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Scandal Reporting Faulted for Bias and Inaccuracy
POPULAR POLICIES AND UNPOPULAR PRESS LIFT CLINTON RATINGS

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POPULAR POLICIES AND UNPOPULAR PRESS LIFT CLINTON RATINGS

A strong State of the Union address combined with public anger at the news media fueled President Clinton’s unexpected lift to a 71% approval rating — even as allegations of a White House sex scandal consumed Washington. When asked in a Pew Research Center re-interview survey why they had changed their minds about Clinton in the two weeks since the allegations broke, Clinton’s new found supporters cited his State of the Union speech (20%); his ability to carry on despite the controversy (13%); and heightened news coverage of his presidency (11%).

Sympathy for a president beleaguered by a press perceived as biased and inaccurate is an important element in Clinton’s support. Overall, the public gives press coverage of the scandal a mixed rating: 51% fair/poor vs. 46% excellent/good. But Americans are highly critical of the media’s fact checking, its objectivity and the amount of punditry associated with the story. Strikingly, 69% of Pew’s respondents think that most reporters presume Clinton is guilty of perjury, while only 9% of the public think this is definitely true.

In an unusual twist, the controversy has broadened Clinton’s base, at least for now. Fully 57% of Americans who now approve of the President, but had not prior to the controversy, are Republicans and Independents. An equal share of these new supporters (59%) say they do not like Clinton personally, but do like his policies. These new supporters are not alone in drawing a distinction between Clinton the man and Clinton the president: 39% of Americans like both the man and his policies; 30% like his policies but dislike him; while 23% like neither. Put another way, 53% of Americans do not like the president personally, but 70% like his policies.

These are the principle findings of a January 30-February 2 Pew Research Center survey that re-interviewed 844 respondents who were initially polled by phone in mid-January. The survey has a margin of error of 4%. A full questionnaire and results are attached.

Clinton’s New Found Support			
	Approvers		Disapprovers
	Core	New	
	%	%	%
<i>Party ID</i>			
Rep/Lean Rep	23	57	75
Dem/Lean Dem	69	30	13
Refused to Lean	<u>8</u>	<u>13</u>	<u>12</u>
	100	100	100
<i>Like ...</i>			
Clinton & Policy	62	18	3
Policy But Not Him	31	59	17
Neither	2	11	75
Other/DK	<u>5</u>	<u>12</u>	<u>5</u>
	100	100	100
<i>Objectivity of Scandal Reporting</i>			
Excellent/Good	30	27	53
Fair/Poor	67	66	45
DK	<u>3</u>	<u>7</u>	<u>2</u>
	100	100	100
	(n=485)	(n=109)	(n=231)

Story Stalls, Opinions Change

Clinton's continued support undoubtedly has been helped by the fact that the public is not any more certain about presidential wrongdoing than it was just a week ago, at the height of media coverage of the scandal. Most Americans continue to think that Clinton *probably* had an affair (43%), but very few *definitely* think it occurred (9%). A plurality also think that he probably lied under oath (40%), rather than think he definitely did (9%). In fact, fewer people now think he may have lied than felt that way just a week ago: 49% vs. 56%.¹ A similar slippage is seen among those who believe Clinton may have encouraged Lewinsky to lie: 40% vs. 48%.

With the accusations still unproven after two weeks of round-the-clock media inquiry, many fewer Americans think the scandal is a matter of great importance to the nation than did so in the first week. As many as 40% expressed that view in a January 24-26 nationwide CBS News poll. Only 25% hold that opinion in the new survey. Even among Republicans, less than a majority (43%) think the scandal is very important.

Hypothetical Consequences and Opinion Now

Americans are equivocal about whether Clinton should be removed from office *if* he lied under oath (50% say yes vs. 46% no) or encouraged others to lie (48% yes vs. 47% no). The responses to these hypothetical questions hinge on how people feel *now* about his guilt or innocence. People who now think that Clinton definitely or probably lied or encouraged lying, overwhelmingly believe he should go, if these charges are true. But those who doubt the charges today say he should stay, even if the charges are true.

Sex, Lies, and Questions of Guilt

(Based on Independents only)

Did Clinton have a sexual relationship with Monica Lewinsky?

	Definitely/ Probably True	Definitely/ Probably Not True
<i>If Clinton DID, he should...</i>	%	%
Be impeached	26	19
Not be impeached	72	80
Don't know	<u>2</u>	<u>1</u>
	100	100

Did Clinton lie under oath about having an affair with Monica Lewinsky?

	Definitely/ Probably True	Definitely/ Probably Not True
<i>If Clinton DID, he should...</i>	%	%
Be impeached	63	44
Not be impeached	35	53
Don't know	<u>2</u>	<u>3</u>
	100	100

Did Clinton get Monica Lewinsky to lie under oath about an affair?

	Definitely/ Probably True	Definitely/ Probably Not True
<i>If Clinton DID, he should...</i>	%	%
Be impeached	70	40
Not be impeached	27	59
Don't know	<u>3</u>	<u>1</u>
	100	100

¹ CNN/USA Today/Gallup Poll, January 25-26, 1998.

Partisanship is evident in these patterns of opinion, so the views of political independents are revealing. Independents who now think Clinton is guilty believe he should leave office, if the allegations about lying are true. However, they do not think a sexual relationship with Lewinsky is grounds for Clinton's removal. Even Republicans reject that as a sole basis for the President's removal from office.

State of the Nation: Bright

Surpassing even Clinton's hike in approval ratings in the past two weeks is a 13% point jump in satisfaction with the way "things are going in this country today." Fully 59% of Americans now say they are satisfied with the country — the highest number since the end of the Gulf War and more than 20% points higher than a year ago.

