

# Moments in Time

by Frank C. Clifford

THE ARRESTS OF FIVE MEN AT THE WATERGATE COMPLEX:  
JUNE 17, 1972; 2:30 A.M. EDT; WASHINGTON, D.C.

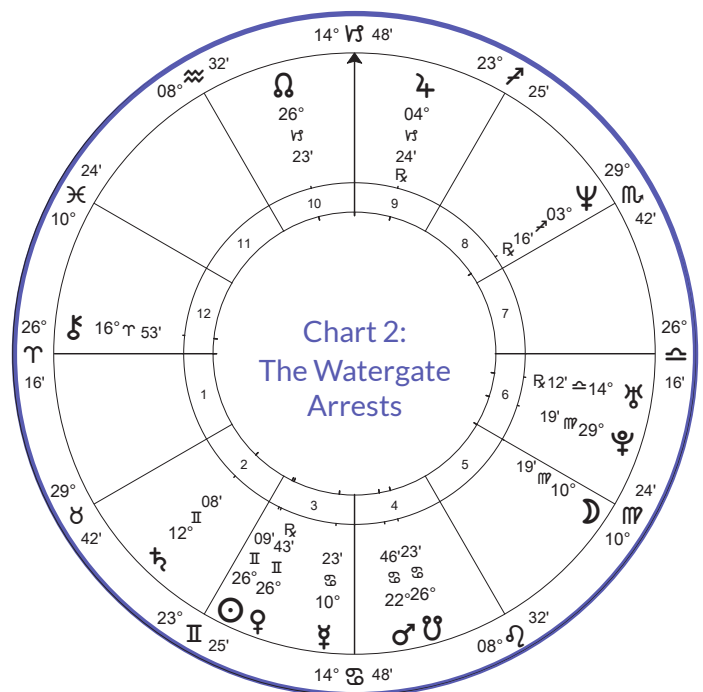
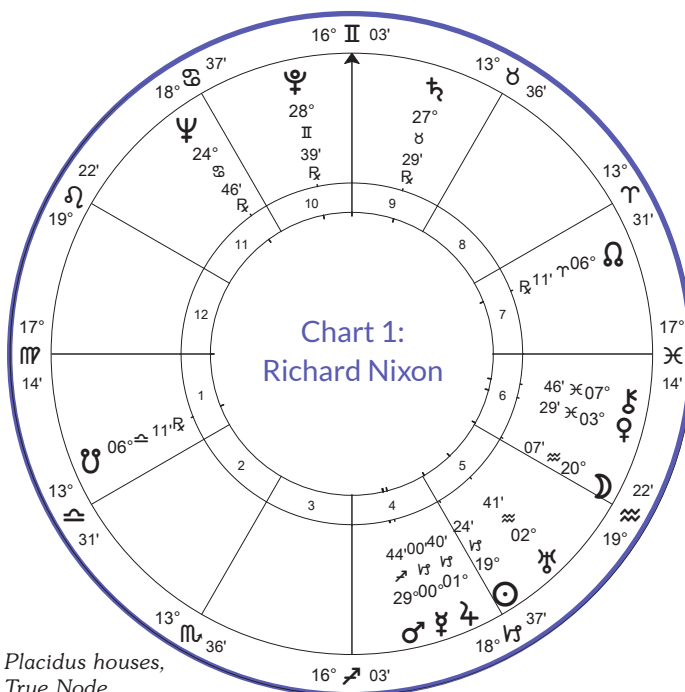


Arguably the most scandalous and written-about political saga of the 20th century, Watergate was a protracted but riveting chain of events that ultimately exposed the dirty tricks, paranoia, and ruthlessness of Richard Nixon, a president with five planets in Saturn's signs and a heavily aspected Pluto in the 10th house. (See **Chart 1**, below.) The events of June 17, 1972 — in which five men were caught breaking into the Democratic National Committee headquarters — would alter the course of political history, and Watergate would become synonymous with governmental abuses of power and the exposure of any kind of newsworthy or illegal cover-up. At a time when the United States (July 4 horoscope) was having transiting Uranus conjunct its Saturn and square its Sun, the Watergate scandal rocked (Uranus) the foundations of the administration (Saturn) and seriously tarnished the image of the presidency (Sun). In the U.S. Sibly chart, transiting Saturn was on the Descendant, and Pluto was set to cross over the Midheaven (MC).

Some three weeks before the main event, phones had been wiretapped during an earlier break-in at the Watergate complex, but on June 17, five “burglars” returned to replace the bugs. Just after 12:05 a.m., security guard Frank

Wills noticed (and removed) tape that had been stuck on door latches to allow the intruders access to the building. At 1:47 a.m., Wills discovered that new tape had been applied, and he called the police. At 2:30 a.m., the five men were arrested. (See **Chart 2**, below.)

