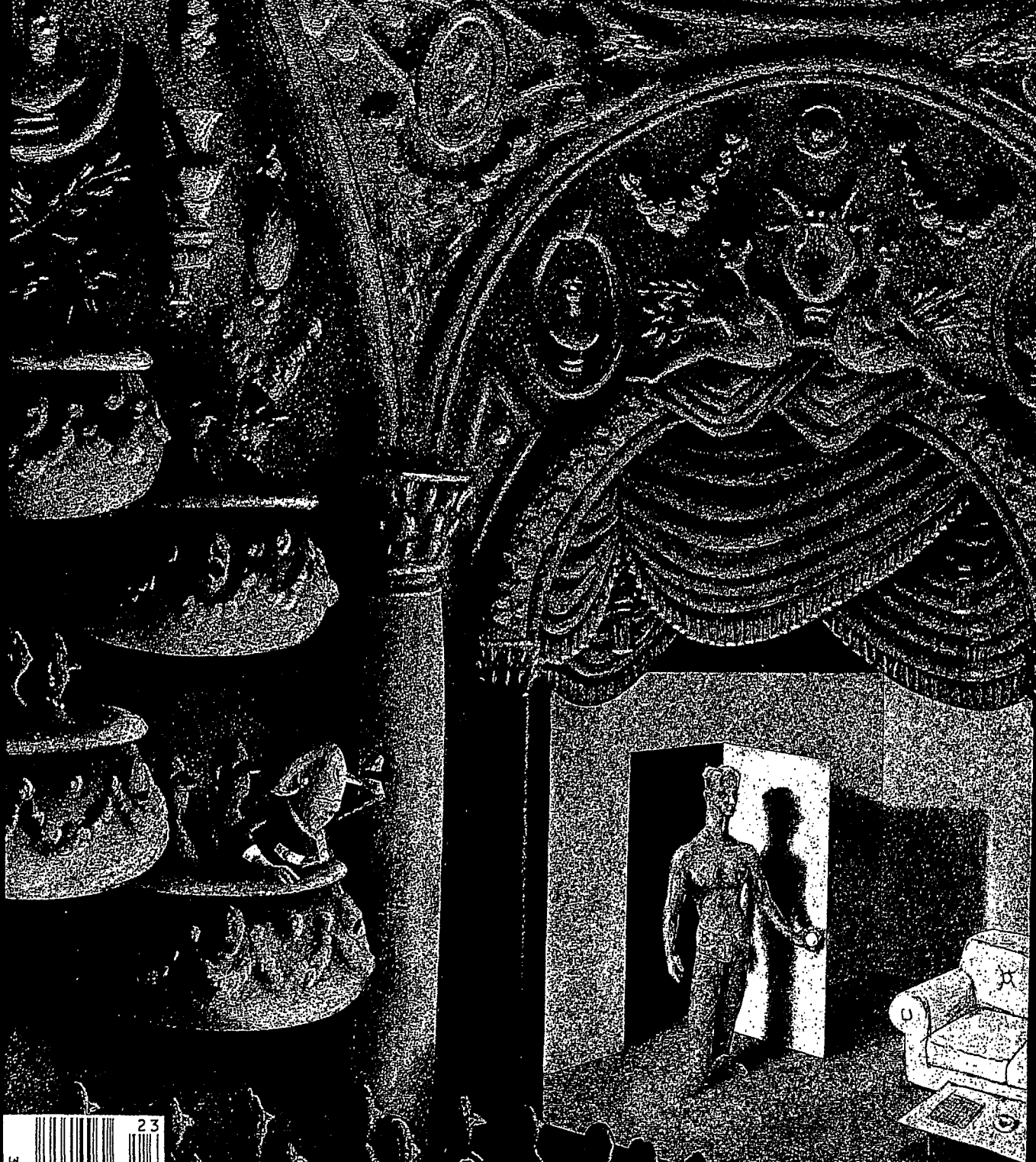


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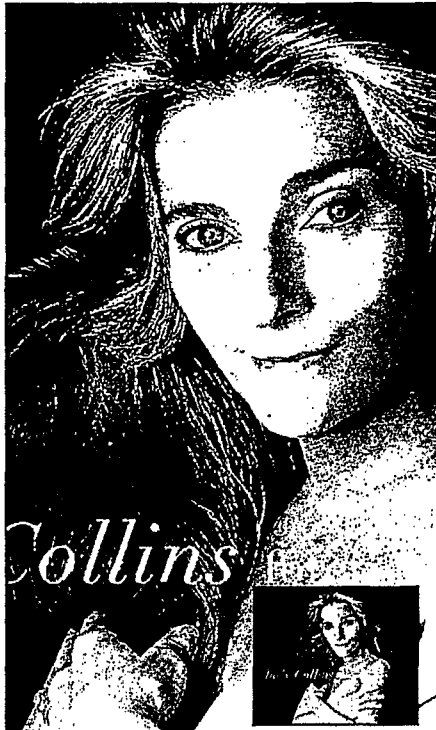
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FOR THE RECORD

A controversial report led to criticism, conjecture, and a subpoena. So the author did some more digging.

BY JANE MAYER

EDITORS' NOTE: After "Portrait of a Whistleblower," by Jane Mayer—a thirty-five-hundred-word profile of Linda Tripp, the former White House employee who drew Monica Lewinsky to prosecutorial attention—appeared in the March 23rd issue of this magazine, one

it has achieved such currency that even William Safire, in his Times column for May 21st, casually asserted that "the Clinton witness-intimidation brigade may have triggered the original query." Controversy has also surrounded the issue of whether the Defense Department acted

Tripp Friend Says Arrest Followed Prank

By JANE MAYER
Washington Post Staff Writer

A friend of Linda Tripp's who was with her when she was arrested on a grand larceny charge in 1989 said yesterday that the arrest was the result of a "spook" gone wrong.

Karen E. Miller, now a resident

of Greenwood Lake, N.Y., and studied the items into Tripp's purse without her knowing. The items then called police and reported a theft, Miller said.

"It was definitely a spook" of her," Miller said. "It turned out a little bit of what was intended. She was entirely innocent in this at-

least on her own recognition.

Court records from the Village of Greenwood Lake indicate that the charge against Tripp was reduced to loitering. She pleaded guilty on June 5, 1989, and was given an unconditional release without being sentenced or fined. Village Court Clerk Barbara Schaefer said yesterday that a violation

short passage quickly became the focus of controversy. In this passage, Mayer reported two newsworthy facts: first, that in 1969, when Tripp was nineteen, she had been arrested and charged with grand larceny; and, second, that in 1987, when asked on a security-clearance form whether she had ever been "arrested, charged, cited or held by federal, state or other law enforcement or juvenile authorities regardless of whether the citation was dropped or dismissed or you were found not guilty," she had answered no.

