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IN DEFENSE OF HIMSELF:
A RHETORICAL ANALYSIS OF SELECTED ACCOUNTS OF
WILLIAM JEFFERSON CLINTON'S EXCUSES AND APOLIGIES

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Abstract

The purpose of this thesis is to analyze the rhetorical apologia of President William Jefferson Clinton. The analysis is grounded in the theory of image restoration which holds that most human beings "engage in recurrent patterns of communicative behavior designed to reduce, redress, or avoid damage to their reputation (or face or image) from perceived wrong-doing" (Benoit, 1995, p. vii). The study will examine multiple accounts given by Clinton, over a 20-year time span, to discern the similarities of the rhetorical situations and his responses to those situations. Fragments (McGee, 1990), as opposed to finished speeches, will be used to consider how Clinton, in the face of actual, perceived, or potential damage to his reputation over time, attempted to defend his image through the use of accounts, excuses, and apologies.

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

On December 11, 1998, after seven days of hearings, a split House Judiciary Committee voted to recommend the impeachment of President William Jefferson Clinton. On a straight party-line vote of 21-16, the Committee approved an article of impeachment asserting that Clinton committed perjury before special prosecutor Kenneth Starr's grand jury, a grand jury originally convened to investigate a failed Arkansas real estate deal involving Clinton nearly 20 years previously but which expanded over time to include accusations of fraud, obstruction of justice and abuse of power.

Eight days later, on December 19, 1998, the House of Representatives impeached William Jefferson Clinton, 42nd President of the United States, charging him with high crimes and misdemeanors for lying under oath and obstructing justice. Though it was only the second time in American history that a sitting president had been impeached, impeachment did not signal the end of Clinton's presidency. In spite of this humiliating experience, Clinton not only remained in office, he continued to enjoy an unprecedented personal popularity among Americans, giving credence to Ware and Linkugel's (1973) observation that "The questioning of a man's moral nature, motives, or reputation is qualitatively different from the challenging of his policies" (p. 412).

Historically, the impeachment of a President has carried with it a strongly negative connotation of political failure. The House of Representatives has initiated proceedings against two presidents, Andrew Johnson and Richard M. Nixon, both of whom resigned before the full House voted. In 1879, Secretary of War William Belknap achieved the distinction of being the only subordinate executive officer ever impeached. Among federal judges there have been 58 impeachment investigations, leading to 13

impeachments, 11 trials, and seven convictions. Three convictions occurred during the 1980's, two of which resulted not only in the removal of the judges, but also their disqualification from holding further federal office (Shane, 1998).

Paradoxically, many Americans did not, and still do not, perceive Clinton as a political failure. In a Gallup Poll survey conducted on December 10, 1998, 71% of Americans thought Clinton was guilty of charges brought on impeachment. However, less than 50% of Americans felt that the charges were serious enough to justify impeachment. In a Gallup Poll taken the next day (Dec. 11,) asking "Overall, would you say Bill Clinton is fit or unfit to be President of the United States?" 62% replied that Bill Clinton was fit. Yet Clinton's responses to accusations of lying under oath and obstructing justice, events that led to his indictment and appearance before Kenneth Starr's Grand Jury, were only the most recent in a series of apologies, excuses, and explanations for things he had said, actions he had taken, and mistakes he had made throughout the course of his political career.

Americans have remained captivated not only by the political acumen of President Clinton, but by his questionable moral and ethical choices, made while holding what is arguably the most powerful political office on earth. Fascination with this President, fueled by instant access to information and opinions of his questionable moral choices, gives testament to the observation, "When Bill Clinton is good, he is very, very good, and when he's bad, he's exactly like he has been all his life" (Benoit, 1999, p. 127).

Fortunately for Clinton, life affords worse tragedies than having to apologize for one's actions, deeds or utterances. He did, after all, serve out his second term. It is in studying the apologies that researchers can find new ways of analyzing information that is already known. That is, particular bits of information may help explain or illustrate

some pattern of behavior, thought, or way of thinking about rhetorical strategies and techniques available to politicians to defend themselves from attacks on their integrity and character. Studying examples of Clinton's apologies can at least give us some insight into his combination of circumstances regarding the evolving public perception of his moral nature, his reputation, and his motives in regards his apologetic discourse.

Further, one goal of generic criticism is to discover similarities in rhetorical patterns over time and in recurring instances. Foss (1996) notes, "The generic critic attempts to understand rhetorical practices in different time periods and in different places by discerning the similarities in rhetorical situations and the rhetoric constructed in response to them" (p. 225). It is for this reason that eleven of Clinton's apologies, covering seven episodes, over a 20-year political period, will be examined.

To better understand Clinton's accounts and apologies regarding the behaviors culminating in his impeachment, the scope of this study will include: the mea culpa to the constituents of Arkansas during his 1982 second run for governor; the denial, during the 1992 presidential campaign, of inhaling while smoking marijuana and avoiding the draft when called to serve in Vietnam; the denials of sexual improprieties with Gennifer Flowers and Paula Jones; and the denials of questionable business practices in the Whitewater land deal. This study will conclude with Clinton's denials, while serving as President of the United States, of having an affair with Monica Lewinsky and of perjuring himself about that affair before the Grand Jury.

The accounts Clinton gave in these particular incidents are categorized as apologies. Broadly speaking, this thesis investigates the extent to which Clinton's apologies represent recurring situations and responses that can be said to reflect some pattern of thinking and/or behavior. In the numerous speeches to which generic criticism

(the examination of a number of speeches in order to draw conclusions about categories of rhetoric), and specifically apologia, can be applied, a defined and convincing interpretation of speech events is one that provides the simplest, most sensible account of why something happened. For scholars and others interested in studying how politicians defend themselves, an analysis of these accounts can provide insight into Clinton's motives and strategies and possibly highlight consequences his past has for present and future politics and politicians.

While it is impossible to gauge what historians 200 years from now will have to say about William Jefferson Clinton, it is possible, through current rhetorical examination, to influence a standard against which we measure present-day political figures. Selected examination of Clinton's apologies, excuses, and accounts may also serve to illuminate aspects of beliefs, attitudes and values, in short, the moral climate of America.

TEXTS

It should be noted that with the exception of one response, most of the accounts to be analyzed here are mere paragraphs or fragments. The question of what constitutes a text can be justified both practically and theoretically. First, "The discourse as it is delivered to its audience/readers is considered 'finished,' whole, clearly and obviously the object (target) of critical analysis." Second, "Every bit of discourse invites its own critique" (McGee, 1990, p. 279). Most of Clinton's responses to allegations of misconduct over the past 20 years constitutes discursive fragments as opposed to finished speeches. McGee explains that contemporary discourse reflects this type of fragmentation:

One clear truth will not change: The public's business is now being

done more often via direct mail, television spots, and "quotable quotes" on the evening news. The solution is to look for formations of texts rather than the text as a place to begin analysis. I want to keep clear that we are dealing with fragments, not texts, only then can we interpret, analyze, and criticize (p. 286-7).

Thus, various fragments will ultimately be examined as texts for interpretation, analysis and criticism.

In examining the rhetorical apologia of William Jefferson Clinton, seven particular episodes will be surveyed. First, the scope of this analysis will include Clinton's account of his 1982 *mea culpa* to the constituents of Arkansas, addressing his second term loss as governor in 1980. Second, this analysis will include Clinton's response, in 1978, to questions surrounding his draft deferment during the Viet Nam War. Third, analysis will include Clinton's remarks made during the 1992 Presidential Campaign relating his experience with smoking marijuana and his inability to "inhale." Fourth and fifth, Clinton's responses to allegations of marital infidelity (in 1992 with Gennifer Flowers and in 1995 with Paula Jones) will be examined. The sixth account in this examination will focus on Clinton's 1992 and 1996 responses regarding the 1978 land partnership deal, which came to be known as the Whitewater Scandal. Seventh, accounts of Clinton's 1998 apologies to the nation for his untruthful account regarding his affair with Monica Lewinsky will be analyzed.

PURPOSE

The purpose of this thesis will be to analyze the rhetorical apologia of President Bill Clinton. The analysis will reveal that most human beings, including Clinton, "engage in recurrent patterns of communicative behavior designed to reduce, redress, or avoid damage to their reputation (or face or image) from perceived wrong-doing" (Benoit, 1995, p.vii). The study will attempt to look at multiple accounts given by

Clinton over a 20-year time span to discern the similarities of the rhetorical situations, and responses to those situations, and observe how closely they exemplify general theory of image restoration. Finally, this analysis will consider how Clinton, in the face of actual, perceived, or potential damage to his reputation over time, attempted to defend his image through the use of accounts, excuses and apologies.

LITERATURE REVIEW-CLINTON BIOGRAPHIES

Bill Clinton is the most investigated president since Richard Nixon. Numerous biographies have been published documenting Clinton's involvement with incidents such as Whitewater, draft dodging, and marital infidelity. (As could be expected, some of the biographies are more favorable than others are, the biographies represented here are meant to serve as a cross section of reference material.) An overview of several biographies sets forth an initial personal context and communication focus for Clinton's responses to those incidents.

Research on Bill Clinton: Two biographies published in 1992 delineate Clinton's career as Governor of Arkansas and his first bid for the presidency of the United States. In The Comeback Kid (Allen and Portis, 1992), the authors provide information on Clinton's accomplishments and on the vital issues of his character and judgment surrounding charges of sexual misconduct, illicit drug use and avoiding the draft during the Vietnam War. Another early biography, Clinton: Young Man in a Hurry (Moore, 1992), details Clinton's rising political career and provides detailed background information about his gubernatorial campaigns. Jim Moore also gives considerable attention to Clinton's drug use and allegations of draft dodging and their potential impact on his campaign for the Presidency.

Two of the first biographies published after Clinton won his first Presidential

election include some of the earliest revelations regarding Clinton's involvement with the Whitewater land deal. In The Clinton Chronicles Book (Matrisciana, 1994), Patrick Matrisciana provides documentation to support claims made by former Clinton colleagues regarding Clinton's draft dodging, promiscuous lifestyle and Whitewater. Written as a result of the interest in a video titled "Clinton Chronicles Video" (1994), Matrisciana expands on information originally provided in the video and offers a more in-depth account of what actually occurred during Clinton's rise to power in Arkansas.

In On The Edge (Drew, 1994), Elizabeth Drew's report includes one of the first accounts of Clinton's White House. In addition to other issues of his early presidency, Drew focuses extensively on the distractions and character issues he dealt with over the Whitewater scandal.

In First in His Class: The Biography of Bill Clinton (1995), considered one of the most definitive works to date and his first of two books about Clinton, David Maraniss provides extensive accounts and background information in areas directly applicable to this analysis. His historical review of Clinton's draft dodging, pot smoking and marital infidelities, along with his responses to those incidents, are of particular importance regarding accounts, excuses and apologies made by Clinton. In The Clinton Enigma (1998), Maraniss offers additional background information of Clinton's four-and-a-half minute speech to the American public regarding his testimony about Monica Lewinsky before the grand jury.

Published in the same year as First in His Class, Richard Odom, in Circle of Death: Clinton's Climb to the Presidency (1995), adds historical detail to deeds surrounding Whitewater while Bill Clinton was Governor of Arkansas. He includes in his analysis accounts from colleagues involved with the land deal during its inception and

planning stages.

The following year Roger Morris published Partner's in Power (1996). His investigative account goes behind the White House facade to expose, along with the politics and personalities, the moral compromises that marked the tenure of Clinton's first Presidential term. Noted as a dual biography of the first couple, Partner's in Power goes beyond the surface accounts of Clinton's banking and commodity deals and the Whitewater imbroglio. As well, Morris reveals abuses of power in covering up sexual infidelities and tells a far more sinister account of Clinton's history of drug use, a history that goes beyond a mere inability to inhale marijuana.

In the first two years of Clinton's second term as Commander in Chief, numerous books were published detailing his first term as president. In 1997, Elaine Laudau published Bill Clinton and His Presidency. Laudau documents the land deals and financial entanglement culminating in what became known as the Whitewater scandal. As well, she includes background information on the problems that Clinton faced early in his political career, most notably, his efforts to avoid the draft.

Of the several Clinton biographies that appeared in 1998, four are relevant to this inquiry. Vincent Bugliosi gives in-depth information regarding Clinton's affair with Paula Jones in No Island of Sanity: Paula Jones V. Bill Clinton: The Supreme-Court on Trial (1998). Bugliosi thoroughly delineates the court proceeding by recounting the Supreme Court deliberations over whether or not to delay Jones's lawsuit. The reader learns details about the incident with Paula Jones at the Excelsior Hotel in Little Rock, Arkansas.

In High -Crimes and Misdemeanors: The Case Against Bill Clinton (1998), Ann Coulter devotes considerable time to Monica Lewinsky, but also includes other Clinton

controversies such as Paula Jones and Whitewater. Though the focus of her analysis is the impeachment process, her conservative point of view highlights background data and a case for impeachment, Clinton's denials notwithstanding.

In Spin Cycle -Inside the Clinton Propaganda Machine (1998), Howard Kurtz provides background material to illustrate the strategies used to counter the scandals caused by Clinton's involvement in the Whitewater affair, his sexual misconduct and other incidents that his advisors would have preferred were kept hidden. Kurtz reveals how Clinton's advisors dealt with the challenge of "spinning" the allegations and Clinton's responses to those allegations, to their advantage.

Finally, in Death of Outrage: Bill Clinton and the Assault on American Ideals (1998), William Bennett takes issue with Clinton's private and public conduct. He reviews the rhetorical defenses made by Clinton to Kenneth Starr's independent counsel. His analysis is brief and historically documented yet to the point and supported with primary sources, including Clinton's own words. Bennett puts Clinton's accounts in perspective, relative to a politically conservative judgment of the President's conduct.

These biographies collectively will aid in constructing an historical context surrounding the various accounts, excuses and apologies given by Clinton over the course of his political career. They provide background material that sets the stage leading up to what Clinton said in response to various predicaments and, ultimately, by force of circumstance, why he said what he said in response to those predicaments.

Further, as any rhetorical/biographical creation is part of a larger historical reference, antecedent to and predicated upon other history, it is possible that a rhetorical analysis of Clinton's political apologia may serve to illuminate or give new perspective to Clinton's political history. In other words, perhaps this study, based on current

historical review, may help future scholars better understand what led Bill Clinton into the arena of political self-defense.

LITERATURE REVIEW - RHETORICAL THEORY

Generic criticism will be used to analyze fragments of Clinton's accounts. Sonja Foss (1996) notes:

Generic criticism... is rooted in the assumption that certain types of situations provoke similar needs and expectations among audiences and thus, call for particular kinds of rhetoric. In other words, rather than focus on any one singular event to explicate a rhetorical act, generic criticism seeks to uncover rhetorical patterns across recurring situations (p. 225).

As particular instances demanded particular types of responses, genre criticism is an appropriate choice for analyzing Clinton's excuses and accounts. Genre criticism is rooted in rhetorical criticism, that is, "the investigation and evaluation of rhetorical acts and artifacts for the purpose of understanding rhetorical processes" (Foss, 1989, p. 5).

Assumptions of Generic Criticism: The generic frame of reference was first introduced by Edwin Black in Rhetorical Criticism: A Study in Method (1965). For Black, a generic perspective presumed that:

1) There is a limited number of ways in which a rhetor can find himself;
2) there is a limited number of ways in which a rhetor can and will respond rhetorically to any given situational type; 3) the recurrence of a given situational type through history will provide the critic with information on the rhetorical responses available in that situation; 4) although we can expect congregations of rhetorical discourses to form at distinct points along the scale, these points will be more or less arbitrary (p. 14).

Black's observations were merely a precursor of the plethora of essays that appeared in support of the affinities between discourses of different kinds as well as to suggest generic clusterings.

In 1968, Lloyd Bitzer argued that it was the situation that called particular discourse into existence. Bitzer maintained that to identify a situation as rhetorical would be to define it as:

a complex of persons, events, objects, and relations presenting an actual or potential exigence which can be completely or partially removed if discourse, introduced into the situation, can so constrain human decision or action as to bring about the significant modification of the exigence (pg. 11).

In other words, rhetorical discourse comes into being when a rhetor determines there is a situation to which s/he can respond. Further, it must be a fitting response, one that is prescribed by the situation. Recurring situations, such as eulogies, speeches of defense, etc., then provide scholars with a body of rhetorical literature to draw upon. Bitzer states, "From day to day, year to year, comparable situations occur, prompting comparable responses; hence rhetorical forms are born and a special vocabulary, grammar, and style are established" (p. 14).

In the same vein, Lawrence Rosenfield (1968) published an essay using a generic perspective to compare apologetic speeches by Harry Truman and Richard Nixon. He established criticism as a variety of discourses that resulted from a stance or position taken about an assertion. In distinguishing critical discourse from merely assertive discourse, he states that critics should "Examine several instances of discourse which we would definitely wish to call criticism and seek to discover its typical features" (p. 435).

The concerns and interests initiated by these scholars and essays resulted in an explosion of articles describing "genres." Literary critic Northrop Frye (1957), who identified the forms within genres as "typical recurring images," foreshadowed many of these early observations. Frye explained that formal similarities establish genres and that the forms relevant to genres are complex forms present in all discourse (p. 95-115). In other words, when a generic claim is made, the situation differs significantly in that the critic is arguing that a group of discourses has a basic core that contains certain elements. The elements, a belief system, lines of argument, stylistic choices and a perception of the

circumstances, are combined to encompass certain rhetorical problems that reflect a particular view or stance that reveals the tension or relationship among these elements.

Campbell and Jamieson (1976) state:

- ✓ A genre does not consist merely of a series of acts in which certain rhetorical forms recur. It is conceivable that parallelism and antithesis
- / might recur jointly without establishing a generic similarity. Instead, a genre is composed of a constellation of recognizable forms bound together by an internal dynamic (p. 21).

Understanding genres from a "fusion of elements" or "constellation of forms" perspective allows one to distinguish between classification and generic analysis. Likewise, these different levels or kinds of meaning require different critical perspectives. Campbell and Jamieson note, "Because all works are not only unique but also resemble other works, generic criticism is essential" (p. 23). Frye (1957), according to Campbell and Jamieson, had previously recognized that:

Part of the meaning of a work is derived from the tradition of which it is a part, from the conventions it observes. The conventions found in a discourse indicate the tradition to which it belongs and the works to which it has close affinities (p. 25).

As generic criticism looks at rhetorical choices across various situations through categorization, artifacts are often grouped according to similarities. In genre criticism, one group is seen as sharing some characteristic that differentiates it from another group. Foss (1996) proposed that genre is composed of three elements: situational elements (conditions that elicit certain types of response) substantive and stylistic characteristics (those elements that make up the content and form of the rhetoric), and an organizing principle (the root term or features that labels or puts a name to the situational, substantive and stylistic characteristics). Thus, apologia may be differentiated from, for example, eulogistic discourses, political campaign discourses, and so forth.

By examining a number of speeches or texts in order to draw conclusions about

categories of rhetoric, genre criticism allows for an understanding of the construction of social reality and its relationship to rhetoric. Additionally, genres reflect patterns for thought and meaning; thus, they can also reflect attitudes and values of larger communities or societies. As Foss (1996) explains, "it also allows critics to study how rhetorical acts-influence each other and how rhetoric is shaped by prior rhetoric" (p. 227). The evolution of rhetoric in a particular culture "and the threads that unite the rhetoric of a culture" (p.227) can thus be realized or understood.

Classification of rhetoric also allows for greater understandings or interpretations of the rhetoric. "It encourages critics to recognize that numerous and divergent systems of classification are possible" (Foss, 1996, p.227). Classification, or defining a genre, can be accomplished by observing similarities in rhetorical responses to particular situations and then analyzing the artifacts to discern whether or not they share characteristics. In other words, a rhetorical critic would seek commonalties in how the rhetors dealt with the perceived problem in the situation.

For example, Ware and Linkugel (1973) analyzed the characteristics of self-defense speeches. They note, "Classification of a genre is not criticism in itself, but does allow critics to discover strategies that recur in particular types of rhetoric" (p. 281). In their 1973 article "They Spoke in Defense of Themselves: On the Generic Criticism of Apologia," the authors delineate particular elements that occur in apologia. This classification gives critics a means for identifying specific persuasive tactics that speakers use to defend themselves.

In another example of "classification," Campbell and Jamieson held that Presidential inaugurals constituted a genre. In "Inaugurating the Presidency" (1986), they

identify inaugurals as a subspecies of discourse Aristotle called epideictic, that is, a speech in praise or blame of someone or some thing.

In John Murphy's essay "A Time of Shame and Sorrow: Robert F. Kennedy and the American Jeremiad" (1986), the rhetorical classification of the jeremiad was used to illustrate how Kennedy attempted to restore social harmony in a time of crisis. Of the Jeremiad Foss noted, "The Jeremiad limits the scope of reform and the depth of social criticism (Foss, 1996, p. 270).

In short, classifications in rhetorical criticism form clusters of opinion or genres of rhetorical discourse. There are any number of genres, and as Edwin Black (1978) states:

One of the major objectives of rhetorical criticism is to enrich our understanding of the rhetorical uses of language, critics can probably do their work better by seeing and disclosing the elements common to many discourses rather than the singularities of a few (p. 177).

Apologia as a Rhetorical Genre: The classification or genre of apologia is of particular concern to this inquiry. Rather than gauge the effects of a single discourse, the focus here will be to discern the effects of the process of apologia. Analyzing examples of apologetic discourse can help explicate public addresses of remorse.

Ware and Linkugel (1973) believe apologetic discourse constitutes a distinct form of public address and thus, warrants generic status. They state:

The recurrent theme of accusation followed by apology is so prevalent in our record of public address as to be, in the words of Kenneth Burke, one of those "situations typical and recurrent enough for men to feel the need of having a name for them" (p. 273-74).

