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The Trial of the Chicago 7 (2020)

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Plot

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Summaries

The story of 7 people on trial stemming from various charges surrounding the uprising at the 1968 Democratic National Convention in Chicago, Illinois.

—*Ashley Barlowe*

In Chicago 1968, the Democratic Party Convention was met with protests from activists like the moderate Students for a Democratic Society led by Tom Hayden and the militant Yippies led by Abbie Hoffman and Jerry Rubin, which led to violent confrontations with the local authorities. As a result, seven of the accused ringleaders are arraigned on charges like Conspiracy by the hostile Nixon administration, including Bobby Seale of the Black Panthers who was not involved in the incident. What follows is an unfair trial presided by the belligerent Judge Hoffman (No relation) and prosecuted by a reluctant but duty-bound Richard Schultz. As their pro bono lawyers face such odds, Hayden and his fellows are frustrated by the Yippies' outrageous antics undermining their defense in defiance of the system even while Seale is denied a chance to defend himself his way. Along the way, the Chicago 7 clash in their political philosophies even as they learn they need each other in this fight.

—*Kenneth Chisholm (kchishol1970@gmail.com)*

What was intended to be a peaceful protest at the 1968 Democratic National Convention turned into a violent clash with police and the National Guard. The organizers of the protest--including Abbie Hoffman, Jerry Rubin, Tom Hayden, and Bobby Seale--were charged with conspiracy to incite a riot. The trial that followed was one of the most notorious in history.

—*yusufpiskin*

1969. With the new [Richard Nixon](#) administration in the White House, US Attorney General [John Mitchell](#) proceeds to lay charges against [Tom Hayden](#) and [Rennie Davis](#), leaders of Students for Democratic Society, [Abbie Hoffman](#) and [Jerry Rubin](#), leaders of the Youth International Parties (Yippies or Young Hippies), [David Dellinger](#), leader of Mobilization to End the War in Vietnam (The Mobe), individuals [Lee Weiner](#) and [John Froines](#), and [Bobby Seale](#), National Chair of the Black Panthers, under the never used Rap Brown Law: for "conspiracy to cross state lines in order to incite violence" for their roles in the protest outside the National Democratic Convention (DNC) in Chicago the summer previous, the protest which turned violent. The protest was against the United States' escalating participation in the Vietnam War, the DNC chosen for then President [Lyndon B. Johnson's](#) doubling of troops almost overnight and the presumptive Democratic nominee for President, [Hubert H. Humphrey](#), continuing such if elected. In part as they are using the same legal team of [William Kunstler](#) and [Leonard Weinglass](#), the first seven are deemed

The Trial of the Chicago 7

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the Chicago 7, with Seale the outsider for many reasons, including he being the only one of the eight a person of color. If convicted, they could serve a maximum penalty of ten years in prison. While the eight are aware of each other, some had never met before the protest and rarely collaborated. As such, the lead prosecutor, Richard Schultz, as does everyone else involved in this case, is aware that the charges and thus the trial are politically motivated rather than a matter of justice under the law, with each of the eight of the eight hundred or so protesters chosen for very specific political reasons, and as former Attorney General under Johnson, Ramsey Clark, had no intention of laying charges after the Justice Department's review.

—Huggo

In the wake of the bloody events before and after the 1968 Democratic National Convention in Chicago, where unarmed protesters were pitted against armed-to-the-teeth police officers in Lincoln Park, Attorney General John Mitchell, appoints prosecutors, Richard Schultz and Tom Foran, to bring eight men to trial for inciting violence. In 1969, under Richard Nixon's presidency, eight alleged ringleaders faced charges of conspiracy and promoting riot. They were the Conspiracy Eight: Tom Hayden and Rennie Davis, enthusiastic and silver-tongued leaders of the Students for a Democratic Society; Yippies, Abbie Hoffman and Jerry Rubin, who ran the Youth International Party; radical pacifist and conscientious objector, David Dellinger; anti-war activist, John Froines; teaching assistant, Lee Weiner, and co-founder of the Black Panther Party, Bobby Seale, whose case was eventually declared a mistrial. Apart from Bobby Seale, all the defendants were represented by William Kunstler and Leonard Weinglass, who were convinced that the charges are politically motivated. The judge was bigoted Julius Hoffman who refused to let the progressive, former U.S. Attorney General, Ramsey Clark, testify in front of the jury. But, who started the riots? Was it the protesters or the police?

