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PREVIEW

**CONFESSION, CONTRITION AND FORGIVENESS: THE INTERSECTION OF  
RELIGION AND POLITICS IN BILL CLINTON'S EXPLANATION OF THE  
MONICA LEWINSKY AFFAIR**

**by**

**Matthew H. Barton**

**A DISSERTATION**

**Presented to the Faculty of**

**The Graduate College at the University of Nebraska**

**In Partial Fulfillment of Requirements**

**For the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy**

**Major: Communication Studies**

**Under the Supervision of Professor Ronald E. Lee**

**Lincoln, Nebraska**

**March, 2002**

UMI Number: 3055259

PREVIEW

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DISSERTATION TITLE

Confession, Contrition and Forgiveness: The Intersection of Religion  
and Politics in Bill Clinton's Explanation of the  
Monica Lewinsky Affair

BY

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GRADUATE COLLEGE  
UNIVERSITY OF NEBRASKA

**CONFESSION, CONTRITION, AND FORGIVENESS: THE INTERSECTION OF  
RELIGION AND POLITICS IN BILL CLINTON'S EXPLANATION OF THE  
MONICA LEWINSKY AFFAIR**

**Matthew H. Barton, Ph.D.**

**University of Nebraska, 2002**

**Advisor: Ronald E. Lee**

**This dissertation investigates the relationship between politics and religion in the American political system. Specifically, this analysis examines Bill Clinton's explanation of the Monica Lewinsky affair. I enter this study through the lens of civil religion to help emphasize the significant influence of religion on our national understanding of politics and presidential behavior.**

**The rhetorical impetus for this study explores the extant scholarly literature on public apology and image repair strategies. I suggest that these bodies of research do not fully account for the complexities of this discourse because of the technical nature of these descriptive taxonomies. In the Clinton case, it is important to recognize that we are really dealing with an event beyond apologia, we are dealing with a public confession. As such, the technical categories of apologia fall short in this context. I argue that an adequate understanding of Clinton's account of his behavior must consider the influence of religious ritual and cultural myth. In other words, I assert that the apologia and image-repair literatures take insufficient account of the cultural mythology that governs requests**

for forgiveness. Evidence for this claim comes from two sources: Clinton's progressive rhetorical choices that led him toward a more complete and valid religious confession, and the media's use of a religious frame to interpret Clinton's explanations of the Lewinsky affair.

I conclude by discussing what the Clinton case teaches us about the enduring tensions among the legal, partisan, and religious cultures in American politics and explore the larger tension between liberalism and democracy that is drawn out in this analysis. Further, I explain the implications of this research in terms of advancing rhetorical theory.

PREVIEW

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## CHAPTER ONE

### Introduction: Bill Clinton and Civil Religion

George Kelly (1984) observes, “The United States is today in a very hazy predicament involving both spiritual and political self-understanding. Troubles in both spheres are more commonly related than is generally supposed, and no therapy can be ventured without a candid recognition of these relationships” (p. 1). Kelly points to the deep-rooted connection between religion and politics by arguing that this relationship is not just adept at explaining the religious origins of the nation in seemingly outdated ideas like manifest destiny, but is in a very real sense capable of explaining contemporary political exigencies in a meaningful way.

Understanding politics in the U.S. often involves examining the role of particular political agents, and no one agent wields a greater influence on America’s political system than the President of the United States. Scholars from a variety of different academic specialties have concerned themselves with the role of the presidency in the modern era. For example, some of these investigations have examined the significance of such things as presidential character during elections and during tenure in office (Glad, 1998), the qualities that shape presidential performance (Greenstein, 2000), and the fine line presidents walk between the public and private spheres (Grossman & Yalof, 1998). The point is that the President of the United States is important to America not just because the president possesses executive authority, but because the president is central to defining America and what it means to be an American. As part of the presidency’s cultural power, the chief executive is an important religious figure in the U.S. Presidents

do not necessarily have to be religious, but history suggests that in order to govern effectively, they must appear to embody the virtues of religion.