Satisfied With Country ...			
<i>(Mid January vs. Now)</i>			
	<i>People who were ...</i>		
	<i>Satisfied, Still Are</i>	<i>Satisfied, But Now Are Not</i>	<i>Dis-Satisfied</i>
<i>Sex</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>%</i>
Men	57	39	42
Women	<u>43</u>	<u>61</u>	<u>58</u>
	100	100	100

This substantial shift in opinion came as one-quarter of the public revised its thinking about the country just since mid-January. Most of these switchers went from being dissatisfied or unsure to satisfied (19%), with a smaller group switching from being satisfied or unsure to dissatisfied (6%). Those who express new satisfaction with the country come disproportionately from the President's own party: 60% are Democrats; 34% are Republicans.

Today, nearly three-in-four Democrats (72%) say they are satisfied with how things are going, up 23% points from just two weeks ago. The group of newly satisfied Americans also includes substantially more women (61%) than men (39%).

The Media and Monica

Americans have not withheld judgement about the news media with regard to its coverage of the scandal. While the public is divided over how good a job the media is doing covering the allegations against Clinton overall, they are unified in their criticism of the press for failing to check the facts in this story and for being biased against the President.

Questions about press practices in covering the scandal elicit strong criticism from much of the public. Two-thirds of the public (65%) say the press has done only a fair or poor job carefully checking facts before reporting stories. Nearly as many (60%) say the press has done a fair or poor job being

	Excellent/ <u>Good</u> %	Only fair/ <u>Poor</u> %	DK/ <u>Ref.</u> %
<i>How well is the media doing at...</i>			
Checking facts before reporting	31	65	4=100
Being objective	36	60	4=100
Providing public with info. it needs	45	52	3=100
Providing right amount of coverage	43	54	3=100

objective about whether or not Clinton is guilty of any of the allegations. Majorities also give the press low marks for providing the right amount of coverage about the story (55% fair/poor) and providing the public with the information needed to make up its own mind about the allegations (52% fair/poor). While many Republicans are critical of the media, especially when it comes to checking the facts, Democrats are *more* critical in each regard.

Overall, only one-in-10 Americans give the media “excellent” marks for its coverage of the allegations; 36% say the coverage has been “good.” One-third (32%) say the coverage has been “only fair,” and 19% judge it “poor.” Evaluations of the press in this regard are extremely partisan. Clinton supporters, Democrats and older Americans are among the most critical of

	<u>Total</u> %	<u>Reps</u> %	<u>Dems</u> %	<u>Inds</u> %
<i>Job the press has done covering allegations</i>				
Excellent/Good	46	61	35	46
Only Fair/Poor	51	35	61	52
DK/Ref.	<u>3</u>	<u>4</u>	<u>4</u>	<u>2</u>
	100	100	100	100

the job the media has done. Republicans, on balance, think the media has done a good job covering the story (61% excellent/good vs. 35% fair/poor).

Among those who are critical of the way the media has covered the scandal, the No. 1 complaint is its failure to verify the facts and its airing of unsubstantiated rumors and accusations. One-third of those critical of the media volunteered this response when asked in an open-ended format why they have a negative view of press coverage of the allegations. The next most common complaint was that the media is devoting too much time to the story and sensationalizing it. Other critiques included biased reporting, intrusiveness and excessive coverage.

Those who give the media high marks for its coverage of the scandal cite its persistence in uncovering the facts and the thoroughness of the coverage as reasons for their more positive evaluations. Fifteen percent of those who think the media is doing an excellent or good job say the

press is uncovering and reporting the facts. Another 13% praise the media for continuing to dig for additional information. A similar proportion (13%) cite the press's constant coverage of the scandal. Other reasons given were keeping on top of the story, keeping the public informed, and being fair and impartial.

News Interest High

The Clinton-Lewinsky scandal has definitely dominated the consciousness of the American public in recent weeks. When asked to recall the first recent news story that came to mind, fully 75% of Americans named the current Clinton scandal. Just two weeks ago, before the Lewinsky story broke, the same sample of Americans mentioned a host of news stories led by the situation in Iraq, winter weather and crime.

When asked specifically how closely they have been following the allegations against the President, one-third of the public (34%) say they have followed the story very closely, another 42% fairly closely. This is much higher than the average 17% who have very closely followed most Washington scandal stories in the past. Only the congressional check bouncing scandal of 1992 garnered more public attention — 36% followed that story very closely.

In spite of the many criticisms of press coverage, a strong majority of Americans (68%) do believe that it is the job of the news media to provide information about whether or not the President lied under oath or encouraged others to lie about his relationship with Monica Lewinsky. Only 44% believe it is the job of the media to provide the public with information about whether or not Clinton has engaged in extra-marital affairs. A narrow majority (52%) say it is *not* their job.

While the public is interested in the story, it clearly believes that the media has gone overboard in its coverage. More than half (55%) fault the media for the quantity of coverage the story has received, and eight-in-10 say there has been too much discussion by commentators and analysts.

Separating Fact from Fiction

The public is relatively discerning in terms of sorting out facts from accusations in this unfolding story. Nearly eight-in-10 Americans (78%) consider it a proven fact that the President personally knew Monica Lewinsky. Six-in-10 (61%) say it is a fact that Clinton recently admitted having an affair with Gennifer Flowers. And half accept as fact that there are indeed tapes of Monica Lewinsky talking with Linda Tripp about

	Fact or Accusation?		
	<u>Fact</u> %	<u>Accusation</u> %	<u>DK</u> %
Clinton knew Lewinsky	78	19	3=100
Clinton HAD affair w/Gennifer Flowers	61	28	11=100
There are tape recordings of Lewinsky talking to Tripp	49	45	6=100
Clinton gave Lewinsky gifts	35	59	6=100
Clinton left messages on Lewinsky's answering machine	23	70	7=100
There is an eyewitness	17	78	5=100
Clinton had sexual relations w/Lewinsky	14	82	4=100
Clinton encouraged Lewinsky to lie	11	85	4=100

her relationship with the President (49%). Very few Americans think the two central allegations against Clinton — that he had a sexual relationship with Monica Lewinsky and that he encouraged her to lie under oath about the affair — have been proven true. More than eight-in-10 (82% and 85%, respectively) view these as unproven accusations.

