

**Tab 27**



By Michael Isikoff

Last weekend, there were two extraordinary dramas playing out in Washington. On Saturday, at the offices of his attorney Robert Bennett, President Clinton was being questioned, under oath, by Paula Jones's lawyers as a media army waited outside. Clinton was asked if he had ever had a sexual encounter with Jones. As he has before, Clinton denied it. But unknown to the reporters in the street, the president was also asked about a woman named Monica Lewinsky. Eager to prove a pattern of sexual harassment, Jones's lawyers were searching for other women who might have been the subject of Clinton's advances. Under oath, the president denied ever having had a sexual relationship with Lewinsky.

Across town, in a small apartment at the Watergate, Lewinsky was in a bind. She had been informed the day before that Whitewater special prosecutor Kenneth Starr was investigating her for perjury and obstruction of justice in the Paula Jones case. Lewinsky had signed an affidavit swearing that she had never had a sexual relationship with the president. But, Starr's deputies had informed her, they had tapes of her suggesting that her denial was a lie--and that they suspected she had been advised to lie by the president and by the president's friend and adviser, Washington superlawyer Vernon Jordan. Now Starr's people offered her a tough choice: cooperate with prosecutors and turn against the president, or face the possibility of criminal charges herself. NEWSWEEK was aware of Lewinsky's situation. For nearly a year, NEWSWEEK's Michael Isikoff had been aware of allegations that Clinton was having a sexual relationship with Lewinsky. That Wednesday, January 14, Isikoff learned that Starr was investigating obstruction of justice and perjury in the Paula Jones case, and that Lewinsky was a target of the investigation. For the next three days, Isikoff continued to report the story. On Saturday at 12:30 a.m., Isikoff and NEWSWEEK editors heard a tape of conversations between Lewinsky and a woman named Linda Tripp. NEWSWEEK could not independently verify the authenticity of the recording, and some of the statements on the tape raise questions about Lewinsky's credibility.

But the tape seems to confirm that Lewinsky told at least one friend on repeated occasions that she was having an affair with the president, and that she had discussed with Clinton and Jordan the fact that she had been subpoenaed in the Paula Jones case. On the tape, Lewinsky sounded distraught but not unbalanced. She talks spontaneously about what she suggests is a sexual relationship with the president, expresses her anguish about being brought into the Paula Jones case, and plaintively declares her wish that the president would "settle" the case. Dejectedly, she says that Clinton is "in denial. He'll never settle." Lewinsky affirms to Tripp that Lewinsky will deny any sexual relationship when she is deposed by Jones's lawyers. "Look," she says, "I will deny it so he will not get screwed in the case, but I'm going to get screwed personally," Lewinsky says. When Tripp asks why, Lewinsky replies, "because it will be obvious... it will be obvious to him... that I told you." However, there was no clear evidence on the tape that would confirm or deny Tripp's allegation that Clinton or Vernon Jordan had coached Lewinsky to lie.

Because the magazine did not have enough time for sufficient independent reporting on Lewinsky, her credibility, and her alleged role in the drama--and in hopes of learning more about the truth by not interfering with Starr's probe at a critical juncture --NEWSWEEK decided to hold off publishing the story last week. Above all, because Lewinsky's name had not surfaced, NEWSWEEK's editors felt there was insufficient hard evidence to drag her into the media maelstrom.

On Tuesday, Jan. 20, the story began to leak out to a number of news organizations. On Wednesday, Jan. 21, NEWSWEEK obtained what may be an important new piece of evidence. It is a written document allegedly given to Tripp by Lewinsky. The document coaches Tripp on "points to make in affidavit" in order to contradict the account of another former White House staffer, Kathleen Willey, who recently testified in her own deposition to unsolicited sexual advances made by the president in 1993. It was Tripp who partly confirmed Willey's claims that she had had a sexual encounter with Clinton--as reported in a NEWSWEEK story in August. In these talking points, Tripp is urged to undercut Willey's credibility, be a "team player" and submit an affidavit for review to "Bennett's people"--Clinton's lawyers. It's not clear who prepared these talking points, but Starr believes that Lewinsky did not write them herself. He is investigating whether the instructions came from Jordan or other friends of the president. President Clinton has denied all allegations of a sexual relationship with Lewinsky or a cover-up; Jordan refused to comment on Wednesday and his lawyer did not return repeated phone calls.