In Rhetorical Criticism: A Study in Method, Edwin Black (1965), observed that his examination of argumentation "has been gross; that is, we have not discriminated among the types of discourse within the genre" (p. 176). Ware and Linkugel note that

Black's criticism of his own study paved the way for consideration of apologia as a genre in its own right. That is, the genre of apologia adheres to those identifying factors set forth by early scholars. Campbell and Jamieson (1978) state, "they conform to stylistic and substantive responses to perceived situational demands" and " ..the recurrence of the forms together in constellation" and " ...recognizable forms bound together by an internal dynamic" (p. 21).

B. Baskerville's (1952) review of Richard Nixon's "Checkers" speech is among the earliest examples of defensive discourse. Baskerville exposed weaknesses in Nixon's argument that, according to Campbell and Jamieson "did not serve to answer the charges that had been made" (p. 28). J.H. Jackson's (1956) analysis of Clarence Darrow, a traditional neo-Aristotelian criticism, evaluated the effectiveness of Darrow's defense against charges of jury tampering. Foss notes of Jackson's analysis that it highlighted Darrow's use of transcendence strategies to formulate an implicit comparison between his own character and that of his prosecutors in his "They Tried to Get Me" speech (Foss, 1989, p. 131). Another early example of self-defense rhetoric occurred when W.L. Rosenfield (1968) undertook an analogic analysis of Nixon's "Checkers" speech and a speech by Harry S. Truman. Rosenfield segmented "four similarities in the two discourses which I take, at this time, to represent constants in the apologetic equation" (p. 436). Campbell and Jamieson (1978) note of Rosenfield's analogs that they "serve to enumerate the factors of generic similarity and dissimilarity" (p. 15).

Other critics, such as Chesbro and Hamsher (1974) and S.D. Butler (1971) extended Rosenfield's work (Chesbro and Hamsher published an analog analysis of speeches by MacArthur and Agnew; Butler analyzed Senator Edward Kennedy's

Chappaquiddick address). Rosenfield's analog theory eventually fell into disuse and was overtaken by Ware and Linkugel's characterization of apologia as a genre.

Drawing on the work of noted social psychologist Robert Ableson (1958), Ware and Linkugel (1973) identified four strategies of self-defense: denial, bolstering, differentiation, and transcendence (p. 275). Additionally, they identified four potential postures or stances of self-defense. Speeches of self-defense they claim, use either denial or bolstering coupled with either differentiation or transcendence (p. 276). The authors established four apologetic postures or stances of self-defense:

Absolutive:	Denial and Differentiation
Vindicative:	Denial and Transcendence
Explanative:	Bolstering and Differentiation
Justificative:	Bolstering and Transcendence

Ware and Linkugel (1973) further delineated two objectives regarding speeches of self-defense. First they established factors that characterized speeches of apology: "Factor analytic theory as it is known in the social sciences serves merely as a source for a new departure in thought with regard to the criticism of public address" (p. 276). Second, they categorized sub-genres within the genre of apologia: "Just as the genre itself is a rough grouping of speeches on the basis of occurrence in a situation of attack and defense of character, our divisions of the genre are merely working sub categorizations of apologetic discourses" (p. 276).

Numerous rhetorical scholars and critics have elaborated upon the genre of apologia. As well, though it has been applied mostly to speeches by political figures, the approach has also been used to analyze the rhetoric of sports figures, religious discourse and corporate discourse.

Using the concept of guilt Kenneth Burke (1973) extended another approach to

understanding self-defense strategies. Burke contended that guilt represents an undesirable state of affairs or unpleasant feelings which occur when expectations of behavior are violated (p. 39). He explained that there are two processes for expunging guilt: victimage and mortification. Victimage involves passing the guilt off to someone or something other than the person originally accused. Mortification involves accepting the blame, confessing, and then requesting forgiveness to restore one's image (p. 39). David Ling (1970) argued that in his 1969 Chappaquiddick address, Edward Kennedy attempted to shift the blame for the accident and Mary Jo Kopechne's death to the scene, that is, Kennedy passed the guilt off to the circumstances of the setting and away from any fault on his part.

Drawing on Burke, Brummett (1982) stated, "Burke argues that when people's actions in social hierarchies estrange and divide them from others, guilt is produced which must be removed symbolically" (p. 547). Brummett suggested that Richard Nixon, in his Watergate speech, attempted to pass the guilt off to the trappings of his office. Conversely, Brummett's analysis of Jimmy Carter's 1979 "Crisis of Confidence" speech exemplified mortification (Carter admitted guilt to wasting energy).

E .R. Gold (1978) offered another analytical view of victimage in her review of Nixon and Watergate. She explained, "The president himself issued fifteen statements...held eight press conferences, and made four television appearances, on each of these occasions, Nixon tried to disentangle himself from the Watergate problem. Yet his great apologetic edifice of denials, explanations, bolstering, and differentiation, tumbled abruptly when he resigned" (p. 309). To some extent Dean, Mitchell, and Ehrlichman all employ mortification, while Haldeman denied any wrongdoing, shifting

the blame to Dean for all improprieties.

The next stage in the development of understanding self-defense discourse stemmed from H.R Ryan's (1982) argument that "one must carefully consider the defense (apologia) in light of the specific attack (kategoria)" (p. 256-61). Ryan extends the genre to include attacks on policy as well as character and draws a relationship between Ware and Linkugel's theory and his analysis:

In apology for policy, I contend that Cicero's four stases correspond to Ware and Linkugel's four postures in apology for character. The apologist for policy absolves himself of the fact (I did not do it), he explains the definition (I did not do what is alleged), he justifies the quality (I had laudable intentions), and he vindicates the jurisdiction (I appeal to a different audience or judge) (p. 257).

Ryan (1982) contends application of accusation and apology as a speech set can be seen in examples such as President Nixon's acknowledgment that "he had the fund - which fact he never denied in apologizing for his character" (259). In another example, "Mary Queen of Scots admitted that she had sent letters to Queen Elizabeth I's enemies, but she contended the letters could not be defined as treasonous" (p. 259). In his "Oratorical Encounters: Selected Studies and Sources of Twentieth- Century Political Accusations and Apologies" (1988). Ryan analyzed eighteen case studies of oratorical encounters between speeches of accusation and defense.

Other studies reflect Ryan's approach. Benoit (1995) analyzed Kennedy's Chappaquiddick speech, arguing that blame was the primary strategy employed. H.R. Ryan includes in his 1988 work L.W. Haapanen's (1988) examination of the verbal battle between Khrushchev and Eisenhower regarding a U2 reconnaissance plane shot down by the Soviet Union. After a press release denied the plane had been on a spy mission, Khrushchev engaged in justification, explaining that the pilot had been captured, thus, he had evidence to prove America was lying. Eisenhower's response admitted and accepted

responsibility for "overflights," which he claimed were justified in the interests of national security.

In yet another example, Ryan (1988) cites J.R. Jensen's analysis of Geraldine Ferraro's response to accusations regarding her finances and position on abortion that revealed that Ferraro engaged in bolstering, (she had nothing to hide regarding her finances) and denial, (she denied she said the Catholic Church's views on abortion weren't monolithic).

These examples are useful in providing a foundation for understanding self-defense discourse. Specifically, they point to a commonality among speeches of self-defense. First, the discourse assumes that one's reputation is important. Second, the discourse assumes that when attacks occur, verbal means of redress exist. Third, the attacks are presumed to be sufficiently pervasive to require a theory of self-defense. The literature on apologia suggests that a limited number of defensive strategies are available to orators who choose to extend self-defense rhetoric.

Apologia in Persuasion Research: Image repair strategies regarding accounts of self-defense also has roots in the social sciences. Early assumptions include Ableson's (1959) theory pertaining to the resolution of belief dilemmas. Ware and Linkugel note of Ableson's theory, "We feel that the theory is the most fruitful source of factors pertinent to the body of apologetic rhetoric. We note at the outset that we take Ableson's theory as a starting point only" (p. 276).

Early work by John Dewey (1939) and C. Wright Mills (1940) examined motives for accounts. Defined as an utterance prompted after an undesirable act to explain or account for the act Mills stated:

When an agent vocalizes or imputes motives, he is not trying to describe

his experienced social action. He is not merely stating 'reasons.' He is influencing others and himself. Often he is finding new 'reasons', which will mediate action (p. 909).

In other words, motives were not treated as internal states of desire, but rather, as utterances that justified or explained behavior after the fact.

Of motives, Rosenfield (1968) cites Dewey's observation: "It is taking thought as to what is better and worse in any field at any time, with some consciousness of why the better is better and why the worse is worse" (p. 440).

Austin's (1961) research focused attention on "excuses," those utterances that arise when someone has done or said something inappropriate, unacceptable, or wrong, that defend his conduct or get him out of trouble. Austin suggested a person has two options: "Accept responsibility but deny that it was bad; in the other we admit that it was bad but don't accept full, if even any, responsibility" (p. 124).

The more detailed studies regarding accounts stemmed from research done by Scott and Lyman (1968). They identified an account as "a statement made by a social actor to explain unanticipated or untoward behavior" (p. 46). They also distinguished between two types of accounts: excuses and justifications. Additionally, they delineated four different types of excuses and four types of justifications.

Goffman (1971) also developed a typology of accounts as responses to face-threatening events. Using Goffman's typology, Benoit (1995) defined an account or apology as "a symbolic splitting of the self into two parts: the bad self, who committed the undesirable act, and the good self, who deplores that act" (p. 35). Goffman also included "requests" as a remedial move to a face-saving situation. Requests "consist of asking license of a potentially offended person to engage in what could be considered a violation of his rights" (p. 114). That is, requests serve to reduce the ill feeling that might result from unacceptable or untoward actions.

Schonbach (1980) using Scott and Lyman's theory of accounts, extended their analyses to include two additional categories, concessions and refusals. Concessions (along the lines of Goffman's apology) include admission of guilt and offer compensation. Refusals include statements of denial of wrongdoing, shifting the blame, and suggesting the accuser has no basis for accusation. Research done by Schonbach reveals an extended report of accounts including fourteen concessions, thirty-nine excuses, twenty-seven justifications, and forty-two refusals (p. 197).

Several essays have also addressed the question of when accounts are likely to be accepted or honored. Scott and Lyman (1968) suggest that accounts are unreasonable when they do not reflect ordinary social knowledge of reasonable behavior and expectations. In other words, the legitimacy of a claim must outweigh the offense.

Perception of accounts has also been investigated. One study found denials and excuses to be effective under certain conditions. Operating from Ware and Linkugel's theory of apologia, McClearey (1983) found that denials were more effective than bolstering when image enhancement was the goal. Other research suggests excuses can be perceived as effective when associated with honoring. Shields (1979) found that those who used excuses were perceived as more remorseful than those who employed justification or confession. However, research also showed that those who used excuses were thought to have less knowledge of the potential negative consequences of their act.

Numerous studies also reflect the impact of apology as a face-saving option. The presence of an apology, overall, creates a more favorable impression than no apology. The studies further suggested that an apology resulted in less ill will toward the wrongdoer and reduced unfavorable consequences. Holtgraves (1989) found that recipients of apologies ranked them from most to least satisfying: full-blown apology,

regret plus excuse, apology, regret, excuse, regret plus justification, justification. Thus, there is consistent support for the effectiveness of extending apologies in face-saving situations.

A number of studies address the efficacy of an account based on the extent of the wrongdoing. In general the studies supported earlier findings that an account was more likely to be acknowledged or honored when the perpetrator was not completely responsible for the offense. In other words, responsibility for an act influences the effectiveness of the account given for the act (Benoit, 1995).

One additional area of research concerning image repair strategies reveals the findings of accounts as speech acts. For example, Fraser (1981) delineated four assumptions about persons who offer apologies: the speaker acknowledges an action occurred prior to the apology, the speaker believes the action offended the listener, the speaker thinks he or she is responsible for the action, and the speaker regrets the action. Fraser also defined a number of strategies for expressing an apology.

Contributions to research on accounts as speech acts serve as a framework for determining when a particular utterance should be seen as an apology. Research in this area, as well as work on accounts and image restoration, share some key assumptions. Clearly, there are various approaches to understanding the rhetoric of image restoration; yet, the reasons for studying the rhetoric of face-saving accounts are congruous. People want to be viewed favorably, consequently, they are motivated to offer accounts of their behavior. It is assumed there are a limited number of options for repairing one's image, thus, it is useful to identify those rhetorical strategies.

A Theory of Image Restoration: Image restoration theory can be used as an

approach for understanding and evaluating apologetic discourse and will be used in this rhetorical analysis to evaluate Clinton's apologetic accounts. There are two critical assumptions that underlie William Benoit's (1995) theory of image restoration: "The first assumption made by this theory is that communication is a goal-directed activity" (p. 63). Benoit outlines the theoretical underpinning for this first assumption and concludes, "The key point here is that the view of communication as goal-directed, while perhaps not universal, pervades writing in our field, transcending particular contexts of interpersonal communication or rhetorical theory" (p. 65).

Benoit defends this assumption with four qualifications:

First, communicators may well have multiple goals. I contend that people try to achieve the goals that seem most important to them at the time they act, or to achieve the best mix of the goals that appears possible. Second, at times a person's goals, motives, or purposes are vague, ill formed, or unclear. Nevertheless, to the extent a person's goals are clear, he or she will try to behave in ways that help to accomplish them. Third, I do not claim that people devote the same amount of attention to each and every communicative encounter. In situations that are particularly important to us; however, we do plan aspects or our utterances carefully. In other situations, we devote as much cognitive effort to producing goal-directed discourse as seems reasonable and necessary to us. Finally even when an individual's goals are relatively clear, it may be difficult for others to identify a communicator's goal(s) because people sometimes attempt to deceive or mislead others about their goals. Despite these reservations, communication generally is best understood as an intentional activity (p. 64-66).

The second key assumption regarding Benoit's theory of image restoration centers on maintaining a good or favorable reputation or image as a goal of the restoration attempt. Human beings, as Benoit notes, engage in activities that make them vulnerable to attacks; he outlines four:

First, when the distribution of scarce resources fails to satisfy a person's desires, dissatisfaction occurs. It is rarely possible to satisfy everyone, so complaints naturally recur. Second, events beyond our control can prevent us from meeting our obligations. Third, people are human, and so we make mistakes-some honestly, others because of self-interests. Finally, and possibly most importantly, we often differ over goals. Conflict over goals creates dissension. These four elements-limited resources, external events, human error, and conflicting

goals-combine to insure that actual or perceived wrongdoing is a recurring feature of human behavior (p. 67-68).

Benoit's theory addresses what happens when humans believe they have suffered damage to their reputations as a result of negatively perceived actions, and answers why image is so important that it compels defensive responses. He states, "face or reputation is a crucial commodity because it contributes to a healthy self-image" (p. 69). A second reason why image is important "concerns its role in the influence process" (p. 69).

Benoit supports the conclusion that when human beings feel their reputations are threatened, they are compelled to explain, justify or defend their actions: "...this phenomenon occurs in all our lives, public and private" (p. 70).

Benoit contends that an attack of one's character or reputation is comprised of two basic components: "an act occurred which is undesirable" and "you are responsible for that action" (p. 71). Both of these components must be present; "only if the actor perceives that the salient audience believes these two conditions are true is the actor likely to employ image restoration discourse" (p. 72). First, if a person believes nothing unacceptable has occurred or that an audience will not perceive what they have done as unacceptable, then the person's image is not threatened; "...it is the actor's perceptions of the audience's beliefs, not their actual beliefs, that prompts defensive discourse" (p. 72). Second, an audience must perceive that a person is responsible for the damage to their reputation; "The key point here is not whether in fact the actor caused the damage, but whether the relevant audience believes the actor to be the source of the reprehensible act" (p. 72).

There are various types of defenses for image restoration. How they are applied helps explain how restoration strategies function. Benoit's typology of image restoration

includes five broad categories, three of which have sub-categories: denial, evading responsibility, reducing offensiveness, corrective action, and mortification. A brief synopsis of each is necessary for understanding image restoration discourse. Benoit's "Image Repair Discourse and Crisis Communication" (1997) provides a detailed synopsis and can be applied here.

Denial: a person may deny an act occurred, that they performed the act, or that the act was harmful to anyone. A second aspect of denial is shifting the blame, "arguing that another person or organization is actually responsible for the offensive act" (p. 2).

Evasion of Responsibility: this strategy has four variants. First, a person may claim their act was a response to another's offensive act, and thus an acceptable reaction. "Another specific form of evading responsibility is defeasibility" (p. 2). That is, a person may claim a certain lack of control or a lack of information regarding a situation; the lack of information or control is claimed as the excuse for their offensive action. "A third option is to claim the offensive action occurred by accident" (p. 3). Here, if a person can convince the audience that the offensive act happened accidentally, the damage to that person's image should be lessened. The fourth option centers on the suggestion that "the offensive behavior was performed with good intentions" (p. 3). The offensive act is not denied, but the audience is-asked not to hold the person responsible for the act because it was done with good intentions.

Reduce-Offensiveness: there are six variants to this strategy. First, a person may use bolstering to enhance the audience's good feelings towards them, "in order to offset the negative feelings connected with the wrongful act" (p. 3). A person may set forth their positive characteristics or reiterate positive acts they have previously accomplished to offset damage to their reputation or image. Second, a person may attempt to minimize

a negative effect. If the accused can convince an audience the offense is not as bad as it appears, the ill-will created by the negative act can be mitigated. Third, a person can employ differentiation, "in which the act is distinguished from other similar but more offensive actions" (p. 3). Here, the person attempts to distinguish the act from similar but less desirable acts to help lessen the audience's negative impression toward the person. "A fourth way of reducing offensiveness is transcendence, which attempts to place the act in a more favorable context" (p. 3). This strategy functions by placing the undesirable act in a different or unrelated context. Justifying the act by stressing the positive outcomes may help lessen the perceived offensiveness of the act and improve the image of the person's reputation. "Fifth, those accused of wrong-doing may decide to attack their accusers" (p. 3). Attacking one's accuser may divert attention from the original accusation, lessen the credibility of the accuser or create the impression that the accuser deserved the offensive act. "Compensation is a final form of reducing offensiveness" (p. 3). Here, the person may offer to reimburse or compensate the victim for the perceived wrongdoing. If the accuser accepts the compensation the negative outcome may be lessened or the reputation of the accuser may be restored.

Corrective Action: "This action can take the form of restoring the state of affairs existing before the offensive action, and/or promising to prevent the recurrence of the offensive act" (p. 4). That is "corrective action can include either restoring a situation to its existing state before the objectionable act occurred or promising to make repairs or committing to another course of more desirable actions and/or outcomes.

Mortification: "The final general strategy for image restoration is to confess and beg forgiveness" (p. 4). If the audience believes an apology is sincere they may choose to pardon or forgive an accused person's offensive act.

Regarding image restoration and the audience, Benoit (1995) states: It is important to note that we are dealing with perceptions here. The actor responds to perceived threats to his or her character. These attacks are important to the actor when they are believed to reduce the rhetor's reputation in the eyes of a group (audience) who is salient to the rhetor (p. 82).

In other words, integral to the reality that one has committed a wrongful act is the belief that others perceive the transgressor as responsible for that act. An audience's reaction to a perceived wrongdoing is what the accused uses to guide his or her image repair discourse strategy. "The apologist addresses an external audience consisting of those for whom the accused is most concerned with restoring his or her face" (p. 82).

Benoit concludes:

This theory is relatively limited in its domain. It does not address related questions, such as the initial development of a positive image or reputation. Nevertheless, the theory of image restoration is developed as an aid to understanding an important form of human communication (p. 94).

Benoit's theory of image restoration represents a relatively new methodology or framework for analyzing apologia. And though much has been written about apologetic situations, for example that rhetors are both impelled and constrained by situations (Bitzer, 1980) and that speakers can transform a rhetorical situation (Vatz, 1973), Benoit's theory pulls together much of the existing rhetorical literature and provides us with a new approach for studying rhetorical situations of excuse making and apologies. This theory will form the basis for this thesis' analysis of Clinton's apologetic discourse.

Texts and Fragments: In today's multicultural, diverse society, structures of texts are not as homogenous as they once were. In his essay "Text, Context and the Fragmentation of Contemporary Culture (1990), McGee traces the historical and philosophical underpinnings for speech criticism and approaches to criticism. He states:

With criticism as a master term, we assume that rhetoric is a form or genre of discourse presented for study. The question of what constitutes "the text" is unproblematic -the discourse as it is delivered to its

audience/readers is considered "finished" whole, clearly and obviously the object (target) of critical analysis. By contrast, with rhetoric as a master term, we begin by noticing that rhetors *make* discourses from scraps and pieces of evidence. Critical rhetoric does not *begin* with a finished text in need of interpretation; rather, texts are understood to be larger than the apparently finished discourse that presents itself as transparent (p. 279).

With these words McGee established a case for the analysis of textual fragments.

That rhetors make discourses from scraps and pieces of evidence, (accounts notwithstanding), is an essential aspect to this inquiry.

For approximately the past twenty-five years criticism has been connected with analysis of discourse; McGee points out that "Our theory of criticism treated the finished discourse as a final choice from among possible arguments and arrangements, styles and media" (p. 274). McGee contends that critics and scholars have "centered on understanding the methods rather than the substance of their academic practice" (p. 274). That is, strategies for effectively dealing with the relationship between a text and its context were limited. He further states: "a reappraisal of the way we associate the terms criticism and rhetoric, might lead to such strategies" (p. 278).

As McGee explains it, rhetoric is essentially composed of fragments. "The apparently finished discourse is in fact a dense reconstruction of all the bits of other discourses from which it was made" (p. 279). Thus, the fragments are only parts of a composition consisting of existing arrangements, facts, expressions, or events previously drawn upon to create its meaning. Since finished speeches or discourses are completed through prearranged methods and strategies, it is not unreasonable to presume that those strategically chosen conventions of construction and the cultural historical events applied to those constructions, could be analyzed or criticized, as rhetoric, separately. As McGee relates it:

One can get a more developed picture of a whole 'text' by considering

three structural relationships, between an apparently finished discourse and its sources, between an apparently finished discourse and culture, and between an apparently finished discourse and its influence (p. 280).

