

FIRE AND WATER

by

Deep Throat

FADE IN:

INT. WASHINGTON POST - BERNSTEIN'S DESK - DAY

CARL BERNSTEIN (28), a rookie reporter, CHINKS and CLACKS out an article on his typewriter:

"The Washington Post

Sunday, June 18, 1972".

He pauses, turns to BEN BRADLEE (50), standing beside him with a cigarette.

BERNSTEIN

You sure about that burglary?

BRADLEE

A story like that would skew the election. There'd be a lynch mob!

Bradlee walks away. Bernstein turns toward his typewriter and PLUNKS out the headline:

"Movie review: Deep Throat".

INT. REPUBLICAN NATIONAL CONVENTION - MAIN STAGE - NIGHT

SUPER: Republican National Convention - Cleveland, OH

SUPER: Thursday, July 29, 1976

PRESIDENT RICHARD NIXON (63), a smug grin on his face, stands behind a podium.

NIXON

Ladies and gentlemen, may I introduce to you the next President of the United States... E. Howard Hunt!

The room erupts into a chorus of THUNDEROUS APPLAUSE. Presidential Nominee E. HOWARD HUNT (57) takes the podium.

HUNT

Thank you, Mister President. I am honored to accept my party's nomination for President of the United States of America.

More APPLAUSE.

HUNT

I, along with my running mate, G. Gordon Liddy, believe in America.

The crowd applauds G. GORDON LIDDY (45), who smiles and nods from his seat. Liddy mouths "Thank you."

HUNT

We will continue the great work of our predecessors, President Richard Nixon and Vice President Spiro Agnew.

Applause.

HUNT

Two hundred years ago, our forefathers conceived a great nation in which every man can do anything their heart desires.

REP. GERALD FORD (63) watches from his seat, his face chiseled into a scowl. He exhales sharply.

INT. REPUBLICAN NATIONAL CONVENTION - BACKSTAGE - NIGHT

Nixon, with two SECRET SERVICE AGENTS on each side, congratulates Hunt with a handshake.

Ford marches toward them.

The Secret Service Agents tense up.

Ford pins Nixon to the wall. The agents grab Ford's arms.

FORD

I'm onto your little scam, you son of a bitch.

NIXON

What the hell are you talking about, Jerry?

FORD

You and your men will never get away with this.

The agents draw their guns.

Ford slowly releases the president.

FORD

I'm onto you crooks.

NIXON

I'm not a crook! And you know it.

FBI Director MARK FELT (62) watches from the shadows, only the left side of his face visible. He has an alarmed expression on his face.

INT. WASHINGTON POST - WOODWARD'S DESK - DAY

The phone rings. BOB WOODWARD (33), another lowly reporter at the Post, answers it.

WOODWARD
Bob Woodward, Washington Post.

FELT (V.O.)
(on phone)
People's lives are in danger.

WOODWARD
Huh? What did you say? Who is this?

FELT (V.O.)
You know something. Something
Bradlee tried to bury.

WOODWARD
Whatever it is, you might want to
speak with Mister Bradlee about it.

FELT (V.O.)
The Watergate break-in. It was a
Nixon plot.

WOODWARD
Tell me everything you know.

FELT (V.O.)
Can't. They'll tap the phones. We
need to meet in private.

WOODWARD
Can I at least get your name?

FELT (V.O.)
No, but here's an address...

INT. WASHINGTON POST - BRADLEE'S OFFICE - DAY

Bernstein (now 32) speaks with Bradlee (now 54). Bradlee puts out his cigarette in the ashtray.

Woodward knocks on the door.

BRADLEE
I'm with Bernstein right now.

WOODWARD

It's... kind of important.

Bradlee shrugs his shoulders.

BRADLEE

Oh, what the hell.

Woodward opens the door and rushes in.

BRADLEE

Where's the fire?

WOODWARD

Not fire. Water. We need to talk about the Watergate burglary.

BERNSTEIN

Ben and I were just on the same subject.

WOODWARD

And you are...?

Bernstein extends his hand.

