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I am submitting herewith a thesis written by Joseph Priest entitled "Three Newspapers' Responses to Six Critical Television Appearances by John F. Kennedy and Richard M. Nixon." I have examined the final copy of this thesis for form and content and recommend that it be accepted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Science, with a major in Communications.

C. Edward Caudill, Major Professor

We have read this thesis and recommend its acceptance.

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Dean of The Graduate School

Three Newspapers' Responses to Six Critical Television Appearances by John F. Kennedy and Richard M. Nixon

A Thesis Presented for the Master of Science Degree

The University of Tennessee, Knoxville

Joseph R. Priest Jr.

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DEDICATION

This thesis is dedicated to my parents

Dr. Joseph R. Priest Sr.

and

Mrs. Dolores E. Priest

for the all the emotional and financial support they have given me and without which my college education would have been much more difficult.

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Attempting a thesis that involves two of this century's more controversial presidents and two of this nation's most important mass media is no small endeavor, and I would not have been able to complete this without the expert guidance of my committee members.

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Abstract

This thesis compares how three television appearances by John Kennedy and three by Richard Nixon, in three crisis situations -- foreign policy, political self-defense, and political defeat -- were assessed by three newspapers -- the *New York Times*, *Los Angeles Times*, and *Boston Globe*. The unit of analysis was any news story or editorial pertaining to the appearance that ran in the morning editions of these three papers in the two days after each appearance.

The newspaper themes that emerged showed that coverage of the appearances contributed to the divergent images of Kennedy and Nixon as follows. Coverage of Kennedy's Cuban missile crisis address portrayed him as a mature leader who took a bold and deliberate stand against a communist aggressor. Conversely, coverage of Nixon's announcement of America's invasion into Cambodia portrayed him as a reckless president who had made an unpopular decision that polarized politicians and college students. Kennedy's appearance before the Ministerial Association of Greater Houston led to press coverage that made him out to be a passionate, articulate defender of religious freedom. In the same way, Nixon gained praise and vindication as a politician who earned widespread public support in the coverage of his "Checkers speech." In scant coverage of Kennedy's concession speech before the 1956 Democratic National Convention, he was delineated as a politician whose standing rose after narrowly losing the vice presidential nomination. Contrariwise, coverage of Nixon's "last press conference" depicted him as a politician whose career had acrimoniously ended as a result of his own character.

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CHAPTER

Chapter I

The Press, Television, and the Kennedy and Nixon Legacies

> I think it's time that our great newspapers have at least the same objectivity, the same fullness of coverage, that television has. And I can only say thank God for television and radio for keeping the newspapers a little more honest.
>
> -- **Richard M. Nixon** (1962) (qtd. in Spear 55)

> We wouldn't have had a prayer without that gadget [television].
>
> -- **John F. Kennedy** (1960) (qtd. in Salinger 54)

The Press and the President

Both in news coverage of national political institutions and in total news coverage, the president is the star. No other individual in America receives as much time and space in the news media. The presidency as an institution benefits from extensive news coverage and dominates news from Washington to the point that other institutions -- Congress, the Supreme Court, and the federal bureaucracy -- pale by comparison (Davis 137). During a 12-month span from August 1994 to July 1995, for example, the presidency received roughly 80 percent of the coverage given to the three branches of government on the early evening broadcasts of ABC, CBS, and NBC; Congress and the

Supreme Court by contrast garnered 17 percent and two percent, respectively (Graber 271-272). Furthermore, the argument can be made that virtually all coverage of national government is primarily the drama surrounding the president -- from the story of a president's initial policy proposal through Congress's handling of the issue to the Supreme Court's potential ruling (Davis 138). According to the late Senator J. William Fulbright of Arkansas, "Television has done as much to expand the powers of the President as would a constitutional amendment formally abolishing the co-equality of the three branches of government" (qtd. in Graber 288).

In the press-president relationship, the framers of the Constitution envisioned that the press could be expected to behave like a watchdog, and that presidential administrations as well as government agencies at every level, dependent for their existence on the opinions of those they govern, could expect to resent being watched and having their shortcomings, real or imaginary, exposed to the public view. And this idea has been proven viable by the fact that the one constant that remains in the relationship between the press and presidency is the dissatisfaction of one with the other: No president escapes press criticism and no president considers himself fairly treated. Yet this basic concept has been increasingly complicated by the challenging nature of the presidency, by the individual nature of presidents, by the rise of new media (especially television), and by the growing complexity of beliefs about the function of both press and government (Tebbel and Watts 3). In regard to this concept, political science professor Doris Graber of the University of Illinois at Chicago asserts of the 20th-century relationship between the president and the press that

> Media coverage is the very lifeblood of politics because it shapes the perceptions that form the reality on which political action is based. Media do more than depict the political environment; they *are* [author's emphasis] the political environment. Because direct contact with political actors and situations is limited, media images define people and situations for nearly all participants in the political process. (274)

Beginning at the turn of the century, the relationship between a president and the press gained increasing importance as presidents realized they needed the cooperation of the media in order to expand the role of their office and meet the increasing expectations placed on the incumbent. Theodore Roosevelt instituted the "bully pulpit" in implementing a policy of regular news conferences in which he sought to direct news coverage and provide the press corps with a steady stream of news. Franklin Roosevelt institutionalized his cousin's reforms, establishing a White House press room and cultivating a sense of camaraderie with reporters to encourage favorable coverage of his administration (Davis 81-84). John F. Kennedy utilized a new tool in press-president relations in giving live news conferences on television for the first time to make use of his spontaneous wit and charm (Tebbel and Watts 478-479). And Ronald Reagan used television in carefully controlled appearances to capitalize on his telegenic appeal while avoiding on-the-spot encounters with the press in which he might misspeak on key issues (Davis 145-149). Increasingly, though, the press would have to be met by presidents on the grounds set by the press. Moreover, the relationship a president formed and maintained with the press would become a significant factor in how his image and record would become judged by history.

Television, as the first medium capable of broadcasting live sounds and moving pictures to mass audiences in their homes, played a crucial part in this relationship, significantly redefining the public role and responsibility of the President with the American people. From roughly 1948 -- the year both the Democratic and Republican parties convened their respective conventions in Philadelphia because the co-axial cable hookup there allowed them to reach audiences in 13 states through television (Barnouw 2: 298-299) -- the public image of presidents or presidential candidates would pivot increasingly on their effectiveness in presenting, explaining, and promoting their views and actions on television. It would become a major criterion by which to evaluate a President's poise and ability in the public arena. For the first time ever, the arcane procedures used to nominate presidential candidates at conventions were seen by millions (Cronkite 178-179). More importantly, television became recognized as the most important communication medium in reaching voters, and presidential campaigns were designed to maximize the use of television (Barnouw 2: 298-299). Presidential press conferences became structured to play to the television cameras rather than the newspaper reporters (Emery and Emery 411-412), and television became a tool that presidents could utilize to bypass the print news media to take their messages directly to the public (Davis 149-150). Finally, evening newscasts and live reports provided regular coverage and breaking news of the day's events involving the president (Emery and Emery 457-459). The advent of television gradually but profoundly changed the nature of the press-president relationship.

Kennedy and Nixon

The impact of this medium is particularly significant in the comparable yet contrasting political careers of Presidents John F. Kennedy and Richard M. Nixon. Both men followed parallel career tracks, being elected to the House in 1946 after serving as Navy officers in the Solomon Islands during World War II (Reeves 60; Ambrose 1: 108), then moving to the Senate within the same two-year period (where Nixon served first as a senator and then as president of the Senate as vice president), and finally running in a head-to-head race for the nation's highest office in 1960. Moreover, Kennedy's and Nixon's political careers became continually intertwined on both a professional and personal level. Both were selected for the Education and Labor Committee as their first assignment in Congress in 1947 (Matthews 44-45). Both gave tacit support to Senator Joseph McCarthy's charges of communist subversion in America in the 1950s (Reeves 120-124; Ambrose 1: 237-238). Both occupied offices directly across the hall from each other while serving in the Senate (Matthews 90). And, as president, both dealt with many of the same issues: American involvement in the war in Vietnam (Kennedy played a leading part in increasing the number of advisers while Nixon grappled with how to end American involvement honorably [Reeves 288-292; Ambrose 2: 299-300]); the conduct of the Cold War (Kennedy negotiated a nuclear test-ban treaty with the Soviet Union while Nixon signed a strategic arms limitation agreement with this nation [Reeves 401-403; Ambrose 2: 441-442]); and the advancement of the American space program (Kennedy served in office during the first voyages to outer space while Nixon was in office during the first moon landing [Wolfe 225-229; Barnouw, *Tube of Plenty* 425-426]).

On a personal level, the two men were only four years apart in age, shared a close friendship, and supported each other's careers with monetary contributions and political favors up until the 1960 election (Kennedy donated $1,000 from his father to Nixon's 1950 Senate campaign; Nixon, as president of the Senate, offered to refuse to exercise his constitutional power in casting a tie-breaking vote in favor of the Republicans during Kennedy's absence for back surgery in 1954 [Matthews 70, 100]).

Strangely, too, an irony exists in the way that at the time of each man's death the event was shadowed in a way by the other's presence. On November 22, 1963, Nixon departed on a flight from Dallas's Love Field three hours before *Air Force One* touched down to bring Kennedy to a fateful rendezvous with a troubled loner training an Italian rifle from a school book depository. In an article that appeared in the *Dallas Morning News* that day Nixon called on the people of Dallas to give a "courteous reception" to the president (Matthews 235-239). In the same way, only a few weeks after Nixon died on April 22, 1994, in the same New York hospital where Jacqueline Kennedy Onassis had been undergoing treatment for lymphoma, Kennedy's widow succumbed to her illness (Matthews 344-345). The media's recounting of her life drew comparisons to royalty and a reawakening of the era of "Camelot" (Noonan 23-27).

History, however, has by and large treated Kennedy's and Nixon's political records as anything but similar. Kennedy is frequently found to be one of the most popular American presidents in public opinion polls while Nixon is often ranked as one of America's worst presidents. According to Gallup polls published in *Congressional Quarterly's Guide to the Presidency*, for example, in 1975 and 1985 Kennedy was chosen first when respondents were asked "Which three U.S. presidents do you regard as the

greatest?" Kennedy received 52 and 56 percent of the votes, respectively, being placed ahead of such past presidents as Abraham Lincoln and Franklin Roosevelt, who garnered 49 and 48 percent and 45 and 41 percent. In these same polls, Nixon earned five and 11 percent of the votes, placing near the bottom (Nelson 147). Correspondingly, in a poll taken among American history professors in 1982 in which respondents were asked to rate most of the U.S. presidents, Nixon was ranked third to last, receiving a mean of 5.18 on a six-part Likert scale in which a "1" represented "great," a "2" "near great," a "3" "above average," a "4" average," a "5" "below average," and a "6" "failure." Nixon placed only above Ulysses Grant and Warren Harding, who garnered a 5.25 and 5.56 mean, (Murray and Blessing 16-18, 122.). Additionally, according to Gallup opinion polls taken among the public at regular intervals during their terms in office, Kennedy received an average approval rating of 70 percent from 1961 to 1963 while Nixon garnered an average approval rating of 47 percent from 1969 to 1974 (Spragens 440, 507).

Moreover, Kennedy's legacy has become one of a fallen King Arthur of Camelot whose dramatic assassination forever transformed him into a martyr for America's "New Frontier." Likened to a violent rupture in the collective experience of the American people, the Kennedy assassination has been portrayed as a national end of innocence, a painful *rite de passage* to a "decade of shocks" (Brown 3), which also included the assassination of other political and activist leaders, the polarization of the populace over a difficult war in Vietnam, and the emergence of a counterculture movement. The obsequies of Kennedy's funeral itself had dynastic features that reinforced the sense that Kennedy's death was a national catastrophe: the continuous stream of visitors filing past the catafalque; the caisson being pulled by a blinkered horse with reversed stirrups; the

procession of foreign leaders following the president's body to St. Matthew's Cathedral; and the jet planes arching overhead as the caisson reached the gravesite at Arlington National Cemetery (Brown 3). Upon his death, buildings, currencies, roads, and schools were named to commemorate his political legacy: Kennedy Airport in New York City; the Kennedy Space Center in central Florida; the Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts in Washington, D.C.; the Kennedy half-dollar; the Kennedy Bridge in Louisville, Kentucky; the Kennedy Expressway in Chicago; the Kennedy School of Government at Harvard University; and Kennedy University in Orinda, California ("Land of Kennedy" 27; "And Then It Was November 22 Again" 26). In addition to these commemorations, Kennedy remains the only deceased American president to be honored with an eternal flame marking his grave (Laird 207).

Contrariwise, Nixon is reviled as a dirty trickster of American politics who used communist witch hunts and White House-sanctioned burglaries to duplicitously seize power. In the glow of martyrdom following Kennedy's assassination, Nixon became increasingly illuminated as the primary foil to Kennedy's ascension to the White House -- especially in light of the fact that Nixon was Kennedy's last political challenger in an election. Nixon is frequently cast as a myopic Republican hard-liner whose politics, personality, and physiognomy were in sharp contrast to the visionary, charismatic, and dashing qualities that Kennedy exhibited. It is the aggressive prosecution of alleged communists in government, the maudlin "Checkers speech," the insouciant resignation of the nation's highest political office, and a stark countenance for which Nixon is remembered for. Yet, while Nixon's legacy is not commemorated in the naming of buildings and institutions as Kennedy's is, it has been recognized in other ways. From the

start of his political career in 1947 to his death in 1994 Nixon made the cover of *Time* magazine 56 times, a record for any president *or* person (Matthews 15-21, 345). The magazine declared that while "Nixon failed more spectacularly than any other U.S. President . . . by sheer endurance he rebuilt his standing as the most important figure of the postwar era" (Stacks 27).

Curiously, political columnist and talk show host Christopher Matthews notes in his book *Kennedy & Nixon* (1996) that a vivid symbol of these two politicians' contrasting legacies is manifested along the north shore of the Potomac River in Washington, D.C., where the Kennedy Center and Watergate Hotel, two buildings that connote dramatically different political legacies, sit beside each other like "unmatched bookends" (345).

Yet, can Kennedy's and Nixon's contrasting images be explained strictly in terms of their respective merits and shortcomings as presidents and politicians? While both Kennedy's and Nixon's relationships with the press and the impact of television on their careers have been studied separately and, most notably, in the Great Debates of 1960, little research has focused on their parallel careers together in an analysis to determine how television played a part in the casting of their divergent images in American collective memory during the same time period. In six dissertations with both Kennedy and Nixon as part of their foci, four involve an examination of some component of either the Great Debates or the 1960 presidential campaign: *An Analytical and Comparative Study of the Persuasion of Kennedy and Nixon in the 1960 Campaign*, James Grant Powell (University of Wisconsin-Madison, 1963); *The Charleston Study: The Television Audience of the Nixon-Kennedy Debates*, John Russell Rider (Michigan State University,

1963); *Ethos in the Presidential Campaign of 1960: A Study of the Basic Persuasive Process of the Kennedy-Nixon Television Debates*, Paul Irwin Rosenthal (University of California-Los Angeles, 1963); and *The Kennedy-Nixon Debates: A Study in Political Persuasion*, Jerome Bernard Polisky (University of Wisconsin-Madison, 1965). The other two dissertations focus on various factors of presidential administrations' public relations efforts: *Front Page from the White House: A Quantitative Study of Personal News Coverage from Teddy Roosevelt to Ronald Reagan*, Rodger Allan Streitmatter (American University, 1989); and *Public Relations in the White House: News Management by Presidents Kennedy, Johnson and Nixon*, Cathy Rogers Franklin (Ohio University, 1993). Correspondingly, while a variety of books concerning the legacies of Kennedy's and Nixon's political careers and the impacts of various components of their relationships with the press have been written separately, only one exclusively focuses on the unique similarities in both men's political careers -- *Kennedy & Nixon* by Christopher Matthews. This book, in delineating the intriguing characteristics of the parallel career paths of two young political rivals who both ultimately sought to become the nation's president, served as a major impetus for the research design of this thesis. A paucity of literature dealing with the similar but contrasting political careers of these two men galvanized the development of a thesis that attempts to highlight this political pair in examining what part two media -- the nascent television medium and the traditional newspaper press -- played in forming their respective images.

