



# Leak: Why Mark Felt Became Deep Throat

By Max Holland

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Through the shadowy persona of "Deep Throat," FBI official Mark Felt became as famous as the Watergate scandal his "leaks" helped uncover. Best known through Hal Holbrook's portrayal in the film version of Bob Woodward and Carl Bernstein's *All the President's Men*, Felt was regarded for decades as a conscientious but highly secretive whistleblower who shunned the limelight. Yet even after he finally revealed his identity in 2005, questions about his true motivations persisted.

Max Holland has found the missing piece of that Deep Throat puzzle—one that's been hidden in plain sight all along. He reveals for the first time in detail what truly motivated the FBI's number-two executive to become the most fabled secret source in American history. In the process, he directly challenges Felt's own explanations while also demolishing the legend fostered by Woodward and Bernstein's bestselling account.

Holland critiques all the theories of Felt's motivation that have circulated over the years, including notions that Felt had been genuinely upset by White House law-breaking or had tried to defend and insulate the FBI from the machinations of President Nixon and his Watergate henchmen. And, while acknowledging that Woodward finally disowned the "principled whistleblower" image of Felt in *The Secret Man*, Holland shows why that famed journalist's latest explanation still falls short of the truth.

Holland showcases the many twists and turns to Felt's story that are not widely known, revealing not a selfless official acting out of altruistic patriotism, but rather a career bureaucrat with his own very private agenda. Drawing on new interviews and oral histories, old and just-released FBI Watergate files, papers of the Watergate Special Prosecution Force, presidential tape recordings, and Woodward and Bernstein's Watergate-related papers, he sheds important new light on both Felt's motivations and the complex and often problematic relationship between the press and government officials.

Fast-paced and scrupulously fact-checked, *Leak* resolves the mystery residing at the heart of Mark Felt's actions. By doing so, it radically revises our understanding of America's most famous presidential scandal.

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### Editorial Review

#### Review

"For anyone interested in the Nixon years, this is a page turner, a perfect blend of investigative and scholarly journalism that explains and documents why Mark Felt?aka Deep Throat?leaked to journalists during Watergate. Holland has answered important and previously unanswered questions."?John Dean, Nixon White House Counsel

?Holland has given clarity to a misunderstood, complicated, and murky story. A probing, revealing, and necessary addition to the Watergate saga.??Stanley Kutler, author of *The Wars of Watergate*

?Lucidly written and prodigiously researched, this gripping corrective deserves five out of five stars?plus a Bravo!??Irwin F. Gellman, author of *The Contender: Richard Nixon, the Congress Years, 1946?1952*

?Convincingly destroys the myth of Deep Throat?s alleged altruism.??Keith Olson, author of *Watergate: The Presidential Scandal That Shook America*

?The definitive account of Mark Felt?s role in Watergate.??Athan Theoharis, author of *The FBI and American Democracy*

?Consistently smart and savvy.??David J. Garrow, winner of the Pulitzer Prize for *Bearing the Cross*

#### About the Author

Max Holland is editor of the website *Washington Decoded*, contributing editor to the *Wilson Quarterly* and *The Nation*, and author of *The Kennedy Assassination Tapes: The White House Conversations of Lyndon B. Johnson Regarding the Assassination, the Warren Commission, and the Aftermath*. He received the J. Anthony Lukas Work-in-Progress Award for a forthcoming book on the Warren Commission.

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