

WATERGATE, THE FARCE

I happen to be reading Stonewall right now. And I gotta say, I've already said what Bernstein said several times.

Watergate would not have played out the same way today because Congress no longer performs its oversight role, said Carl Bernstein, one of the journalists famous for uncovering the story.

"The difference with today is that the system did its job. The press did its job. The court did its job. The Senate committee did its job," Bernstein said Saturday. "There's been great reporting on this president. But there's been no oversight. We have a Democratic Congress now and there's still no oversight."

Bernstein also said that "35 years of ideological warfare" could also change how the public would react to such a scandal.

"We live in a very different atmosphere today," Bernstein said.

"With Watergate, eventually the people of this country looked around and decided Nixon was a criminal president. I'm not sure the same chain of events would have taken place today."

I'm going to come back and comment on this in more depth. But for now, I'd like your opinion on the following:

- Bernstein blames Congress, implicitly excusing the press and the courts—or at least not commenting on their failure. Do you agree with his assessment, or do

you think he's just being polite?

- Somewhere during the early days of TNH, (Kagro? help? Update: Ah, here it is, thanks Kagro) Kagro did a great post suggesting that the Republicans neutralized the possibility of impeachment with the Clinton impeachment. Is that it? Or are there other reasons behind the changed ways the public has responded to Bush's shredding of the Constitution?
- Would Republican oversight have been enough? That is, was there ever a time when Bernstein's answer—congressional oversight—was a real possibility, or had Republicans simply placed their party ahead of the Constitution irrevocably?