The Year's Most Discussed Events in Polling Review

January

Gingrich Formally Reprimanded and Fined $300,000 for Using Tax-Exempt Donations for Political Purposes and Submitting False Information to the House Ethics Committee

Question: Speaker Gingrich recently admitted to violating House rules in his political fundraising practices. As a result, the bipartisan House Ethics Committee recommended that Speaker Gingrich be reprimanded and fined three hundred thousand dollars. In your view, was this punishment too severe, too lenient, or about right?


Question: Do you think investigations of misconduct against Speaker Gingrich are the result of significant ethical lapses on his part, or represent mostly partisan attempts to damage him?

Source: Survey by the Los Angeles Times, February 5-6, 1997.

Question: The House of Representatives voted to give Newt Gingrich a "reprimand" and for him to pay $300,000... Do you think Newt Gingrich should be allowed to pay the $300,000 out of his campaign political fund, or out of his own pocket?

Source: Survey by the Gallup Organization for CNN/USA Today, April 11-13, 1997.

Question: Newt Gingrich has to pay the House of Representatives $300,000 as a result of the investigation into ethics charges against him. Gingrich has decided to pay this money by taking a loan from Bob Dole... Do you think it is appropriate or inappropriate for Gingrich to borrow money from Dole...?

February 4 • Civil Jury in Santa Monica Finds O.J. Simpson Liable in 1994 Stabbing Deaths Goldman Family Awarded $8.5 Million in Compensatory Damages

February 10 • Civil Jury Orders Simpson to Pay $25 Million in Punitive Damages

**Question:** As you may know the jury in the O.J. Simpson civil trial found Simpson liable in connection with the deaths of Nicole Brown Simpson and Ron Goldman. Do you agree or disagree with the jury's verdict?

**Source:** Survey by Princeton Survey Research Associates for Newsweek, February 5-7, 1997.

**Question:** Regardless of the verdict, do you think O.J. Simpson was guilty or not guilty of the murders of Nicole Brown Simpson and Ron Goldman?

**Source:** Survey by Yankelovich Partners, Inc., for Time/CNN, February 5-6, 1997.

**Question:** O.J. Simpson's civil trial...do you think this has been getting too much attention in the press, not enough attention, or about the right amount of attention?

1997's Big Stories...

February 18 • Dow Closes at Record High of 7,067, the 13th High in The New Year

October 27 • Dow Falls 554 Points, Closing at 7,161

Question: Do you have any money invested in the stock market now—either in individual stocks or in stock mutual funds?


Question: Do you personally or with a spouse, have any money invested in the stock market right now—either in individual stocks or in a stock [market] mutual fund?


Question: If the stock market goes down, do you think you would place more money in the stock market, take some money out of the stock market, or leave your investments in the stock market the way they are?


Question: Did the fall of the stock market this week shake your confidence in the American economy, or didn’t it change your opinion?

**February 23** • Hello, Dolly! Scottish Researchers Report Creation of the First Genetic Clone of an Adult Animal, a Finn Dorset Sheep

**Question:** ...[A] scientist in Scotland successfully cloned, or made an exact genetic copy, of one sheep from another sheep. ...Do you think cloning is a good thing or a bad thing?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Good</th>
<th>22%</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bad</td>
<td>62%</td>
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**Source:** Survey by Hart and Teeter Research Companies for NBC News/Wall Street Journal, March 6-10, 1997.

**Question:** If cloning animals enabled scientists to produce new, lifesaving drugs or medical techniques, then should it be allowed, or not?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Should</th>
<th>42%</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Should not</td>
<td>56%</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

**Source:** Survey by ABC News, February 24, 1997.

**Question:** Do you think it is morally acceptable to clone animals such as sheep...?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>7%</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>89%</td>
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</table>


**Question:** Do you think it is morally acceptable to clone human beings...

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>10%</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>87%</td>
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</table>


**Question:** ...[D]o you think the cloning of humans should or should not be allowed?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Acceptable</th>
<th>26%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Not acceptable</td>
<td>62%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not sure</td>
<td>10%</td>
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**Source:** Survey by Opinion Dynamics for Fox News, March 5-6, 1997.