Discourse, speeches, texts and the like, in today's modern society, come together as a result of greater societal fragmentation and greater cultural diversity. McGee states, "We stand now in the middle (or at the end, if reactionaries have their way) of a seventy-year movement which has fractured and fragmented American culture. Contemporary discourse practices reflect this fragmentation" (p. 286).

Much of the rhetoric in this fast-paced, fragmented society is not complete enough or finished enough for scholars, rhetoricians and critics to analyze. The solution is to look for formations of texts, in other words, fragments. Contemporary discourse requires some concept that is suitable for criticism. McGee concludes "something very similar to the strategy I propose has the power to account for discourse produced in consequence of the fragmentation of culture" (p. 288).

McGee's analysis is particularly useful to this inquiry in that much of what is available for rhetorical examination in today's high tech, fast paced society is what one reads in the headlines. Often, what one learns of any story or event is gleaned in two or three editions of a newspaper. McGee contends, "Text construction is now something done more by the consumers than the producers of discourse" (p. 288). A fragment from any one headline is merely a starting point in constructing a story by an audience, a starting point that has its origins in a broader text (or context) elsewhere.

From McGee's point of view, a published statement "is only a featured part of an arrangement that includes all facts, events, texts, and stylized expressions deemed useful in explaining its influence and exposing its meaning" (p. 279). As much of this rhetorical analysis takes its texts from headlines, McGee's case for texts and fragments is

applicable. Thus, to some extent, genre theory can accommodate fragments because ultimately, the focus is more "on the performance of the discourse than on the archaeology of discourse" (p. 279).

CRITICAL METHOD

As previously noted, Clinton's excuses and accounts are categorized under the auspices of generic criticism as apologia. Application of generic criticism to Clinton's responses can reveal whether or not the responses adequately meet the requirements of apologia.

Sonja Foss (1996) notes that genre criticism "is rooted in the assumption that certain types of situations provoke similar needs and expectations among audiences and thus, call for particular kinds of rhetoric" (p. 225). Foss states that rather than focus on any one singular event to explicate a rhetorical act, generic criticism seeks to uncover "rhetorical patterns across recurring situations" (p. 225). And though generic criticism often focuses on bridging different time periods and different places, it can also serve to examine a particular series of situations in an attempt to categorize similarities among those situations. If, as Foss (1996) points out, "genres represent conventionalized patterns for thought or structures for meaning, they can serve as an index not only of social reality, but of beliefs, attitudes and values" (p. 226).

The task here, in the broadest sense, will be to examine the category of generic speech criticism known as apologia. With Ware and Linkugel's four strategies for rhetorical self-defense, i.e., denial, bolstering, differentiation, and transcendence, established as a foundation for examining Clinton's image restoration discourse, William J. Benoit's (1995) theory of image restoration will be used to draw conclusions and

implications regarding Clinton's excuses and apologies, as applicable to face-saving accounts. Analysis of Clinton's accounts will be accomplished by examining various fragments as opposed to finished discoursed or entire speeches.

DESIGN OF THE STUDY

This study will examine the similarities of the [seven episodes of] rhetorical responses made by Clinton, focusing on the overall goals of the responses as well as the uniqueness each separate response was intended to accomplish. Using Benoit's theory of image restoration, strategies for dealing with actual, perceived, or potential damage to Clinton's reputation or image will be examined through his accounts.

This study will also include an evaluation of the overall success of Clinton's responses. As the responses span the bulk of Clinton's political career, observations can be drawn highlighting the relationship among his rhetorical accounts. Evaluation of genre criticism, as it applies to drawing conclusions about categories of rhetoric, may reflect characteristics of Clinton's self-defense accounts. These characteristics may in turn explain why Clinton was compelled to maintain a healthy image of himself and why he needed others to think favorably of him.

The communicative behavior of excuse making deserves serious study not only because it pervades our social lives, but it serves an important function: it provides us with a body of knowledge about the past, and a way of thinking about the human condition. A lucid and convincing interpretation of speech events is one that provides an understandable account of why something happened, which is the goal of this inquiry, and whereas it will not be synonymous with truth, it will set forth analysis reflecting something more than mere opinion.

LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

This study will be limited to analysis of responses by President Clinton concerning only the seven episodes previously identified. Presidential staff declarations, letters, or legal responses by those other than President Clinton will not be considered, the primary focus will be on the denials, excuses and apologies given by the President when confronted with accusations of draft dodging, pot smoking, infidelity, and lying.

This study will focus on Presidential responses to allegations of misconduct because it was the President who uttered the responses as a result of perceived wrongdoing. As scholarly research has shown, communication discourse that attempts to restore a favorable impression is pervasive and serves an important social function. Analysis of Clinton's accounts may help illuminate his need for face-saving strategies.

JUSTIFICATION OF THE STUDY

It is the intent of this study and its findings to illustrate that accounts, excuses and apologies are common communicative behaviors among human beings. In the field of rhetorical criticism and rhetorical theory, the significance of the study of apologia will center on the examination of rhetorical choices human beings make when faced with allegations of misconduct or misbehavior.

Public figures, especially those in the spotlight, seem particularly vulnerable to analysis; misconduct or misbehavior requires image restoration. Analysis of the particular outcomes of apologetic discourse could help us better understand, explain, or illustrate patterns of behavior, thought, or a way of thinking about political rhetoric. An examination of one man's accounts, over time and in response to different accusations, can help provide not only insight into human nature, but can possibly shed light on the consequences the past has for the present and the future.

Human beings desire a healthy image of themselves, the former President included. Thus, the examination of excuse-making or image restoration deserves serious consideration, possibly more so when the subject is considered one of the most powerful men in the world.

CHAPTER TWO

This study will examine the similarities of eleven rhetorical responses made by Clinton, between 1978 and 1998, to various charges of perceived wrongdoing. The focus will be on the overall goals of the responses as well as the uniqueness each separate response was intended to accomplish.

Ryan (1988) contends, "it is important to examine the defense in light of the attack" (p. 26). Thus, to best understand the motives for Clinton's responses, a brief historical perspective of the six previously identified episodes will be presented. Each historical perspective will be followed by an analysis of Clinton's response(s) to the identified incidents. It is in the analysis section that Benoit's "Theory of Image Restoration Strategies" will be applied. A table of Benoit's Strategies serves as an overview and guide to understanding application of the theory.

Denial

Simple denial	<i>Did Not Perform Act</i>
Shifting the blame	<i>Act Performed by Another</i>

Evading of Responsibility

Provocation	<i>Responded to Act of Another</i>
Defeasibility	<i>Lack of Information or Ability</i>
Accident	<i>Act was a mishap</i>
Good intentions	<i>Meant Well in Act</i>

Reducing Offensiveness of Event

Bolstering	<i>Stress Good Traits</i>
Minimization	<i>Act Not Serious</i>
Differentiation	<i>Act Less Offensive</i>
Transcendence	<i>More Important Considerations</i>
Attack accuser	<i>Reduce Credibility of Accuser</i>
Compensation	<i>Reimburse Victim</i>

Corrective Action

Plan to Solve or Prevent Problem

Mortification

Apologize for Act (Benoit, 1997, Table 1)

THE GUBERNATORICAL MEA CULPA

In 1978, Bill Clinton was elected governor of Arkansas; at the age of 32 he was the youngest governor in the nation. In 1980, after only one term, the Arkansas electorate voted Clinton out of office. Allen and Portis (1992) report that John Robert Starr, managing editor for the Arkansas Democrat, said Clinton was defeated by the actions of his own staff and his insistence on supporting those actions. "He tended to blame the press, rather than miscreants in his administration, for the bad publicity and consequent negative reaction from the public that dogged him throughout his first administration" (p. 68). Allen and Portis state Clinton gave four reasons for his defeat: "the mood of the times; the increase in automobile license fees; the second influx of Cuban refugees to Fort Chaffee; and the public perception of him as too young, too ambitious, arrogant and insensitive" (p. 70). They quote Clinton as saying. "I simply didn't communicate to the people that I genuinely cared about them, I think maybe I gave the appearance of trying to do too many things and not involving the people as I should" (p. 70).

Roger Morris (1996) states that publicly and privately Clinton blamed several people for his loss and that Clinton claimed he inherited his problems as governor. Regarding his own Democratic Party, Clinton thought it "spoiled, asleep at the switch, in pretty bad shape" (p. 248). He would not blame his wife or her maiden name for his defeat but the "voter hostility" to the license fees and the road tax proposals and the Cubans and the "mood of the times" (p. 248). Morris states, "Clinton was plunged into a what one account called a 'bitter depression' over his loss of the governorship, issuing in a burst of womanizing, a seemingly desperate search for conquest that shocked even his most indulgent and cynical intimates" (p. 249). Morris adds "But above all he plotted his return" (p. 249).

Nothing seemed to assuage Clinton's anguish over his second term loss. Morris notes, "Restlessly he prowled offices and restaurants, even grocery stores and shops in and around his neighborhood, seeking out familiar faces or, as often as not, strangers to accost with what journalist and friend Max Brantely called 'this Hamlet soliloquy – All is lost, what can I do?' Many observers thought it kind of emotional panhandling" (p. 271). "It was supine, really a craven kind of crawl from one place to another, begging to be taken back" (p.272). "He apologized so often and with such remorse," John Robert Starr recorded, "that even I begged him to stop" (p. 272). Advisers would urge him to make a campaign theme of apology to "admit what older Arkansas political figures and wealthy backers saw as radical liberalism and rash reforms of his first governorship" (p. 271).

Early in the fall of 1981, Dick Morris, hired by Clinton as a consultant to help him lay the groundwork for his 1982 comeback campaign, polled Arkansas voters to gauge their opinions about Clinton. The results showed that the voters held a "paternalistic attitude" toward Clinton and that "Frank White had not won the election so much as Clinton had lost it" (Maraniss, 1995, p. 397). Betsey Wright, according to Elizabeth Drew (1994), was "Clinton's chief of staff in Arkansas for several years, a damage controller during the first campaign, and very loyal to Clinton" (p. 388). Wright worked with Dick Morris on the comeback campaign and concluded, after seeing the poll results, "a comeback was doable" (Maraniss, p. 397).

Morris determined that to make a comeback possible, Clinton would first have to apologize for having lost his reelection race in 1980. He designed a public *mea culpa* to be delivered as a television advertisement.

In February 1982, Clinton went before the people of Arkansas in a thirty-

second television advertisement to announce that he would run for governor again and that he had learned from his mistakes. "The ad brought much attention, the most common opinion seemed to be that broadcasting a campaign advertisement before actually announcing as candidate was curious; the press was intrigued" (Allen and Portis, p. 76). In the ad viewers saw:

A sad-eyed Clinton biting his lip and staring intently into the camera. The focus was at such close range that the top of his newly styled hair and even the tip of his drawn-up chin were off the screen, his face looming with sudden intimacy in living rooms all over Arkansas. Deeply apologetic for what he had been and done as governor, he asked their forgiveness, especially for those license fees. He had learned from defeat and from all the people he had talked to since leaving office, and he wanted and desired a second chance. "You can't lead without listening" he summed up! (Morris, p. 283).

In 1982, facing both a tough primary and a general election, Clinton ran, according to Elizabeth Kolbert of the New York Times, "advertisements against his Democratic rivals and later against his Republican opponent, Mr. White. He never let an attack go unanswered" (September 28, 1992, p. 1).

Morris notes that beyond public view Clinton's campaign was less contrite and often cynical. He would attack his opponents and claim they pandered to "special interests" (p. 283). When Clinton was attacked by his opponents, he "reacted with television commercials apologizing for commuting sentences or for being 'out of touch,' implying he was misled by alien staff. Privately, he lashed out at the Arkansas Education Association for endorsing Tucker" (p. 284).

Morris notes that after beating Tucker in the primary:

Clinton's organizational machinery went into overdrive. In the coda to the most expensive primary in Arkansas history, the barrage of Clinton ads and apologies ran constantly. When it was over, Clinton had the nomination by a margin of thirty-two thousand votes out of nearly half a

million cast – the slim, harshly won margin of a come back, a career, and ultimately a president (p. 285).

Analysis: Clinton conceded the accusations constituents leveled at him when he lost his first gubernatorial reelection campaign. He responded with a 30-second television ad in which he said:

"I have made mistakes, and if you'll give me a chance to serve again, you'll have a governor who has learned from defeat that you can't lead without listening." (Los Angeles Times, January 14, 1992, p. 2).

In this fragment, Clinton first attempted to reduce offensiveness. There are six variants to this strategy: bolstering, minimization, differentiation, transcendence, attack accuser, and compensation. In this instance, compensation is the predominant variant. In exchange for the "mistakes," Clinton promised that if he were reelected, he would be a Governor who would listen. In other words, Clinton offered to redress the past wrong by promising something better in the future. As Benoit puts it, "In effect, compensation functions as a bribe...if it has sufficient value the negative affect from the undesirable act may be outweighed" (p. 78). Clinton implied that at least one of his mistakes was that he did not listen to his constituents. Then, to reduce potential ill feeling about his failure, he offered compensation for the offensive act of not listening by promising to listen in the future.

Second, Clinton engaged in corrective action. Benoit notes, "In this strategy for image restoration, the accused vows to correct the problem" (p. 79). Clinton stated, "If you'll give me another chance, you'll have a governor who has learned from defeat that you can't lead without listening." In other words, Clinton promised to correct the problem. He implied he would "mend his ways" and would prevent the undesirable act

(including the mistake of not listening) from happening in the future. The corrective action would take the form of restoring the state of affairs existing before the offensive act occurred and prevent future problems by listening to his constituents. This differs from compensation in that corrective action specifically addresses the wrongdoing; (compensation, according to Benoit, "consists of a gift designed to counterbalance the injury" (p. 79).) Clinton implied he did not listen during his first tenure as governor but that he would take corrective action and listen if reelected.

Third, Clinton engaged in mortification, confessing, "I have made mistakes." Though Clinton did not actually say he was sorry or ask for forgiveness, he did take personal responsibility for "mistakes" that he made. Benoit notes, "If we believe the apology is sincere, we may choose to pardon the wrongful act" (p. 79). Though Clinton did not say "I'm sorry," we can infer, by virtue of the fact he admitted to mistakes then asserted he would correct said mistakes if reelected, that Clinton was sincere in seeking pardon for those past transgressions.

The strategies in this case were successful. Maraniss (1995) notes, "By admitting his mistakes and seeking absolution before the first tough questions of the race could be asked, Clinton was able to say that criticism of his previous actions were irrelevant" (p. 399). Further evidence of success can be realized in the fact that Clinton did not identify specific mistakes, rather, he lumped past mistakes together. Thus, to an extent, he altered the nature of the initial accusations (e.g., the increase in licensing fees, the road tax proposals, the influx of Cuban refugees) into one generalized category of "mistakes." If the constituents of Arkansas forgive the one category of "mistakes," then they collectively forgive all the mistakes. Benoit (1995) notes, "If successful in reorienting

the audience's attention, the rhetor may well be able to successfully ignore some or all of the accusations" (p. 84). Clinton did not alter the nature of the accusations, but he did direct attention away from specifics to one generalized category of mistakes, then promised he had learned from his mistakes and would do better on a second go around as Governor.

Clinton's strategies were instrumental in that they were designed to achieve another goal, that of a second gubernatorial nomination. In the end, after a bitter primary race in which he defeated David Pryor and Jim Guy Tucker, Clinton defeated Republican Sheffield Nelson.

AVOIDING THE DRAFT

In 1978, at the age of thirty-two, Clinton was on the verge of being elected Governor of Arkansas. Maraniss states:

He had a determined wife, a finely tuned political machine and an army of friends. He had come further, faster in the political world than any member of his generation. And yet it was in those promising days of 1978 that Clinton perplexed his aids by hanging out in racy nightclubs and surrounded by admiring women. It was then that Rodham signed the first papers in a land deal along the White River. and it was then that Clinton was confronted with accusations that he had dodged the draft (p. 356).

Of those events, only the draft issue was made public at the time. Allen and Portis (1992) state that Clinton claimed the draft issue was the reason he did not finish his third year at Oxford. "I kind of regret the fact that I never got a degree [from Oxford]. My class had the highest percentage of Rhodes Scholars that never earned a degree, because we were right there in the middle of that Vietnam War buildup" (p. 31). According to Allen and Portis, Clinton claimed the threat of being drafted dictated a student's curriculum:

We were over there changing course three or four times because we knew that we'd get a year, and it'd be done. And so, ironically, at the end of my first year is when President Nixon started to wind the war down; so there were only a couple of us who were actually drafted (p. 31).

When the question of Clinton's draft status eventually came up in the New Hampshire primary more than two decades later, Clinton, according to Morris (1996), would never mention the numerous "personal contacts and pleas made on his behalf- though Raymond Clinton and his lawyer regularly told the anxious student and his family what they were doing" (p. 80). Morris reports that Clinton's Uncle Raymond, along with his friend and personal attorney Henry Britt, appealed to Commander Trice Ellis, Jr., the officer in charge of the local naval reserve unit. They also lobbied William S. "Bill" Armstrong, chairman of the Hot Springs draft board. It was a concerted effort "to get Bill what he wanted," Britt would later say, "Of course Billy knew about it" (p. 81). Morris states:

At one point, Raymond and Henry Britt hurriedly drove some distance to buttonhole Senator Fulbright at a dam dedication on the banks of the Arkansas River and get him to insure that his office, too, would intercede with the Hot Springs draft board (p. 82).

According to Morris the Hot Springs board members were impressed with Clinton's grant at Oxford: "As old as he was, he would have been at the top of the list to be drafted, [but] we were proud to have a Hot Springs boy with a Rhodes scholarship" (p. 82). By standards applying to hundreds of others, Clinton should have been drafted no later than the summer of 1968:

But William Armstrong acceded to the manifold political pressures and routinely kept Clinton's draft file back from consideration. Of all those classified I-A by his draft board during the turbulent, bloody year of 1968, Bill Clinton was the only one whose process was so extended (Morris, p. 82).

Morris states that the behind-the-scenes intervention of Raymond Clinton and others would make it possible for Bill Clinton to complete a first year at Oxford without either a deferment or any other military obligation. "And in the longer sequence of the draft, that interval would be just enough to be decisive in keeping him out of the war" (p. 82).

By the end of Clinton's first term at Oxford, according to Morris, "ten thousand more Americans were killed... draft calls were unremitting" (p. 87). Clinton's induction was set again for April, 1969. "Only after more intense lobbying by Raymond and others was that date put off once more, to July 28, 1969" (p. 87). Friends at Oxford advised Clinton to try for an ROTC deferment, but the ROTC programs were "notoriously crowded" and would require him to leave Oxford. With only eleven days left before the scheduled July 28 induction, Clinton drove to Fayetteville to the home of Colonel Eugene Holmes, commander of the army ROTC unit at the University of Arkansas. In a two hour interview, as the colonel remembered, "Bill Clinton earnestly explained his desire to join the program" (p. 88).

Morris reported that Clinton promised to let Holmes "hear from me at least once a month" and Holmes said he would immediately begin the processing of Clinton's application that would inform the Hot Springs board of his new ROTC deferment (p. 89).

On August 7, 1969, Clinton signed the formal letter of intent to join the University of Arkansas ROTC, "but did not legally file it until some days later" (p. 90). As well, to be eligible for the University of Arkansas ROTC Program, he would have to leave Oxford and apply for the university's law school, though he did nothing official to apply or test for the law program. Allen and Portis (1992) state that during Clinton's 1992 presidential campaign, Clinton would claim that the school "informally" accepted

him simply on his academic record: "The actual record left no illusions, he figured this maneuver would get him several more years of deferment, possibly until the end of the war" (p. 203).

"It was just a fluke" that he was not drafted, Clinton would tell the Los Angeles Times in 1992. "I certainly had no leverage to get special treatment from the draft board" (Morris, p. 79). The draft issue came back to haunt Clinton during the 1992 presidential campaign. As David Maraniss recounts it in his 1995 biography of Bill Clinton, Billy G. Geren, a retired lieutenant colonel in the Air force, held a news conference in which he accused Clinton of being a draft dodger. Geren claimed Clinton had received a draft deferment in 1969 by agreeing to join ROTC, but had reneged on his agreement and returned to London to finish his studies at Oxford University.

Clinton denied the charge claiming he had never received a deferment because he had canceled his ROTC agreement and reentered the draft pool before a deferment could be granted. Clinton wrote to Holmes in December, 1969 asking to be released from his ROTC commitment and told Holmes he was reentering the draft.

Floyd G. Brown (1999) includes a verbatim text of Clinton's letter to Holmes in which Clinton thanks Holmes for saving him from the draft. He acknowledges that had Holmes known more about his political beliefs and activities regarding the Vietnam War, "you might have thought me more fit for the draft than for ROTC" (p. 1).

In Holmes' September 1992 affidavit concerning Clinton's deferment he states in part:

Bill Clinton came to see me at my home in 1969... we engaged in an extensive interview. At no time during this long conversation about his desire to join the program did he inform me of his involvement, participation and actually organizing protests against the United States involvement in Southeast Asia. He was shrewd enough to realize that had

I been aware of his activities, he would not have been accepted into ROTC (Brown, p. 2).

Holmes included the following segment in the final paragraphs of his revealing affidavit:

In retrospect I see that Mr. Clinton had no intention of following through with his agreement to join the Army ROTC program. I believe he purposely deceived me, using the possibility of joining the ROTC as a ploy to work with the draft board to delay his induction and get a new draft classification (p. 2).

