

Critique of the Nixon Library's Watergate Exhibit

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America prides itself on being an open society and on encouraging access to many differing points of view. For our Government, under the auspices of the National Archives and Records Administration, to impose a single interpretation on what may well be our nation's greatest political scandal—while there remain many unresolved issues and conflicting interpretations—is unseemly and improper. Yet, that is what has happened at the Nixon Library. Its new Watergate exhibit asserts a single point of view—and epitomizes only what one side of an ongoing and evolving controversy very much wants people to believe about Watergate.

This exhibit, exclusively authored, designed and curated by one non-expert scholar, opened on April 1, 2011. At the opening ceremonies, Sharon Fawcett, Assistant Archivist for Presidential Libraries, posed several fundamental questions about Watergate, the first three of which were:

1. Did President Nixon go further than other American Presidents?
2. How did the turmoil of the sixties and early seventies surrounding the Vietnam War impact Presidential actions?
3. Did President Nixon know about the break-in at the Democratic headquarters in the Watergate hotel?

While these are, indeed, perceptive, basic and crucial questions, visitors to this new exhibit will search in vain for any substantive answers:

- There is no mention, let alone exploration, of comparable abuses of power or campaign dirty tricks by prior Presidents, particularly by President Nixon's two immediate predecessors, Presidents Kennedy and Johnson.
- There is no mention of the turmoil of the 1960s or of the massive protests against the Vietnam War that preceded President Nixon's 1968 election or that characterized his first term.
- Although it is virtually universally accepted that President Nixon had no prior knowledge of the Watergate break-in, the exhibit suggests that this remains an open question, despite the lack of any definitive proof coming forth over the last thirty-nine years,. At the same time, the exhibit ignores completely the lively and on-going debate about whether others—including the CIA, the District of Columbia police, Democratic National Committee officials and others, including syndicated columnist Jack Anderson—might have had advance knowledge that some illicit operation against the DNC was planned.

How and why this lack of objectivity came about—and the resulting exhibit is anything but non-partisan or balanced—is the subject of this critique.

Topics Considered

One Curator, One View: Dr. Timothy Naftali, the exhibit's sole author, was named the Nixon Library's first Director in October, 2006, shortly before it became a part of NARA's Presidential Library System. Born and raised in Canada, Dr. Naftali was barely a teenager when Watergate occurred, so he has no first-hand knowledge of the scandal or of that intensely political era in America—nor does he have any instinctive feeling for the political forces and events surrounding opposition to the Vietnam War and to Watergate's unfolding. Graduating from Yale in 1983 and holding post-graduate degrees in history from Harvard, he was selected principally because of his knowledge of the history of the Cold War and his work with presidential recordings at the University of Virginia's Miller Center.

Dr. Naftali's full-time duties as Director included hiring and supervising a staff of almost two dozen employees located at offices and facilities in both Yorba Linda, California, and in College Park, Maryland, as well as supervision of the relocation of some forty-two million pages of documents and over thirty thousand state gifts following construction of appropriate facilities for their access and storage at the Nixon Library. In addition to these formidable administrative, managerial and logistical responsibilities, he found time to research and write this new Watergate exhibit.

The Nixon Library's new Watergate Exhibit—on arguably the most controversial subject addressed in any of our Presidential Libraries—is the work of one man, who has never before written or curated any exhibit—for the National Archives or any other institution.

We have been assured that in preparing this exhibit, Dr. Naftali worked completely alone. There was no consultation or peer review from academics or Watergate experts. He shared his work-product for the first time—and in its final form—with officials of the Nixon Foundation late on a Thursday afternoon in May, 2010. He told them he would allow five days for comment—but that construction was about to begin and was expected to be completed by June 30th.

When the Foundation pointed out the unprofessionalism and unreasonableness of this conduct, the National Archives' Office of Presidential Libraries—with whom Dr. Naftali also had first shared his work-product on that same Thursday afternoon—gave the Foundation sixty days in which to comment. The Foundation's extensive analysis and suggestions for improvement were submitted on August 2nd, and are available on line from the Foundation's website.

