



# Leak: Why Mark Felt Became Deep Throat

*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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