
David Brock

The Other Anita Hill

Introducing Angela Wright, the pugilistic bureaucrat whose flaky stories became the Thomas haters' last hope.

Anita Hill's inability to show a pattern of harassing behavior by Clarence Thomas was one of the many atypical aspects of her case. If Hill was telling the truth, Thomas had chosen to sexually harass her—and only her—among the dozens of women who had worked for him over the years. As columnist Stephen Chapman wrote in the *Chicago Tribune* at the time of the hearings: "... to believe Hill, we have to believe that someone who had been the soul of probity suddenly, on her arrival, became a sexual thug—and then, the moment she left, wholly reverted to his saintly self, never to transgress again."

The heightened awareness of sexual harassment, a valued legacy of the Thomas-Hill scandal, set the stage for harassment accusations lodged against three U.S. senators—Democrats Brock Adams and Daniel Inouye and Republican Bob Packwood—in 1992. Ironically enough, each of those cases was far stronger—and more typical—than Hill's, principally because in each instance more than a half-dozen women came forward, some under a veil of anonymity, and



made allegations that, if true, constituted an undeniable pattern of abusive behavior by the senators. Eight women made allegations against Adams, nine against Inouye, and more than a dozen against Packwood. Anita Hill, however, remains Thomas's lone accuser.

That was a significant factor in the Senate's decision to confirm Thomas. As Democratic Senator Sam Nunn of Georgia put it in a speech on the Senate floor, "A responsible, credible citizen presents information about a nominee on a matter of personal behavior, on which there

are no direct witnesses and little direct corroborating evidence. . . . In such a case, I look closely at the individual's background and the FBI files to determine whether there are patterns or habits of behavior that would make it more or less likely that the individual behaved in the offending manner." In Thomas's case, the evidence showed no such pattern.

Hill herself, who has taught in the area of civil rights law, stated at a press conference after her charges were leaked to the media, "One of the things that I will say about sexual harassment generally, and I suspect that it's true in this case too, in fact I've heard rumors to that effect, but I cannot substantiate any of those. I will say, however, that harassment usually isn't an individual issue. It's not an

David Brock, investigative writer for The American Spectator, is author of the new book The Real Anita Hill: The Untold Story (The Free Press), from which this article is excerpted with permission. Copyright © 1993 by David Brock.

issue with one person. It is behavior that people engage in. So I don't think that this was something that was directed at me personally." When asked about the absence of a pattern by NBC's Tom Brokaw, feminist theoretician and Hill adviser Catharine MacKinnon also seemed to acknowledge that sexual harassers tend to be repeat offenders. "Well, I hate to put it this way, but he's not dead yet," MacKinnon replied.

More than anything else, then, "another woman" with a credible charge would have so enhanced the plausibility of Hill's case that the Thomas nomination would likely have been defeated. Shortly after Hill's allegations made the papers, major headlines appeared that another woman might come forward with sexual harassment allegations against Clarence Thomas. On the morning Hill was to testify, a lead story in the *New York Times* reported: "Conflict Emerges Over A 2nd Witness: Thomas Panel To Hear Woman—White House Protests." The reports of a second witness sent a shudder through the pro-Thomas camp, which feared that now that Hill's charge was in the public domain, it would be open season on Thomas for anyone with a motive to seek revenge against him. Like any chief executive of a large organization, Thomas had taken a series of adverse personnel actions over the years.

Amazingly, only one such person—Angela Wright—surfaced before the committee. Wright never testified, but in a late-night deal struck with the phantom witness, her interview with Senate Judiciary Committee lawyers was entered into the official record (unlike the other staff interviews), and made publicly available. At the time, however, even scandal-hungry reporters wouldn't touch Wright's statement. Her credibility within a few days after her name first surfaced in the press collapsed in both Democratic and Republican circles, for reasons that will soon become evident.

At the time of the hearings, therefore, little was known publicly about the Wright story after the initial flurry of headlines. In a demonstration of how the history of the Thomas-Hill hearings was rewritten after Thomas was confirmed, the Wright statement began to take on a second life when it was discovered belatedly by the satirical magazine *Spy*, in the spring of 1992. *Spy* reprinted sections of Wright's committee statement in an effort to show that the testimony of this "other woman" had been suppressed by the Judiciary Committee. Soon thereafter, the cartoonist Garry Trudeau picked up portions of the transcript, too. *Doonesbury's* fictional Rep. Lacey Davenport "readmitted the testimony" of Wright: "Ms.

Wright, whose experience with Thomas was remarkably similar to Ms. Hill's, was blocked from publicly testifying. Instead, her statement was quietly slipped into the record. Few people have seen it . . . until now, dear hearts."