The question of when Clinton decided to give up the deferment is important in its relation to his later and, according to Maraniss, confusing accounts of when he decided to resubmit himself to the draft. "It is a difficult episode to sort out, muddled by Clinton's various accounts, which tend to be incomplete or contradictory" (p. 190).

As noted by William Bennett (1998), Clinton offered a different narrative of his draft status in an interview for the Washington Post before the New Hampshire primaries. Clinton again failed to mention that he had been drafted in the spring of 1969 and left the impression that he had never received a draft notice; "That is something, you know, in some ways I wish I'd been a part of it. I wound up just going through the lottery and it was just a pure fluke that I wasn't called" (p. 44).

On the morning of February 6, the Wall Street Journal published an article that described how Clinton had evaded the draft. According to Allen and Portis (1992), "The news did not play well in New Hampshire. The anti-Clinton campaigns...had been making much of the 'Slick Willie' image and of Clinton's method of giving elliptical answers to questions" (p. 197).

On February 11, ABC newsman Ted Koppel sent a message to David Wilhelm, Clinton's campaign manager. Koppel said he had a letter Clinton had written in 1969 in which Clinton stated his opposition to the Vietnam War and his strong feeling against the

draft. Koppel said *ABC News* would use the letter in a broadcast. Allen and Portis state Clinton tried to preempt the effect of the broadcast by hurriedly calling a news conference to explain why and in what context the letter was written. Clinton said, "It represents a pattern by people desperate to stay in power and willing to impugn the motives, the patriotism and the lives of anyone who stands in their way. It's me today; it could be Tsongas or Kerrey or Harkin or somebody else tomorrow" (p. 198).

Then, according to Bennett (1998), "came a classic Clinton maneuver, of the I-didn't- do-it and-even-if-I-did-it-doesn't-matter variety."

It's amazing to me that even if all this stuff was true, it doesn't change anything about what I did or knew at the time. You've got a feeding frenzy on about something that even if it's true, it doesn't amount to a hill of beans. I know nothing about it and it does not affect the truth that I have told about the facts of the draft situation. None of the facts of my story have changed (p. 45).

Analysis: Benoit (1995) states, "One strategy for dealing with attacks is simply to Deny the undesirable action" (p. 75). In the fragment above it is clear Clinton employed denial in the closing lines of the press conference, (what Bennett characterized as the "classic Clinton maneuver"). He denied he avoided the draft and claimed his avoidance was not harmful: "even if all this stuff was true, it doesn't change anything about what I did or knew at the time...even if it's true...I know nothing about it...it does not effect the truth." Clinton denied the "stuff" occurred and denied he committed the "stuff." In effect, Clinton claimed the event, avoidance of the draft, did not happen. Further, Clinton's denial was supported with the twice asserted "even if this stuff was true" and "even if it's true." Thus, in addition to denying the charge of draft avoidance, Clinton buttressed the denial by claiming there was a lack of evidence to prove the charge.

Second, Clinton's closing remarks reflected evasion or responsibility. There are

four variants of this strategy: provocation, defeasibility, accident, and good intentions. Defeasibility is the variant employed here; "pleading lack of information about or control over important factors in the situation" (Benoit, p. 76)). Clinton stated, "it's amazing to me," suggesting not only that he couldn't believe the draft issue was being dredged up again (as if it shouldn't be), but that he had no control over the media or the fact that the issue had resurfaced. Additionally Clinton stated, "You've got a feeding frenzy on," inferring the accusers had taken the deferment issue beyond what was reasonable and contorted it into some mad free-for-all scramble for information, which also could not be controlled. Clinton further stated, "I know nothing about it," implying he either knew no reason for a "feeding frenzy" or why the draft issue resurfaced as an issue or both. Since he "does not know," he cannot be held accountable for the offensive claims being made.

A variant of reduce offensiveness is also apparent, that of transcendence. Benoit states, "This strategy for image restoration functions by placing the act in a different context" (p. 77). Clinton employed transcendence by suggesting a different frame of reference for the pursuit of information about his draft status. He states, "You've got a feeding frenzy on," suggesting the audience, in this case reporters, were really more concerned with trying to get any information, regardless of its veracity, as opposed to learning the actual facts and truth of the draft issue. In other words, Clinton, suggested that what was really going on was a mad grab for scandal news, any scandal news, and that that was really all the reporters wanted, something less related to what he considered was a dead issue. The situation was characterized as a mere "feeding frenzy" that got out of control and not about a letter he wrote in 1969 stating his opposition to the war in Vietnam and his strong feelings against the draft.

Transcendence is further realized in Clinton's assertion that "even if it's true, it doesn't amount to a hill of beans." The entire issue of Clinton's draft deferment had then been transcended to "a hill of beans." The phrase "even if it's true" adds an interesting escape route for Clinton in that should the draft avoidance issue have any truth to it, it would still be a "hill of beans." Clinton characterized the draft avoidance issue as something less than significant, directing attention away from the salient point of the claim and on to the "hill of beans," thereby lessening the perceived offensiveness of the act.

Clinton attempted to reduce offensiveness in two other ways, through minimizing the attack and by attacking his accusers. Regarding minimizing Benoit states, "If the rhetor can convince the audience that the negative act isn't as bad as it might first appear, the amount of ill feeling associated with that act is reduced" (p. 77). Clinton stated, "even if all this stuff were true," suggesting his accusers were extending their accusations beyond the facts about his draft record and implying his deferment record wasn't the controversy they were claiming. Minimizing was also employed to the extent that Clinton reframed the accusations of "the draft situation" and categorized the issue as a cliché, "a hill of beans," that is, a trite, worn out issue, which he considered his deferment history to be. In effect, Clinton claimed the accusations had no merit and had been extended to the absurd.

One additional aspect of reducing offensiveness can be discerned, that of attack accuser. Benoit states, "If the credibility of the source of accusations can be reduced, the damage to one's image from those accusations may be diminished" (p. 78). Clinton said, "It's amazing to me that even if all this stuff was true," and "it does not affect the truth

that I have told about the facts." Implied here is that Clinton's accusers were lying for some reason or motive of their own. As a line of defense and to divert attention away from the accusation of draft dodging, Clinton stood by what he considered to be "the truth that I have told about the facts" in order to restore his reputation.

Examination of the image restoration strategies used by Clinton, in February 1992, to deflect accusations of draft dodging, were successful to the extent that the questionable deferment issue did not keep Clinton from being elected President. A case cannot be made for definitive success as the question of his draft status continued to resurface, particularly during his reelection campaign (Laudau, 1997, Kurtz, 1998). Never-the-less, in 1992, Clinton's responses during the February press conference were successful enough to deflect damage done to his election campaign efforts during the New Hampshire primaries. He tackled the charge of draft dodging head on by denying he opposed the Vietnam War or the draft. He evaded responsibility for the issue resurfacing in the press by claiming in effect that the draft issue was a non-issue, a non-issue that had descended to an uncontrollable "feeding frenzy" by the press. He reduced offensiveness through transcendence, minimizing and attacking his accusers; the issue became a "feeding frenzy," a "hill of beans," and a distorted (if not fabricated) version of the truth.

ON SMOKING MARIJUANA

During his senior year at Georgetown, in the fall of 1967, Clinton shared a house on Potomac Avenue with five other men. Richard Odom (1995) characterizes the climate of the times:

This was the fall of 1967, the season that followed the summer of love in San Francisco's Haight-Ashbury district, the time when

college campuses across the nation became theaters of protest, scented by tear gas and the smell of pot, echoing with the chants of "One, two, three, four, we don't want your fucking war!" (p. 96).

Odom tells of Allen Ginsberg's visit to Georgetown that school year. When Ginsberg asked, "how many happy Hoyas smoked marijuana?" fifty hands rose (p. 96). And though to some of his high school classmates back in Hot Springs, Bill Clinton seemed a bit of an unkempt hippie, Maraniss notes, "within the wider spectrum of sixties behavior, Clinton and his housemates were trim and tame" (p. 152).

Clinton's exposure to marijuana is not disputed, and the history of his proximity to the drug extended through his Oxford years in 1968-69. Maraniss tells of Clinton's association with Sara Maitland, a student at St. Anne's College near Oxford. "She struck up a friendship with Clinton and his friends and began inviting them over to St. Anne's for afternoon tea parties. 'It was a very good way to meet English people,' according to Maitland" (Maraniss p. 153).

Maitland characterized the parties as "tea in the afternoon" and said of the sessions, "It was talk. Lots of politics. Lots of literature. Bits of philosophy. How ghastly our parents were. Who was sleeping with whom" (Maraniss, p. 153). But this was hardly a wild crowd according to Maraniss. "There was some casual sex, quite a bit of drinking, and the sweet smell of marijuana and hashish clung to their clothing as they gathered in cloistered rooms for late night parties" (p. 154).

Clinton's exposure to the availability of marijuana continued the first few years after Oxford as well. Jim Moore (1992) tells of Clinton's stint at the Washington Monthly, "an iconoclastic political journal" (p. 268). Clinton was writing speeches for Senator McGovern and helping the campaign recruit delegates for the caucuses in Kentucky and Georgia. Rick Sterns, a friend and former classmate of Clinton's,

approached Clinton with the idea of running McGovern's Texas Campaign in Austin.

Moore recounts:

The McGovern headquarters that awaited them in Austin was located in a one-story stucco shell on West Sixth Street, noted for its creaky wooden floors and peeled walls. Across from the boiler room was the radio room, run by Mark Blumenthal, who arrived in Austin from a hippie commune in New Mexico. Blumenthal made only minimal lifestyle changes to accommodate his new line of work. He now lived on a three-acre farm on the eastern rim of Austin with his wife, an infant daughter, dairy goats, fig trees, a beehive, and an ample supply of marijuana (p. 268).

Clinton led a relatively moderate life in Texas according to Maraniss. There "was dope around, but not compared to beer - beer was the drug of choice" (p. 276). Maraniss states in his biography of Clinton that there was "pot smoking at late night parties" (p. 176).

A few days after the election, which McGovern lost, Clinton and several friends from the campaign staff drove out to Blumenthal's ranch on the outskirts of Austin and spent one last evening together. Maraniss quotes Mark Blumenthal as saying "most of the people there were in altered states of consciousness induced by the heavy disappointment that we lost so badly. Bottles of Jack Daniels were passed around the campfire along with a couple of joints" (p. 283).

The presence of marijuana followed Clinton through his first campaign for office in Arkansas in 1978. Rumors about Clinton's sexual behavior also began in the first campaign. Moore (1992) recounts that Clinton was immune from charges of marital infidelity (he was not yet married), but little else:

John Baran, who had taught Clinton art in junior high school, heard rumors at his church during the final months of the congressional campaign that 'Bill was a homosexual.' Some of the same churchgoers spreading that story would later attack Clinton for living with a woman before he was married. Mary Lee Fray attended a Baptist

church in Fayetteville where Clinton was criticized from the pulpit. She learned that some conservative preachers were crusading against him, they were constantly talking about drugs and women in the Clinton campaign. Nearly every week, Paul Fray would field a call from a labor organizer in Fort Smith who would utter the same lament, "We're catching hell down here about all you left wing dope smokers up there at that damn yoo-nah-ver-sity, Paul. We're just catchin' hell down here!" (p. 333).

Moore states that the campaign was not a haven for the drug culture, but it was not a marijuana-free zone either:

Randy White, a college freshman who joined the campaign as a volunteer, was sent to work at a phone bank one night at an apartment in Fayetteville. When he entered the apartment, he saw "seven or eight people in there smoking pot." He felt terrified that the place would be busted (p. 334).

Moore also revealed that whenever eighteen-year old Roger Clinton, the candidate's younger brother, came to Fayetteville, the scent of marijuana trailed him.

Moore quotes Neil McDonald, a campaign worker at the time:

It was no secret Roger was blowing smoke. It ain't too hard to tell when you go into a room that Roger had just been in, and it smells like burnt rope. He and his buddies would be in the basement stenciling signs, and actually smoking joints (p. 334).

Unavoidably, Clinton's documented historical association with marijuana surfaced during the 1992 presidential campaign. Allen and Portis (1992) quote Clinton as saying:

When I was in England, I experimented with marijuana a time or two, and I didn't like it. I didn't inhale and never tried it again. I was curious, other people were doing it and I tried it. I assumed it was against the law, but when we got there they told us that as long as we did it inside our apartments or whatever, nobody would hassle us. But I was not into that (p. 31).

During the 1992 campaign, when reporters asked Clinton about extramarital sex and illegal drug use, Clinton said "It's none of your business" and accused the press of being "the moral police of the country" (Allen and Portis, 1992, p. 148). A week later, Clinton denied having said "It's none of your business" or of having called the press "the moral police." Still the questions persisted and on July 22, USA Today published an

interview in which Clinton said he had "never broken any drug law." Allen and Portis point out that during the 1990 gubernatorial reelection campaign, Clinton said he "never violated the drug laws of the state as an adult in Arkansas" (p. 148). They recount that the day after the July 22, interview, Gazette reporter Scott Morris asked Clinton if the USA Today interview represented a broadening of his drug-use statement. According to Allen and Portis Clinton said:

It is accurate to say that I haven't broken any drug laws. I will say that because it is a legal question. I literally thought what I said was consistent with what I said in 1990 (p. 148).

When Morris asked Clinton if he had used marijuana or any other illegal drug as a college student, Clinton responded with, "The answer to that question is no. That's the question you asked, and I'll give you the answer" (p. 149).

Clinton's documented historical association with marijuana surfaced again in the 1996 Presidential reelection campaign (Moore, 1992). Bob Dole, according to Moore, attempted to use a video clip of Clinton's 1992 claim that he "would have inhaled marijuana if he could and that he wished he had" statement, to discredit President Clinton's drug policy, which was one of Clinton's campaign platforms. That statement, made during a guest appearance on *MTV*, was characterized by Gloria Borger in a September 30, 1996 issue of U.S. News & World Report:

That's the stuff that makes a campaign adman's life worth living: Bill Clinton, in an MTV moment, gets cute when a smarmy young fellow asks, "If you had it to do all over again, would you inhale?" Cut to Clinton. "Sure, if I could" he offers with a boyish grin. "I tried before (p. 1).

According to Borger (1996), when women, who had remained some of Clinton's most loyal supporters, saw the clip, they suddenly rejected him. Borger further reported that even though it was a dated clip (from 1992), the date wasn't important; "Bob Dole's

consultants argue that the small matter of timing is dwarfed by the explosive content. This is the baby boomer who hasn't grown up. This is the guy who can't say no" (p. 1). Borger quoted Republican drug czar Bill Bennett as saying, "This is about public character, it will remind voters of who Clinton is" (p. 1).

In the same 1996 U. S. News & World Report article regarding Clinton's use of marijuana, Borger claimed:

The drug conundrum is a chink in Clinton's armor. Teenage drug use has more than doubled over the past four years. Clinton's 1992 promise to provide addicts with "treatment on demand" collapsed. And he did ax the White House drug staff. Clinton's stupid MTV rejoinder will speak for itself, probably doing little more than convincing the 30 percent of voters who hate Clinton that they hate him even more (p. 2).

Though Clinton claimed he did not inhale when he smoked marijuana, William Bennett (1998) asserts that Clinton was known for deceiving the public through the use of slippery wording. "When asked during the 1992 campaign whether he had ever smoked marijuana, Mr. Clinton answered he had "never broken the laws of my country. "He later admitted he smoked marijuana in England" (p. 99).

Howard Kurtz (1998) notes that reporters had grown accustomed to Clinton's "essential slipperiness," and further stated: "They had been grappling with this question since 1992 - the lawyer-like philandering, the draft, marijuana, Whitewater, Paula Jones, Clinton simply could not be trusted to provide an unvarnished version of the truth" (p. 138).

Analysis: Kurtz's observation that "Clinton simply could not be trusted to provide an unvarnished version of the truth" is telling. The historical record indicates Clinton offered a variety of accounts regarding his use of marijuana. Allen and Portis

(1992) quote Clinton as saying:

When I was in England, I experimented with marijuana a time or two, and I didn't like it. I didn't inhale and never tried it again. I was curious, other people were doing it and I tried it. I assumed it was against the law, but when we got there they told us that as long as we did it inside our apartments or whatever, nobody would hassle us. But I was not into that (p. 31).

A number of Benoit's (1995) restoration strategies are useful in understanding Clinton's account, in the above fragment, of his admission to smoking pot. First, Clinton had good, not bad intentions when he experimented with pot. Good intentions, a variant of evading responsibility, allows for the suggestion "that the performance of the action in question may be justified on the basis of motives or intentions" (Benoit, p. 76). Clinton inferred his intentions were not harmful when he said, "I experimented...a time or two" and "I was curious, other people were doing it and I tried it." Clinton implied that his experimentation was a minor, youthful indiscretion. That smoking pot during the 1960's was considered culturally acceptable is not disputed; Clinton supported his good intention with "other people were doing it," suggesting he was in keeping with the cultural times and just trying to fit in with everyone else.

Further, Clinton's experimentation with marijuana occurred "a time or two." Suggested here is that usage was so infrequent that it was hardly worth mentioning. Inferred is that Clinton's intention was merely to discover what pot smoking was all about, to try and fit in, and be part of the crowd; clearly a harmless non-event. Also implied is that Clinton was not a hard core drug user, not a dealer, not an addict. This is supported by the claims "I didn't like it...I didn't inhale and never tried it again." Clinton's intentions were good, that is, not harmful and not significant. His good intention was bolstered by stating, "never tried it again," suggesting the brief

experimentation was to prove to himself that indeed, pot smoking was not a good thing.

Clinton tried to reduce the offensiveness of the act by minimizing the event(s).

Benoit states, "If the rhetor can convince the audience that the negative act isn't as bad as it might first appear, the amount of ill feeling associated with that act is reduced" (p. 76).

Clinton admitted to experimenting "a time or two." Considering what is now known (and was known then) about the pot smoking cultural climate of the '60's, admitting to experimenting "a time or two" minimizes that experimentation to something less than significant.

That Clinton "assumed" pot smoking was against the law is also minimized.

Clinton stated, "I assumed it was against the law, but when we got there they told us that as long as we did it inside our apartments or whatever, nobody would hassle us." By stating he assumed it was illegal, Clinton suggested that possibly he could have been wrong, that is, perhaps it was legal. One can only infer that Clinton's assumption of illegality in Great Britain was based on the fact that smoking marijuana was illegal in the United States. Whatever the legal status, Clinton further minimized the pot smoking event(s) by stating "as long as we did it inside our apartments or whatever, nobody would hassle us." Suggested here is that smoking marijuana in the privacy of one's home was acceptable to the extent that the legal system turned a blind eye to the incidents. If the legal system dismissed pot smoking in "apartments or whatever," then, smoking must be a minimal concern, in other words, relatively acceptable.

A final aspect of minimizing can be discerned in the fragment; Clinton said, "I didn't inhale." In other words, the full effects of the brief, culturally accepted experimentation with marijuana, were not realized. Suggested here is that the pot

smoking event(s) did not count as an experience because he did not completely enjoy the pot, that is, he did not get "high." Thus, the effect associated with the negative act was minimal. If he did not get high, then he really did not commit an offensive act.

In addition to good intentions and minimizing, corrective action is also apparent in Clinton's statement. He repeated his intention to prevent recurrence of the event(s): "I didn't like it...never tried it again...I was not into that." Benoit notes, "If the problem is one that could recur, the actor's position may be enhanced by provision of assurances that changes will prevent it from happening again" (1995, p. 79). Clinton clearly suggested to his audience that even though he had had a previous, insignificant encounter with smoking marijuana, he "didn't like it" and "never tried it again." Clinton enhanced his position by assuring the audience that with exception of the insignificant, brief and unsatisfied encounter(s) with pot in Great Britain during the '60's, he took corrective action and remained a law abiding, non-pot smoking citizen in the U.S.

His contradictory statements about previous use of marijuana fueled the controversy surrounding Clinton's association with drugs. In Clinton's July 22, 1992 response in USA Today regarding allegations that he had smoked marijuana he said:

It is accurate to say that I haven't broken any drug laws. I will say that because it is a legal question. I literally thought what I said was consistent with what I said in 1990 (Morris, 1996, p. 148).

In this particular fragment Clinton first evaded responsibility. There are four variants to evading responsibility: provocation, defeasibility, accident, and good intentions. It is the strategy of good intentions that can be discerned here. Clinton did not deny that he smoked marijuana, but evaded directly acknowledging he did smoke marijuana in the past. Benoit (1995) states, "Here the wrongful act is not denied, yet the

audience is asked not to hold the actor fully responsible because it was done with good, rather than evil, intentions" (p. 77). Clinton had previously admitted he had smoked marijuana while at Oxford.. By stating he had not broken any laws he implied that as a U. S. citizen, he had not done anything illegal. The good intention here is that he did not violate any U.S. drug laws, even if he did experiment at Oxford, thus, any previous pot smoking activity should not be held against him.

Clinton also attempted (in the previously identified fragment) to reduce offensiveness through differentiation. "Here the rhetor attempts to distinguish the act performed from other similar but less desirable actions" (Benoit, 1995, p. 77). Clinton states, "I will say that because it is a legal question." Clinton clearly attempted to drive home the legality point. As he did not directly deny smoking pot, it cannot be said he was innocent of the charge. He did differentiate the legality question because he had previously admitted, "When I was in England, I experimented with marijuana a time or two." The audience is asked not to hold Clinton fully responsible because he claimed he did not break any U.S. drug laws. As the initial allegation did not differentiate between smoking pot in the U.S. or smoking pot in England, Clinton could justifiably presume the question referred only to his alleged U.S. consumption of marijuana. Without directly admitting to smoking pot in England, Clinton was able to differentiate the good intention of not breaking any drug laws from any previous pot smoking activity, thus, any previous activity should not be held against him.

