

FOIA MARKER

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Collection/Record Group: Clinton Presidential Records

Subgroup/Office of Origin: National AIDS Policy Office

Series/Staff Member:

Subseries:

OA/ID Number: 21067

FolderID:

Folder Title:
George Magazine

Stack:

S

Row:

66

Section:

7

Shelf:

11

Position:

3

Re: George Magazine

Rob Wherry
Research Dept.--George
1633 Broadway
41st Floor
New York, NY 10019
(212) 767-6223
Fax: (212) 767-5622

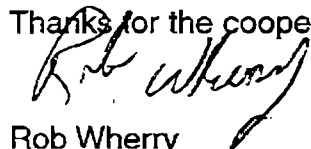
Daniel Montoya
Press Secretary--Office of National Aids Policy
Washington, DC
Fax: (202) 632-1096

Dear Mr. Montoya:

As per our conversation earlier this afternoon, I am faxing a list of questions to confirm information in a story by John Cloud on Sandra Thurman. Hopefully all the questions will be "yes" or "no" answers and won't take a lot of time. Please feel free to correct the statements in any way, or to question them. Some of the questions involve confirming quotes that she said (i.e. question #1) and will be noted with an asterisk so as to refresh your memory.

My deadline is late Wednesday.

Thanks for the cooperation.



Rob Wherry

Questions:

- *1. Is it correct that Washington is the type of town where things get done based on who you know and not what you know? *See attached*
2. Is it correct that you are 43 and will be that age until after July 15 (Press date)? *yes*
3. Is it correct that you have a slight southern accent? *yes*
4. Do you remember mentioning James Carville and his wife Mary Matalin, Bruce Reed and Michael Iskowitz during the interview with Mr. Cloud? *See attached*
5. You come from a wealthy family background? *see attached*
6. You met Bill Clinton in 1992 through Carville? *yes*

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7. You dated James Carville?

8. At the time he was a consultant for Georgia Governor Zell Miller? *yes*

*9. Would you describe your help with the Georgia primary and Clinton's winning there, a defining moment in the campaign? *See attached*

10. Have you ever shopped in Paris or New York? *I have shopped everyplace I have ever been!*

11. Would it be accurate to describe some of the previous directors as unknown bureaucrats with little access to the White House? (This isn't attributed to you, but I would like to confirm the author's opinion) *See attached ~*

12. Are you a *determined* furious networker?

*13. Would you describe a part of your philosophy of government as dealing with people face-to-face, in the hall or at cocktails parties. Forcing them to deal with issues at once instead of sitting on memos. *See attached*

14. You have had several family friends die early on in the epidemic? *yes*

15. You started volunteering in 1983? *yes*

*16. Your friends at the time thought it was unusual for you to do that? *yes, and so did everybody else - AIDS was VERY new -*

17. In 1989 you were named executive director of AID Atlanta (It is AID Atlanta and not AIDS Atlanta?)? *yes*

18. It is the south's largest AIDS organization? *yes*

19. You quadrupled the budget and erased a \$200,000 deficit? *yes*

20. Some activists in Atlanta thought you had a clothing budget and criticized you landing on the gossip pages instead of the news section? *See attached*

21. You didn't have a clothing allowance? *of course not!*

22. Some have called you the Imelda Marcos of the AIDS world. *see attached*

*23. You fired back by saying that you weren't some aging hippie, that you drove a BMW, wore *designer* ~~nice~~ clothes but got the job done.

*24 Did you describe the White House decision to make you AIDS czar as "tacky" because you had turned it down before and loved your current job at the Information Agency? *see attached*

25 You were at the previous job for three months? *yes*

*26. Washington can be dull at times because the cocktail parties are lacking good conversation or

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something new besides all the old stuff? *see attached*

27. You have secured office space in the Old Executive Office Building? *yes*

*28. It is "crummy" but close enough for good access to Clinton? *see attached*

29. *One of my* ~~Your~~ next missions is to sit down with Barry McCaffrey and discuss ~~the~~ needle exchange program *3.*

*30. And you termed that meeting as being one that could be "very interesting." *yes* -
he is very nice and very smart.

