USH&G Name:

**The Clinton Impeachment**

**U.S. Constitution**

Article II, Section 4 of the U.S. Constitution states that "The President, Vice-President, and all Civil Officers of the United States, shall be removed from Office on Impeachment for and Conviction of, Treason, Bribery, and other high Crimes and Misdemeanors."

The impeachment of President [Bill Clinton](http://www.whitehouse.gov/history/presidents/bc42.html) arose from a series of events following the filing of a lawsuit on May 6, 1994, by [Paula Jones](http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-srv/politics/special/clinton/players/jones.htm) in the United States District Court for the Eastern District of Arkansas. In her complaint initiating the suit, Ms. Jones alleged violations of her federal civil rights in 1991 by President Clinton when he was governor of Arkansas and she was an Arkansas state employee. According to the allegations, Governor Clinton invited Ms. Jones to his hotel room where he made a crude sexual advance that she rejected.

After Ms. Jones filed the lawsuit, the attorneys for President Clinton moved to delay any proceedings, contending that the Constitution required that any legal action be deferred until his term ended, an issue ultimately decided against the President by the Supreme Court of the United States in its decision of [***Clinton v. Jones, 520 U.S. 681 (1997)***](http://supct.law.cornell.edu/supct/html/95-1853.ZS.html). Following the Supreme Court decision allowing the Jones lawsuit to proceed, pre-trial discovery commenced in which various potential witnesses were subpoenaed for information related to the Jones incident and, Mr. Clinton's alleged sexual approaches to other women. On April 1, 1998, [Judge Susan Wright](http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-srv/politics/special/clinton/players/wright.htm) dismissed the Jones suit in its entirety, finding that Ms. Jones had not offered any evidence to support a viable claim of sexual harassment or intentional infliction of emotion distress. Ms. Jones appealed Judge Wright's decision to the 8th Circuit Court of Appeals, but before a decision on the appeal was rendered, Ms. Jones and the President settled the case on November 13, 1998.

The name of [Monica Lewinsky](http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-srv/politics/special/clinton/players/lewinsky.htm), who had worked in the White House in 1995 as an intern, was first included on a list of potential witnesses prepared by the attorneys for Ms. Jones that was submitted to the President's legal team. Ms. Lewinsky's name had been provided to the attorneys for Ms. Jones by [Linda Tripp](http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-srv/politics/special/clinton/players/tripp.htm), a former White House employee who had become a confidante of Ms. Lewinsky and had secretly tape recorded various [conversations](http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-srv/politics/special/clinton/stories/docs100298.htm) she had with Lewinsky relating to her contacts with the President. Ms. Tripp also provided the tapes of her conversations with Ms. Lewinsky to Independent Counsel [Kenneth W. Starr](http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-srv/politics/special/clinton/players/starr.htm), who had been appointed to investigate charges relating to the Whitewater real estate venture in Arkansas of the President and Mrs. Clinton. On the same day, Ms. Lewinsky's sworn [affidavit](http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-srv/politics/special/pjones/docs/lewinskyaffidavit.htm) was sent by her lawyers to the Jones attorneys in which she asserted in part:

***I have never had a sexual relationship with the President, he did not propose that we have a sexual relationship, he did not offer me employment or other benefits in exchange for a sexual relationship, he did not deny me employment or other benefits for rejecting a sexual relationship.***

On January 15, Starr obtained approval from the Attorney General to expand the scope of the Whitewater probe into the new allegations. On the following day, a meeting between Ms. Lewinsky and Ms. Tripp at a hotel was secretly recorded pursuant to a court order, with federal agents then confronting Ms. Lewinsky at the end of the meeting with charges of her perjury and demanding that she cooperate in providing evidence against the President. Ms. Lewinsky initially declined to cooperate, and told the FBI and other investigators that much of what she had told Ms. Tripp was not true.

On January 17, President Clinton was [deposed](http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-srv/politics/special/pjones/docs/clintondep031398.htm) in the Jones lawsuit. He denied having "sexual relations" with Ms. Lewinsky under a definition provided to him in writing by her lawyers, and also said that he could not recall whether he was ever alone with her. After repeated media inquiries, on January 26 President Clinton asserted in an appearance before the White House press corps: "I did not have sexual relations with that woman, Miss Lewinsky," and denied urging her to lie about an affair.

The President's attorneys failed in efforts to block Starr's expansion of his investigation, which also included whether the President himself had lied under oath in his own deposition taken in the Paula Jones litigation. In July 1998, after being granted sweeping immunity from prosecution by Special Prosecutor Starr, Ms. Lewinsky admitted that she in fact had had a sexual relationship with the President that did not include intercourse, but denied that she had ever been asked to lie about the relationship by the President or by those close to him.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
|  | **The Watergate Affair** | **The Lewinsky Scandal** |
| **What crime is that the heart of the scandal?** | Placing wires in the office of the DNC to get an unfair advantage in the election. | Allegations that President Clinton was having sexual relations with Mrs. Lewinsky and sexually harassing her |
| **How is the President involved?** | Nixon had called for these wires and listening devices to be placed in the office of the DNC. He was also involved in the attempted cover-up of the burglary. | President Clinton is involved in the allegations that he had a sexual relationship with Monica Lewinsky |
| **How is the Congress involved?** | One of the main proponents of the investigation into the Watergate scandal was the House of Representatives. | Kenneth Starr gave Congress a 445 page report that described the Lewinsky and Clinton’s encounters in detail. The House of Representatives voted to proceed with impeachment hearings against Clinton |
| **How is the Supreme Court involved?** | United States v. Nixon – The Supreme Court issued a unanimous decision that Nixon must hand over tape recordings of the oval office. | Clinton Vs Jones says the Constitution does not grant a sitting President immunity from civil litigation except under highly unusual circumstances. |
| **What are the charges against the President?** | Obstruction of Justice, Contempt of Congress, Abuse of Power | Perjury, Obstruction of Justice |