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**CBS News**

# **FACE THE NATION**

**Sunday, June 5, 2005**

**GUESTS: BEN BRADLEE**  
The Washington Post

**JOHN DEAN**  
Former Nixon White House Counsel

**JAMES MANN**  
Author, "Rise of the Vulcans:  
The History of Bush's War Cabinet"

**MODERATOR: BOB SCHIEFFER - CBS News**

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**FACE THE NATION - CBS NEWS**  
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BOB SCHIEFFER, host:

Today on FACE THE NATION, the mystery and the meaning of Deep Throat. A 30-year mystery was solved last week when it was revealed that Deep Throat, the anonymous source who leaked to Washington Post reporters Woodward and Bernstein and helped bring down President Nixon was Mark Felt, the number-two at the FBI. Why did he do it? If not for him, could President Nixon have stayed in office? And what does it mean to the debate over anonymous sources? We'll talk to Ben Bradlee, who was the editor of The Washington Post during Watergate, John Dean, former White House counsel under Nixon, and author James Mann who fingered Mark Felt over a decade ago. Finally, some of my own thoughts on Deep Throat. But first, the editor who broke the Watergate story on FACE THE NATION.

Announcer: FACE THE NATION with CBS News chief Washington correspondent Bob Schieffer. And now from CBS News in Washington, Bob Schieffer.

SCHIEFFER: And joining us now from Graydon, Maryland, Ben Bradlee, and during the time of Watergate, the courageous editor of The Washington Post; from Los Angeles, John Dean; and here in the studio, author James Mann, who almost figured this out. Perhaps he did figure it out some years ago.

Ben Bradlee, I want to start with you and I would ask you the basic question: What do you think would have happened if Mark Felt had not helped and guided Woodward and Bernstein?

Mr. BEN BRADLEE (The Washington Post): Well, I wish I knew the answer to that question. I just don't. I have a feeling that the momentum was with us until the election, and then I think we were doing fine without Deep Throat until the election. I think after the election of 1972, we needed help to get us to a point where the case eventually went before Judge Sirica. Once we're in that courthouse, once the grand jury is working and the Senate hearings are in the offing and finally, of course, the tapes, it was a steamroller.

SCHIEFFER: Well, you point that out. You thought you were doing fine before the election, but George McGovern in that election, the basic story of...

Mr. BRADLEE: Yeah. We didn't...

SCHIEFFER: ...Watergate had come out. He tried to make it an issue and he just didn't succeed. Nixon was elected in a landslide but...

Mr. BRADLEE: Overwhelming. Yeah.

SCHIEFFER: Yes.

Mr. BRADLEE: Well, that wasn't our fault...

SCHIEFFER: No, absolutely...

Mr. BRADLEE: ...nor was that what we were trying to do. We had a good story, a really good story.

SCHIEFFER: But what you're saying here is that you had broken the original story. You went...

Mr. BRADLEE: Yeah.

SCHIEFFER: ...through the election cycle and then there was the idea of where do you go next with this story and that, if I understand what you're saying, is where Mark Felt was so valuable to you.

Mr. BRADLEE: Well, he started us again and his importance was overwhelming in the beginning, not so much because of specific information that he gave but he would get Woodward off of certain stories that we seemed to be concentrating on. And Woodward would come back and says, 'My friend says there's nothing down that path. Let's try another one.'

SCHIEFFER: We tend to forget in the aftermath of Watergate that Mark Felt was a suspect in the minds of many people as being Deep Throat. In 1976 on this very broadcast, Ron Ostrow of the Los Angeles Times--he was on FACE THE NATION. Mark Felt was on FACE THE NATION and Ostrow said he still thought Felt might be the guy. Here's part of what--let's listen to part of that broadcast.

