

0. RICHARD NIXON AND THE COVER-UP - Story Preface

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President Nixon used a tape recorder, in the Oval Office, to record his conversations with various individuals on various topics. That recorder, depicted in this image, ultimately led to his downfall since the tapes recorded on the device revealed what he knew, or didn't know, about the Watergate break-in and its cover-up. The recorder is on display at the Gerald R. Ford Presidential Museum as part of its Watergate Exhibit. Public Domain.

Despite his foreign policy abilities, Richard Nixon provided artists with endless opportunities to poke fun at him. During the evening hours of June 17, 1972, former employees of the Nixon Committee to Reelect the President (sometimes referred to as CREEP) decided to pay an unscheduled visit to the headquarters of the Democratic party. Of course, they were uninvited guests.

Their mission was to find Democratic "dirt" so they could help reelect the President. Their efforts backfired and led to the Watergate scandal.

During a famous news conference—with 400 Associated Press managing editors on November 17, 1973—the President said:

...in all of my years in public life I have never obstructed justice. People have got to know whether or not their president is a crook. Well, I'm not a crook.

Herb Block, the famous political cartoonist, had a field day with the President's statements and the Administration's efforts to cover up all the bad acts. The Library of Congress has created a special on-line exhibition of Block's best work. (NOTE, however, the Library's copyright restrictions.)

- Less than five months after the President's forceful declaration, the White House announced he would pay \$432,787.13 in back taxes. On 4 April 1974 - the day following the announcement - Herb Block published his famous cartoon, "I am not a Crook," in the *Washington Post*.
- The White House secret taping system, installed by President Kennedy, provided Block with a way to make the President eat his words. "I am ... a crook" was in the *Washington Post* the next month - on 24 May 1974
- When news of the Watergate burglary became public, Democrats insisted on an independent investigation. The administration said that was unnecessary. Block's take on the situation? A cartoon entitled, "There's no need for an independent investigation - We have everything well in hand." (*Washington Post*, 8 September 1972)
- Nixon finally admitted (on 22 May 1973) that he had concealed information about the Watergate break-in so he could protect "national security interests." Herb Block, in turn, covered the president with a "National-Security Blanket." (*Washington Post*, 27 May 1973)

During the Senate's investigation into Watergate, all kinds of revelations about federal-government shenanigans were made public. Nixon, of course, took center stage in the endless stream of political cartoons.

See [Alignments to State and Common Core standards for this story online at:](http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/AcademicAlignment/RICHARD-NIXON-AND-THE-COVER-UP-Political-Cartoon)

<http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/AcademicAlignment/RICHARD-NIXON-AND-THE-COVER-UP-Political-Cartoon>

See [Learning Tasks for this story online at:](#)

Media Stream



Nixon Tape Recorder - Watergate

The Nixon Tape Recorder is now owned by the U.S. National Archives and is on display, in this photo, at the Gerald R. Ford Presidential Museum. Public Domain.
View this asset at:

<http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/view/Nixon-Tape-Recorder-Watergate>



I Am . . . A Crook

Image online, courtesy the U.S. Library of Congress.

View this asset at: <http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/view/I-Am-...-A-Crook>



I Am Not a Crook

Image online, courtesy U.S. Library of Congress. LC-USZ62-126921.

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We Have Everything Well in Hand

Image online, courtesy the U.S. Library of Congress. LC-USZ62-126916.

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National Security Blanket

Image online, courtesy the U.S. Library of Congress. LC-USZ62-126917.

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News Conference - "I am not a Crook"

Clip of President Nixon's news conference, 17 November 1973, online courtesy the U.S. National Archives.

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