NEWSWEEK will have full coverage of this entire story in its next issue, on stands Monday, January 26. But because NEWSWEEK and others have been able to confirm further details of the investigation--and because the magazine has developed exclusive reporting on the nature of the evidence--the editors of NEWSWEEK have decided to publish this chronology of events on NEWSWEEK Interactive on AOL :

Monday morning, January 12. Linda Tripp, met with her lawyers in Washington. She had been subpoenaed in the Jones case and needed to prepare her testimony. She had a disagreement with her lawyers, whom she feared were too close to the White House. Angrily, she left her lawyers' office and called the office of Whitewater independent counsel Kenneth Starr. Within a few hours, there were federal prosecutors and an FBI agent sitting in Tripp's living room in Columbia, Md. They heard Tripp tell an extraordinary story--and much of the drama that follows is based on Tripp's version of events.

She told the FBI agents and Starr's deputies that she had been a friend of Monica Lewinsky, 24. Lewinsky and Tripp worked together in the public affairs office at the Pentagon. Tripp described Lewinsky's background: Lewinsky had gone to work at the White House as an intern in the summer of 1995 shortly after graduating from Lewis and Clark College in Oregon. In December 1995, Lewinsky had been given full-time job as a staffer in the legislative affairs office in the White House. The previous month, Lewinsky allegedly told Tripp,

She had begun having a sexual relationship with President Clinton. Lewinsky was 21 at the time. As Lewinsky told the story to Tripp, Lewinsky had been attracted to the president. At a White House party in mid-November 1995, Lewinsky wore a revealing dress and made eye contact with Clinton as he worked the crowd. The president and the young staffer had begun a consensual affair shortly thereafter. The president and Lewinsky allegedly had a number of sexual encounters, most of them during late-afternoon or weekend visits (and one late at night in a small private study off the Oval Office). Lewinsky told Tripp that she was flattered and excited by the attention from the president. She told Tripp that the president would sometimes ignore her frantic phone calls, but at other times he would call her in the middle of the night. Tripp told Starr's staff that she had personally heard messages from Clinton on Lewinsky's answering machine.

Tripp also told Starr's deputies that she had been angered and offended by what she considered the president's "callous" behavior toward Lewinsky. Tripp, a longtime federal employee who had begun work at the White House in the Bush administration, had had a number of run-ins with the Clinton White House. In 1993, Tripp was an executive assistant to Bernard Nussbaum, then the White House counsel. Early in the Whitewater probe, she had testified before a federal grand jury and the Senate Whitewater investigating committee about the so-called Travelgate affair, the firing of staffers in the White House travel office by the Clinton administration in 1993. She told Starr's assistants that she had been urged by her lawyers--whom the White House arranged to represent

her--not to volunteer information she had about Hillary Clinton's role in Travelgate. Tripp also talked to Starr's deputies about Kathleen Willey. In the fall of 1993, Tripp said, she had seen Willey, a White House aide, shortly after Willey emerged from the Oval Office with her make-up smeared and her clothing askew. Willey told Tripp that she had just had a sexual encounter with the president. In late July, Tripp had told this story to NEWSWEEK, which published it in an issue the first week of August. At the time, Bennett, Clinton's lawyer, publicly questioned Tripp's credibility. Tripp became concerned that she would be put in a compromised position if she was later subpoenaed by Jones's lawyers: either perjure herself, or tell the truth and be attacked by the White House--possibly at the cost of her job at the Pentagon. It was then, Tripp said, that she began to secretly record her phone conversations with Monica. Tripp's lawyer, Jim Moody, denied that his client has a personal vendetta against the president. "She is not an enemy of this administration. She is a proponent of the truth."