To an extent, transcendence is also helpful in discerning the underlying meaning of Clinton's response (in the previously identified fragment). Benoit notes that one strategy of transcendence is appealing to values or higher loyalties (1995, p. 78). Clinton

stated, "I literally thought what I said was consistent with what I said in 1990." Clinton implied his loyalty was to the U.S. when he stated "It is accurate to say that I haven't broken any drug laws." As the President and a U.S. citizen, it would be important to stress his law-abiding status, but critically, in 1990, Clinton said, "When I was in England, I experimented a time or two and I didn't like it. I didn't inhale and never tried it again." Clinton implied the greater value and higher loyalty was to U. S. laws regarding drug use. This positive context transcends the possible offensiveness of a mere, long ago rare experimentation that he did not like and never did again. Clinton, accused of wrongdoing, directed attention to the higher value of 'law abiding citizen, and away from what the audience may have recalled from his 1990 comments.

When Morris asked Clinton (regarding Clinton's 1992 USA Today interview) if he had used marijuana or any other illegal drug as a college student, Clinton responded, "The answer to that question is no. That's the question you asked, and I'll give you the answer." Here, Clinton denied the wrongful act of marijuana use and illegal drug use. That Clinton specified "That's the question you asked" is significant. Technically, Clinton was not lying if one remembers that his first four years of college were spent at Georgetown University. Morris' question did not specify both Clinton's years at Georgetown and his years at Oxford, thus, Clinton can truthfully claim he thought the question was only in reference to his Georgetown University years.

Second, though Clinton denied drug use in college, he again did not deny drug use while he was at Oxford University. It is, arguably, questionable whether or not Clinton understood the question to include only the Georgetown years; however, defeasibility, a variant of evading responsibility, could explain Clinton's response should he be called

upon to clarify the contradiction to his 1990 account regarding experimental use in London. Benoit explains that pleading lack of information may suggest that the rhetor should not be held accountable for the act (p. 76). Clinton could not be blamed or accused of lying if the question he was asked was interpreted by him to mean Georgetown University (that is, he lacked the knowledge that the reporter meant all his college years, including the years at Oxford). Thus, he could technically deny he had used drugs in college by differentiating between his years at Georgetown and his years, on another continent, at Oxford.

A number of Benoit's restoration strategies are useful in analyzing accounts Clinton gave in response to using drugs. Depending on the nature of the accusation, Clinton's accounts reveal that he tried to reduce the offensiveness of the act and unfavorable feelings toward himself. By increasing the esteem for himself, through his motives, and reducing negative feelings about the act, he was successfully able to deflect charges, by reporters, that he had had some more questionable association with drugs. Specifically, he denied he used drugs in the United States and minimized his use of drugs in Great Britain. If some reporters' questions about his drug use included his tenure at Oxford, he could claim he did not know that. His intentions, in Great Britain, were not bad; everyone was smoking marijuana and the authorities, seemingly, did not care. His ultimate good intention was to be a law-abiding citizen, thus, after the brief encounter, he never smoked pot again. Clinton's attempts to deflect the questions of a third party, the press, and restoring his image in the eyes of the American people, can be viewed as successful; the accusations did not keep him from being elected to a second term as President of the United States.

ACCUSATIONS OF ADULTERY

The news reached Ron Addington at home in Arkansas one morning as he was preparing to drive over to Henderson State University to teach a class: His old friend Bill Clinton seemed to be in trouble again and the issue was sex. When Addington arrived at the campus, sex and the president was the only topic anyone wanted to talk about. His thoughts inevitably drifted back to 1974, and he was haunted by the understanding that with Clinton - as always - past is prologue (Maraniss, The Washington Post, 1998, p. A1).

The repetitive patterns of Clinton's personality and behavior became apparent, according to Maraniss (1998), starting with Clinton's childhood in a troubled household in a small town in Arkansas. The traits that first surfaced included his tendency to block things out, to compartmentalize aspects of his life, to deny reality at times, to keep going no matter the obstacles, and to feel a constant hunger for affirmation.

In the chronology of Clinton's life, the earliest recurring trait that Maraniss identifies as relevant to Clinton's sexual promiscuity is "a tendency toward denial" (p. A2). From an early age, he developed a capacity to block out unpleasant aspects of his life. "His mother, Virginia, once said that she could block out problems to the point of denying their existence, and so could her oldest son" (Maraniss, p. A3).

Maraniss (1995) notes in his biography of Clinton that there was more to shaping Clinton's sexual character than political ambition. He had been raised by a mother who "loved to flirt, who walked around in a tube top and short shorts and spent considerable time each day trying to make herself sexually alluring" (p. 218).

Virginia Clinton's second husband, Roger, came into their lives when Bill Clinton was four years old. He was, according to Maraniss (1998), "A philandering alcoholic who at times was verbally and physically abusive" (p. A3). Young Bill Clinton would pretend that nothing was wrong, that the trouble did not exist. "Many of his childhood

friends said they were in the house every day and had no idea that Roger Clinton was a violent alcoholic, nor did Bill ever tell them" (p. A3).

According to Maraniss (1998), the characteristics that Clinton carried with him into his adult life from his family experiences in Hot Springs had both positive and negative effects. "His capacity to block out and compartmentalize his life helps explain his optimism in the face of difficulties and his remarkable ability to recover from setbacks" (p. A4). Maraniss adds:

It also gave him the propensity to drift into his own version of never-never land: trying to avoid and deny unpleasant facts, ignoring necessary but unwanted personal advice from friends and advisers, and at times acting as though they and the problem they wanted to discuss with him did not exist (p. A4).

One particular example of Clinton's tendency toward denial concerned his sex life and Presidential aspirations. In the same January 1998 Washington Post article, Maraniss reported that in the summer of 1987, after Gary Hart, the former Colorado senator, dropped out of the race for the 1988 Democratic presidential nomination in reaction to allegations of marital infidelity, Clinton summoned his top advisers to Little Rock and prepared to enter the race himself, even though rumors of his own extramarital proclivities were "making the rounds" (p. A5). Maraniss notes:

Wright believed that her boss was in self-denial and refusing to confront his own problem. She presented him with a list of women with whom he might have had affairs, went over the list twice with him to determine which ones might be troublesome if he entered the race and, after the vetting process, urged him not to run. Only then, when confronted so directly, unable to block out the problem did Clinton back away from the presidential campaign (p. A5).

Clinton's sex life had been an issue in every campaign he had run since the race for Congress in 1974 when, "Clinton would be ushering one of his Arkansas girlfriends

out the side door of campaign headquarters while his wife-to-be was walking in the front" (p. A5).

One of Clinton's early noted sexual liaisons was with Gennifer Flowers. In December, 1980, after Clinton won his second term as Governor, Clinton called Gennifer Flowers, one of the women who had been named in a lawsuit filed by Larry Nichols against Clinton. According to David Lauter (1992) of the Los Angeles Times, Nichols was a former state employee who had been fired for using state telephones and airfreight accounts to raise money for Nicaraguan rebels. Nichols used his suit against Clinton as a vehicle to name several women he claimed had had affairs with the governor:

Nichols was not coy about his motivations. "I have my own agenda," he said in a recent interview in which he declined to offer evidence for his allegation. "They roasted me, and now everything I do will be done to run him out of the state" (Lauter, p. 11).

Fostered by Nichols and pushed by Clinton's Republican opponent, Sheffield Nelson, and by rival Democrats, rumors of the lawsuit "dogged" Clinton for months, according to Lauter (p. 11).

During that December 1980 phone call with Gennifer Flowers, Allen and Portis (1992) report that Clinton and Flowers talked about the lawsuit and Sheffield Nelson. Clinton did not know that Flowers was tape-recording their conversation:

"I stuck it up their ass," Clinton said. "Nelson called afterwards, you know." He said that Nelson had claimed that he had nothing to do with the infidelity allegations. "I know he lied. I just wanted to make his asshole pucker," Clinton said to Flowers. "But I covered you" (Allen and Portis, p. 193).

Allen and Portis state that when AP reporter Bill Simmons had first called Clinton and read him the list of women's names included in the Nichols lawsuit, Clinton told Flowers, "God...I kinda hate to deny that! He had good taste. I told you a couple of years

ago, one time when I came to see you that I had retired. And I'm now glad I have because they scoured the waterfront" (p. 194).

In a 1992 New York Times article Elizabeth Kolbert reported that in the wake of the Gennifer Flowers controversy, "Mr. Clinton appeared on *60 Minutes* and expressed regret for any pain he had caused in his marriage" (p. 6). During the interview with *60 Minutes* Clinton said:

If you just go out and divorce your wife, you have to deal with [charges of infidelity]. But if you work at your problems, if you make a commitment, then you do. So people are rewarded in politics if they divorce their wives (September 28, p. 3)

David Lauter (1992) reported in the Los Angeles Times that Clinton never denied accusations of past infidelity, saying: "Like nearly anybody who's been together 20 years, our relationship has not been perfect or free of its difficulties" (p. 11). Lauter stated that in a separate interview, regarding accusations of infidelity and the impact of those allegations on his presidential bid, Clinton said people were not interested in his past mistakes and didn't want a president who thought he was perfect (January 14, p. 12).

Maraniss (1998) wrote in the Washington Post that Hillary Clinton played a pivotal role in the Gennifer Flowers scandal when her husband made his first bid for the presidency:

Political scientists say it is doubtful that Clinton would be president today if she had not dismissed Gennifer Flowers' claim of having a 12-year affair with Clinton as something comparable to an Elvis sighting and then agreed to sit by his side on CBS's *60 Minutes* as he acknowledged earlier "problems" in the marriage (January 25, p. 9).

Clinton's sexual history, however, could not be ignored by scandal aficionados.

Howard Kurtz (1998) reported:

The phenomenon had begun back in 1992 with Gennifer Flowers, whose allegations of infidelity had nearly sunk Clinton's candidacy.

Flowers sold her story to The Star, the Florida-based supermarket tabloid, and within days the tale spread to the New York Post and New York Daily News, to other big papers, and to CNN, which provided live coverage of the news conference that The Star staged for Flowers (p. 99).

Now the floodgates were open, according to Kurtz; other women were coming forward with accounts of their sexual affairs with Clinton. "There was a touch of paranoia in the Oval Office...No modern president had been subjected to this level of personal vilification, to this endless barrage of stories about his sex life" (p. 110).

The endless allegations about Bill Clinton's infidelities seemed to have a life of their own. The president, of course, was widely seen as the First Playboy, dogged by charges about Gennifer Flowers, Paula Jones, Arkansas troopers procuring women, supposed late-night trysts at the Washington Marriot (Kurtz, p. 96).

Paula Jones, then a twenty-four-year old secretary for the Arkansas Industrial Development Commission, alleged that in May, 1991, Clinton sent one of his state troopers to solicit her while she was working the reception desk at the Excelsior Hotel in Little Rock. Maraniss (1995) records a version of the account (which Clinton denied), Jones gave three years later:

She said that she went out of curiosity. Inside the room, Clinton kissed her on the neck, placed a hand on her thigh, said that he liked the curves of her body and the flow of her hair, turned "beet red," and asked her to perform a sex act. She refused, and quickly left (p. 459).

Vincent Bugliosi (1998) adds to the Jones account, "Clinton looked sternly at her and said, 'You are smart. Let's keep this between ourselves'" (p. 32).

Three years after the alleged incident occurred, Paula Jones filed a complaint in the U.S. District Court for the Eastern District of Arkansas against President Clinton.

According to Bugliosi the complaint stated:

Jones's complaint seeks \$175,000 for each of four counts of the complaint. The most important count...is count one, which alleges

a civil rights violation by Clinton against Jones...in that "Clinton, as Governor of Arkansas...discriminated against [her] because of her gender by sexually harassing and assaulting her," thereby depriving her "of her right to equal protection of the law" under the Fourteenth Amendment to the United States Constitution (p. 33).

Jones further contended, according to Bugliosi, that after her encounter with Clinton she "was treated in a hostile and rude manner...and eventually transferred to a position which had no responsible duties for which [she] could be adequately evaluated to earn advancement" (p. 33). She also claimed that "although other employees received merit increases, [she] never received a raise beyond a cost of living increase" (p. 33). She alleged these things were done because "she was being punished for [her] rejection of the...advances made by Clinton" (p. 33). According to Bugliosi, Jones's lawsuit was not filed under Title VII of the 1964 Civil Rights Act because the six-month statute of limitations had already run out at the time Jones filed the suit. The section 1983 lawsuit had a three-year statute of limitations; she filed it just two days before the statute for that section had run out.

The President, as Bugliosi relates it, alleged temporary immunity from civil lawsuits during the term of his presidency. He filed a motion on August 10, 1994, asking the district court in Little Rock to dismiss the complaint "without prejudice," thereby allowing Jones to re-file her suit at the termination of his presidency.

The district court denied the president's motion to dismiss but stayed the trial until the end of his presidency. However, the court ruled that the discovery and deposition process could proceed during his term in office. Both parties appealed the court's ruling. In January 1996, the court of appeals reversed the lower court's ruling that the trial be postponed. The president then filed a petition with the U.S. Supreme Court, seeking a reversal of the court of appeals. In May 1997, the Supreme Court affirmed the judgment of the court of appeals (Bugliosi, 1998, p. 34).

Bugliosi notes that on July 3, 1997, the President filed an answer to the Jones complaint, denying the "false allegations advanced in the complaint" (p 34). The answer contended that "at no time did the President make sexual advances toward the plaintiff, or otherwise act improperly in her presence...he 'does not recall ever meeting' Paula Jones" (p. 35).

The Jones suit, then three years old, went forward. The Paula Jones ruling, according to Kurtz (1998) led all the networks. USA Today ran a huge picture of Paula Jones with the headline "Sex Trial Possible in Clinton Term" (p. 210). The story reported that Jones's lawyers would "start subpoenaing Clinton and at least 10 women he allegedly had trysts with, including Gennifer Flowers" (p. 210).

White House aids, according to Kurtz, were not unduly concerned and believed the Paula Jones scandal would not hurt Clinton's image. "People had made a judgment about this president, character flaws and all...had still reelected him, despite all the carping from the press" (p. 211).

Bob Bennett, Clinton's legal counsel, was deluged with interview requests. *Meet The Press*, *Face the Nation*, and *This Week* had called, "If the Sunday shows were definitely going to feature Paula Jones's lawyers, who were milking this for very last drop of publicity, he should be there to counter them" (Kurtz, p. 211) .

The White House decided that Bennett should go on both *Meet the Press* and *CNN's Late Edition*. "He spoke to Clinton on Saturday night. 'You tell the American people that this did not happen,' the President said. Bennett told his client that he planned to float the idea of a payment to charity as a way of settling the case, and Clinton agreed" (Kurtz, p. 213).

In Kurtz's account, Bennett said on the two Sunday shows that Clinton "would

never apologize for something he didn't do but might be willing to donate \$600,000 or \$700,000 to charity to settle the matter" (p. 213). While being interviewed by Tim Russert, Bennett also delivered a threat; "if Paula Jones really wants to put her reputation at issue, as we hear, we are prepared to do that" (p. 213).

Bennett leaked word to the New York Times that his office had "flown one of Jones's former boyfriends to Washington and taken his deposition. It was a spectacular blunder" (Kurtz, p. 213). Bennett found himself under fire for his talk-show revelation and the Times accused him of "threatening on national television to ruin Ms. Jones reputation by bringing up her sexual history" (Kurtz, p. 213).

"Bennett still didn't grasp how much trouble he was in, that he had come off like a break-your-kneecaps kind of guy" (Kurtz, p. 214). As Kurtz relates it, "Bennett, a 'sure-footed' attorney, wasn't accustomed to this sort of widespread denunciation, he had taken an embarrassing situation and turned it into a public relations disaster. White House aids were furious" (p. 214).

Bennett's setbacks and embarrassments continued as the Jones suit kept playing out in the press. Kurtz reports that Bennett "found himself discussing the president's penis on *Face the Nation*, declaring that Clinton was "a normal man" in terms of "size, shape, direction" (p. 247). Clinton continued to claim he did not recall meeting Ms. Jones, invoking what his White House aides dubbed "the amnesia defense."

Analysis (Gennifer Flowers): "It is undeniable that Clinton has had an active extramarital sex life since he married his wife in 1975. Clinton himself has admitted as much, and friends have privately confirmed it" (Washingtonpost.com Special Report, 2000, p. 6). Yet in 1992, when confronted by the press, according to Morris (1996):

Clinton would simply deny everything. The governor had an almost mystical faith in the absence of photographs. If you could deny it over and over, the reporters would get tired sooner or later and go away. As Clinton himself would tell one of the women, Gennifer Flowers, 'If they ever hit you with it, just say no and go on. There's nothing they can do if everybody kinda hangs tough, they're just not going to do anything' (p. 440).

Clinton's advisers insisted that the public had elected him knowing that he was flawed and had accepted that he had strayed sexually (Drew, 1994). Though most of the eyewitness accounts would appear only after the 1992 election, the list of the future President's illicit affairs would be remarkably detailed. The list included "more than twenty women who stepped forward or were otherwise publicly identified by the spring of 1994" (Kurtz, 1998, p. 99).

However numerous Clinton's illicit affairs were, two were most notable, Gennifer Flowers and Paula Jones. It was, according to Allen and Portis (1992), the Gennifer Flowers controversy that compelled Clinton's sexual liaisons into the public limelight; *60 Minutes* interviewer Steve Kroft pointedly asked Clinton if he had had an affair with Flowers. Clinton said he had not. When Kroft asked about other alleged affairs Clinton responded: "I have acknowledged wrongdoing. I have acknowledged causing pain in my marriage. I have said things to you and to the American people from the beginning that no American politician ever has" (p. 190). Kroft said, "I want to go back and ask you the question again. Who is Gennifer Flowers: do you know her?" Clinton admitted knowing her. When Kroft asked Clinton about the twelve-year affair Flowers claimed to have had with Clinton, Clinton responded by saying, "That allegation is false" (p. 190).

When questioned by the press after the *60 Minutes* interview about his relationship with Gennifer Flowers and his marital infidelity and its potential impact on his presidential chances, Clinton said:

What I think the people want, what I hope they want, is not someone who ever pretends to be perfect in any way. Most people intuitively sense whether they're dealing with a person who has a center or a core. That's far more important to them than whether a person has made mistakes in his life (Lauter, Los Angeles Times, p. A1).

Considering Clinton denied having a 12-year long affair with Flowers, his response to the press was, in the least, curious. Given Clinton's sometimes confusing and conflicting accounts to other controversial events in his life (avoiding the draft, smoking marijuana, Whitewater), his response could be characterized as predictably convoluted; he did not deny the accusation, nor did he directly answer the question. Rather, he attempted to bolster his position. Benoit (1995) states, "A person accused of misbehavior may attempt to reduce the degree of ill feeling experienced by the audience" (p. 77). Benoit developed six components to reducing offensiveness. The first, bolstering, is evident in Clinton's response to the Los Angeles Times. Bolstering "may be used to mitigate the negative effects of the act on the actor by strengthening the audience's positive affect for the rhetor...those accused of wrong-doing might relate positive attributes they possess" (p. 77). Clinton stated, "What I think the people want...is not someone who ever pretends to be perfect in any way." Clinton attempted to bolster his image by implying that he was just an ordinary, normal person and would never feign perfection. That he would never pretend to be perfect is framed as a positive human quality. Thus, while the negative impact of the claim of adultery remained, the positive impact of being an honest, normal person not only mitigated the damaging accusation of being unfaithful to his wife, but also bolstered his image of being an honest and sincere person.

A second variant of reducing offensiveness is transcendence. About

transcendence Benoit notes, "A person accused of wrong doing might direct our attention to other, allegedly higher values, to justify the behavior in question. This positive context may lessen the perceived offensiveness of the act and help improve the actor's reputation" (p. 78). Clinton stated, "Most people intuitively sense whether they're dealing with a person who has a center or a core. That's far more important to them than whether a person has made mistakes in his life." These remarks shifted attention off of marital infidelity and on to some other, more positive issue, in this case, on to "a person who has a center or a core." This transcendence suggested four agendas by Clinton. First, he asserted that having "a center or a core" was more important than past mistakes. Implied here is that if one has a core and a center, then marital infidelity can be forgiven because either the core/center will assert itself and eventually the right path will be chosen, or barring that, at least the capability for choosing other moral paths exists.

Second, by suggesting his belief that "people intuitively sense whether they're dealing with a person who has a center or a core," Clinton implied that he himself encompassed both of those qualities. This shifted the accusation from Clinton's marital infidelity to Clinton's center and core. How the audience interpreted the meaning of "center and core" was not the issue, but it seems clear Clinton felt he himself possessed "a center or a core" and presumed the audience would recognize and identify with that fact.

Third, about having a core and center Clinton asserted, "That's far more important to them than whether a person has made mistakes in his life." The irony of this assertion cannot be overlooked; the very man accused of cheating on his wife claimed he had a core and a center and that the "center and core" issue was more important to his

audience. The issue had transcended from the negative wrongdoing of Clinton's marital infidelity to the positive audience ability to recognize a person's moral fortitude.

Finally, Clinton suggested the 'center and core' issue was more important than "past mistakes." He did not say the core/center issue was more important than marital infidelity, but shifted the infidelity accusation to a generalized "past mistakes" context. This more generalized 'mistakes' context was intended to lessen the perceived offensiveness of the act of adultery and improve his image in the eyes of his audience. Thus, the negative act of infidelity was also minimized. Benoit notes, "If the rhetor can convince the audience that the negative act isn't as bad as it might first appear, the amount of ill feeling associated with that act is reduced" (p. 77).