Other Anitaphiles began invoking Wright's name throughout the spring and summer of 1992. In a March speech at Stanford University, NPR's Nina Totenberg said:

Now there are some things that happened during those hearings that nobody knows about, and maybe in the next few months or years we will find out about the deals and counter-deals that were made behind the scenes as those hearings ground on for twelve, fourteen, sixteen, twenty hours sometimes at a clip, but we do know a few things. And one of the things that we do know is, I think, somewhat indicative. And that is the story of Angela Wright. Angela Wright was the so-called "other woman" who made allegations of sexual harassment against Clarence Thomas. . . . Angela Wright, in a sworn deposition, said that Clarence Thomas had sexually harassed her . . .

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Totenberg was wrong on both counts: the Wright statement was *not* sworn, and—one good reason why it warranted little attention during the hearings—it did *not* charge Thomas with sexual harassment.

The campaign to rehabilitate and publicize the unsubstantiated comments of a woman who never

came forward, and never charged Thomas with sexual harassment, continued in Timothy M. Phelps and Helen Winternitz's book, *Capitol Games: Clarence Thomas, Anita Hill, and the Story of a Supreme Court Nomination*. "The decision about Wright's testifying was probably the most important of the whole hearings," the authors asserted:

The question of whether more than one alleged victim of Thomas' sexual harassment existed was absolutely critical in many senators' minds. . . . The result would be that Wright was no longer a factor in the outcome of the hearings. Written testimony was far less dramatic, or convincing, than live testimony. The Democrats had allowed themselves to be intimidated [by the Thomas camp], sidelined at a crucial point in the game.

The revisionist tilt in favor of Hill and against Thomas was completed on the first anniversary of the hearings, when Angela Wright's story was transformed from a subject of deep skepticism even among Democrats on the committee, to a subject for political satire, and then one of suppressed evidence that would have reversed the outcome of the Thomas confirmation vote. An October 1992 cover story in *U.S. News & World Report* quoted Illinois Senator Paul Simon as saying that if senators had known more about

Wright and an alleged corroborating witness for her, it "could have toppled Thomas."¹

Ordinarily, one would not credit such baseless, unsworn statements as Wright's by publicizing them further. But because they have been continually cited by defenders of Hill like Simon, who quoted extensively (and credulously) from the Wright statement in his book *Advice and Consent*, her story has taken on a new prominence, and therefore must be seriously examined. Wright's story is also interesting for its several parallels with Hill's—casting further light on the operations of anti-Thomas Senate staffers.

The parallels begin with the way each prospective witness first came to the attention of the Senate Judiciary Committee. In both cases, Senate staffers sought out the alleged victims as part of anti-Thomas dirt-digging expeditions, and solicited the stories. Neither Hill nor Wright had contacted the committee of her own volition, and neither evinced any enthusiasm for talking when first approached. But the staffers would not take no for an answer.

Now an assistant metropolitan editor at the *Charlotte Observer* in North Carolina, Wright wrote a draft column about Hill's allegations—not her own experiences—after they became public. Someone at the newspaper apparently tipped off Senator Joseph Biden's Judiciary Committee staff to the unpublished column as soon as it became a subject of discussion within the paper. Wright had hopes of becoming a columnist for the paper, and had been casting around for something compelling to write a sample column about. Since she had worked for Thomas at the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, Hill's charges seemed a tailor-made topic. What Wright wrote in the unpublished column is not known, and she

¹ The witness to whom Simon referred was Rose Jourdain, a former Thomas speechwriter at the EEOC, who gave an unsworn statement to the Senate Judiciary Committee after Wright was asked if Jourdain could corroborate any part of her statement. Jourdain, whom Wright later referred to as a "mother figure," did not, however, corroborate any of Wright's specific charges. The details in Jourdain's statement—she remembered, for example, Wright telling her that Thomas had said, "You have hair on your legs and it turns me on"—were not contained in Wright's own statement. Furthermore, like Wright, Jourdain was a disgruntled former employee of Thomas's who had been fired at the same time as Wright for failing to complete her work assignments. "Rose was writing a book, and she worked on her book all day. She never did any work," Thomas's secretary Diane Holt recalled. Jourdain blamed the firing on political differences with Thomas, according to Phelps and Winternitz in *Capitol Games*.

refused to release it to the Judiciary Committee. Presumably, she took the position that Hill's charges were credible based on her own impressions of Thomas.

