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The Strong Man: John Mitchell and the Secrets of Watergate

By James Rosen



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The Strong Man: John Mitchell and the Secrets of Watergate By James Rosen

***The Strong Man* is the first full-scale biography of John N. Mitchell, the central figure in the rise and ruin of Richard Nixon and the highest-ranking American official ever convicted on criminal charges.**

As U.S. attorney general from 1969 to 1972, John Mitchell stood at the center of the upheavals of the late sixties. The most powerful man in the Nixon cabinet, a confident troubleshooter, Mitchell championed law and order against the bomb-throwers of the antiwar movement, desegregated the South's public schools, restored calm after the killings at Kent State, and steered the commander-in-chief through the Pentagon Papers and Joint Chiefs spying crises. After leaving office, Mitchell survived the ITT and Vesco scandals—but was ultimately destroyed by Watergate.

With a novelist's skill, James Rosen traces Mitchell's early life and career from his Long Island boyhood to his mastery of Wall Street, where Mitchell's innovations in municipal finance made him a power broker to the Rockefellers and mayors and governors in all fifty states. After merging law firms with Richard Nixon, Mitchell brilliantly managed Nixon's 1968 presidential campaign and, at his urging, reluctantly agreed to serve as attorney general. With his steely demeanor and trademark pipe, Mitchell commanded awe throughout the government as Nixon's most trusted adviser, the only man in Washington who could say no to the president.

Chronicling the collapse of the Nixon presidency, *The Strong Man* follows America's former top cop on his singular odyssey through the criminal justice system—a tortuous maze of camera crews, congressional hearings, special prosecutors, and federal trials. The path led, ultimately, to a prison cell in Montgomery, Alabama, where Mitchell was welcomed into federal custody by the same men he had appointed to office. Rosen also reveals the dark truth about Mitchell's marriage to the flamboyant and volatile Martha Mitchell: her slide into alcoholism and madness, their bitter divorce, and the toll it all took on their daughter, Marty.

Based on 250 original interviews and hundreds of thousands of previously unpublished documents and tapes, *The Strong Man* resolves definitively the central mysteries of the Nixon era: the true purpose of the Watergate break-in, who ordered it, the hidden role played by the Central Intelligence Agency, and those behind the cover-up.

A landmark of history and biography, *The Strong Man* is that rarest of books: both a model of scholarly research and savvy analysis and a masterful literary achievement.

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