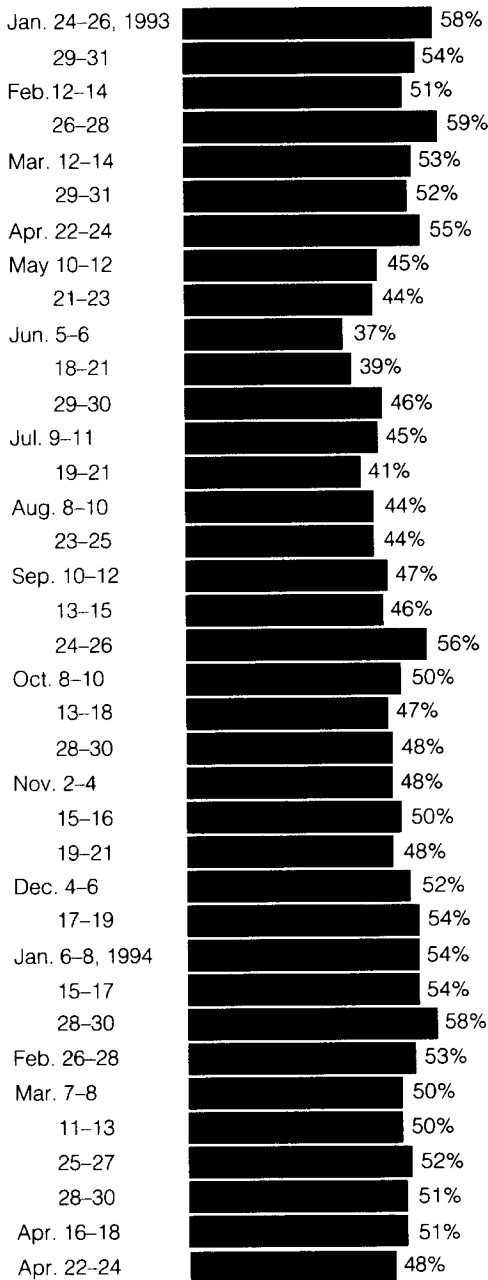


# SCANDALS: WHITEWATER

Are there recurring public opinion patterns in political scandals? In the next seven pages we look at Whitewater and at the early days of Iran-Contra and Watergate. In March 1994, Americans were still confused about Whitewater. The number who say they are following it closely has risen modestly since January.

Question: **Do you approve or disapprove of the way Bill Clinton is handling his job as president?**

## Approve of the way Bill Clinton is handling his job as president



### Key dates

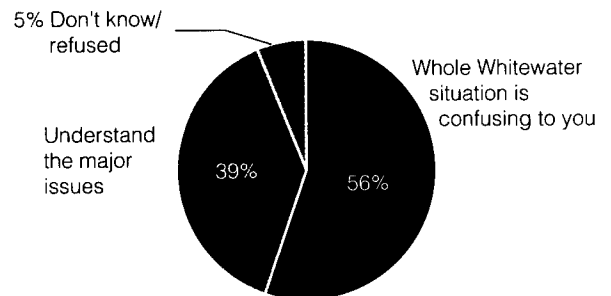
\* Jan. 20, 1994 - Special counsel selected to investigate Whitewater.

\* Mar. 4 - Special counsel issues subpoenas requiring White House and Treasury officials to testify regarding Whitewater investigation briefings.

\* Mar. 24 - President Clinton discusses Whitewater during primetime press conference.

Source: Surveys by the Gallup Organization for USA Today and CNN.

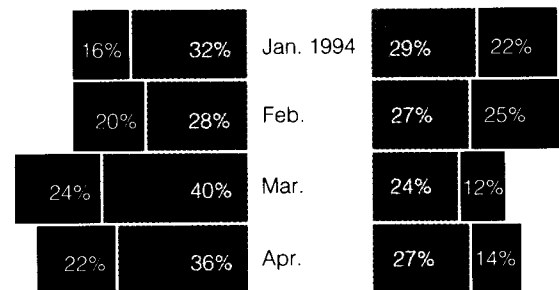
Question: **I have a few questions about the news concerning Bill and Hillary Clinton's involvement in the Whitewater real estate deal and other matters while he was Governor of Arkansas, and the investigation into these matters by a special counsel and other government officials since Bill Clinton became president. Would you say you, personally, understand the major issues involved in the Whitewater situation involving the Clinton administration, or is the whole situation confusing to you?**



Source: Survey by the Gallup Organization for USA Today and CNN, March 7-8, 1994.