Precisely, what part did television play in contributing to the divergent images of each man's political career in newspapers? In the shifting balance of power in the relationship between the press and the president during this century, and the press and

presidential aspirants, how did these two men's relationships with the increasing power of the press figure into the shaping of their divergent images? What part did the advent of arguably this century's most powerful new mass medium, television, contribute to the forging of these disparate historical roles? And how did the emergence of television affect the treatment of Kennedy and Nixon in traditional mass media -- specifically, newspapers?

Methodology

The research question put forth in this thesis is *"How did three newspapers' coverage of six crucial television appearances involving Kennedy or Nixon in three crisis situations contribute to the shaping of the two men's divergent press images?"* Specifically, this thesis attempts to compare how three television appearances by Kennedy and three television appearances by Nixon, in three different crisis situations -- foreign policy crisis, political self-defense, and political defeat -- are assessed by three newspapers -- the *New York Times*, the *Los Angeles Times,* and the *Boston Globe*. The themes running through both the news reports and editorials about these six appearances are summarized and analyzed as to how they figured into the shaping of Kennedy's and Nixon's divergent images in the traditional press. In this way, the focus of this research plan is the challenge of new media to old -- the way newspapers responded to television and consequently how newspaper coverage of crucial television appearances by Kennedy and Nixon contributed to the shaping of their disparate images in the newspaper press.

The six crucial television appearances made by Kennedy and Nixon that are

examined in this thesis are as follows.

Foreign Policy Crisis

1) *Kennedy's ultimatum to the Soviet Union to remove missiles from Cuba on October 22, 1962*

2) *Nixon's announcement of American forces' invasion of Cambodia on April 30, 1970*

Political Self-defense

3) *Kennedy's defense of his Catholicism before the Ministerial Association of Greater Houston on September 12, 1960*

4) *Nixon's defense of a political fund in the "Checkers speech" on September 23, 1952*

Political Defeat

5) *Kennedy's concession speech at the Democratic National Convention on August 17, 1956, after narrowly losing the vice presidential nomination*

6) *Nixon's "last press conference" after losing the California gubernatorial election on November 7, 1962*

These appearances represent crisis events in which either the performance on television or the circumstances of the appearance represented a critical moment in Kennedy's or Nixon's political careers. The selections are gleaned from a composite of secondary sources this researcher consulted and judged to be significant and commensurate to allow for an extended comparison. Chief among these sources are: *Kennedy & Nixon* by Christopher Matthews; *A Question of Character: A Life of John F. Kennedy* by Thomas Reeves; *Nixon: The Education of a Politician, 1913-1962* and *Nixon: The Triumph of a Politician, 1962-1972* by Stephen Ambrose; *The Golden Web* and *The Image Empire* by Erik Barnouw; *Popular Images of American Presidents* edited by William C. Spragens; and *The Press and America* by Michael Emery and Edwin Emery.

The unit of analysis is any news story or editorial pertaining to the appearance that appears in the morning editions of the *New York Times*, the *Los Angeles Times,* or the *Boston Globe* in the two days after each selected appearance. A news story is defined as any article written in third-person or inverted pyramid style. An editorial is defined as any article written in first-person or subjective style, or an article which appears in a designated editorial section. Each article meeting these criteria is identified and assessed as to how it addressed three areas of investigation that have been developed to examine how newspaper coverage of selected television appearances involving one of three crisis situations contributed to the shaping of each man's press image:

1) Reference to the effect of the broadcast on Kennedy's or Nixon's political career;

2) Reference to the effectiveness of Kennedy's or Nixon's use of television with implications of its effect on their respective political careers;

3) Reference to the reaction of viewers to Kennedy's or Nixon's use of television.

The format used to present the findings from each newspaper for each of the six television appearances consists of four parts: an introductory paragraph describing the historical importance of the appearance and placing it in perspective to Kennedy's or Nixon's political career; two paragraphs describing the themes that emerge in the news stories and editorials in the *New York Times*; two paragraphs describing the themes that emerge in the news stories and editorials in the *Los Angeles Times*; and two paragraphs describing the themes that emerge in the news stories and editorials in the *Boston Globe.* Each of the two paragraphs describing the themes that emerge identify the total number of news stories and editorials that appear within the two-day period in that paper. The themes emerging in the news stories and editorials are then identified and illustrated as completely as possible with headline and quotation excerpts.

An epilogue treats the two special television appearances that concluded Kennedy's and Nixon's political careers and how they contributed to the two men's disparate press images. These appearances include Kennedy's nationally televised funeral procession on November 24, 1963, and Nixon's farewell speech to his staff and exit aboard Marine One upon his resignation of the presidency on August 9, 1974. Because these two final appearances in office involve unique events of assassination and resignation, it is problematic to compare them in as parallel a fashion as the other six

appearances. They therefore are not included in the body of the thesis. Nevertheless, because they figure so importantly in the enduring legacies of each man they warrant consideration in a special section.

Sources and Limitations

The *New York Times*, the *Los Angeles Times*, and the *Boston Globe* were selected as newspaper sources in this thesis in an attempt to incorporate papers of different editorial slants as well as different regional influences -- notably, in the case of the latter two papers, to include coverage from the geographical home bases of Kennedy and Nixon. There are, of course, several limitations that follow from the *use* of newspapers as gauges of opinion by which to measure how Kennedy's and Nixon's television images are defined. A discussion of those limitations is given after a brief explanation of how the *New York Times*, the *Los Angeles Times*, and the *Boston Globe* represent different editorial slants and regional influences. The rationale for using newspapers as a gauge of opinion in this study is then explored.

The *New York Times* was selected as one of the three papers used in this thesis for its preeminent reputation as America's "newspaper of record" and its relatively middle-of-the-road editorial style. Under the leadership of such pioneering journalists as publisher Adolph Ochs (who ran the paper from 1896-1935), managing editor Carr Van Anda (who served the paper from 1904-1932), publisher Arthur Hays Sulzberger (1935-1961), and executive editor Abe Rosenthal (1969-1976), the *Times* established itself as one of the most credible and comprehensive newspapers in America during the

20th century. In a 1982 poll of publishers, editors, and journalism professors taken by the Media Research Institute, the *Times* was listed by 95 percent of the respondents when asked to give their choices of newspapers for a top ten list (unranked). When asked to give their choices for a top five list (ranked), 60 percent of the respondents listed the *Times* as number one; and the *Times* was unanimously ranked as number one in top five rankings conducted across nine newspaper regions. Furthermore, in polls taken in 1961 (among publishers, editors, and journalism professors) and 1970 (among publishers) by public relations pioneer Edward Bernays, the *Times* garnered the most number one votes. Editorially, the *Times* has struck a balance in endorsing Democratic and Republican presidential candidates, supporting Democrat Franklin Roosevelt in 1936 and 1944, and Republicans Wendell Wilkie in 1940, Thomas Dewey in 1948, and Dwight Eisenhower in 1952 and 1956. Starting in 1960, the paper backed Democrats in the next seven elections. Additionally, the *Times* earned an international reputation for excellence in editorial opinion and news coverage, and by 1987 had garnered a record 58 Pulitzer Prizes (Emery and Emery 273-278, 595-598).

The *Los Angeles Times* was selected as a newspaper source for its predominantly conservative editorial tradition and its position as journalistic leader in the western United States. The *Times* was consistently placed fourth in the 1982 poll described above that asked publishers, editors, and journalism professors to give their choices for a top ten list (unranked), a top five list (ranked), and a top five regional list (ranked). Publisher Otis Chandler helped create one of the largest supplementary news services in the world by striking a partnership with publisher Philip Graham of the *Washington Post* in the 1960s to form the Los Angeles-Washington Post News Service. In addition, the *Times* operated

eight national bureaus and 24 foreign bureaus. Editorial cartoonist Paul Conrad, hired in 1964, won three Pulitzer Prizes over 20 years while drawing for the *Times*. The paper also increased its stature through its purchases of *Newsday* and the *Dallas Times Herald* in the 1970s. Editorially, Republican candidates, such as Barry Goldwater in 1964 and Nixon in 1972, were routinely endorsed by the *Times*. However, this stance had begun to shift dramatically by the 1980s as Democrats were increasingly supported (Emery and Emery 596, 602-604).

Although not coming into contention for top national ranking until the 1970s, the *Boston Globe* was selected as the third newspaper used in this thesis for its liberal record and its prominence as one of the major newspapers of New England. In a 1974 poll by *Time* magazine, the *Globe* broke into the top ten newspapers for the first time, and in the 1982 poll noted above to discuss the reputations of the *New York Times* and *Los Angeles Times* the *Globe* was included in a rounding out of the top 15 newspapers rated to be the best in America. Competing in a metropolitan area that was served by two other major dailies, the *Christian Science Monitor* and the *Boston Herald*, the *Globe* gained liberal credentials by becoming the second major newspaper to oppose the Vietnam War, joining the *New York Times* and the *Washington Post* in publishing the Pentagon Papers in 1971. The *Globe* also editorialized against the Nixon presidencies in 1968 and 1972, becoming the first major daily to call for his impeachment in October, 1973. The paper was awarded Pulitzer Prizes for its 1975 coverage of anti-busing riots, its 1980 coverage in local reporting, and its 1983 coverage of the nuclear arms race. The daily morning and evening editions of the *Globe* were consolidated into one paper in 1979 (Emery and Emery 596, 607-608).

* * *

A first limitation of the methodology employed in this study lies in the *number* of primary sources used. However important the *New York Times*, *Los Angeles Times*, and *Boston Globe* may be as journalistic sources, they represent only a handful of the multitude of news sources available that could be examined to determine how selected television appearances shaped the disparate press images of Kennedy and Nixon. Ideally, a greater number of newspaper sources could be used to represent different geographical regions with different market demographics; this would allow for greater *reliability* in attempting to qualitatively measure the composite newspaper images of Kennedy and Nixon (Wimmer and Dominick 52-55). For example, albeit it was still gaining in stature and had not established itself as the dominant newspaper published in the nation's capital during the period covered in this study (1952-1970), the *Washington Post* could be used to assess how one of the nation's political newspapers of record treated the six television appearances by Kennedy and Nixon and what themes were prevalent in newspaper coverage read by many federal government officials. Likewise, the *Chicago Tribune* could be used to investigate what themes were running in the newspaper leader of the Midwest and what type of coverage was being read by the different ethnicities composing one of the largest population centers in the Great Lakes region. And the *Miami Herald*, as a journalistic leader in the South, could be included to examine the themes that were prominent in a newspaper market that served a large Hispanic population.

In addition to including a larger number of newspapers to improve the reliability in this study, the other major component of the print press -- magazines -- could be used to assess how six television appearances contributed to the shaping of Kennedy's and

Nixon's divergent images. The 20th century saw the peak of newspaper circulation in America, with almost 1.5 newspapers reaching each household in 1905. However, during the next 40 years this number fell and remained at a rate of about 1.2 papers per household. From 1950 to 1970, the period covered in this study, this rate dropped from roughly 1.2 to .9 papers per household, and the decline has continued to the 1990s. Conversely, the number of magazines per household has risen precipitously in this century, increasing from nearly 1.8 magazines per household in 1920 to three magazines per household in 1945. And from 1950 to 1970 this figure grew from about 3.3 to 3.9 magazines per household, with the upward climb essentially continuing to the 1990s (Leonard 177-179). In 1962, *Time* claimed a circulation of 3 million; *Newsweek* 1.5 million in 1961; and *U.S. News & World Report* 1.2 million in 1962 (Emery and Emery 388-389). To some extent, then, magazines have supplanted newspapers as a medium during the period under study in this thesis, and an examination of such high-circulation newsweeklies as *Time*, *Newsweek*, and *U.S. News & World Report* could, therefore, add significantly to a more composite understanding of how six television appearances contributed to the divergent images of Kennedy and Nixon in the newspaper *and* magazine print press.

A second limitation that follows from the one above is involved with the *selections* of newspapers that are examined in this study. The *New York Times*, *Los Angeles Times*, and *Boston Globe*, as noted above, are ranked as three of the top ten newspapers in America in polls conducted among publishers, editors, and journalism professors. Yet while these three papers are recognized as three of the most influential and prestigious newspapers in the nation, an examination of coverage from less

prominent newspapers as well as newspapers in which a range of different editorial positions are represented could result in a more balanced determination of how journalists of the day assessed Kennedy and Nixon television appearances. Significantly, small town dailies and weeklies could be included in the mix of press sources used, as a check of the reliance on larger, metropolitan papers, to see if major differences or disparities existed between large and small newspapers. As well, publications from specialized areas of the press could be consulted because these areas were not commonly a large factor in mainstream newspapers. For example, black press papers such as the *Chicago Defender*, religious press papers like *Catholic Worker*, and underground press papers such as *I.F. Stone's Weekly* represent important periodicals that could be included. The incorporation of small town newspapers and specialized periodicals in this study could result in the examination of a wider range of editorial slants, a broader inclusion of regional influences affecting specific newspaper markets, and a much more complete survey of the American newspaper market as a whole.

Also important to the argument for including a greater number of newspapers and a more diverse range of editorial slants in this study is the fact that the American newspaper industry suffered a significant decline in the number of cities with competing dailies in the latter half of this century. The number of one-daily cities increased from 1,188 to 1,312 from 1954 to 1971, while the number of cities with competing dailies shrunk from 87 to 37 during this same period. The percentage of cities with competing dailies, then, decreased from 6.0 to 2.4 during a 17-year period (Emery and Emery 623). This decline in competition is thus an important consideration in how coverage of Kennedy and Nixon differed in newspapers in cities with one daily as opposed to

newspapers in cities with competing dailies. The incorporation of a larger number of papers (especially ones in cities with competing dailies) that encompass a wider range of editorial viewpoints could minimize this potential dilemma.

A third limitation in weighing the newspaper assessments of Kennedy's and Nixon's television appearances in the period covered in this study is the way the size of the American television audience grew from 1952 to 1970. The election of Kennedy and Nixon to Congress in 1946 coincided with one of the first launchings of television on a mass scale, and television's growth and Kennedy and Nixon's political development subsequently paralleled one another. After its debut at the 1939 World's Fair, television programming and set production were soon put on hold in 1942 so television manufacturers could devote their full technological capabilities to the war effort from 1942 to 1946. Only 10,000 sets were estimated to have been sold before this halt. Following this interruption in television's development, the new medium began a resurgence from 1946 to 1948 until the Federal Communications Commission called a halt to the issuing of new licenses to study interference problems. At the time of this "freeze" approximately 100 stations were broadcasting in a handful of American cities (Barnouw 2: 126-128, 285-286) and only one percent of American homes had television sets (Ranney 8). By 1952, the year the freeze was lifted, about 34 percent of American homes had sets; by 1955, this number rose to 68 percent (Emery and Emery 423, 430). In 1960, the number reached 87 percent, and by the 1970s the proportion of American households with sets rose to 95 percent (Ranney 8). In terms of the total television sets in America, the number grew from 6 million in 1950, to 33 million in 1955, to 55 million in 1960, to 61 million in 1965, and to 84 million in 1970 (Emery and Emery 430). The size

of the American television audience, then, doubled in its first three years after the freeze, increased by 150 percent in its first eight years, and nearly tripled by about its first 23 years. At the same time, the number of sets exploded by nearly nine times from 1950 to 1960 and rose by some 65 percent from 1960 to 1970. Thus, television can be said to have truly "arrived" after its first ten years of availability in America, seemingly moving from infancy to adulthood in roughly 20 years. Consequently, it is important to keep in mind how dramatically the medium of television grew from the year of the earliest appearance in this study, 1952, to the year of the latest appearance, 1970. It is fair to speculate that newspaper journalists may have treated television differently at junctures during this period as a result of it gaining more stature and acceptance as a mass medium through the size of its audiences.