Although neither of these facts is disputed, Mayer and *The New Yorker* have been attacked by some commentators and by activists interested in minimizing damage to Tripp, whose credibility is an important factor in the investigation by Kenneth Starr, the Whitewater Independent Counsel, of President Clinton's relationship with Lewinsky. For example, Dick Morris, the President's estranged former political strategist, has charged in a series of newspaper columns that the story of Tripp's arrest was funneled to Mayer by what he calls "the White House secret police"—Administration officials and private detectives allegedly working for the Clintons. This claim is false. Nevertheless,

properly in answering Mayer's questions about Tripp's security form.

On April 30th, Mayer was served with a nineteen-page subpoena, demanding "any and all records, correspondence, notes, communications, or other documents" relating to hundreds of subjects, people, and organizations, including members of Congress, Administration officials, and "any person in the media." The subpoena—issued by Judicial Watch, a conservative group that is pursuing civil suits against the Clinton Administration—itsself became a subject of public controversy, and Mayer moved to have it quashed on First Amendment grounds. On May 28th, Federal District Judge Royce C. Lamberth granted her motion, and remarked, in the inimitable language of the law, that the subpoena was "facially over broad."

While Tripp's arrest is not in dispute, the details of what happened in Greenwood Lake, New York, nearly three decades ago are of no great significance in themselves. What makes them important is Tripp's prominence as a potential witness for Starr, who is collecting information about the Pentagon's role in *The New Yorker's* original story and ap-

pears to be looking into the circumstances of Tripp's arrest as well. Because Tripp's explanation of this incident was so different from what Mayer had learned, Mayer went back and made some further inquiries.

