

The Deeper Meaning of "Deep Throat"

A Blog Entry in Comments From Left Field & GordonTalk

June 5, 2005

[Revealing the identity of "Deep Throat,"](#) as W. Mark Feld, former Number Two man at the FBI, not only resolved one of the longest running mysteries in Washington—where secrets are more apt to leak in thirty minutes than in thirty years—but also resurrected for many of us the bitter memories and hard feelings of the Watergate era. And a whole lot more, with profound implications for every last one of us.

If 9/11 marked "the end of innocence" for America in the world, then Watergate marked "the end of innocence" for America at home.

Truth be told, the resounding effects of the Watergate scandals represented the culmination of an extremely bitter era for our country. It began with "a shot heard 'round the world": the assassination of President John F. Kennedy, whose youthful idealism and infectious enthusiasm had come to symbolize the United States enjoying the unprecedented prosperity and power we had amassed in the post-War years. But in an instant, out of the blue, one madman with a gun changed the course of history for the other five or six billion of us then or now alive—a concept so mind-boggling as to inspire countless theories of conspiracy (even

without considering all the unearthly coincidences unearthed).

From that moment onward, the world that had seemed so bright seemed to go all to hell.

"I want to hold your hand!"

Sure, the music and movies and TV shows of the Sixties were so great that they are still replayed and rerun today like nobody's business (and in commercials for everybody's business). How much of what passes for entertainment today will be so popular some forty years from now?

And yes, we did fulfill JFK's dream of the New Frontier by "putting a man on the moon" before the end of the decade. But did we follow through? We're lucky to get shuttles into orbit anymore; our dreams of exploration have been down-graded to second-hand experiences, fulfilled by robots (making, admittedly, most wonderful discoveries) or by our fantasies in movie theaters or in theaters at home (I don't think Columbus could've discovered America from his barcalounger).

Like most memories, the Sixties have for many passed into the romanticized realm of nostalgia;

but for those of us who lived through that "tumultuous decade," it marked the beginning of the end for the relative peace and prosperity and, most importantly, unity that we had enjoyed as a nation in the Fifties ... at least in the national psyche (as captured in all its black-and-white glory, both visually and morally, in *Father Knows Best* and countless other shows produced for that mind-melding new mass medium, of television).

The Right utterly despised the Sixties because of all the civil unrest, as "colored people" marched on the Capital and rioted in the ghettos, and hippies burned their draft cards on college campuses and did only God (who they said was dead) knows what in their communes.

The Left claimed they loved everyone but, in fact, hated all the prejudice, all the poverty, all the pollution, all the conformity, and—above all—all the War (never declared) in Vietnam.

The Right shouted, "America! Love it or leave it!"

The Left answered, "America! Change it or lose it!"

The Right told the Left to "work within the system," which was easier said than done as assassins from the Right kept killing political leaders on the Left.

Even Gov. George Wallace, of Alabama—who finally led the South out of its traditional home in the Democratic Party and into the eager, race-baiting, war-mongering embrace of the GOP

and, thus, helped set the stage for the Red State / Blue State divide we "enjoy" today—had his presidential aspirations interrupted by a would-be assassin, as the Sixties turned into the early Seventies.

By then, the seemingly endless parade of flag-draped coffins returning from Southeast Asia—bearing the remains of someone's son or father or brother or neighbor or ...—overwhelmed any geo-political arguments about Communist dominoes falling halfway around the world. The majority wanted to put an end to the war; President Nixon tried to bomb the "gooks" into submission but, failing that, fumbled for a way to make "peace with honor."

Nixon won praise far and wide for "opening the door" to the Soviet Union and Red China and, thus, helping to thaw the frosty relations of the Cold War (never mind the fact that he had risen to power feeding the Red Scare hysteria, as by branding his political opponents Communists or their sympathizers). He was bringing an end to the Vietnam War (years after he got elected with a "secret plan" to end it). And most significant of all, he was seen as a God-fearing, patriotic American who championed the "silent majority": Suburbanites from sea to shining sea felt "he was one of us, not one of them (you know, one of those uppity colored fellas or ungrateful longhairs or ... well, you know ...)."

And who stood in the way of Nixon's re-election? Other than Wallace, taking some votes in the South for his third-party bid (from a wheelchair)? None other than Senator George McGovern, darling of the "radical" Democrats (I

believe this would be the only time that decriminalizing marijuana would be in the Democratic presidential platform).

Nixon was poised to win by a landslide, which, of course, he would.

Then again, Nixon faced one other enemy, who had dogged him his entire, "checkered" (pun intended) political career: himself.

More to the point, Nixon's classically tragic flaw was his insatiable paranoia.

With a blatant and hypocritical contempt for the law, the "law and order" president and All the President's Men would corrupt the institutions of government at their command and turn a "third rate burglary" of the Democratic National Committee Headquarters at the Watergate Hotel into the greatest political scandal this nation had ever seen—that is, that we were able to see, and thwart, thanks to the courageous "whistleblowing" by Deep Throat and the dogged reporting by Woodward & Bernstein and others in our still free press—culminating, of course, in the unprecedented, inglorious resignation of our nation's Chief Executive.

To the Right, this was *The Poseidon Adventure*, the world turned upside-down.

To the Left, this was *The Godfather*, the abuse of power inevitably ending in tragedy.

But one thing everyone seemed to agree on: After all the bitter disappointments ("the only war America ever lost") and tragedies ("Where

have all the young men gone?" "Has anybody here seen my old friend John?"), after all the carnage and chaos, after all the lies about body counts and cover-up about secret tapes—after all the betrayals—only a fool would believe anyone in Washington ever again.

So when I see some "snake oil" diet pill being sold on TV and almost bearing as a badge of honor a disclaimer that "these statements have not been verified by the US Food and Drug Administration," when I hear some guy on the radio rant about the flying saucers in Area 51 that the government is hiding from us, when I witness a couple army buddies blow up the federal building in Oklahoma City, or when I fight a seemingly endless battle against a political party that is doing everything in its power to bankrupt the federal government and ["starve the beast."](#) well, I have to wonder how different things the world over might have been if the events of the Sixties and early Seventies that culminated in Watergate had not occurred.

Perhaps Granny ranting on *The Beverly Hillbillies* about how "the South shall rise again" would have remained in the realm of farce.

[Looking at the Red State / Blue State map of America today](#), I don't think anyone is laughing.