The fourth and perhaps most important limitation to consider in an examination of the way newspaper reporters of the *New York Times*, *Los Angeles Times*, and *Boston Globe* assessed selected television appearances of Kennedy and Nixon from 1952 to 1970 is that the political and social temper of the U.S. changed radically during this period. The political measures and cultural dispositions by which newspaper reporters discussed and judged politicians' television appearances in 1970 were different from what they were in 1952. Nixon first gained national political prominence through vigorous prosecution of alleged communists in the government as a member of the House Un-American Activities Committee in the late 1940s. In making a political name for himself in an era when the specter of communist subversion was a popular concern, he became nominated for the vice presidency on the Republican ticket with Dwight Eisenhower in the election of 1952. The United States during that time, the late 1940s to

the mid 1950s, was in the throes of a "Second Red Scare" (Tindall 1209). Emerging victorious from a second world war in 1945, the U.S. anxiously witnessed four events in the ensuing years that raised its anti-communist fervor to near hysteria: the Soviet Union's immediate attempt after the war to expand its domination by installing puppet governments in occupied Eastern Europe in 1945 (Tindall 1189-1190); the fall of China to the Communists in 1949 after a long civil war (Jones 519-520); the explosion of an atomic bomb in 1949 by the Soviets and the end of American nuclear monopoly (Tindall 1204-1205); and the deployment of American forces to defend South Korea against the invasion by communist North Korea (Tindall 1205-1206). In response to communist fears, the Truman Doctrine was initiated in 1947 (Jones 519), the North Atlantic Treaty Organization was formed in 1948 (Tindall 1196), the McCarran Internal Security Act was passed in 1950 (Jones 530), and Senator Joseph McCarthy was given free rein to investigate a series of baseless charges he made from 1950 to 1954 against sundry government officials (Jones 531-533). Hence it was in the backdrop of this reactionary political environment that Nixon made his political mark.

In contrast, the 1960s and 1970s saw a shift in American values and were marked by a new liberalism in the championing of civil rights, the emergence of a "counterculture," and a new climate of opposition to an American war. The civil rights movement for blacks was spearheaded by several events: the admission of the first black student to the University of Mississippi in 1962; Martin Luther King Junior's March on Washington in 1963; and the passage of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 into law (Tindall 1283-1285). During the same time, the women's movement galvanized approval of the Equal Rights Amendment by Congress in 1972; and Hispanic and Native American

groups also made important advances in gaining national recognition for their causes in the 1970s (Jones 582-587). A new class of society known as the "counterculture" -- idealistic young Americans who had developed a sense of themselves as a discrete generation in rebellion against authority -- expressed itself in campus protests, rock concerts, and drug use (Tindall 1294-1295). More traumatic to the American social consciousness during the 1960s and 1970s, though, was the long and seemingly unwinnable war in Vietnam. Secretary of Defense Robert McNamara summed up the dilemma of the war in 1967 in stating that, "The picture of the world's greatest superpower killing or injuring 1,000 noncombatants a week, while trying to pound a tiny backward nation into submission on an issue whose merits are hotly debated, is not a pretty one" (qtd. in Tindall 1288-1291).

The profound political and social changes that took place during the time period of this study, then, need to be considered in understanding newspaper journalists' assessments of Kennedy's and Nixon's television appearances. The set of political values that was deemed favorable in the early 1950s -- which included an aggressive stance towards suspected communist infiltration of American enterprises -- changed by the 1960s -- to a more individualist, activist policy in the securing of personal freedoms. As authors James D. Startt and Wm. David Sloan touch upon this point in *Historical Methods in Mass Communications*, journalists

> . . . are products of their own social environments; they can never completely escape the conditions that shaped and continue to shape them. They all have emotions, persuasions,

> and ethical standards, some of which are shared in part with others of similar background and some of which are uniquely their own. Religion, nationality, geography, class awareness, ideology, education, occupation, knowledge, and experience give definition to human perceptions. To what extent do these perceptions become habits of thought, perhaps even biases, either recognized or not, that enter into the writing of history, thus imperiling the reconstruction of the true past? (47)

Newspapers vs. Television

The rationale for using television and newspapers as two mass media by which to measure the challenge of new media to old and to assess how Kennedy's and Nixon's images may have been consequently impacted is based on two factors: the historical role of newspapers as one of the oldest, most conventional, and most important forms of mass media in America and the explosive growth of television to a near omnipresent medium in America in a short span of years.

From the publication of the crude weekly the *Boston News-Letter* in 1704 to the launching of the splashy national daily *USA Today* in 1982, newspapers, from the earliest days of American colonization to the present, have provided a common language and source of information for Americans to find out about the happenings in their community, country, and world (Folkerts and Teeter 20-23, 522-523). America came of age with newspapers, and this medium played an ubiquitous role in the history of the young country in its 222 years of development. Samuel Adams' *Boston Gazette* helped foment colonists to set in motion the American Revolution in the 1770s with its incendiary "Patriot" propaganda. James Gordon Bennett's *New York Herald* and Horace Greeley's

New York Tribune for the first time offered news targeted to the masses in the pioneering penny press papers of the1830s and 1840s. William Lloyd Garrison's abolitionist *Liberator* and Robert Barnwell Rhett's "fire-eater" *Charleston Mercury* fanned the flames of sentiment in the North and South during the Civil War in the 1860s. Joseph Pulitzer's *New York World* and William Randolph Hearst's *New York Journal* ushered in an era of "yellow journalism" that was partly responsible for igniting a firestorm of public sentiment that propelled the United States into the Spanish-American War in the 1890s. Joseph Medill Patterson's *New York Daily News* and Bernarr Macfadden's *Daily Graphic* initiated a new cycle of sensationalism in tabloid-style formats in the "jazz journalism" of the 1920s. Daniel Wolf's *Village Voice* and *I.F. Stone's Weekly* "underground papers" helped propagate the counterculture and activist movements in the 1960s (Emery and Emery 54-58, 120-126, 147-150, 235-241, 296-297, 323-326, 481-483). And newspaper bellwethers like the *New York Times* and *Washington Post* began to publish their editions in new on-line formats on the World Wide Web in the 1990s. The newspaper can thus be seen as the traditional and most visible arm of "the press" (a term which later became "the media" to reflect the advent and importance of electronic forms of communication).

Newspapers and newspapermen, too, have played a special role in the presidency, especially prior to the 20th century. When the first president, George Washington, needed to explain his rationale for leaving his presidency to the public, he did so through a newspaper. His farewell address, rather than spoken directly to Congress or delivered as a speech, was printed at Washington's request as a communication to the people in Pennsylvania's *Daily American Advertiser* on September 19, 1796. Thomas Jefferson helped the fledgling *National Intelligencer* establish itself as the first newspaper of

Washington, D.C., when he took office in 1801. It also became an official channel of information coming from the executive branch of government and the then Democratic-Republican Party (Bass, Euchner, and Kumar 87, 89). Upon assuming the office of the presidency in 1829, Andrew Jackson made newspaperman Amos Kendall part of his "Kitchen Cabinet" -- one of the first instances in which a journalist directly played a part in a presidential administration. Kendall, a former editor of the *Argus of Western America*, a frontier newspaper and organ for the Democratic Party in Frankfort, Kentucky, played a crucial role in editing Jackson's important public statements. Indeed, one of Jackson's rivals remarked of Kendall, "He was chief overseer, chief reporter, amanuensis, scribe, accountant general, man of all work -- nothing was well done without the aid of his diabolical genius" (qtd. in Emery and Emery 112). A newspaperman became the first reporter to cover a president-elect full time when Henry Villard, an Associated Press correspondent and future publisher of the *New York Evening Post*, shadowed newly elected Abraham Lincoln in 1860 and 1861. Villard became such an important Civil War correspondent that he was summoned by Lincoln to discuss his assessments of the war (Emery and Emery 181; Kumar 93). And in 1896, during the administration of Grover Cleveland, William Price of the *Washington Evening Star* became the first correspondent to be based at the White House full-time (Bass, Euchner, and Kumar 95).

Growing and evolving with America and the presidency, then, newspapers have been the predominant mass medium for news and advertising in America until challenged by the burgeoning media of radio, magazines, and television in the 1920s (radio and magazines) and 1950s (television) (Shaw 14-19). In his study "The Rise and Fall of

American Mass Media," media historian Donald Shaw argues that the newspaper is on the "downward slide" from its "king of the hill" period, or time of greatest historical prestige and market penetration, which was in the late 1910s and early 1920s (20, 11). Shaw delineates cycles in the history of American mass media, pointing out that each medium goes through periods of youth, maturity, and senior citizenship. Two patterns, among others, emerge in these cycles: no medium, once it has lost its dominant or king of the hill position, has ever returned to the top; and each new medium tends to spread more rapidly than earlier media (20). In the case of newspapers, the first of these patterns is borne out by the fact that the slide from its peak period has been downhill for at least 70 years. And in the case of television the second pattern holds true, as this medium penetrated American homes faster than any mass medium up to that point (Shaw 8-9).

Newspapers, on a decline from their period of greatest predominance, are nevertheless a promising source for inquiry into how press images of Kennedy and Nixon were filtered to the general public and how the two men's more composite historical images took root. The limitation is that this inquiry is the message and not the readers' original interpretations that are available to historians. The study of newspapers does not represent or reflect the entire public of an era. But newspapers and magazines can be taken to represent smaller publics, or markets, who support the publication by buying it. Even when newspapers and magazines do not mirror the reader's ideas, that periodical still conveys information that helps form opinion. Thus while it is impossible to know the opinions and ideas of all society, it is possible to glean from common sources of information what ideas and issues were in the popular arena and the parameters and critical points of debate. Ultimately, the composite press images of Kennedy and Nixon

are not amenable to simple examinations or explanations from any isolated group of press sources. The two men and their publics are gone, but their messengers remain. And while it cannot be known how individuals interpreted the message, it can be known what the messenger told them (Caudill xv, 141, 143).

Thus, the *new* medium of television is used as a counterpoint to the *old* medium of newspapers in this study. This is based on the rationale, as noted above, that television fulminated to a dominant mass medium in America at a breakneck pace and redefined the nature of the relationship between the press and the president.

Television's Impact on the Presidency

Significantly, television arguably altered the balance of power between the president and the other branches of government. The visual emphasis in television news and the daily visual needs of television news producers have given the president the upper hand. News organizations established regular "beats" at the White House, Capitol, and Pentagon because events happening at these government branches have a high potential for newsworthiness, either because of their intrinsic significance, the prominence of their sources, or simply because they have been produced by beat reporters on the payroll. Importantly, however, the presidency has made a better media target in this coverage because it is a single-headed institution readily personified, filmed, and recorded in the visible person of the chief executive. Media audiences are thus given a familiar, easily dramatized focus of attention. Moreover, as the personification of the nation, the president can usually command national television time, often at prime time

and simultaneously on all major networks. During a recent ten-year period, for instance, three out of eleven congressional requests for television coverage were granted, compared with 44 out of 45 for the president (Graber 108, 289).

In contrast to the presidency, Congress is a "many-headed Hydra" (Graber 289) with no single familiar focus, and as a result it suffers in television time in comparison to the coverage the president usually garners. Congress's activities are conducted in more than 100 locations on Capitol Hill, and no individual member can command nationwide media coverage at will. Furthermore, the nature of Congress's work makes coverage difficult: the drafting of laws, the compromising among conflicting interests, the forging of coalitions, and the hammering out of legal details. Stories in the executive branch that describe what is actually done are more memorable than reports about how the laborious process of legislation takes shape (Graber 289-291). As Christopher Matthews, former press secretary to the late Speaker of the House Tip O'Neill, has remarked, Congress ends up the "Hamburger Helper to the White House Story" (qtd. in Graber 291). Additionally, Congress prohibited television coverage of its proceedings until the late 1970s, fearing that legislative floor sessions would offer a dull, stultifying spectacle. The exceptions to this rule were selected committee hearings that typically involved spicy topics such as subversives in government or high-level corruption. In 1979, the House of Representatives lifted this prohibition, and the Senate followed suit in 1986 (Graber 291-293).

In the same way, television coverage of the Supreme Court and the federal courts pales in comparison to television time accorded to the presidency. Supreme Court coverage is difficult, for reporters must break down voluminous and contradictory

opinions supporting or dissenting from a decision. The subject matter is often highly technical and the volume of decisions large. And with notable exceptions, stories about the Court's decisions frequently lack the potential to become top-story news; they are hard to boil down into catchy phrases and clichés and they seldom lend themselves to exciting visual coverage. Moreover, while the Court does have a press office, it refuses to provide interpretations of the justices' decisions in laypersons' terms, fearing this could cause legal controversy. Most significantly, though, the Supreme Court and federal courts do not allow television coverage of their proceedings. As well, federal judges rarely grant interviews, almost never hold news conferences, and generally do not seek television appearances, mainly because they fret that their impartiality and mystique might be compromised (Graber 307-311).

Hence the explosive growth of television to a dominant mass medium in a short span of years coupled with the way the visual demands of television resulted in the presidency gaining the lion's share of television coverage make this medium an important one to examine in how it contributed to the images of two politicians in the traditional mass medium of newspapers. Critically, the proportion of the American population citing television over newspapers as their major source of news has increased dramatically from the late 1950s to mid-1970s. Television moved from a six-percentage point deficit in relation to newspapers in 1959 to a two-point deficit in 1964, a 9-point lead in 1967, a 12-point lead in 1971, and a 15-point lead in 1976 (Robinson and Jeffres 2). This tension is explored as three prolific papers are now evaluated as to how they played a part in the forging of the divergent press images of two of this century's more controversial American presidents.

Chapter II

Foreign Policy Crisis

"I call upon Chairman Khrushchev. . . ."

The ultimatum that Kennedy delivered via television to Soviet Premier Nikita Khrushchev on October 22, 1962, marked one of the tensest moments in the Cold War -- the Cuban missile crisis. On October 16, the President was informed that photographs taken from CIA surveillance flights revealed that missile sites were being built in Cuba with Soviet help, not only for surface-to-air missiles for use against aircraft, but also for longer range missiles, capable of reaching 1,000-mile and 2,200-mile radii (Divine 2, 16). In frenetic behind-the-scenes meetings in the days that followed, Kennedy and his Executive Committee of the National Security Council resolved that the missiles had to be removed; the question was how. A decision was finally made that a blockade (officially referred to as a "quarantine" since a blockade is technically an act of war) would be imposed on all incoming ships to Cuba to prevent the further importation of weapons. The plan offered the advantage of forcing the Soviets to shoot first, if it came to that, and at the same time offered them a necessary escape route (Tindall 1272-1274). Thus, in a nationally televised address Kennedy proclaimed to Khrushchev:

> I call upon Chairman Khrushchev to halt and eliminate this clandestine, reckless, and Provocative threat to world peace and to stable relations between our two nations. I call

> upon him further to abandon this cause of world domination, and to join in an historic effort to end the perilous arms race and to transform the history of man. (qtd. in Divine 35)

In the anxious week that followed in which the U.S. and the Soviet Union found themselves eyeball to eyeball. The Soviet Union eventually "blinked" first, turning around its ships short of the quarantine line and making a deal to withdraw the missiles in Cuba (Tindall 1273-1274). Subsequently, Kennedy's public standing rose considerably during the following weeks as the impression was that, even though both sides had had to make concessions remove the missiles, American firmness had forced the Soviet Union to back down (Jones 547). At the same time, Kennedy won acclaim from liberals for pursuing a non-military plan in his handling of the crisis while his success enabled him to neutralize criticisms from the political right (Barnouw, *The Image Empire* 216).

* * *

In the two days after Kennedy's television address, two themes emerged in the nine news articles that referenced Kennedy's use of television. The primary theme delineated the seriousness and deliberateness of the Kennedy's speech while a concurrent theme detailed the overwhelming approval for the President for taking bold action in a situation that offered no other recourse. A third and somewhat lesser theme that emerged was that U.S. action against Cuba was long overdue. Kennedy' on-air delivery was little noted in any of the articles. Public reaction pertaining to the themes of bold action that had to be taken against Cuba and action that was long overdue were evinced in an article titled "Cuba Action Gets Public Backing" that appeared in the November 23 issue of the *Times*: ". . . two sentiments apparently swept the nation. First, that the new, firm stand

against aggressive Communism should have been taken by this country much earlier, and second, that the President must get -- and will get -- total support" (21). An article published two days after the speech titled "Anxiety Coupled with Support Here on U.S. Move" echoed these public sentiments: "The reaction of New Yorkers yesterday to President Kennedy's speech was a compound of 'It's about time we took strong action on Cuba and dread of the consequences'" (McRobertson 26). In an example of the first theme of the seriousness of the speech and in one of the only mentions of Kennedy's composure during the address, an article titled "President Grave" noted under a front-page headline that, "All this the President recited in an 18-minute radio and television address of a grimness unparalleled in recent times. He read the words rapidly, with little emotion. . . " (Lewis 1).

