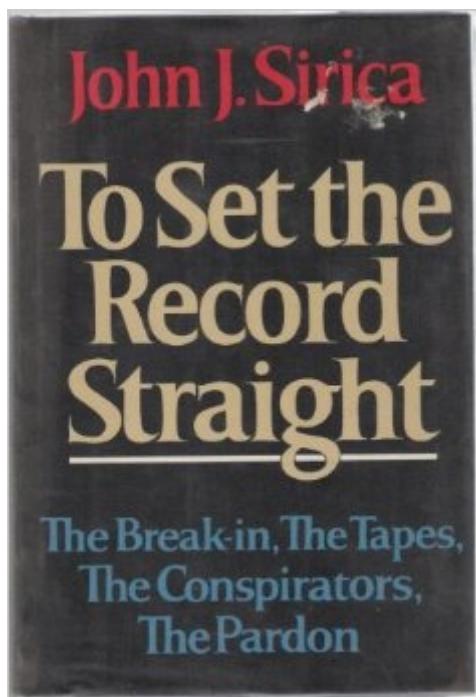


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To Set The Record Straight: The Break-In, The Tapes, The Conspirators, The Pardon



Synopsis

To Set the Record Straight: The Break-In, the Tapes, the Conspirators, the Pardon

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Review: "To Set the Record Straight: The Break-In, the Tapes, the Conspirators, the Pardon", by Judge John Sirica. Hard Cover, 1979. I would have to say that this book remains an integral part of the still fascinating Watergate drama. One would be remiss to ignore the views of the chief presiding judge. Having read Ehrlichman's book and seeing his portrayal of Sirica in rather pejorative and disrespectful tones, I would now conclude that these views were resultant of a deep bitterness. G. Gordon Liddy was even more contemptuous of the judge and while not grinning like a clown in court, he refused to testify or answer questions. Were one to only listen to the many defendants who were hauled in to court to answer for their crimes and misdemeanours, one would conclude that the presiding judge was a mental midget (Liddy's comment from his book is worth reading: "Boy, I said to Peter Maroulis, "we drew some judge --- a book-thrower with the intellect of half a glass of water.") In fairness to Judge Sirica, he didn't break the laws, was not found gravely mistaken in his judgements and was largely if not wholly supported in his decisions by the Supreme Court and the Appeals Court. I view most of the negative comments about his handing of the case as "something he was subjected to for 5 years, at a time when he had every right to retire" these views are sour grapes from men who were going down in flames and who had the punitive laws of the land handed to them by this judge. So, of course their perspective is biased, to say the very least and in many cases just wrong and not based in the facts of the very long trial. First, let us consider what Sirica wrote. Up until the Watergate trial, most Americans would

not have heard of him.

John Joseph Sirica (1904-1992) became famous for his role in the Watergate scandal, when he ordered President Richard Nixon to turn over his recordings of White House conversations. He wrote in the Foreword to this 1979 book, "I received scores of letters from friends and from the general public urging that I set down my own impressions of that crucial period in our national history... I also found that many of the previous accounts were self-serving. I felt I had an obligation to set the record straight... I have deliberately avoided making this a book for lawyers alone... my desire is that the young people in this country ... will see that our system works... and that it must be nurtured and preserved..." He wryly notes, "I remember that back on April 30, 1973, President Nixon, then trying to save himself from the Watergate scandal, told the nation I was 'a courageous judge.' I wonder why he didn't tell the nation then that the sentences I had imposed on March 23, 1973 were outrageous. I guess he misspoke himself, as he did frequently during that period." (Pg. 86) Commenting on the transcripts which Nixon provided of some of the tapes, he notes, "Compared to the tapes I had heard, the transcripts were mild indeed. In places where the president had used one vulgarity or another, the transcripts noted 'expletive deleted.' This phrase was repeated so often in the texts that it became a national joke... More important than the deletion of curses, however, was the editing out of long and critical sections of the conversations. I... found the stunning 'I don't give a s___' quote missing... with the most incriminating statements by the president either fuzed over or missing altogether, so that the real impact of that tape was gone." (Pg. 86)

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