

One woman came to Congress to
stop a war... She nearly succeeded.

freedom deal

A feature length screenplay
Based on actual events



synopsis|overview

page 1 of 2

Based on the incredible true story of the *Holtzman v. Schlesinger* case, 1973.

A nation torn apart by war. 300,000 Americans dead. Investigations into Watergate have just begun.

Elizabeth Holtzman wins a congressional seat and comes to Washington to end the Vietnam War.

Utapo Air Force Base, Thailand. Four US pilots face court martial for refusing to fly bombing raids into Cambodia.

ACLU attorney Burt Neuborne and Congresswoman Holtzman file the case in Brooklyn court, seeking an injunction to stop the bombing.

Incredibly, the Federal Judge rules in their favor, ordering an immediate end to the war.





synopsis|overview

page 2 of 2

Within hours, the Nixon administration has the ruling overturned.

Burt and Liz refuse to back down and take their fight all the way to the Supreme Court. A legal showdown is set to take place that will determine the future integrity of the Court for generations.

Their battle leads to heartbreak. A warring Supreme Court rules against them. The bombing continues, leading to the deaths of thousands.

Elizabeth Holtzman would get the final victory. A few months prior to the case, Liz was put on the House Judiciary committee, which was just beginning its investigation of a very strange break-in at the Watergate hotel....



main character

elizabeth holtzman

congresswoman

"I came to Washington to end the war. What did I get elected to Congress for, if not for a case like this?"

Unyielding, determined, charismatic. Liz runs for Congress on a promise to stop the Vietnam War. She wins, becoming the youngest woman to ever hold a Congressional seat.

A rookie in a world of men, she is met with opposition at every turn, largely because she is a "woman and a Jew."

ACLU attorney Burt Neuborne asks Liz to be the plaintiff in a lawsuit to end the illegal bombing in Cambodia. Liz agrees and finds herself in a legal battle that will go all the way to the Supreme Court and challenge a President's power to wage war.

freedomdeal

photo: Richard Avedon

04



main character

burtneuborne

aclu attorney

"I'm asking for a stay of execution for all those innocent people who are about to wake up in the morning, no idea that an American bomb is about to be dropped on their heads!"

Shrewd, passionate, brilliant attorney for the ACLU.

Through the late 1960's and early 70's, Burt's mission has been to find a legal means to stop military action in Vietnam, arguing Congress never officially declared war.

When Burt lands the case of the four pilots, he knows this could be his chance to make history and have the Pentagon ordered to cease all military action.

But in order to win, Burt will have to find a way to convince the Supreme Court to interfere with Presidential authority and bring an end to a conflict that has ripped a nation apart.

freedomdeal

photo: Lawrence Frank

05

secondary character

thurgoodmarshall

supreme court justice

"The integrity of the Court has to stand. Imagine a day when the people no longer trust the impartiality of the Supreme Court."

An American icon. The first African American Justice of the Supreme Court and the famed civil rights attorney who ended school segregation in the case of *Brown v. Board of Education*.

With the Supreme Court out of session, Burt and Liz take their efforts to stop the bombing before Marshall, fully expecting the civil rights hero to rule in their favor.

Marshall is forced to make a painful decision, one that will turn his clerks and allies against him and test the integrity of the Court for years to come.

secondary character

william douglas

supreme court justice

"They tried to impeach me. What is this country if one man, one very corrupt man, thinks he has absolute power?"

Cantankerous, a rebel, known as "Wild Bill" by his peers.

A leading Liberal voice on the Supreme Court for forty years and outspoken critic of American involvement in Vietnam. In 1970, the Nixon administration attempted to impeach him for trying to use the Court to end the years long conflict.

Burt and Liz ultimately take their case to Douglas, who grants them an impromptu hearing from his home in Yakima, Washington, setting the stage for a final legal battle and one last chance to make history.



supportingcharacters

Peter Rodino:

(top right)

(60's) Chair of the House Judiciary Committee, pragmatic, at odds with Liz over her unyielding approach.