(Excerpt from FACE THE NATION, August 29, 1976)

Mr. RONALD J. OSTROW (Los Angeles Times): You denied a number of times being Deep Throat, the source that Bob Woodward and Carl Bernstein credited for many of their Watergate disclosures, but there remains in some of us the notion that maybe you were a piece of it, say a hunk of the larynx or something. And what I'm wondering is that whether you want to take credit at this time for helping unmask any of the Watergate cover-up?

Mr. MARK FELT: No. No, I am not Deep Throat and the only thing I can say is that I wouldn't be ashamed to be because I think whoever helped Woodward helped the country. No question about it.

(End of excerpt)

SCHIEFFER: So there you have it. The first take of Mark Felt on perhaps whoever Deep Throat was. We now know it was Mark Felt. He thought they were doing basically a public service. John Dean, you had a much different perspective, as President Nixon's lawyer, on all of this through Watergate. You later sort of fessed up and told all to the Watergate Committee, but you have said you had mixed emotions about Felt's activities. Why?

Mr. JOHN DEAN (Former Nixon White House Counsel): Well, primarily because I got hooked as a Watergate buff and Deep Throat sleuth and began looking at who could be this character and spent--actually wasted an awful lot of time just because it was a good mystery story, and Felt, he never quite fit for me, and then when I looked at his information, I had problems because much of the information he gave Woodward, at least as reported in "All the President's Men," is not correct. He missed some--I was very interested in hearing Ben saying how they were working well on their own up until the election, and after that it was Throat that was helping them. But what's interesting is Throat gives them very little information, that Woodward at least reports, up till the election. And after the election he starts giving them much more detail, and when he gives them more detail, he gets into many, many inaccurate statements that--as to what was going on and why it was going on.

So that's my mixture. I think there was a nobility, particularly given the risk he was taking, because the White House was impenetrable. And truly we didn't control the FBI and we--the

other thing is, The Washington Post was not really troubling us with their stories. What troubled us was looking at it from a cover-up point of view is they were keeping pressure on Congress, they were keeping pressure on the judges and the prosecutors and giving a story that might have no legitimacy and didn't have much legitimacy outside the Beltway a true bit of cachet and importance that it might otherwise not have had.

SCHIEFFER: Well, let me just ask you this. Was there anyplace else that Mark Felt could have gone? I mean, he clearly--there were obviously several reasons that he did what he did. Could he have gone to his higher-ups, as...

Mr. DEAN: Well, I...

SCHIEFFER: ...as some now say he should have done? Or should he have--could he have gone public, as some now say he should have done?

Mr. DEAN: He was clearly the number-one man for operational purposes in the FBI at that time. Pat Gray was running around the country actually campaigning with rank-and-file agents to become the director so that he could get the nod at some point. So he...

SCHIEFFER: He was the acting director.

Mr. DEAN: He really was the acting--and to all practical purposes the titular head. So where could he go? To me, now that I know who it is, given his law enforcement position the obvious place is to go to Congress. But he chose not to. Gray at one point does go to Nixon and say, 'Hey, they--your people are interfering with this investigation,' and there's a wonderful conversation. And Nixon tells him, 'Just go right after it, Pat, and don't hold back at all.' But that isn't--it's not the FBI that's giving the White House information. It's really the criminal division of the Department of Justice where they're reporting.

SCHIEFFER: Let me go to author James Mann, who--What?--in May of '92...

Mr. JAMES MANN (Author, "Rise of the Vulcans"): Right.

SCHIEFFER: ...it seems to me you wrote an article for the Atlantic Monthly that pointed at Felt as one of the main possibilities to be Deep Throat. You turned out to be correct, obviously. Why do you think so many people were so wrong about who it was, Jim?

Mr. MANN: I think people went about it the wrong way, and in a way that sort of didn't understand how Washington worked. Everybody kept looking at the famous faces they already knew, the political appointees. Was it--you know, some of these guesses were crazy. Was it George Bush Sr.? Well, George Bush Sr. was UN ambassador. And these are--they kept looking at people who had no real access to the hard law enforcement investigative information that...