In an effort to explore the intersection between politics and religion, this dissertation probes situations in which the actions of a president necessitated a formal, public apology. In particular, Bill Clinton's public response to accusations that he had an affair with White House intern Monica Lewinsky, which led to charges that he obstructed justice by lying under oath and suborned others to perjure themselves, is an especially good example of the interdependent nature of religion and politics. Ultimately, these charges led to the impeachment trial of Clinton, marking only the second time in the history of the country that a sitting president faced dismissal from office (Schmidt & Weisskopf, 2000).

The president is an agent in a complex religious-cultural-political scene (Burke, 1969). As such, we need to pay careful attention when the president invokes God's blessings on America during an inaugural address, offers a public eulogy, or lays a wreath on the tomb of the unknown soldier, because these public rituals index the relationship between religion and politics. In addition, when presidents make moral mistakes for which they must ask forgiveness, the politics-religion dynamic is in sharp relief. Bill Clinton's public confession of the Monica Lewinsky affair is a particularly clear example of this reoccurring public situation.

In this chapter, I justify exploring the intersection of religion and politics through the lens of civil religion and focus this lens on the Clinton-Lewinsky controversy. First, I explain the background of this controversy and lay out the issues I address. Second, I explain the importance of the president to the American public as the high priest of

American civil religion (Hart, 1977). Third, I discuss the usefulness of civil religion in understanding Clinton's apologia. Last, I discuss the research question that serves as the basis for this study.

### **The Clinton Case<sup>1</sup>**

In the 1992 presidential election, William Jefferson Clinton defeated incumbent President George Bush, becoming the first Democrat to control the White House in more than 12 years. He followed in the footsteps of those who had risen from the rubble of poverty and through hard work and opportune circumstances ascended to the nation's loftiest political post. This study begins and ends with one of the most memorable experiences of the past quarter century, the events preceding the Clinton impeachment trial. The media played the story out as a full-blown scandal (Gillis, 2000). This case was further complicated because of its connection to a series of complex legal issues that reveal a multi-layered political scene. Each of these layers is connected to one another and helps establish a basis for understanding Clinton's explanation for his involvement with Lewinsky. However, before elaborating on the specifics of the different contexts of the Clinton-Lewinsky situation, I provide a basic timeline of key events because so many of them were happening simultaneously, and then explain how these events led to Clinton's formal remarks about the affair.<sup>2</sup> While some of these events are more tightly

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<sup>1</sup> While I have tried to describe these events in an impartial and judicious way, insufficient time has passed for the publication of scholarly evaluations of the Clinton Presidency. Thus, at times I have had to rely on journalistic and partisan sources.

<sup>2</sup> Alan Dershowitz (1998) offers a timeline of events beginning with the Whitewater land purchase up through the worldwide television airing of Clinton's grand jury testimony. It is useful to get a brief sense of when events like Whitewater,

tied together than others, all are important in understanding the partisan political culture the Clintons lived in preceding the Lewinsky investigation.

Many of Clinton's political problems relevant to this study can be traced to his days as governor of Arkansas, where he was accused of having extramarital relationships with a number of women.<sup>3</sup> Colleen Elizabeth Kelley (2001) writes that by "January 1992 the question of Bill Clinton's extramarital relationships reappeared as tabloid newspapers and television programs continually queried Hillary Clinton about the stories in Arkansas that he had been unfaithful" (p. 162). During this time, the most highly publicized case was that of Gennifer Flowers. On January 23, 1992, the *Star*, a tabloid paper, released a story documenting Flowers' illicit, twelve-year sexual affair with Clinton (Kelley, 2001). Flowers first met Clinton in 1977 while she was a reporter for KARK-TV in Little Rock. After several interviews and interactions with Clinton, Flowers claims that he asked for

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Troopergate, the Paula Jones trial, and various other activities took place as so many investigations about the Clintons overlapped and influenced one another.

