



The Wars of Watergate: The Last Crisis of Richard Nixon

Stanley I. Kutler

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This is the first truly comprehensive history of the political explosion that shook America in the 1970s, and whose aftereffects are still being felt in public life today. Drawing on contemporary documents, personal interviews, memoirs, and a vast quantity of new material, Stanley Kutler shows how President Nixon's obstruction of justice from the White House capped a pattern of abuse that marked his entire tenure in office. He makes clear how the drama of Watergate is rooted not only in the tumultuous events and social tensions of the 1960s but also in the personality and history of Richard Nixon.

Kutler examines Nixon's confrontations with the institutions he feared and resented—the Congress, the federal agencies, the news media, the Washington establishment—and how they mobilized to topple the President. He considers the arguments of Nixon's defenders, who insisted that Watergate was a minor affair, and the contention that the President did nothing worse than his predecessors had done. He offers compelling portraits of the President's men—H. R. Haldeman, John Ehrlichman, John Mitchell, Charles Colson, John Dean; of his adversaries—Judge John Sirica, the U.S. Attorneys, Special Prosecutors Archibald Cox and Leon Jaworski; and of the legislators who would stand in judgment—Sam Ervin and Peter Rodino.

In the course of his engrossing narrative, Stanley Kutler illuminates the constitutional crisis brought on by Watergate. He shows how Watergate diminished the moral level of American political life, and illustrates its continuing detrimental impact on the credibility, authority, and prestige of the Presidency in particular and the government in general. His book underlines for the American electorate the significance of Watergate for the future of our political ethics and the maintenance of our constitutional system, as well as for the place of Richard Nixon in American history.



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