Norman Siegel:

(not shown)

(20's) Young ACLU intern, is sent to Yakima, Washington to track down Justice Douglas.

Philip Landrum:

(bottom left)

(60's) Southern Democrat, good ole boy, doesn't accept that women are now in Congress.

Barbara Jordan:

(top left)

(40's) One of the first African American women elected to Congress.

Slade Gorton:

(bottom right)

(40's) Attorney General of Washington State, is selected to represent the White House in the final legal showdown before Justice Douglas.



freedomdeal

photos: (top) Getty Image | (bottom left) unknown | (bottom right) WA State Archive

08



freedom deal and the illegal bombing of cambodia

"I want to hit everything, I want them to use the big planes...let's start giving them a little shock."

Operation Freedom Deal (1970–1973): a secret bombing campaign on the neutral country of Cambodia. The action was led by Nixon, and executed without Congressional approval.

500,000 tons of bombs dropped. Up to 150,000 innocent civilians killed. Nearly 20 percent of the land destroyed.

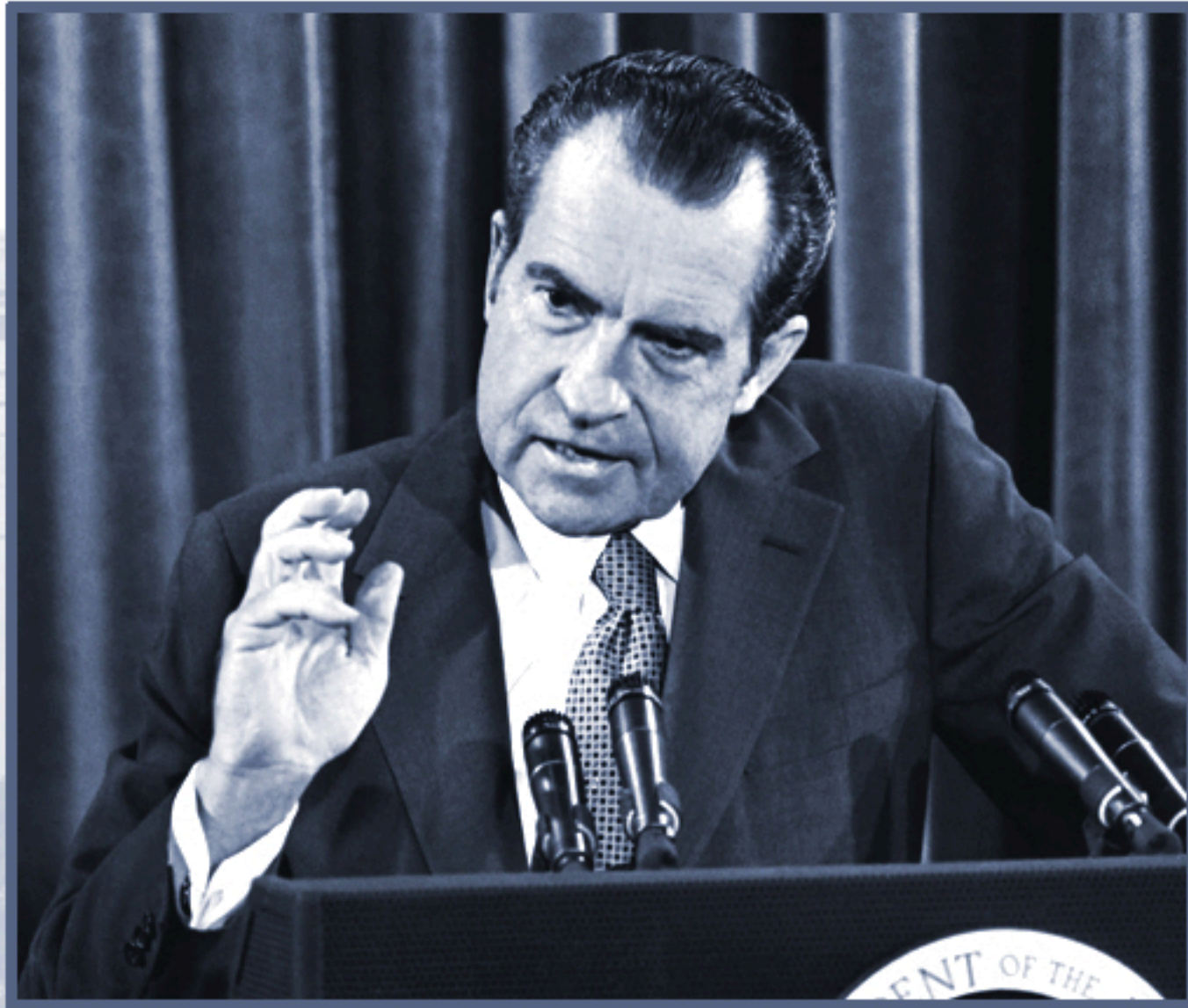
Nixon believed in his "Madman Theory," a plan to frighten the North Vietnamese into thinking he was crazy enough to do anything to win the war.