SCHIEFFER: But what...

Mr. MANN: ...Deep Throat obviously had.

SCHIEFFER: What led you to Felt?

Mr. MANN: Actually, what I did, this story 13 years ago has--which seems to have more bounce than most 13-year-old magazine pieces, said, 'Look, I don't know for sure who Deep

Throat is but I know--I'm convinced that he worked at the FBI, and that his institutional affiliation was in some ways more important than exactly who he was.' And that came from two things, really. I'd actually been a reporter at The Post and worked alongside Woodward and recognized that he had a source at the FBI, didn't say who it was, wasn't particularly linked to Watergate.

And then I went off in other reporting through the '70s and '80s, covered law enforcement and the national security apparatus, and got the sense that, hey, look, there is a permanent government out there. It's not who you see on the talk shows. It may--it's not the political appointees, and that this really seemed as though this was the source and that there was this history, very specific history from 1972 to--Watergate took place right after J. Edgar Hoover's death.

SCHIEFFER: Let me--I want to go back to Ben Bradlee. I want to talk a little bit about Bob Woodward. I thought the most interesting story of all last week was the one that Bob Woodward himself wrote about how he first met Mark Felt. He was still a lieutenant in the Navy. He was working for Admiral Tom Moore over at the Pentagon and he delivered a message over to the White House. He was sitting there in the waiting room and found himself sitting beside Mark Felt. He didn't even know he worked at the FBI. He introduced himself, and from that came this relationship that later proved so productive. What about that, Ben?

Mr. BRADLEE: Well, I think that proves that Bob Woodward was a reporter before he even knew it himself. I mean, it was his instincts to develop friendships and contacts with people, and he was very good at that. I would like to quibble with John Dean's thing. John has identified a whole lot of people in his career as Deep Throat, and the idea that when he says that Deep Throat was wrong many times, I don't believe that, and I certainly don't believe that he was wrong in any significant case. Any information that we got from Dean turned out to be right, period.

Mr. DEAN: Well, I can tell you one, Ben, that's wrong. For example, he tells Woodward that, 'I've met with Howard Baker,' and 'Baker's in the bag.' Flat wrong. I never had such a meeting with Howard Baker.

Mr. BRADLEE: Well--excuse me. Well, let me...

SCHIEFFER: Go ahead, Ben.

Mr. BRADLEE: I've not given--well, I don't give up on that. I think Howard Baker certainly was a powerful force for good at--after the hearings started, but I think Howard Baker was reporting to the White House in the early stages of it, and he probably should have been from his point of view.

SCHIEFFER: Well...

Mr. BRADLEE: I don't...

SCHIEFFER: ...Ben, let me just ask you, as somebody who works in a news organization, a lot of times you can have a very good source who will tell you some stuff that you'll check out and discover that it was not correct.

Mr. BRADLEE: Yeah.

SCHIEFFER: Did every single thing that Mark Felt told Bob Woodward check out or were there some things that you concluded were not right?

Mr. BRADLEE: Everything that he wrote was right. Everything that got in the paper was right. Now I can't--from 30 years, I can't remember, you know, an individual instance where--certainly where I said he was wrong, 'cause I didn't know.

SCHIEFFER: Yeah.

Mr. BRADLEE: I never met Deep Throat, so--but I mean, we'd put information from him to Woodward through a very fine sieve, I'll tell you, very fine sieve.

SCHIEFFER: Well, I think that's the lesson for those kids who are in journalism school right now and are watching this broadcast. You didn't just take his word for everything he sa--every--you checked out what he had to say and you used him to check out what others said to you.

Mr. BRADLEE: That's true, to the best we could. The point is that reporters do that. Reporters understand that people have a motive when they talk to--when some source talks to them. They do that for their own reasons. We have to discover those reasons, look at them, filter them out and decide up or down.