Of course, Dr. Naftali was under no obligation to accept any of the Foundation's suggestions—nor was the internal review panel that the National Archives established for their evaluation. While the Foundation was assured that this review panel found many of their comments to be quite helpful and was assured that some of their factual corrections and suggestions for context would be included, Dr. Naftali has subsequently informed reporters that he found virtually none of these suggestions to be acceptable and that Foundation input was not allowed to change his exhibit in any substantive way.

It is uncontroverted fact that Dr. Naftali's complicated and controversial text was never submitted to independent scholarly review before the exhibit was built and opened to the public. No panel of outside academics or Watergate experts was ever asked to comment, and Dr. Naftali has never had to defend his work or to produce specific citations for his more tendentious assertions and personal interpretations of events.

Whether the Foundation's comments would have brought some balance and objectivity to the exhibit is open for scholastic review and comment because they remain publicly available. Unfortunately, we have been told that there is no written record of any comments or suggestions made by the National Archives' internal review panel—nor is there any record of whether they were asked to review Dr. Naftali's final text to see if any of their suggestions were, in fact, accepted.

The exhibit that opened on April 1st remains essentially unchanged in form or content from the one first presented as final in May, 2010. A few words were changed, but not a single story board was added or omitted. As a consequence, this is not an objective presentation of archival information; it is the presentation of one individual's point of view—to the exclusion of all others.

It is both surprising and disturbing that the United States Government—in the form of the National Archives—would allow its imprimatur to be put on the work of an individual who, only a few years ago, openly and enthusiastically acknowledged that he was just beginning to learn about the details of Watergate in any depth.

Conceptual Shortcomings

Richard Nixon is the only American president who resigned—and he did not do so in a vacuum, but in the midst of one of the most highly politicized eras in American history. In the twenty years between 1960 and 1980, America had five presidents. None of whom served two terms. One was assassinated. Two were essentially driven from office. The margins of victory in the 1960 and the 1968 elections were among the closest in American history, yet the ones that immediately followed—in 1964 and 1972--remain the two largest margins of victory ever achieved. These two decades were dominated by widespread protests against the most unpopular foreign war in American history--its build-up, its conduct, and the aftermath of our withdrawal and the collapse of our South Vietnam ally. There were massive protests, riots in cities and on campuses across America, assassinations (of President Kennedy, of Robert F. Kennedy and of Martin Luther King), and political chaos. Any re-telling of the Watergate scandal outside of this unique political setting is highly tendentious and subject to challenge that it is both incomplete and misleading.

Simply put, there is no single, objective and definitive non-political truth about Watergate—and any exhibit presenting itself as such is substantively and conceptually indefensible.

Whether one believes that President Nixon conducted his administration in such an horrendously unacceptable manner that he had no choice but to resign or that he was driven from office through the coordinated actions of his political enemies—or something in between--Watergate's unfolding was a tumultuous, intense and highly politicized series of events whose re-telling deserves both political context and an airing of differing points of view.

By way of making this point, it might be said that there are two generic views of what constitutes the Watergate scandal:

- The Expansive View that holds that the actual criminality of Watergate was only a part of the wide-spread wrongdoing, which also included abuses of power and campaign dirty tricks whose disclosure during extensive congressional hearings so offended the nation's conscience that they led both to impeachment recommendations from the House Judiciary Committee and to President Nixon's resignation.
- The Criminal View, in contrast, holds that the abuse of power and campaign dirty tricks that came to light were certainly politically damaging, but we now know that in many—if not most—cases, they differed little from those of prior administrations. What was unique about Watergate at the time—and remains so today—was the series of criminal acts beginning with an illegal break-in; an extensive and criminal cover-up; the political and legal aftermath that followed the cover-up's collapse; and the resulting investigations and prosecutions—which led not only to President Nixon's resignation but to the convictions of his senior aides in the Watergate conspiracy trial.

Ever if one holds the expansive view—as Dr. Naftali obviously does—one might expect that any fair and balanced exhibit would properly contain some responses to the questions posed by Sharon Fawcett: Did Nixon go further than his predecessors in committing abuses of power or campaign dirty tricks? Did the tumultuous times of that era—particularly of the late '60s—have anything to do with such excesses? One might well expect, but no such discussion or comparison has been included in this exhibit.