The central theme that came out in the five editorials in the *New York Times'* in the two days after Kennedy's speech called for unanimous and unwavering support for the President's actions at a time when the world's two most powerful nations stood perched on the brink of war. As in the news coverage, two other themes that emerged were that the president was forced into a situation in which he could do nothing less than take bold and necessary action and that this action was long in coming against a recalcitrant communist nation existing in such propinquity to the United States. Kennedy's on-air demeanor was not discussed in any of the editorials. In the lead editorial on the October 23 *Times'* editorial page, "'Quarantine' on Cuba," it was declared, "It is action not so drastic as many Americans would like to take; but in our view it is drastic enough at the present time, and we commend the President for his restraint in not moving

beyond a partial blockade -- or 'quarantine' as he euphemistically called it" (36). The theme of united public support for the President's action was evinced more wholly in an article titled "Excerpts from Newspaper Editorials on Decision to Impose Arms Blockade on Cuba," in which a composite of editorial opinions from newspapers around the nation were presented. (These editorials, while taken from newspapers other than the three selected for this study, nonetheless provide important evidence of how the coverage of selected television appearances shaped the disparate press images of Kennedy and Nixon because they ran in one of the papers selected for this study.) The *New York Daily News* opined that, "We think the President has acted magnificently, and we feel confident that the American people will back him to the hilt in his new and courageous Cuban policy." In this article, too, the theme pertaining to overdue action against Cuba by the United States as well as the theme of public support was cited in a *Buffalo Courier-Express* editorial: "If there be any words of criticism, they justly can be that the firm steps now being taken have been long delayed. But that all is behind us, as in all great national crises, the nation must and will unite behind the President. . . ." Additionally, in regard to the theme of public support, the *Atlanta Constitution* expressed: "The American people are united behind President Kennedy in his Cuban action. He has acted bravely, responsibly and well" (26). In one of the few dissenting views that appeared, the theme of bold and necessary action by the President was taken on in a letter to the *Times* that read: "President Kennedy's analysis of the Cuban situation fails to deal with the tragic misunderstanding which lies behind the present international situation . . . Unfortunately, the Soviet leadership will not forget being forced to retreat" (Harris 38).

In the *Los Angeles Times*, the theme that Americans should give the president unanimous support during a time of crisis emerged the most persistently in the 13 news stories that appeared in the two days after Kennedy's speech. This theme was manifested in the headlines to several articles: "Nixon Supports Actions Taken by President"; "Hoover, Truman Give Kennedy Full Support"; "Eisenhower Asks for Full Support for Kennedy"; and "Kennedy Has Congress Backing, [Senator] Kuchel Says." In an article headlined "Crowd Gathers Silently on Street and Listens Intently to President" that appeared the day after the address, the theme of public approval and support for the president was described in man-on-the-street reactions:

> When the President concluded, the man who kept nodding all the way through shouted, 'Attaboy, President!' Maybe half of the crowd clapped, but only for an instant . . . When the Star Spangled Banner played, a slight, gray-haired woman stood, her eyes closed, her hands pressed together. It was probably a prayer." (Weeks 17)

Lesser themes expressing the president's action as overdue and his speech grave also emerged in the coverage. In an article titled "Americans Support Kennedy on Blockade" that appeared on October 24, these themes were delineated: "Across the nation, interviewers encountered an odd mixture of tension and relief in the comments they heard from voters -- tension stemming from a sombre realization of the fateful risks involved in the action, relief that finally we had taken a stand and cleared some of the fog which enshrouded the Cuban situation" (Gallup 16).

The three editorials that appear in the *Los Angeles Times* in the two days after the address primarily conveyed the theme that America must stand united behind the president in a time of nearly unparalleled crisis. In the peroration to an editorial titled "Kennedy, Plagued by Dissenting Allies, Deserves Support at Home," published the day after the speech, it was declared: "In this matter, and whatever his mistakes may have been elsewhere, he needs and deserves the support of all Americans, Republicans no less than Democrats" (White Part II, 5). Another editorial appearing the day after the speech, titled "The Challenge of Cuba," likewise urged support: "These will be months in which the President must have the support of every American. The challenge of Cuba . . . belongs to us all" (Part II, 4). However, a different point was made in an editorial published on October 24. In "The Cuba Crisis and the Elections," the idea is broached that Kennedy could conveniently be using his announcement of a blockade of Cuba as a gambit to benefit the Democrats in the state and congressional elections taking place the next month. Robert T. Hartmann speculated in the article:

> In the undeniable gravity of this sudden stiffening of the administration attitude toward the overbold enemy, it would be tasteless to ascribe purely political motives to the President of the United States. . . . There is little doubt that the dramatic turn of events will immediately enhance President Kennedy's personal popularity which had slipped off some from its phenomenal peak. . . . What nobody really knows is whether his new nonpartisan role will help Democrats more or as much as his personal blessing as Party leader on the stump. (Part II, 4)

Kennedy's address was covered in 13 news stories in the *Boston Globe* in the two days after the broadcast. Two primary themes emerged in the news coverage while Kennedy's use of television is directly addressed in one article. The first theme expressed was that in delivering an ultimatum Kennedy has thrown down a gauntlet and placed the United States and the Soviet Union at the brink of nuclear war. In an article titled "Soviet Convoy on Way, Will be Intercepted," published the day after the speech, the lead reflected this theme: "President Kennedy, in a momentous decision that may eventually be interpreted as a hostile act by the Soviet Union, ordered Monday night a blockade of military equipment bound for Cuba" (Donovan 1). This theme was further conveyed in "Like Hitler's March on Rhine," also published on October 23: "Monday's night grim speech was a new turn in the Kennedy-Khrushchev relationship, a calculated risk and one full of danger" (Roberts 8). The second theme running through the *Globe*'s coverage was one declaring united support for the president in a time of nearly unparalleled crisis. The headlines of some of the articles from the two-day period after Kennedy's broadcast conveyed this theme: "Ted, George, Hear JFK, Back Stand," in which U.S. Senatorial candidates Ted Kennedy and George Cabot Lodge both expressed approval for the president while at a debate; "New England Leaders Cheer J.F.K.'s Stand"; "Ike -- Back J.F.K., Analyze It Later"; and "Public Firmly Supports President, Gallup Interviewers Find." In an article titled "About Time -- Reaction in Boston," a statement by a salesman from Cambridge, Massachusetts, typified many of the man-on-the-street reactions gathered in the story and reiterated the theme of united public support: "I completely agree with the President. We might have to go to war again, but he's taking a stand, and I

am with him" (Crocket 4). In addition to the emergence of these two themes in the coverage, Kennedy's use of television was directly addressed in an article titled "Clear, Stern JFK Draws Line . . . in 18 TV minutes," written by the television critic for the *Globe*. As well as convey the theme pertaining to the gravity of Kennedy's ultimatum, Kennedy's speech was described as fast and deliberate:

> This was a rapidly read address that seemed to get faster as he plunged into the heart of its contents. . . . He kept the note of rising excitement out of his voice, preferring instead to emphasize his points in the grim lines of his face and in the cold, hard look as he pronounced them. (Shain 11)

A total of six editorial articles that appeared in the *Globe* from October 23 to 24 reflected two overall themes about Kennedy's television address: the necessity of and the approval for delivering an ultimatum of the utmost gravity in a crisis in which there was no other recourse; and the near unanimous backing of the people and the press for taking bold but necessary action. The first theme was epitomized in the lead to an editorial printed the day after the speech, "It's Up to Khrushchev": "One can only hope that in this, the most dramatic and momentous hour for him and for his countrymen, the President's grimness and determination to take what steps are necessary for freedom will have as sobering an effect upon the world as they had last evening on all Americans" (20). This theme pertaining to momentousness of Kennedy's action was further expressed in the headlines of the editorials, "Speech Ended One Era, Launched Another" and "Why Kennedy Had to Act." The second theme regarding the united public and press support

for the president's plan emerged in "Press Comment in U.S. Solidly Behind President," a composite of editorials from newspapers across the nation. The *St. Louis Globe-Democrat*, in this article, was quoted as reporting, "The entire nation will support Mr. Kennedy in this decision . . . and the hazards are evident and not minimized by the President. . . ." As well, the *Cleveland Plain Dealer* was on record in this article as declaring, "It is to Mr. Kennedy's credit that he investigated carefully and thoroughly before he acted, and that he took the action he did because there was no other way to remove the cancer of communism. . ." (21). The theme of support for the president's action is perhaps best conveyed in the lead to an editorial titled "What Columnists Are Saying:" The lead read, "I can report from wide firsthand observation that there is nothing which President Kennedy could do which has more united -- and revived -- the nation than to take the action announced on his television address. . ." (Drummond 9).

"Pitiful, helpless giant"

The nationwide television address made by Nixon on April 30, 1970, that announced a ground "incursion" into Cambodia sparked shock and outrage across America and explosively delineated the divisiveness of public tolerance for the Vietnam War. In the address, Nixon announced that American ground forces would launch an offensive into established Vietcong sanctuaries in parts of Cambodia, designated as the Parrot's Beak and the Fishhook, to knock out the enemy. Specifically, the operation's objectives were to clear out Vietcong strongholds, seize any hidden matériel, and search for and destroy one of the major headquarters for the entire communist Party, called

COSVN. The announcement shocked many who believed the U.S. was in the process of de-escalation in the war in Vietnam; at the same time, the news pleased others who believed this aggressive action was a bold tactic that would widen the war to end it sooner (Ambrose 2: 345-347, 350-352, 354). "If, when the chips are down, the world's most powerful nation, the United States of America, acts like a pitiful, helpless giant, the forces of totalitarianism and anarchy will threaten free nations and free institutions throughout the world," Nixon declared in the television speech (qtd. in Ambrose 2: 345). In the days that followed, hundreds of colleges and universities closed down in the wake of campus demonstrations in what the president of Columbia University called at the time "the most disastrous month of May in the history of American higher education" (qtd. in Tindall 1304). Copies of the Constitution were buried to the sound of taps; faculty members from Princeton, Columbia, and Johns Hopkins, among other universities, signed resolutions decrying Nixon's action; and in California, Governor Ronald Reagan shut down the entire state and college system (19 colleges, nine universities, 19 colleges, 280,000 students), citing "emotional turmoil" (Ambrose 2: 350-351).

Overshadowing all campus disturbances, however, was the violence at Kent State University that erupted on May 4 when Ohio National Guard troops opened fire on a crowd of protesters after a campus ROTC building had been burned in protest earlier in the day; four students were killed and eight wounded. Nixon exacerbated the tragedy by releasing a statement that criticized the resort to violence by campus protesters but offered not a word of sympathy for the dead students, their families, or the wounded students. In response to an impromptu comment Nixon had made the day after the

Cambodia speech in which he said, "You see these bums, you know, blowing up the campuses," the father of one of the Kent State victims volunteered to a reporter, "My child was not a bum" (qtd. in Ambrose 2: 348, 351). Following this episode, on May 7, further violence was sparked when antiwar demonstrators marching to protest the Kent State deaths in New York City were beaten in the streets by "hard-hat" construction workers while police officers stood by and watched. The hard hats later stormed City Hall to raise the flag that had been lowered to half-staff in mourning for the Kent State victims (Spear 96).

* * *

In the 11 news articles pertaining to Nixon's address that appeared in the *New York Times* in the two days after the broadcast, two major themes emerged: divisiveness among members of both parties in Congress on whether to support or criticize the president's action; and shock and anger unleashed by students and activists in violent public protests. Overall, though, the coverage was colored with a skepticism about a military action that was depicted as controversial. In a story that appeared on May 1, titled "Key Congressmen Briefed; Reaction Called Favorable," the first theme dealing with support or disapproval over Nixon's announcement was delineated. The lead read, "President Nixon was reported to have received a generally favorable reaction from Congressional leaders. . . ." However, further in the article a Democratic senator was quoted as being doubtful of Nixon's move: "President Nixon has definitely made it his war. . . . I hope and pray he can end the war this way. I have grave doubts about it." Another Democratic senator was quoted in the same article, though, as being behind the

president: "It was time to do it. . . . I feel confident it will succeed. It was well planned and well understood" (Finney 1, 5). The theme of support is further drawn out in an article titled "Johnson Asks Support for Nixon," in which former president Lyndon Johnson called on citizens to back Nixon, and "Military Planners View Nixon Decision as Sound," a story that detailed the approval of top Pentagon officials. The theme of dissension, at the same time, was elicited in the article "Legal Basis for U.S. Role in Conflict in Cambodia," in which the legal authority of the president to launch an invasion into Cambodia was questioned. Finally, the second theme pertaining to the outrage and antagonism sparked by the address among detractors was manifested in the headlines of such articles as "Nixon Is Assailed On Cambodia Move At May Day Rally" and "Students Protest Troop Move." In this latter article, published on May 2, the lead read, "The national antiwar movement, drained of vigor in recent months, seemed yesterday to have found a new rallying point and an impetus to renewed protest in President Nixon's announcement of direct intervention in Cambodia. . ." (Charlton 1).

The five editorials that appeared in the *New York Times* in the two days after Nixon's broadcast expressed one predominant theme concerning the president's announcement: denunciation of a futile military maneuver that will prolong a bloody war. Two lesser themes also emerged: support for a bold expansion of the war to bring it to an it end sooner and criticism pertaining to the argument that the president's move to launch an invasion into Cambodia is tantamount to an usurpation of constitutional authority. In an editorial run on May 2, titled "Cry, the Beloved Country," the first theme of disapproval was most vividly delineated:

> But the President's course in Cambodia would make the most optimistic rationalist despair For his country. Nothing for years has cast so dark a shadow on America's future. . . . By this action President Nixon has calculatedly chosen to widen the division among the American people, to inflame instead of heal. (Lewis 32)

The first theme of denunciation for the president's action was also elicited in an article titled "Editorial Comments on Move in Cambodia," published two days after the speech, in which a composite of editorial opinions from newspapers across the nation were provided. An editorial from *Newsday* read: "It is all utterly pointless, a matter of sending more good blood after the blood we already helped so copiously to waste. There is only one way to save the lives. That is to end the war." However, the second theme of approval for Nixon's move was also expressed: "The kind of thing we should have been doing all along," the *Phoenix Gazette* was quoted as publishing. The *Richmond News Leader* likewise espoused support for Nixon: "It was the old Nixon talking, the tough Nixon, the courageous Nixon. It was the battling Nixon whom now the nation must support" (10). The third theme regarding an usurpation of constitutional authority by the president came out in an article printed the day after the address: "The shocking expansion of this still undeclared war that was announced last night warrants the assertion by Congress of its constitutional powers of restraint on behalf of a people who have been asked once too often to swallow the military hallucination of victory through escalation" ("Military Hallucination" 34). Nixon's on-air presentation was maligned in two of the editorials. In the aforementioned editorial, "Cry, the Beloved Country," it was

noted, ". . . the President of the United States, in a maudlin personalization and simplification of complex political issues, makes war a test of his own and of the country's manhood" (32). As well, in the article "Editorial Comments on Move in Cambodia," described above, the *Cleveland Plain-Dealer* observed, "His maudlin appeal to patriotism was offensive" (10).