THE source who led *The New Yorker* to Linda Tripp's arrest record had no intention of getting involved in a national political controversy. In fact, she did not even realize that she had a personal connection to the events unfolding in Washington until I got in touch with her. In the course of reporting on Linda Tripp's family history, I had been told by a former neighbor of Albert Caro, Tripp's father, in Essex Fells, New Jersey, that Caro had a second wife, named J. Lowe Davis, who later went to work for a newspaper in Biloxi, Mississippi. I eventually located Davis in Pensacola, Florida, where she is the assistant managing editor of the *Pensacola News Journal*. When I explained that I was calling about Linda Tripp, there was no hint of recognition on the other end of the line. "You used to be married to her father, Al Caro, right?" I asked. Davis, who had met Linda only twice and had forgotten her married name, was so shocked to make the connection between Caro's daughter and the woman on the evening news that, she later wrote in her weekly newspaper column, it was as if "Roy Jones had hit me with an uppercut."

Davis agreed to talk about Linda, but at that point only as a confidential source. In the article, accordingly, I attributed no quotes to her by name, although in the course of describing Tripp's family I did identify her as Caro's former wife. Even that passing reference, however, brought an outpouring of unwanted attention, which Davis attempted to deflect in her column a week or so later. "Thank Heaven, I had nothing to add to the Linda Tripp file," she wrote. "Thank Heaven, I didn't earn more than a mention in *The New Yorker's* pages."

As the origin of the Tripp story became a political issue, Davis began reading about all the speculation and accusations and subpoenas. Davis is an experienced journalist who was the project editor of a Pulitzer Prize-winning series in 1994, and she began to feel uncomfortable about remaining silent. So she called me one afternoon after I had been

served with a subpoena that would have required me to reveal my sources, and volunteered to come forward. "You shouldn't have to go to jail for this," she said. Her motivation for speaking out, she said, was neither political nor personal. She is not a Clinton supporter. And though Davis, who plans to enter an Episcopal seminary when she retires from newspapers, is now estranged from Linda Tripp's father, and was divorced from him years ago, she says, "I have searched my soul about this, and am sure I am not acting out of vindictiveness." Rather, she felt that the stories attributing the information about the arrest to the White House were "wrong and unfair."

So I can now say that it was Davis who first told me that Linda was a troubled teen-ager and that she had been arrested once. Davis was living with Linda's father in New Jersey, she said, when he got a frantic telephone call from Linda's mother, asking him to bail their daughter out of jail. Davis wasn't sure whether the arrest was in 1969 or 1970, but remembered that it had something to do with Greenwood Lake. Linda's crowd liked to go across the border to Greenwood Lake because of New York's lower legal drinking age. On the night in question, a group of twenty-five or thirty kids had gone to Greenwood Lake to barhop, and some of them had been stranded there overnight when their car broke down. With Davis's recollections and the help of local police departments, it was possible to find the twenty-nine-year-old police record.

According to the police documents, Tripp, then nineteen, was detained at eight-thirty in the morning on May 12, 1969, and charged with grand larceny. Two men accused her of taking a watch, valued at six hundred dollars, and two hundred and sixty-three dollars in cash from their rooms at the Long Pond Inn. The record said that Tripp had made "oral admissions" to the police but pleaded not guilty at her arraignment. It also showed that she had spent more than twenty-four hours in jail, until she was released into the custody of her father. *The New Yorker* had been unable to find out the disposition of Tripp's case when "Portrait of a Whistleblower" went to press; Tripp herself was asked to respond to detailed questions about the arrest, but declined, through a lawyer. It

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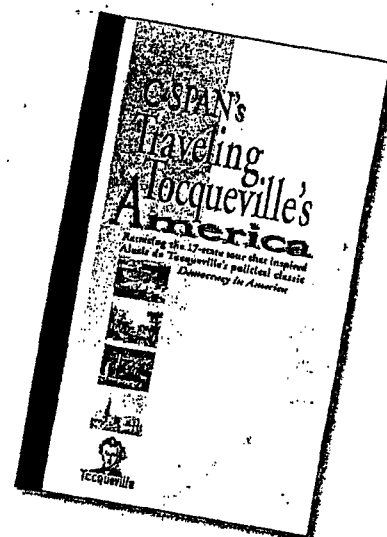
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