SCHIEFFER: All right. Well, let's take a break here. When we come back, we'll talk about Deep Throat's motives and whether he did all this for the right reasons or for other reasons in a minute.

(Announcements)

SCHIEFFER: And we're back again with Ben Bradlee, with John Dean and with James Mann.

Jim, I want to go back to you first. This whole idea, a lot being made now about what motivated Deep Throat. Do you think that really matters, and what do you think motivated him?

Mr. MANN: I think it does matter. I think that it doesn't matter for the central facts of Watergate, the fact that, you know, a crime was committed, the Nixon administration tried to cover up. That's the essence of Watergate. But the backdrop to it, the history to it is this idea that--J. Edgar Hoover died, the FBI is trying to preserve the autonomy it had under Hoover, and the Nixon administration's trying to grab that autonomy not just for, you know, law enforcement reasons but for political reasons, too. That's really the backdrop for what's taking place.

SCHIEFFER: I thought Ben Bradlee made an excellent point when he said 'Reporters always take into consideration...'

Mr. MANN: Right.

SCHIEFFER: '...what somebody's motive is.' Because people--news gets out because somebody wants it out.

Mr. MANN: Yeah.

SCHIEFFER: It's up to the reporter to decide if it's in the public's interest to know that. And that's what gets in the paper and what gets on television.

Mr. MANN: You're never going to dismiss the information someone's bringing to you because he's got a bunch of different motives for it.

SCHIEFFER: But you have to check.

Mr. MANN: Right.

SCHIEFFER: And the motives do play a part.

John Dean, do you think that Mark Felt is a good guy or a bad guy, as it turns out?

Mr. DEAN: Well, you know, Bob Woodward, just picking up also on the motives and then going to that question, says he doesn't have any idea of exactly what was motivating his source, Mark Felt, and he was dealing with him closer than anybody. What I think Jim needs to do is put his institutional hat back on because, as I look at it, I don't know how conceivably Felt, as a single man whose day-to-day operation is running the FBI, could indeed have been alone. In other words, there are other people in the institution who know exactly what's happening, that Felt is feeding information to Woodward or to The Washington Post, and they're helping him.

Somebody is checking Woodward's balcony, for example, to see if the flag is in the flower pot, signaling a need for a meeting. Obviously Felt can't get out and do that. Contacting Woodward through circling page 20 of his New York Times. I think that's some other agent that Felt's got working for him. So I think there's probably more of an institutional motive here that seems to be concerned about the White House, and so they're going out of channels to do this.

SCHIEFFER: Well, let's...

Mr. DEAN: And that would be good if they really felt that they were being stymied.

SCHIEFFER: Well, that's one of the questions that I have for Ben Bradlee.

Ben, how was Mark Felt? Could he have done this all by himself?

Mr. BRADLEE: No

SCHIEFFER: I mean, marking Bob Woodward's personal New York Times and all of that?

Mr. BRADLEE: No, he couldn't. And I think it's perfectly obvious that he had help. It's perfectly obvious, I think one of his motives that he wanted to be head of the FBI. That's one of the purest, noblest motives that I've run into in 30 years. What's the matter with that? And he did not break any laws telling us that I'd pay much attention to.

SCHIEFFER: Well, let me just say, that just begs the question, you know and I know that the best way to keep a secret in Washington is not to tell anybody about it. So obviously Mark Felt had to share this with some of those other FBI agents, if they were the ones that were watching for that signal from Bob Woodward. How did it manage to stay secret so long?

Mr. BRADLEE: Well, I think he didn't share in the sense that he said, 'The Washington Post wants to know something; give me some advice on this.' I think there was a bunch of people

who disapproved of L. Patrick Gray burning letters from H.L. Hunt. I think he disapproved of L. Patrick Gray campaigning for Nixon. And I think that was enough. They thought that their guy should be maybe--I don't know even know this, but I imagine that they centered on Felt could be the next guy.