The *Los Angeles Times*, in a total of 20 news stories, contained three overall themes in its coverage of the Cambodia speech in the two days following the broadcast: a general disapproval of the operation by members of Congress; division among state politicians over whether to back or denounce the invasion; and outrage expressed in campus demonstrations. In an article titled "Some Congressmen Express Dismay; Others Back Move," printed the day after the address, the first theme of Congressional disapproval came to light in quotes by several senators. Republican senator Bob Dole from Kansas was quoted as having said, "I just can't see anything but an increase in wounded and killed and this will cause a sharp downturn in support of the President's policies." A Democratic senator from Idaho voiced concern that, "I do think this has become a war without end and it is time for Congress to begin to assert its responsibility under the Constitution and set limits on American intervention in Indochina" (Averill 11). The Cambodia move was defended by some senators, however, as a quote from a Republican senator from Florida that appeared in an article titled "Nixon Agrees to Meeting with Senators on Cambodia" evinced: "The strident cooing of the antiwar Doves that this is a broadening of the war is pure bosh. . . . A nation at war must take all actions necessary to defeat the enemy" (Averill 10). The second theme pertaining to dissension

California politicians came out in the headlines of six articles appearing in the two-day period from May 1 to May 2: "No Basis for Nixon's Action, Cranston Says," in which U.S. senator Alan Cranston was reported as disagreeing with Nixon; "Yorty Praises Nixon's Decision on Cambodia," an article profiling Los Angeles mayor Sam Yorty's appraisal; and "Reagan Hails Nixon for Courage," a story in which California governor Ronald Reagan endorsed Nixon. Sharp disagreement and outrage over Nixon's Cambodia decision emerged as a third theme in four articles reporting outbreaks of violence in campus protests. In a front-page story published the day after Nixon's address, titled "State Police Battle Maryland Students," it is reported, "State police battled 1,000 University of Maryland students with cattle prods, clubs, tear gas and Mace Friday night . . . in a protest against the sending of American troops to Cambodia" (1). Finally, in addition to these three central themes being expressed, referenced to Nixon's on-air appearance were made in two of the articles appearing the day after the speech. In a story titled "Headquarters for Entire Red Effort in S. Vietnam Is Target," Nixon was noted as appearing "tired, grim and tense as he made his most portentous address" (Loory 1). Similarly, in "Speech Reflects Johnson Vow of 'No Wider War,'" it was described that, "His speech had a somber, almost tragic ring. . ." (Donovan 25).

In only two editorials that appear in the *Los Angeles Times* in the two days after Nixon's address, one depicted opponents of the Cambodian operation as extremists while the other presented two sides to the issue in the form of letters to the editor. In "An IndoChinese Primer; How Best to Get Out," printed on May 1, what can be classified as a decidedly conservative stance on the Cambodia invasion was espoused:

> Only two groups of Americans do *not* wish the United States to get out of the Vietnam conflict As expeditiously as possible: the lunatic right-wing, the "bomb North Vietnam back to the Stone Age -- and throw a few nukes at Peking" crowd; and the lunatic left-wing, which hopes prolonging the war indefinitely will exacerbate internal dissension into revolution. (Elegant Part II, 7)

In the other editorial, "Dilemma Over Cambodia," published two days after the broadcast, one letter to the editor expressed a pro-Nixon view detailed the legal justification the president's right to launch an invasion into Cambodia; another letter offered an opposing view on the invasion proposed that the president has lost sight of the country's military objectives in being in South Vietnam at all. The peroration read: "The United States is in no position to police the world. We have enough problems in this country to keep us occupied for a long time" (Part II, 4).

The news coverage of the *Boston Globe* in the two days following Nixon's address, which included 16 different articles, was characterized by three basic themes. Two strong themes running through the coverage concerned the general disapproval of Nixon's action by both national and New England politicians as well as derision for Nixon's taking a seemingly huge military gamble that likely would result in greater casualties and little gain. A lesser theme pertained to indignation over the Cambodian invasion manifested in campus demonstrations. The theme of disapproval among local politicians was illustrated in an article, appearing two days after the broadcast, titled "Kennedy, Spaulding united against action in Cambodia," in which the lead declared,

"New England joined the nation yesterday in spirited reaction to President Nixon's decision to send American troops to Cambodia" (3). This theme was likewise expressed in "President to Brief Senate, House Units Tuesday," published on May 2: "Reacting in frustration against U.S. attacks into Cambodia, angry senators yesterday demanded a face-to-face confrontation with President Nixon . . ." (1). However, some support was reported for Nixon, such as in an article titled "Johnson Backs Nixon Policy," in which former president Lyndon Johnson endorsed Nixon's plan. This was in contrast to other articles defining selected politicians' views, such as one titled "Kennedy Denounces 'Madness,'" in which U.S. senator Ted Kennedy criticized the Cambodia action as "madness . . . and a dangerous game" (1). The theme regarding derision for the seeming gamble taken by Nixon in launching the invasion emerged in such articles as "Nixon Hit for 'Widening War,'" printed the day after the speech: "President Richard M. Nixon, already under fire for his policies in Southeast Asia, felt the full sting of congressional criticism last night after he announced that thousands of U.S. ground troops had invaded Cambodia." "Ghastly" and "A tragic mistake" typified the tone of quotes made by certain U.S senators that were included in this article (1). The main headline for the May 2 *Globe* elicited this theme as well: "Criticism of Nixon Decision Grows." Thirdly, the theme of indignation that emerged in the *Globe* comes out in several articles chronicling outbreaks of campus demonstrations. In "Protests erupt on campuses across U.S.," which appeared in the May 2 *Globe*, this theme was succinctly expressed: "The entry of American troops into Cambodia touched off a new rash of violence on the nation's college campuses yesterday" (3).

The seven editorials that appeared in the *Globe* in the two days following Nixon's speech, which included three political cartoons, reflected two themes: Americans have been deceived into believing that the U.S. military forces are in the process of de-escalation only to find out that Nixon has plunged America deeper into the war; and Nixon has resorted to a slick, carefully orchestrated appeal to sell his decision to invade Cambodia to the American people. The first of these themes was most tellingly expressed by a cartoon published on May 1 that depicted a smiling Nixon placing his arm around the shoulder of a bewildered-looking man holding an American flag in one of his hands (see Appendix A). The man has the stub of a recently exploded cigar in his mouth and his face is blackened from the recent explosion. This cigar stub has the label "Vietnam." Nixon is offering the man a new cigar with the label "Cambodia." The caption to the cartoon read, "Here . . . have another one" (SZEP 18). Similarly, another cartoon published the day after the speech depicted a man with "U.S." imprinted on his back falling down a hole (see Appendix B). A sign at the edge of the hole read "Laos and Cambodia." The caption to the cartoon was, "The tunnel at the end of the tunnel" (Herblock 19). The theme of deception further came out in an article titled "Cambodia: do or die," in which it was written, "The Cambodian venture has about it the desperate air of improvisation, and appears to be a potentially reckless gamble instead of a carefully laid plan to hasten the disengagement from Southeast Asia. . ." (Lisagor 9). The second theme, pertaining to the president using a ploy to sell the Cambodian operation, emerged in "Mr. Nixon's biggest gamble," in which Nixon's speech was criticized: "Perhaps more than anything else, it is the tone and the choice of the President's words that are

disturbing. His appeal was to the emotions, but he has most seriously misjudged American public opinion" (8). Furthermore, this theme came out in an editorial titled "Nixon insulates self against media queries." In this editorial, Nixon was attacked for using television as an instrument to evade questioning by reporters: "The Nixon White House is being run like the Nixon campaign of 1968. . . . Above all, this applies to direct questioning of the President under the pressure of live television" (Storin 9).

* * *

The preceding analyses of newspaper themes do not make for a simple examination of how Kennedy's and Nixon's television appearances contributed to the forging of their newspaper images. The references to and assessments of their actual appearances on television are few and far between in the newspaper coverage. Consequently, it is somewhat difficult to separate the assessments of the television appearances from the larger story of the action being announced (i.e., the imposition of a naval blockade around Cuba and the invasion of American troops into Cambodia). However, this having been noted, the themes of the newspaper assessments of Kennedy's and Nixon's television appearances indicate that they contributed to the two men's newspaper press images in the following ways.

In the news stories and editorials that appeared in the *New York Times*, *Los Angeles Times*, and *Boston Globe* in the two days following Kennedy's Cuban missile crisis television address, two themes emerged that contributed to the shaping of a favorable image for Kennedy. First, a primary theme made out Kennedy to be a mature and competent leader for taking bold action in a situation that offered no recourse.

Second, a theme was expressed that called for unanimous and unwavering support for Kennedy's action and indicated that he had made a popular decision.

The themes that ran in the coverage of Nixon's televised announcement of American troops' invasion into Cambodia shaped Nixon's newspaper press image far more negatively. The central theme of the coverage concerned a denouncement of a decision that initiated a futile military strategy that would likely prolong a bloody war. A secondary theme pertained to the skepticism of and dissension among members of Congress over Nixon's announcement. A third and equally prevalent theme as the second one dealt with the way Nixon's announcement sparked outrage and antagonism among college students and activists, and again drew him to be an unpopular leader and policy maker. Nixon is thus painted as a leader who has made an extremely unpopular decision, or at the very least a highly controversial one.

Chapter III

Political Self-defense

". . . I am not the Catholic candidate for President."

In accepting an invitation to speak to the Ministerial Association of Greater Houston on September 12, 1960, in a proceeding that was televised statewide in Texas, presidential candidate John F. Kennedy broke down a major cultural barrier that had hitherto precluded a segment of the American populace from pursuing the nation's highest office: prejudice towards candidates with non-Protestant religious affiliations. A furor over Kennedy's Catholicism erupted when the Rev. Norman Vincent Peale, a lecturer, author, and minister of New York City's Marble Collegiate Church, issued a statement along with a group of 150 ministers in early September, 1960, that argued that a Catholic chief executive would be unable to honor the separation of church and state embodied in the Constitution. Catholic canon law and practice concerning interfaith gatherings, birth control, public schools, and religious liberty, at home and abroad, were cited to support the argument (Reeves 191). Rather than try to keep the religious issue low-key as the last Catholic presidential candidate, Al Smith, had done in 1928 in an election he lost, Kennedy decided to meet the issue head-on in accepting an offer to appear before the Ministerial Association for an address and question-and-answer session. Kennedy's strategy in bringing the religious issue to such a public forum was

two-fold: to minimize the anti-Catholic vote by labeling any Protestant vote against Kennedy as a vote based on bigotry; and to maximize his ethnic support by convincing Catholics, Jews, and other religious minorities to stand firmly behind him (Matthews 141). Hence in drawing attention to a seeming political liability, Kennedy's goal was to turn the issue around to one that dealt with religious intolerance and bigotry, and thereby score political points by painting himself as a candidate who was unable to gain a fair vote because of religious discrimination. And indeed, the sectarianism that marked the debate over Kennedy's religion disturbed and unsettled many Americans. The unwritten rule that persons of different religions worked in harmony to serve the interests of the nation seemed to have been abruptly violated (Dulce and Richter 185). Thus with calmness and deliberateness Kennedy stated to the ministers:

> . . . let me stress again that these are my views -- for contrary to common newspaper usage, I am not the Catholic candidate for President. I am the Democratic Party's candidate for President who happens also to be a Catholic. I do not speak for my church on public Matters -- and the church does not speak for me. (qtd. in Dulce and Richter 177)

Kennedy's performance was acknowledged as a resounding success by the ministers as well as Democrats and Republicans; henceforth the Catholic issue would largely be vitiated. Democrats subsequently used clips of the appearance on the campaign trail (Reeves 192). The religious issue would be raised again on election day. But, in the words of authors Berton Dulce and Edward Richter: ". . . its early inoculation into the

national blood stream had allowed time for a reaction. By the time fevers rose again, a fixed and active resistance was able to curtail its spread" (195).

* * *

In the five articles that appeared in the *New York Times* in the two days after Kennedy's appearance, two themes emerged: Kennedy made as powerful a presentation as he could have in addressing the issues concerning his ability to govern and the practice of his religion, but doubt still lingers about his viability as a candidate; and the religious issue should be dropped from the campaign altogether. The first theme was succinctly expressed in a page-one lead in an article titled "Reaction of Minister" that appeared two days after the speech: "Senator John F. Kennedy made an excellent personal impression on many Texans in his latest statement on religion, but how many minds he changed remains problematical. . ." (Hill 1). Within the same article, this theme was further developed in a statement attributed to a pastor of a Houston Baptist church: "I think he was forthright and frank, and I'm sure he's honest. . . . But my question remains about the policies of the church. There's no question in my mind that they require certain members to take certain positions on public matters" (Hill 32). Praise for Kennedy's appearance was reiterated in another article, "Protestant Group Applauds Kennedy for Houston Speech," that appeared two days after the speech: "It called the address 'the most complete, unequivocal and reassuring statement which could be expected of any person in his position" (Braestrup 33). The second theme of dropping religion from the campaign was elicited in "NIXON ENDORSES KENNEDY PLEDGE," an article that appeared two days after Kennedy's appearance: "Vice President Nixon said today that the

nation should 'accept without any further questioning' Senator John F. Kennedy's statement that his religion would not influence his conduct of the Presidency" (Baker 1). In the aforementioned article, "Reaction of Ministers," this theme also came out in the statement of the president of the Houston Minsterial Association: "I think the eye of the hurricane has blown past. I think the issue will subside in the future and not receive as much attention" (Hill 32).

In the two editorials that appeared in the *New York Times* in the two days after Kennedy's appearance, the theme that was revealed was that Kennedy was far from overcoming prejudice by Texas clergy towards his candidacy on the basis of his religion. In an editorial titled "Economic and Religious Coalition in Texas" published two days after Kennedy's speech, this theme emerged in the peroration:

> . . . Kennedy's problem is not single; he faces a coalition of extremely influential forces. Catholicism is one, and for many people here a decisive factor despite his frank answers in Houston last night, but the liberal Democratic platform is another, and of the two this may prove in the end to be more important with the powerful interests of the state than anything else. (Reston 42)

Kennedy's appearance before the Ministerial Association of Greater Houston received scant coverage in the *Los Angeles Times* in the two days after the broadcast, and appeared in a total of only two articles. The themes that emerged in the two articles were that Kennedy made a strong though not necessarily favorable impression in delineating the separation of the worship of his religion from the way he would govern the country

and that Kennedy viewed his appearance as a success. In "Vatican Not His Censor -- Kennedy," published the day after the broadcast, the first theme was evinced in the way that the article ascribes emotion to Kennedy's posture: "Sen. Kennedy tonight *heatedly* [italics added] rejected the implication raised here that the Vatican exercises any censorship over his views or campaign statements" (Shannon 1). As well, the event in this article was described as an "emotionally charged meeting," and one of Kennedy's responses was described similarly: "Showing a flash of temper, Kennedy added. . ." (Shannon 1). The second theme of Kennedy assessing of the appearance as a success emerged in an article appearing two days after his speech, "Kennedy Sees Chances in Texas as Brighter": "Kennedy was understood to be pleased with the reaction to his meeting with Houston Protestant ministers last night. . . . Aides said Kennedy wants his campaign organization to distribute videotapes of the session for local distribution. . ." (Shannon 1, 6).

One editorial referencing Kennedy's appearance appeared in the *Los Angeles Times* in the two days following the broadcast. The editorial, "Powerful Texas Interests Aid Anti-Kennedy Drive," was taken from the *New York Times* and was the same as "Economic and Religious Coalition in Texas," which was included in the analysis of editorials from the *New York Times* above. The theme of this article was that the issue of Kennedy's religion was being fomented as a way to oppose him on other matters -- namely economic. The Protestant churches act as a base to which political opponents can make tax-free contributions to fight Kennedy. This theme was pointed out.

"It is, of course, true that many people in Texas sincerely oppose Kennedy for both economic

> and religious reasons. But it also happens to be true that it is easier, and cheaper, to defeat him here among the working class voters with religious rather than with economic arguments." (Reston 2)

A total of only three articles that referenced Kennedy's broadcast appeared in the *Boston Globe* in the two days following the event. The theme that emerged was that Kennedy made a forthright and commendable declaration of his views on the separation of church and state; doubt still lingers, however, about the potential role the Catholic Church would play in his decisions were he elected president. In an article titled "Jack Says He'd Quit Presidency Rather Than Let Church Dictate," published the day after the broadcast, this theme was expressed in such statements as, "Kennedy was frequently applauded by the Ministerial Assn. as he made his speech and answered questions." However, a statement from a minister reported in this article also reflects this theme: ". . . 'I doubt he has changed any votes here tonight'" (Healy 11).

No editorials referencing Kennedy's broadcast appeared in the *Boston Globe* in the two days after the speech.

"Clean as a hound's tooth"

The political self-defense that Nixon mounted on September, 23, 1952, in a one-half-hour, nationally televised address that became known as the "Checkers speech" is significant both for the fact that the speech drew one of the largest television audiences up to that time (approximately 58 million people [Ambrose 1: 289]) and that in many ways it proved to be the gravest crisis Richard M. Nixon ever faced in his political career.