Compensation is also inferred in Clinton's Los Angeles Times account of marital infidelity. He stated, "Most people intuitively sense whether they're dealing with a person who has a center or a core. That's more important to them..." In exchange for an alleged adulterer, Clinton offered the audience something more important, a person with a "center or a core." As Benoit notes, "Here the person offers to remunerate the victim to help offset the negative feeling arising from the wrongful act" (p. 78). The victim in this case was the disappointed voting populace, the remuneration offered was a person with a center or a core, in other words someone who had a moral base and was capable of reform. By extension, the audience was offered compensation for the negative perceptions they may have had as a result of Clinton's wrongful act of infidelity. "If the accuser accepts the proffered inducement, and if it has sufficient value, the negative affect from the undesirable act may be outweighed, restoring reputation" (p. 78).

Analysis (Paula Jones): The Gennifer Flowers tabloid buzz hardly had time to

cool down before the Paula Jones scandal hit the news. Jones filed a sexual harassment suit against Clinton "for allegedly trying to get her [Jones] to perform oral sex with him [Clinton] in a Little Rock hotel room" (Drew, 1994, p. 381). Clinton denied the allegations made by Jones. Clinton's lawyer, Bob Bennett, filed a response to Jones' complaint that stated, "At no time did the President make sexual advances toward the plaintiff, or otherwise act improperly in her presence. He does not recall ever meeting Paula Jones" (Bugliosi, 1998, p. 35).

On advice from his legal council Clinton said little about the sexual harassment suit. One public fragment was offered to the press in 1997 while Clinton was in Paris to sign the agreement for the NATO alliance to expand into Poland, Hungary, and the Czech Republic. Soon after the signing, according to Kurtz (1998), "Mike McCurry was paged by the White House press office. 'Re: Supreme Court & Paula Jones,' his beeper said" (p. 208). The high court unanimously agreed that a sitting president was not immune to lawsuits over personal behavior and that Jones's suit could go forward. About the opinion Clinton said, "It must be an interesting opinion if it's nine to zero. Let's find out what the reasoning is" (Kurtz, p. 209).

Clinton's advisors wanted Bob Bennett, the President's lawyer, to handle the press, who had not been given a chance to question Clinton about the court's ruling. Clinton's staff wanted the media focus to stay on the NATO alliance. Bennett gave an interview to *CNN* in which he related only that the court's ruling was a disappointment" (Kurtz, p. 210).

The next day Clinton met with European Community officials at the Hague. The press were ordered not to ask Clinton about Paula Jones at the news conference. But, as

Kurtz (1998) recounts it, the President's advisors told Clinton, "They've [the press] gotta get something on this. Maybe it's better if we do an impromptu outside" (p. 211). Later, as Clinton was leaving the Hague, he fielded questions shouted at him from the press. About the court's ruling Clinton said he was concerned about the court ruling's effect on "future presidents," but would not go beyond that (p. 211). All Clinton would say officially was:

I saw Mr. Bennett's comments this morning, or heard them, on CNN.
I don't have anything to add to that (Kurtz, p. 211).

What Bennett had said was that the court's ruling, regarding the Jones suit going forward, was a "disappointment." The court had ruled, unanimously, that a sitting president was not immune to criminal prosecution over personal behavior. In the above fragment, Clinton concurred with Bennett's disappointment. In effect, Clinton minimized the significance of the court's finding by not adding anything to Bennett's statement. That the court's ruling would result in a sexual harassment suit against Clinton was also minimized. Clinton's lack of commentary shifted the seriousness of a sexual harassment suit to an issue of unimportance and kept focus on the reason Clinton was at the Hague in the first place. If Clinton could appear unconcerned about the high court's decision, then it must be of minimal concern. Clinton was successful in suggesting that the negative act, a sexual harassment suit filed against him, was not as bad as it first appeared.

On November 13, 1998, the Washington Post reported that President Clinton reached an out-of-court settlement in the suit filed against him by Jones, agreeing to pay her \$850,000 but acknowledging no wrong doing.

If sexual misconduct were considered disqualifying, many distinguished former presidents would not have served in office. What differentiates Clinton's tenure as

Commander in Chief is that his Presidency, and specifically his scandals, were so public. As McGee (1990) notes, "The 'bottom line' these days is the instantaneous public opinion poll which measures popular reaction to current conditions" (p. 286). Anyone in the world can receive any fragment of information about any subject in a matter of minutes. To say that millions of people around the world knew of Clinton's affairs would not be an exaggeration, and public opinion polls recorded the opinions of all that cared to weigh in. By virtue of the fact that Clinton's sex life could be known and discussed so freely (unlike past decades), it was. But because Clinton's sex life was the subject of tabloids, Internet chat rooms, and other forms of instant media, it also required (unlike past decades), a response.

Clinton's responses to allegations of sexual misconduct, with Gennifer Flowers and Paula Jones, covered a number of variants extending from bolstering to compensation. In an effort to strengthen the audience's positive feelings toward himself, Clinton asserted that he was just a normal guy who wasn't perfect and made a few past mistakes. Clinton competently minimized the effects of being an adulterer by expressing his "I'm not perfect" stance to bolster his image and offset damage to his reputation.

In the case of Gennifer Flowers, Clinton attempted to reduce the alleged offensiveness of his marital infidelity by placing the act in a more favorable context, that is, through the use of transcendence. He shifted the issue of adultery to the issue of having a center and a core, then specifically to his own center and core. He also shifted the audience's potential ill feeling about adultery to the audience's ability to recognize a moral person and finally, shifted infidelity to the generalized category of "mistakes."

In the case of Paula Jones, Clinton minimized the impact and significance of the

high court's finding - that a sitting president could indeed be prosecuted for his personal behavior. That the court's ruling would result in a sexual harassment charge against Clinton was dismissed as a mere disappointment.

Clinton's accounts and apologies regarding his alleged sexual improprieties can be considered successful to the extent that the public did not reject him. He did, after all, win a second Presidential election. As Michael Kagay (1999) observed:

It is likely that President Clinton's job approval ratings stayed high because the American electorate already knew Bill Clinton. Clinton had a reputation as a philanderer, or suspected philanderer, back in 1992. Recall the Gennifer Flowers episode. And George Bush raised the so-called character issue in that year's campaign. But American's elected Clinton president anyway in 1992 -- an election year when the economy swamped all other issues. The public knew Clinton even better by 1996 -- after years of investigations, lawsuits, and coverage in the media concerning Whitewater, the Paula Jones lawsuit, and so on. Yet Americans elected Clinton for the second time in 1996 (p. 453).

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With Bill Clinton it is often tempting, but usually misleading, to try to separate the good from the bad, they coexist. In his worst times, one can see the will to recover and the promise of redemption. In his best times, one can see the seeds of disaster (Maraniss, 1995, p. 355).

The final months of 1978, according to Maraniss, reflected the second of those two conditions. "He was on the edge of glory. At the early age of thirty-two, he was the governor-apparent of Arkansas" (p. 355). It was then that he and Hillary Clinton signed papers in a land deal along the White River in the Ozark hills.

Commonly said to care little about making money, an impression he casually cultivated, the governor was privately avid in his own financial pursuits. He unabashedly solicited friends like Jim McDougal for campaign funds and even legal retainers for his wife. 'McDollars' Clinton would laughingly call the money that always seemed available through McDougal (Morris, 1996, p. 313).

During Clinton's first term as Governor, Jim McDougal was a member of

Clinton's staff, "...the governor's liaison to banking and industrial development. He was the one with the longest connection to Clinton, going back to the Fulbright campaign of 1968" (Maraniss, p. 373). In the summer of 1978, when Clinton was still attorney general but "seemed a sure bet to occupy the Governor's Mansion" (p. 373), McDougal met the Clintons at a Little Rock restaurant and made his sales pitch on the White River land.

According to Morris, McDougal invited the Clintons to join in the Whitewater venture because he thought it would prove profitable and he enjoyed having partners with whom he could discuss the deal. "Other acquaintances of McDougal said he had another motive: he thought having the next governor of Arkansas involved in the deal would make it easier for him to develop and sell the land" (p. 359). Maraniss (1995) adds:

Clinton knew nothing about real estate and had no interest in it, according to McDougal. When he talked to the Clintons, McDougal said later, he dealt with Rodham. They formed a corporation, Whitewater Development Company Inc., and took out a \$20,000 loan from the Union National bank of Little Rock for the down payment on the land then a \$182,000 loan from Citizens Band and Trust of Flippen to buy the property. They secured the property itself, and expected to payoff the interest by subdividing the land into fifty-two lots and selling them as vacation home sites (p. 374).

Morris reports that on December 16, 1980, McDougal's Bank of Kingston loaned Hillary Rodham \$30,000 to build a model home on Whitewater's Lot 13. But the market soured and the lots did not sell. "Interest rates rose from 8 to 18 percent, both the McDougals and the Clintons had to make good on the original loans they had taken with the McDougals" (Maraniss, p. 430).

Over the next four years, the ties between McDougal and the future President grew closer "and ever more lucrative for Bill Clinton" (Morris, p. 370). Morris recounts that a federal investigation later found evidence of at least \$60,500 siphoned from Madison Guaranty to Clinton's 1984-reelection campaign. "Even then, the suspected

siphoning appeared to be only a fraction of the 'McDollars' campaign aids saw cascading into the 1984 race" (p. 370).

In 1984, after his reelection to a third term as governor, as Morris recounts it:

Clinton interrupted his morning jog to appear unannounced at McDougal's office. The governor then launched into a familiar and forlorn complaint about his personal income and expenses, that his statehouse salary and Hillary's law partnership were not enough. "I asked him how much he needed, and Clinton said 'about \$2000 a month.'" In response the banker promptly put Hillary on a \$2000 a month retainer, with the unusual arrangement that it be paid to her personally rather than to or through the firm. "I hired Hillary because Bill came in whimpering they needed help," he remembered (p. 370).

In late January 1985, Clinton, according to Morris, asked McDougal to "knock out the Deficit" of the 1984 campaign. To eliminate the deficit, McDougal hosted a fund-raiser for the governor:

Between fifty and a hundred people sipped wine and made out checks, including Madison executives and employees there on command. Of the \$35,000 McDougal raised to retire Clinton's loan, federal auditors found some \$12,000 in certified checks drawn on Madison Guaranty yet attributed to "phantom contributors" who made no donations. Investigators suspected thousands more in such "orphaned" contributions (p. 372).

In 1989, McDougal's savings and loan company, Madison Guaranty, went bankrupt. According to Elizabeth Drew (1994) Hillary Clinton had been retained by Madison to prevent it from being closed down by a state agency after it had been found insolvent. Drew notes, "On October 31, 1993, the Washington Post reported that the Resolution Trust Corporation, which acquired and disposed of the assets of failed S&L's, had asked the justice Department to conduct criminal investigation of Madison" (p. 377). At issue were questions about whether Madison funds had been used to payoff the Clinton campaign debt from his 1984 gubernatorial campaign and questions about

transactions involving Whitewater.

As Drew recounts it, there was a debate over whether to name the Clintons in the Resolution Trust Corporation criminal investigation of Madison guaranty. "A subsequent referral in October 1993, in which the Clintons were named, was rejected by the new Democratic U.S. Attorney in Little Rock, a former law student of Clinton's who afterward recused herself from the case" (Drew, p. 378).

Drew notes that after Clinton won the Presidential election, the Clintons left for Washington amid the buzz that the Little Rock Madison case "was a very big deal" and was "very much alive" (p.378).

Kurtz (1998) states, "readers were following the twists and turns" of the Whitewater story, but news of the story was coming in "dribs and drabs" (p. xvii).

No day went by without the president and his coterie laboring mightily to generate favorable headlines and deflect damaging ones, to project their preferred image on the vast screen of the media establishment...it was a carefully honed media strategy (Kurtz, p. xvii.)

It is typical for the White House press staff and White House aides to handle and control what a President might say for various occasions, but for much of Clinton's first term, according to Kurtz, these efforts to control the message were clumsy. Clinton's first press secretary, DeeDee Myers, was popular with reporters, but was viewed as ineffective and "out of the policy loop" (p. xxii). By the time Mike McCurry inherited the press secretary post, "the press operation had become increasingly crucial...on one level the growing bureaucracy was needed to deal with an expanding media universe... clamoring for interviews and attention" (p. xxii).

From a distance, in the headlines and on the evening news, most Americans saw Bill Clinton as a singular figure, holding forth, posing with foreign leaders, making newsworthy pronouncements. But much of what they saw was stage

craft orchestrated by the likes of McCurry (Kurtz, p. xxiii).

According to Kurtz, a small group of White House aides worked "relentlessly" at presenting Clinton in a favorable light and deflecting scandal. "They did not let Clinton have the briefest exposure to journalists without rehearsing what he would say" (p. xxiv).

"McCurry was not above a little hardball" (Kurtz, p. 46). The White House was unhappy that *ABC* and *Nightline* kept bringing up the Whitewater issue; the Clinton media handlers were keeping count. "That's your twenty-first Whitewater story this year" (p. 46). When *Nightline* asked to spend the final days of the 1996 campaign with Clinton, McCurry sent word to Tom Bettag, *Nightline's* executive producer that he was not happy with the Whitewater programs *Nightline* had been running. "No one came out and said that Ted Koppel couldn't travel with Clinton because he had spent too much time on Whitewater; no one had to. *Nightline* was in the doghouse" (p. 47).

The president, for his part, could not control his temper when reporters antagonized him.

He lashed out time and again in public settings. He ripped off his microphone and abruptly ended an interview in Prague with *NBC's* Jim Miklaszewski after the reporter asked two questions about Whitewater instead of about Clinton's European trip (Kurtz, p. 74).

The original Whitewater special prosecutor was Robert B. Fiske Jr. In his October 1998 article "Untangling Whitewater," Froomkin reported that Fiske came under fire from conservatives for being insufficiently aggressive in pursuit of the President. "A three-judge panel in charge of appointing independent counsels abruptly replaced him with a conservative activist named Kenneth W. Starr" (*The Washington Post*, p. A03).

Clinton's reelection campaign had begun in the last weeks of 1994 when,

according to Patrick Matrisciana (1994), James Carville "went nuclear against Starr" (p.139). Carville, who "masterminded the Clinton campaign in 1992" (p. 130), had grown obsessed with the Whitewater prosecutor. Carville's assault started on *Meet the Press*. "Here was Clinton's close friend denouncing the prosecutor as a Republican hatchet man, without the president, or his spokesman, lifting a finger to dissuade him" (p.131).

This presented a challenge for Clinton's press staff, who didn't know if he should embrace Carville's criticism or cut him off. McCurry told reporters that Carville's actions "did not represent the President's thinking" (Matrisciana, p. 131).

Privately, according to Matrisciana, Clinton told McCurry that he didn't think Carville's attacks on Starr were helping. McCurry thought, "the only marginal benefit was that people might get the impression that Whitewater was just a political game" (p. 132).

The Carville episode was a good example of why journalists had come to view much of what McCurry said with skepticism. According to Matrisciana:

To argue, with a straight face, that the president's pal was attacking the president's prosecutor and the president had no way of stopping him, and that the president's senior adviser had discussed this with the president's pal - well, it was hard to watch a grown man twist himself into a pretzel (p. 132).

Hillary Clinton, according to Howard Kurtz (1998), had her own method of spin control when it came to fielding questions about Whitewater. She was wary of giving interviews. Kurtz states, "Her narrow, lawyerlike answers on the mounting Whitewater inquiries made it look as if she had something to hide" (p. 78). When Whitewater began heating up in 1994, "Hillary's fierce resistance to public disclosure became a major liability; to many journalists the first lady was a stonewaller, a slippery pol" (p. 84).

Hillary's staff persuaded her to invite Len Downie the executive editor of the Washington Post, to the White House to "talk frankly about the scandal, to show that she had nothing to hide" (Kurtz, p. 85).

Downie tried to explain why the Post had to do this kind of reporting, that there was nothing personal or judgmental about it. If the first family's explanations were innocent, he said, all she had to do was provide the documents and they would publish the story. Hillary responded with lawyerly caution, saying that she couldn't produce the documents because the White House didn't have them all (Kurtz, p. 85).

From Hillary's point of view, according to Kurtz, the interview was disaster; Downie didn't seem to believe her. Downie kept asking how she could prove she and President Clinton had lost money on the Ozarks investment deal. Hillary was unable to provide satisfactory answers during the interview. "That was the day she knew she was screwed with the Post (p. 85). Hillary believed Downie now felt the Clinton's had something to hide and that his paper was going to uncover it.

It was Susan Schmidt, according to Kurtz, who reported that federal banking regulators had referred their inquiry into Madison Guaranty, the savings and loan at the heart of the case, for criminal prosecution. Hillary decided it was time to attack Schmidt head on. Hillary wanted the White House to prepare a report on Schmidt's coverage. Fabiani rejected the idea, saying it would "backfire." Hillary "retreated further into a self-imposed isolation" (p. 89).

While Hillary did not want to talk, President Clinton's press secretary, Mike McCurry was "constantly offering the president the same advice: Don't expound at great length (Kurtz, p. 184). Don't talk the story onto the networks." The story concerned Webb Hubbell; Clinton felt there was nothing wrong with helping out a friend. The press stories, on the other hand, hinted at obstruction of justice. One of the people "helping

out" Hubbell was chief of staff Erskine Bowles who had been telling reporters that he would be leaving the Clinton administration and returning to North Carolina. The millionaire investment banker "had clearly been shaken by having to testify in the Hubbell case" (p. 196).

McCurry warned Clinton the press might ask about James McDougal, Clinton's Whitewater business partner. McDougal had appeared on *Larry King Live* and said he "was tired of covering up for Clinton." "Don't worry, I won't comment on it," the president said" (Kurtz, p. 185).

On another occasion, however, Clinton snapped. According to Kurtz, the Washington Times reported in a front-page story that their top Whitewater investigator, Jerry Seper, "had found some previously sealed court records in which Ken Starr described Hillary as a central figure in the probe and said she had changed her sworn testimony over time" (p. 197). "Don't say anything on this," McCurry cautioned Clinton. "It's hard for them to make much of this story unless you give them a lot of verbiage" (Kurtz, p. 197). Moments into a scheduled press conference, Clinton was asked if he knew of any discrepancies in his wife's account and was Whitewater becoming more troublesome.

For the first time in months, Clinton lost his composure in public. "No, and no," he snapped. "Could the president elaborate?" "Well, you have been watching for years. If you don't know, I can't help you," he said coldly (Kurtz, p. 197).

On June 23, the Supreme Court ruled that the Clinton administration would have to turn over to Kenneth Starr the Whitewater notes of Hillary's discussions with White House Lawyers. Dan Froomkin (1998) reported in the Washington Post that in the first Whitewater trial, which ended in May 1996, the McDougals were convicted of most of

the fraud and conspiracy charges brought against them by Starr. The charges were related to the complex loan-swapping schemes that eventually destroyed McDougal's savings and loan. President Clinton testified on videotape about one of the loans but was not accused of wrongdoing (October 5, p. A05).

Froomkin also reported that James McDougal received a reduced sentence of three years for cooperating with Whitewater investigators. He died of a heart attack a few months before he was released from prison (Washington Post, p. A05).

Susan McDougal, according to Froomkin, was convicted of lesser charges and was sentenced to two years in prison. She began serving that sentence after serving 18 months in jail on a contempt of court charge for refusing to testify before Starr's grand jury (Washington Post, p. A05).

At the second Whitewater trial, which ended in August 1996, a federal jury cleared two Arkansas bankers of four felony charges involving donations to Clinton's 1990 campaign. Seven other counts were dismissed (Froomkin, p. A05).

Froomkin reported that the case made it to the Supreme Court - twice. "In June 1997, the court sided with Starr and ordered the White House to turn over notes taken by White House lawyers in discussions with Hillary Clinton" (p. A06). In response to allegations of wrongdoing in Whitewater, Clinton responded on August 17, 1998 with:

"An independent federal agency found no evidence of any wrongdoing by me or my wife over two years ago" (Washington Post, p. A06).

Analysis: Identifying the salient aspects of the issue is helpful in understanding Clinton's brief and infrequent responses to the Whitewater scandal:

◆ Though much of the Whitewater controversy fell on Hillary Clinton's shoulders, it is undeniable that Clinton played an intricate part, from the inception, in the spiraling events that led to the Whitewater controversy (Matrisciana, 1994, Maraniss, 1995).

- ◆ Though Clinton had no interest in real estate, he did have an interest in eliminating his campaign debt; investing in real estate seemed a good way to turn a profit.
- ◆ Morris (1996) documents Bill Clinton's "avid" pursuit of "McDollars" which always seemed to be available from Jim McDougal, the Clintons' real estate partner.
- ◆ That Hillary was put on legal retainer by McDougal was a direct result of Bill Clinton's complaint about his lack of personal income and numerous campaign expenses (Drew, 1994).
- ◆ It was Bill Clinton who asked McDougal to eliminate his campaign debt. That Hillary was defending McDougal's Savings & Loan after McDougal filed bankruptcy only fueled the controversy.
- ◆ An investigation into the bankruptcy revealed that funds from McDougal's Savings & Loan were indeed used to pay off Clinton's campaign debt (Drew, 1994).
- ◆ White House aids dealt with the media and would not let Clinton speak on the issue (Kurtz, 1998).

Kurtz (1998) reports Clinton's comments given at a press conference during the first Whitewater investigation and notes that Clinton lost his composure and, when asked if Whitewater was becoming troublesome and if he knew of discrepancies in his wife's account, snapped:

Well, you have been watching for years. If you don't know, I can't help you! (p. 197).

In this fragment, Clinton evaded responsibility through defeasibility, "pleading lack of information about or control over important factors in the situation" (Benoit, 1995, p. 76). Implied was that the investigation had gone on for so long, if the reporters could not keep the events straight, it was not Clinton's responsibility to clarify matters for them; he did, after all, have a country to run. Clinton did not deny that Whitewater had become troublesome or that there were discrepancies in his wife's testimony; rather, he suggested that lack of control over the events (years of investigating) made it difficult for him to "help".