"He can't be restrained when he's angry—and he has his hand on the nuclear button."



freedomdeal

photo: Associated Press | Corbis/Getty Images.jpeg



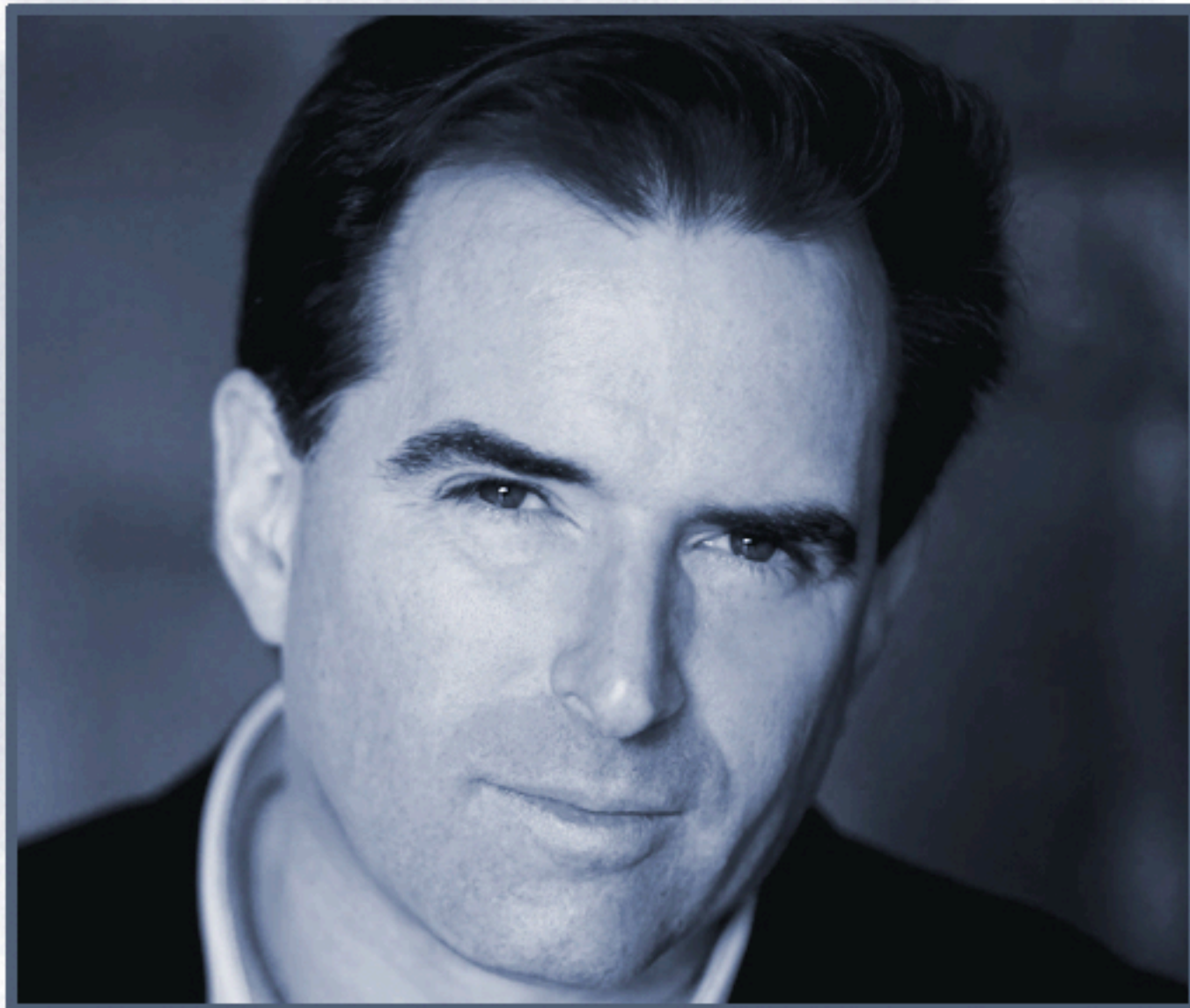
rule 509/watergate

"I didn't know it at the time, but this one little act took down a Presidency."

Rule 509, a provision buried in a bill before Congress. If passed, it would have allowed Nixon to withhold evidence from an investigation, claiming Presidential privilege over state secrets.

Liz Holtzman is assigned to sit on the House Judiciary committee, which is just starting to investigate the break-ins at the Watergate hotel. She discovers the administration trying to sneak through a Presidential "secrets act" in the form of Rule 509.

Liz goes before Congress and strikes Rule 509 down in March of '73. She had no way of knowing that her actions would soon compel Nixon to turn over his Oval Office recordings and force his resignation.



creatorcredits

John Stanisci is a *New York Times* best selling, and Eisner award nominated, writer/artist for DC and Marvel Comics who has worked on characters such as Spider-Man, Batman, Wonder Woman, and many more. John currently has several projects out for Film/TV development including his graphic novels *Foundlings* and *Lifedeath*. Other current TV projects include *Gladiatrix*, co created with Oscar nominated screenwriter Dan Gordon (*The Hurricane* w/ Denzel Washington, *Rambo 