The public is skeptical about several other details of the case, which have been reported by major news organizations. Six-in-10 (59%) say reports that Clinton gave Monica Lewinsky gifts are merely accusations; 70% say the same about the existence of tape recordings of Clinton's voice on Monica Lewinsky's answering machine. Nearly eight-in-10 consider accounts of an eyewitness to encounters between the President and Monica Lewinsky to be accusation rather than fact (78%).

Those who believe that the press has not done a good job checking the facts on this story are particularly skeptical about the veracity of many of these reported details.

Republicans and Clinton detractors are much more likely than Democrats and Clinton supporters to view many of these details as proven facts. The biggest partisan gap can be seen on the issue of whether or not Clinton had a sexual relationship with Monica Lewinsky; 23% of Republicans say this is a fact; just 6% of Democrats agree.

Views about the future of the investigation also have a partisan flavor. When asked what would be best for the nation — that the investigation continue or the matter be dropped altogether — 64% of Republicans say it would be best to continue the investigation, only 24% of Democrats agree. Overall, the public supports dropping the matter by a margin of 55% to 43%.

Press Criticisms All Too Familiar

Complaints about coverage of this story reinforce the public's already critical view of press practices, and they have added to public wariness about the media's accuracy and its watchdog role.

Supporters of a watchdog press outweighed critics by well more than two-to-one for nearly a decade between 1985 and 1994. Today, a much narrower 55% majority believes that press criticism "keeps political leaders from doing things that should not be done." That number held steady over the past year, but the number of people saying that press criticism "keeps political leaders from doing their jobs" swelled seven percentage points to 39% as fewer people are undecided about the practice. Most of these new press critics are Democrats, who traditionally have been more sympathetic to the media.

Today, 63% of the public complain that press accounts are "often inaccurate," a 7% point jump since 1997 and by far the worst rating the press has received on this in a decade. Two-thirds of the public (66%) today complain that coverage of the personal and ethical behavior of political leaders is "excessive;" the same number (65%) felt that way a year earlier. Similarly, 65% of the public say the press "gets in the way of society solving its problems;" 63% lodged this criticism just a week before the story of Clinton's alleged infidelity broke.

But Still Liked

But just as many Americans dislike Bill Clinton personally yet approve of his policies, the public continues to value the press in spite of its perceived flaws. Overall, Americans hold decidedly favorable views of the network news media, major cable news networks and the major national news papers as well as their local media.

Three-quarters of the public (76%) has a very or mostly favorable view of television network news; 71% hold favorable views of cable news networks; and 71% of those who can rate nationally influential newspapers say the same of them. Criticism of press practices has driven down the number of people who hold *very favorable* views of the media in recent years, however. In this poll, only cable television news got such high approval from as many as one-in-four Americans with 26%.

TABLES

PRESIDENTIAL APPROVAL*

January 1998 vs. Early February 1998

	--- January 1998 ---			--- Early February 1998 ---			Change in Approval
	Approve	Disapprove	DK	Approve	Disapprove	DK	
	%	%	%	%	%	%	
Total	62	30	8=100	71	26	3=100	+9
Sex							
Male	62	32	6	69	28	3	+7
Female	63	28	9	73	24	3	+10
Age							
Under 30	68	23	9	77	22	1	+9
30-49	61	30	9	71	26	3	+10
50-64	57	32	11	68	28	4	+11
65+	63	35	2	72	25	3	+9
Education							
College Grad.	61	33	6	68	31	1	+7
Some College	62	31	7	71	27	2	+9
High School Grad.	61	31	8	74	24	2	+13
<H.S. Grad	68	20	12	71	21	8	+3
Family Income							
\$75,000+	63	33	4	69	30	1	+6
\$50,000-\$74,999	66	29	5	69	27	4	+3
\$30,000-\$49,999	58	33	9	72	27	1	+14
\$20,000-\$29,999	68	27	5	75	22	3	+7
<\$20,000	63	28	9	71	25	4	+8
Region							
East	59	31	10	76	19	5	+17
Midwest	64	30	6	71	27	2	+7
South	60	33	7	67	30	3	+7
West	67	24	9	73	25	2	+6
Community Size							
Large City	67	24	9	75	22	3	+8
Suburb	66	26	8	72	25	3	+6
Small City/Town	61	31	8	72	25	3	+11
Rural Area	56	39	5	65	33	2	+9
Party ID							
Republican	34	58	8	46	52	2	+12
Democrat	88	8	4	92	7	1	+4
Independent	63	29	8	74	23	3	+11
GOP Congress Approval							
Approve	59	38	3	66	33	1	+7
Disapprove	71	27	2	77	21	2	+6

* Based on re-interview sample: N=844.

Question: Do you approve or disapprove of the way Bill Clinton is handling his job as President? [IF DK ENTER AS DK. IF DEPENDS PROBE ONCE WITH: Overall do you approve or disapprove of the way Bill Clinton is handling his job as President? IF STILL DEPENDS ENTER AS DK]