Clinton also attempted to minimize the event. "Troublesome" and "discrepancies" took a back seat to "years," suggesting that the length of the on-going saga made other, related issues, less important.

Clinton also tried, to a lesser extent, to minimize the offensiveness of Whitewater by differentiating the scandal from the years it had been occurring. The issue became the reporters' inability to follow, remember and keep sorted all the tangents of the Whitewater investigation. Whitewater became the less offensive act; the reporters' failure to deduce the "trouble" and "discrepancies" became the issue. Thus, to some extent, Clinton also employed transcendence; rather than answer the reporters' questions he strategically shifted the scene to the reporters' inability to follow the ins and outs of the story.

After the second Whitewater investigation Froomkin reported in the Washington Post (October, 1998) that in response to allegations of wrongdoing in Whitewater, Clinton said:

An independent federal agency found no evidence of any wrongdoing by me or my wife two years ago (p. A05).

In this fragment Clinton does not directly deny that he or his wife were guilty of wrongdoing. He does reinforce the fact that a federal agency found "no evidence of wrongdoing," which is a form of denial. Benoit states, "Whether the accused denies that the offensive act actually occurred or denies that he or she performed it, either option, if accepted, should absolve the actor of culpability" (p. 75). Needless to say, that a federal agency "found no evidence of any wrongdoing" does not absolutely establish the Clintons' innocence in the Whitewater scandal.

Clinton attempted, to a lesser extent, to minimize their culpability by noting that a

federal agency found no evidence "two years ago." Implied was that not only were he and his wife innocent at that moment, but that two years prior, the same conclusion had been reached. Thus, not only were the allegations false, they were redundantly false. Additionally, the act was minimized; Clinton used transcendence to the extent that time displaced the importance of the accusation, so the accusation no longer retained any significance.

The Whitewater scandal, and all the twists and turns associated with the two investigations, consumed several years of Clinton's political career. Ironically, it is the one scandal about which Clinton had the least to say. This was most likely because Clinton's White House press staff and legal team handled most of the press inquiries and would not let Clinton speak on the issue (Kurtz, 1998). When he finally did speak, he evaded responsibility for commenting on his or his wife's involvement by suggesting the issue had gone on so long it was impossible to sort out the events, thereby minimizing the original wrongdoing. Clinton reduced the offensiveness of his wrongdoing through differentiation, the issue became Clinton's accusation of the reporters' inability to keep track of the years long events. This strategy shifted the issue to some other problem and off Clinton's involvement in the Whitewater scandal.

After the second investigation, as the analysis shows, Clinton offered something of a non-denial denial regarding he and Hillary's involvement in Whitewater. Clinton did not say they were not guilty of some involvement in the scandal, but noted that a federal agency found no evidence of their involvement (Washington Post October, 1998, p. A05). Given the documented history of the long friendship and business association Bill and Hillary had with the McDougals, it is a question left to speculation. Clinton

minimized the significance of their involvement, or lack of, by noting that two years prior, the same "no evidence" conclusion had been reached, thus, the issue was placed in a different context - that of "old news."

THE MONICA LEWINSKY AFFAIR

"The news, McCurry knew, was bad, so undeniably awful that any attempt at spin would be ludicrous. The press secretary had bobbed and weaved and jabbed and scolded his way through all manner of Clinton scandals, from the arcane Whitewater land dealings to the tawdry tale of Paula Jones. But this one is different. The banner headline in that morning's Washington Post made clear that this was a crisis that could spell the end of the Clinton presidency (Kurtz, 1998, p. xiii).

Clinton had been accused of having sex with a former White House intern, Monica Lewinsky, in the executive mansion for more than a year, from the time that she was twenty-one years old. Worse, Clinton was accused of lying under oath about the affair, committing perjury, and urging Ms. Lewinsky to lie about the affair (Coulter, 1998).

On January 11, 1998, the president and three of his lawyers, according to Kurtz, prepared a statement, in which Clinton denied any improper relationship with the intern; McCurry was to deliver it to the press. McCurry confirmed the final version with Clinton "Fine," Clinton said. "McCurry had not asked the president himself if he had been banging the intern. That was not his role; his job was to repeat whatever facts or assertions the lawyers had approved" (p. xiv).

As Kurtz (1998) relates it, McCurry walked toward the podium and faced the cameras. The shouting began with the network correspondents demanding that McCurry explain what Clinton meant by "improper" relationship:

I'm not going to parse the statement, McCurry said.

Does that mean no sexual relationship? asked *NBC's* Clair Shipman.

Clair, I'm just not going to parse the statement for you, it speaks for itself.

What kind of relationship did Clinton have with Lewinsky?

I'm not characterizing it beyond what the statement that I've already issued says, McCurry replied.

Shipman's *NBC* colleague, David Bloom, uncorked a broader question: Mike, would it be improper for the president of the United States to have had a sexual relationship with this woman?

You can stand here and ask a lot of questions over and over again and will elicit the exact same answer.

So Mike, you're willing to -

'I'm not leaving any impression, David, and don't twist my words,' McCurry shot back, jabbing his finger.

John Harris of *The Washington Post* tried a different tack, invoking McCurry's own reputation for honesty. Would you be up here today if you weren't absolutely confident these are not true?

Look, my personal views don't count, McCurry said.

McCurry bit his lower lip as Deborah Orin of the *New York Post* tried next: What is puzzling to many of us is that we've invited you probably two dozen times today to say there was no sexual relationship with this woman and you have not done so (p. xv).

Thirty-six minutes and one hundred forty-eight questions later, the press conference was finally over.

The week before, according to Kurtz, had been the start of Clinton's sixth year in office. Clinton's approval rating was hovering around 60 percent, and for all the "scandalous headlines and political bumps in the road the country finally seemed to have grown comfortable with him" (p. xvi).

Now, just when they thought they had survived the worst of the investigations,

Kurtz notes, the latest sex scandal had hit them. Clinton's staff was depressed and uncertain about how long Clinton might last:

The irony was inescapable: The president who worried so openly about his legacy, who insisted that Whitewater was nothing next to Watergate, might make history by following Richard Nixon into oblivion because he could not resist a lowly intern! (p. xvi).

William Bennett (1998) wrote that during Mrs. Clinton's televised response to the Lewinsky charge, she insisted she was interested in the facts. "We know very few facts right now. I don't think it's fruitful at all to speculate or to engage in hypotheticals" (p. 95). Bennett recounts:

There is one very large problem with the first lady's account. As George Will so aptly put it, "The man across from her at the breakfast table surely has lots of pertinent facts right now. Mrs. Clinton might begin to slake her thirst for facts by saying: 'Pass the marmalade, and by the way, is the New York Times right that Monica Lewinsky met alone with you...two weeks after being subpoenaed by Paula Jone's lawyers and a week before Lewinsky filed her affidavit saying she had not had sexual relations with you?'" (p. 95).

Bennett states that when asked why the president would not provide an explanation of his relationship with the young intern, Mrs. Clinton, a Yale Law School graduate, answered, "Because there is an investigation going on...he can't. I hope every American understands...that is the way the system works" (p. 96).

The President, also a Yale Law School graduate, insisted that the law prohibited him from speaking. He refrained from commenting on the matter at a press conference because he was "honoring the rules of the investigation" (Bennett, p. 96). Bennett observed:

As they both surely know, there are no legal restrictions forbidding the president from commenting on the matter; federal laws prohibit only prosecutors from commenting on evidence presented before a grand jury (p. 96).

The White House was eventually forced to concede that the president was not legally prohibited from giving an explanation of his relationship with Lewinsky. In June, defenders of the president, according to Bennett, then moved to the "non-facts" defense, claiming the case against the president was "unsubstantiated innuendo."

According to Kurtz (1998), however, information about the Clinton-Lewinsky scandal was developing quickly:

Coverage was spinning out of control; the networks devoted more airtime to the Lewinsky soap opera in a single week than they had given to all the Clinton scandals, from Gennifer Flowers to campaign fundraising abuses, combined (p. 290).

Within four months, according to Bennett (1998), the country knew there were at least twenty-four hours of tape recordings between Lewinsky and her colleague Linda Tripp. On the tapes Lewinsky gave details about her affair with the President and claimed the President directed her to testify falsely in the Paula Jones case.

Additionally, according to Bennett, the country learned that Lewinsky told others about her encounters with the President and that others claimed to have heard Mr. Clinton's messages left on Lewinsky's answering machine. According to Kurtz (1998), Linda Tripp had been furious when White House Lawyer Bob Bennett responded to her account by publicly questioning her credibility, she then decided to secretly tape her conversations with Lewinsky.

Mike Isikoff, a Newsweek reporter, learned that Tripp, outfitted with a body mike, had taped further conversations in which Lewinsky accused Clinton and his friend Vernon Jordan of urging her to lie about their affair in her deposition in the Paula Jones case. Isikoff lobbied to have the story published, but Newsweek's editors held the piece, saying it was too explosive. Within hours, Matt Drudge, a reporter for the Washington

Post, learned of the Isikoff piece and posted some of the details on his Internet site (Kurtz, 1998).

The journalistic engines were racing, especially as reports spread that during his own deposition, the president had flatly denied having sex with Lewinsky. At midnight the following Tuesday, Sue Schmidt's story on Monica Lewinsky hit the streets, quickly followed by reports on ABC radio and in the Los Angeles Times. The White House staff was stunned (Kurtz, p. 293).

According to Kurtz, reporters jammed into the press secretary's office the next morning. Reading from notes, McCurry said Clinton was "outraged" by the charges and had "never had any improper relationship with this woman" (p. 293).

But the White House instantly paid a price for the years of aggressive spinning, for the evasive answers that had angered so many journalists through so many scandals. Most of the reporters automatically assumed that Clinton was lying, that he had in fact been carrying on with Monica Lewinsky and was pathetically trying to cover it up! (Kurtz, p. 293).

Nothing could stop the media stampede over the allegations that the President possibly had obstructed justice and had oral sex with a Beverly Hills twenty-something who lived "of all places, at the Watergate" (Kurtz, p. 294).

Another story in The Post, according to Ann Coulter (1998), reported that Clinton, in his deposition with Paula Jones's lawyers, had admitted having an affair with Gennifer Flowers. "This would mean that the very first thing most Americans had learned about Bill Clinton - his denial, on Super Bowl Sunday six years earlier, that he had slept with Flowers - was a lie" (Coulter, p. 16).

The chaos in the West Wing was so great that Clinton's advisers, according to Kurtz, couldn't agree on whether Clinton should carry on with the day's agenda or leave it to Hillary and Al Gore. The issue became moot when the President made clear that he had had enough of staying silent. The political advisers and lawyers worked out a

compromise: Clinton would make a more forceful public denial and wouldn't say anything new.

When the President appeared in the Roosevelt Room, the next morning, he closed his remarks by repeating his denial about having had sex with Lewinsky, this time narrowing his eyes and jabbing his finger and delivering the message with an emotional punch (Kurtz, p. 298).

Clinton's closing remark was prefaced, according to William Bennett (1998), by several other denials to questions about his relationship with Monica Lewinsky including:

I have answered it repeatedly and have nothing to add to my former answer.

I really believe it's important for me not to say any more about this.

On the claims of executive privilege, I cannot comment on those matters because they are under seal.

I just don't have anything else to say about that.

I just have nothing to say (p. 104).

On February 2, 1988, USA Today reported that Clinton said: "In recent weeks, political and media elites have wallowed in smut and scandal. Since my personal weaknesses contributed to creating this situation, I am now determined to use my presidential strengths to end it" (p. 13A).

On August 18, 1998, the Washington Post reported President Clinton's remarks his grand jury testimony:

This afternoon in this room...I testified before the Office of Independent Counsel and the grand jury, answered their questions truthfully, including questions about my private life. Still, I must take complete responsibility for all my actions, both public and private. And that is why I am speaking you tonight...I did have a relationship with Miss Lewinsky that was not appropriate. In fact it was wrong. But I told the grand jury...and I say to you that at no time did I ask anyone to lie (p. A5).

On September 9, 1998, The Charlotte Observer reported that Clinton offered his most direct and contrite apology to date: "I have no one to blame but myself for my self-

inflicted wounds...I've done my best to be your friend. But, I also let you down, and I let my family down, and I let this country down. But I'm trying to make it right" (p. A1).

On September 12, the New York Times reported on Clinton's address at the National Prayer Breakfast:

I may not be quite as easy with my words today have been in years past. And I was up rather late last night thinking about and praying about what I ought to say. First, I want to say to all of the that I have been on quite a journey these last few weeks get to the end of this, to the rock bottom truth of where I am...I don't think there is a fancy way to say that I have sinned (p. A12).

On December 11, 1998, the Washington Post reported that after seven days of hearings, "A bitterly split House Judiciary Committee voted to recommend the impeachment of President Clinton" (p. A1).

On December 12th, 1998, the New York Times stated that a "careworn President Clinton today once more expressed regret for the actions that have brought him to the brink of impeachment and, for the first time in public, invited Congress to censure him" (p. A1).

On December 19, 1998, the Washington Post reported: "The House of Representatives impeached the president of the United States..." (p. A1).

Analysis: When asked at a press conference to comment on his affair with Ms. Lewinsky, Clinton said he was "honoring the rules of the investigation" and could not comment (Bennett, 1998). The White House was eventually forced to concede that the President was not legally prohibited from giving an account of his relationship with Lewinsky. Though Clinton did not then offer any explanation, within four months the country knew there were at least twenty-four hours of tape recordings between Lewinsky and her colleague Linda Tripp, in which Lewinsky went into detail about her affair with

Clinton, and claimed he told her to give false testimony in the Paula Jones suit. (Bennett, p. 97).

Because he was President, there was pressure for Clinton to respond to each development of the Lewinsky scandal as it unfolded. Clinton's responses had to consider that with each revelation the charges against him could change. Staff writer Paul Balz (1998) of the Washington Post noted, "No president has ever been forced to address such personal issues" (p. A1).

One of the earlier and most noted responses was posted on-line by *ABC News* January 1998. After denying he had relations with Lewinsky in the Jones deposition, Clinton stated:

Now, I have to go back to work on my state of the union speech. And I worked on it till pretty late last night. But I wanna say one thing to the American people. I want you to listen to me, I'm gonna say this again: I did not have sexual relations with that woman, Miss Lewinsky, I never told anybody to lie, not a single time, never. These allegations are false, and I need to go back to work for the American people. Thank you (*ABC News*-on line, January 26, 1998).

This was a brief fragment in which key points were repeated in a strong vocal tone. Clinton clearly employed denial, further, he prefaced his denial by reminding the audience that he was "gonna say this again." Thus, his denial was underscored with something of a proof. Implied was that if the first denial (in the Jones deposition) wasn't proof enough, this second denial should be. As well, he denied on two fronts, that is, not only did he deny he had relations, he also denied he "told anybody to lie." It is interesting to note that he used a general "anybody" category to identify whom he did not tell to lie; in other words, he minimized the negative affect associated with the act. Implied in saying "I never told anybody to lie" was that the accusation (telling Lewinsky

to lie about his affair with Paula Jones in the deposition) was an exaggeration.

Interestingly, his denial of telling "anybody to lie" then shifted the act of lying to Lewinsky, who then stood accused by Clinton of lying in her deposition.

In an attempt to reduce offensiveness, Clinton further minimized "being accused of having relations" and "telling anybody to lie" by referring to his state of the union address. He prefaced his denial by stating "Now, I have to go back to work on my state of the union speech. And I worked on it till pretty late last night." Clinton indicated that the nation's business was a far more important matter than the alleged "accusations of sexual relations" and "asking others to lie in a deposition." Clinton drove home the importance of his upcoming address to the nation by closing his brief statement with "I need to go back to work for the American people." This closing statement underscored the triviality of the Lewinsky scandal and shifted emphasis to a more serious and important event. Clinton left the audience with an agenda that shifted attention away from sex and on to his responsibilities to the American people.

Minimization can also be discerned in Clinton's reference to "that woman, Miss Lewinsky." As it had already been revealed (Newsweek, January, 1998) that Clinton had apparently known and fraternized with Lewinsky in the Oval Office from November, 1995, until March, 1997, Clinton's use of the phrase "that woman, Miss Lewinsky," framed their relationship as a platonic, vague association at best. It also suggested that he wanted it perceived that he viewed her from a respectful distance, which is often how and why someone might use the term "Miss." It is also conceivable that Clinton intended to suggest he did not even know or remember her first name, further minimizing not only his knowledge of her, but also his relationship with her.

Finally, differentiation can be identified in Clinton's use of the term "sexual relations." The words appear to be strategically chosen in that they offer a broader interpretation of what may have occurred rather than merely saying "sex, " (several sources documented Clinton's narrow delineation between oral sex and sexual intercourse). Thus, saying "sexual relations with that woman" appeared less offensive than saying "sexual intercourse with that woman." This differentiation had the effect, in Benoit's (1995) words, "of lessening the audience's negative feelings toward the act and the actor" (p. 77).

In July, 1998, Lewinsky revealed to Starr's grand jury that she had had a sexual relationship with Clinton and, as proof, produced a blue dress upon which, she claimed, Clinton had left a semen stain. (Newsweek, July, 1998). In August, Clinton testified before Starr's grand jury and refused to answer all the questions asked of him. The discrepancies between Lewinsky's statements and Clinton's statements (or lack thereof) "guaranteed...no early cease fire in a war that already had taken a terrible toll on the country" (Washington Post, August, 1998).

On August 17, in a nationally televised address, Clinton spoke about his grand jury testimony and his relationship with Monica Lewinsky:

While my answers were legally accurate, I did not volunteer information. I know that my public comments and my silence about this matter gave a false impression. I misled people, including even my wife. I deeply regret that (Washington Post, p. 13A).

Clinton attempted to differentiate between the responses he gave, regarding the deposition, and the responses he could have given. Of differentiation Benoit states, "Here the rhetor attempts to distinguish the act performed from other similar but less desirable actions. In comparison, the act may appear less offensive" (p. 77). Clinton said, "While

my answers were legally accurate, I did not volunteer information." He was stating for the record that there were acceptable legal parameters of which he took advantage. His legally accurate responses were differentiated from the less acceptable responses "I misled people," and thus, the legally accurate responses could be deemed less offensive.

Clinton's use of mortification (to date) was rare. Of mortification Benoit notes, "The accused may admit responsibility for the wrongful act and ask for forgiveness" (p. 79). Though Clinton did not actually say "I am guilty of having a sexual relationship with Monica Lewinsky" or "I'm sorry," he came close by saying, "I misled people, including even my wife. I deeply regret that." That Clinton admitted to misleading people and regretted that he had done so can be characterized as an apology. Though the guilt was not expressly stated, the regret was articulated. Benoit suggests that if the audience perceives the apology as sincere, they may choose to forgive the negative act (p. 79).

On Wednesday, September 9, 1998, Clinton spoke at a luncheon just before independent counsel Kenneth Starr sent his report to Congress, which would trigger impeachment proceedings. The Charlotte Observer (1998), reported that at the luncheon speech in Florida Clinton said:

I have no one to blame but myself for my self-inflicted wounds.
I've done my best to be your friend. But I also let you down, and I let
my family down, and I let this country down. But I'm trying to make it right.
And I'm determined never to let anything like that happen again, and I'm
determined to redeem the trust of people (p. 1A).

As details of Starr's investigation unfolded, Clinton was forced to acknowledge that not only had he had a sexual relationship with Monica Lewinsky, but that he had lied about the relationship. Clinton's responses to the mounting allegations of wrongdoing

reflected a more apologetic stance; his remarks at the luncheon meeting offered his most direct apology to date.

Clinton did attempt to minimize his relationship with Lewinsky, to an extent, by opening with a reference to his "self-inflicted wounds." The audience would have to infer that the "wounds" referred to his shame (in the least), though the choice of the phrase "self-inflicted wounds" could also be used to describe an injury sustained by accidentally shooting oneself. Further, "self-inflicted wounds" tended to shift emphasis off the pain and sorrow he had caused his family and the country, and on to his own personal suffering. Thus, the opening line more directly reflects a "pity me" sentiment than a "sorry I had inappropriate relations with a 21 year old intern in the Oval Office" sentiment.

Clinton also minimized the event by stating, "I've done my best to be your friend." Whereas there are any number of speculative reasons Clinton chose to say this, it does appear he was concerned with maintaining a certain persona with his audience and that that persona was important to him. Focus on the friendship minimized the focus on the reason he was apologizing. Precisely what Clinton wanted the audience to interpret from "I've done my best to be your friend" is questionable, however, in context differentiation seems probable. Being a friend seemed less damnable than being an adulterer who had an affair with a White House intern. Clinton may also have been attempting to differentiate his duties as the President from his escapades as an unfaithful husband. That he would characterize his duties as friendship is unusual, but perhaps he was framing his deception in such a way as to shield his constituents from unpleasant news, which a friend would do. In light of his next line, "But I also let you down," Clinton may also

have attempted to differentiate his philandering ways from being, in the connotative sense, a reliable, trustworthy friend. In either event, he attempted to lessen the effect of the audience's negative feelings toward himself and his actions.

Clinton's opening line also reflected transcendence. By stating, "I've done my best to be your friend," Clinton strategically placed the wrongdoing, his affair with Ms. Lewinsky, in a more positive and different context, that of "friend of the people." The "friend" issue transcended the "affair" issue.

That Clinton expressed regret reflected mortification. He said, "But I also let you down, and I let my family down, and I let this country down." Though (as in the case of Gennifer Flowers) he did not actually say, "I'm sorry," he did express regret. Benoit notes that "It may be wise to couple this strategy with plans to correct (or prevent recurrence of) the problem" (p. 79). Clinton accomplished this by next stating "But I'm trying to make it right. And I'm determined never to let anything like that happen again, and I'm determined...to redeem the trust of people." Clinton coupled his mortification with corrective action by vowing to correct the problem. Benoit states, "This may take two forms: restoring the situation to the state of affairs before the objectionable action and/or promising to "mend one's ways and make changes to prevent the recurrence of the undesirable act" (p. 79). In this case it would not be unfair, given Clinton's previous sexual history, to presume that Clinton meant "prevent recurrence."