Question: **As you may know, President Clinton and his wife are involved in a controversy over an investment they made in Whitewater Development Corporation in Arkansas and their involvement in a failed savings and loan in the 1980s while Clinton was governor of Arkansas. Are you...?**

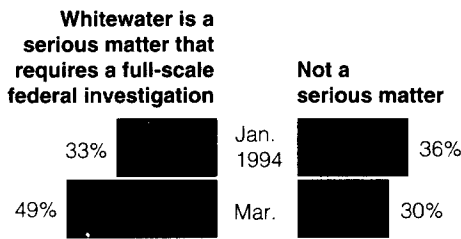
Are paying a great deal of attention to the Whitewater issue
  Some
  Only a little
  No attention



Source: Surveys by Yankelovich Partners for Time and CNN, latest that of April 6-7, 1994.

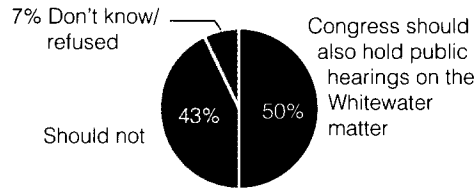
Early on Americans wanted an independent investigator appointed and felt they needed to know more. Tension between wanting aggressive media and the feeling that they have overplayed their roles is apparent in attitudes about Whitewater, Iran-Contra, and Watergate. Clinton has been dogged by questions of trust from the start.

Question: **Do you think Whitewater is a serious matter that requires a full-scale federal investigation, or do you think it's not a serious matter and should just be dropped, or what?**



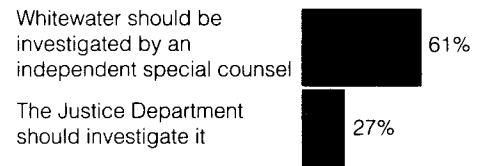
Source: Surveys by ABC News, latest that of March 7, 1994.

Question: **I have a few questions about the news concerning Bill and Hillary Clinton's involvement in the Whitewater real estate deal and other matters while he was Governor of Arkansas, and the investigation into these matters by a special counsel and other government officials since Bill Clinton became president. Do you think...?**



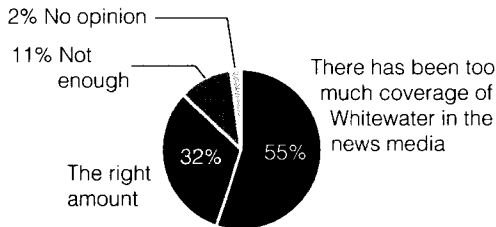
Source: Survey by the Gallup Organization for USA Today and CNN, March 7-8, 1994.

Question: **As you may know, the Justice Department is looking into President Clinton's investment in an Arkansas real estate venture called Whitewater in the 1980s. Some people have said this should be examined by an independent special counsel, not by the Justice Department. What do you think? Should it be...?**



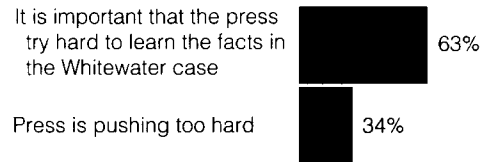
Source: Survey by ABC News/Washington Post, January 5-9, 1994.

Question: **Do you think there has been too much coverage of Whitewater in the news media, not enough coverage, or about the right amount?**



Source: Survey by the Gallup Organization for USA Today and CNN, March 25-27, 1994.

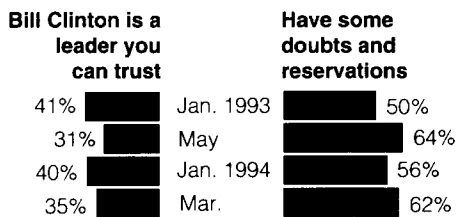
Question: **Do you think the press is pushing too hard on questions about Bill and Hillary Clinton's failed real estate investments in Arkansas, or is it important that the press try hard to learn the facts in the case?**



Note: Asked of those who followed news stories about Whitewater in the past month very or fairly closely (39%).