<sup>3</sup> Most of the authors who have written about Clinton discuss his sordid political past in Arkansas. Although many of these allegations have never made their way to court, many speculate that they are accurate. For example, David Gallen (1994) provides what he calls an "oral biography" of Arkansas residents who recount their observations and interaction with Clinton, many of them talking about his womanizing. One account of him on the "bar circuit" in Little Rock between 1980-1982 (when he was not governor) notes that he was "always with women, with an entourage, and you never knew whether this was his 'action' or just staff members but he was always with a pack. His wife was never there" (p. 218). David Maraniss (1995) reports that one of the state troopers to come forward during the Troopergate events claimed that in the two years he was on the security staff (1983-1985) "he was asked to solicit more than one hundred women for Clinton . . ." (p. 425). *Newsweek* reporter Michael Isikoff (1999) talks about several different women that came forward with stories about Clinton's sexual advances during his investigation of Paula Jones' accusations. You can also read other accounts in Coulter (1998), Evans-Pritchard (1999), and Tyrrell (1996). The point here is really to establish the fact that his alleged misconduct with Lewinsky was a reoccurring event in his life.

her phone number and this effort ultimately lead to the alleged affair between the two (Carpozi, 1995).<sup>4</sup> What is particularly interesting about the Flowers case is that it became new precisely at the time that Clinton was emerging as the front-runner for the Democratic Party's 1992 presidential bid.

Following the Superbowl on January 26, 1992, *60 Minutes* aired an interview with Bill and Hillary Clinton who confronted the rumors of his relationship with Gennifer Flowers. It also served as a forum for them to comment on the strength and stability of their marriage. Because the interview followed the most watched event on television, it was guaranteed a large primetime audience (Blaney & Benoit, 2001). When Steve Kroft asked about the allegations, Clinton maintained that they were false, denying any sexual relationship with Flowers. However, he did admit to causing "pain in his marriage," which was widely understood as an admission of past infidelities. During the broadcast, the Clintons focused on maintaining their marriage as a private issue by pointing out that they had experienced problems like any other couple, but they had worked them out and were committed to one another. Clinton stated that his past behavior was definitely "in the past." As George Stephanopoulos (1998), former senior advisor to Clinton later wrote, "the point of the *60 Minutes* declaration was that the governor had outgrown all

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<sup>4</sup> Carpozi also reports that Clinton was allegedly involved with a number of other women in Arkansas including two women who held the title of Miss Arkansas, several state employees, and he even documents Clinton's involvement with three prostitutes that he met while jogging near the capital. Carpozi explains that Clinton paid the prostitutes for their services and he often took them to a cabin near his hometown for their meetings together. He goes so far as to suggest that one of the prostitutes alleges that Clinton is the father of her child. There are many other accounts of Clinton's alleged infidelity in this volume, but they all point to the fact that Clinton had a history of promiscuous behavior.

that, and that Clinton was offering a clear definition of character that the country could judge him by: 'I may not be perfect,' he was saying, 'but I'll fight for you. I'll be a president who puts people first, and I'll get up every day determined to be a better person than I was the day before'" (p. 50).<sup>5</sup> Kelley (2001) notes that Hillary Clinton's statement about the strength of the relationship was particularly important to the success of the interview, suggesting that she had forgiven her husband and the American public should do the same. Clinton appeared to successfully dodge the infidelity bullet by addressing it. After the *60 Minutes* interview, his campaign picked up steam. But the admission of causing pain in his marriage also gave some credence to speculation about his unfaithful past. Following the Gennifer Flowers incident, the Clintons faced the second major ghost of their past – Whitewater.

In 1978, the Clintons entered into an investment relationship with James and Susan McDougal to purchase 220 acres of land in the Ozark Mountains for the purpose of building vacation homes. They formed a company called Whitewater Development, and while the actual project was a financial failure, there was a major controversy over the investment that centers on two major issues. First, the Clintons borrowed \$220,000 to invest in Whitewater. Kelley (2001) reports that the Clintons suffered a \$47,000 loss on their investment, but continued making interest payments on their bank loan.<sup>6</sup> The

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<sup>5</sup> Stephanopoulos also speaks to the partisan nature of the Gennifer Flowers issue. He notes that in terms of his presidential career, that this case was a starting point for right-wing conspiracies suggesting that "Clinton haters have been out to get him for years" (p. 50) and that this event only touched the surface of problems in store for the Clintons in the next few years in the White House.