Wright was asked about the circumstances of her "coming forward" in an interview with Senate lawyers. Her hostile responses and pointed refusal to make any charge against Thomas underscored the fact that Wright was an unwilling participant in the proceedings:

Q. . . . Can you tell us why you chose to wait until now to come forward?

A. Well, I think a more appropriate explanation of what is going on here is I'm answering questions that are just now being asked. But I must say that I was perfectly willing to keep my opinions to myself, except, of course, when asked about the Clarence Thomas nomination. I did not feel that it was a good thing, until I saw Anita Hill on television Monday night and my conscience started bothering me because I knew I felt from my experience with Clarence Thomas that he was quite capable of doing what she said.

And it became a very moral struggle with me at that point.

I was struggling with trying to determine, trying to decide whether to say something, when I got a call from the Senate Judiciary Committee and that question became no longer a question.

Q. All right, now you say that you got a call from

the committee when you decided you were going to come forward, did you call somebody or did somebody first call you?

A. Somebody first called me.

Q. Can you tell us who that was?

A. It was Mark Schwartz. [A Biden staffer.]

Q. And so he first called you?

A. Yes.

Q. Do you have any idea as to how he got your name?

A. He said that he had gotten information that I worked for Clarence Thomas. He knew of a column that I had written that was going to be published detailing my opinion of this, of Hill's allegations.

Q. I'm sorry, your opinion of what?

A. Of Hill's allegations.

Q. I see, could you make that available to us?

A. No.

Q. Can you give us some general description of what you said?

A. No, I'd rather not. Because the column was not written in, with the intent of publishing it. It was written in the context of a discussion that I was having with my, with my supervising editor about becoming a columnist.²

At another point in the interview, addressing Senator Strom Thurmond's staffer Terry Wooten, Wright said, "I

² It is not clear whether the column was intended for publication. Wright contradicted herself on this point.

am sorry, Terry, but I cannot answer, I cannot answer the questions if you are going to insist that I decided to come forward. Obviously I did not come forward with anything."

Despite suggestions to the contrary in virtually every account of the Thomas hearings, Wright did not charge Thomas with sexual harassment. "You know, Clarence Thomas I think felt very comfortable around me, and I want you to understand that I am *not* sitting here saying to you that I was sexually harassed by Clarence Thomas," Wright told the interviewers:

Q. Did you take them [Thomas's alleged comments] as a joke or did you take them as something that maybe, you know, you had been harassed? You said you had not been harassed. I mean did you take them as a—

A. Not sexual harassment, no.

Though she did not charge harassment, Wright did say in the interview with Senate lawyers that Thomas had asked her for dates and made comments about parts of her anatomy:

Q. Were there comments that he made to you that maybe you considered inappropriate?

A. Yes . . . There were several comments he made. Clarence Thomas did consistently pressure me to date him. At one point, Clarence Thomas made comments about my anatomy. Clarence Thomas made comments about women's anatomy quite often. At one point, Clarence Thomas came by my apartment at night, unannounced and uninvited, and talked about the prospect of my dating him.

Wright also claimed that, at an EEOC banquet, Thomas said to her, "You look good, and you are going to be dating me, too." But like Hill's initial recollection of her experience with Thomas to the Judiciary Committee and the FBI, Wright could give few specifics of what Thomas allegedly had said to her, and generally refrained from quoting Thomas verbatim. What, for example, had Thomas said about women's anatomy?

Q. Do you remember specifically—now I understand that you told us that there was this general environment of this, but do you remember any specific comments that Clarence Thomas made to you along these lines prior to this banquet?

A. Prior to this banquet?

Q. Correct.

A. No, I cannot give specific comments.

Q. And what about after this banquet, you remember any specific comments where he talked to you about dating him?

A. No, I can only remember them in general.

Q. Okay. Why don't you tell us what you remember, in general.

A. In general, given the opportunity, Clarence Thomas is the type of person—well, let me back up a minute. In general, given the opportunity, Clarence Thomas would say to me, you know, "You need to be dating me, I think I'm going to date you, you're one of the finest women I have on my staff," you know, "we're going to be going out eventually."

Even if she did not charge harassment, however, if Thomas did in fact say these things, Hill's portrait of Thomas as someone who preyed on subordinates for dates and spoke in a lewd fashion would be more plausible. Thus the question turns to Wright's credibility as a witness.



An attractive woman with long, braided hair, Wright arrived in Washington in the late 1970s from her native North Carolina, and took a job as an aide to Democratic Rep. Charles Rose of North Carolina. Wright was soon fired from her job on Capitol Hill due to intemperate and erratic behavior in the office, and she went to work for the Republican National Committee. She had drifted to the Republican side of the aisle not out of an intense ideological commitment but rather as the result of personal connections made at the association for black Republican congressional staffers, where she

was first introduced to Clarence Thomas.