Through the duration of the Lewinsky scandal Clinton responded to various allegations as events unfolded. One of the memorable responses was given on September 12, 1998, at the National Prayer Breakfast. Public perception was that Clinton was not contrite enough in his August 17th apology. Balz (1998) stated in the Washington Post,

"It was a Clinton the country has seen before when he faced a political crisis, a Clinton as defiant as he was contrite. Having bared his soul, he asked the country to take his side in a bitter political battle that has convulsed Washington for the past seven months" (p. A1).

A more contrite apology was deemed necessary. The New York Times reprinted

Clinton's September 12th National Prayer Breakfast address at which Clinton said:

I may not be quite as easy with my words today as I have been in years past. And I was up rather late last night thinking about and praying about what I ought to say today. And rather unusually for me, I actually tried to write it down. So if you will forgive me, I will do my best to say what it is I want to say to you, and I may have to take my glasses out to read my own writing.

First, I want to say to all of you that, as you might imagine, I have been on quite a journey these last few weeks to get to the end of this, to the rock bottom truth of where I am and where we all are. I agree with those who have said that in my first statement after I testified, I was not contrite enough. I don't think there is a fancy way to say that I have sinned.

It is important to me that everybody who has been hurt know that the sorrow I feel is genuine: first, and most important, my family; also my friends; my staff; my Cabinet; Monica Lewinsky and her family, and the American people. I have asked all for their forgiveness (p. 12).

Clinton's opening lines were curious. Clinton minimized and differentiated his reason for apologizing all at once. The audience was obliged to hear Clinton relate a number of unrelated musings about his speech preparation process: that on this occasion he would not be his usual glib self; that he was up late thinking about what he would say; that he tried to write down what he would say; that he would do his best to say what he wanted to say; that he might need his glasses. Giving the actual apology seemed minimal compared to the effort and strain it took to prepare the apology.

Clinton differentiated between the delivery of the speech and the preparation of the speech. He asked for forgiveness about the prep process; "So if you will forgive me, I

will do my best to say what it is I want to say to you..." One would have to infer that Clinton was apologizing for staying up late and thinking about the speech and for writing it down. That he said, "I'll do my best to say what it is I want to say" implied that despite "thinking and writing," he still wasn't sure that he would say what he wanted to say. If the audience could forgive Clinton's less than successful preparation for the speech of apology, then they could forgive the reason for the apology.

Clinton's next line started with "First, I want to say to all of you that, as you might imagine, I have been on quite a journey these last few weeks to get to the end of this..." After the explanation about his speech preparation process (which was technically the actual "first" thing he said), the audience may have expected that by saying "first," Clinton was designating to whom he would apologize first. However, "first" in this second part of the apology indicated his intent to minimize the Monica Lewinsky saga. Clinton re-framed the entire scandal with Lewinsky as a "journey" and suggested that everyone in the audience might relate to or understand his journey. Sex with an intern in the Oval Office, denial of sex with an intern in the Oval Office, lying to the grand jury, suborning perjury, and so on...all a "journey." Benoit notes, "If the rhetor can convince the audience that the negative act isn't as bad as it might first appear, the amount of ill feeling associated with that act is reduced" (p. 77). If the scandal was merely a journey for Clinton, and the audience can imagine it was indeed a journey, then perhaps the entire episode was not as bad as it appeared.

Clinton's opening line in the second paragraph continued with "...to get to the end of this, to the rock-bottom truth of where I am and where we all are." Some bolstering can be discerned in Clinton's claim that on this occasion he would give the audience the

rock-bottom truth. Implied was that he was capable of giving the rock-bottom truth, a positive attribute. He may have understood the necessity for stressing the rock-bottom truth given his past history of denials. That he noted the rock-bottom truth "of where I am" indicated that the audience would get a truthful rendering of how he viewed himself in respect to the Lewinsky scandal, also a positive quality.

Clinton's use of the phrase "to get to the end of this" was a clear attempt to put closure to the Lewinsky episode. This transcendence shifted the scandal from a current drama to past history. Clinton's next line was an acknowledgment that prior to this apology, the issue wasn't quite closed. Implied was that with this Prayer Breakfast apology, Clinton would get to "the end of this." The scandal shifted from an "on-going disgrace" to "it ends today."

At the end of the second paragraph, Clinton agreed that his previous apology had not been contrite enough, then said, "I don't think there is a fancy way to say that I have sinned." One would have to infer that for Clinton, a more contrite apology encompassed an acknowledgment of sin. His reference to "sin," a religious term, was strategic, given his address was at the National Prayer Breakfast. Still, Clinton differentiated between the demand for a contrite apology and the reason for the apology. The reason, and all it encompassed, was framed as a "sin," which minimized all the salacious details, about what he did with Lewinsky in the Oval Office, that came out of the grand jury testimony. Further, though Clinton addressed the fact that a more contrite apology was needed, he did not apologize. The audience may have expected that his next line would contain the apology; to Clinton's way of thinking, perhaps acknowledging that he had "sinned" was an apology.

In the third paragraph Clinton expressed remorse. He said, "It is important to me that everybody who has been hurt know that the sorrow I feel is genuine." One of the reasons he was giving the National Prayer Breakfast apology was because critics did not feel his August 17th apology had been contrite enough. It was necessary, on this occasion, for Clinton to convince his audience that his sorrow was heartfelt. Further, given his past history of denial, Clinton may have realized that this apology must be perceived as "genuine." As Benoit notes, "If we believe the apology is sincere, we may choose to pardon the wrongful act" (p. 79).

Clinton then repeated his use of the term "first," and in this case, he was designating the first people to whom an apology was to be extended - his family. He said, "...first, and most important, my family; also my friends; my staff, my Cabinet; Monica Lewinsky and her family, and the American people." Unlike the August 17th apology, Clinton specifically addressed a broader range of people to whom an apology was due. Most notably, he named Lewinsky and her family. Couched in his mortification was a clear admission of his guilt. That he named Monica Lewinsky was noteworthy, given his previous reference to her as "That woman, Miss Lewinsky." He continued with, "I have asked all for their forgiveness." Again, Clinton did not say, in present tense, "I'm sorry." He informed the audience, in past tense, that he had asked "for their forgiveness." Thus, Clinton did not technically apologize rather, he informed the audience that he had previously done so.

Clinton's accounts regarding Monica Lewinsky cover a range of face-saving strategies, all intended to restore his image. His earliest account denied the affair with Lewinsky, minimized the accusation of the affair, and shifted business back to the state of

the union address. Clinton's August 17th apology accounted for his less than full disclosure to the grand jury and his regret that he had created a false impression about his relationship with Ms. Lewinsky. As the details of Clinton's relationship with Lewinsky became known, Clinton's accounts became more contrite and remorseful, he admitted his wrongdoing and asked for forgiveness from the American people.

Clinton's two September 1998 apologies reflected more direct mortification, though not without continued minimization (e.g., self-inflicted wounds) and differentiation (e.g., a journey). He indicated how much his indiscretions had troubled him (he was up late thinking). He was troubled to the extent that he wrote things down (something he usually did not do). These revelations suggested how much the experience had affected him. He asked forgiveness from everyone, including Lewinsky, (an appeal, possibly, to those who felt sorry for Monica). Clinton successfully marginalized the legal implications of the scandal (possible impeachment), and focused on his personal redemption. He was able to appear remorseful without being pathetic, and acknowledge his failures without looking weak.

Though Clinton's accounts never directly included a present tense apology (as in stating "I apologize" or "I'm sorry"), he was clearly concerned about saving face with those aware of the accusations (the American people and presumably other international audiences as well), or he would not have offered any explanations or accounts of his relationship with Lewinsky. (He had been known not to offer accounts in the past, e.g., Paula Jones, Whitewater.) His apologies can be considered successful to the extent that his effectiveness as a President, in the eyes of the American people, did not diminish. After the September 12, Prayer Breakfast Apology, a September 14-15, 1998, Gallup Poll

asked "As of now, do you think Bill Clinton can be an effective president during his remaining two years in office, or not?" 58% of the respondents said, "Yes, can be effective."

CONCLUSIONS AND APPLICATIONS

Rhetorical scholars have and will continue to study communication that examines recurring patterns of discourse. The theory of image restoration, which stems from the broader discipline of genre criticism, is based on a goal-centered understanding of discourse and develops a typology of strategies that are well suited to analysis of Clinton's political history of accounts, excuses and apologies. Brinson and Benoit (1999) state:

When people, groups, and organizations are accused of objectionable behavior, reputations can be damaged. Image restoration rhetoric attempts to redress allegations or suspicions of wrong doing (p. 486).

Image restoration discourse focuses on message options; analysis of Clinton's accounts and apologies, over a 20-year time span, reflects all five message option strategies in Benoit's typology, as well as repetitive cycles in his self-defense rhetoric. Simple denial and shifting the blame make up the first component of the typology. For example, Clinton denied he evaded the draft and he denied he broke any U.S. laws regarding his drug use. He also denied any wrong doing in the Whitewater controversy and finally, he initially denied he had sexual relations with Monica Lewinsky. In these instances, Clinton either denied the act was harmful to anyone, denied the act occurred, or denied that he performed the act.

Provocation, defeasibility, accident and good intentions make up the second component of Benoit's typology, that is, evasion of responsibility. That he was

"provoked" or that anything was "done by accident" is never claimed by Clinton in the accounts represented in this analysis. However, defeasibility and good intentions are identifiable in Clinton's image repair discourse. Regarding defeasibility, Clinton alleged either a lack of information about or control over important elements of the situation. For instance, during allegations of draft dodging, Clinton claimed the press was engaged in a "feeding frenzy," and that he could not be held accountable for offensive claims made about his draft deferment. Defeasibility is also identified in Clinton's account of precisely when he smoked pot (at Georgetown University and at Oxford University, or just at Oxford). On the subject of pot smoking, Clinton claimed he had good intentions, that is, he never violated U.S. drug laws and he only experimented a time or two at Oxford.

Clinton's self-defense discourse contains all five elements of the third strategy in Benoit's typology, that of reducing offensiveness. The first, bolstering, is seen in his response to allegations of an affair with Gennifer Flowers. Clinton claimed he wasn't perfect and that he thought that was what the American people wanted...someone who didn't pretend to be perfect. Minimizing, the second element of reducing offensiveness, is used extensively by Clinton to decrease negative feelings associated with his various wrongful acts. Clinton minimized the draft issue, he minimized the pot smoking issue, he minimized his 12-year affair with Gennifer Flowers and minimized the importance of the sexual harassment suit brought against him by Paula Jones. As well, Clinton minimized the significance of the Whitewater scandal and minimized the impact of sexual relations in the Oval Office with 21-year old intern, Monica Lewinsky. In all instances, Clinton tried to downplay the extent of the problems and/or allegations and to make them seem less damaging than they appeared.

Differentiation, the third element of reducing offensiveness, was also used by Clinton to distinguish his wrongful acts from other similar but more offensive actions. For example, pot smoking, compared to shooting up heroine, is less offensive. Clinton differentiated his use of marijuana as merely experimental; he was not a hard-core drug user. Regarding Whitewater, Clinton snapped that reporters' inability to keep the years long Whitewater story straight was the problem. In the Monica Lewinsky affair, Clinton differentiated between sexual intercourse and sexual relations; between legally accurate information and lack of information; and between letting his friends down and being a philanderer. Clearly, Clinton's acts of wrong doing sound much less offensive when compared to their less desirable alternatives.

A fourth element of reducing offensiveness, transcendence, is used judiciously in almost all of the accounts covered in this analysis. It is human nature for most people to put a positive spin on a negative act, and so it was with Clinton. He attempted to place his negative acts in more favorable contexts. This is first discerned in his denial of draft dodging, alleged draft dodging was less offensive than the press "feeding frenzy." In the case of Gennifer Flowers, Clinton's "core and center" became the more salient point, his 12-year relationship with Flowers was downplayed. Regarding Whitewater, the misappropriation of funds was painted as less offensive than the years and money investigators spent tracking the ins and outs of the story. Regarding his revelations of his affair with Lewinsky, Clinton was a friend who let the American people down, not an adulterer who lied. And finally, the whole sordid Lewinsky mess was not a mess, it was a journey. Ultimately, Clinton attempted to place his acts of wrong doing in more favorable contexts or suggested different frames of reference for the acts.

Clinton's one instance of attacking the accuser, the fifth element of reducing offensiveness, can be seen in the draft avoidance account. Clinton implied that his accusers were making things up when he said "even if all this stuff were true." Clinton attempted to reduce the credibility of the accusations, and enhance his own image, by suggesting the source of the accusations was less than reliable.

Compensation, the final element of reducing offensiveness, is realized in Clinton's *mea culpa* to the voters of Arkansas, Clinton promised to be a better listener if the voters of Arkansas would elect him to a second term. This remuneration served to reduce the negative impact of Clinton's first term loss and restore his reputation, as well as his governorship.

Benoit's fourth main strategy for image restoration is corrective action. Clinton's apologetic discourse reflects corrective action in his *mea culpa* on his first term loss as governor of Arkansas. He vowed to mend his ways and listen to the people if reelected. To a lesser extent, Clinton implied, in response to allegations of smoking pot, that after a minor experimentation, he never tried pot again. In both cases, Clinton was rectifying past mistakes and announcing his intent to prevent recurrence of the wrongful acts.

The fifth and final image restoration strategy, mortification, was used most often in Clinton's apologies regarding the Monica Lewinsky affair. Benoit's definition of mortification includes admitting responsibility for a wrongful act and asking for forgiveness (p. 79). Whereas Clinton does admit responsibility for his wrongdoing, in the apologetic discourse represented here, he never directly stated, "I'm sorry." He "regretted," he "blamed himself," he "let the country down," he "sinned," he "asked for forgiveness." He never once said "I am truly sorry."

In the accounts included in this thesis, Clinton seems to admit nothing that cannot be proven (draft dodging and Whitewater) and attempts to move past what has already surfaced (Flowers and Lewinsky). In moving past what has already surfaced, another repetitive theme is discerned, that of transcendence. Clinton's apologetic discourse goals often aim to secure the support of the American people. An initial observation would presume the obvious; Clinton is, after all, a politician. He must appeal to multiple and conflicting audiences. Yet transcendence is almost painfully apparent in all of Clinton's accounts, (the *mea culpa*, the draft, the pot smoking, Gennifer Flowers, Whitewater). Clinton repeatedly shifts the issue off the salient point and on to some lesser point. The shift often entails either some type of praise for the audience's support or an assumption that the American people are on his side (the draft avoidance issue, the pot smoking incidents, the Gennifer Flowers affair). Perhaps it was Clinton's ability to transcend an issue that convinced such a significant number of Americans to give him a high popularity rating, even after he was suspected of guilt (draft dodging, Whitewater), or found guilty of perjury and adultery (Flowers, Lewinsky).

A second discernible theme is reflected in Clinton's inclination to minimize events (draft dodging, pot smoking, Gennifer Flowers, Paula Jones, Whitewater, Monica Lewinsky). In an attempt to deflect potential ill feeling associated with his negative acts, Clinton always attempted to convince the audience that his wrong-doing wasn't as bad as it appeared. He was successful to the extent that regardless of the accusations, he served out two terms.

A third repetitive theme is reflected in Clinton's use of differentiation; other less desirable incidents or outcomes were possible. Less desirable actions/outcomes did not

occur or happen: pot experimentation, not drug addiction; a president who did not pretend perfection, not an entitled egotist; a president who remained focused on running the country, not a man who got bogged down by a failed real estate deal; a president who had sexual relations, not full-fledged sexual intercourse; a friend who let the country down, not a lying adulterer. In all of these accounts, Clinton's wrongdoing appeared more acceptable when compared to the less desirable outcomes. In comparison, Clinton's acts seemed less offensive.

Benoit's theory of image restoration seems useful in explaining the goals of Clinton's accounts in regard to identity maintenance and image restoration. As well, the theory is useful in gauging the success of Clinton's accounts as his success pertained to answering accusations of perceived wrongdoing.

It should be noted that Benoit's theory, as it pertains to this analysis, is tested primarily on fragments, which is a significant component of this thesis. Most of Clinton's accounts here represent short press conference statements or sound bites for the evening news. McGee (1990) notes that in the not too distant past, "...all discourses were what some social theorists call 'totalizations'" (p. 284). That is, discourse practices reflected full, whole and complete speeches, such as King's "I Have a Dream" speech. That pedagogy reflects methodologies for full text analysis does not lessen the requirement for methodologies that provide interpretation of fragments, such as sound bites. McGee makes a case for the criticism, analysis, and interpretation of fragments. He states:

..."texts" have disappeared altogether, leaving us with nothing but *discursive fragments of context*. By this I would mean that changing cultural conditions have made it virtually impossible to construct a whole and harmonious text such as Edmund Burke's "Speech on Conciliation with the Colonies." If by "text" we mean the sort of finished discourse anticipated in consequence of an essentially homogenous culture, no texts exist today. We have instead

fragments of "information" that constitute our *context* (p. 285).

In other words, in our computer age, instant news, and high tech society, we must be able to analyze and interpret those bits of information available to us on a daily basis. "If you analyze contemporary discourse, fragment or some concept that can be made equivalent is *necessary*" (McGee, p. 288).

Fragments then, can be characterized as a by-product of our fast paced culture. As such, they are a reality of our political milieu. McGee notes, "The 'bottom line' of politics these days is the instantaneous public opinion poll which measures popular reaction to current conditions rather than the considered, deliberate judgment of 'We, the People'" (p. 286). Politicians, like Clinton, generally seek the approval of their constituents and want to stay in office, that is, their image is important to them. When a politician's image is damaged, image repair is necessary. Benoit's theory of image restoration seems a suitable methodology in analyzing the meaning of goal driven, identity maintenance fragments.

As such, the procedure for analyzing each of Clinton's fragments was similar. Textual fragments reflecting defensive discourse about Clinton's character were compiled and studied. Background information was provided for each text scenario to provide insight as to why the text was considered significant or important. Benoit's image restoration strategies were used to evaluate responses to attacks. The strategies were then evaluated to determine success of image restoration.

We live in a mass-media society in which Benoit's theory of image restoration likely has a future. Clinton's presidency could be characterized as the first "electronic age" presidency, thus, future analysis of presidential face saving rhetoric may rely more

on a theory well suited to sound bites. Given that positive application, it is fair to speculate on how well Benoit's theory would apply to other face saving scenarios. For example, would Benoit's theory accommodate a rhetor that has more than one goal to consider in any one singular account (other than saving face)? That is, what if while saving face, a politician must also keep secrets of state? In other words, how would Benoit's theory apply to a dilemma-centered face saving account? What strategies would best accommodate identification of, and understanding of, dual goals?

Further, by what means does one draw a rhetorical judgment (in terms of success or failure) of a face saving account based on Benoit's strategies? Benoit's strategies are useful in identifying how a face saving account is delineated, but by what means do we determine the rhetorical success of the account? Clinton's face saving accounts are a good case in point. After Clinton's August 17 apology, even Democratic supporters and presidential advisors expressed disappointment in Clinton (Seattle Post, August, 1998). Conversely, public support remained high; Clinton's apology for an act concerning his private life was sufficient (Washington Post Opinion Research Archive August, 1998). In other words, equal and opposite conclusions were reached from the same body of evidence. Benoit supplies the tools for analysis; rhetorical success may be left to history.

Fortunately for William Jefferson Clinton, his wrong-doings did not keep him from serving five terms as Governor of Arkansas, nor did they keep him from serving two terms as President of the United States. Arguably, the worse tragedy for Clinton may be in living with the legacy of a scandal-ridden political career, and specifically, in living with the documented history of a Presidency tainted by an impeachment proceeding.

Perhaps it is in studying an entire political career of face-saving accounts that

rhetorical scholars will find unique and useful ways of predicting and explaining patterns of behavior and ways of thinking about strategies available to politicians for defending themselves from attacks on their integrity and character. Clinton's apologetic discourse gives us greater insight into his unique circumstances as they pertained to the evolving public perception of his moral nature, reputation, and motives. Thus, it is possible to influence a standard by which we measure the rhetorical successes and failures of present-day political figures.

Clinton's rhetorical successes notwithstanding, it is difficult to believe, in this author's opinion, that future presidents would want to find themselves giving apologies for the same reasons that Clinton did. Never the less, measured by the yardstick of apologetic success, Clinton's rhetoric was skillfully adroit. Clinton's face saving rhetoric allowed the private to become public; on national television he shook his finger at millions of people and lied to their face. Only after he was caught in the lie did he promise to be forthcoming. (He reneged on that promise during grand jury testimony.) Clinton's face saving rhetoric directly resulted in prolonging the Monica Lewinsky scandal. Clinton framed his apologetic discourse in a way that placed emphasis and importance on the American people while simultaneously ignoring or trivializing his accusers (e.g., Clinton's January 26, 1998 denial of a relationship with Ms. Lewinsky). Fortunately for Clinton, his accounts, in response to his perceived wrong doing, were successful enough to sustain him through two terms as President.

We can only speculate how future historians, scholars, researchers, and critics will assess William Jefferson Clinton's tenure as our 42nd President. However, through rhetorical examination and analysis, we may further compel a means by which we

measure the effectiveness of present-day image repair discourse of political leaders. By studying Clinton's accounts, we can better understand his rhetorical situations, as well as the rhetoric he constructed in response to those situations. Unfortunately for Clinton, the accounts he constructed did not keep him from being the second president impeached, and the only *elected* president to be impeached. Undoubtedly, this will mar his historical record and reputation forever. However, in the end he was not convicted and remained popular through both terms of his Presidency.

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