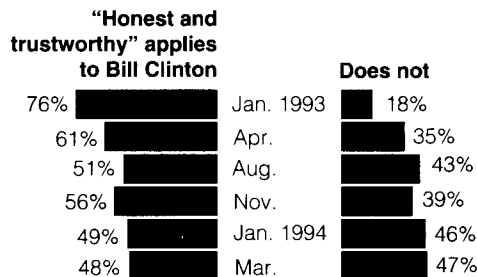
Source: Survey by Princeton Survey Research Associates for the Times Mirror Center, January 27-30, 1994.

Question: **Do you think Bill Clinton is a leader you can trust, or do you have some doubts and reservations?**



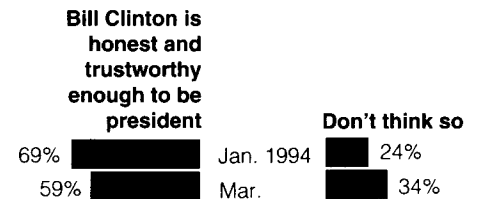
Source: Surveys by Yankelovich Partners for Time and CNN, latest that of March 9-10, 1994.

Question: **I'm going to read off some personal characteristics and qualities. As I read each one, please tell me whether you think it applies or doesn't apply to Bill Clinton.**



Source: Surveys by the Gallup Organization for USA Today and CNN, latest that of March 7-8, 1994.

Question: **Do you think Bill Clinton is honest and trustworthy enough to be president, or don't you think so?**

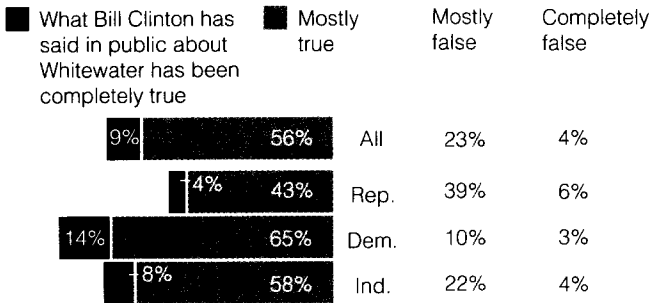


Source: Surveys by Yankelovich Partners for Time and CNN, latest that of March 9-10, 1994.

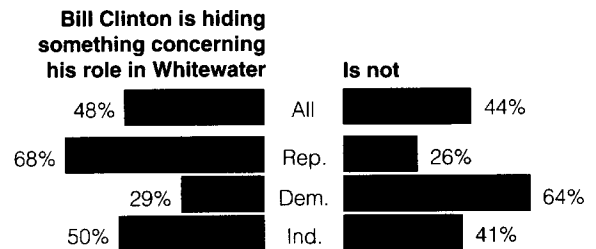
# Political Fallout

Majorities of Democrats and independents say Bill Clinton has been mostly truthful about Whitewater, while majorities of Republicans and independents, in response to another question, say he is hiding something. Solid majorities nationally say Whitewater hasn't affected their evaluation of Clinton.

Question: **Do you think that what Bill Clinton has said in public about the Whitewater matter has been completely true, mostly true, mostly false, or completely false?**

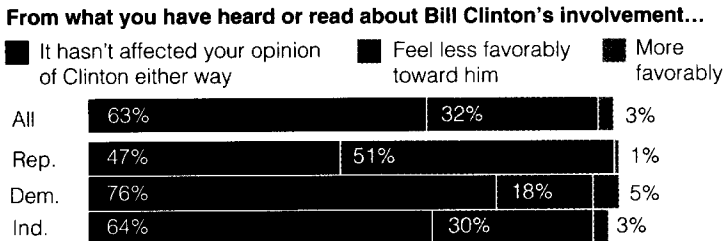


Question: **In your view, is Bill Clinton hiding something concerning his role in these matters, or don't you think so?**



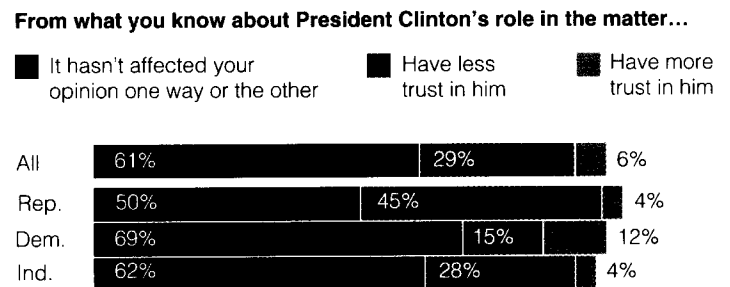
Source: Surveys by the Gallup Organization for USA Today and CNN, March 25-27, 1994.