As she anticipated, Tripp had been subpoenaed in mid-December by Jones's lawyers, who were trying to locate any and all alleged paramours of the president to bolster their sexual harassment case against Clinton. Realizing that she would have to testify under oath, Tripp told Lewinsky that she was going to tell the truth--that Lewinsky had told her that she was having an affair with the president. According to Tripp, Lewinsky responded that she intended to lie. She told Tripp that Clinton had told her not to worry about the Jones case because Jones's lawyers would never find out about the relationship. According to Tripp, Lewinsky said that Clinton had advised her

deny the affair. Tripp also reported that Lewinsky had told her that she met with Vernon Jordan, Clinton's old friend and personal adviser.

Lewinsky first went to see Jordan at the instruction of Betty Currie, Clinton's personal secretary, last November. Jordan asked her to take her frustration and anger at Clinton and vent it at him. Lewinsky told Jordan she was worried about a subpoena from Jones's lawyers. Jordan offered to set Lewinsky up with an attorney, Frank Carter. (Carter declined comment.) According to Tripp, Lewinsky assured Jordan she would stick with "the cover story." Lewinsky said, "This is what I signed up for when I began the relationship."

Tripp told Starr that Lewinsky met again with Jordan at a later date in the back of his limousine. Jordan advised Lewinsky to remain silent. "They can't prove anything," Jordan allegedly told her. "If they thought they could, your answer is it didn't happen, it wasn't me." He told her that witnesses are never indicted for perjury in civil cases. He also promised to help Lewinsky get a job in the private sector. Earlier this month, Lewinsky responded to a subpoena in the Jones case by signing a sealed affidavit swearing that she had no relevant information to offer. In the affidavit, Lewinsky swore that she never had had a sexual relationship with Clinton.

At that first meeting on Monday, January 12, Starr's deputies listened to Tripp's story with great interest. After four years and at least \$30 million, the investigation by the independent prosecutor's office is still moving slowly. Starr's deputies believe that they are being stonewalled by the White House at every turn. Here was an opportunity to get inside the president's protective circle. Jordan was of particular interest to Starr. Jordan is already under investigation by Starr in another matter, involving former Deputy Attorney General Webster Hubbell. Jordan is one of several friends of Clinton who helped get Hubbell lucrative consulting fees when Hubbell was under investigation by the Whitewater special prosecutor in 1994. Starr is investigating whether Jordan and others were funnelling hush money to Hubbell.

Starr's interest was also piqued by Tripp's tapes of her conversations with Lewinsky, which Tripp turned over to Starr in response to a subpoena. There are 17 of these audio tapes, consisting of about 20 hours of surreptitiously-taped phone conversations. Most of the tapes were made from Tripp's home in Maryland, a state which generally prohibits taping unless all parties to the conversation consent. (Tripp argues that the tapes were justified because she was trying to protect herself against allegations of perjury, according to her lawyer.) NEWSWEEK has heard several of these conversations. On the 90-minute tape, Lewinsky can be heard weeping and clearly intimating that she had a sexual relationship with the president. She says that she intends to lie about it if questioned by Paula Jones's lawyers. She never directly names the president, referring instead to "the big he" and "the creep," but it is obvious from the tape that she is referring to Clinton. She ponders telling Clinton that she has revealed the affair to others, including Tripp. She hopes that, somehow, Clinton can be persuaded to settle with Jones. Maybe, Lewinsky wonders, she should threaten to tell all--tell Clinton that she intends to tell the truth if she is questioned by Jones's

yers. "Look," Lewinsky says to Tripp, "Maybe we should just tell the creep. Maybe we should just say, don't ever talk to me again, I f----d you over [by telling others about the affair], now you have this information, do whatever you want with it." Linda says, "Well, if you want to do that, that's what I would do. But I don't know if you're comfortable with that. I think he [the president] should know." But Monica, sounding despairing, responds, "He won't settle [the Paula Jones case]. He's in denial." At another point in the tape, she says she simply cannot tell Clinton that she has revealed the affair to several others. "If I do that," she moans, "I'm just going to f---ing kill myself."

