



For drill let me ask you to pick four of your most famous, respected, and admired presidents. My guess is we would agree on the first one and maybe the second. Three, not so much. Four...all four? - No way.

Richard Nixon would not be on your list. If he is, I will buy you a milkshake at a Dairy Queen.

You are going to ask “How in the hell can you pick Tricky Dick? He was a crook!” – or something pretty close. Without trying to persuade you to change your vote let me tell you a story. Let me tell you about by appreciation for our 37th president. Let me call him “**RN**.”

First of all comma most of the political history of our country from 1960 to 1974 is way down on my list of remembering as this was the busiest time of my young life – and maybe for you too – but I did not pay much attention because my life was revolving around getting married, flying at Webb AFB, having two daughters, flying the first Lear Jets, and then being sent to Korea in 1968 – then, working my way up with Braniff Airways till 1974 when **RN** resigned.

We all remember **1968**! Oliver Stone said “Nineteen sixty-eight was one of the most extraordinary years of the century”¹ (p. 356). We knew in April of that year when LBJ said he would not run again and that we might have a better chance of fighting the war in Vietnam with a new president – and for the rest of us sitting iron bomb alert on foreign shores - like me at Kunsan.

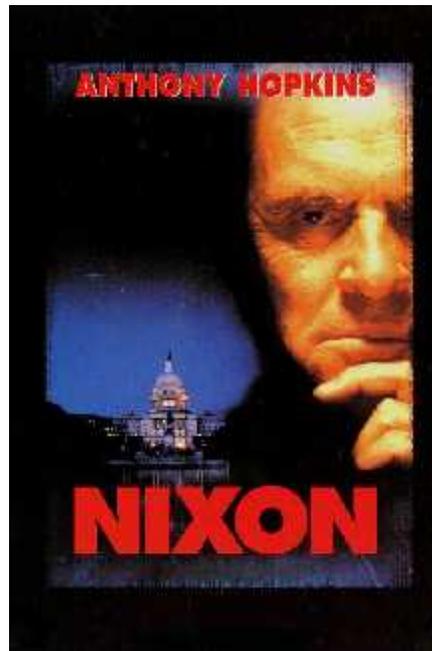
Coming home in July of 1969 the history finally settled in. I found out in person what they were talking about coming home and being spit on and what the 60’s Revolution was all about.

It was this history from JFK, LBJ, and to **RN** that showed up in Oliver Stone’s movie “Nixon.” Finally, I could understand some of the stuff that happened while I was too busy to pay attention. Stone did not hold back or really take sides but portrayed the good, the bad, and the ugly.



¹ Oliver Stone & Peter Kuznick. (2019). *The untold history of the United States*. New York, NY: Gallery Books.

“Oliver Stone’s zest for exploring troubling figures and myths of American history came to a surprisingly empathetic note in *Nixon*. In an inspired casting choice that heeded incredible results, Anthony Hopkins transforms as the troubled, paranoid, and corruptible president with relative ease. Stone takes us through the ices of some of America’s most skeptical points in history and shows how Nixon was at the center of so much of it. While still critiquing the cowardice and selfishness of Nixon’s reactionary, racist policies, it still manages to paint a nuanced portrait of a man whose name still lives in the vein of infamy.”²



Of course “Nixon” is not as good as “JFK” but the note above promotes “Stone’s zest for exploring troubling figures and myths of American history.” Say what you like about **RN** and I will say you must have some appreciation for what he did to sit through this production. To me the history is worth the time. I liked **RN** because he was not LBJ. **RN** got us out of LBJ’s Vietnam war. **RN** was acting like a president and he brought our POWs back home.

Wonder who Stone will highlight in his next movie?

I will tell you this, having paid a little more attention to history since **RN** resigned, there is only one president since 1974 worth the zest of another three hour movie.

Bet we would agree on which one.

² <https://movieweb.com/best-oliver-stone-films/>