BERNSTEIN

Carl Bernstein.

Woodward shakes his hand.

WOODWARD

Bob Woodward.

They turn toward Bradlee.

BRADLEE

Okay. Maybe I chickened out. But this was an election year.

BERNSTEIN

We should have told them.

BRADLEE

The fact it was the D-N-C could have swung the election. You know, sympathy votes. Or retaliation from the right.

WOODWARD

Funny you should mention that. I just got a call from some guy, implicating Nixon, Hunt, and Liddy.

BRADLEE

Probably believes Kubrick faked the
Moon landing.

Bernstein chimes in.

BERNSTEIN

Ben, do you really believe that a
porno is a more important story
than our national security?

Bradlee pauses, exhales, and contemplates.

BRADLEE

Alright. I'll let you boys run with
this, just on the chance that
you're right.

BERNSTEIN

And if we're right, damn you for
letting this one go.

Woodward and Bernstein exit. Bernstein grabs a cigarette.

BRADLEE

Don't fuck it up.

Bradlee has a "What have I done?" expression on his face.

INT. PARKING GARAGE - NIGHT

Woodward looks around the area, in search of his informant.

Mark Felt waits in the shadows behind a pillar, his face
barely visible.

FELT

Over here.

Woodward nods, then runs to catch up.

He stops in front of Felt and catches his breath.

Felt offers Woodward a cigarette.

Woodward nods, holds up his hand and smiles.

WOODWARD

No, thanks.

Felt lights it up for himself and takes a puff.

WOODWARD

I thought you quit.

FELT

How'd you know it was me?

WOODWARD

I'm a journalist. Congratulations on the promotion.

FELT

No congratulations. They're crooks. Criminals. Every last one of them.

WOODWARD

Tell me everything you know, Mister Felt.

FELT

Don't quote me.

WOODWARD

I won't quote you, even as an anonymous source.

FELT

Good. Those bastards find out I leaked to the press, I'm fucked. And so are you.

Felt takes another drag. Woodward coughs.

FELT

Sorry. Bad habit. Like I said, this started with Nixon and his men. It involves Hunt and Liddy. They orchestrated Watergate, and now they're trying to take the White House. No one's clean.

WOODWARD

So what do we do?

FELT

You should have done your jobs four years ago. I don't care what Bradlee told you. Fuck it. Our country's at stake.

WOODWARD

What about Carter and the Democrats?

FELT

They're our only hope. Nixon, he's got tapes. Someone was gonna find them sooner or later.

WOODWARD
Where are these tapes?

FELT
In the back of my car, carefully
hidden.

WOODWARD
How did you--

FELT
I'm not at liberty. Just pay
attention to the Republicans.
Follow the money.

Woodward turns around. Felt takes one step forward, fully
exposing his face.

FELT
And one more thing!

Woodward turns around. Felt steps back into the shadows.

FELT
You know who I am. But nobody else
can.

Woodward nods and walks away.

INT. WASHINGTON POST - BRADLEE'S OFFICE - DAY

The clock reads 10:00.

Woodward, Bernstein and Bradlee listen to a series of Nixon
tapes on a reel-to-reel machine.

Bernstein smokes a cigarette. Bradlee puts one out.

NIXON (V.O.)
(on tape)
All of the Jewish families are
close, but there's this strange
malignancy... So few of those who
engage in espionage are Negroes...

BRADLEE
That son of a bitch.

The clock now reads 10:15.

NIXON (V.O.)
The Jews, the Jews are born spies.

10:21.

NIXON (V.O.)
... Puts himself above the law.

10:40.

H.R. "BOB" HALDEMAN (49) also appears on the tape.

HALDEMAN (V.O.)
...They've been able to trace the
money. Not through the money
itself, but through the bank.

Woodward takes a swallow of his coffee.

NIXON (V.O.)
But they're tracing the money to
whom?

Bradlee lights another cigarette.

HALDEMAN (V.O.)
Ken Dahlberg.

NIXON (V.O.)
Who the hell is Ken Dahlberg?...

11:00.