5*) and exec produced by Charley and Vlas Parlapanides (*Blood of Zeus*, Netflix). As a playwright, John's work has been named as a finalist for the prestigious Woodward/Newman Award for Drama as well as the Eugene O'Neill Playwrights Conference and many others. www.johnstanisci.com

Tom Burka is a writer, actor and former Brooklyn prosecutor. Tom has worked closely with television creators to assist them in creating realistic depictions of the criminal justice system and courtroom procedure, among them producer David Manson on the Netflix series *Bloodline* and writer Chuck Rappaport on *Law & Order*. He also provided some assistance to writer Gilbert King with his Pulitzer Prize-winning account of young Thurgood Marshall's criminal defense of four black men accused of rape, *Devil in the Grove*. In addition to *Freedom Deal*, Tom has the live action comedies *Overruled*, *Trivium*, and *Doubting Thomas*, as well as the animated political satire *Dead Presidents in Space* out for development. Tom's work as a satirist has been featured in the *New York Times*, MSNBC and CNN.

contact information

Representation:

Joshua R. Lastine, Esq. Lastine Impressions LLC

joshua@lastineimpressions.com

IMDB: www.imdb.com/name/nm8524601

Co-creators/writers:

John Stanisci, (917) 723-4820, johnstanisci@yahoo.com

Tom Burka, (917) 913-8282, tburka@mac.com

Registered with the WGA

Freedom Deal © 2022 John Stanisci and Tom Burka