

The European Legacy >
Toward New Paradigms
Volume 20, 2015 - [Issue 7](#)

99 Views | 0 CrossRef citations to date | 0 Altmetric

Book Reviews

Saving Justice: Watergate, the Saturday Night Massacre, and Other Adventures of a Solicitor General

John Shosky 

Pages 800-802 | Published online: 01 Sep 2015

 Cite this article  <https://doi.org/10.1080/10848770.2015.1065098>

 Check for updates

Sample our
Humanities
Journals 

>> [Sign in here](#) to start your access
to the latest two volumes for 14 days

 Full Article

 Figures & data

 Citations

 Metrics

 Reprints & Permissions

Read this article

 Share

The inadequacies I have pointed out are merely the tip of the iceberg. Heimann's work is misleading, omits crucial facts, and fails to take into account the contemporary context of the major events she discusses.

FRANCIS D. RAŠKA

Charles University, Czech Republic

francsraska@gmail.com

© 2015, Francis D. Raška

<http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/10848770.2015.1054606>

Saving Justice: Watergate, the Saturday Night Massacre, and Other Adventures of a Solicitor General. By Robert H. Bork (New York: Encounter Books, 2013), xvii + 136 pp. \$23.99 cloth.

Justice Robert Bork died in December 2012. He was one of the great legal scholars of our time, a giant on the jurisprudential landscape. Bork is perhaps best known for his failed nomination to the Supreme Court during the Reagan Administration. Prior to that, Bork was a legendary professor at Yale University, author of the best book on antitrust law, a distinguished federal judge, and the solicitor general who fired Archibald Cox as the special prosecutor examining the Watergate Affair during the Nixon Administration. After he was brutally savaged in the 1987 hearings for his nomination to the Supreme Court, Bork wrote another great book, this one on constitutional law titled *The Tempting of America*. It became a bestseller and the go-to text for "judicial restraint" and an "original" interpretation of the American Constitution. Bork then returned to teaching and lecturing. At the time of his death Bork was working on a book about Watergate and his tenure as solicitor general (the lawyer who represents the United States government before the Supreme Court). The book has now been published with a foreword by former Attorney General Ed Meese.

I highly recommend this book... highly recommend. It is a well-written, clear, concise, and honest telling of Justice Bork's involvement with the so-called "Saturday Night Massacre," the 1973 incident when President Richard Nixon ordered the firing of Watergate Special Prosecutor Cox who was investigating the break-in at the

headquarters of the Democratic National Committee at the Watergate complex in Washington, D.C. People of a certain age will remember all this. Those who lived through the experience remain puzzled by the thinking and behavior of President Nixon and his staff. Historians have offered speculative theories, including political paranoia, simple stupidity, and visceral dishonesty.

This book partially recounts the history. As the Watergate scandal unfolded, Nixon asked Attorney General Richard Kleindienst to resign, probably because Nixon did not trust him. Elliot Richardson was nominated as his successor. The Senate Judiciary Committee made Richardson's confirmation contingent on the appointment of a special prosecutor. So, as a concession to the Congress, Nixon appointed a special prosecutor to look into the Watergate burglary and its aftermath. He selected Archibald Cox, a respected law professor at Harvard University. Cox's investigations led him from the burglary to examine the actions and decisions of the President and his staff. When the existence of taped White House conversations was made public in a congressional hearing, Cox sought the tapes. Nixon did not want to turn them over, claiming "executive privilege." Cox persisted, believing that executive privilege was not a justification for cloaking possible criminal activity. Cox even rejected compromise solutions, such as allowing others like respected Mississippi Senator John Stennis to hear the tapes and then report to the Special Prosecutor. He wanted the tapes. Nixon reacted by deciding to fire Cox, regardless of the political or constitutional damage. This became the stuff of high drama and constitutional crisis. Attorney General Elliott Richardson refused to fire him and resigned, believing that during his confirmation hearings he had committed to Cox's independence of action. Within minutes, the Deputy Attorney General, William Ruckelshaus, was then ordered to fire Cox. He refused and also resigned. Nixon immediately refused the resignation in order to fire him, which he did immediately. Third in line was Bork, who was the Solicitor General at that time. Bork fired Cox and became the Acting Attorney General. This all happened on a Saturday weekend, hence the "Saturday Night Massacre." Liberals and the Washington establishment never forgave Bork. The Justice

Log in via your institution

➤ Access through your institution

Log in to Taylor & Francis Online

Restore content access

> [Restore content access for purchases made as guest](#)

Purchase options *

[Save for later](#)

PDF download + Online access

- 48 hours access to article PDF & online version
- Article PDF can be downloaded
- Article PDF can be printed

EUR 48.00

 Add to
cart

Issue Purchase

- 30 days online access to complete issue
- Article PDFs can be downloaded
- Article PDFs can be printed

EUR 185.00

 Add to
cart

* Local tax will be added as applicable

Related Research

People also read

Recommended articles

Cited by

[Czechoslovakia: The State that Failed](#) >

Francis D. Raška

The European Legacy

Published online: 8 Jun 2015

Information for

[Authors](#)

[R&D professionals](#)

[Editors](#)

[Librarians](#)

[Societies](#)

Opportunities

[Reprints and e-prints](#)

[Advertising solutions](#)

[Accelerated publication](#)

[Corporate access solutions](#)

Open access

[Overview](#)

[Open journals](#)

[Open Select](#)

[Dove Medical Press](#)

[F1000Research](#)

Help and information

[Help and contact](#)

[Newsroom](#)

[All journals](#)

[Books](#)

Keep up to date

Register to receive personalised research and resources by email



Sign me up



Copyright © 2026 Informa UK Limited [Privacy policy](#)

[Cookies](#) [Terms & conditions](#) [Accessibility](#)

Registered in England & Wales No. 01072954
5 Howick Place | London | SW1P 1WG



Taylor & Francis
by informa