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**April 13** • Tiger Woods Wins Masters Tournament with the Lowest Score in the Tournament’s History

**Question:** ...[Do you] ...know who ...Tiger Woods ...[is]? [If yes] Who is...[he]?

| Correct answer | 82% |
| Other answer/DK | 18% |


**Question:** [Please],...rate your feelings toward each...[public figure] as either very positive, somewhat positive, neutral, somewhat negative, or very negative...

| Tiger Woods | 57% |
| Michael Jordan | 38% |

**Source:** Survey by Hart and Teeter Research Companies for NBC News/Wall Street Journal, April 26-28, 1997.

**Question:** Which one of the following is the black American athlete you most admire...

| Michael Jordan | 35% |
| Tiger Woods | 23% |
| Emmitt Smith | 10% |
| Ken Griffey, Jr. | 8% |
| Grant Hill | 7% |
| Colin Powell | 47% |
| Bill Clinton | 20% |

**Note:** Responses not shown here: None/Other (Vol.) 7%; Not sure 7%; and Deion Sanders 3%.

**Source:** Survey by Hart and Teeter Research Companies for NBC News/Wall Street Journal, March 6-10, 1997.
1997's Big Stories...

**APRIL 14** • Janet Reno Refuses to Appoint an Independent Counsel to Investigate the Financing of Clinton's 1996 Campaign

**Question:** Do you think the reason Janet Reno decided not to appoint an independent counsel to investigate Democratic fundraising is because there aren't facts to support having one or because the president appointed her to her job?

- Don't know: 21%
- Not enough facts: 26%
- President appointed her: 53%

**Source:** Survey by Opinion Dynamics for Fox News, April 16-17, 1997.

**Question:** Do you think Janet Reno should appoint a person from outside the Clinton administration to head an investigation into Clinton’s 1996 fundraising activities, or not?

- No: 39%
- Yes: 61%

**Source:** Survey by the Gallup Organization, April 18-20, 1997.

**Question:** Do you approve of Janet Reno’s decision not to appoint an independent counsel to investigate campaign fundraising abuses in last year’s presidential campaign, or do you think she should have appointed an independent counsel?

- Don't know/Refused: 15%
- Approve of decision: 57%
- Should have appointed independent counsel: 28%


**Question:** Which of these statements comes closer to your own view...the campaign finance allegations are important indicators of Bill Clinton’s character and ability to serve as president, or ...are not relevant to his ability to serve as president?

- Important indicator: 43%
- Not relevant: 50%
- No opinion: 7%

**Source:** Survey by the Gallup Organization, April 18-20, 1997.

**Question:** Do you think Bill Clinton personally did anything wrong in his 1996 campaign fundraising activities? (If yes) Do you think Clinton’s activities were unethical or illegal?

- No, nothing wrong: 48%
- Yes, unethical or illegal: 31%
- Don't know/No answer: 21%

**Source:** Survey by CBS News, September 18-20, 1997.

**MAY 27** • Supreme Court Rejects Clinton’s Request to Delay Proceedings in the Sexual Harassment Lawsuit

**Question:** Should the Paula Jones sexual harassment court case against Clinton be postponed until after Clinton leaves office or should it proceed while he is serving as president?

- Postponed: 43%
- Proceed: 54%

**Source:** Survey by ABC News, May 27, 1997.

**Question:** In her claims against Bill Clinton, do you think Paula Jones is telling the entire truth, is mostly telling the truth but is hiding something, or is mostly lying?

- Entirely/Mostly true: 59%
- Mostly lying: 26%
- Don't know/No answer: 15%

**Source:** Survey by CBS News, August 5-6, 1997.

**Question:** ...Do you think that Paula Jones' description of that incident is completely true, mostly true, mostly false, or completely false?

- Completely/Mostly True: 35%
- Mostly/Completely False: 51%
- Don't know/Refused: 14%

**Source:** Survey by the Gallup Organization for CNN/USA Today, August 12-13, 1997.

6 THE PUBLIC PERSPECTIVE, DECEMBER/JANUARY 1998
MAY 11 IBM Computer Defeats Chess Grandmaster Garry Kasparov

Question: Who is Gary Kasparov?