IMPRESSIONS OF PRESIDENT CLINTON & HIS POLICIES

	<u>Like Clinton & Like Policies</u>	<u>Dislike Clinton & Like Polices</u>	<u>Dislike Clinton & Dislike Policies</u>	<u>Other/ DK</u>	<u>(N)</u>
	%	%	%	%	
Total	39	30	23	8=100	(844)
Sex					
Male	38	31	24	7	(407)
Female	41	29	21	9	(437)
Age					
Under 30	35	38	18	9	(138)
30-49	38	30	25	7	(379)
50-64	42	28	23	7	(178)
65+	46	26	20	8	(148)
Education					
College Grad.	36	33	27	4	(274)
Some College	39	32	24	5	(210)
High School Grad.	37	33	22	8	(277)
<H.S. Grad	49	20	16	15	(82)
Family Income					
\$75,000+	30	37	29	4	(135)
\$50,000-\$74,999	36	32	25	7	(141)
\$30,000-\$49,999	33	38	22	7	(193)
\$20,000-\$29,999	47	26	21	6	(144)
<\$20,000	46	23	20	11	(164)
Region					
East	35	36	19	10	(155)
Midwest	39	32	24	5	(218)
South	40	27	27	6	(284)
West	43	28	17	12	(187)
Community Size					
Large City	46	30	15	9	(182)
Suburb	36	33	25	6	(187)
Small City/Town	39	29	23	9	(317)
Rural Area	34	32	28	6	(154)
Party ID					
Republican	12	35	47	6	(250)
Democrat	66	23	6	5	(290)
Independent	35	35	20	10	(258)
GOP Congress Approval					
Approve	31	33	30	6	(378)
Disapprove	49	28	17	6	(356)

Question: Which of these best describes you... (READ) I like Bill Clinton personally and I like his policies, OR I don't like Bill Clinton personally but I like his policies, OR I don't like Bill Clinton personally and I don't like his policies.

**HOW GOOD A JOB ARE NEWS ORGANIZATIONS DOING AT
REPORTING ABOUT CLINTON ALLEGATIONS?**

	<u>Excellent</u>	<u>Good</u>	<u>Only Fair</u>	<u>Poor</u>	<u>DK/Ref</u>
	%	%	%	%	%
Total	10	36	32	19	3=100
Sex					
Male	11	34	33	19	3
Female	9	37	31	20	3
Age					
Under 30	9	44	30	15	2
30-49	9	37	32	19	3
50-64	16	29	32	18	5
65+	7	28	34	26	5
Education					
College Grad.	8	36	32	22	2
Some College	11	32	37	16	4
High School Grad.	7	41	31	19	2
<H.S. Grad	18	27	27	21	7
Family Income					
\$75,000+	14	38	26	18	4
\$50,000-\$74,999	7	41	32	20	*
\$30,000-\$49,999	6	42	31	17	4
\$20,000-\$29,999	17	32	28	19	4
<\$20,000	10	30	39	18	3
Region					
East	11	37	29	21	2
Midwest	12	38	30	17	3
South	10	35	32	19	4
West	7	33	36	20	4
Community Size					
Large City	10	35	30	20	5
Suburb	10	36	30	21	3
Small City/Town	9	39	32	19	1
Rural Area	13	28	33	19	7
Party ID					
Republican	10	51	22	13	4
Democrat	9	26	36	25	4
Independent	11	35	34	18	2
GOP Congress Approval					
Approve	10	46	28	13	3
Disapprove	8	25	36	27	4

Question: How good a job are news organizations doing at reporting about the allegations against President Clinton... an excellent job, a good job, only a fair job or a poor job?

SURVEY METHODOLOGY

ABOUT THIS SURVEY

The survey results are based on telephone re-interviews conducted January 30 - February 2, 1998 among 844 adults, 18 years of age or older under the direction of Princeton Survey Research Associates. All respondents are from a nationwide sample of 1,218 randomly selected adults, 18 years and older who were initially interviewed during the period of January 14 - 18, 1998. For results based on the re-interview sample (N=844), one can say with 95% confidence that the error attributable to sampling and other random effects is plus or minus 4 percentage points. For results based on either Form 1 (N=410) or Form 2 (N=434) of the re-interview sample, the sampling error is plus or minus 6 percentage points.

In addition to sampling error, one should bear in mind that question wording and practical difficulties in conducting surveys can introduce error or bias into the findings of opinion polls.

THE QUESTIONNAIRE

PEW RESEARCH CENTER FOR THE PEOPLE & THE PRESS
JANUARY 1998 RE-INTERVIEW SURVEY
FINAL TOPLINE
JAN 30 - FEB 2, 1998
N=844

Hello, I am _____ calling for Princeton Survey Research Associates in Princeton, New Jersey. A few weeks ago we were conducting a telephone opinion survey for leading newspapers and TV stations around the country, and we spoke with a (INSERT SEX AND AGE) in your household. I'd like to ask (HIM/HER) a few additional questions to follow up on that previous interview. Is (HE/SHE) available?

IF PEW RESPONDENT DOES NOT ANSWER THE PHONE, USE THE FOLLOWING INTRODUCTION WHEN HE OR SHE DOES GET ON THE LINE:

Hello, I am _____ calling for Princeton Survey Research Associates in Princeton, New Jersey. A few weeks ago you participated in a telephone opinion survey we were conducting for leading newspapers and TV stations around the country. I'd like to ask you a few additional questions to follow up on that previous interview.

MY FIRST QUESTION IS...

Q.1 Do you approve or disapprove of the way Bill Clinton is handling his job as President? **[IF DK ENTER AS DK. IF DEPENDS PROBE ONCE WITH: Overall do you approve or disapprove of the way Bill Clinton is handling his job as President? IF STILL DEPENDS ENTER AS DK]**

	<u>Approve</u>	<u>Disapprove</u>	<u>Don't Know</u>
Early February, 1998	71	26	3=100
January, 1998	61	30	9=100
November, 1997	58	31	11=100
September, 1997	58	29	13=100
August, 1997	59	32	9=100
June, 1997	54	34	12=100
May, 1997	57	34	9=100
April, 1997	55	34	11=100
February, 1997	60	32	8=100
Early February, 1997	57	30	13=100
January, 1997	59	31	10=100
November, 1996	57	34	9=100
July, 1996	54	38	8=100
June, 1996	54	38	8=100
April, 1996	53	39	8=100
March, 1996	55	38	7=100
February, 1996	51	39	10=100
January, 1996	50	43	7=100
October, 1995	48	42	10=100
September, 1995	45	42	13=100
August, 1995	44	44	12=100
June, 1995	50	40	10=100
April, 1995	47	43	10=100
March, 1995	44	44	12=100
February, 1995	44	44	12=100
December, 1994	41	47	12=100
November, 1994	48	40	12=100

Q.1 CONTINUED ...

