



Directed by **Steven Spielberg**

Starring: **Meryl Streep and Tom Hanks**

This film is a historical political thriller about the unlikely partnership between *The Washington Post's* Katharine Graham (Streep), the first female publisher of a major American newspaper, and editor Ben Bradlee (Hanks), as they race to catch up with *The New York Times* to expose a massive cover-up of government secrets that spanned three decades and four U.S. Presidents. The two must overcome their differences as they risk their careers - and their very freedom - to help bring truth to light.

The facts of the story became world news. By the mid-1960s, most Americans were losing faith in the conclusion to three decades of conflict in Vietnam. While various Presidents told Americans that success was assured, the top-secret *Pentagon Papers* revealed that national policy was based on lies. Former military analyst Daniel Ellsberg leaked the *Papers* to *The New York Times*, but publications was suppressed by court order. The rival *Washington Post* acquired a copy and had to decide whether to publish and risk the paper's future, or not publish and lose the respect of its journalists.

The government documents in question, known as "the Pentagon Papers," revealed that U.S. officials lied to the American people about aspects of the Vietnam War—including the fact that they knew the war couldn't be won, but allowed it to continue anyway—as well as the fact that four U.S. presidents had covered it up. Graham and Bradlee risk imprisonment, after the attorney general accused the newspaper of violating the Espionage Act.

The movie is also a feminist one. Graham inherited the publisher role from her husband after he committed suicide. Consequently, she must prove to the newspaper's all-male board that she is capable of making the right decision as the company is on the brink of going public.

Critics' comments:

Tom Hanks and Meryl Streep impress as Washington Post bigwigs fighting to expose government lies about the Vietnam war in the director's timely drama. (The Guardian)

Spielberg recreates the golden age of newspapers in a bracing defence of press freedom. (The Times)

Steven Spielberg's exhilarating drama "The Post" is about a subject that's dear to the heart of journalists: themselves! Set largely during a few anxious weeks in 1971, it revisits *The Washington Post's* decision to publish portions of *the Pentagon Papers*, an immense classified report that chronicled America's involvement in Southeast Asia from World War II to 1968. (The New York Times)