The crisis arose just as Nixon, the newly nominated Republican candidate for the vice presidency running on the ticket with presidential candidate General Dwight D. Eisenhower, was beginning to move his campaign into full swing. On September 18, a story headlined "Secret Nixon Fund!" appeared in the *New York Post* and quickly fomented an investigation by newspapers across the nation into a $18,000 fund that was set up by Nixon supporters to provide Nixon with money for expenses in excess of the amounts allowable by law to a senator. Within days, despite Nixon's explanations of the fund, the story caused so much furor that newspapers and key Republicans were calling for Nixon's resignation from the Republican ticket (Ambrose 1: 276-282). Eisenhower was eventually forced to make a decision about the viability of Nixon's place on the ticket, declaring, "Of what avail is it for us to carry on this crusade against this business of what has been going on in Washington if we, ourselves, aren't as clean as a hound's tooth" (Ambrose 1: 281)? Eisenhower called Nixon and told him to go on national television to present his side of the story; contingent upon public reaction to Nixon's explanation, Eisenhower would decide whether or not to keep Nixon on the ticket.

Thus, with his vice presidential candidacy and political career squarely on the line, Nixon prepared for a speech in which he laid out his entire personal finances and demonstrated the absence of any impropriety in the acceptance of political contributions on his part. The speech gained its name from the appeal Nixon made to the audience in declaring that he and his family, despite what might be said, were going to keep a black and white dog that was given to them by a man from Texas.

> One other thing I probably should tell you, because if I don't they will probably be saying this

> about me, too. We did get something, a gift. . . . It was a little cocker spaniel dog, in a crate that he had sent all the way from Texas -- black and white, spotted, and our little girl Tricia, the six-year-old, named it Checkers. And you know, the kids, like all kids, loved the dog, and I just want to say this, right now, that regardless of what they say about it, we are going to keep it. (Nixon 115)

Despite its mawkish overtones, the speech was largely successful and drew widespread support and congratulations from the public. Eisenhower and other Republicans subsequently welcomed Nixon back to the fold, and the Eisenhower-Nixon ticket won the election of 1952 (Ambrose 1: 290-293). Of the importance of the broadcast, Nixon wrote, "The crisis of the fund was the hardest, the sharpest, and the briefest of my public life" (128). And in response to a political scientist who after a study of the 1960 presidential election speculated that if had not been for the "Checkers speech" Nixon would have won, Nixon retorted, with perhaps some degree of wryness, "If it hadn't been for that broadcast, I would never have been around to run for the presidency" (129).

* * *

Three themes emerged in the 16 news stories of the *New York Times* in the two days after the broadcast. First was the theme that the speech won the support and endorsement of Dwight Eisenhower. The second theme was that Nixon's handling of the explanation of the fund gained widespread public approval. Third, there was a theme that Republican leaders hailed the speech as a major success. The first theme concerning Eisenhower's support was expressed in a statement attributed to Eisenhower in an article titled "PRAISE BY GENERAL": "I have seen brave men in tough situations. . . . I have

never seen any come through in better fashion than Senator Nixon did tonight'" (Reston 25). In a page-one article published the next day, "CANDIDATES MEET," which appeared under the headline "EISENHOWER CALLS NIXON VINDICATED" this theme was further delineated in another statement by Eisenhower: "He is not only completely vindicated as a man of honor but, as far as I am concerned, he stands higher than ever before" (Reston 1). The second theme of approval was elicited in the lead to an article printed two days after the broadcast, "MESSAGES POUR IN BACKING NOMINEE": "A flood of telegrams . . . appeared tonight to have assured Senator Richard M. Nixon's retention on the Republican national ticket even before he met with Gen. Dwight D. Eisenhower in West Virginia" (Knowles 1). This theme was further demonstrated by the headlines of such articles as "NIXON IS ACCLAIMED BY AIRPORT CROWDS," "NIXON REPLIES TAX PHONE, WIRE LINES," and "Contributions Mailed In." The third theme pertaining to backing by GOP leaders emerged in stories such as "G.O.P. HEADS RALLY TO NIXON'S SUPPORT": "Thomas J. Curran, New York County Republican Chairman, estimated that the reaction to Senator Nixon's address was so favorable that 'if the election were held today, he would win in a sweep on that one speech alone'" (1). As well, in the aforementioned article, "NIXON REPLIES TAX PHONE, WIRE LINES," this theme emerged: "The Republican reaction from those in high office in the Party was almost unanimously favorable. . . . Governor Dewey [of New York] said, 'It was a superb statement by a man of great purpose in the service of his country'" (21).

In the seven editorials that appeared in the *New York Times* in the two days after the speech, three relatively equal themes were manifested: praise for Nixon's "full and painstaking" account of his personal finances; acknowledgement of Nixon's vindication but dismay over the circumstances of the situation in general; and scorn for a contrived, histrionic appeal to the public. All three themes came out in an article titled "Excerpts From Editorial Comment on Nixon's Explanation of Fund." The first theme regarding praise for Nixon was expressed in an editorial excerpt from the *Chicago Tribune*: "It would hardly be an exaggeration to say that in the public mind, the Republican ticket is now Nixon and Eisenhower rather than Eisenhower and Nixon" (28). The theme of dismay over the circumstances of Nixon's speech was elicited in an editorial from the *Pittsburgh Post Gazette*: "We think Nixon's talk will satisfy most people. But at the same time, Nixon shows up as naive in his notions of money honesty or indiscreet, both in having this fund and not having told General Eisenhower about it before. . ." (28). The third theme concerning Nixon's contrived appeals to the public likewise was expressed in this article in an excerpt from the *New York Post*: "Senator Nixon staged his private soap opera before a nationwide audience. The cast included Mrs. Nixon. There was also a moment when it looked as if the family dog would scamper across the screen. . . . Others may have felt, as we did, that the corn overshadowed the drama" (28). The first theme was also reflected in other editorials such as a letter to the editor titled "Use of Funds Upheld": "The fact that he never traded political favor for these payments shows his [Nixon's] integrity. The circumstances of this incident so far have justified completely the confidence which the Republican Convention placed in Nixon's sincerity, honesty and

integrity" (Brown 30). In an article titled "TWO FUNDS," the second theme of dismay over Nixon's disclosure was succinctly delineated: "We [the *New York Times*] have not called for Mr. Nixon's scalp in this affair because we believe that although he acted with extremely poor judgment his own personal integrity is untouched" (30). An editorial appearing two days after the broadcast, "If Political 'Relief Funds' Are to Be a Fixture," further expressed the third theme of a contrived appearance by Nixon:

> By his skillful use of the techniques of the theatre that, in such circumstances, quickly brings tears to the eyes of this sentimental people Nixon evoked an emotional wave of great intensity. And the tone and volume of the deluge of responses in his favor indicate that many saw in the Senator on the television screen only the man . . . who, if he erred in accepting money from private persons to pursue purely political activities, erred only in not realizing to what use the powerful enemies he has made would put a disclosure he should have been wise enough to make himself. (Krock 30)

The *Los Angeles Times* provided copious coverage of the "Checkers speech," and ran a total of 39 news stories in the two days after the broadcast and blanketed at least the first four pages of each of the two issues. The two major themes that emerged are that the speech fully and unequivocally vindicated Nixon and that the speech gained the robust and near unanimous support of both the public and the Republican Party. A third and somewhat lesser theme was that Eisenhower commends Nixon for his action and wholeheartedly welcomes him back on the ticket. Still another lesser theme concerned an implication that some members of the Democratic Party are not owning up to their own secret, illicit funds. The first theme of unequivocal vindication was implied in a page-one

article that appeared the day after the speech, "Senator Rests His Case With People; Will Confer With General": "Nixon's obvious sincerity loosed a rising flood of response from all America. . . . If Nixon gave his case to a jury of voters, that jury's deliberation was almost instantaneous" (1). In an article titled "Nixon Speaks With Wife as Only 'Live' Audience," also published the day after, this theme was continued: "Something about the handshakes told them instantly that the speech had been a smashing success. . . . By now the Nixons must have known that in show parlance they were a box-office hit" (2). The second theme involving the gaining of nearly undivided public support for Nixon was seen in the headlines of articles appearing over the two-day period: "Nixon Response Floods Telegraph Offices," "Avalanche of Commendation Follows Nixon's Broadcast," "Dollars Pour In to Spur Nixon Fight," "Where to Send Donations to GOP Campaign," and "Flood of Telegrams to Washington Favors Nixon." Likewise, this theme as it pertains to the gaining of the support of among segments of the Republican Party was also elicited in article headlines: "3000 YOUNG REPUBLICANS PLEDGE FIGHT FOR NIXON," "Senators Laud Nixon's Speech as Vindication," "National Committee Members Back Nixon," "RESPONSE TO HEART-WARMING NIXON TALK SNOWBALLS SUPPORT FOR GOP," and "Texas Leaders of Both Parties Hail Nixon Talk." The third theme concerning Eisenhower's commendation of Nixon's speech came out in a page-one article titled "Eisenhower Lauds Nixon as Brave Man," printed the day after the broadcast: "I have been a warrior . . . and I like courage. And tonight I saw an example of courage" (1). In the same way, in the article "General Declares Senator Subjected to Vicious Attack," published two days after the speech, this theme was

expressed: ". . . a crowd estimated at 2500 persons broke into cries of 'We want Nixon' as Eisenhower preceded the Vice Presidential candidate out of the plane" (Francis 1). The fourth theme, pertaining to an implication that some Democrats are secretly maintaining their own funds, emerged in the headlines of several articles appearing over the two-day period: "Stevenson [the Democratic candidate for president] Won't Say Who Got Paid," "Not Accused, Says Sparkman [the Democratic candidate for vice president]," and "White House Aide Denies Truman Ordered Inquiry on Nixon Fund."

Despite its extensive news coverage of the "Checkers speech" in 39 articles, only one editorial appeared in the *Los Angeles Times* in the two days after the broadcast. The theme of this editorial, "DICK NIXON, VINDICATED, CARRIES ON," published two days after the speech on page one of the paper, was that Nixon cogently and unequivocally defended himself against baseless charges made by political enemies who have made him the victim of a vicious smear campaign. The following passage epitomized the editorial:

> "Few men in public or private life have found themselves caught so mercilessly in the whirlpools of honest doubt, calculated malice and planned contumely as the GOP's young nominee for Vice-President. Fewer still have emerged so triumphantly -- with honor untarnished, integrity unscathed and conduct unsmirched. . . . In his extemporaneous and homely talk to nation's huge television and radio audience Tuesday night Nixon cleared the atmosphere of suspicion -- and the decks for action. (1)

The themes that emerged in the *Boston Globe*'s 19 news stories in the two days after Nixon's speech include: Eisenhower's endorsement of Nixon for responding admirably and impeccably under extreme political pressure; widespread public approval of Nixon's explanation; and Republican support for an embattled candidate who honestly defended himself against petty Democratic tactics. The first theme pertaining to Eisenhower's endorsement was elicited in the lead to an article printed the day after the speech titled "Ike Likens Nixon's Case to 'Error' of Gen Patton": "Gen. Dwight D. Eisenhower called Senator Richard M. Nixon of California a courageous and brave man tonight and indicated strongly that he will keep him on the G.O.P. ticket as his running mate" (3). This theme was further conveyed in an article that appears two days after the broadcast, "'You're My Boy,' Ike Says to Nixon; Senator Weeps," under the headline "IKE KEEPS NIXON ON TICKET" and a picture of Eisenhower and Nixon shaking hands: "'You're my boy,' Gen. Dwight D. Eisenhower told Senator Richard M. Nixon tonight as he welcomed his running mate at Wheeling [West Virginia] airport" (Bigart 1). The second theme of public approval came out in such articles as "Nixon Wins New Fight Here, Popularity Poll Jams Wires," published the day after the Nixon's broadcast: "Quick reaction to Senator Richard M. Nixon's TV talk last night, in which he started a unique popularity poll on whether he should remain as Gen. Eisenhower's running mate was that he had virtually rewon the nomination" (Harris 5). As well, this theme was echoed in "Flood of Gifts Swell Nixon Fund $2000 in 3 Days," published two days after the broadcast:

> Letters supporting Senator Richard Nixon and containing contributions ranging from one cent

> to $250 were piled high on the desk of Dana Smith today. . . . "More than one-half the contributions were less than $5," he [Smith] said. "In one envelope obviously addressed by a child, there was a penny. In another was 50 cents from a woman, who said she was more than 80 years old and living on $60 a month." (4)

The third theme of Republican support was manifested in the headlines of several stories appearing in the *Globe* over the two-day period: "Herter [Christian A. Herter, Republican gubernatorial candidate] Says: 'Nixon Entitled to Vigorous Support . . .," "GOP National Committee Votes Without Dissent to Retain Ike's Running Mate," "Republicans Say: Mass Response Exonerates Nixon, Democrats Say: 'Fanned Out . . . Soap Opera Drama," and "Nixon Victim of 'Smear,' Says [Herbert] Hoover."

The four editorials that were run in the two days following Nixon's speech revealed three themes: dismay over the fact that such political funds are used; disapproval over the way the decision was made to keep Nixon on the ticket; and public support for Nixon's handling of the fund explanation. The first theme was found in "Mr. Nixon's Statement," which appeared the day after the broadcast: "It is necessary to reiterate that the establishment of the $18,000 fund was bad practice in pursuing objectives which could easily have been sought in an ethical manner. This incident should make it unlikely that other public servants will operate with similar funds in future" (16). In an editorial by prolific columnist Walter Lippmann titled "Nixon, Ike and Mob Rule," the second theme of disapproval of the decision-making process was revealed: ". . . this thing in which I found myself participating was, with all the magnification of modern electronics, simply mob law. . . . the General has been showing an alarming disposition to improvise

his great decision -- to proceed by intuition, without careful exploration of the facts and of the principles, off the cuff and ad lib" (18). The third theme of public support came out in a letter to the editor, "Nixon for President," that appeared two days after the broadcast: ". . . I wish the ticket was Nixon for President and Ike for Vice President" (F.F.P. 18).

* * *

The primary theme that was manifested in the *New York Times'*, *Los Angeles Times'*, and *Boston Globe's* coverage in the two days after Kennedy's televised appearance before the Ministerial Association of Greater Houston can be seen to have resulted in a favorable portrayal of Kennedy. This theme was that he made as excellent an impression as he could have in addressing the issues concerning his ability to govern and the practice of his religion. A secondary theme was that skepticism still lingered about the potential role the Catholic Church could play in his official decisions. In this way, he received praise for his articulate defense of his freedom to practice his own religion and at the same time became a kind of martyr for being judged as a victim of religious discrimination.

Likewise, Nixon was portrayed in a beneficial way in the coverage of his "Checkers speech." The central theme that emerged was that the speech fully and unequivocally vindicated Nixon. A concurrent theme was that Nixon's television appearance gained the robust and near unanimous support of Eisenhower, the public, and the Republican Party. Hence Nixon's image was delineated as one of an upright politician who defended himself admirably against political enemies who had made him the victim

of a smear campaign. However, a lesser theme also painted him as a slick politician who unabashedly resorted to a hokey appeal to public sentiment to save his political skin.

Chapter IV

Political Loss

"It only hurts when I laugh."

The concession speech that Kennedy delivered on nationwide television on August 17, 1956, after narrowly losing the nomination for vice president at the Democratic National Convention marked the only time, save Senator Edward Kennedy's failed bid to capture the nomination for president at the 1980 Democratic National Convention, that any of the Kennedy brothers (John, Robert, and Edward) lost a political race (although technically John and Edward "lost" their respective races among delegates of the Democratic Party and not in public elections). Kennedy's race for the vice presidential nomination started in the summer of 1956 with a report prepared by Kennedy speechwriter Ted Sorensen that outlined the merits of including a Catholic on the Democratic ticket. The report, which became known as the "Bailey Memorandum" after it was circulated among prominent Democrats and members of the news media by John Bailey, the state chairman of the Democratic Party in Connecticut, fomented a grassroots effort in the Democratic Party for a Kennedy vice presidential nomination (Parmet 358-360). This effort gained considerable momentum after Kennedy narrated a keynote film on the history of the Democratic Party on the first night of the Democratic convention and three nights later made the nominating speech for the heavily favored

presidential nominee, Governor Adlai Stevenson of Illinois. After Stevenson easily won the nomination, he stunned the convention by declining to select a running mate and opening up the nomination of vice president to the delegates. "The choice will be yours," Stevenson told the convention. "The profit will be the nation's" (Reeves 135). The surprise announcement precipitated a furious 12-hour operation among prospective nominees Kennedy, Senator Estes Kefauver of Tennessee, Senator Albert Gore Sr. of Tennessee, and Senator Hubert Humphrey of Minnesota to attract as many delegates as they could to vote for their respective nominations (Parmet 375). After the prospective nominees and their supporters spent a sleepless night jockeying for votes among delegates in downtown Chicago, Kefauver led on the first ballot with 483 1/2 votes when a vote was taken among the delegates the next afternoon. Kennedy trailed with 304. (The number of votes needed to clinch the nomination was 686 1/2.) On the second ballot, though, Kennedy started off drawing 646 votes to Kefauver's 551 1/2. The Kennedy team, knowing a switch of several states would ensure Kennedy's nomination, grew elated at what seemed a sure victory on the next ballot. However, Gore then withdrew his candidacy and in the turnabout that ensued among the delegates the momentum shifted to Kefauver as he took the nomination with 755 1/2 votes to Kennedy's 589. Deflated over having come so close to clinching the nomination, Kennedy still mustered an appearance at the convention to deliver a concession speech before Kefauver was officially placed on the ticket (Parmet 376, 378-380). Kennedy remarked of the loss afterwards, "I feel like the Indian who had a lot of arrows stuck in him and, when he was asked how he felt, said, 'It only hurts when I laugh'" (Martin 121).

