



Shortly after midnight on June 17, 1972, an unusually attentive security guard named Frank Wills discovered an unlocked door in the garage of the Watergate office complex. A piece of tape had been placed over the latch. Wills removed the tape and continued on his rounds. When he returned a while later, he found the lock taped again. He called the police. Twenty-six months later, Richard Nixon resigned the presidency.

“This is the door,” I tell Alexander Vindman, late of the United States Army and the National Security Council. Vindman and I were supposed to be walking along the Potomac, but we took a detour to visit the Watergate. I wanted to show him this particular door. There is no plaque here, but there should be one, dedicated to the Constitution, to the free press, and to the most important security guard in American history.

Vindman, who is an idealist—this is why he took a job in the Trump White House despite having read about the Trump White House—seems moved. “The system worked,” he says. Then he asks a question.

Dean, Nixon’s lawyer, facilitated the Watergate cover-up, and then turned witness against the president. No, I say. Dean did wrong before he did right. Did you start by doing something wrong?

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