At the RNC, Wright's reputation did not improve. Former office mates remembered having to restrain Wright from pouring boiling water from a coffee-maker out a window, onto a crowd of pro-choice demonstrators outside the committee's offices. (It's not clear what her beef with them was.) Wright frequently made suggestive comments like "I'm freezing my tits off," and told male co-workers that she liked to walk around her house in the nude.

Wright next took a job in the Reagan administration as a political appointee at the Agency for International Development, where she worked from the spring of 1983 to January 1984. She repeatedly clashed with Kate Semerad, AID's assistant administrator for external affairs, who had hired Wright to coordinate the agency's media relations. The clashes would end in a vindictive maneuver by Wright to stop Semerad's Senate confirmation with unfounded eleventh-hour allegations.

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According to Semerad, Wright's staff "complained that she did not give clear direction and was sometimes verbally abusive. Her immediate supervisor told me that on several occasions she reversed his specific direction for action and that she was often argumentative, uncooperative and unresponsive." Semerad held regular counseling sessions with Wright, trying to work out the problem to no avail. Wright's behavior became "more and more belligerent," Semerad said in a letter to the Senate Judiciary Committee, until an order was signed for Wright's dismissal.

On her way out the door, Wright suddenly charged Semerad with racism, an incendiary tactic designed to satisfy Wright's vengeful impulse. By all accounts, the racism charge was baseless. The FBI file on the Thomas nomination recounted the following from an interview with Kate Semerad:

Semerad advised that she received reports from coworkers that Wright was delinquent in the performance of her job. She related that Wright was having

problems with adequately performing her job responsibilities. She related she confronted Wright concerning major problem areas that needed to be improved: a) Wright's confrontational attitude b) Wright's showing up to work on time.

Semerad advised that Wright's immediate supervisor at AID was Thomas Blank, deputy assistant of external affairs. She related that Blank was head of the news department and Wright reported directly through him. Semerad stated she received information from Blank stating that Wright's management and writing skills were not satisfactory. Semerad stated she received additional complaints from Blank and from around the AID office that Wright was not putting in a full day's work. She stated that Wright would leave work early and take long lunch hours. She advised that this was creating a morale problem in the office.

Semerad advised she attempted to counsel Wright about her behavior in an attempt to correct the problem. Semerad stated that Wright advised her she felt she was being unfairly treated. Wright informed Semerad she would not be Semerad's lackey and would no longer be treated as a subservient subordinate.

Semerad advised Wright that she would have to fire her if her job performance did not improve. She advised before she could fire Wright she received a letter of resignation from Wright claiming race discrimination on the part of Semerad. Semerad also stated she denied any type of bias or prejudice concerning Wright. She stated she treated Wright fairly and waited until she had no choice but to confront Wright concerning her unsatisfactory job performance. Semerad advised that if Wright had not resigned she would have been left no choice but to fire her.

... [Semerad] did characterize Wright as being overly sensitive about being a young, attractive black woman. She stated that Wright felt she was not being treated fairly and people were judging her on her appearance instead of her accomplishments ...

Semerad stated she was aware of the applicant having difficulties on past employments she had held. She stated that Wright worked for [Rep.] Charles Rose of North Carolina before she worked for AID. She stated she did not know of Wright's dates of employment or title, but did state Wright was fired from her position.

Semerad characterized Wright's personality as being vengeful, angry, and immature. She advised that after Wright resigned from AID she took a letter of resignation claiming unfounded racial discrimination claims to Capitol Hill seeking revenge on Semerad.

Wright was not content to file the charge with the appropriate party upon leaving the agency. When Semerad was later nominated for a higher agency post that required Senate confirmation, Wright followed her with the racism allegation, taking it to Senate staffers working for GOP Senator Jesse Helms of North Carolina, who were looking for damaging material on the nominee. Ultimately, the Senate found the charge to have no merit, though the story

does suggest Wright's modus operandi. According to a public statement issued by Jay Morris, the former deputy administrator of AID:

... Mrs. Semerad came to me and said Ms. Wright's performance was abysmal. She often failed to come to work or came in late. She was difficult to work with in

the opinion of her peers and supervisors. Moreover, her work was unprofessional—that is, late, incomplete, and ungrammatical. ... Based on [Semerad's] advice and my own observations I agreed that she should be dismissed and issued the appropriate order.