Question: **I have a few questions about the news concerning Bill and Hillary Clinton's involvement in the Whitewater real estate deal and other matters while he was Governor of Arkansas, and the investigation into these matters by a special counsel and other government officials since Bill Clinton became president. From what you have heard or read about his involvement in those matters, do you feel...?**



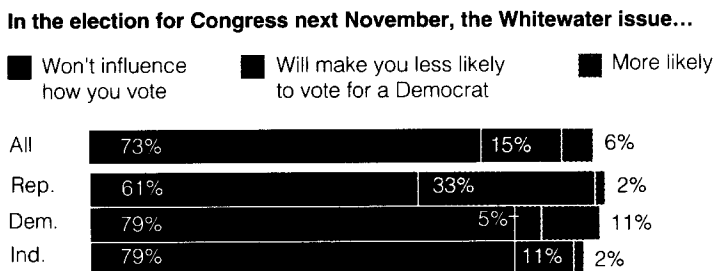
Source: Surveys by the Gallup Organization for USA Today and CNN, March 7-8, 1994.

Question: **From what you know about President Clinton's role in this matter, has President Clinton's behavior in these matters caused you to have more trust in him, less trust, or hasn't it affected your opinion one way or the other?**



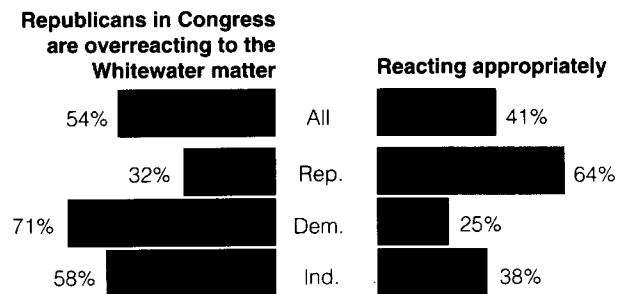
Source: Surveys by Yankelovich Partners for Time and CNN, March 9-10, 1994.

Question: **In the election for Congress next November, do you think that the Whitewater issue will make you more likely to vote for a Democrat for Congress, less likely to vote for a Democrat for Congress, or won't it influence how you vote?**



Source: Surveys by Yankelovich Partners for Time and CNN, March 9-10, 1994.

Question: **Do you think the Republicans in Congress are overreacting to the Whitewater matter, or are they reacting appropriately?**



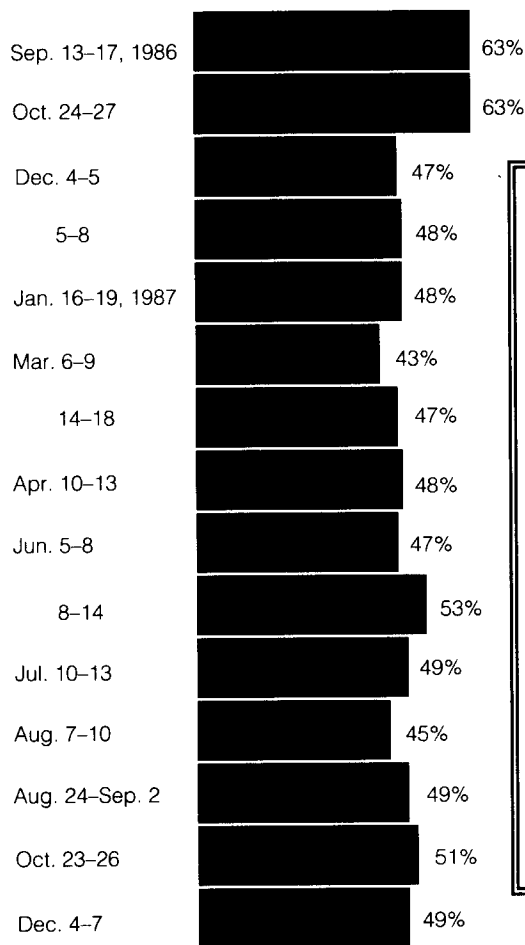
Source: Surveys by the Gallup Organization for USA Today and CNN, March 25-27, 1994.

