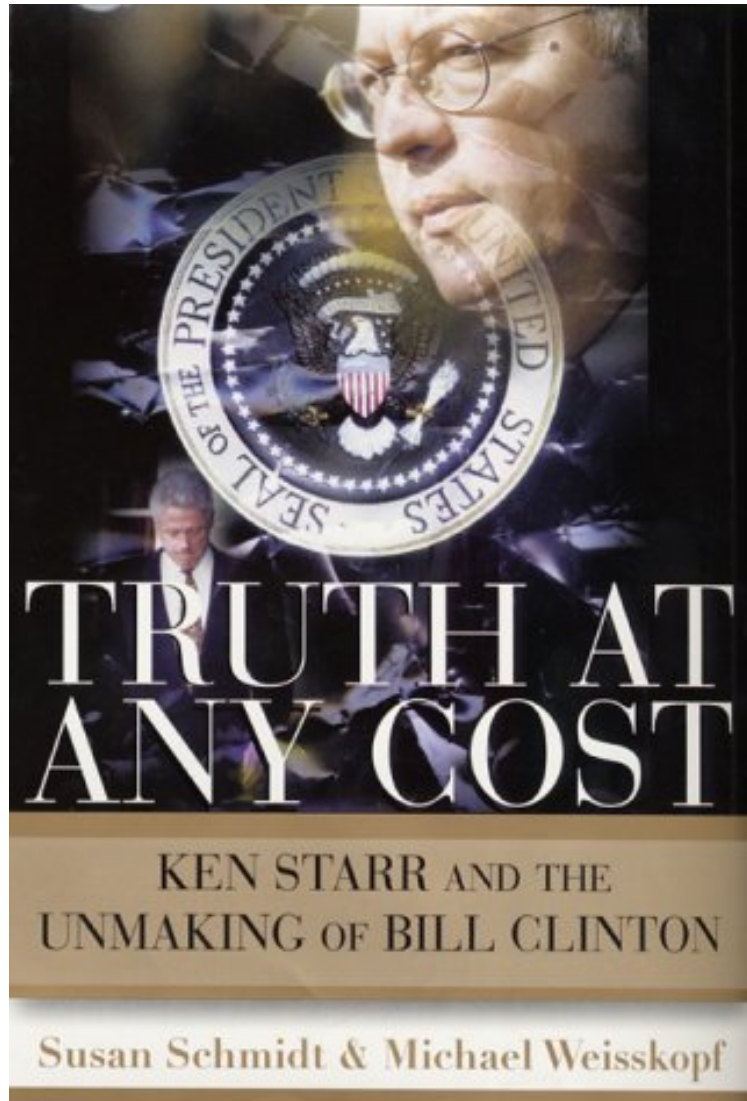


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## Truth at Any Cost: Ken Starr and the Unmaking of Bill Clinton

*Susan Schmidt, Michael Weisskopf*  
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**Susan Schmidt, Michael Weisskopf : Truth at Any Cost: Ken Starr and the Unmaking of Bill Clinton** before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Truth at Any Cost: Ken Starr and the Unmaking of Bill Clinton:

7 of 12 people found the following review helpful. Informative and Enlightening By K. Olgren From the first time I saw this book, I knew I wanted to read it. I wanted the inside story, something other than what the headlines told through the impeachment saga. This book fulfilled those expectations. As a stay at home mom, I had the time to give to watching the impeachment unfold. I took in as much information as I possibly could as it happened. Even so, there