Subsequent to Ms. Wright's dismissal, Mrs. Semerad was nominated by President Reagan to the post of Assistant Administrator for External Affairs. Upon her departure, Ms. Wright had written a letter to AID accusing Mrs. Semerad of racism and incompetence and threatening retaliation. The accusations were ridiculous on their face. Mrs. Semerad is one of the most fair-minded people I know. She is also one of the most competent public affairs specialists I have ever met.

Morris submitted the statement to the Judiciary Committee because he believed that Wright might do to Thomas what she had done to Semerad:

The reason I am offering this statement is that I am struck by the startling parallels between what Ms. Wright did then and what she is doing now. She vowed vengeance on a former supervisor for dismissal on the basis of competence. She seemed incapable of accepting responsibility for her own shortcomings and blamed the episode on external factors. She delayed in making her charges until after the confirmation hearings were concluded. When she made her charges she did so at the 11th hour to a staff member who would be sympathetic because he was "looking for dirt." The entire process sug-

gested a last ditch attempt to stop the advancement of someone she resented. I see the same pattern of behavior today in the case of Judge Thomas.

Wright went from AID to a political appointment at the EEOC under Thomas, arranged by Phyllis Berry-Myers, a friend from Republican political circles. Her performance there, in a similar position to the one she held at AID, was also problematic, to put it mildly. "Angela had a foul mouth. She would curse the press out on the phone," recalled Diane Holt, Thomas's secretary.

In his testimony, Clarence Thomas was asked about the circumstances of Wright's quick departure from the agency:

SEN. SIMPSON: . . . Angela Wright will soon be with us, we think, but now we are told that Angela Wright has what we used to call in the legal trade, cold feet. Now if Angela Wright doesn't show up to tell her tale of your horrors, what are we to determine about Angela Wright? Did you fire her, and if so what for?

THOMAS: As I indicated, Senator, I summarily dismissed her, and this is my recollection. She was hired to reinvigorate the public affairs operation at EEOC. I felt her performance was ineffective, and the office was ineffective. And the straw that broke the camel's back was a report to me from one of the members of my staff that she referred to another male member of my staff as a faggot.

SIMPSON: As a faggot?

THOMAS: And that is inappropriate conduct, and that is a slur, and I was not going to have it.

SIMPSON: And so you just summarily discharged her?

THOMAS: That is right.

SIMPSON: That was enough for you?

THOMAS: That was more than enough for me. That was my recollection.

SIMPSON: That is kind of the way you are, isn't it?

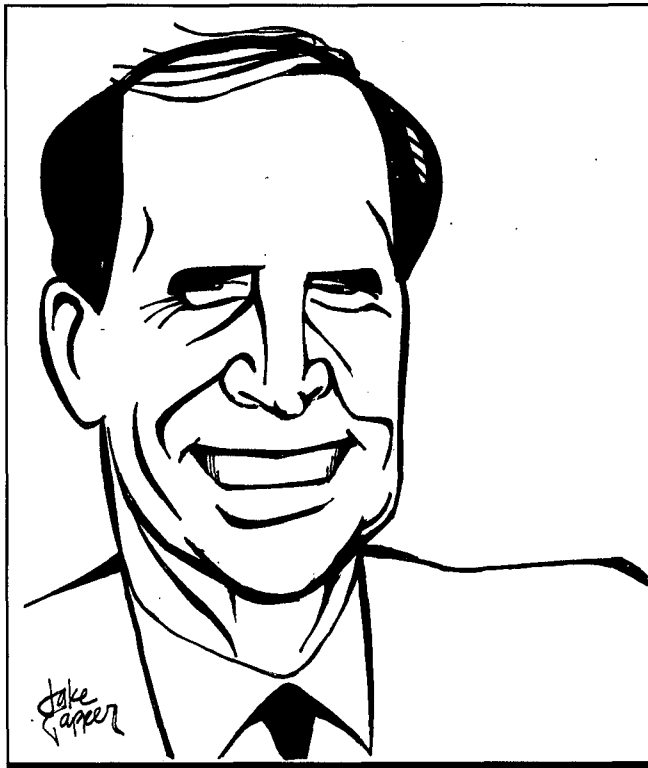
THOMAS: That is the way I am with conduct like that, whether it is sex harassment or slurs or anything else. I don't play games.

SIMPSON: And so that was the end of Ms. Wright, who is now going to come and tell us perhaps about more parts of the anatomy. I am sure of that. And a totally discredited and, we had just as well get to the nub of things here, a totally discredited witness who does have cold feet . . .

According to several EEOC staffers, Thomas was already

thoroughly dissatisfied with Wright's general performance at the time she made this comment. "The faggot remark was just the precipitating event," said Pamela Talkin, Thomas's former chief-of-staff.