# IRAN-CONTRA

Ronald Reagan lost all of the support he was going to lose very early in the Iran-Contra scandal. Six in ten were following it closely in November 1986, three-quarters by March 1987. Americans thought there was more to learn and wanted a special prosecutor appointed in this instance, too.

Question: **Do you approve or disapprove of the way Ronald Reagan is handling his job as president?**

## Approve of the way Ronald Reagan is handling his job as president



### Key dates

\* Nov. 3-6, 1986 - Reports of arms-for-hostages deal appear.

\* Nov. 25 - Reagan discloses that proceeds from arms sales to Iran were diverted to the Contras.

\* Dec. 19 - Independent counsel to investigate Iran-Contra affair selected.

\* May 5, 1987 - Joint House and Senate hearings open.

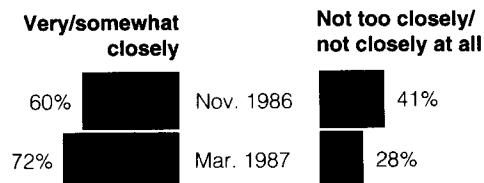
\* Aug. 12 - Reagan addresses nation following close of Iran-Contra hearings.

\* Nov. 18 - Joint congressional committee issues final report.

Source: Surveys by the Gallup Organization.

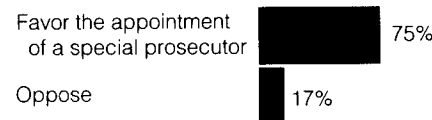
Question: **How closely are you following the situation involving the shipment of arms to Iran and the attempts to release American hostages held by pro-Iranian terrorists in Lebanon? Are you following it very closely, somewhat closely, not too closely, or not closely at all?**

## Following situation...



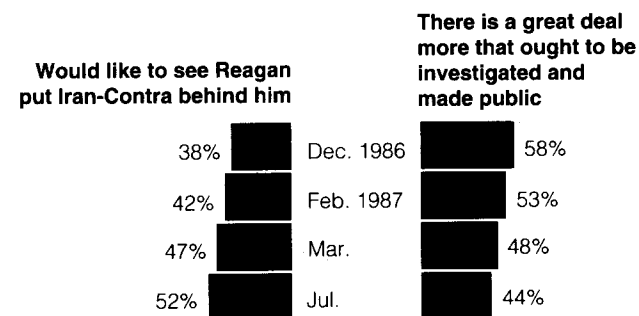
Source: Surveys by ABC News, November 13, 1986, and by ABC News/Washington Post, March 5-9, 1987.

Question: **Would you favor or oppose the appointment of a special prosecutor to investigate this situation (involving arms shipments to Iran and the Contra rebels in Nicaragua)?**



Source: Survey by NBC News/Wall Street Journal, December 1-2, 1986.

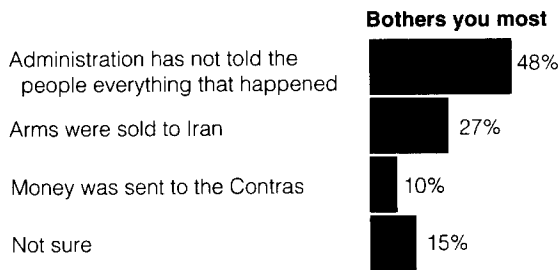
Question: **Would you like to see Ronald Reagan put this whole [Iran-Contra] business behind him as soon as possible, or do you think there is a great deal more about it that ought to be investigated and made public?**



Note: Question wording for December was: "Would you like to see Ronald Reagan put this whole business (the secret American arms deals with Iran and the Nicaraguan Contras) behind him as soon as possible, or do you think there is...?"  
Source: Surveys by the Los Angeles Times, latest that of July 10-13, 1987.