This chart describes Wills and the arresting officers (1st-house ruler) as unaware of the implications of what they'd uncovered: Mars is unaspected in protective, security-driven Cancer in the 4th. The five arrested (7th-house ruler) are seen as a hapless motley crew returning to complete a badly orchestrated venture that was riddled with errors and miscommunications: Venus is retrograde in the 3rd conjunct the Sun in Gemini. In addition, Venus is conjunct asteroids *Whitehouse* (24° Gemini) and *Leake* (25° Gemini) — the men were, after all, hired by Nixon's infamous “plumbers,” whose job it was to stop the leaking of classified information — and all are within a few degrees of Nixon's natal Pluto. Interestingly, the break-in might have been simply dismissed as a third-rate, botched burglary, had some of the men arrested not been carrying address books with phone numbers (Mercury) linked to the White House!



Placidus houses,  
True Node

Crucially, Mercury (dispositor of the Gemini and Virgo planets) is conjunct the U.S. Sun and on its way to an explosive, revelatory square to Uranus. Mercury is also opposite asteroid *Tape* at 11° Capricorn near the MC! Not only was tape being used on the door latches, it would later be revealed that the conniving Capricorn president (signified by the MC and Saturn in this chart) secretly tape-recorded most conversations in the Oval Office — a practice that would prove his undoing and bring him to his knees.

Although Richard Nixon was an astute, accomplished statesman, he was temperamentally unsuited to giving the charismatic, crowd-pleasing performances that the role of president demands. The hall of mirrors that Watergate became actually resulted from Nixon's irrational fear that he might be only a one-term president. The scandal reflected his Saturn- and Pluto-dominated chart (as well as Saturn's transit through Gemini): Nixon's obsession with controlling information; his suspicious, vengeful, and plotting mindset; his resistance to probes into his administration; and his denial of responsibility.

Later, two *Washington Post* reporters, Carl Bernstein and Bob Woodward (note the chart's Gemini/3rd-house emphasis square Pluto), would be instrumental in linking the burglary to the Nixon administration; however, during the summer of 1972, the bigger picture was ignored by most of the media. Nixon won the election by a landslide, and the intruders were sentenced in the month of his second inauguration. It wasn't until March 23, 1973 that the cover-up was blown open: One of the intruders, James McCord, wrote a letter to the judge stating that he had perjured himself. Transiting Saturn was conjunct Nixon's MC, as it had been the previous summer, and soon-to-be-disgraced Attorney General John Mitchell and the infamous informant, Deep Throat (Mark Felt), were both having their second Saturn returns. (Mark Felt finally revealed his identity as Deep Throat on May 31, 2005, as transiting Venus returned to 26° Gemini.) When Nixon's involvement was confirmed in late June to mid July 1973, transiting Saturn crossed over the Arrest chart's Sun-Venus in Gemini (and conjoined Nixon's 10th-house Pluto). And when Saturn was opposing the Arrest chart's MC, Nixon resigned on August 9, 1974.

The sequence of events (from the break-in to Nixon's pardon) can be tracked using Dietrech Pessin's Lunar Gestation Cycle (see the June/July 2015 issue of *TMA*). The break-in occurred days after a New Moon at 20° Gemini. Nine months

later, following a First Quarter Moon at 21° Gemini, McCord wrote his letter. A further nine months on, at the Full Moon at 17° Gemini, Ford became Vice President, and during the height of the nation's mistrust of Nixon, the infamous 18½-minute section of Oval Office tape was found to have been erased. And finally, nine months after that, now-President Ford pardoned Nixon — one day before a Last Quarter Moon at 16° Gemini, which completed the 27-month Moon Family.

Security guard Frank Wills would become a footnote in history for his inadvertent discovery of the clandestine break-in, and asteroids *Franck* and *Willis* closely flank the Arrest chart's Pluto at 29° Virgo. Asteroids provide further and entertaining confirmation: Asteroid *Whitehouse* is at 3° Sagittarius in Nixon's horoscope and, at the time of the break-in, was being transited by Neptune at that very same degree.

For more on the astrology of Watergate, see Robert Hand's *Planets in Transit* (Whitford Press, 1976) and Richard Swatton's *From Symbol to Substance: Training the Astrological Intuition* (Flare, 2012); the Swatton book explores in depth the symbolism of the scandal as seen in Nixon's birth chart and his self-sabotaging natal Sun-Neptune opposition.

All data listed can be found at <http://www.astrodatabank.com>; for the arrest data, see <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2002/05/31/AR2005111001227.html> and for Wills's Watergate security log, see <http://watergate.info/burglary/frank-wills-watergate-security-log>

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