Years later, Wright would be offered the chance to settle this score when contacted by the Judiciary Committee staff about the column she had written on Thomas. She gave a statement to Senate staffers. Once she did—and once it was evident that Wright had not charged Thomas with sexual harassment—the testimony that had whetted the appetites of Thomas's opponents and unnerved the Thomas camp was judged to be fairly tepid after all. Wright had nonetheless recounted conversations with Thomas that lent an air of authenticity to Hill's account.



Wright refused to be interviewed by the FBI. The FBI, however, was dispatched to the field to interview friends and former employers of Wright's to assess her credibility. The result only added to the sense among supporters of both Thomas and Hill that Wright's testimony would not damage Thomas—and might even damage Hill by association. Thelma Duggin, a mutual friend of Wright's and Thomas's, told the FBI that she doubted the veracity of Wright's story:

Duggin stated that she has known Wright since about 1978 or 1979 adding that they met as co-workers at the Republican National Committee. . . . She described Wright

as a friend who is high strung to a certain extent. She said Wright would react without thinking. In her opinion, Wright is "a little shaky on the integrity side. . . ."

Duggin stated that Wright is not one who would be intimidated by the sexual advances of a man. She said Wright is very attractive and if one tried to "hit on her and make a pass" she would "cuss like a sailor" and probably hit them. She said Wright isn't the type who would make a sexual harassment charge, she would "deck a person." Duggin advised that Wright could be described as a "seductive-type person." She has known Wright to enjoy a few beers and then dance on the table at the clubs. Duggin said Wright is a person who likes to party. Duggin said that to some extent, Wright would invite the sexual advances of a man and then brag about having guys hit on her. Duggin said Wright enjoyed the attention of men . . .

Duggin wasn't kidding about Wright's proclivity to "deck" people. One legendary story from Wright's days at the EEOC concerned an altercation with one of her male staff

members at an EEOC conference. Wright and the man exchanged cross words about the conference arrangements he had made, which Wright found inadequate. Wright socked him in the jaw. He landed flat on his back, and slid under a table in front of a room full of stunned EEOC staffers.

Duggin went on to describe the history of Wright's relations with Thomas, and how she had threatened to get even with Thomas as recently as two months before she made her statement. Duggin also revealed that Wright lied to her about the circumstances of her dismissal from the agency:

Duggin stated that Wright was always very critical of her supervisors. She said Wright always complained about her supervisors and had a problem working within a structure and keeping a job. . . .

Duggin related that she does not know if Wright ever filed any complaints claiming sexual harassment. She said she can recall Wright speaking about racist employers and the possibility of filing a complaint but she does not know whether or not she actually made a complaint.

Duggin said Wright called her about one to two weeks after Thomas fired her. Duggin stated that Wright was very upset. Duggin said that to the best of her recollection, Wright told her she was fired because Wright had not made the proper preparations for a meeting that was to be attended by various commissioners. Wright said that Thomas was making a bigger deal out of the situation than was necessary.

Duggin advised she last spoke to and saw Wright in August 1991 in Charlotte, North Carolina, when Duggin was in town. She said that at this time Clarence Thomas had already been nominated and since both of them knew him they had some conversation about Thomas. In particular, Duggin recalled Wright stating "I want to get him back." She said Wright also said that she "was pissed that he had fired her." Duggin advised that she was surprised to see that Wright wanted revenge on Thomas so many years later. Duggin went on to say that Wright told her the *Charlotte Observer* was pressuring her to do something about Thomas. She said Wright stated that "she didn't know if she was going to write anything about Thomas but she was looking for a way to get him back."

Former EEOC aide Armstrong Williams had a similar experience with Wright when he visited her in North Carolina in 1989. According to Williams, Wright told him over dinner, "If it's the last thing I do, I'll get him [Thomas]." When Williams spoke with Wright in the sum-

mer of 1991, after Thomas was nominated to the court, Wright told him, "You know I'm still pissed at him for firing me, but I'm not going to do anything."