NIXON (V.O.)
This is a - Hunt will... Did
Mitchell know about this thing?
...Is it Liddy? He must be a little
nuts.

Bradlee takes a drink of his coffee. Woodward coughs and
tries to fan Bernstein's cigarette smoke.

Bradlee puts his cigarette out.

HALDEMAN (V.O.)
He was under pressure, apparently,
to get more information.

NIXON (V.O.)
Pressure from Mitchell? Thank God
it wasn't Colson.

HALDEMAN (V.O.)
The F-B-I interviewed Colson
yesterday. They determined that
would be a good thing to do.

NIXON (V.O.)
Mm-hm.

Woodward writes in his notepad.

HALDEMAN (V.O.)

They think it was either a White House operation that had some obscure reasons for it, non-political...

NIXON (V.O.)

Mm-hm.

HALDEMAN (V.O.)

Or it was a--

NIXON (V.O.)

Cuban.

HALDEMAN (V.O.)

The Cubans and the C-I-A. And after their interrogation of--

NIXON (V.O.)

Colson.

HALDEMAN (V.O.)

Colson yesterday, they concluded it was not White House, so they are now convinced that it was a C-I-A thing.

NIXON (V.O.)

Well, I don't want Helms to get that closely involved.

HALDEMAN (V.O.)

No, sir. We don't want you to.

NIXON (V.O.)

You call him. Good. Good deal. Play it tough. That's the way we play it, and that's the way we're going to play it.

Everyone stands frozen in utter disbelief.

BRADLEE

I'll be goddamned.

The tape goes silent.

BRADLEE

What the hell happened?

WOODWARD

It's been erased. About twenty minutes of it.

BERNSTEIN

What's Nixon trying to hide?

BRADLEE

I don't know, but you two better find out.

INSERT - NEWSPAPER

The Washington Post, dated August 1, 1976. Front page headline reads:

"Nixon has incriminating tapes; 18 1/2 minutes missing" by Carl Bernstein and Bob Woodward.

INT. OVAL OFFICE - DAY

Nixon reads the inside of The Washington Post.

Haldeman and JOHN DEAN (37) sit idly by.

Nixon SLAMS the paper down onto his desk, furious.

Haldeman and Dean jump back.

NIXON

How the hell did The Post get my tapes?

HALDEMAN

Bradlee, probably. Kennedy shill.

NIXON

If they'd exposed us four years ago, I'd be impeached. If they expose me now, those shitholes will murder me! I'll show them.

DEAN

What are you gonna do?

NIXON

Howard's going to silence Bradlee and his two stooges.

INT. PARKING GARAGE - NIGHT

Woodward and Felt meet up again.

WOODWARD

How many more tapes are there?

FELT

Thousands of hours worth. There's not enough time.

WOODWARD

We've still got three months.

FELT

Not the election. Your lives.

WOODWARD

What do you mean?

FELT

Oswald didn't act alone. Hunt was an accomplice.

WOODWARD

Kennedy?

Felt nods.

FELT

You, Bernstein and Bradlee are next.

Woodward stands frozen in fear. He gulps.

FELT

Please take whatever precautions necessary. And don't lose sight of the story.

Woodward remains motionless.

INT. HOBACK RESIDENCE - NIGHT

Bernstein, meanwhile, interviews JUDY HOBACK (39), bookkeeper for the Committee to Re-Elect the President.

Bernstein takes a sip of his coffee.

BERNSTEIN

Missus Hoback, you were bookkeeper for the Committee during the Seventy-two campaign, correct?

HOBACK

Yes, Mister Bernstein. What's this about?

BERNSTEIN

When did you first become aware of
the Watergate break-in?

HOBACK

Three months before it happened.
Nixon was very meticulous in
planning the whole thing.

BERNSTEIN

Why didn't you tell anybody?

Hoback's voice breaks.

HOBACK

I did!

She clears her throat.

HOBACK

I did. I contacted the FBI. Told
them everything I knew. The
break-in, the secret funds--

BERNSTEIN

Secret funds?