<sup>6</sup> In different accounts of the Whitewater business dealings, there is some discrepancy about the exact amount of the Clinton's investment, including the number of

problem came when McDougal purchased a savings and loan in 1983 and was accused of fraudulent record keeping in order to cover the illegal disbursement of funds to his private interests, including the Whitewater Corporation. Blaney and Benoit (2001) suggest that much of the “controversy . . . centered around a fraudulent \$300,000 loan to Susan McDougal, some portion of which was funneled to the Whitewater Development Corporation” (p. 66). Kelley (2001) notes that \$120,000 of the \$300,000 loan did go toward Whitewater, but the real problem with this particular loan was that former judge, David Hale, later testified that Governor Clinton had pressured him to make the fraudulent loan, backed by the Small Business Association, in order to save the struggling Whitewater Corporation. Isikoff (1999) points out that Hale owned a lending company in Little Rock, and this put him in a position to grant the loan to Susan McDougal’s non-existent marketing firm. Although Clinton denied even knowing Hale, Jim McDougal later said that Hale’s allegations were true. A further complication came when McDougal’s savings and loan, Madison Guaranty, “helped ease Bill Clinton’s 1985 debt from the previous year’s gubernatorial campaign,” (Kelley, 2001, p. 174) suggesting financial improprieties.

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acres they purchased and the actual amount they lost. For example, Shelley (2001) reports that the initial property investment was \$200,000 and the losses were reported at \$69,000, although they were later amended to \$47,000 in late March of 1994 during a Whitewater press conference. Blaney and Benoit (2001) state that the Clintons lost \$40,000 on their investment in 220 acres. Lyons (1996) notes that the Clintons spent \$220,000 on 230 acres. Dershowitz (1998) reports that they borrowed \$203,000 to purchase 220 acres of land. At any rate, this provides some sense of the wide and divergent interest that the nation expressed in the Clinton’s Arkansas dealings. Another source, describing the Clintons’ business dealings that is worth noting is Roger Morris’ (1996) book, Partners in Power.



The second part of the Whitewater issue that caused problems for the Clintons came when Madison Guaranty ran into serious financial solvency problems and was investigated by the federal government. The S&L eventually went under, but during the subsequent investigation, Hillary Clinton was connected to McDougal as her law firm represented Madison Guaranty, which appeared to be a conflict of interest. Although the Clintons maintain that Hillary was not directly involved in an attorney-client relationship with the McDougals, during the S&L investigation, a number of missing billing records from the Rose Law Firm were subpoenaed, but were not found until two years later when they turned up in the White House private quarters (Lyons, 1996).<sup>7</sup> Hillary Clinton appeared to be more closely involved in another of McDougal's land development projects – Castle Grande (a subsidiary of Madison Guaranty). Hillary denied doing any legal work for this project while at the Rose firm (Shelley, 2001). However, Tyrrell (1996) notes that late in 1995 Senate hearings revealed that Hillary Clinton had “handled the Castle Grande development project, which bank examiners discovered involved in part a series of fictitious transactions devised to inflate profits” (p. 225).

On March 8, 1992, the *New York Times* ran the initial front-page story on Whitewater, opening up yet another controversy for the Clintons to manage. Over the next two years, a special prosecutor was appointed to figure out the extent to which the

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<sup>7</sup> Tyrrell (1996) reports that in 1985 Hillary Clinton, then first lady of Arkansas, began taking a “\$2,000 monthly retainer from McDougal's Madison Guaranty Savings and Loan, though the trust was under the scrutiny of federal examiners skeptical of its solvency. According to McDougal, her [Hillary's] husband leaned on him for the arrangement” (p. 225). Tyrrell also discusses the Rose Law Firm's “failure to disclose conflicts of interest in its relations with seven of the seventeen failed savings and loans on which it did legal work for the federal government” (p. 225). One of the clients was Madison Guaranty.

