to do with trust in politicians.

[00:23:09] Undoubtedly, Richard Nixon was not the first or last US president to [overstep](#)<sup>149</sup> his power.

[00:23:15] But the Watergate [Scandal](#) made Nixon the face - and the voice - of an idea that remains to this day: that politicians are dishonest and can't be trusted.

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<sup>144</sup> behave in dishonest ways

<sup>145</sup> coming through the nose

<sup>146</sup> without colour or variety, unchanging

<sup>147</sup> a group of letters added at the end of a word to make a new word

<sup>148</sup> not covered, visible

<sup>149</sup> go beyond in an unacceptable way

## Nixon & The Watergate Scandal

[00:23:26] As far as Nixon was concerned, perhaps it was not too much of a surprise.

People had seen how he had behaved throughout his political career, and it was clear that he would do whatever he thought was necessary to stay in power.

[00:23:42] And if that wasn't enough, there was a clue right there in his nickname.

[00:23:47] After all, he wasn't known as [Tricky](#) Dick for nothing.

[00:23:50] OK then, that is it for today's episode on the Watergate [Scandal](#), the story of one man's [lust](#)<sup>150</sup> for power and his willingness to do anything to keep it.

[00:24:03] I hope it was an interesting one, and whether you knew a lot about Watergate before, or this is the first time you'd actually [dug into](#)<sup>151</sup> the story of it, well I hope you learned something new.

[00:24:15] As always, I would love to know what you thought about this episode.

[00:24:19] If you were alive at the time of the Watergate [scandal](#), how do you remember it?

[00:24:23] How do you think Nixon [ranks](#)<sup>152</sup> on the list of US presidents?

[00:24:27] How do you think his legacy would have been different if it hadn't been for Watergate?

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<sup>150</sup> strong desire

<sup>151</sup> learned details about

<sup>152</sup> appears, is presented

[00:24:32] I would love to know, so let's get this discussion started.

[00:24:36] You can head right into our community forum, which is at [community.leonardoenglish.com](https://community.leonardoenglish.com) and get chatting away to other curious minds.

[00:24:45] You've been listening to English Learning for Curious Minds, by Leonardo English.

[00:24:50] I'm Alastair Budge, you stay safe, and I'll catch you in the next episode.

[END OF EPISODE]

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## Key vocabulary

<b>Word</b>	<b>Definition</b>
<b>Scandal</b>	an event that caused a public feeling of shock and anger
<b>Stared</b>	looked in a fixed way
<b>Resignation</b>	the act of quitting his position
<b>To date</b>	until now
<b>Resign</b>	quit
<b>Institutions</b>	established organisations, public services
<b>Brought down</b>	caused him to lose his position
<b>Modest</b>	ordinary, simple
<b>Elected</b>	chosen for it by voting
<b>Spy</b>	a person who was secretly helping the enemies by providing information
<b>Credentials</b>	qualities, qualifications
<b>Prominence</b>	the state of being important and famous

**Nixon & The Watergate Scandal**

<b>To play dirty</b>	act in dishonest or not fair ways
<b>Get ahead</b>	be successful
<b>Portraying</b>	presenting, describing
<b>Misleading</b>	giving a false or wrong impression
<b>Pamphlets</b>	very small books containing information or opinions, leaflets
<b>Tricky</b>	using tricks, trying to fool people
<b>Deceitful</b>	keeping the truth hidden to get advantages
<b>Dishonest</b>	not honest or fair
<b>Household name</b>	a famous person
<b>Further</b>	promote, advance
<b>Running mate</b>	the person that he had chosen to help him
<b>Election</b>	the formal choice of a person for a political office by vote
<b>Earned</b>	gained, received
<b>Campaign trail</b>	the series of appearances that a politician makes at different locations during a political campaign
<b>Mudslinging</b>	the use of not fair insults and accusations in order to change the

**Nixon & The Watergate Scandal**

opinions of people about an opponent

**To have a crack** make an attempt, give it a try

**Narrowly** only by a small amount

**Charismatic** attractive and impressive

**Plot** secretly plan

**Contested** took part in the competition for

**Prestigious** respected and admired

**Pundits** commentators, specialists

**Ruled himself out** excluded himself from, made himself unavailable for

**Assassinated** killed for political reasons

**Kept to his word** did what he had said or promised

**From the sidelines** without taking part directly

**Landslide** having a great majority of votes

**Wiped out** defeated them very easily

**Plotting** making secret plans

Nixon & The Watergate Scandal

<b>Tension</b>	a worrying situation that caused anxiety and nervousness
<b>Bubbling</b>	become more intense and reaching the point of being expressed
<b>Shot</b>	chance
<b>Incumbent</b>	holding office at that time, sitting
<b>Reelection</b>	to be chosen by the people's vote again, to be elected again
<b>Turbulence</b>	a state of conflict or confusion
<b>Nominee</b>	a person who was selected as a candidate
<b>Sparked</b>	started
<b>Rioting</b>	wild and violent disturbance of the peace or protests by a large number of people
<b>On the edge</b>	very worried and confused
<b>Nomination</b>	suggestion for that position
<b>Capitalised</b>	took advantage of
<b>Ticket</b>	message
<b>Margin</b>	difference, amount of votes
<b>Tensions</b>	worrying situations that caused anxiety and nervousness