was information in this book that never reached the evening news or newspapers, so I found out some things I never knew before. Some have complained that this book gave more of the Independent Council's perspective rather than that of the White House. To those with such a complaint, I would say, note the title and cover of the book. It is about Ken Starr, not Bill Clinton. Naturally, his perspective is going to be more prominent than that of the White House. If that surprises you, I can't imagine why. Even though the book is about Ken Starr, it does not present him from a biased perspective, as near as I can gather. I am a conservative, so it is possible that I could have missed something, but it seemed to me well balanced. You got a clear picture of Starr (and others in his office) for his strengths AND his weaknesses. You can't help but wonder if perhaps some of those flaws had not been a part of the story, maybe the outcome would have been different. It is a worthwhile read, for those who want to catch up with what happened in the Monica Lewinsky situation as well as those who soaked up every detail as it happened. There is new information there for everyone. 19 of 37 people found the following review helpful. Truth at Any Cost By A Customer EXCELLENT, comprehensive, fair book-----but MY comment is why has this book not been reviewed in the NY Times Sunday book section and why isn't it being featured on television talk programs or morning shows? Aside from Chris Matthews on "Hardball" we have seen nothing, whereas a James Carville book, say, gets plenty of play constantly. Am beginning to think the reasons are obvious. 0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. A GENERALLY SYMPATHETIC PORTRAIT OF KENNETH STARR By Steven H Propp Authors Susan Schmidt and Michael Weisskopf are investigative reporters; Weisskopf is also the author of Blood Brothers: Among the Soldiers of Ward 57, and co-author of Tell Newt to Shut Up: Prize-Winning Washington Post Journalists Reveal How Reality Gagged the Gingrich Revolution. They note that in 1992 (shortly before the Democratic nominating convention) Kenneth Starr spoke with an Arkansas trooper, who "launched into a detailed history of Clinton's ... amorous adventures. Starr was astounded... just a few months earlier (Clinton) had publicly denied Gennifer Flowers's (Gennifer Flowers: Passion and Betrayal) claims of a twelve-year affair... And yet back home, it seemed, his extramarital transgressions were widely known and freely discussed." (Pg. 6-7) They comment that Starr "believed in his own rectitude... He did not realize how important it was that before the Lewinsky investigation even began, thanks in large part to the White House, he was already widely seen as a sworn enemy of the president, as a real-life Javert pursuing his prey. He did not recognize how critical public opinion is to the work of a prosecutor, whose success depends, above all, on the citizens' trust." (Pg. 16) Concerning Starr, they noted, "By time Starr went to work for Ronald Reagan, he had become a Republican, but he was never the hard-right ideologue later portrayed by Clinton allies... his judicial championing of First Amendment rights kept him from being nominated (to the Supreme Court; pg. 150). They note that Monica Lewinsky "still saw Clinton through a romantic haze, though less so than in the past. She had begun to question his sincerity. Many of his gifts to her had been recycled, she thought. His talking on the phone (during their activities) made her feel 'cheap.'" (Pg. 221) Later, "(Clinton's) wife was barely speaking to him. Clinton told a friend she even brought up the Ten Commandments... Hillary Clinton's concerns went beyond his extramarital adventure. Her husband had made it almost impossible to demonize Starr, she told a political adviser. He had given Starr credibility." (Pg. 256) This book is of definite interest to anyone looking for more information about the infamous events that led up to President Clinton's impeachment.

What drove the man who nearly toppled a presidency and forced the most serious constitutional crisis in twenty-five years? Conventional wisdom portrays Independent Counsel Kenneth Starr as a right-wing religious zealot out to destroy the president, and Bill Clinton as a victim whose only "crime" was a private indiscretion. In *Truth at Any Cost*, two of America's preeminent investigative reporters, Susan Schmidt and Michael Weisskopf, reveal for the first time what really went on inside the Office of the Independent Counsel. The book details Ken Starr's motivations, his inner struggles, and his anguish as he comes under attack by Clinton's ferocious partisans. It goes behind the locked doors of Starr's office as prosecutors make the fateful decision to pursue the case against Clinton for lying to conceal his embarrassing affair with an intern half his age. Schmidt and Weisskopf lay bare what happened on the night when FBI agents first confronted Monica Lewinsky, how the White House launched a political jihad to survive, and how Starr's team agonized over Clinton's fate. For four years, the bland, smiling man behind the investigation of President Clinton remained a mystery, both to many who supported him and to those who feared him. Until now. *Truth at Any Cost* shows Ken Starr in a new light: as an upright but politically naive prosecutor who withstood public vilification to pursue the truth--including what he and his deputies saw as the president's attempts to use the power of his office to thwart a legitimate inquiry. Here is an unblinking look at the battle between Starr's legal absolutism and Clinton's chronic evasions. It examines Starr's impassioned quest to bring the president to justice, and explains how Starr eventually became a casualty of his own mission, leaving the arena as bloodied as the man he had pursued.