	<u>Approve</u>	<u>Disapprove</u>	<u>Don't Know</u>
October, 1994	41	47	12=100
Early October, 1994	38	47	15=100
September, 1994	41	52	7=100
July, 1994	45	46	9=100
June, 1994	42	44	14=100
May, 1994	46	42	12=100
March, 1994	45	42	13=100
January, 1994	51	35	14=100
Early January, 1994	48	35	17=100
December, 1993	48	36	16=100
October, 1993	44	42	14=100
September, 1993	49	35	16=100
Early September, 1993	43	43	14=100
August, 1993	39	46	15=100
May, 1993	39	43	18=100
Early May, 1993	45	37	18=100
April, 1993	49	29	22=100
February, 1993	56	25	19=100

IF RESPONDENT GIVES A DIFFERENT ANSWER THAN THEY DID IN JAN. NII, ASK:

Q.1a When we interviewed you earlier, you said you (INSERT RESPONSE FROM PREVIOUS SURVEY: approved/disapproved) of the way Bill Clinton is handling his job. What made you change your mind? (*open-end*)

**BASED ON THOSE WHO "APPROVED" IN CURRENT POLL, BUT DID NOT IN PREVIOUS POLL:
[N=109]**

- 29 Domestic issues/Policy (Net)**
 - 20 The State of the Union address
 - 4 Economy is better
 - 2 Education issues
 - 2 Social Security issue
 - 2 Rate of unemployment
 - 1 Balanced budget

- 13 Doing his job despite all the scandal/Good job handling scandal

- 11 News Coverage (Net)**
 - 8 Paying more attention to what's going on/I'm thinking about him more
 - 4 News on TV
 - 2 All the media/Press coverage over past week

- 7 The way he's running the country/Doing his job as president

- 6 International issues/Policy (Net)**
 - 4 Policy toward Iraq
 - 1 U.S. military presence in Middle East/UN
 - 2 Other international issues/policy mentions

Q.1a CONTINUED

- 6 Doing his job as well as expected/Current ratings
- 5 Doesn't deserve attacks/Unfair attacks/Not to blame
- 4 Everything is going OK/Country is going well
- 3 His policies/Don't like personal life but like policies (unspecified)
- 3 Same as/No worse than any other politician
- 3 All the stuff going on with him
- 2 Good job handling country
- 2 Trying to help people/His programs to help
- 1 Need to know all the facts
- 1 What is the truth/Telling the truth/
- 1 Mixed/Feel both ways
- 2 Other miscellaneous mentions
- 20 Don't know/Refused/No answer

Q.2 All in all, are you satisfied or dissatisfied with the way things are going in this country today?

	<u>Satisfied</u>	<u>Dissatisfied</u>	<u>No Opinion</u>
Early February, 1998	59	37	4=100
January, 1998	46	50	4=100
August, 1997	49	46	5=100
January, 1997	38	58	4=100
July, 1996	29	67	4=100
March, 1996	28	70	2=100
October, 1995	23	73	4=100
June, 1995	25	73	2=100
April, 1995	23	74	3=100
July, 1994	24	73	3=100
March, 1994	24	71	5=100
October, 1993	22	73	5=100
September, 1993	20	75	4=100
May, 1993	22	71	7=100
January, 1993	39	50	11=100
January, 1992	28	68	4=100
November, 1991	34	61	5=100
<i>Late February, 1991 (Gallup)</i>	<i>66</i>	<i>31</i>	<i>3=100</i>
August, 1990	47	48	5=100
May, 1990	41	54	5=100
January, 1989	45	50	5=100
September, 1988	50	45	5=100
May, 1988	41	54	5=100
January, 1988	39	55	6=100

Q.3 What is the FIRST news story that comes to mind when you think about what's been in the news on television, radio or in the newspapers lately. **(OPEN-END. ACCEPT MULTIPLES RESPONSES, BUT DO NOT PROBE. IF RESPONDENT OFFERS A GENERAL CATEGORY OF NEWS SUCH AS "CLINTON" OR "CRIME" OR "THE ECONOMY" PROBE: Can you name a SPECIFIC news story about that.)**

75	Clinton Scandal (NET)
49	Bill Clinton/Monica Lewinsky sex scandal/White House intern
12	Bill Clinton's personal affairs (unspecified)
12	Bill Clinton/The President and all of his problems
1	Paula Jones/Sexual harassment suit against Bill Clinton
1	Clinton crisis/White House crisis/President's crisis
1	Washington scandal
10	Iraq/Situation in Iraq/Saddam Hussein/War with Iraq (unspecified)
5	Crime (NET)
2	Crime (unspecified)
1	Murders (unspecified)
1	Kidnapings/Missing children/Abductions
1	Ted Kaczynski/Unabomber/Unabomber trial
1	Other crime mentions
1	State of the Union address/Clinton speech
1	Other Washington mentions
1	Bad weather/Storms/Snow/Ice storms
1	El Nino/Effects of El Nino on weather
1	Iran
1	Other Middle East mentions
5	Don't know/Refused/No answer

Q.4 Now I'd like your opinion of some organizations. As I read from a list, please tell me which category best describes your overall opinion of what I name. (First), would you say your overall opinion of... **(INSERT ITEM; ROTATE)** is very favorable, mostly favorable, mostly UNfavorable, or very unfavorable? **(INTERVIEWERS: PROBE TO DISTINGUISH BETWEEN "NEVER HEARD OF" AND "CAN'T RATE")**

