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Memo:THE FALL OF THE FRONT-RUNNER

PICTURES WITH WOMAN HELPED END CAMPAIGN

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The straw that broke the back of **Gary Hart's** presidential campaign was an envelope obtained by The Washington Post from an anonymous source who provided photographs of Hart in the company of a Washington woman. Although Post editors declined to talk on the record, one person closely involved in the incident said the newspaper received an anonymous telephone call Tuesday, two days after The Miami Herald reported that the Democratic front-runner had spent time with Miami model-actress Donna Rice at his Washington townhouse while Hart's wife was in Colorado.

The caller offered The Post an envelope with material on Hart, and left it at an office to be picked up, said the source. The source would describe the contents only as documented evidence of a recent liaison between Hart and a local woman with whom he has had a long-term relationship. The evidence included "tame photographic material . . . not dirty pictures," he said. "You're not talking about people swinging on chandeliers." He said the newspaper does not have any indication that the person who provided the damaging evidence is connected with another political camp and was seeking to sabotage the Hart campaign. "It could

have been anybody," including someone with a personal grievance against Hart or someone with a hot story, he said.

According to the source, this is what happened:

Post reporters checked out the material and concluded by Wednesday night that it was accurate. A Post reporter covering the Hart campaign in New Hampshire told Hart press secretary Kevin Sweeney about the material late that night. The reporter tried to ask Hart directly about the material. Hart was informed immediately about the material but would not talk to the reporter.

On Thursday morning, Hal Haddon, a senior campaign aide and friend of Hart, called Post Executive Editor Benjamin C. Bradlee. Haddon read Bradlee a press statement that was being released in New Hampshire about the campaign being suspended, and he told Bradlee of Hart's intention to withdraw from the presidential race.

The Post reported Friday that Haddon requested that the woman's name not be revealed. Bradlee said the newspaper had no intention of naming the woman. "We never got to the point of making a decision about what to do with the material because by the time we got a reaction, it was overtaken by a bigger story -- Hart withdrawing from the race," said the source. "The material became a secondary element, and there was no point in naming the woman."

By Thursday afternoon, rumors were spreading wildly through the national news media that The Post had a blockbuster of a story about Hart and that he was pulling out of the race as a result.

The names of half a dozen women -- ranging from an actress on a television series to the wife of a former U.S. senator -- came up as news organizations chased reports about The Post's alleged story. There also were rumors that The Post would link Hart to cocaine use and prostitutes.

One rumor had The Post threatening to run a damaging story about his sex life unless Hart resigned, but Bradlee insisted the newspaper made "no ultimatums" and engaged in no negotiations.

Bradlee said Friday that The Post was interested in pursuing the story because "it's not about infidelity, but about lying."

"The question was whether a presidential candidate told the truth or lied, and the evidence showed that he was telling a lie."