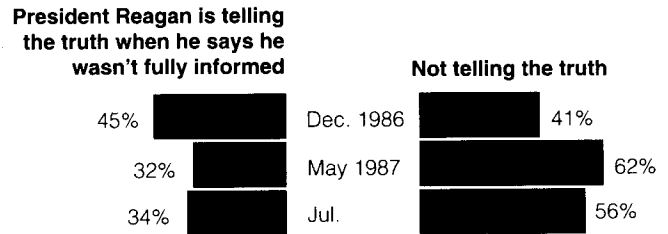
The belief that Reagan wasn't telling the truth about Iran-Contra grew through the spring. A plurality in December and a majority in July said press coverage was about right, but far more said coverage was too aggressive than said it was not aggressive enough. The belief in Reagan's honesty held solidly in the early months of the scandal.

Question: **What bothers you most—that arms were sold to Iran, that money from the arms sale was sent to the Contras in Nicaragua, or that the Reagan Administration has not told the American people everything that happened?**



Source: Survey by Yankelovich Clancy Shulman for *Time*, May 7, 1987.

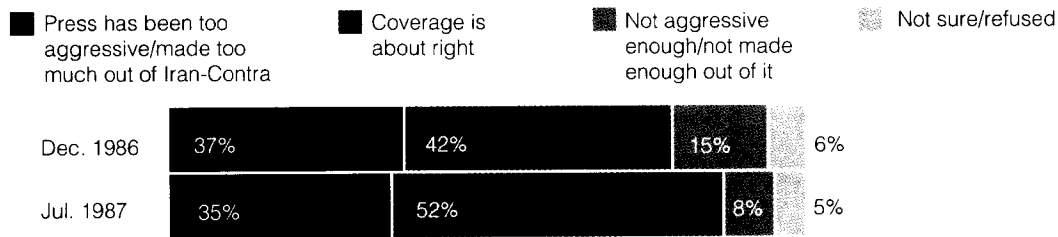
Question: **President Reagan says he was not fully informed that money from the sale of arms to Iran was being sent to the rebels in Nicaragua. Do you feel the president is telling the truth when he says he wasn't fully informed about this situation, or don't you think so?**



Source: Surveys by NBC News/*Wall Street Journal*, latest that of July 12, 1987.

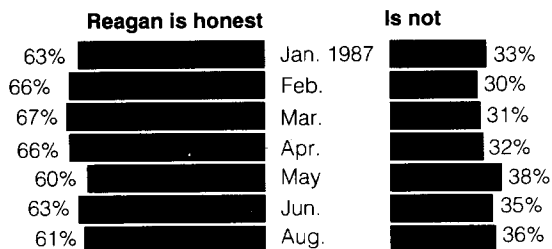
Question: **Do you think the media has been too aggressive in their coverage of the story about arms for Iran and Nicaragua, or about right, or do you think television and the press and magazines and radio have not been aggressive enough? (Dec. 1986)**

Question: **From what you have heard or read, would you say that the press has made too much out of the Iran-Contra affair, or has not made enough out of it, or would you say that the coverage of the Iran-Contra affair by the press has been about right?**



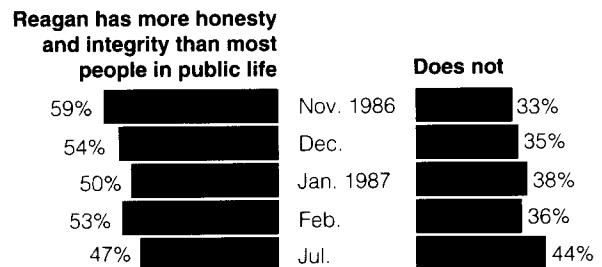
Source: Surveys by the *Los Angeles Times*, latest that of July 10-13, 1987.

Question: **Do you think Reagan is honest or not?**



Source: Surveys by ABC News/*Washington Post*, latest that of August 3-5, 1987.