SCHIEFFER: All right. Let's go to Jim Mann. You wanted to say something on this.

Mr. MANN: Let me give you my own theory on it. Yeah, I think there are maybe a couple of other people in the FBI who helped out, but that creates the idea, if--the suggestion is, well, there were, you know, 12 of Hoover's top aides who got together to work on this, I have no sign of that. The other people who helped out could have been grunts. You know, we're talking about, you know, maybe a 25-year-old guy who just came in and is going to do whatever Mark Felt says working in his inner office. That's the sort of person who gets up to circle page 20 at 4 in the morning. And why didn't anybody ever know? You know, that 25-year-old guy, believe it or not, might not know who Bob Woodward was, might not read The Washington Post.

SCHIEFFER: Well, let me just go back to Ben Bradlee one more time. Ben, over the years, of course, a lot of people said that Deep Throat was a composite. Is all of the information that was attributed to Deep Throat in the books and so forth, did that come from Mark Felt or did some of it come from other people?

Mr. BRADLEE: Not to my knowledge. Everything that is credited to Deep Throat came from him. I'm sure he had some help. I'm absolutely sure he had some help, but we didn't take a tip from some senator and attribute it to Deep Throat ever.

SCHIEFFER: John Dean, did people in the White House suspect Felt from the beginning? I know at one point that Richard Nixon certainly suspected him.

Mr. DEAN: I have conversations in some of those tapes where Nixon and I are talking about Felt, and there's no question that Felt was an early suspect as being a source for The Washington Post. It was repeated on many occasions. It came up with the president on several occasions. I think that's one of the reasons that Felt wasn't even under consideration to become the director of the FBI because his loyalty is being questioned right from the get-go as to whether or not he's a leak.

Mr. BRADLEE: Well, why didn't John Dean identify him instead of identifying two or three other people?

Mr. DEAN: I said the principal reason I had him off my radar is Felt leaves the FBI on June 14th of 1973. Woodward's last significant tip from Felt is in November of '73 when he's told there's one or more of Nixon's tapes that have a deliberate erasure. Now he's out of the FBI; yet, he gets this very inside, closely held information. I'd love to know where Felt got that little tidbit. Does he have a mole in the White House? Does he have a liaison agent? Is he picking this up in the hall or does some White House source, is he privy to this and is he feeding Felt?

SCHIEFFER: OK. All right. Well, that just...

Mr. BRADLEE: I...

SCHIEFFER: ...underlines that there are still some mysteries connected with Watergate, something we'll be talking about, I think, for a long, long time.

We'll be back with a final word in just a minute. Thank you, gentlemen, all of you.

(Announcements)

SCHIEFFER: And finally today, a couple of my own thoughts on Deep Throat. To tell the truth, I was sorry to learn who Deep Throat was, not that I had anything for or against Mark Felt. I never met the man. It's just that finally knowing is like having a magic trick explained. Once you know, it's no longer any fun. And it all seems so obvious in retrospect, but then, as Sherlock Holmes once observed, all things seem obvious once you know the answer. Watergate was important. Knowing Deep Throat's identity really wasn't. But it was still fun to guess and speculate and worry about it. It was a diversion, like sports or working a crossword puzzle, a parlor game.

Now there's a new parlor game. Did he do it for the right reasons or because he held a grudge, because he got passed over as J. Edgar Hoover's replacement? Like most whistle-blowers, it was probably done with a little of both in mind, but his motives are as unimportant to me as his identity. The important thing is what he did and how he did it. He saw the danger posed by a gang that thought all things were legal if done in the name of the president. Without his guidance to Woodward and Bernstein, the Watergate cover-up might have succeeded and America would have become what it had never been, a nation of men, not laws. Who knows where that would have led?

Deep Throat, we hardly know you still. But we owe you, whatever your reasons.

That's it for us. We'll see you next week right here on FACE THE NATION.