* * *

In only two news stories that reference Kennedy's speech that appeared in the *New York Times* in the two days after the telecast, no real theme emerged. Rather, coverage of the unanimous applause Kennedy received upon delivering his concession speech was reported. In a page-one story titled "FINISH DRAMATIC," printed the day after the speech, an account read:

> The switches were stopped when Speaker Rayburn recognized the youthful Senator Kennedy, who got a big hand from all sides as stepped [sic] to the rostrum. He thanked the convention for its generosity and kindness. He added that today's action had demonstrated the Party's strength and unity and the "good judgment" of Mr. Stevenson in bringing the Vice-Presidential nomination to the floor instead of hand-picking his successor, as has been the custom. (Lawrence 6)

No editorials pertaining to the speech appeared in the *New York Times* in the two days after the telecast.

Only one news story appeared in the *Los Angeles Times* in the two-day period following Kennedy's concession speech that referenced the speech. However, the story, "Beats Kennedy on Second Ballot in Tight Seesaw Race," included such a brief, objective account of Kennedy's speech that it cannot truly be judged to meet any of the three criteria necessary to be included in this study.

As with the *New York Times*, no editorials about Kennedy's concession speech appeared in the *Los Angeles Times* in the two-day period following the speech.

In the *Boston Globe* a total of five articles appeared that referenced Kennedy's speech in the two days following his television appearance. Two themes emerged in the *Globe*'s coverage: Kennedy received a rousing response after narrowly losing the vice presidential nomination; and Kennedy's overall political standing has risen after making such an impressive showing. The first of these themes was reflected in an article run the day after the concession speech, "Crowd Loves Kennedy Even as Smiling Loser": "The Democratic National Convention erupted into wild acclaim late today for a young Senator from Massachusetts and a veteran war horse campaigner from Tennessee. . . . But the loser, Sen. John Kennedy took the platform and received an ovation from the standing, waving delegates" (5). Additionally, this theme was expressed in another story published the day after the speech, "Sen. Kennedy Defeated In Tight, Exciting Duel,": "He [Kefauver] was preceded to the podium by Kennedy, who had come within 40 votes . . . of winning. Kennedy, too, was given an ovation [and] thanked everyone for generous support" (Harris 3). In an article titled "Kennedy's Fight for V.P. Wins Him National Stature," printed two days after the speech, the second theme of Kennedy's standing having risen was elicited: "Senator John F. Kennedy of Massachusetts lost out by a whisker in his bid for the Vice-Presidential nomination. But he won the hearts of the Democratic convention delegates" (42). This theme was more fully revealed, however, in another article run two days after Kennedy's appearance, "Vote Totalizer Shutdown Beat Kennedy, Backers Say":

> But the delegates were cheered by the national stature they felt was won by Kennedy as a result of the balloting. "Jack Kennedy is now one of the top leaders of the Democratic

> Party," [Congressman Torbert] Macdonald said.
>
> "Watch him in 1960. When you remember that he was up against a man who had campaigned in nearly every presidential primary, and very nearly topped him, you can be sure that his position in the Party is high." (24)

No editorials referencing Kennedy's speech appeared in the *Boston Globe*'s coverage in the two days after the speech.

"You won't have Nixon to kick around any more. . . ."

The "last press conference" held by Nixon the day after losing the election for the governorship of California to incumbent Governor Pat Brown, on November 7, 1962, in many ways marked the nadir of Nixon's political career, if not the seeming end of it. Nixon had been accused from the outset of the campaign of using the governorship as a stepping stone for a future presidential bid, and throughout the campaign he resorted to the tried and true tactics that had served him well in the past -- such as charges of communism -- but that in 1962 seemed politically out of touch to many Californians (Ambrose 1: 660-661). Interestingly, Nixon claimed Kennedy's handling of the Cuban missile crisis played a key part in his defeat by shifting attention away from the election in California and by association giving Democratic candidates nationwide a boost in the polls after the crisis was resolved peacefully and authoritatively (Ambrose 1: 666). Nixon was largely stymied from making any more headway in the polls in the wake of the crisis. Miscalculating his chances of victory and entering the race halfheartedly, Nixon suffered an embarrassing defeat that, taken with his loss against Kennedy for the presidency two

years earlier, seemed to mark his political *coup de grâce* (Matthews 207). No politician seeking the presidency, it seemed, could come back from losing two consecutive major elections to ever run as a viable candidate for higher office again. Thus, the scene was set the day after the election for an uncharacteristically angry outburst by Nixon at those whom he felt were mainly responsible for his defeat.

Nixon was haggard and splenetic after staying up most of the night before paying attention to election results. After first telling his press secretary, Herb Klein, that he would not face reporters to publicly concede the election and with the plan to make a getaway from the hotel where he was staying while his press conference was being held, Nixon suddenly changed his mind as he was preparing to leave. He then burst in to the hotel conference room where his press secretary, Herb Klein, was in the middle of reading a statement to the press. There followed a 17-minute rambling, disorganized soliloquy that ended with an accusation about how the press had for the past 16 years, since Nixon's investigation of accused communist Alger Hiss in 1946, treated him unfairly (Ambrose 1: 668-669). His peroration was sardonic and seemingly definitive:

> And my plans, incidentally, are, from a political standpoint, of course, to take a holiday. It will be a long holiday. . . . But as I leave you I want you to know -- just think how much you're going to be missing me. You won't have Nixon to kick around any more, because, gentlemen, this is my last press conference. (Matthews 217-218)

To many, it seemed that Nixon was walking out of history. Not only had Nixon now lost two major elections consecutively (the first, of course, being the presidential election in

1960), but his "last press conference" phrase connoted finality. Reporter Mary McGrory of the *Washington Star* seemed to sum up the event neatly in referring to it as "exit snarling" (Ambrose 1: 671).

* * *

In a total of six news stories that discussed the "last press conference" that appeared in the *New York Times* in the two days after the speech, the theme that emerged was: Nixon ignominiously ended a once bright political career by selfishly and irrationally attacking the press for his campaign's shortcomings. In the lead to an article published the day after the speech, titled "NIXON DENOUNCES PRESS AS BIASED," it was reported: "Richard M. Nixon conceded defeat today. He later devoted what many observers regard as the possible valedictory of his national political career to a bitter denunciation of the press." Further in the article it was declared, "The virtually unanimous opinion of political observers was that the defeat had obliterated the lingering possibility, despite his disclaimers, that he might figure in the Presidential race of 1964" (Hill 1,18). In "Brown Expects Nixon to Remain in Political Life," also published the day after the speech, this theme was further elucidated in a description of the press conference:

> There followed an unusual press conference in Beverly Hills at which Mr. Nixon complained of the attitude of the press toward his candidacy for Governor, announced he was taking a long holiday and bade reporters farewell. He implied that he would not run for office again. (Davies 18)

In the two editorials concerning Nixon's address that ran in the *New York Times* in the two days after, two themes were revealed: the tragedy of Nixon's political obituary after having come so close to winning the nation's highest office only two years ago; and the inevitability of his fall in a harsh system which he had formerly used for political gain. In an editorial printed on November 8, titled "The Gubernatorials," the first theme emerged: "Only two years ago he [Nixon] came within 110,000 votes (out of a total nearly 69,000,000 cast) of winning the race for the Presidency. . . . Instead, still short of his fiftieth birthday, the former Vice President's position as a major influence in national politics appears shattered" (38). This theme was likewise expressed in "Richard Nixon's Farewell: A Tragic Story," which appeared two days after the speech: "Two years ago he was within 100,000 votes of the American Presidency and today, unelected and unmourned, he is an unemployed lawyer in Los Angeles. No wonder he slammed the door as he went out." In this editorial as well writer James Reston used the occasion of Nixon's seemingly self-destructive concession speech to philosophize about its meaning in perspective to Nixon's entire political career:

> It was this system that produced Nixon in the beginning and destroyed him in the end. He came to power too early and retired too soon. He mastered the techniques of politics before he mastered the principles, and ironically it was this preoccupation with techniques that both brought him forward and cast him down. . . .
>
> He was the point of the Republican spear, always tilting with the opposition in the exaggerated rhetoric of the political wars, and inevitably this pugnacious and aggressive role perpetuated his reputation as the symbol of everything that is harsh and devious in American political life. (Reston 34)

The theme running in seven news stories that pertain to Nixon's speech and appeared in the *Los Angeles Times* in the two days after the speech was that Nixon had abruptly and vitriolically proclaimed his retirement from politics. A secondary theme hinted at Nixon's unfair accusation that the *Los Angeles Times* unfairly covered the election and his campaign. The first theme was reflected in "Nixon Bows Out, Bitterly Assails the Press," which ran on page one the day after Nixon's speech: "Richard M. Nixon bitterly assailed the press Wednesday in an impromptu talk conceding victory to Gov. Brown and bearing all the earmarks of a political swan song" (1). In another article that appeared the day after the speech, "GOP Results Touch Off Guessing Game for 1964," the theme of dramatically ending his career was also elicited: "While the ex-Vice President had already flatly withdrawn his name from Presidential contention, even if elected, his loss to incumbent Gov. Brown appears to have guaranteed his departure. . . . The valedictory tenor of Nixon's remarks Wednesday morning bolstered that belief" (Bassett 26). The secondary theme dealing with Nixon's criticism of the *Times'* reporting of his campaign was also revealed in the aforementioned "Nixon Bows Out, Bitterly Assails Press": "Nixon's off-the-cuff remarks to reporters and a television audience at the Beverly Hilton singled out the Los Angeles Times for criticism. . ." (1). This theme emerged, too, in a disclaimer run alongside the article above, titled "PUBLISHER OF TIMES TELLS ENDORSEMENT," which included a statement by *Times'* publisher Otis Chandler: "In this recent campaign, The Times published three editorials and seven editorial cartoons supporting Mr. Nixon's candidacy. We continue today to believe that he was the best qualified candidate for governor. . ." (1).

In the one editorial that ran in the *Los Angeles Times* in the two days after Nixon's appearance, a cartoon, the theme that was expressed was that Nixon's political future is up in the air (see Appendix C). The cartoon, titled "Post-Mortem," pictured a giant question mark superimposed neatly over a hunched Nixon (Russell Part II, 4).

In the *Boston Globe*'s one news story about Nixon's conference that appeared in the two days after the event, the theme that emerged was that Nixon became a victim of his own political success. The tactics he utilized augured his own political downfall, and the ending of his career seemed fitting. In "Bitter Nixon Rips Newspapers, Says His Public Life Is Ended," this theme was elucidated:

> Nixon, his face drawn and haggard, his voice tense, his mood bitter, spoke just after he conceded the governorship of California Wednesday to his Democratic opponent, Gov. Edmund G. Brown.
>
> In a harsh and impromptu self-described final public appearance at his headquarters at the Beverly Hilton Hotel, the former Vice President, assailed the press, admitted defeat. . . .
>
> The end was as turbulent, as revealing of inner tensions and emotional introspection as Nixon's whole gaudy political career. (Hyams 10)

In three editorials about Nixon's speech that appeared in the *Boston Globe* in the two days after the event, two themes emerged: Nixon's meteoric political career has ended acrimoniously and definitively; and his true character proved to be the fount of his own undoing, which his bitter farewell conference demonstrated. The first theme of Nixon's career having come to a grinding halt was revealed in the lead to "Richard Nixon -- An Obituary Of a Career," which was published the day after the speech: "Richard M.

Nixon has had his seventh crisis [Nixon wrote a book titled *Six Crises* which was published that year]. The verdict: Shock and hemorrhage -- take him away." Further in the article it was reported, "It is probably fair to say that Nixon's political career has been ended because his fellow Californians wanted him to get lost, permanently" (Lahey 10). This theme was elucidated further in a story titled "Mr. Nixon's Last Stand," printed two days after the conference: "Nixon's fantastic swan-song was unscheduled and unexpected. . . . No questions had been asked except by Nixon of himself. None actually remained, the former Vice President having disposed of everything, including possibly his reputation, in his epic tirade." The second theme pertaining to how Nixon's true character limited his career also was evinced in "Mr. Nixon's Last Stand": "He stood there with his hands jammed into his pockets, his head cocked to one side and gave vent to the wrath and frustration that rose up in him. . . . He was literally beside himself" (McGrory 20). The character issue, though, was most trenchantly delineated in the aformentioned "An Obituary of a Career":

> He has had the most spectacular political career of our day, not excluding John F. Kennedy. . . .
>
> But that elusive something that made Nixon vulnerable finally caught up with him in the California election.
>
> What was that "elusive something?"
>
> We can't be certain. But on the basis of observations dating back to 1948, we can suggest one of Nixon's greatest handicaps.
>
> The poor guy was at his worst trying to be a human being. (Lahey 10)

* * *

Because Kennedy's televised concession speech at the 1956 Democratic National Convention received so little coverage in the *New York Times*, *Los Angeles Times*, and *Boston Globe* in the two days following the event, little can be concluded about the apparent themes that emerged in the coverage of the speech. Two semi-themes that emerged, however, suggest that Kennedy's image benefited from coverage of the speech. One apparent theme indicated that Kennedy received a boisterous applause when he conceded the vice presidential nomination. Another implied his overall political standing rose after making such an impressive showing in the balloting.

Conversely, Nixon's image suffered greatly in the two-day coverage following his "last press conference." The two major themes that were manifested delineated that one of the most meteoric and promising political careers had come to an ignominious end; and that Nixon had become a victim of his own success -- the tactics which he had employed in his political ascent proved to be the source of his undoing. His image was one of an abrasive and crafty politician whose career had now necessarily ended.

Chapter V

Epilogue

Quo vadis? [Whither goest thou?] -- ***Bible***, John 16:5 (qtd. in Rawson and Miner)

Because Kennedy's and Nixon's final appearances in office involved the unique events of assassination and resignation, it is problematic to compare them in as parallel a fashion as the six events analyzed above that pertain to three types of crisis situations. Therefore, these final two events of Kennedy's and Nixon's presidencies are not included in the main body of this study. Nevertheless, because they figure so importantly in the enduring legacies of each man and the shaping of their disparate press images they warrant special consideration in a separate section.

* * *

As some of the most important events in Kennedy's political career were captured before television cameras, so was the final part of his political career played out on the television screen -- a momentous event that unfolded over four days and touched Americans as few events in this century have. There had never been anything like it.

