

## HILLARY CLEANS HOUSE

By Lloyd Grove and Donnie Radcliffe March 5, 1994

From upstairs in the counsel's office, to backstairs among the kitchen and ushers staffs, it was a rotten day at the White House.

Yesterday, while White House counsel Bernard Nussbaum was apparently making agonizing preparations to fall on his sword, White House chef Pierre Chambrin and three of his underlings submitted their resignations, and veteran usher Chris Emery was handed his walking papers.

According to sources, Emery's dismissal is an extremely rare if not unprecedented development in the century-long history of the White House Ushers Office, a highly sensitive four-person operation that is privy to the most personal details of life in the residence, supervises the running of the mansion and caters to the needs of the First Family -- and where lifetime employment is the norm.

Sources said Emery, 36, who joined the ushers staff in March 1987 under Ronald and Nancy Reagan, was called in by chief usher Gary Walters around noon Thursday and told that yesterday would be his last day. An agitated Walters told the stunned Emery -- who supports a wife, an 8-year-old daughter and three older stepchildren on his \$50,000-plus a year salary -- that First Lady Hillary Rodham Clinton demanded his termination. According to sources, Walters gave Emery the vague explanation that the First Lady was "uncomfortable" with him.

"He was asked to leave," Neel Lattimore, a spokesman for Mrs. Clinton, said yesterday. "There is restructuring going on in the ushers office. It is unfair to say any more than that."

According to several accounts, the Clintons had considered making wholesale changes in the ushers office since the beginning of the administration -- despite the longstanding tradition of longevity in those jobs. But they decided to wait, sources said, after the abrupt dismissal of the White House Travel Office staff blew up into a scandal.

Sources said that the president himself effusively thanked Emery last Monday night, when the usher gave the Clintons' dinner guest, British Prime Minister John Major, a short history of the Lincoln Bedroom during an impromptu tour. The First Lady, who never gave Emery any indication that his service was wanting, has not spoken to him about his termination, sources said.

"The ushers know every single thing there is to know about the First Family," said a former White House staffer familiar with that operation. "These people know what time they go to bed, they know when they're in the bath or in the shower, they get their

laundry done and they control gate access -- they know everyone who comes into the private quarters." The ushers also keep the accounts of the residence.

According to one person who spoke yesterday to Chambrin -- who has run the White House kitchen since 1990 -- the chef quit of his own accord after a series of frustrating incidents involving his interaction with the First Lady's staff over menus and the numbers of guests, as well as the president and First Lady's habit of scheduling and then canceling social occasions -- only to reschedule them again at the last minute. But other sources said the chef's menus and food preparation did not satisfy the First Lady's taste for American cuisine. He was apparently offended by Mrs. Clinton's use of outside chefs as consultants.

Sources said sous-chef John Moeller, Chambrin's second-in-command, along with assistant chef Sean Haddon and dishwasher Adam Collick, were asked to submit their resignations, effective at the end of March, with the understanding that they could reapply for their jobs once a new executive chef is hired.

"The kitchen is at the heart of the house, because it is involved in every event, and it represents the style and the taste of the president and First Lady," said a White House social staffer from a previous administration.