	Very Favor- <u>able</u>	Mostly Favor- <u>able</u>	Mostly Unfavor- <u>able</u>	Very Unfavor- <u>able</u>	Never Heard <u>Of</u>	Can't <u>Rate</u>
a. Network television news	16	60	17	5	*	2=100
February, 1997	15	58	18	5	*	4=100
April, 1996	21	58	13	4	0	4=100
January, 1996	25	58	11	4	*	2=100
June, 1995	16	51	21	9	*	3=100
July, 1994	17	52	22	7	*	2=100
May, 1993	23	58	12	3	0	4=100
January, 1992	27	55	11	2	0	5=100
November, 1991	24	51	16	5	0	4=100
March, 1991	40	51	5	2	0	2=100
May, 1990	22	60	12	3	*	3=100
August, 1989	28	54	11	3		4=100
February, 1989	21	61	12	3		3=100
August ² , 1988	29	52	9	5		5=100
May, 1988	20	58	14	4		4=100
January 27, 1988	12	69	13	3		3=100
January 7-18, 1988	18	60	14	4		4=100
October, 1987	19	62	10	3		6=100
May, 1987	21	63	11	3		2=100
January, 1987	19	55	16	6		4=100
July, 1986	30	53	10	4		3=100
August, 1985	30	51	8	2		7=100
June, 1985	25	59	8	2		6=100
b. Local television news	19	62	12	4	0	3=100
February, 1997	25	56	12	3	0	4=100
April, 1996	26	58	10	3	*	3=100
January, 1996	28	56	10	4	*	2=100
March, 1991	37	52	6	2	*	3=100
August, 1989	27	53	11	4		5=100
July, 1985	27	57	9	2		5=100
c. Large nationally influential newspapers such as the New York Times and the Washington Post	9	38	12	6	1	34=100
February, 1997	8	33	13	7	2	37=100
January, 1992	16	37	9	4	0	34=100
July, 1985	12	36	8	3	1	40=100

² Based on Registered Voters.

Q.4 CONTINUED ...

	Very Favorable	Mostly Favorable	Mostly Unfavorable	Very Unfavorable	Never Heard Of	Can't Rate
d. The daily newspaper you are most familiar with	18	56	13	5	*	8=100
February, 1997	21	53	15	4	0	7=100
April, 1996	24	56	12	4	0	4=100
January, 1996	27	52	11	5	*	5=100
June, 1995	22	52	14	7	1	4=100
July, 1994	23	57	13	5	*	2=100
May, 1993	26	55	10	4	0	5=100
January, 1992	27	51	13	5	0	4=100
November, 1991	24	56	11	5	0	4=100
March, 1991	30	55	7	3	*	5=100
May, 1990	22	56	12	5	*	5=100
August, 1989	25	52	12	5	6=100	
February, 1989	22	56	13	4	5=100	
August ³ , 1988	30	48	10	5	7=100	
May, 1988	19	59	13	4	5=100	
January 27, 1988	19	62	11	3	5=100	
January 7-18, 1988	21	59	12	4	4=100	
October, 1987	21	58	9	4	8=100	
May, 1987	22	59	12	3	4=100	
January, 1987	19	57	13	6	5=100	
July, 1986	28	51	11	6	4=100	
August, 1985	25	52	10	5	8=100	
June, 1985	25	56	8	3	8=100	
e. Cable news networks such as CNN and MSNBC	26	45	9	3	1	16=100

ON ANOTHER SUBJECT...

Q.5 Which of these best describes you... **(READ)**

- 39 I like Bill Clinton personally and I like his policies, OR
 - 30 I don't like Bill Clinton personally but I like his policies, OR
 - 23 I don't like Bill Clinton personally and I don't like his policies
 - 3 **(DO NOT READ)** I like Bill Clinton personally but I don't like his policies
 - 5 DK/Refused
- 100

³ Based on Registered Voters.

NOW A FEW QUESTIONS ABOUT THE NEWS MEDIA...

Q.6 Which of the following two statements about the news media do you agree with more...(READ)

		Jan <u>1998</u>	Feb <u>1997</u>	March <u>1995</u>	July <u>1994</u>
29	The news media helps society to solve its problems	31	36	33	25
	OR				
65	The news media gets in the way of society solving its problems	63	54	57	71
$\frac{6}{100}$	Don't know/Refused	$\frac{6}{100}$	$\frac{10}{100}$	$\frac{10}{100}$	$\frac{4}{100}$

Q.7 Some people think that by criticizing leaders, news organizations keep political leaders from doing their job. Others think that such criticism is worth it because it keeps political leaders from doing things that should not be done. Which position is closer to your opinion ?

		Feb <u>1997</u>	Late Jan <u>1994</u>	Early Jan <u>1994</u>	Aug <u>1989</u>	Dec <u>1986</u>	June <u>1985</u>
39	Criticism by the press keeps political leaders from doing their job 32	24	18	23	26	17	
55	Criticism keeps leaders from doing things that shouldn't be done	56	66	69	68	60	67
$\frac{6}{100}$	Don't know/Refused	$\frac{12}{100}$	$\frac{10}{100}$	$\frac{13}{100}$	$\frac{9}{100}$	$\frac{14}{100}$	$\frac{16}{100}$

ASK FORM 1 ONLY: [N=410]

Q.8F1 Do you think that press coverage of the personal and ethical BEHAVIOR of political leaders is excessive or not?

		Feb <u>1997</u>	Jan <u>1994</u>	Aug <u>1989</u>
66	Yes, coverage is excessive	65	59	52
29	No, it is not excessive	30	38	43
$\frac{5}{100}$	Don't know/Refused	$\frac{5}{100}$	$\frac{3}{100}$	$\frac{5}{100}$

ASK FORM 2 ONLY: [N=434]

Q.9F2 In general, do you think news organizations get the facts straight, or do you think that their stories and reports are often inaccurate?

