

# Unraveling the Watergate Grab-Bag

By LAWRENCE A. ARMOUR

Under ordinary circumstances, "All The President's Men," the Watergate whodunit by Washington Post reporters Carl Bernstein and Bob Woodward, would have been shot down by the pre-publication publicity. For a book that still is a week short of its "publication" date, it's already stirred up quite a storm.

The folks at Columbia, for instance, liked the raw material so much they

## The Bookshelf

"All The President's Men"

By Carl Bernstein and Bob Woodward.  
Simon & Schuster. 349 pages. \$8.95.

awarded the Post a Pulitzer. Other votes of confidence came from Playboy, the Warner paperback people, the Book of the Month Club and Robert Redford, who to date have collectively laid out more than \$1.5 million for rights to various pieces of the package. And then, of course, there was that other fellow from Washington, who upstaging Simon & Schuster, dashed off a 1,308-page Watergate transcript.

But the book by Bernstein and Woodward—or "Woodstein," as they were dubbed by their newsroom colleagues—was worth waiting for. Indeed, while it's one thing to know the butler did it, it's quite another to know how he did it and who helped him pull it off. Thus, if nothing else, "All The President's Men" is a great guide for people like me who still have trouble figuring out where Ehrlichman begins and Haldeman ends and how the Chapins, Colsons, Caulfields, Kalmbachs and Kleindienst all tie together.

As it happens, the book offers a great deal more, including brevity (it's one-third the length of the White House version), good, tight writing and a willingness to call an expletive an expletive. It's packed with the sort of suspense usually reserved for the mystery counter. And its step-by-step development of the grab-bag we now call Watergate—the break-in and bugging, the cover-up, the slush fund and the Mexican laundry men, the dirty tricks and all the rest—provides a framework for following the drama that continues to unfold about us.

For "Woodstein," it all began at 9 a.m. on Saturday, June 17, 1972. Five men had been arrested the night before at Democratic National Committee headquarters in the Watergate office-apartment building complex. When one of the five turned out to be a former employe of the CIA, what had seemed like a clumsy, third-rate burglary attempt took on new dimensions and Woodward and Bernstein went looking for the meaning.

At first, they had trouble working together. The 29-year-old Woodward was a graduate of Yale and a former Naval officer, the 28-year-old Bernstein a long-haired college dropout who had started as a copy boy at 16. According to the authors, who neatly skirt what could have been a problem by taking a third-person approach to the narrative, "Bernstein looked like one of those counterculture journalists that Woodward despised. . . . Bernstein thought that Woodward's rapid rise at the Post had less to do with his ability than his establishment credentials."

But the two soon realized that their overlapping talents comprised the raw material for powerful, synergistic union. And six weeks later, after several trips to Florida and days of exhausting legwork in Washington, they jointly bylined the disclosure that a \$25,000 check earmarked for the Nixon campaign had been deposited in the bank account of the one of the five Watergate burglars. As the Post's City Editor Barry Sussman put it: "We've never had a story like this. Just never."

And that, of course, was just the beginning. Finding the offices of the Committee for the Re-election of the President (CRP) impossible to penetrate during the day, the reporters donned their cloaks and daggers, obtained a list of CRP employes and began a series of after-hours home visitations. Most of the staffers were too frightened to talk. But then, just as the dynamic duo was about to throw in the sponge, they stumbled across one, code-named "The Bookkeeper," who fed them leads which eventually tied the slush fund in Maurice Stans' office to Gordon Liddy and finally to John Mitchell himself.

There were other contacts: the lawyer from Nashville, who told Bernstein that an old Army buddy named Donald Segretti had asked him to participate in some seamy activities on behalf of the Nixon campaign; the secretary, now living in Milwaukee, who confirmed that a special White House phone that John Ehrlichman's office had installed for Howard Hunt was billed to her Alexandria address; and people in the Justice Department, the Treasury and other agencies who provided important leads along the way.

The key figure, however, was "Deep Throat," a Woodward contact who worked in the Executive Branch and who seemed to have intimate knowledge of everything happening at both the White House and the CRP. The phone being too dangerous, Woodward would signal Deep Throat by moving a flower pot to the back of his balcony; the two would then meet at 2 a.m. the next morning in a pre-designated underground parking garage. Although Deep Throat would never offer fresh informa-

tion, he would confirm or deny the stories the reporters had dug out of others and point them in fruitful directions.

Bit by bit, the leads, legwork, hunches and the like began to make sense. Then, all of a sudden, it one day became clear that the June break-in at the Watergate was part of a massive spying and sabotage effort that was okayed, funded and often directed by men who spent their nine-to-five hours in the White House.

The road to the discovery was marred by numerous detours and setbacks, the most serious being the time the reporters misinterpreted an informant and prematurely blew the whistle on Haldeman. But later there was the pleasure of hearing Ron Ziegler, who had laced into the "shabby journalism" being practiced by The Washington Post, telling a UPI reporter, "I was over enthusiastic. I would apologize to the Post and I would apologize to Mr. Woodward and Mr. Bernstein."

For some strange reason, Simon & Schuster has scheduled the official publication of "All The President's Men" for June 18. It's already at the bookstore around the corner, however, and copies are probably available elsewhere. We suggest you get one. It makes for real fine reading.

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