

Arthur Felix Broomfield Prize Report: Jack Leader

As I sketched out the subject of my undergraduate dissertation - how Richard Nixon used television to communicate 'law-and-order' in the 1968 Presidential Election - it became clear that a visit to the Nixon Presidential Library in Los Angeles, where the campaign archives were stored, would be essential.

Thanks to the generosity of the Arthur Felix Broomfield Prize, my visit became possible. With the support of this prize, I was able to visit the Nixon Presidential Library in August 2026. There, I reconstructed the 1968 campaign from its beginnings: working through newspaper clippings and early memorandums to grasp the information behind key campaign decisions. It was very exciting to be conducting my first proper archival research!



More exciting still was the discovery of new information about the intellectual origins of Nixon's 'law-and-order' discourse: campaign staff drew some of the arguments that became part of Nixon's stump speech on the issue from a specific *New York Times* article of 1966. I was even able to find transcripts of some of Nixon's live broadcasts from the campaign which no longer survive, and which do not appear to have been analysed yet in existing research. In the moment, it felt like striking gold!

After spending five days at the Nixon Library, the prize also enabled me to spend a further five days at the Paley Archive in northern Los Angeles, one of the largest media repositories in the world. With access to the archive's collection, which includes countless hours of footage from 1968 unavailable elsewhere, I immersed myself in the televised world of that year.



Contemporary documentaries on policing and urban decay gave me new insights into how a televised discourse of crime and decline had developed before the 1968 election and set the scene for Nixon's campaign focus on these issues. Reports featuring interviews with those affected by the riots provided a crucial glimpse into how ordinary citizens had become alienated and divided. Through this footage, I could see and hear the same pictures and reporting that were broadcast nightly into homes across America in 1968.

This trip was invaluable for my research, and will hopefully enable me to bring some new material into future research on the 1968 Presidential Election. None of it would have been possible without the generosity of Pembroke and the support of the Arthur Felix Broomfield Prize - for which I am deeply grateful.