Correct answer 18%
Any other answer/DK 82%


Question: As you may know, Gary Kasparov, the world's best chess player—is currently playing in a six-game chess tournament against a computer. Who would you personally like to see win this tournament—Gary Kasparov, the human or the computer?

Kasparov 82%
The computer 10%
Either/Don't care 4%


MAY 22 First Lt. Kelly Flinn, the Air Force's First Female B-52 Bomber Pilot, Accepts a General Discharge

Question: Overall, do you approve or disapprove of the way Lieutenant (Kelly) Flinn has handled her situation with the Air Force?

No opinion 19%
Approve 45%
Disapprove 36%


Question: Overall, do you approve or disapprove of the way the Air Force has handled the situation involving Lieutenant (Kelly) Flinn?

No opinion 14%
Approve 33%
Disapprove 53%


Question: As you may know, recently Kelly Flinn, a female B-52 pilot who had an extra-marital affair, was discharged from the military. From what you know about the case, do you think Kelly Flinn's punishment was fair or unfair?

Fair 35%
Unfair 56%
DK 9%

2•Federal Jury Convicts Timothy McVeigh for the Oklahoma City Bombing

**Question:** I have some questions about the Oklahoma City bombing trial. From what you know about the case, do you think the jury should find Timothy McVeigh guilty or not guilty of the charges against him?

- Guilty: 66%
- Not guilty: 5%
- Disagree: 8%
- No opinion: 29%


**Question:** A jury today found Timothy McVeigh guilty of planning and planting the bomb which killed 168 people in Oklahoma City in 1995. Do you agree or disagree with the jury's verdict?

- Agree: 89%
- Disagree: 3%

**Source:** Survey by ABC News, June 2, 1997.

**Question:** As you know, Timothy McVeigh was convicted of murder in the Oklahoma City bombing. Do you think Timothy McVeigh should receive the death penalty, or not?

- Should receive the death penalty: 78%
- Should not receive the death penalty: 17%

**Source:** Survey by Yankelovich Partners, Inc., for *Time/CNN*, June 4-5, 1997.

**Question:** If Timothy McVeigh... is given the death penalty, do you think his execution should be shown on television, or don't you think so?

- Yes, execution should be shown on television: 18%
- No, execution should not be shown on television: 80%

20•Tobacco Companies Reach a $368.5 Billion Settlement

**Question:** Around the country, smokers and former smokers are suing tobacco companies for compensation for smoking-related illnesses and some tobacco companies are considering settling these lawsuits before they go to trial. Who do you think is more responsible for these smoking-related illnesses: the people who smoke, or the tobacco companies?

- Tobacco companies: 19%
- People who smoke: 67%
- Neither/Both (vol.)/Not sure: 14%

**Source:** Survey by Opinion Dynamics for Fox News, April 16-17, 1997.

**Question:** Do you happen to smoke cigarettes or other tobacco products, or not?

- Yes: 26%
- No: 74%

**Source:** Survey by ABC News, June 18, 1997.
Question: Which of the following statements best describes your view of who’s to blame for the health problems faced by smokers in this country? The tobacco companies are completely to blame, the tobacco companies are mostly to blame, smokers are mostly to blame or smokers are completely to blame?

![Pie chart showing the distribution of blame.]

64% Smokers and tobacco companies equally to blame
26% Smokers completely/mostly to blame
10% Tobacco companies completely/mostly to blame

Question: All in all, do you think it would be a good thing or a bad thing for the tobacco companies in this country to be driven out of business by a law suit?

![Pie chart showing the distribution of opinion.]

56% Bad thing
44% Good thing


Question: Do you approve or disapprove of each of the following provisions of the agreement ... with the tobacco companies (and the plaintiffs who are suing them)...

- ...a ban on cigarette vending machines
  - Approve: 66%
  - Disapprove: 31%

- ...a ban on outdoor advertising of cigarettes
  - Approve: 60%
  - Disapprove: 36%

- ...a requirement that tobacco companies contribute money to provide health insurance to children who do not have any
  - Approve: 63%
  - Disapprove: 33%

- ...a ban on tobacco companies sponsoring sports events or other live events
  - Approve: 48%
  - Disapprove: 48%

- ...limits on the ability of people who have smoking-related illnesses to sue the tobacco companies
  - Approve: 48%
  - Disapprove: 47%