**OFFICE OF NATIONAL AIDS POLICY
EXECUTIVE OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT**

808 17th Street, N.W., 8th Floor
Washington, DC 20006

Phone: 202-632-1090

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FACSIMILE COVER SHEET

TO: Mr. Rob Wherry

FAX NUMBER: (212) 767-5622

FROM: Sandy Thurman

DATE: 6/4/97

PAGES INCLUDING COVER SHEET: (7)

COMMENTS:

Sandy Thurman
Director
Office of National AIDS Policy
808 17th Street
8th Floor
Washington, DC 20006

Mr. Rob Wherry
Research Department--George
1633 Broadway
41st Floor
New York, NY 10019
Fax: (212) 767-5622

Dear Rob,

I have attempted to answer as many questions with “yes” or “no” as possible (see attached). However, several of the questions and “quotes” required further explanation or clarification.

I must say that the lack of inquiries regarding the AIDS office and the abundance of references to me personally is of some concern to me. Judging from the questions, it would appear that John did not have an opportunity to get input from anyone who knows me well or anyone with whom I have worked closely in the past. If, by chance, you would like a little more substantive input I would be happy to make some recommendations.

1. Washington is the type of town where things get done based as much on who you know as what you know....the “what” is a given (in this town, if you don’t have the “what”, you more than likely wouldn’t be here in the first place).

4. I do not remember mentioning Mary in our conversation. I do not know her personally, however I have great admiration for her.

5. I come from a politically and civically active background. I certainly had more advantages than the average kid growing up, but I would not consider us wealthy.

7. James and I became very good friends during the Miller campaign (in fact the

Governor introduced us) and we have remained friends.

9.I would describe my work in the Georgia primary as meaningful and Clinton's victory as a defining moment in the campaign.

11. The previous directors didn't have the same kind of access that I have in part because they didn't come to the job with the political experience and existing relationships within the Administration that resulted from my work over the years on campaigns, conventions, etc.

13.I do prefer to deal with people face to face, in the hall, over lunch and at receptions. I find that sort of informal and direct interaction to be much more effective than endless memos and meetings.

20.*One* local gay newspaper printed *one* story insinuating that I was paying for my clothes out of AID Atlanta's budget, and complaining that I drove an expensive automobile (a BMW to be exact, which I happened to have had when I went to work at the Agency). The article appeared following my being named one of Atlanta's 10 best dressed executives by our leading business magazine. There was some criticism regarding my continued involvement in fundraising activities for several other causes, such as the Ballet and the March of Dimes, that I had been involved in for many years prior to my involvement in AIDS. Those activities did, on occasion, land me on the society pages. And, AIDS and AID Atlanta did, in fact, land in the news.

22. I had never heard the Imelda Marcos reference until my appointment to this job. It was in a press release from Act-up, but nobody seems to know where the reference came from. I suppose if they couldn't criticize my accomplishments they had to head for my closets!

23. This reference was to the original article that I referred to in #20, where I was criticized for wearing designer clothes and driving a BMW. My response was indicating that some critics had a difficult time reconciling their image of me with the kind of work I was doing. Had I dressed like some aging hippie and driven an old VW I think their comfort level might have been elevated. In their view, I suppose, the proverbial book didn't match the cover. However, all of our grandmothers warned us not to judge a book by it's cover.

24.I certainly did not characterize the White House decision to make me AIDS czar as "tacky". Had I thought that I obviously would not have taken the job. However, I may well have jokingly referred to having them ask me to consider taking the job just after I had gotten settled into the job I had wanted all my life as "tacky".It was sort of like signing up for duty in Bali and then getting asked to volunteer for an important assignment in Bosnia!

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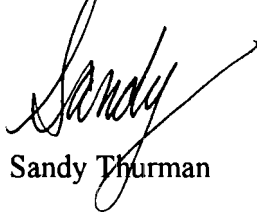
often lacking in good conversation. It tends to be centered on the same old stuff....work, work, work. Not much new and different

28 .The office *was* a bit “crummy” before it was cleaned up and painted. Now it looks great. And it is close enough to everyone in the White House to whom we might need access.

Thanks so much for taking the time to confirm this information.

I hope this is helpful. If you have any questions or need additional information, please give me a call at (202) 632-1090.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Sandy", with a long, sweeping horizontal line extending to the right.

Sandy Thurman

Dear Rob,

I have attempted to answer as many questions with "yes" or "no" as possible. However, several of the questions and "quotes" required further explanation or clarification.

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