Question: **Do you think Ronald Reagan has more honesty and integrity than most people in public life?**



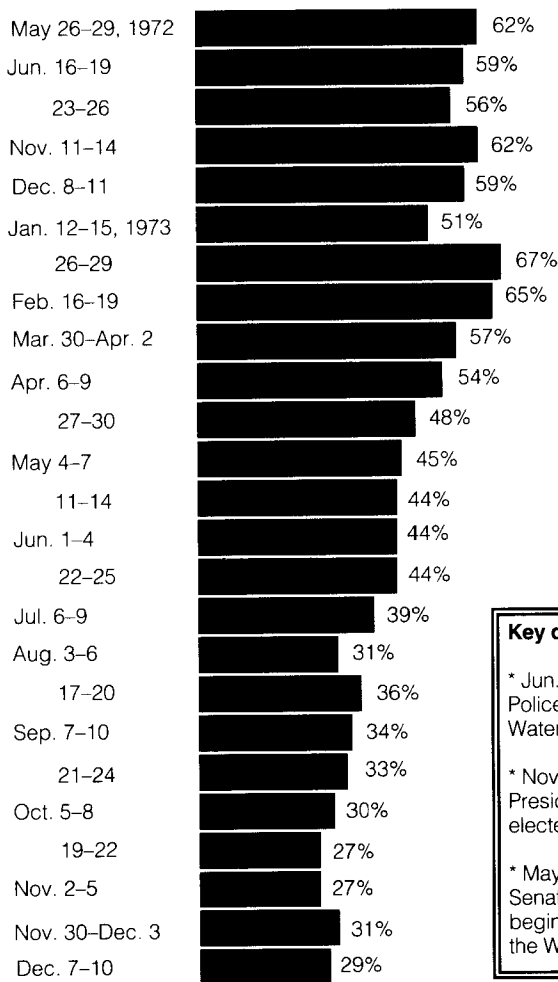
Source: Surveys by CBS News/*New York Times*, latest that of July 9, 1987.

# WATERGATE

Watergate took months to emerge in public opinion data. Only a few questions were asked about it in the summer and fall of 1972. By April 1973, nine months after the scandal broke, however, awareness was widespread. At that time, Americans said the White House had withheld information and called for a special prosecutor.

Question: **Do you approve or disapprove of the way Richard Nixon is handling his job as president?**

## Approve of the way Richard Nixon is handling his job as president



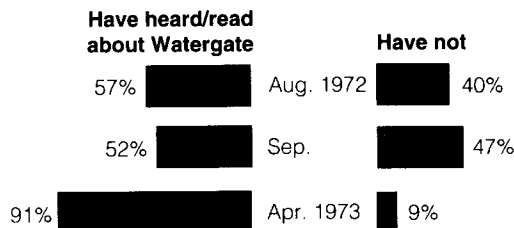
**Key dates**

- \* Jun. 17, 1972 - Police arrest Watergate burglars.
- \* Nov. 7, 1972 - President Nixon re-elected.
- \* May 17, 1973 - Senate committee begins hearings on the Watergate affair.

Note: Nixon's final approval rating, taken August 2-5, 1974, was 24%.  
Source: Surveys by the Gallup Organization.

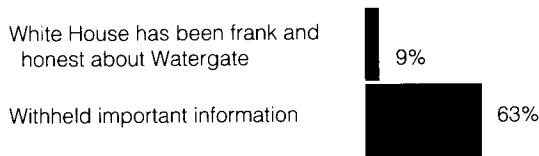
Question: **Have you seen, read, or heard about the so-called "Watergate" incident in June, when five men were arrested while trying to break in and bug the Democratic National Committee headquarters at the Watergate Hotel? (Aug. 1972)**

Question: **Have you heard or read about (the Watergate situation/Watergate)? (Sep. 1972, Apr. 1973)**



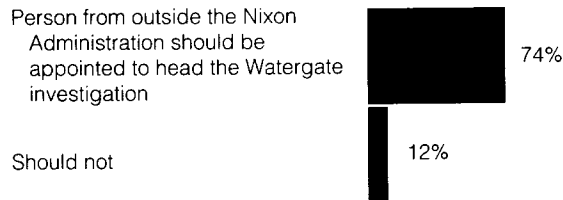
Source: Surveys by Opinion Research Corporation for President Nixon, August 29-31, 1972 (top bars), and the Gallup Organization (middle and bottom bars), latest that of April 27-29, 1973.

Question: **Do you feel that the White House has been frank and honest on the Watergate affair, or do you feel they have withheld important information?**



Source: Survey by Louis Harris and Associates, April 18-23, 1973.