		<u>Feb</u> <u>1997</u>	<u>Jan</u> <u>1992</u>	<u>Aug</u> <u>1989</u>	<u>Aug</u> <u>1988</u>	<u>May</u> <u>1988</u>	<u>Jan</u> <u>1988</u>	<u>June</u> <u>1985</u>
34	Get facts straight	37	49	54	40	48	44	55
63	Stories often inaccurate	56	44	44	50	43	48	34
<u>3</u> 100	Don't know/Refused	<u>7</u> 100	<u>7</u> 100	<u>2</u> 100	<u>10</u> 100	<u>9</u> 100	<u>8</u> 100	<u>11</u> 100

ASK ALL:

Q.10 In your opinion, are the news organizations you are familiar with being fair or unfair to the Clinton administration?

		<u>Sept</u> <u>1994</u>	<u>May</u> <u>1994</u>	<u>Aug</u> <u>1993</u>	<u>June</u> <u>1993</u>	<u>Feb</u> <u>1993</u>
49	Fair	67	52	66	51	72
44	Unfair	26	36	21	43	17
<u>7</u> 100	DK/Refused	<u>7</u> 100	<u>12</u> 100	<u>13</u> 100	<u>6</u> 100	<u>11</u> 100

Q.11 Now I will read a list of some stories covered by news organizations this past month. As I read each item, tell me if you happened to follow this news story very closely, fairly closely, not too closely, or not at all closely?
[READ LIST DO NOT ROTATE]

	<u>Very Closely</u>	<u>Fairly Closely</u>	<u>Not too Closely</u>	<u>Not at all Closely</u>	(VOL) DK
a. Clinton's proposal to deal with the problem with Social Security	24	38	26	12	*=100
January, 1998 ⁴	18	27	29	25	1=100
February, 1997	23	26	22	28	1=100
January, 1997 ⁵	29	35	22	13	1=100
b. The conflict in Iraq over UN weapons inspectors and U.S. threats to retaliate with air strikes	36	40	16	8	*=100
January, 1998 ⁶	32	35	18	15	*=100
November, 1997 ⁷	44	32	10	13	1=100
c. Allegations that President Clinton had an affair with former White House intern, Monica Lewinsky	34	42	17	7	0=100

Q.12 Thinking specifically about these allegations against President Clinton, how important an issue do you think this whole situation is to the nation... of great importance, of some importance, or of very little importance?

--- CBS News ---

	<u>Jan 26th 1998</u>	<u>Jan 24-25 1998</u>
25 Great importance	39	40
27 Some importance	28	21
45 Very little importance	28	35
1 None (VOL)	2	3
<u>2</u> DK/Refused	<u>3</u>	<u>1</u>
100	100	100
	(N=609)	(N=943)

⁴ This month and February 1997 the story was listed as "The debate about how to reform the Social Security system."

⁵ This month the story was listed as "Proposals to reform the Social Security System"

⁶ This month the story was listed as "The conflict in Iraq over UN weapons inspectors"

⁷ This month the story was listed as "Iraq's refusal to let Americans participate in weapons inspections."

Q.13 How good a job are news organizations doing at reporting about the allegations against President Clinton... an excellent job, a good job, only a fair job or a poor job?

10 Excellent

36 Good

32 Only fair

19 Poor

3 DK/Refused — **GO TO Q.15**
100

Q.14 Why do you think they are doing a (INSERT RESPONSE FROM Q.13) job? (*Open-end*)

BASED ON THOSE WHO SAID “EXCELLENT/VERY GOOD” [N=376]

Positive responses

15 Reporting the facts/Uncovering the facts
13 Additional/More information/They dig for information
13 Close coverage/Following case real close/Constant coverage
12 Up-to-date reporting/Keeping us up-to-date/On top of story
11 Keeping the public informed/Getting information out to public
11 Non biased news reporting/Hearing both sides/Not taking sides/Being fair
9 Their job to dig/Investigate politicians/President
7 Trying to do their job/Report news as they see it
6 We need to know this/Important/Otherwise we would not know
4 Are trying hard despite rumors/Doing a good job
3 Giving people what they want to hear/See
1 Makes us think/Voice opinions
1 Other positive mentions
1 Mixed/Some good and bad

Negative responses

2 None of their business/Who cares what he does with his personal life/Leave his personal life alone/It's between Bill and Hillary Clinton/Nosy/Stay out of personal life
2 Too much coverage/Excessive/Over-reporting/24-hours a day
2 Lack of facts/Not verifying facts/Reporting without proof/Hearsay/Rumors/Accusations/Half-truths/Unsubstantiated
1 Trying to exploit Bill Clinton/Get him out of office/Impeach him
1 Too much sensationalism/Blow out of proportion/Over-Emphasizing/Overkill
1 Biased reporting/Using personal opinions/One-sided reporting
10 Don't know/Refused/No answer

Q.14 CONTINUED ...

BASED ON THOSE WHO SAID “FAIR/POOR” [N=440]

Negative responses

- 33 Lack of facts/Not verifying facts/Reporting without proof/Hearsay/Rumors/Accusations/Half-truths/Unsubstantiated
- 17 Too much sensationalism/Blow out of proportion/Over-Emphasizing/Overkill
- 15 Biased reporting/Using personal opinions/One-sided reporting
- 14 None of their business/Who cares what he does with his personal life/Leave his personal life alone/It’s between Bill and Hillary Clinton/Nosy/Stay out of personal life
- 9 Too much coverage/Excessive/Over-reporting/24-hours a day
- 8 Quick to print/Broadcast
- 8 More important topics to cover/Not what people really care about
- 6 Trying to exploit Bill Clinton/Get him out of office/Impeach him
- 6 Information is not complete/Not in-depth
- 5 Trying to create news/Not report on it
- 3 Tired of story/It’s tiresome
- 2 It’s not important to country
- 2 Liberal biased
- 1 Mixed/some good and bad

- 6 Don’t know/Refused/No answer

Q.15 How would rate the job the press is doing (**INSERT ITEM; ROTATE**)... would you say they are doing an excellent job, a good job, only a fair job, or a poor job? How about...

