



**NEWS** **STYLE** **SPORTS** **CLASSIFIEDS** **MARKETPLACE**

**MOVIES** **MUSIC** **RESTAURANTS** **TV** **MUSEUMS** **THEATER** **BOOKS** **HOME & FASHION** **TRAVEL** **VISITORS' GUIDE**

## 'All the President's Men'

By *Matt Slovic*  
WashingtonPost.com Staff

### Related Item

- Go to the [D.C. Movies](#) Page.

Impartiality aside, no film blends the elements of journalism and Washington intrigue more compellingly than "All the President's Men," the story of two Washington Post reporters who helped take down the No. 1 resident on Pennsylvania Avenue, transforming both politics and journalism.



Robert Redford (left) and Dustin Hoffman played Post reporters Bob Woodward and Carl Bernstein.

[See more scenes . . .](#)

Not only did The Post win a Pulitzer for its Watergate coverage, but this film was also nominated for an Academy Award as Best Picture (it lost to "Rocky").

The story is as riveting today as it was 20 years ago. What's dated are the dial telephones, typewriters and haircuts. The movie opens with typewriter keys thunderously hammering on paper with the date of June 1, 1972, the day President Nixon returned from China. Sixteen days later the infamous break-in occurred. The Post newsroom now has computers (many with Internet access) and touch-tone phones with voice mail. Also, people smoked in the newsroom, which would be inconceivable in any office today.

### On WashingtonPost.com:

- The Watergate break-in took place 25 years ago. This [special feature](#) includes a timeline, the key players and other information about the most famous political scandal in American history.
- Another special feature highlights [Journalists in the Movies](#).

**Post Stories:** Before filming began, Redford, Hoffman and others visited The [Post newsroom](#). Twenty years after the break-in (here's the [original story](#)), The Washington Post ran retrospectives about Watergate: a story about this movie, "[Journalism's Finest 2 Hours](#)

[and 16 Minutes](#)," speculation on the probable identity of [Deep Throat](#) and editor [Ben Bradlee's reflections](#) on those pivotal 26 months.

---

**Washington Sites and Mentions:** The Watergate; Hotel Washington; Lincoln Memorial; Jefferson Memorial; Library of Congress; Capitol; White House; The Washington Post parking lot; Department of Justice Building; Lafayette Square; Kennedy Center; Apt. 519 Webster House, 1718 P St. NW (Woodward's apartment in the film, but he actually lived in No. 617); 9702 Montauk Ave., Bethesda, Md. (former home of bookkeeper Judy Hoback); San Souci restaurant.

---

**It Wasn't Washington:** The scenes in The Washington Post newsroom were shot on a sound stage (you couldn't expect a news operation to shut down so a few movie scenes could be shot, could you?). The set builders actually took newspapers, trash and other objects from The Post to make the set more realistic. Those blue and orange filing cabinets in the film are no longer in the newsroom. In her book "Personal History," Katharine Graham, who was president and publisher of The Post at this time, wrote: "In the end, we didn't allow filming in the newsroom. ... Instead, an exact duplicate of The Post's newsroom, including the stickers on Ben's secretary's desk, was created in Hollywood (for a mere \$450,000 it was reported), and in the interests of authenticity, several tons of assorted papers and trash from the desks throughout our newsroom were shipped to California for props. We did cooperate to the extent of allowing the filmmakers to shoot the entrance to the newspaper building, elevators and certain production facilities, as well as a scene in the parking lot."

---

**Film Background:** The movie was based on the book of the same name by Woodward and Bernstein. However, city editor Barry Sussman, who played a vital role in helping the two young reporters, was written out of the film. And in his memoirs published in 1995, Bradlee wrote that Howard Simons, the late Post managing editor, "never really got over his resentment" at feeling that his role in Watergate was "fatally shortchanged" in "All the President's Men." "Our relationship . . . was never the same after the film."

---

**Who Is Deep Throat?** Only a few people know the true identity of Deep Throat. Woodward promised that he would use the source only as deep background. The nickname comes from the controversial, X-rated movie "Deep Throat," which was in theaters at the time.

"Deep Throat" was not filmed in Washington.