Question: **Do you think a person from outside the Nixon Administration should be appointed to head the Watergate investigation, or not?**



Source: Survey by the Gallup Organization, May 2, 1973.

About a year into Watergate, the public began to question whether it was just politics or something more serious. Ambivalence about the press' role existed in Watergate, too. Nixon, unlike Reagan, lost substantial ground on the integrity question early. If a question mentioned the cover-up, Americans favored Nixon's resignation.

Question: **Do you believe this whole break-in, bugging attempt at the Democratic National Committee headquarters at Watergate is just more politics, or is it really something serious?**

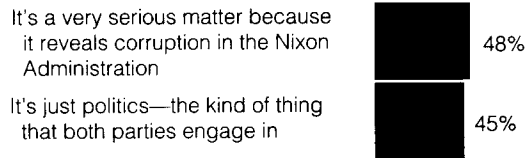
**Watergate break-in is...**



**Note:** Asked of the 57% who had seen, read, or heard about the Watergate incident.  
**Source:** Survey by Opinion Research Corporation for President Nixon, August 29-31, 1972.

Question: **Which of these two statements comes closer to your point of view about Watergate?**

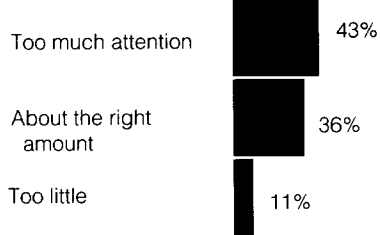
**Comes closer to your view about Watergate**



**Source:** Survey by the Gallup Organization, July 6-9, 1973.

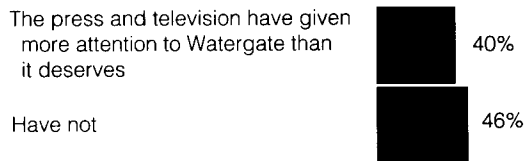
Question: **With regard to the Watergate affair, do you think the mass media—that is, newspapers, television, and radio—have provided too much coverage, about the right amount, or too little?**

**Media has given Watergate...**



**Source:** Survey by the Gallup Organization, June 1-4, 1973.

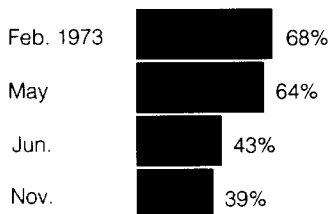
Question: **Let me read you some statements about the role of the press in the Watergate affair. For each statement, tell me if you agree or disagree.**



**Source:** Survey by Louis Harris and Associates, June 14-18, 1973.

Question: **Let me read you some statements about President Nixon. For each, tell me if you tend to agree or disagree.**

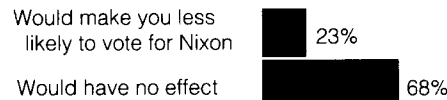
**Nixon is a man of high integrity**



**Source:** Surveys by Louis Harris and Associates, latest that of November 12-15, 1973.

Question: **If it is proven that high-ranking Republicans were involved in the break-in, bugging attempt at the Democratic National Committee headquarters at Watergate or mishandling of Republican campaign contributions, do you think this will make you less likely to vote for President Nixon or won't it have any effect on your vote?**

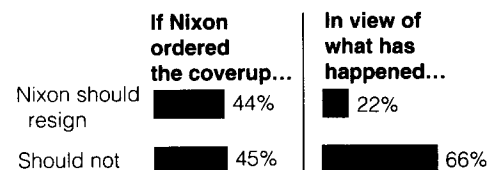
**If it is proven that high-ranking Republicans were involved in the break-in or there was a mishandling of campaign contributions...**



**Note:** Asked of those who had seen, read, or heard about the Watergate incident (57%).  
**Source:** Survey by Opinion Research Corporation for President Nixon, August 29-31, 1972.

Question: **If it is proven that President Nixon ordered the cover-up of White House involvement in Watergate, after Republican agents were caught there, do you think he should resign or not?**

Question: **In view of what has happened in the Watergate affair, do you think President Nixon should resign or not?**



**Source:** Survey by Louis Harris and Associates, July 18-22, 1973.