For example, it seems almost beyond question that the arrests of the Watergate burglars constitute the very dramatic beginning of the Watergate scandal. That is why the National Archives' internal review panel "agreed that the exhibit should begin with the break-in and not the Pentagon Papers." In spite of this assurance, however, the exhibit still opens—as in Dr. Naftali's original draft—with the publication of the Pentagon Papers. This is because it is Dr. Naftali's thesis that the leak of these classified documents triggered the "conspiracy thinking" that set President Nixon on the "Road to Resignation". It is an interpretation, but certainly not the only interpretation of this incident.

As the recent controversy over WikiLeaks' release of classified information has made clear, leaks—and the government's response—remain ongoing and occasionally dramatic issues. The leak of the Pentagon Papers and the establishment of the Plumbers unit were hardly unique. The critical mistake—impossible to ascertain from Dr. Naftali's exhibit—was the Plumber's choice to utilize non-government agents in their attempts to gather intelligence regarding Daniel Ellsberg's intent. Yet, Dr. Naftali's exhibit is built on the opposite assertion: that Daniel Ellsberg was actually something of a hero and that the very establishment of the Plumbers Unit was evidence of corruption in and of itself.

If one prefers the more focused criminal view—or believes it to be central to the scandal itself—then one might expect the exhibit to contain a good deal of information about the cover-up, as well as the aftermath of its collapse, including the trials and convictions of those alleged to have been involved. But any discussion or exploration of such information is left totally unaddressed in this exhibit—because the timeline ends with President Nixon's resignation and President Ford's pardon.

In this same vein, the new exhibit might have provided some indication of relative importance of various events it describes. Yet each story board entry—whether the description of the Houston Plan, the mistaken FBI field interviews about Daniel Schorr, the incident involving the Bureau of Labor Statistics, or the letter urging a write-in campaign in the New Hampshire primary on behalf of Senator Kennedy—is given the same prominence as that given to the Ervin Committee hearings and to the House Judiciary Impeachment Inquiry, each of which dramatically dominated the nation’s attention for months at a time.

To those with any memory of the Watergate scandal, Dr. Naftali’s re-telling is antiseptic—and devoid of all of the political clash and drama of the real thing. In this sense, the exhibit’s failure is its supposed objectivity. The visitor ends up learning little of meaning or consequence—and certainly is not encouraged to inquire further.

There are two other issues that continue to surface with regard to the essence of Watergate—but that are barely mentioned, much less adequately addressed, in the exhibit:

- The reason for the Watergate break-in: A number of serious—and best-selling—books have raised interesting issues about who masterminded the Democratic National Committee break-in, whether various individuals knew in advance, and whether Gordon Liddy was ever really in control of the break-in team at all.
- The role of John Dean: John Dean, President Nixon’s counsel, was given the responsibility for designing a campaign intelligence plan for the 1972 presidential election. He recruited and hired Gordon Liddy for that purpose. He was present at two key meetings in the Attorney General’s office when those plans were first presented. After the botched break-in, he orchestrated the cover-up and committed a series of independent criminal acts in furtherance his efforts. Sensing his cover-up was about to collapse, he was the very first to seek immunity and to offer to become a Government witness, both disclosing sensitive internal files and changing his recollections to help build a case for prosecuting his former colleagues.

Yet these two key issues are not raised in any substantive manner, much less addressed in any detail.

In addition—and regardless of one’s own political views—the crux of the exhibit should have been devoted to President Nixon’s own involvement, the question so memorably posed by Senator Baker: “What did the President know, and when did he know it?”

While this question is quoted in the exhibit, only one view point is presented in response. One gets the impression that the infamous White House tapes have been relentlessly scoured for any hint, no matter how small, of Presidential involvement or complicity, with the total omission of any contrary actions whatsoever.

