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The Final Days



BOB WOODWARD
CARL BERNSTEIN

Authors of **ALL THE PRESIDENT'S MEN**

"An extraordinary work of reportage on the epic political story of our time" *NEWSWEEK*

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To those who generously gave us their time, their recollections, notes, diaries, memos, files—and candor; they made this book possible.

And to Francie and to Nora.

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Finally, with affection and esteem, we thank Alice Mayhew, our editor, for the hundreds of hours she spent with us and with this manuscript.

B. W.

C. B.

AUTHORS' NOTE

The Final Days is the work of four people. Scott Armstrong, a former Senate Watergate Committee investigator, and Al Kamen, a free-lance writer/researcher, assisted us full time in the reporting, research and some of the writing. Their contributions were immeasurable. We are the beneficiaries of their intelligence, imagination, sense of organization and diligence. We will never be able to thank them enough.

FOREWORD

As reporters for the *Washington Post*, we began covering the Watergate story a few hours after five men were arrested at the Democratic National headquarters on June 17, 1972. Our work for the *Post* on that story lasted more than two years—until Richard M. Nixon resigned the presidency on August 9, 1974.

After the resignation, some of our most reliable sources said that the real story of those final days of the Nixon presidency had not been adequately told; to report that story and sort through the contradictions would require a concentrated effort of perhaps a year or more. Our editors at the *Post* agreed. We took a leave of absence from the paper and set up an office on the sixth floor of the *Post* building. Scott Armstrong, a former Senate Watergate Committee investigator, and Al Kamen, a free-lance writer/researcher, were hired to assist us.

We divided the project into twenty-two areas of inquiry:

- President Nixon
- the Nixon family
- key White House aides
- the White House lawyers
- other senior members of the White House staff
- the presidential speech-writing staff
- the White House press office
- former Nixon aides
- the President's personal staff
- the medical staff
- the congressional liaison staff
- the anti-impeachment lobby
- the office of Secretary of State Kissinger
- the other Cabinet members

the office of Vice-President Ford
the unofficial transition team
the House and Senate leadership
the House Judiciary Committee
the Office of the Watergate Special Prosecutor
the Senate Watergate Committee
others who visited or talked with the President
the public record—newspaper stories, books, public
statements, testimony and documents

From these areas of inquiry, we drew up a preliminary list of several hundred people to be interviewed. We spent six months at the task. *The Final Days* is based on interviews with 394 people. Some persons spent dozens of hours with us and volunteered information freely; one person was interviewed seventeen times. Many supplied us with contemporaneous notes, memoranda, correspondence, logs, calendars and diaries. Others granted interviews simply to give their version of events or to respond to information we had obtained elsewhere. A few, including President Nixon, declined to be interviewed.

All interviews were conducted "on background"; that is, they were on the record—we could use the information—but only upon our assurance that the identity of the source would remain confidential. With this guarantee, those we talked to were willing to give us information we would never otherwise have been able to obtain.

In general, we tried to interview the principals described in *The Final Days* only after extensive details had already been gathered from members of their staffs. We made clear to each person that we would attempt to check every detail.

The notes from each interview were typed and each significant detail was indexed under the appropriate area of inquiry. The subject areas were further divided chronologically into each of the final 100 days of the Nixon Administration—the period we initially planned to describe in the narrative. In the course of interviewing we realized that to explain the last 100 days we would have to deal extensively with earlier periods, particularly the six months after April 30, 1973, when President Nixon's chief aides resigned.

We have attempted to check every detail in the course

of reconstructing events. In reporting meetings, for example, we were able in almost all instances to talk to one or more of the participants. If we obtained two versions, we resolved disagreements through re-interviewing. If this proved impossible, we left out any material we could not confirm. In a few instances, there were meetings between two participants where we were unable to obtain a direct account from either; in those cases, we interviewed people the participants talked to immediately afterward. Nothing in this book has been reconstructed without accounts from at least two people. We were fortunate: in those last days in the White House, the principals compared notes among themselves and with their assistants.

We did not accord equal weight to all sources. In the course of over three years of reporting on the Nixon Administration, we had learned to place extraordinary trust in the accuracy and candor of some sources. We had also talked regularly over the same period of time with a small number of people who consistently sought to give versions of events that were slanted, self-serving, or otherwise untrustworthy; we used information from them only when we were convinced by more reliable sources of its accuracy.

