

## Cautionary 'Mark Felt: The Man Who Brought Down the White House'

Submitted by [PatrickMcD](#) [1] on October 7, 2017 - 12:30pm

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Rating: **3.5/5.0**

CHICAGO – Everything old is new again, in the 1970s story of the infamous “Deep Throat” – the source in the FBI who tipped off the Washington Post about the issues surrounding Watergate scandal – who revealed himself in 2005. He is now the subject of a new film, and is portrayed by Liam Neeson, in “Mark Felt: The Man Who Brought Down the White House.”

It's a blistering history lesson, and again the more revealed about the Richard M. Nixon administration the more it becomes clear that the Republican Party agenda was/is based in acquiring power rather than serving the American people. Mark Felt was an old-school FBI agent that wasn't so innocent himself – he was somewhat of a bag boy for J. Edgar Hoover – but he saw injustice and used his power of knowing where the “bodies were buried” to bring down the corrupt Nixon. The film gets a bit choppy at the end, as if there was more to it, and the introduction of Felt's personal life distracted from the main procedural. It still was compelling history, and a cautionary tale that evokes today's presidential situation.

Mark Felt (Liam Neeson) was a clear-cut FBI man, the second in rank only to Director J. Edgar Hoover in the early 1970s. Richard Nixon was the president at that time, and his agenda becomes apparent with the death of Hoover in 1972. After the smoke (made possible by the burning of Hoover's “secret files”) clears, Nixon puts his own man as Director of the FBI, L. Patrick Gray (Marton Csokas), undermining Felt's power and position.



Liam Neeson as 'Mark Felt: The Man Who Brought Down the White House'

*Photo credit: Sony Pictures Classics*

Around the same time, the Washington, D.C.-based Democrat Party offices, headquartered in the Watergate Hotel, are broken into. The FBI investigation of the events are compromised by Gray and Nixon, and Felt feels impelled to go to the Washington Post newspaper and leak the key details. He is the infamous “Deep Throat” source for reporters Bob Woodward and Carl Bernstein, and his information brings down the Nixon White House.

The film also includes Felt’s relationship with his wife (Diane Lane, always great) and daughter, which distracts from the more important Watergate issues, and writer/director Peter Landesman (“Parkland”) had a problem with that balance. The last third of the film wrapped up quickly, as if several other scenes were excised. But the sheer audacity of the Nixon years are well exposed, and if you’re a history buff, or interested in politics-in-the-halls-of-power at all, this is highly recommended.

Liam Neeson is a great choice for Mark Felt, he knows how to create a larger-than-life character with the necessary flaws that lead to a downfall. He wears the tragedy of the events in the performance, and creates both sympathy and empathy for what Felt had to endure. The most fascinating people you’ll ever meet in your life are the ones that seem born to be in the position or occupation they embody. Mark Felt was one of those people, and Liam Neeson knows how to communicate his responsibility.





Diane Lane Portrays Audrey, Mark Felt's Wife  
Photo credit: Sony Pictures Classics

The supporting cast takes their place in the story with a gravitas that really lends itself to the drama. The always welcome Tom Sizemore portrays Bill Sullivan, a Republican goon with a Nixonian haircut. Bruce Greenwood is Sandy Smith, a Time Magazine reporter who also had a relationship with Felt. Marton Csokas as L. Patrick Gray scores as an ultimate bureaucrat, reshaping the legacy of Hoover and almost bringing down the FBI in those politically-charged times. That sounds very familiar (James Comey).

The underground heroes of history are often people who just give a damn about what this country was founded for... wealthy land owners. Just kidding. The principles of truth usually can defeat power, but with the proliferation of "fake news" it's also overwhelming. We're drowning in information, but do we really know anything? Where or who is the next Mark Felt?

*"Mark Felt: The Man Who Brought Down the White House" continues its nationwide release in Chicago on October 6th. See local listings for theaters and show times. Featuring Liam Neeson, Diane Lane, Bruce Greenwood, Noah Wyle, Marton Csokas and Tom Sizemore. Written and directed by Peter Landesman. Rated "PG-13"*



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