This is not to say that there are not difficult and discouraging statements made on the tapes, but what little has been found in the thirty-six hundred hours of Presidential conversations—much of which is rather ambiguous—suggests President Nixon’s personal involvement in the scandal itself was quite

limited. In addition, there are at least two segments that suggest an even more benign interpretation of President Nixon's intent and state of mind:

- Phone Call with Acting FBI Director Patrick Grey: Following the infamous "Smoking Gun" conversation which is so prominently featured—in text and audio—President Nixon was personally telephoned by Acting Director Gray and warned that others were interfering with his Bureau's investigation. President Nixon's unhesitant response was to instruct the Director to pursue his investigation, where ever it led. While brief mention of this event is made, no audio segment of this very important conversation is offered to the visitor.
- Decision to Reconvene the Grand Jury: Similarly, following the infamous "cancer on the presidency" meeting with John Dean—and clearly troubled by his disclosures--President Nixon informed his senior staff that very afternoon, as well as in a follow-up meeting the next day, of his decision to order that the grand jury be reconvened, to examine new information that had come to light. As is quite clear from recordings of those meetings, all that Nixon wanted before making his decision public was the long-promised report from John Dean—which now would also contain the material that he had just learned that morning—and that would provide the basis for his action.

At the very point at which many would think is the very height of the cover-up conspiracy, one is struck by the total absence of any conspiratorial tone or notion of wrong-doing—at least by President Nixon or his senior staff. For his part, John Dean suggests that President Nixon grant immunity to all concerned—but the idea is immediately rejected, both because it would look bad and because no one else in the room thinks that they have done anything wrong.

Dean then is heard assuring the President that he can produce the requested report and is accordingly dispatched to Camp David to devote his full and uninterrupted time to its preparation. Once at Camp David, however, Dean realized that he could not prepare this promised report without revealing his own criminal actions--about which his White House superiors were clearly still in ignorance—and so he instead proceeded to retain his own criminal defense counsel and to seek immunity from prosecution for his own criminal acts in exchange for becoming a government witness.

While the unfolding of the Watergate scandal then went in an entirely different direction, all of President Nixon's actions—and not only a tendentious selection of them--deserve mention and consideration in any fair and balanced exhibit.

It is disappointing in the extreme that none of these topics—the continuing mysteries surrounding the original break-in, the critical role of John Dean throughout the scandal, and President Nixon's salutary and virtually immediate response to Dean's first detailed disclosures--is explored in Dr. Naftali's exhibit. Perhaps it was because raising such issues would undermine the single interpretation being presented—and the one conclusion being advocated--as the sole transcending truth about Watergate.

Misuse of Oral History Project: Among the most disturbing aspects of Dr. Naftali's exhibit is his use of and extensive reliance on some of the 131 interviews that he videotaped with various individuals from

that era. One can well question whether memories of the complex and controversial events that had transpired almost four decades prior can be claimed to constitute a more accurate source of information and interpretation than the huge volume of contemporaneous documentation already in the possession of news agencies, libraries, and the National Archives. Certainly the National Archives' internal review panel suggested that Dr. Naftali rely on more contemporaneous sources.

This is an especially relevant consideration because these interviews seemingly were conducted without reference to any documents or detailed questioning.

Two examples may suffice to make this point:

Deputy Attorney General William Ruckelshaus: It is asserted in the exhibit that Ruckelshaus chose to resign rather than fire Special Prosecutor Cox in the Saturday Night Massacre, because, as acting FBI Director, he "had seen evidence of the President's role in the cover-up." This is an entirely new assertion, not known to have been mentioned in any prior literature. While no citation is given for this very serious and significant assertion, it could only have come from the Ruckelshaus' oral history only recently taken by Dr. Naftali. Yet, it may not be a fully accurate reflection of Ruckelshaus' actual interview statement. Regardless, the assertion is highly problematic, because if it is as the exhibit suggests, then the Deputy Attorney General would have been under an obligation to inform the Special Prosecutor of these facts, in addition to the House of Representatives.

This illustrates the inherent weaknesses in using oral histories taken some four decades later and by someone intent on pursuing a particular point of view—especially ones where assertions such as this go unexplored—or, where required, unchallenged—not only by the interviewer during the oral history itself but by independent scholars prior to any subsequent, uncritical use.