Bob Woodward
Carl Bernstein

December, 1975

CAST OF CHARACTERS

ROBERT ABPLANALP	Friend of the President
CARL ALBERT	Speaker of the House
OLLIE ATKINS	Official White House photo-grapher
RICHARD BEN-VENISTE	Assistant Watergate Special Prosecutor
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PATRICK J. BUCHANAN	Assistant to the President; speech writer
PHILIP BUCHEN	Friend of the Vice-President; coordinator, transition team
STEPHEN BULL	Personal aide to the President
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JOHN DOAR	Counsel, House Judiciary Committee
JAMES DOYLE	Press chief, Watergate Special Prosecution Force
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BRUCE HERSCHENSOHN	Public-relations aide, the White House
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BENJAMIN J. STEIN	White House speech writer

xiv : THE FINAL DAYS

JOHN C. STENNIS	Senator, Democrat of Mississippi
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MAJ. GEN. WALTER TKACH	Physician to the President
LT. GEN. VERNON WALTERS	Deputy Director, Central Intelligence Agency
GERALD WARREN	Deputy press secretary to the President
CLAY T. WHITEHEAD	Director, White House Office of Telecommunications Policy; coordinator, transition team
CHARLES WIGGINS	Congressman, Republican of California; member, House Judiciary Committee
ROSE MARY WOODS	Personal secretary to the President
CHARLES ALAN WRIGHT	Special counsel to the President for Watergate
RONALD L. ZIEGLER	Press secretary to the President

A Chronology of the major developments of Watergate, the cover-up, and the subsequent investigations begins on page 510.

PART I

Chapter One

THIS was an extraordinary mission. No presidential aides had ever done what they were about to do. J. Fred Buzhardt and Leonard Garment settled into their first-class seats on Eastern flight 177 from Washington, D.C., to Miami. They had reached an inescapable conclusion, and had reviewed the reasons over and over. Garment had a list on a yellow legal pad—now twenty-two or twenty-three items. It was a bleak and very unpleasant business.

The two men left behind a cool Saturday in Washington. It was November 3, 1973. The only good news for the White House that day was an unexpected strike at the *Washington Post*. The newspaper that morning had been only a real-estate section.

For most of the travelers, the flight was an occasion for relaxation, the beginning of a vacation. But Buzhardt and Garment were grim and tense as they rehearsed their presentation.

They were both lawyers. For the past six months they had handled President Richard Nixon's Watergate defense. They had become close friends. Because the two men, seemingly so different, had agreed about this mission, their advice might carry some weight. They knew they would not be facing a receptive audience, but together they might be persuasive: Garment, the liberal, intellectual New Yorker, and Buzhardt, the conservative, practical Southerner. They sometimes thought of themselves as reflecting two sides of the Nixon personality—good and bad, some would say, or hard and soft. It was not that simple.

Buzhardt nervously tapped his hand on the armrest. His West Point class ring struck the metal. The "1946" was nearly worn from the setting. A slightly hunched fig-

ure with thick glasses and a slow, deliberate manner, Buzhardt came out of the political stable of Senator Strom Thurmond, the archconservative South Carolina Republican. Thurmond's preoccupation was the military, and as an aide to the Senator in the 1960s, Buzhardt had developed an extensive network of informants among the Pentagon's officer corps, meeting them at times in all-night drugstores. Later, as general counsel to the Defense Department, he had been in charge of making the best out of the military horror stories of the early 1970s—the Mylai massacre, the Pentagon Papers, Army spying, unauthorized bombing raids in Southeast Asia, multimillion-dollar cost overruns by defense contractors.

He had come to the White House to make the best of Watergate for Nixon, and since then Buzhardt had spent a lot of time with the President. "Now, you're a Baptist," Nixon would say to him before arriving at one decision or another, "this is right, isn't it?" And Buzhardt, balking, would say he didn't think it was his job to give moral advice—he was a lawyer.

Garment had been one of Nixon's law partners in New York. He was distinctly the odd man out in the Nixon White House: a Democrat among Republicans, a liberal among conservatives, a theatergoer among football fans, a Jew among fundamentalists. His relationship with Nixon was personal, not political. He was the philosopher in the court.

Some six months before, Garment had been alone with Nixon when the President had decided he had no choice but to ask for the resignations of his two top aides, H. R. (Bob) Haldeman and John D. Ehrlichman. Nixon had seemed crushed by the weight of the decision, and Garment had found the President's torment strangely reassuring. Nixon would never cut his two top men loose if he was hiding the truth, Garment had reasoned. It showed the President's innocence in a simple human way.

Just before the President had gone to tell Haldeman and Ehrlichman that they must resign, he had said to Garment, "Last night I went to sleep and hoped I'd never wake up."

Now Garment and Buzhardt were on their way to Key Biscayne to recommend that the President resign.