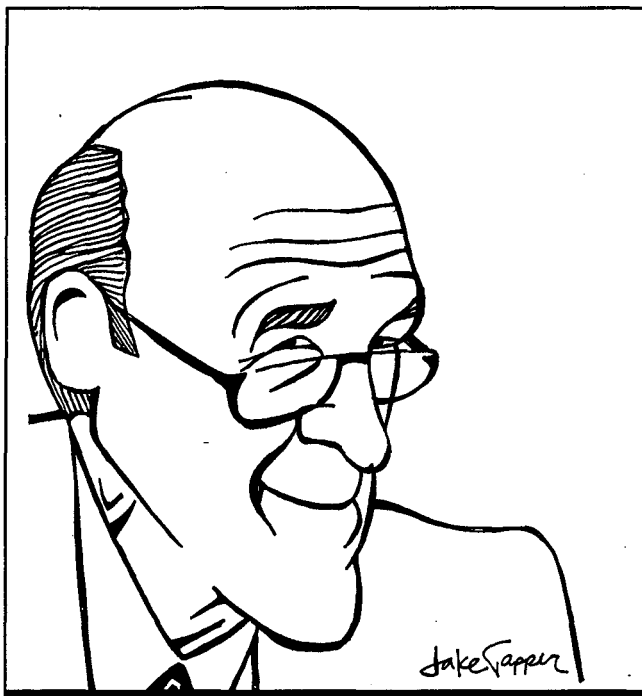
As we have seen, Wright had filed a complaint in the past, against Kate Semerad. If she was willing to do so then, with or without good grounds for it, why wouldn't she be willing to do so against Clarence Thomas? Very likely no such thought occurred to her until Hill's story broke in the press, because no grounds existed for a sexual harassment charge. Wright had also learned from her experience with Semerad that such tactics do not work, and knew she stood to be exposed as a seeker of revenge if she came forward.

After the interview with Senate staffers, Wright flew to Washington in anticipation of testifying before the Judiciary Committee on Sunday, October 13. Why she never

appeared has been the subject of speculation and widely diverging accounts. In *Capitol Games*, Phelps and Winternitz report that, in addition to Republican efforts to keep Wright from testifying, Anita Hill's camp had effectively blocked Wright's appearance, fearing that Wright would undermine Hill's credibility. However, in an interview, Charles Ogletree of Harvard University, one of Hill's attorneys during the hearings, said that this was false. He said that Hill's advisers strongly favored calling Wright to testify, and charged instead that the Republicans and some unnamed Democrats had colluded to keep Wright off the stand to protect Thomas.

Why any of the Democrats would have wanted to protect Thomas is not readily apparent. They may simply have wanted to protect themselves from public embarrassment if Wright testified. As the FBI report indicated, they certainly had cause for concern. As for Ogletree's suggestion that the Republicans conspired to keep Wright from appearing, the Republicans insisted they were all for hearing Wright's testimony—probably for the same reason the Democrats wanted it hushed up. "I was laying in the weeds waiting for Angela Wright to testify, just laying there," recalled Alan Simpson. "I said, 'Oh, Joe, this is the woman who was fired for calling someone a faggot. Oh, Joe, bring her out. I'd like to examine her.'"

Late Sunday night, Biden's staff reached an agreement with Wright. She would not testify, but her statement would be placed in the record with no opportunity for the pro-Thomas side to rebut it. Biden interrupted the hearing to announce that Wright had decided not



to testify. He read from a letter he had written Wright, "It is my preference that you testify. If you want to testify at the hearing in person, I will honor that request." In a subsequent interview with *U.S. News*, Wright claimed that Biden's staff "is lying," and that they had kept her from testifying.³

After the loud media criticism of the way the committee had mishandled Anita Hill's allegation—and the charges of a cover-up by women's groups—Biden could not have afforded to keep Wright off the stand, even if he had wanted to. Only Wright herself could have done that. Perhaps fearing that her testimony would be easily impeached, in the end Wright herself decided not to appear. □

³In addition to resurrecting and mischaracterizing Wright's charge against Thomas, the magazine also claimed that a third sexual harassment charge had been lodged against Thomas by Sukari Hardnett. This was also false. Hardnett, a former legal assistant to Chairman Thomas, submitted an affidavit to the Judiciary Committee on October 14, the day before the Senate vote on the nomination. "Women know when there are sexual dimensions to the attention they are receiving. And there was never any doubt about that dimension in Clarence Thomas's office," Hardnett wrote. She provided no specifics describing this "dimension," however. She also stated plainly: "I am not claiming that I was the victim of sexual harassment." Hardnett said she eventually resigned from the EEOC because she found working on Thomas's staff "unpleasant." EEOC officials, however, said that Hardnett was fired from the staff after failing on more than one occasion to pass the bar exam. Co-workers of Hardnett's during the period said she had never complained to anyone about the working environment in the agency. Barbara Lawrence, who shared an office with Hardnett at the time, said, "Thomas was like our mentor. He was very nice to all of us and spent a lot of time with us. I know he spent a lot of time trying to help her. But I know there was nothing more to it than that. I saw them every day." According to David Savage in *Turning Right: The Making of the Rehnquist Supreme Court*, Hardnett had met with Nan Aron of the Alliance for Justice earlier in the summer to discuss her concerns about Thomas. This was apparently an unsuccessful effort by Aron to obtain corroboration for Hill's nascent charge.

