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All The President's Men Essay

All the President's Men is a very well-made film that proves why journalism is essential to our democracy.

I knew the basics of the Watergate scandal and the names Bob Woodward and Carl Bernstein, but I didn't realize just how impactful they were in their investigation and uncovering of the whole affair. Several things stuck out to me about their reporting while I was watching. Their relentlessness for one, as from the beginning of working on the story to the end they never stopped or gave up even when it seemed like that was the only choice. This was evident with their long days of calling around, trying to get names and information from a lengthy list of people. Bernstein and Woodward knew that most of them would be unhelpful or would not have the information they needed, but they did it because of one small piece of information they could garner that could bring them their next lead. The men were also observant in realizing there was a larger story in the first place.

The Watergate break-in seemed to be a one-time thing, but Woodward and Bernstein's suspicions that the attempted robbery was just a small part of a bigger conspiracy. Their attention to the repeated "non-denial denials" from several people involved in the Watergate scandal or in the Republican party were paramount to continuing to pursue their investigation, knowing they were on to something. And most of all, Woodward and Bernstein persevered through the many hurdles in their way while reporting. At the beginning when The Washington Post was the only paper to be reporting on the break-in and the larger surrounding scandal, this was huge as it showed no one else had the confidence that this story would lead to anything.

From a film standpoint, it is an excellent inside look at the reporting going on during that time. The film does a fantastic job of portraying the tedious work that they had to do. Some of the reporting scenes were long – but that is just reflecting exactly what they were doing when trying to write this story. Gathering information, following leads, and putting together a story, especially one this big, takes a lot of time and patience.

This film really reflects that effort and the importance of their investigation. That they were able to gather some extremely vital information, such as John Mitchell being the one who was controlling the secret fund, before the FBI knew is telling as to how thorough and just simply good at their jobs they were. Bernstein and Woodward sought for the truth no matter how long it took to get it, and the movie showed that.

What I found the most interesting about the whole thing is that it was The Washington Post who broke the story. This was just after they went ahead with publishing the reports on the Vietnam War and upheld the freedom of the press through reporting to the people. That they again made it their duty to uncover the truth for the American public is very telling. They stuck to their guns and didn't let the government try to control them.

I think The Post's contributions to journalism should be more widely discussed, as what they have done to make sure that their rights and the people's right to the truth are never taken away is so monumental to not just journalism, but the preservation of democracy. The actor who plays Ben Bradlee said the famous line, "Not that there's a lot riding on this. Only the first amendment and freedom of the press

and maybe the future of our democracy.” What Bernstein and Woodward did to ensure the American people knew the truth was audacious and just, and they changed our democracy for the better.