---

**What Happened to . . .:** We don't want to take up valuable cyberspace with a list of everyone who received a conviction. We all know that Nixon didn't live at the White House after Aug. 9, 1974. Woodward is still at The Post as assistant managing editor of investigations. He has written a number of books, most recently "The Choice" about Bill Clinton and Bob Dole. Bradlee retired from The Post in 1991 but is listed as a vice president at large. Bernstein left the newspaper shortly after Watergate to become bureau chief of ABC News, where he stayed less than two years. He hasn't been permanently attached to any news organization since that time. He writes books and occasional freelance articles. He recently wrote a book about Pope John Paul II.

---

**Plot:** Washington Post reporters Bob Woodward (Robert Redford) and Carl Bernstein (Dustin Hoffman) are assigned to cover a routine burglary at the National Democratic Committee headquarters at the Watergate offices ([read their story](#) from June 19, 1972). Two of the burglars have the phone number of Howard Hunt, a White House aide and CIA consultant. Woodward and Bernstein start digging. Interviews with other aides and cabinet members uncover contradictory stories.

Their investigation is helped by a high-level source called Deep Throat (Hal Holbrook), who would meet Woodward in a dark parking garage.

The reporters are constantly challenged by Ben Bradlee (Jason Robards), The Post's executive editor. When some of the other editors question the newspaper's coverage, Bradlee stands by his young reporters and prints the articles.

Their investigation uncovers involvement all the way up to President Richard Nixon. And as the White House continues to deny any wrongdoing, The Post continues to print story after damaging story. The Watergate scandal eventually helps take down Nixon, who resigns in August 1974.

---

#### **Memorable Scenes:**

- Woodward's first meeting with Deep Throat, who lights a cigarette in a dark, dismal parking garage.
- Bernstein wheedles himself into house of Judy Hoback (the

bookkeeper for the Committee for the Re-Election of the President) and ends up staying for hours drinking coffee and subtly interrogating her.

- The reporters need another confirmation before Bradlee will run the story implicating H.R. Haldeman, the president's chief of staff and the "second most powerful man in Washington." Bernstein calls a source and says he will count to 10. If he reaches 10 and the source is still on the line, that will verify the Haldeman is involved. The source stays on the line. He rushes across the newsroom to tell Woodward. The two then race to the elevator to tell Bradlee, who is leaving. Bradlee gives the okay to print the story.
- Woodward and Bernstein turn up the radio and type notes to each other after Deep Throat tells them their lives are in danger and that they are probably being bugged.

---

### Memorable Lines:

- "Follow the money": Deep Throat to Woodward.
- "Print that baby": Bradlee to Woodward and Bernstein about the story that will implicate John Mitchell, the former attorney general.
- "Nothing's riding on this except the first amendment of the Constitution, freedom of the press and maybe the future of this country": Bradlee to Woodward and Bernstein after they discovered the mass involvement in the cover-up.

---

**Rating:** PG for language.

**Release Date:** 1976 (by Warner Bros.).

**Running Time:** 2 hours, 16 minutes.

**Director:** Alan J. Pakula

**Cast:** [Robert Redford](#) (Bob Woodward); [Dustin Hoffman](#) (Carl Bernstein); [Jason Robards](#) (Ben Bradlee); [Hal Holbrook](#) (Deep Throat); Jack Warden (Harry Rosenfeld); Martin Balsam (Howard Simons); [Jane Alexander](#) (Judy Hoback, the bookkeeper for the Committee for the Re-Election of the President); Meredith Baxter (Debbie Sloan); Ned Beatty (Martin Dardis); Stephen Collins (Hugh Sloan Jr.); Lindsay Crouse (Kay Eddy); Polly Holliday (Dardis's secretary); F. Murray Abraham (first arresting officer); Frank Wills, the security guard at the Watergate who called the police, plays himself.

**Total Oscar Nominations:** 8.

**Oscar Wins:** Jason Robards, best supporting actor; William Goldman, best adapted screenplay; George Jenkins and George Gaines, best art direction; Arthur Piantadosi, Les Fresholtz, Dick Alexander and Jim Webb, best sound.

**Other Nominations:** Best picture; Jane Alexander, best supporting actress; Alan J. Pakula, best director; Robert L. Wolfe, best editing.

© Copyright 1996 The Washington Post Company

[Back to the top](#)



**Yellow Pages**