Secular or Theist?

The truth about the Founding Fathers, the Constitution and our political-religious roots

In 1960, Fr. John Courtney Murray dropped a bombshell on the political science establishment.

His book, *We Hold These Truths*, proposed a controversial thesis: The principles undergirding the American Founding were not only compatible with Roman Catholicism, but actually had their roots in the natural law philosophy of the Catholic Middle Ages. The day could come in a secularized future, posed Murray, when only Catholics would be willing to uphold these original principles.

Was Murray's thesis correct? Or were the Founders more influenced by Enlightenment rationalism/deism of Locke and Hobbes? Have Murray's predictions held up today? (Hint: Recall the Clarence Thomas hearings, where liberal Democrats attacked him for defending the Constitution's natural law tradition.)

We Hold These Truths And More:



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The Thought of Fr. John Courtney Murray, S.J. and Its Relevance Today

EDITED BY Donald J. D'Elia & Stephen M. Krason

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How to Grow the Deficit

by Paul Craig Roberts

Bill Clinton is practicing a new brand of economics that has replaced both demand-side and supply-side economics. It is called blind-side economics. He wants to repeat a fifth time the tax-hike approach to deficit reduction that failed in 1981, 1982, 1984, and 1990. (There were several other tax hikes along the way.)

A brief history of previous efforts to reduce deficits with taxes will document the counter-productivity of the approach. In 1981, David Stockman convinced President Reagan that scaling back personal income tax rate reductions from 30 percent to 25 percent and delaying their implementation until the second half of his term would permit a balanced budget in 1984. Stockman got his way, and fiscal policy provided nothing to offset Federal Reserve chairman Paul Volcker's independent recessionary monetary policy during 1981-82. The economy fell into recession, and the deficit estimate for 1984 jumped from \$0 to \$128 billion.

The Reagan administration responded with a second deficit-reduction program. This time Stockman promised that the 1982 Tax Equity and Fiscal Responsibility Act (TEFRA), which took back most of the prior year's tax reduction for business, would reduce the deficit to a mere \$59 billion by 1987. TEFRA was enacted to much fanfare, but by December

1982 Stockman's estimate of the 1984 deficit had moved from \$128 billion to \$229 billion. The \$59 billion deficit promised for 1987 had become \$280 billion.

Other tax increases followed. The five-cent-a-gallon gasoline tax and the 1983 Social Security Amendments were supposed to raise \$118 billion over a multi-year period—but the deficit persisted. Stockman put the Reagan Revolution into tax hike high gear again with the Deficit Reduction Act of 1984 (DEFRA), which took back the remainder of the business tax cut and was supposed to raise \$100 billion, but the deficit was unfazed.

None of this accumulated failure made any impression on Richard Darman when he occupied the Office of Management and Budget. Darman forecast massive deficits unless President Bush broke his "no new taxes" pledge

and signed on to a \$165 billion tax hike. Bush gave in, and an ecstatic Darman made his budget deal with congressional Democrats. His budget for FY 1992 (issued early in 1991) projected a balanced budget in 1995 and \$20-billion surplus in 1996.

Here it is 1993, and Clinton projects \$300-billion deficits for these years unless he gets his tax increase. But if \$612 billion of tax increases has not reduced the deficit, Clinton's tax hike won't either. There has to be another way, and there is: either a budget freeze or a milder policy of permitting federal spending to grow by less than the annual increase in revenues that economic growth produces.

There is a lot of blather about the impossibility of freezing the budget: "What about entitlements and interest on the debt? Do you plan to cut Social Security, Medicare, and to default on the debt?" These aren't daunting questions: in 1987 Reagan did, for all practical purposes, freeze the budget. Federal spending increased only \$13.6 billion instead of the \$44 billion that it increased in 1986 and the \$95 billion in 1985. As a result, most of that year's \$85 billion revenue growth went to deficit reduction. The deficit fell by a third—from \$221 billion to \$150 billion—in one year. If Reagan had repeated this feat a second year, he would have rid his record of the deficit issue. Instead, spending resumed, rising by \$60 billion and absorbing that year's revenue growth.

From 1985 to 1989, federal tax revenue growth averaged



Paul Craig Roberts, former assistant secretary of the treasury, is an economist at the Center for Strategic and International Studies and a nationally syndicated columnist.