William Ruckelshaus is welcome to his own recollections—and his actual interview is much less assertive than Dr. Naftali's characterization would suggest—but if such information was available to the Acting FBI Director at the time, then it certainly would be in the public domain by now and could have been used to confirm his rather startling assertion. One suspects, however, that the assertion was simply too good to risk undermining by conducting the research necessary to confirm it.

FBI Agent Angelo Lano: Another oral history featured prominently in the exhibit demonstrates a similar weakness. FBI agent Lano asserts that the postponement of interviews of Ken Dahlberg and Manuel Ogarrio (as a result of the President's concurrence in the "Smoking Gun" conversation that the CIA ask the FBI not to interview these two witnesses) seriously frustrated the grand jury's work and effectively prevented prompt indictments for the Watergate break-in.

A moment's reflection, however, recalls that the FBI does not deal directly with any grand jury, because that is exclusively the province of federal prosecutors. If Agent Lano had intimate knowledge of the grand jury's needs and deliberations, then he had it improperly. Further, if

the nine day delay was frustrating to prosecutors, there do not appear to be any contemporary records of their having said so. The only known comment from Prosecutor Earl Silbert was to the effect that the two interviews, when conducted, did not indicate any wrongdoing on the part of the two individuals.

As importantly, it is interesting to note that the delay in the two interviews at the very outset of the investigation lasted only from June 23rd to July 2nd. The grand jury's indictments were not handed down for another two and a half months—until September 15, 1973. This very substantial time difference would seem to undercut Agent Lano's point completely, however sincerely he now seems to believe it. But the timing discrepancy is not raised at all—either in Dr. Naftali's oral interview or in his exhibit. Nonetheless, inclusion of this unchallenged, uncorroborated and unprecedented assertion (because, like the Ruckelshaus statement, this is appearing here for the first time) makes for good theater--but perhaps to the exclusion of more accurate but less dramatic archival records.

There is an even more serious problem with many of the interviews conducted by Dr. Naftali: almost half of them were obtained under false pretenses and without notice that questions about Watergate were intended to be asked—much less included in his exhibit. The interviews with former members of Nixon's White House staff (constituting over sixty of Dr. Naftali's 131 oral histories), were “pretext interviews”: purportedly conducted for the purpose of documenting President Nixon's domestic policy initiatives. No warning was given that Watergate might be the real focus or that selected portions--particularly anything said that might be critical of the President--were intended to be featured in the Watergate exhibit then being drafted by the very person conducting their interview.

Indeed, the National Archives became so concerned about the possible misrepresentation and misuse of portions of oral histories obtained under such false pretenses—and afraid that it might undercut their ability to obtain oral histories in the future—that they agreed to require that specific, written consent be obtained from all these individuals prior to the use of any portion of their interview material in Dr. Naftali's Watergate exhibit.

Further—and no doubt worried about the historical accuracy of such interviews--the National Archives also assured the Nixon Foundation (in a memo dated August 24, 2010), that

“The [internal] review panel also suggested more use of primary sources and less reliance on oral histories in the limited space. . .”

These instructions and suggestions were effectively disregarded by Dr. Naftali, because the bulk of the documentation offered in his exhibit—and virtually all of the materials made available in the Watergate Resource Center that sits at its very center—are segments of oral histories conducted, edited and selected by Dr. Naftali. It is unfortunate, in addition, that a number of these oral history segments were taken from interviews with at least nineteen individuals from whom no specific consent appears to have been obtained. They have, therefore, been included in the exhibit in seemingly direct contravention to explicit assurances given by the National Archives.

Indeed, rather than reference to—or reliance on—what hitherto has been considered to be essential Watergate documentation, Dr. Naftali is presenting the oral histories that he conducted some four decades *post facto* as revealing the central truth about Watergate. He appears to believe that their visual immediacy absolves their lack of specificity or citation to any relevant documentation. One suspects he didn't have the time or inclination to pursue an extensive review of the massive amount of Watergate materials already in the possession of the National Archives, and chose to rely instead on video segments of his own creation—where he played the role of sole investigator, prosecutor, judge and jury.

“It is up to you to decide”: The exhibit's introduction states:

The National Archives selected the events and themes highlighted in this gallery. Watergate has produced many books and conflicting interpretations. Ultimately, it is up to you to decide how well our system of government worked back then and what, if any, lessons there are for us today.

