



Contents

- ▶ [Home](#)
- ▶ [Legislation](#)
- ▶ [Oversight](#)
- ▶ [Hearings](#)
- ▶ [Reports](#)
- ▶ [Letters](#)
- ▶ [Press](#)
- ▶ [Jurisdiction](#)
- ▶ [Members](#)
- ▶ [Rules](#)
- ▶ [Subcommittees](#)

COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENT REFORM AND
OVERSIGHT

U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

WASHINGTON, D.C.

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In the matter of :

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WHITE HOUSE TRAVEL : DEPOSITION OF

: CHRISTINE VARNEY

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Tuesday, July 23, 1996

Washington, D.C.

The deposition in the above matter was held in Room 2203,
Rayburn House Office Building, commencing at 10:10 a.m.

Appearances:

Staff Present for the Government Reform and Oversight
Committee: Kristi Remington, Investigator; Laurie Taylor,
Investigator; Matt Pinkus, Professional Minority Staff.

For: CHRISTINE VARNEY

LYN UTRECHT, ESQ.

Oldaker, Ryan, Phillips & Utrecht, ESQ.

818 Connecticut Ave., N.W. Suite 1100

Washington, D.C. 20006

Ms. Remington. Good morning.

We are on the record this morning for the deposition of Ms. Christine Varney, which will be administered under oath.

Let me identify the people who are present in the room.

My name is Kristi Remington. I am Assistant Counsel for the Majority; Laurie Taylor, Assistant Counsel for the Majority.

Mr. Pinkus. Matt Pinkus, Minority Professional Staff.

Ms. Remington. Ms. Lyn Utrecht is here this morning to represent the witness, Ms. Christine Varney.

Before you are sworn in, I would like to provide you with some background information concerning this investigation and your appearance here. As you know, pursuant to its authority under Rules X and IX of the House of Representatives, the Government Reform and Oversight Committee is investigating the White House Travel Office matter.

This matter refers to all events leading up to the May 19th, 1993 firings of the White House Travel Office employees and includes all information provided about the White House Travel Office and any employees of the White House Travel Office at any time from January 1, 1993, to the present.

Our investigation also encompasses the activities of Harry Thomason, Darnell Martens and Penny Sample at the White House, as well as all allegations of wrongdoing concerning the Travel Office employees.

The committee investigation is reviewing all actions taken by

any division or field office at the FBI and the Department of Justice, both prior to and after the firings, as well as issues relating to the White House's receipt of background investigations on prior administration officials.

The investigation includes but is not limited to the investigation and prosecution of the U.S. v. Billy Ray Dale and all investigations and subsequent reviews of the Travel Office firings by any agency, including but not limited to the White House Management Review, all FBI and Justice Department reviews, the IRS and Treasury Department internal reviews and reports, the GAO review, as well as the proposed U.S. House of Representatives "Resolution of Inquiry" considered and voted on in the House Judiciary Committee in July 1993.

Do you understand that your answers should not exclude any information which you have on these subjects?

Ms. Varney. Yes, I do.

Ms. Remington. The committee has been granted specific authorization to conduct this deposition pursuant to House Resolution 369, which was passed by the House of Representatives on March 7th, 1996. Pursuant to Committee Rule 19, which I believe has been provided to your counsel, both Majority Counsel and Minority Counsel will be afforded an equal opportunity to pose questions to each witness.

Committee counsels will proceed with equal rounds of questioning, each lasting up to one hour, until both counsel have completed their questioning. The only exception to this rule is if a Member of this committee is present and wishes to pose questions to the witness. If so, the Member will be afforded immediate opportunity to pose questions and committee counsel will resume questioning once the Member has completed his questions.

You are here today voluntarily and not by subpoena, is that correct?

Ms. Varney. Yes, that is.

Ms. Remington. This deposition is to be administered under oath. You will be allowed to confer with your attorney. If you do not understand the question, please let me know and I

will rephrase the question.

All objections raised by your attorney should be stated for the record with the reason for the objection clearly stated. Once an objection is raised, committee Majority Counsel will review whether the objection is proper in the context of this deposition. If counsel does not agree that the objection is properly before this panel, I will confer with Minority Counsel and ask that they express their views on the record.

If the objection remains, it ultimately may be presented to the Chairman of this committee or his designee for resolution. The Chairman has agreed to consult with the Ranking Minority Member before his final decision on the objection.

You will be given a 5-day time frame in which you and your attorney may review your deposition transcript and correct any technical problems that you perceive in the transcription. After that review period, you will be asked to sign the transcript. Do you understand that?

Ms. Varney. Yes, I do.

Ms. Remington. Just as a matter of course, we have been getting the depositions back pretty quickly. Usually they are in the next day.

Ms. Utrecht. Okay.

Ms. Remington. You are accompanied by your counsel this morning and I ask that you be sworn in at this time.

THEREUPON,

CHRISTINE VARNEY,

a witness, was called for examination by Counsel, and after having been first duly sworn, was examined and testified as follows:

EXAMINATION BY MS. REMINGTON:

Q Could you just give us a brief work history from college or graduate school forward?

A Sure. From graduate school, I was a presidential

management intern at the General Accounting Office here in Washington. I then went to work for the United Farm Workers in California for a couple of years. I came back here.

I went to law school at night and worked a variety of jobs during the day at law firms and restaurants. I graduated from law school in '85. I went to work at Surrey and Morris, a law firm here in Washington, D.C.

I then went to a couple of other law firms and eventually, in '89, went to the Democratic National Committee where I served as General Counsel, and in 1990 I joined Hogan & Hartson, where I was through July of 1992, when I -- I was the General Counsel to the Clinton Campaign and then during the general election I actually left the firm and went on the campaign payroll in July of '92.

And then in January of '93, I went into the White House as Cabinet Secretary. I was there until October of '94 at which time I was appointed by the President and confirmed by the Senate to be a Commissioner at the Federal Trade Commission where I currently serve. That's more or less --

Q Okay.

A -- the rough outline.

Q And you were Cabinet Secretary?

A Yes, I was.

Q Were you an associate at Hogan & Hartson?

A Yes, I was.

Q And you said you worked on -- you had a paid position with the Clinton Campaign?

A I did. I was an associate at Hogan & Hartson and I was serving as the Chief Counsel to the Clinton Campaign. During the campaign season when we went through the convention and went to the general, I actually left Hogan and was put on the campaign payroll starting in probably July or August of '92.

Q While you were working on the campaign, who did you report to?

A Eli Segal and Mickey Kantor.

Q What positions did they hold during that time?

A Eli was the Chief of Staff of the Campaign and Mickey was the Chairman of the Campaign.

Q And who did you have under your direct supervision?

A I also reported to Tony Harrington, who was the General Counsel of the Campaign. He was a partner at Hogan & Hartson back here in Washington, but I was primarily in Little Rock, and my day-to-day working relationships were with Eli and Mickey.

I am sorry. Who did I have reporting to me?

Q Yes.

A On the staff, Phil Friedman was the Deputy General Counsel. There were a variety of volunteer lawyers around the country that worked on different projects that I coordinated. I worked closely with the accounting department, which was headed by a different person and they didn't report to me, but I did work closely with the accounting department.

Q What kind of functions did you perform as Chief Counsel?

A Generally attempting to ensure compliance with all applicable State, local and Federal laws, particularly election law and campaign financing.

Q Did you work on the transition?

A No, I did not.

Q Did you work on the Inaugural Committee?

A Yes, I did. I was General Counsel to the Inaugural.

Q And what kind of duties did you have as General