	<u>Excellent</u>	<u>Good</u>	<u>Only Fair</u>	<u>Poor</u>	<u>DK/Ref.</u>
a. Carefully checking facts before reporting stories	6	25	36	29	4=100
b. Being objective about whether or not President Clinton is guilty of any of these allegations	7	29	37	23	4=100
c. Providing you with the information you need to make up your own mind about these allegations	10	35	31	21	3=100
d. Providing the right amount of coverage about this story	12	31	30	25	2=100

Q.16 Besides the news coverage, do you think there has been too much, too little or the right amount of **DISCUSSION** about this issue by commentators and analysts on television and radio?

- 80 Too much
 - 4 Too little
 - 14 Right amount
 - 2 DK/Refused
- 100

Q.17 In your opinion, is it the job of the news media to provide the public with information about whether or not President Clinton has engaged in extra-marital affairs, or not?

44 Yes, it's their job

52 No, it's not their job

2 Depends (VOL)

2 DK/Refused
100

Q.18 In your opinion, is it the job of the news media to provide the public with information about whether or not the President has lied under oath about his relationship with Monica Lewinsky or encouraged others to lie about this, or not?

68 Yes, it's their job

27 No, it's not their job

2 Depends (VOL)

3 DK/Refused
100

ASK FORM 1 ONLY: [N=410]

Q.19F1 Have these allegations against Bill Clinton reduced your confidence in his leadership abilities, or not?

27 Yes

70 No

3 DK/Refused
100

ASK FORM 2 ONLY: [N=434]

Q.20F2 Have these allegations against Bill Clinton reduced your respect for him as a person, or not?

35 Yes

61 No

4 DK/Refused
100

ASK ALL:

Q.21 Now I'm going to describe some of the allegations being made in this matter. As I read each one, please say whether you think it is definitely true, probably true, probably not true, or definitely not true. (First,...) (Next,...)

		Definitely <u>True</u>	Probably <u>True</u>	Probably <u>Not True</u>	Definitely <u>Not True</u>	DK/ <u>Ref</u>
a.	The allegation that Bill Clinton had sexual relations with Monica Lewinsky	9	43	29	10	9=100
b.	The allegation that Bill Clinton lied under oath about having an affair with Monica Lewinsky	9	40	31	11	9=100
	<i>Gallup: Jan 28, 1998</i>	9	37	31	13	10=100
	<i>Gallup: Jan 25-26, 1998</i>	18	38	23	13	8=100
	<i>Gallup: Jan 23-24, 1998</i>	15	40	26	10	9=100
	<i>Gallup: Jan 21, 1998</i>	8	41	28	15	8=100
c.	The allegation that Bill Clinton participated in an effort to obstruct justice by getting Monica Lewinsky to lie under oath about the affair	8	32	36	16	8=100
	<i>Gallup: Jan 28, 1998</i>	6	30	36	16	12=100
	<i>Gallup: Jan 25-26, 1998</i>	14	34	28	16	8=100
	<i>Gallup: Jan 23-24, 1998</i>	11	35	31	14	9=100
	<i>Gallup: Jan 21, 1998</i>	6	33	33	18	10=100

Q.22 If it turns out that President Clinton had a sexual relationship with Monica Lewinsky, do you think that he should be impeached and removed from office, or not?

21 Yes, should be impeached

76 No, should not

3 DK/Refused
100

Q.23 If it turns out that President Clinton lied under oath about having a sexual relationship with Monica Lewinsky, do you think that he should be impeached and removed from office, or not?

50 Yes, should be impeached

46 No, should not

4 DK/Refused
100

Q.24 If it turns out that President Clinton encouraged Monica Lewinsky to lie under oath about the nature of their relationship, do you think that he should be impeached and removed from office, or not?

48 Yes, should be impeached

47 No, should not

5 DK/Refused
100

Q.25 Do you think most REPORTERS believe Bill Clinton had a sexual relationship with Monica Lewinsky, or not?

73 Yes

16 No

11 DK/Refused
100

Q.26 Do you think most reporters believe Bill Clinton is guilty of lying under oath about his relationship with Monica Lewinsky, or not?

69 Yes

19 No

12 DK/Refused
100

Q.27 Now I'm going to read a list of details that have been reported about this controversy. Please tell me whether you consider each to be a FACT which has been proven... OR an ACCUSATION which may or may not be true. First, reports that **(INSERT ITEM; ROTATE, ALWAYS READING ITEM "a" FIRST)**... is this a fact or simply an accusation? How about reports that...

	<u>Fact</u>	<u>Accusation</u>	<u>DK</u>
a. President Clinton personally knew Monica Lewinsky	78	19	3=100
b. President Clinton had a sexual relationship with Monica Lewinsky	14	82	4=100
c. President Clinton encouraged Monica Lewinsky to lie under oath about the affair	11	85	4=100
d. President Clinton gave Monica Lewinsky gifts	35	59	6=100
e. There are tape recordings of Monica Lewinsky talking to her friend Linda Tripp about her relationship with the President	49	45	6=100
f. There is at least one eyewitness who saw the President and Monica Lewinsky in a compromising position	17	78	5=100
g. President Clinton recently admitted that he HAD an affair with a woman named Gennifer Flowers when he was Governor of Arkansas	61	28	11=100
h. There are tape recordings of President Clinton leaving messages on Monica Lewinsky's answering machine	23	70	7=100

Q.28 Finally, looking forward, what do you think would be the best thing for the nation... **(READ)**?

43 To carry on the investigation into the allegations about President Clinton we have been discussing

OR

55 To drop the matter

2 DK/Refused **(VOL)**

100