On the tape, Lewinsky can also be heard saying, "I have lied my entire life." In the context of the conversation, she is saying that it wasn't hard for her to conceal her sexual relationship with Clinton. But the statement raises the possibility that the affair itself was a lie, an exaggeration of a flirtatious moment, perhaps, that grew into a big lie. Still, Lewinsky sounds truly worried that her alleged relationship with Clinton will be exposed. She begs Tripp to lie about it. She speaks of exchanging gifts and letters with the president and worries that Jones's lawyers will find them and use them as incriminating evidence. At one point she says, "I was thinking about the fact that I sent a note to Nancy [Hernreich, as assistant to the president], a note to Betty [Currie, the president's personal secretary], and a note to creep to thank them all for when my family came for the radio address. The note I sent to him, 'Dear Schmucko, thank you for being, as my little nephew said, it was neat to meet the principal of the United States.'" Later she says that Clinton gave her a dress, and she makes a vague reference to an official photograph that Clinton sent her, apparently with some kind of personal inscription. She suggests to Tripp that, in response to the subpoena from Jones's lawyers, which asks for any letters, photographs, gifts, etc. that she received from Clinton, that she turn over a different photograph that the president gave her, one without the inscription.

NEWSWEEK has obtained receipts from a Washington messenger service showing that Lewinsky sent packages addressed to the White House on nine separate occasions between October 7, 1997, and December 8, 1997. The contact number on the packages is 456-2990, the phone number of Clinton's personal secretary, Betty Currie. According to Tripp, Lewinsky told her that the packages were letters and in one case a sexually-provocative audio tape for President Clinton. Asked about the deliveries last week by NEWSWEEK, Currie said she didn't recall them, but that she would look into the matter and get back to a reporter. Contacted again on Wednesday, Jan. 21, Currie said, "I have no knowledge whatsoever," and hung up the phone.

Another piece of key evidence would be secret service logs that would show whether Lewinsky came and went from the White House at odd hours. Jones's lawyers have subpoenaed secret service records, but the Justice Department has moved to quash that subpoena, citing in part executive privilege. Sources say that records show a "pattern of visits" by Lewinsky to the White House "in the late afternoons and evenings," with Currie listed as the contact.

Other administration aides wondered about Lewinsky, who was moved to the

ntagon in 1996. Lewinsky told Willie Blackwell, former deputy assistant Secretary of defense, that she lost her job at the office of White House legislative affairs when Evelyn Lieberman, then deputy White House chief of staff, twice spotted her hanging around the West Wing and questioned why she was there. A spokesman for Lieberman said that Lieberman was displeased with Lewinsky's performance in part because she was spending a lot of time in the Rose Garden and at White House events rather than doing her job. It was the run-in with Lieberman, Lewinsky told Tripp, that prompted White House personnel to arrange a job for Lewinsky with Pentagon spokesman Ken Bacon. Lewinsky told Tripp that the president had assured her that he would "get her back" after the election, but it never happened.

On the tape recorded conversations that NEWSWEEK listened to--a conversations that happened shortly before Christmas--there is at least two references to Jordan's first name, Vernon. It appears that Lewinsky did meet with Jordan, or at least claims to have met with him. The references to Jordan are cryptic, however, and neither support nor contradict the allegation that Jordan was encouraging Lewinsky to lie. She talks about acting "based on what Vernon said," but it's not clear what Jordan told her to say. At another point in the tape, in an apparent reference to the multiple subpoenas from Jones's lawyers, Tripp says, "Maybe Vernon was right, it's a huge fishing net because of the rumor." On Wednesday, Jan. 21, William Hundley, Jordan's lawyer, did not return repeated phone calls.

Tuesday, January 13. As she recounted her story to Starr's team on Monday, pp said that she was meeting with Lewinsky for drinks at the Ritz Carlton at Pentagon City the next day. Starr's deputies set up a sting operation. On Tuesday, the FBI agents working for Starr wired Tripp with a secret listening device. When Tripp met with Lewinsky around noon, there was a team of FBI agents and prosecutors listening as a hidden tape recorded the conversation. According to knowledgeable sources, Lewinsky again discussed conversations with Jordan about keeping quiet in the Jones case. She also talked about Jordan's efforts to get her a job in New York. (Lewinsky quit her Pentagon job on December 26; MacAndrews & Forbes, a New York firm that owns Revlon, confirmed that they offered Lewinsky a public relations job this month after she was referred to the company by Jordan, a member of Revlon's board of directors.) The incriminating tape gave Starr's deputies hope that they could "flip" Lewinsky and make her a witness for the prosecution. They hoped to "sting" Jordan or Currie by getting Lewinsky to place phone calls to them that Starr's staff would monitor.