HOBACK

Yes, sir.

BERNSTEIN

Can you give me any names?

HOBACK

Jeb Magruder.

Bernstein writes the name down in his notepad.

HOBACK

And Liddy.

Bernstein pauses.

BERNSTEIN

Gordon Liddy?

Hoback nods. Hand trembling, she takes a sip of her coffee.

HOBACK

I told the FBI about collusion with
Brezhnev.

BERNSTEIN

What did you say? You mean to tell me that the President of the United States is a Soviet agent?

INT. WOODWARD'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Woodward lies awake in bed, breathing heavily and sweating profusely. He trembles.

He props himself up and reaches for the phone.

INT. BERNSTEIN'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Bernstein sleeps in his bed. The PHONE RINGS, causing him to jolt awake. He checks his heartbeat.

He reaches for the phone.

BERNSTEIN

Hello?

WOODWARD (V.O.)

(on phone)

Carl?

BERNSTEIN

Bob? It's three in the morning! Why the hell'd you call?

WOODWARD (V.O.)

Do you have a bulletproof vest?

BERNSTEIN

Huh? No. Why?

WOODWARD (V.O.)

We're gonna need it. Bradlee, too.

BERNSTEIN

Can you tell me what the hell this is about?

WOODWARD (V.O.)

Our lives are in danger.

INT. WASHINGTON POST - BRADLEE'S OFFICE - DAY

Empty. Bradley opens the door. He pauses for a second, somewhat alarmed.

He turns on the television. Nixon speaks with a reporter.

NIXON

(on TV)

It's not true. None of it. The story in The Washington Post is false journalism.

BRADLEE

"False journalism." Why not just call it "fake news?"

Bradlee sits behind his desk. Little does he know...

Hunt jumps out from under the desk and chokes Bradlee with a rope. Bradlee gasps for air.

The door opens, seemingly by itself. Woodward and Bernstein enter with their hands in the air.

Behind them is the one who opened the door, Liddy -- pointing a .357 Magnum behind their backs.

WOODWARD

Ben!

Bernstein elbows Liddy in the chin and grabs his gun. BANG! He shoots Hunt's right hand.

Hunt cries in pain and releases Bradlee, still alive.

Hunt pulls out his own gun, a .38 Smith & Wesson.

BANG! He shoots Bradlee in the back.

Bradlee reveals his bulletproof vest.

BRADLEE

Thanks for the call, boys.

Bradlee turns toward Hunt and punches him in the face. Hunt drops his gun. Bradlee picks it up and points it at Hunt.

Likewise, Bernstein points the .357 at Liddy.

Bradlee picks up the phone and dials 911. He glares at Hunt, pointing the phone at him.

BRADLEE

Turn yourselves in.

INT. WASHINGTON POST - TYPEWRITER - DAY (TIME LAPSE)

The machine churns out several headlines amid a CHORUS OF CHINKS and CLACKS.

"Hunt, Liddy attack Washington Post editor, reporters in attempted assassination".

"Hunt, Liddy drop out of race".

"Nixon's approval rating plummets to 30 percent".

"House: 'Too late' to impeach Nixon".

"Gov. Reagan, Rep. Ford chosen to replace Hunt, Liddy".

"November 3, 1976

Carter elected 38th President of the United States

President-Elect jokes, 'Maybe next time, Ronny.'

"April 18, 1977

Post writers Woodward and Bernstein win Pulitzer.

Book, All The President's Men, to be adapted into film starring Burt Reynolds and Richard Dreyfuss."

"October 31, 1978

Nixon administration found guilty

The jury found several members of Former President Richard Nixon's administration -- including former Republican presidential nominee E. Howard Hunt and running mate G. Gordon Liddy, as well as Nixon himself -- guilty on a laundry list of charges including: Conspiracy against the United States; three counts of election fraud; three counts of attempted murder; and obstruction of justice."

"Carter condemns Nixon administration, refuses to pardon".

"November 5, 1980

Carter wins re-election in rematch against Reagan".

The typewriter stops. Silence.

FADE OUT.

THE END