

Ashlyn Kennedy

Although I have seen *The Post* before, what really stuck out to me while watching this time was the bravery of the journalists who stuck to upholding the freedom of the press and reporting to the people. In Justice Black's ruling upholding the First Amendment, he said, "The founding fathers gave the free press the protection it must have to fulfill its essential role in our democracy. The press was to serve the governed, not the governors." I think this is a great way to describe the reporting going on in the movie, and the reporting that went on in real life.

It was very well known that Nixon, during his presidency, did not like newspapers or news outlets because they could potentially expose the various wrongdoings that were going on in his administration and government. So, when The New York Times, and then The Washington Post, got their hands on what are now called the Pentagon Papers, which revealed extremely damaging information about the federal government lying to the American people for years about the state of the Vietnam War, he was very upset. He attempted to invoke the Espionage Act to stop the papers from publishing, which could possibly lead to some of the publishers and editors going to jail.

The duty of a reporter is to report the truth, no matter what, and so these Washington Post reporters did. That they continued to push for access to the Pentagon Papers and then print them so people could be exposed to what was really going on behind closed doors was very inspiring. This was a war that everyone was connected to one way or another, and the journalists knew that people had to be made aware of what their sons, husbands, and fathers were being sent into. They risked their careers to get this information out to the public, knowing that no matter what it was the right thing to do.

But they weren't just doing this for the American people; they were doing this to fight for the freedom of the press. Nixon's administration was trying to censor the newspapers by telling them what they could and could not print. But in everyone at The Washington Post's eyes, by going through with revealing the information in the Pentagon papers, they were challenging the government to try and take away their freedom of press. It's situations like this when we can really see why journalism is so important to America and our democracy. These reporters were standing up to those who tried to silence them and at the same time stood up for all the people who were kept in the dark about a war that just as much concerned them. They fought for freedoms that are our fundamental rights, and yet they were trying to be taken away. They were fighting for change to push our country and its government to be better.

There was a reason that the Supreme Court sided with the journalists when the case was brought to court. While government security was at stake, so was the larger issue of freedom of the press. I think that this kind of reporting is what all journalists should aspire to have: the bravery to stand up for your rights and for the people. This is what Katharine Graham, Ben Bradlee, and so many others took a risk because of, and they were able to change our country for the better.