Wednesday, January 14. Lewinsky picks up Tripp at the Pentagon and offers to drive her home. Lewinsky gives Tripp "talking points" about how she should respond to questions from Jones's lawyers in the Willey matter. NEWSWEEK has obtained the document. "Points to make in affidavit," it reads. Tripp is to modify comments she had made to NEWSWEEK back in July--that she had seen Willey coming out of the Oval Office with her make-up smeared. Tripp is now to tell Jones's lawyers that "you do not believe that what she claimed happened

ally happened. You now find it completely plausible that she herself smeared lipstick, untucked her blouse, etc." The document also seems to reflect concerns that Tripp has already told others about Lewinsky's claims of a sexual relationship with the president. In case Tripp is questioned about the rumors about Lewinsky by Jones's lawyers, the talking points suggest that she say Lewinsky "turned out to be this huge liar" who "left the White House because she was stalking the P or something like that."

At about this time, NEWSWEEK learned that Starr was investigating Lewinsky, Jordan, and Clinton. NEWSWEEK told Starr's deputies that the magazine was planning to run with the story in the issue that appeared that Monday. NEWSWEEK needed to get a response from the people involved. Starr's deputies asked NEWSWEEK to hold off. The investigation was at a delicate stage. Starr was hoping to confront Lewinsky and persuade her to cooperate as a witness for the prosecution. Starr's deputies did not want to tip off Lewinsky or Jordan or the White House. NEWSWEEK agreed to wait until Friday afternoon, in part because the magazine was reluctant to interfere with an ongoing federal investigation and in part because the editors believed that NEWSWEEK would learn more about the truth behind the story by waiting.

Friday, January 16. Starr decided to formally expand his inquiry to investigate subornation of perjury and obstruction of justice in the Paula Jones case. In conversations the previous day, Starr's deputies had described Jordan as a principal target of the probe, and got Justice Department approval to seek a formal expansion of his jurisdiction. The three-judge appeals court panel that supervises the independent counsel gave its authorization. That same day, Starr's deputies had Tripp lure Lewinsky to another meeting at the Ritz Carlton. As the two were sitting down for lunch, FBI agents for Starr moved in and asked Lewinsky to step upstairs for a talk.

Friday-Saturday, January 16-17. Starr's deputies tried to "flip" Lewinsky. Obviously, she was in a fix. If she admitted to the affair, she would be contradicting her own sworn affidavit. But if she denied it, she would be vulnerable to criminal prosecution. Lewinsky called her mother in Los Angeles. At the urging of Starr's staff, NEWSWEEK decided to wait one more day before contacting Lewinsky and Jordan for comment.

Saturday, January 17. A Los Angeles lawyer, William Ginsburg, flew to Washington to represent Lewinsky. Still uncertain about whether Lewinsky was telling the truth about a sexual relationship with Clinton and a White House cover-up, and running out of time to reach the major players in the story--or assess Lewinsky's credibility or role--NEWSWEEK, whose deadline is Saturday night, decided to hold off publication.

Monday, January 19. Negotiations between Starr's staff and her attorneys broke down. On Monday morning, Lewinsky's name surfaced in the Drudge Report, a widely read but somewhat unreliable gossip column on the Internet. Drudge had picked up rumors that NEWSWEEK was debating whether to run a piece about

insky, and reported that after a "screaming fight" in the editors' offices Saturday night, the story had been spiked. (There had been no screaming; the story was not spiked but put on hold while NEWSWEEK's reporters continued to gather information.) According to Starr's deputies, the fear that Lewinsky's name would become widely known was enough to torpedo the negotiations between Starr and her Lewinsky's lawyers. As of now, Lewinsky is not cooperating. According to knowledgeable sources, Starr is now considering whether to indict her for perjury. Lewinsky is scheduled to be deposed by Jones's lawyers on Friday. Sources tell NEWSWEEK that she will take the Fifth Amendment.

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