This would make sense if the exhibit contained at least a modicum of material on any point of view other than Dr. Naftali's. This remains true in spite of the very minimal disclaimer in the section on campaign dirty tricks, “There is a long history of dirty tricks in American political campaigns.” Of course, the entire section is devoted to an enumeration of the Nixon Administration's 1972 campaign tactics—and contains no examples of the many dirty tricks employed by prior administrations, especially in the highly politicized 1960, 1964 and 1968 presidential elections with which President Nixon was intimately familiar.

The notion that at least some of President Nixon's own views on Watergate might somehow be presented in an exhibit at the Presidential Library bearing his name does not appear to have occurred to Dr. Naftali. Some 250 pages of President Nixon's own *Memoirs* were devoted to a detailed account of Watergate. In 1983, some thirty-eight hours of interviews were taped with President Nixon, a portion of which dealt with Watergate. Frank Gannon, who not only helped President Nixon research and write his *Memoirs* in the late 1970s and conducted the 1983 interviews, was appointed by the Foundation as their liaison with Dr. Naftali for the Watergate exhibit. He was never consulted in the three years that Dr. Naftali labored in secret on his exhibit.

Even the exhibit's concluding section, “The View from San Clemente,” in which one might have thought input from the Nixon Foundation could be considered relevant, consists solely of video segments chosen by Dr. Naftali—apparently to cement the idea that some of Nixon's statements to David Frost constituted admissions of his own criminal guilt. Having deprived the former President of his own voice throughout the exhibit to this point, Dr. Naftali now selects and presents such statements from the Frost interviews as serve the purposes of his own thesis of President Nixon's guilt. One can only marvel at his repeated claim of non-partisan objectivity.

Last Clear Chance for Balance and Context: The month before the exhibit's opening—after Dr. Naftali's public accusations that the Nixon Foundation delayed and tried to censure his exhibit appeared in articles in the *Los Angeles Times* and *The New York Times*—Nixon Foundation personnel met with senior officials of the National Archives to discuss their request for *the addition* of materials in five

specific areas---in the hopes of achieving some semblance of balance and context in Dr. Naftali's exhibit. The five areas—and reasons for their requested inclusion—were as follows:

1. Political Context of President Nixon's 1968 Election and first term in office: As detailed earlier in this critique, it is difficult for those who graduated from high school after the mid-1970s—which now includes the majority of Americans—to appreciate the intensity of the opposition to the Vietnam War or the political chaos that prevented President Johnson from seeking re-election and that lies at the heart of the heated protests, the riots in cities and on campuses across the country, and the series of assassinations and violent actions that plagued the nation leading up to President Nixon's 1968 election and that so heavily influenced his first term. Without this context, nothing about the political clashes of Watergate and the intensely political nature of the ensuing investigations makes real sense.
2. Abuse of Power Allegations with Regard to Prior Presidents: Dr. Naftali's extensive itemization of alleged abuses of power by the Nixon Administration can only be fairly evaluated in the context of actions taken by his immediate predecessors. Interestingly, such contextual materials were produced in virtually the same timeframe as the Watergate scandal unfolded.
 - o Indeed, the House Judiciary Impeachment inquiry authorized such a study by Professor C. Vann Woodward of Yale University—which (according to the majority counsel of the House Judiciary Committee) was suppressed when it tended to show that the allegations against President Nixon did not materially differ from those alleged against a number of his predecessors going all the way back to George Washington. Professor Woodward's study was later published; it is in the public domain; and might well have been cited in the abuse of power segment of the exhibit—or at least in its Watergate Resources Center.
 - o Similarly, Book II of the Final Report of the Church Committee, *The Growth of Domestic Intelligence: 1936 to 1976*, is the result of two years of hearings on abuses of American citizens in connection with domestic intelligence initiatives. These hearings commenced less than a year following President Nixon's resignation. It is available on line at:

<http://webcache.googleusercontent.com/search?q=cache:t5TzcMxroVgJ:www.icdc.com/~paulwolf/cointelpro/churchfinalreportIIb.htm+%22Ideological+Organizations+Audit+Project%22&cd=6&hl=en&ct=clnk&gl=us>

