

22 Years Ago This Week: Bill Clinton Impeached



October 8th, 1998 - The U.S. House of Representatives voted 258-176 to initiate the impeachment of President Bill Clinton. According to *History.com*, this was only the third occurrence in U.S. history where a formal impeachment inquest was launched against a sitting president. The U.S House of Representatives officially commenced the impeachment of Clinton on October 8th, 1998. Next, the House of Representatives voted in favor of pursuing impeachment proceedings against Bill Clinton for “high crimes and misdemeanors.” The House of Reps approved two impeachment articles against President Clinton, charging him with dishonesty under oath to a federal grand jury and obstructing justice. This decision came after 14 hours of debate.

In November of 1995, Clinton had begun an affair with a 21-year-old unpaid intern, Monica Lewinsky. The President and Lewinsky had over a dozen sexual encounters in the White House for well over a year. Later in the following year, Lewinsky was relocated to the Pentagon (April 1996.) During that summer, she confided in Linda Tripp, a co-worker at the Pentagon. Lewinsky told Tripp about her past sexual relations with President Clinton. In 1997, Tripp secretly started to record these private conversations with Lewinsky, in which Lewinsky described specifics about the affair. In December, lawyers for Paula Jones, who was suing the president for sexual harassment, subpoenaed Lewinsky. According to *Wikipedia*, a subpoena is a

writ issued by the government to compel testimony by a witness or production of evidence under a penalty for failure. Allegedly, the president recommended that Lewinsky file an affidavit in which she would deny having had any sexual encounters with him. Five days later, Tripp contacted Kenneth Starr's office (lawyer), to discuss Lewinsky and the recording she made of their conversations about the affair. Tripp and Lewinsky met again on January 16th when Lewinsky was brought to a hotel room by FBI agents and U.S. attorneys. She was questioned, interrogated, and offered immunity if she "cooperated with the prosecution", a *History.com* editor wrote. Just days later, the story was leaked. Clinton denied the allegations, making a public statement saying, "I didn't have sexual relations with that woman, Ms. Lewinsky." Lewinsky and Starr's lawyers assembled a full-immunity accord that covered both Lewinsky and her parents. On August 6th, Lewinsky made her first appearance in front of the grand jury to establish her testimony. On August 17th, President Clinton testified.

In contradiction to his testimony in the Paula Jones sexual-harassment case, Clinton admitted to prosecutors that he had an affair with Ms. Lewinsky. Early in the following month, on September 9th, Starr set forth his report and 18 boxes of assisting documents to the House of Representatives. The Starr Report drafted a case for impeaching Clinton on 11 bases. These bases included; perjury, obstruction of justice, witness-tampering, and abuse of power. On October 8th, the House approved a comprehensive impeachment inquiry. The HJC (The House Judiciary Committee), approved three articles of impeachment on December 11th. Clinton was finally impeached on December 19th. As written in Article 1 of the U.S. Constitution, the U.S. Supreme Court's chief justice was sworn in to moderate, and the senators were sworn in as jurors. On February 12th, a little over a month later, the Senate voted on whether to impeach Clinton. The president was cleared on both bases of impeachment. A two-thirds majority was necessary for the prosecution to convict but failed to achieve even a bare majority. After the trial came to a close, President Clinton said he was "profoundly sorry" for the burden his misconduct inflicted upon Congress and the American people.

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