

She's No Lady'--She's A Lawyer

Washington

If there is one thing Jill Wine Volner doesn't like, it is to be asked about her miniskirts; if there is another, it is to be described as a "woman lawyer."

So it was understandable that Mrs. Volner, an assistant Watergate prosecutor, might have been less than pleased when Judge John J. Sirica referred to her and the witness she was questioning as "two ladies" arguing.

Mrs. Volner's expression did not change as the spectators laughed, and she went on calmly asking Rose Mary Woods, President Nixon's secretary, how it came about that the efficient Miss Woods had inadvertently erased some 18 minutes of dialogue from a tape.

But some who saw her later said that Mrs. Volner was indeed angry at the

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judge's interruption of her questioning with a chiding, "All right, we have enough problems without two ladies getting into an argument."

The 30-year-old Mrs. Volner is the latest young lawyer to emerge into celebrity from the welter of Watergate courtroom proceedings. The publicity, something no prosecutor with as-

pirations can be expected to dislike entirely, has had its unfortunate aspects.

For one thing, a substantial part of the attention has included references to Mrs. Volner's miniskirts: "My hemline is irrelevant," she said when asked about her style of dress. "The question is — do I ask good questions?"

And for another, the Volners' northwest Washington apartment has been burgled twice, most recently last week, after her sharp exchanges with Miss Woods made headlines. The other time was last summer, when she was the first woman named to the special Watergate prosecution task force.

Mrs. Volner is generally cool and competent. Some courtroom critics have said she might press Miss Woods harder than she does; others maintain that Mrs. Volner's low-key style is deceptive.

Since joining the Watergate force in July, Mrs. Volner has been working 16-hour days and, generally, six-day weeks. Her husband, Ian David Volner, whom she met and married when they were both in law school at Columbia University, described his wife as a "restless personality." When not working, he said, she likes cooking, doing needlepoint, painting or reading, particularly Russian novelists.

Since their legal specialties are so different — Volner is a partner in a firm specializing in communications law — there is no real problem about shoptalk dominating their private



Jill Wine Volner questioned President Nixon's secretary about Watergate tapes

life, he said, adding that, besides, his wife is "very circumspect." But he added, "We have

occasionally had glorious battles. Once, she belted me with a hairbrush when I told her that a procedure she

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was pursuing I considered fascist."

Mrs. Volner prefers to be known by her full name and has talked about hyphenating it to "Wine-Volner." She was born in Chicago on May 5, 1943, one of three children of Bert S. and Sylvia Wine. Her father is a certified public accountant.

She attended the Skokie, Ill., public high school and then went to the University of Illinois in Urbana, to study journalism. She planned to be a political writer, and she has said that she first went to law school only to take law courses that would aid her in this career.

Her interest in criminal law, she has said, developed only after she moved to Washington, where her husband had a job with the Federal Communications Commission. Once there she herself was offered a job with the Justice Department's organized crime division.

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