—Nick Riganas

Spoilers

⚠ The synopsis below may give away important plot points.

Synopsis

During the 1968 Democratic National Convention in Chicago, there were massive demonstrations against the Vietnam War, which was reaching its peak. When a curfew was finally instated, this led to even further protests, eventually leading to a police riot. Following this, seven of the demonstrators (Abbie Hoffman, Jerry Rubin, Bobby Seale, John Froines, Tom Hayden, Lee Weiner, and David Dellinger) were tried for conspiracy. This is the story of the trial that followed.

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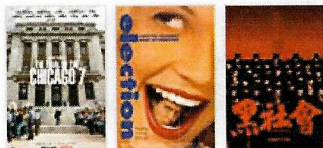
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The Trial of the Chicago 7 (2020)

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Certification

Edit

MPAA Rated R for language throughout, some violence, bloody images and drug use

Certification Argentina:16 | Australia:MA15+ | Brazil:16 | Canada:PG (British Columbia) | Canada:PG (Ontario) | Canada:G (Quebec) | Denmark:11 | Finland:K-16 | France:16 | Germany:16 | India:18 (self-applied) | Ireland:15A | Italy:T | Japan:R (self-applied) | Mexico:R (self-applied) | Netherlands:16 | New Zealand:M | Norway:12 (2020, cinema rating) | Singapore:NC16 | South Korea:18 (Netflix) | South Korea:15 (theatrical rating) | Spain:12 | Spain:16 (self-applied) | Sweden:11 | Switzerland:16 | Turkey:15+ | United Kingdom:15 | United States:R (certificate #52706) | Vietnam:C18

Sex & Nudity

None 155 of 242 found this to have none

F--k is used in a sexual context

Abbie Hoffman requests a permit to use Chicago park for rock music and fornication.

Violence & Gore

Moderate 123 of 178 found this moderate

Riot scenes show many people being beaten brutally. Some injuries are shown to be very bloody.

A girl is attacked by a group of men and her shirt is ripped open exposing her bra. The scene lasts around 10 seconds.

Profanity

Moderate 99 of 207 found this moderate

Cunt is said in 1 scene.

1,624

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45 uses of "fuck"

Alcohol, Drugs & Smoking

Mild 112 of 138 found this mild

Characters mentioned being stoned a few times

One character is seen briefly smoking a joint

Some strong talks about the drug consume.

Frightening & Intense Scenes

Mild 73 of 163 found this mild

The riot scenes can be fairly intense and somewhat graphic in nature, including the use of tear gas visibly bloody injuries, and a moment of sexual violence. The moment was brief but disturbing and possibly triggering to some viewers.

Spoilers

The Parents Guide items below may give away important plot points.

Sex & Nudity

An attempted sexual assault of a protestor during a protest. A group of men pull a protestor to the ground and rip her shirt open (she is wearing a bra). They are stopped before anything happens. This scene is brief yet disturbing.

Violence & Gore

One member of the seven is hit with a club and has his head cracked open. The injury is shown as very bloody.

Three men are yelling at a girl to stop holding a flag up eventually they call her a cunt and attack her and then proceed to remove her shirt in an attempt to sexually assault her before being stopped

Cops bashes a man's skull with a bat. We see blood pouring all over his head.

Frightening & Intense Scenes

The scene were Bobby Seale is bound and gagged can be intense, and even disturbing, to some viewers.

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