.com It began with a phone call. On January 12, 1998, Deputy Independent Counsel Jackie Bennett talked to a woman named Linda Tripp, who claimed to have potentially incriminating evidence against President Clinton. Bennett passed this information along to his boss, Kenneth Starr, who then decided it was worth pursuing. Though they knew they would catch some heat for it, it was a chance they were willing to take. In a prophetic, and ultimately understated,

comment, Bennett declared: "We're really going to be criticized on this someday." He had no idea. Susan Schmidt and Michael Weisskopf's *Truth at Any Cost* is an utterly absorbing and honest assessment of the Monica Lewinsky scandal and subsequent investigation, one of the most contentious political issues in memory. Even those who followed the story closely will find many secrets exposed in these pages, many myths deconstructed. Political junkies will likely devour it in a single sitting. Because relatively little is known about the man who nearly toppled a presidency, a warts-and-all look at Ken Starr is one of the highlights of the book. Like Clinton, Starr's own pattern of self-destruction plagued him throughout the investigation. Surprisingly, considering his 30 years of experience in Washington, most of his problems arose from a lack of political acumen; he may be a topnotch prosecutor, but he's a public relations disaster. Schmidt and Weisskopf brilliantly re-create one particularly naive display, in which Starr agreed to an interview with *Brill's Content*, a journalism review, and was skewered when his comments were used to suggest that he had leaked grand jury testimony to the press. Snared by the interview and shocked at the treachery of the reporter, he severely undermined the investigation and nearly suffered a contempt-of-court charge in the process. Readers will be surprised to discover just how close Starr came to having the investigation terminated as a result of this event. He never grasped how vital public opinion is to the work of a prosecutor, and he paid a dear personal price for his tunnel vision. Not only was he relentlessly bashed in the press but he was the focus of what one anonymous White House official referred to as a "continuing campaign to destroy Ken Starr" that even included members of the Department of Justice. *Truth at Any Cost* deserves to be read both for its impressive depth of detail and its admirable balance. Based on hundreds of hours of interviews with primary sources (30 hours with Starr alone) and reams of official records (including grand jury transcripts), it's a solid piece of journalism by veteran investigative reporters Schmidt and Weisskopf. The authors sum up the complexities of the investigation, with all of its political wrangling, spin control, and legal hair-splitting, and at the same time offer countless juicy anecdotes that reveal much about the character of the participants. And though no book could possibly settle such a polarizing debate, its strict adherence to the facts is as refreshing as it is valuable. --Shawn Carkonen

From Library Journal  
Washington Post reporter Schmidt broke the Monica Lewinsky story; Weisskopf worked with her until joining *Time*. Their account of Clinton's impeachment will not be available for review prior to publication. Copyright 1999 Reed Business Information, Inc.

About the Author  
Susan Schmidt and Michael Weisskopf, both award-winning investigative reporters, worked together at the Washington Post for several years until Weisskopf's move to *Time* in 1997. Schmidt broke the Lewinsky story in the Post in January 1998 and piled up scoops on every front. Weisskopf cowrote *Time*'s 1998 Man of the Year story on Starr and is the coauthor (with David Maraniss) of *Tell Newt to Shut Up*. Susan Schmidt and Michael Weisskopf, both award-winning investigative reporters, worked together at the Washington Post for several years until Weisskopf's move to *Time* in 1997. Schmidt broke the Lewinsky story in the Post in January 1998 and piled up scoops on every front. Weisskopf cowrote *Time*'s 1998 Man of the Year story on Starr and is the coauthor (with David Maraniss) of *Tell Newt to Shut Up*.