Book II documents truly massive abuses of governmental power--beginning as far back as 1936 under President Franklin Roosevelt—many of which make the allegations against President Nixon seem mild in comparison. These include the wiretaps and bugging of Dr. Martin Luther King, as well as of a *New York Times* reporter (and his assistant); the opening of over 100,000 thousand pieces of first-class mail and an annual average of 125 illicit entries to copy documents and place bugging devices—all without court order—by agencies including the CIA and the FBI; and the identification of tens of thousands of “subversives” with contingency plans for rounding them up—which preceded the Houston Plan so prominently featured in Dr. Naftali's exhibit.

3. Political Dirty Tricks Affecting Nixon Campaigns: In this same connection, it is difficult to defend the Watergate exhibit's extensive itemization of political dirty tricks without some mention of parallels to President Nixon's predecessors. Two situations come immediately to mind:
- Bugging of Nixon's Hotel Suite Prior to the first 1960 Presidential Debate: Sworn affidavits were released by the RNC during the unfolding of the Watergate scandal that tended to show that the hotel suite Nixon had used the week before his first debate with Senator John Kennedy in the 1960 campaign had been bugged. For his part, Nixon had always felt that his opponent seemed to have anticipated his every argument in that first debate, the one which had had such an adverse impact on his own election chances.
 - Bugging of Nixon's 1968 Presidential Campaign: It is clear from testimony before the Church Committee that President Johnson ordered the FBI to place individuals involved in the Nixon campaign—including both Vice Presidential nominee Spiro Agnew and Campaign Co-Chairman Anna Chennault—under surveillance during the final two weeks of the 1968 campaign. This was presumably an attempt to monitor their response to President Johnson's late October bombing halt announcement. The fact that his own campaign had been bugged is even mentioned several times by President Nixon in taped conversations with his senior aides.
4. Reference to Alternative Watergate Theories: There have been a number of books published since 1984 that call into question Dr. Naftali's version of Watergate. The exhibit ought at least to have referenced some of these, perhaps including:
- Jim Hougan's *Secret Agenda: Watergate, Deep Throat and the CIA* (1984)
 - Len Colodny's *Silent Coup: The Removal of a President* (1991)
 - Jerry Zeifman's *Without Honor, The Impeachment of Richard Nixon and the Crimes of Camelot* (1995)
 - James Rosen's *The Strong Man, John Mitchell and the Secrets of Watergate* (2008)
 - Geoff Shepard's *The Secret Plot to Make Ted Kennedy President, Inside the Real Watergate Conspiracy* (2008)
 - Robert Merritt's *Watergate Exposed, How the President of the United States and the Watergate Burglars Were Set Up* (2011)

It is not that one has to agree with any of the theories propounded by these authors; it is that their existence should be acknowledged in any exhibit purporting to be an objective presentation of the Watergate scandal—particularly one that features such an extensive Watergate Resource Center.

5. Disclosure of the Role of John Dean: Given John Dean's pivotal role though out the Watergate scandal, outlined above, the Foundation suggested that it would be appropriate to disclose his actions at the various relevant points in the exhibit's timeline. While several mentions of Dean's presence and involvement have been added, they were not done in a manner that would raise questions in a visitor's mind about the shifting nature of his central role.

Even these modest requests for additional materials were rejected by Dr. Naftali—and the exhibit remains, as it was from the start, Dr. Naftali's expression of his particular personal point of view.

Conclusion

George Orwell observed, in *1984*, his novel raising the specter of government-initiated thought control, that:

“He who controls the present, controls the past. He who controls the past, controls the future.”

For those who fear their government might be tempted to present the re-telling of a vitally important and still controversial part of our Nation's political history as a single, unassailable truth, nothing could be more disturbing than Dr. Naftali's Watergate exhibit.

Indeed, one might ask whether some \$500,000 of taxpayers' monies have been spent to enshrine the views of one individual--as the one and only story of Watergate—with the National Archives' goal of balance, accuracy and objectivity lying shattered in its wake.