**Nixon & The Watergate Scandal**

<b>Negotiated</b>	tried to reach an agreement by talking
<b>Pull out</b>	remove
<b>Comeback</b>	return
<b>Initial</b>	that happened at the beginning
<b>Boiled down</b>	simplified
<b>Reelected</b>	chosen by the people's vote again
<b>Cling onto</b>	hold on too, keep having
<b>Break-in</b>	illegal entering
<b>Complex</b>	group of similar buildings or facilities
<b>Bugged</b>	hid very small recording devices in them in order to listen to or record their conversations secretly
<b>Dig up dirt</b>	discover damaging information about them
<b>Got away with it</b>	didn't face the consequences
<b>Keen-eyed</b>	having the ability to notice and recognise things, very observant
<b>Fishy</b>	suspicious
<b>Tape</b>	a narrow strip or binding, used to hold or fasten something



**Nixon & The Watergate Scandal**

<b>Arrested</b>	caught
<b>Red handed</b>	in the act
<b>Turned out</b>	it proved to be the case
<b>Burglars</b>	the people who had illegally entered the building
<b>Distanced itself</b>	said it wasn't involved
<b>Burglary</b>	the act of illegally entering the building
<b>Assured</b>	told them that it was certain
<b>Landslide victory</b>	a result in which he had the great majority of votes
<b>Turns out</b>	was proved to be the case
<b>Ensure</b>	make certain to happen
<b>Downfall</b>	cause for his loss of power and status
<b>Booted out</b>	forced to leave his position
<b>Kicked out</b>	forced to leave his position
<b>To cover its tracks</b>	to hide their activities
<b>Distance itself</b>	show that it wasn't involved

**Nixon & The Watergate Scandal**

<b>Wiretap</b>	the act of secretly using recording devices
<b>Faulty</b>	not working properly
<b>Alibis</b>	proofs that they weren't there at the time of the crime
<b>Hush money</b>	money given to buy people's silence
<b>Period</b>	no further discussion needed, full stop
<b>Tapes</b>	cassettes, recordings
<b>Transpire</b>	become known
<b>Incriminating</b>	making them seem guilty of crimes
<b>Brush the official investigation under the carpet</b>	keep it secret
<b>Shaping</b>	affecting, influencing
<b>Anonymous</b>	whose name was not known
<b>Coverup</b>	attempt or try to keep it secret
<b>Paranoid</b>	extremely nervous and worried
<b>Breaking in</b>	entering the building illegally

**Nixon & The Watergate Scandal**

<b>Wiretaps</b>	recording devices
<b>Obstructing justice</b>	blocking or interfering with the process of justice
<b>Getting in over his head</b>	getting himself involved in a situation he couldn't get himself out of
<b>Pleaded</b>	stated formally in the court that they were
<b>Threatened</b>	forced to do it by warning them that they would be harmed if they didn't
<b>Media scrutiny</b>	detailed examination or search by the media
<b>Crack under the pressure</b>	start talking because of being very stressed
<b>Testified</b>	gave information in a law court
<b>Smoking gun</b>	evidence
<b>Obstruction of justice</b>	blocking or interfering with the process of justice
<b>Track down</b>	find, discover
<b>Withhold</b>	refuse to give or stop
<b>Bluntly</b>	in a direct and simple way

**Nixon & The Watergate Scandal**

<b>Unravel</b>	become known, clear up
<b>Fired</b>	dismissed, ended their service
<b>Resigning</b>	quitting
<b>Massacre</b>	violent loss of many lives
<b>Indicted</b>	accused officially
<b>Aides</b>	assistants
<b>Unindicted</b>	not officially accused
<b>Hand over</b>	give
<b>Lawbreaking</b>	illegal activities
<b>Impeach</b>	make a formal statement saying that the president was guilty of a serious crime
<b>The game was up</b>	his illegal activities could no longer continue
<b>Handed over</b>	gave
<b>Impeached</b>	formally accused of being guilty
<b>Handing over</b>	giving
<b>Hastened</b>	made it happen sooner or more quickly

**Nixon & The Watergate Scandal**

<b>Wrongdoing</b>	illegal behaviour
<b>Pardon</b>	formally forgive
<b>Sworn in</b>	accepted into office by making a formal promise to be honest or loyal
<b>Put the issue to bed</b>	end the issue
<b>Tarnished</b>	badly marked
<b>Behind bars</b>	in prison
<b>Mastermind</b>	the person who had planned and directed it
<b>Distrustful</b>	not able or willing to trust
<b>In disgrace</b>	in shame or dishonour
<b>Climax</b>	highest point, peak
<b>Behind the scenes</b>	out of sight of the public, secretly
<b>Reasserting</b>	making it stronger again
<b>Power dynamic</b>	the way in which power worked
<b>On tape</b>	recorded on a cassette or tape
<b>Solidified</b>	made it stronger

Nixon & The Watergate Scandal

<b>Deceive</b>	behave in dishonest ways
<b>Nasally</b>	coming through the nose
<b>Monotone</b>	without colour or variety, unchanging
<b>Suffix</b>	a group of letters added at the end of a word to make a new word
<b>Exposed</b>	not covered, visible
<b>Overstep</b>	go beyond in an unacceptable way
<b>Lust</b>	strong desire
<b>Dug into</b>	learned details about
<b>Ranks</b>	appears, is presented

*We'd love to get your feedback on this episode.*

*What did you like? What could we do better?*

*What did you struggle to understand?*

*Let us know in the forum [community.leonardoenglish.com](https://community.leonardoenglish.com)*