

Weighing the Coverage

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More than four in ten Americans (44 per cent) in the latest survey believe that the mass media — newspapers, television and radio — have provided “too much” coverage of Watergate, but 38 per cent say the extent of coverage has been “about right” and 11 per cent want more of it.

A retired business executive, interviewed in the latest Gallup survey, had this to say about Watergate: “The press and television somehow have not awakened to the fact that the Watergate movie is over. The lynching party has hanged the bad guys. All that remains is to cut them down, bury their bodies and then tip off the sheriff’s office. We can then wait a few years to see Son of Watergate.”

A different point of view is expressed by a 26-year-old secretary: “I feel that we need to keep abreast of what is happening in this case and believe that TV and journalists in general are doing their share to bring the facts to the people.”

A middle-aged woman executive puts her views more succinctly: “Who else would dig up all of this garbage and inform the public if it weren’t for the newspapers — certainly not the President.”

Opinion on the issue is highly partisan, with two out of every three Republicans thinking there has been too much coverage of Watergate by the media. Democrats lean to this view, as well, but by a far smaller margin, with 31 per cent saying “too much” and 14 per cent “too little.”

Following is the question asked:

With regard to the Watergate affair, do you think the mass media — that is, newspapers, television and radio — have provided too much coverage, about the right amount, or too little?

Here are the national results and results by key groups:

	Too Much	Too Little	About Right	No Opinion
	%	%	%	%
National	44	11	38	7
College	44	6	48	2
High school	44	14	36	6
Grade school	42	12	29	17
Under 30 years	38	15	43	4
30-49 years	44	10	39	7
50 and over	48	10	34	8
East	42	11	41	6
Midwest	44	14	36	6
South	50	9	35	6
West	39	12	43*	6
Republicans	56	6	23	5
Democrats	31	14	49	6
Independents	43	12	39	6