Clintons were involved in illegal business dealings with the McDougals and the failed S&L. Kelley (2001) reports that Hillary “knew there were going to be problems figuring out the status of the Whitewater investment when it came time to file financial disclosure forms on 1992 taxes in the spring of 1993” (p. 173). Prior to this time the Clintons’ financial records had been shielded from public view since the 1970s. In addition, Hillary showed some reluctance to meet with the press about Whitewater adding to what became a full-blown media frenzy by 1994. The Whitewater story was so big, that it “became an omnipresent context for stories on the president’s every move or decision” (Kelley, 2001, p. 180).

To make matters worse, Clinton appointed Vincent Foster as deputy White House counsel in 1993. Foster, who had served as the Clintons’ personal attorney in Arkansas, was at the crossroads of two other significant Clinton scandals: “Travelgate and Filegate.”<sup>8</sup> The “Travelgate” issue stemmed from Clinton’s decision in May 1993 to fire seven long-time employees of the White House travel office for mismanagement and replace them with “individuals employed by World Wide Travel, a Little Rock, Arkansas, travel agency. The new office director was Catherine Cornelius, a cousin of the president” (Kelley, 2001, p. 182). This decision triggered a barrage of media

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<sup>8</sup> Most readers may attribute the label “Filegate” to the Republican accusation that the Clinton administration had “unlawfully obtained hundreds of confidential FBI files” (Blaney & Benoit, 2001, p. 115). The accusations stated that Clinton had used this information to “debilitate his political foes” (p. 115). Representative Bill Clinger and Senator Orrin Hatch first talked about the situation in June 1996. However, the Filegate label has also been associated with the suspected removal of records from Vince Foster’s office following his suicide. While both scandals are important, in this case, my use “Filegate” references the latter chain of events.

criticism which forced the Clintons to abandon their idea, but not before further damage was done to their public image. During an early investigation of “Travelgate,” Foster tried to help Hillary deny the charges that she had acted on her own when she fired the travel office staffers. Foster committed suicide on July 20, 1993 because some suspected that he knew what Hillary’s role was and would certainly be required to describe it under oath placing Foster in a position of either giving up Hillary or lying (Kelley, 2001). As for the “Filegate” story, following Foster’s death, media reports “linked White House aides to the removal of records and files regarding the Clintons and their Arkansas real estate investments from Foster’s office” (Kelley, 2001, p. 186). This naturally added to the momentum for continuing to investigate Whitewater.

If things were not bad enough for the first couple, in December 1993, reports also sprang up in another controversy about Clinton’s alleged womanizing in a scandal known as “Troopergate.” Arkansas state patrol officers told the *American Spectator*, a conservative publication, and later the *Los Angeles Times*, that Clinton had offered two of the troopers federal jobs in order to buy their silence (Kelley, 2001; Tyrrell, 1996). The story talked about “everything from oral sex in pickup trucks with department store clerks to the dropping of the gubernatorial pants before a state employee identified only as ‘Paula’” (Kelley, 2001, p. 193). This seemingly mundane discovery of the woman named Paula activated an explosive chain of events.

“Paula” was actually 24-year-old Paula Corbin Jones, a state clerk for the Arkansas industrial development agency. She alleged that in May 1991 Clinton invited her to his hotel room where he exposed himself to her while asking for sexual favors, which Jones refused (Baker [Online], January 18, 1998, p. A1). Jones’ own account to

reporters describes the events in more detail. She claims that on May 8, 1991, while she was working at the registration desk during a conference for the Industrial Development Commission at the Excelsior Hotel in Little Rock, then Governor Clinton appeared in the lobby and stared at Jones for quite some time. Later that afternoon, State Trooper Danny Ferguson came to tell her that Clinton wanted to talk to her in his hotel room. Clinton and Jones were left alone in the room when she claims that he came on to her kissing her neck, running his hand up her legs, and “praising her curves.” He eventually pulled down his pants asking Jones to perform oral sex (Evans-Pritchard, 1997; Isikoff, 1999). Jones refused Clinton’s request and he did not further pursue the issue. Following the initial story in the *American Spectator*, the Clintons responded like they had to other charges, by saying that this was another partisan attack by the Republicans who had found people that could be bought and further that these events had no relevance to their current activities in the White House.

