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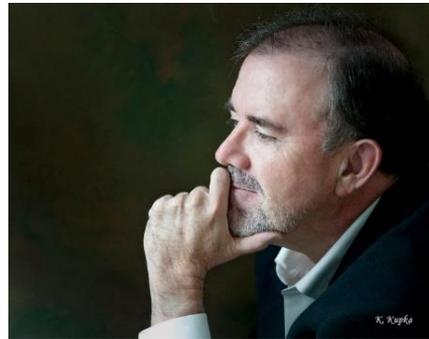
AMERICAN CULTURE IN THE NETHERLANDS

## Introduction for John Farrell

*By Eelco Bosch van Rosenthal*

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Good evening, welcome all and a particular welcome to our guest of tonight, John Farrell. Whom I envy for having spent several months in Yorba Linda, California, in preparation for this book. Yorba Linda is the town where Richard Nixon was born in 1913. It's in Orange County, which has always been a famous bastion of conservatism in California -- until last year.



Because ironically, on Election Day of 2016, when Donald Trump caused a shock to the political system, the birthplace of Richard Nixon - of all people, the president whose name appeared in every other magazine article on Trump over the past few months - went blue. Voted Democratic, for the First Time since the Great Depression. Mainly because of the growth of the Latino population.

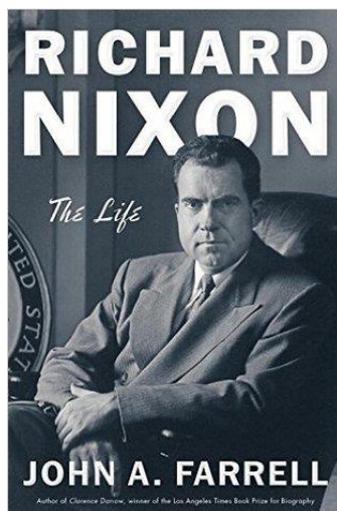
America is changing, rapidly -- but some things stay the same, as we will see tonight while drawing parallels between the past and the present.

So, Yorba Linda, California. Nixon's birthplace, which is why the Nixon Presidential Library & Museum was built there -- and John Farrell did a lot of his research for this book at that library. Being a sucker for presidential museums, I spent a few hours in the Nixon Library about ten years ago. It was not renovated yet, and it was almost as if you were thrown back in the 1970s. The place was a bit run-down. Every visitor seemed to be between 70 and 80 years old. And they all came for the story of Richard Nixon, his youth, his political rise, and only at the end -- was there a small exhibition on Watergate.

The old exhibition on Watergate was approved by Richard Nixon personally, and it depicted the Watergate scandal as a coup orchestrated by Nixon's enemies and by journalists. That exhibit was replaced in 2007 by one with a much more honest take on what happened after the Watergate break-in. But still, it almost looked like an afterthought in the museum, it was only a small room. While for me - being born in 1976, a few years after Nixon's downfall - Nixon was Watergate and Watergate was Nixon.

Later on, after more study, I realized how unfair that was - and after reading John Farrell's book, *Nixon: A Life*, I realize that even more.

This book is a fascinating read. You know how it ends. There's no mention of Watergate until the 24th chapter. But it's a gripping book which teaches us a lot about Richard Nixon and his days, it's also a book about America.



There's no mention of Donald Trump in the book, yet the timing could hardly be better. Trump's distrust, or even hatred of the press -- his anti-elitism -- his dog-whistles to southern racists during a campaign - a Special Prosecutor investigating whether there was a cover-up in the White House --- it has all happened before. And yet - Nixon deserves better than being compared to Trump. He is at times a brilliant politician, with a real understanding of foreign policy, a smart man, a modest man, someone who could perhaps have made it to the top of those presidential rankings - if it weren't for his other side, his dark side, his paranoid side, his ruthless side. There is always one Nixon - and then there is the other Nixon. Which makes Richard Nixon an American tragedy -- which I believe was actually the working title of John Farrell's book.

We'll talk about this brilliant book, about Nixon, a little about Trump, but let me first welcome our guest on stage. John Farrell is an author and historian who previously wrote a book on the legendary House Speaker Tip O'Neill. He was a White House correspondent for the Boston Globe, a Washington Bureau Chief for the Denver Post, and at the Globe he was also a member of the investigative Spotlight team, depicted in the movie Spotlight. He worked on his Nixon book for five years, and we're very happy he's our guest tonight - John Farrell.