On May 6, 1994 Paula Jones filed a civil suit against (now) President Clinton in U.S. District Court in Little Rock, Arkansas seeking \$700,000 in damages for “willful, outrageous and malicious conduct at the Excelsior Hotel in Little Rock on May 8, 1991” (Timeline, 1998a [Online], p. 1). Jones charged that in addition to sexual harassment and assault, Clinton defamed her by denying the charges and then prevented her from receiving proper raises and promotions at her job. The accusation grabbed media attention because it was the first time a lawsuit had been filed against a sitting president. Clinton responded by filing a motion to dismiss Jones’ suit on the grounds of presidential immunity. Following an appeal by Jones, the Supreme Court unanimously agreed on May 28, 1997 “that a sitting president was not immune to lawsuits over personal

behavior and the three-year-old Jones's lawsuit could go forward" (Shelley, 2001, p. 196). This ruling forced Clinton into "testifying under oath to lawyers in the Paula Jones sexual harassment case" on January 17, 1998 (Dershowitz, 1998, p. 259).<sup>9</sup>

A further complication from the Jones lawsuit came when allegations surfaced that Clinton had an affair with White House intern Monica Lewinsky and that she was going to be subpoenaed as a witness in the Jones trial. The importance of Lewinsky's testimony to the Jones case was the plaintiff's hope of establishing a pattern of reckless sexual behavior on Clinton's part. During his investigation of the Paula Jones controversy, Michael Isikoff (1999), an investigative reporter for the *Washington Post*, began down a journalistic trail that would eventually blow the whistle on Clinton and Lewinsky.

*Newsweek* ran a cover story on January 13, 1997 about the Jones-Clinton lawsuit. Although no longer working on the Jones case at this point (after the *Washington Post* refused to print his story on Paula Jones), Isikoff, now working for *Newsweek*, was once again assigned to do some fresh reporting on the situation. Following the oral arguments before the Supreme Court, Isikoff (1999) got in touch with Joe Cammarata, the lawyer representing Jones, to see how the case was progressing. Cammarata told Isikoff about an anonymous caller who had told him that she had knowledge of a similar incident to the

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<sup>9</sup> Michael Isikoff (1999) argues that another variable that greatly influenced the Jones' case came when Clinton retained Bob Bennett as his legal counsel. Isikoff describes Bennett as "perhaps Washington's hottest criminal defense lawyer" (p. 86) and the fact that Clinton would hire him to refute Jones' claims "bestowed official legitimacy" on the story that the *Washington Post* was afraid to touch (p. 86). "It showed the White House was worried about Jones—and meant the public had a right to know what her claims were all about" (p. 86).

one that Jones described in 1994. She alleged that Clinton had fondled her in a private study off the Oval Office while asking for sexual favors. After more investigation, Isikoff eventually got in touch with the woman, Kathleen Willey, who claimed that someone at the White House could corroborate her story, that person was Linda Tripp. Tripp explained to Isikoff that Willey did have some sort of encounter with the president in 1994, but suggested that it was not a case of sexual harassment, rather it was something that Willey had sought. At any rate, Willey was probably going to be subpoenaed in the Jones case and from her conversations with Isikoff, Willey knew that the president might be linked to the case in ways he was unaware of at the time. Willey contacted her friend Nancy Hernreich, director of Oval Office operations to give her a heads up on Isikoff's inquiry.

At this point, Clinton had a meeting with Lewinsky about a threatening letter he had received from her because he never made good on his promise to get her a job back at the White House. During his second term she had been exiled to a public affairs position at the Pentagon in April 1996 because Clinton aides were concerned that she was spending too much time with the president. Isikoff reported that during this particular meeting, Lewinsky warned the president that a friend (Tripp) had told her that Isikoff was investigating Willey's claims of sexual harassment. Clinton told her not to worry, that he was already aware of the situation based on his conversation with Hernreich. Thus from Isikoff's point of view, he was in the middle of a "bizarre game of telephone" (p. 150) where he was talking to Willey who (without his knowledge initially) was talking to Hernreich, who was talking to the president. The president was talking to Lewinsky who

was talking to Tripp (without Clinton's knowledge) who was talking to Isikoff. So, the Jones case via Kathleen Willey linked Clinton to Lewinsky.

The Lewinsky story first hit the nation's newspapers on the morning of January 21, 1998. Although Isikoff had essentially linked all of these people together in his search to verify stories in the Jones lawsuit, *Newsweek* decided not to print the story. At least that was its plan until an Internet gossip columnist, Matt Drudge, printed a story (in the *Drudge Report*) about Clinton's involvement with a 21-year-old intern. In his account, Drudge also included the fact that *Newsweek* refused to print the story. From that point, *The Washington Post* and *The Los Angeles Times* printed stories the next day followed by detailed coverage from the rest of the major news outlets around the country as they tried to get their own scoops. "The story was so prevalent that it overshadowed essentially all other major news of early 1998" (Shelley, 2001, p. 204). The shocking part about the case was that Clinton was allegedly involved in a sexual relationship with a young woman less than half his age, Lewinsky had just turned 22 shortly before their affair commenced. Kurtz (1998) noted that the "velocity of the story was incredible. Four days after the scandal broke, Wolf Blitzer (of CNN) was reporting that some of Clinton's closest advisers thought he had sex with Lewinsky and were considering calling for his resignation" (in Shelley, 2001, p. 209). The story consumed the media. For example, an electronic database search showed that between January and August 1998, *Newsweek* ran 90 different stories related to the incident, *Time* ran 66 stories, and *U.S. News & World Report* ran 45 stories. Arguably the nation's most influential newspaper, the *New York Times*, ran more than 500 stories about the Clinton-Lewinsky affair over the course of eight months. It was also major fodder for late night talk shows (Gillis,

2000), indeed the story appeared to thoroughly permeate the U.S. culture. Isikoff (1999) argued that this information was critical to the nation because it showed Clinton's "brutal willingness to deceive the public" (p. 168).

On January 17, 1998, just four days before the Lewinsky story broke, Clinton had given sworn testimony in the Jones case that he had never met Paula Jones and further denied any sexual relations with any of the other "Jane Does" on the prosecutor's list – including Jane Doe #6, Monica Lewinsky (Isikoff, 1999; Shelley, 2001). However, Clinton did admit to sexual relations with Gennifer Flowers going directly counter to his 1992 denial on *60 Minutes*. On January 7, 1998, when asked about her relationship with Clinton, Lewinsky signed an affidavit declaring she had "never had a sexual relationship with the president" (Timeline, 1998 [Online], p. 6). In general, the allegations suggested that Clinton had encouraged Lewinsky to lie about their relationship in the affidavit in order to protect himself. Prior to this time, Clinton allegedly promised Lewinsky a job, to be arranged with the help of Clinton friend Vernon Jordan, in return for her cooperation. Between October 1997 and January 1998 Jordan arranged four different employment interviews for Lewinsky resulting in a job offer at Revlon, which was later rescinded. In the meantime, Lewinsky's co-worker Linda Tripp knew about her involvement with the president and began taping conversations she had with Lewinsky (Schmidt, Baker & Locy, 1998). Although the Jones lawsuit was ultimately dismissed, Clinton agreed to settle out of court for \$850,000 on November 13, 1998 with the stipulation that the payment did not equate to an admission of guilt on his part.<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>10</sup> For an interesting criticism of the Supreme Court's decision that mandated Clinton's testimony in the Jones case, see Vincent Bugliosi's (1998) book Island of