Muffled Drums

> It was a series of sounds and images that had monumental impact and will always remain in the the minds of those who watched: the bloodstained suit, the child saluting the coffin, the funeral procession to the muffled drums, the riderless horse. (Stark 78)

So was the broadcast of the funeral of America's 35th president on November 25, 1963, the culmination of an exhaustive four days of live, uninterrupted coverage by the networks and stations across the country. A landmark in the history of television, the coverage of the immediate aftermath of Kennedy's assassination, the subsequent shooting of Lee Harvey Oswald, and the funeral procession itself, in the four days from November 22 to November 25, 1963, lionized Kennedy from a popular president to a legend and catapaulted television from a nascent electronic alternative to newspapers to not only the "medium of choice," but the "*only* medium anyone could envision capturing an event" (Stark 82). To recount the four days that author Thomas Brown has written symbolizes "a rupture in the collective experience of the American people," (2) Kennedy was killed by two rifle bullets while riding in a motorcade in downtown Dallas on Friday, November 22, and his body was flown back to Washington on Air Force One with newly sworn-in President Lyndon Johnson on that same day. The next day, Saturday, a kaleidoscope of old clips of Kennedy as well as information about the suspected assassin, Lee Harvey Oswald, were broadcast. On Sunday, the caisson bearing Kennedy's body was moved from the White House to the Capitol and Oswald, while being transferred from the Dallas city prison to the county jail, was fatally shot by Jack Ruby. On Monday, the funeral

service itself was held, in a procession from the Capitol to St. Matthew's Cathedral, and from the Cathedral to Arlington National Cemetery, where an eternal flame was lit at the gravesite (Barnouw, *The Image Empire* 228-235). On the day of the funeral, every nine out of ten television sets were in use. As one New York critic wrote of the telecast, it was not an event but an experience: "This was not viewing. This was total involvement . . . I stayed before the set, knowing -- as millions knew -- that I must give myself over entirely to an appalling tragedy, and that to evade it was a treason of the spirit" (qtd. in Barnouw, *The Image Empire* 228).

In this way, Kennedy became an American ghost. Through taped television appearances, still pictures, speech clips, and spates of hagiographical works published in the immediate aftermath of his death, his image came to haunt the American imagination and engender an ideal of many things a president should be. The young and charismatic Kennedy captured on television, rescued by premature death from the disillusionments of age, became a symbol of how many Americans came to see their country -- a "New Frontier" of hope and promise, free of the burdens and limits of the past. (Brown 106-107). And it is this final television event with Kennedy that is the most important one to his legacy -- for it is the circumstances of his death rather than the events of his life that have elevated him to a primary place in the political consciousness of Americans. It is the day of Kennedy's death, not that of his birth, that is annually observed as a benchmark in American history (Brown 2).

* * *

In contrast to Kennedy's dramatic political exit, Nixon's finale was marked with disgrace rather than hagiography. Rather than have his life suddenly cut down and his presidency eulogized in an epic four-day television event, Nixon suffered a two-year political scandal of unprecedented dimensions that ended in the first resignation of a president in American history, the conviction and imprisonment of 25 officials of the Nixon Administration, and one of the most serious constitutional crises since the impeachment trial of Andrew Johnson (Tindall 1318). Like the four days following Kennedy's assassination, the ensuing events made for television like which there had never been anything before.

"Therefore, I shall resign the presidency. . . ."

"Watergate" started in June, 1972, when seven men connected to the Committee for the Re-Election of the President were arrested for burglarizing the offices of the Democratic National Committee at the Watergate complex. After refusing to reveal any information about the covert operation in trial, the burglars were about to be sentenced to stiff prison sentences until one of the men, James McCord, agreed to cooperate with the court and a special Senate investigating body headed by Senator Sam Ervin and known as the "Ervin Committee." The committee's hearings that took place in mid-1973 riveted the nation as the CBS, ABC, NBC, and PBS television networks provided live coverage of the proceedings during the day and taped versions at night. McCord's testimony opened a floodgate of confessions and revelations of misconduct in the executive branch that

resulted in the resignations and indictments of several top White House officials, such as Chief of Staff H.R. Haldeman. The investigation stalled, however, until a former White House aide revealed a taping system installed in the Oval Office had recorded conversations that had taken place there during Nixon's tenure. In a furious legal struggle that subsequently ensued, a special prosecutor appointed by Nixon, Archibald Cox, was fired after taking Nixon to court in an attempt to force him to relinquish tapes deemed to be pertinent to the Watergate investigation. Nixon suffered the resignations of the Attorney General and Deputy Attorney General after ordering them, respectively, in October, 1973, to fire Cox in an episode that became known as the "Saturday Night Massacre." Nixon's public standing subsequently sank to a new low and a newly appointed special prosecutor, Leon Jaworski, quickly filed motions to obtain the tapes in question (Emery and Emery 507-515). Meantime, a House Judiciary Committee had been formed to begin impeachment hearings and in April, 1974, subpoenas were issued for 42 tape recordings. In a dramatic prime time television address on April 29, 1974, Nixon attempted to head off these legal maneuvers by presenting multi-volume transcripts of the White House conversations under subpoena. Yet, what at first appeared to be a masterly performance that could appease the demands of Watergate investigators, soon fomented increased derision of Nixon and calls for his impeachment. The reasons were clear: Nixon had made his own selection of conversations to be transcribed; and many of the requested conversations were not included. More inflammatory, however, was the fact that the transcripts were punctuated throughout with "expletive deleted" and apparently had been heavily edited.

In the next four months, the Supreme Court ruled 8-0 that Nixon must relinquish the tapes under subpoena by Congress while the House judiciary committee, in televised hearings deliberated and passed three articles of impeachment against Nixon. One of the tapes released in the last batch handed over by the White House after the Supreme Court ruling contained the so-called "smoking gun" conversation, which apparently offered incontrovertible evidence of Nixon's early involvement in the cover-up of the Watergate burglary. Facing certain impeachment in the House and a trial that offered little hope of an acquittal in the Senate, Nixon announced his resignation of the presidency in a nationwide television address on August 8, 1974 (Barnouw, *Tube of Plenty* 458-461):

> . . . because of the Watergate matter, I might not have the support of the Congress that I would consider necessary to make the very difficult decisions and carry out the duties of this office in the way the interests of the nation will require. . . .
>
> Therefore, I shall resign the presidency effective at noon tomorrow. (qtd. in Ambrose III: 435)

The next day, on which the resignation went into effect, Nixon allowed his final goodbyes to his White House staff to be televised. After a highly personal hour-long speech in which he expressed his farewell sentiments to his staff, Nixon and his family, accompanied by Vice President Gerald Ford and his wife, headed for the South Lawn of the White House to board the Marine One helicopter which would fly him and his family to nearby Andrews Air Force Base for a ride home to California on *Air Force One*. After walking alongside a military honor guard on a red-carpeted path to the helicopter, the

group stopped as Mrs. Nixon and then Nixon ascended the steps to board. Strangely, at this moment of seeming catastrophic self-defeat, Nixon turned to face the television cameras as president one last time to make his famous "V-for-Victory" sign with both hands (Ambrose III: 439-4450). And with this baffling gesture, he turned to embark and disappear into history. Viewers were left with the television image of the first United States president forced to resign upon threat of impeachment gesturing inexplicably before beginning what would surely be a future life of disgrace.

In these ways, Kennedy's and Nixon's final political appearances on television were in marked contrast to one another. Kennedy's television exit was in a four-day epic in which he was virtually transformed from a man into a legend -- a legend reinforced by the hagiographical tenor and the dynastic obsequies of his funeral procession. Contrariwise, Nixon's television exodus occurred over a span of almost a year and a half of derisive television coverage in which the American people witnessed the slow, torturous erosion of his administration and were able to predict the dire inevitability of his resignation.

Chapter VI

Conclusion

> Journalism is just the first rough draft of history. . . . The whole truth takes too long to emerge, and it consists of too many strands for a single journalist to catch in the single sitting that daily journalism demands.
>
> --**Benjamin Bradlee** (Bradlee 12)

An overriding conclusion that can be drawn about the examination of the three newspapers' coverage of six critical television appearances by Kennedy and Nixon in this study is that the newspapers by and large failed to consider the part that television was playing in the shaping of Kennedy's and Nixon's images. In scrutinizing the news stories and editorials pertaining to the broadcasts in the two days after each of the six appearances, it is difficult to separate the news event of the action that was taking place or being announced from the parts of the coverage that actually addressed the three areas of investigation that were developed in this study (reference to the broadcast's effect on Kennedy's or Nixon's political career; reference to the effectiveness of Kennedy's or Nixon's use of television with implications of its effect on their political careers; and reference to viewer reaction of Kennedy's or Nixon's use of television).

For instance, in the three papers' coverage of Nixon's announcement of American forces' invasion into Cambodia, the articles and editorials that were identified to pertain to the three areas of investigation above focused on the futility and reckless gamble of the military action that was announced, the sharp disagreements the announcement caused among members of Congress, and the incendiary protests the announcement sparked on college campuses. However, little if any coverage explored the effect of Nixon's decision to announce this action on primetime television instead of through a press conference or another channel. The way Nixon's speaking style or physical appearance may have influenced the impact of this announcement on Nixon's political career was not discussed either. Hence a researcher is only able to extrapolate these pieces of information from the overall coverage.

Likewise, in the coverage of Kennedy's appearance before the Ministerial Association of Greater Houston, the articles and editorials that referenced the three areas of investigation in this study centered on the way Kennedy seemed to answer the questions posed to him as best he could and the idea that the religious question should be dropped from the campaign altogether. Yet, little mention is made of the fact that if Kennedy had not had his appearance aired on television his public poise may not have reaped the same benefit that he would have had it not been seen by millions. In other words, the point that the success of his speech may have lied in both the way he answered the questions articulately *and* the way he may have made a favorable impression on television was not made. Again, these points have to be extrapolated from the overall coverage.

Exceptions to the newspapers' tendency to fail to recognize the part that television may have been playing in each man's political career, however, occurred in some of the editiorials and particularly in one column by a television critic for the *Globe*. In an aforementioned article titled "Clear, Stern JFK Draws Line . . . in 18 TV Minutes," written by *Globe* critic Percy Shain, the real heart of the type of coverage sought for in this study was found. The article specifically examined Kennedy's television manner in the televised speech he made during the Cuban missile crisis:

> This was a rapidly read address that seemed to get faster as he plunged into the heart of its contents . . . He kept the note of rising excitement out of his voice, preferring instead to emphasize his points in the grim lines of his face and in the cold, hard look as he pronounced them. (Shain 11)

In this type of forum, the newswriter had the liberty to examine at length the precise areas of investigation delineated in this study and come closer to providing evidence to answer the research question: How did three newspapers' coverage of six crucial television appearances involving Kennedy or Nixon in three crisis situations contribute to the shaping of the two men's divergent press images?

Hence an important direction for future research involving an investigation into how newspapers covered television appearances may lie in the selection of newspapers that employ their own television critics. As well, a greater emphasis on the examination of editorial coverage may yield more substantive evidence in regard to this investigation. This is discussed in more detail below.

However, with this overall conclusion having been made about the newspapers' general failure to consider the part television may have been playing in the shaping of Kennedy's and Nixon's images, several other conclusions can be drawn.

* * *

The news stories and editorials of the *New York Times*, *Los Angeles Times*, and *Boston Globe* that appeared in the two days after Kennedy's televised ultimatum to the Soviet Union to remove missiles from Cuba expressed three themes that contributed to the shaping of a favorable image for Kennedy. The central theme that ran throughout the three newspapers' coverage was that Kennedy took bold but necessary action in a situation in which there was no other recourse. Concurrently, however, and almost as prevalent as the first theme was the theme that in this time of crisis Kennedy's action should receive the unanimous and unconditional support of the American people. A third theme even indicated that some Americans considered Kennedy's action long overdue. Kennedy, in most of the coverage, was thus depicted as a mature leader who had taken a bold and deliberate stand against a communist aggressor, and a stand that at the same time enjoyed the support of most Americans. These three themes seemed best epitomized in the lead to an editorial printed in the *Boston Globe* on October 23, the day after Kennedy's address, titled "It's Up to Khrushchev": "One can only hope that in this, the most dramatic and momentous hour for him and for his countrymen, the President's grimness and determination to take what steps are necessary for freedom will have as sobering an effect upon the world as they had last evening on all Americans" (20).

The themes that emerged in the two days after Nixon's televised announcement of

American forces' invasion into Cambodia depicted Nixon as a far different leader. The major theme that ran through most of the coverage involved denunciation for a futile military maneuver that would likely prolong a bloody war. A second theme delineated the dissension between politicians, especially among members of Congress, over support for or opposition to the operation. The legal basis of Nixon's power to launch the operation was also questioned. A third and almost equally prevalent theme concerned the violent campus demonstrations that took place in the wake of the announcement. Nixon was hence portrayed as a president who had taken a reckless gamble with American troops with an unpopular decision that was meeting fierce opposition by both politicians and college students. The major theme of the coverage was illustrated in an editorial that ran in the *New York Times* two days after Nixon's speech, titled "Cry, the Beloved Country," in which the theme of disapproval was most vividly delineated:

> But the President's course in Cambodia would make the most optimistic rationalist despair for his country. Nothing for years has cast so dark a shadow on America's future. . . . By this action President Nixon has calculatedly chosen to widen the division among the American people, to inflame instead of heal. (Lewis 32)

Kennedy's televised appearance before the Ministerial Association of Greater Houston gave rise to two major themes in the newspaper coverage in the two days after the event. First, the theme emerged that Kennedy made an excellent impression on the ministers in addressing the issues concerning his ability to govern and the practice of his religion. Skepticism about his independence from the Catholic Church remained,

however. Second, a theme that came out was that the religious issue should be dropped from the campaign altogether because to discriminate on the grounds of religion represented a form of bigotry. This first and most important theme was reflected in a statement from a pastor of a Houston Baptist church in a page-one article in the *New York Times* titled "Reaction of Minister": "I think he was forthright and frank, and I'm sure he's honest. . . . But my question remains about the policies of the church. There's no question in my mind that they require certain members to take certain positions on public matters" (Hill 32). Kennedy for the most part gained acclaim as a passionate, articulate defender of religious freedom and at the same time became somewhat of a martyr as a victim of bigotry through religious discrimination.

In the same way, Nixon gained praise and vindication in the themes that emerged in the newspaper themes in the two days after the "Checkers speech." The primary theme that was manifested was that the speech fully and unequivocally vindicated Nixon. Secondly, there were the themes that the speech gained the support of both the public and the Republican Party. A third theme was that Eisenhower found Nixon's speech commendable and wholeheartedly welcomed him back on the ticket as a result. However, a fourth theme that was elicited was one of scorn for what some considered a contrived, histrionic appeal to the public. A passage from "DICK NIXON, VINDICATED, CARRIES ON," a page-one editorial published in the *Los Angeles Times* two days after the speech, epitomized the coverage of this speech:

> "Few men in public or private life have found themselves caught so mercilessly in the whirlpools of honest doubt, calculated malice and planned contumely as the GOP's young

> nominee for Vice-President. Fewer still have emerged so triumphantly -- with honor untarnished, integrity unscathed and conduct unsmirched. . . . In his extemporaneous and homely talk to nation's huge television and radio audience Tuesday night Nixon cleared the atmosphere of suspicion -- and the decks for action. (1)

Yet while Nixon, in the themes running through the newspaper coverage, can largely be seen as having vindicated himself through a painstaking disclosure of his personal finances, he was at the same time derided as a political shyster who was not above employing artifice for political gain.

Little can be concluded thematically about the scant coverage of Kennedy's televised concession speech before the Democratic National Convention in 1956. The speech, in terms of coverage in the three papers used in this study, was not treated as major an appearance as the four appearances above were. The speech received little if any mention in the *New York Times* and *Los Angeles Times*, and only moderate coverage in the *Boston Globe.* To make this study more sound, a different television appearance representing a more significant instance of political loss for Kennedy needs to be selected in order for this appearance to compare more equally with the four appearances discussed above. Perhaps even a different category of crisis that includes a more significant television appearance should be developed to be grouped with foreign policy crisis and political self-defense; or perhaps a third category of crisis should be eliminated entirely from this study. This having been noted, though, the two minor themes that can be said to have emerged about this appearance, primarily in the *Globe*'s coverage, were: Kennedy received a rousing response after narrowly losing the vice presidential nomination; and

Kennedy's overall political standing had risen after making such an impressive showing. The first of these themes was best reflected in an article that ran in the *Boston Globe* the day after the concession speech, "Crowd Loves Kennedy Even as Smiling Loser,": "The Democratic National Convention erupted into wild acclaim late today for a young Senator from Massachusetts and a veteran war horse campaigner from Tennessee. . . . But the loser, Sen. John Kennedy took the platform and received an ovation from the standing, waving delegates" (5).

Nixon's "last press conference" elicited themes of negative coverage in the two days after the speech, which was not in the least surprising as Nixon seemingly blamed the press and newspapers in particular for his loss in the gubernatorial election. Two themes emerged: Nixon's meteoric political career has ended acrimoniously and definitively; and his true character proved to be the fount of his own undoing, which his bitter farewell conference demonstrated. The tactics he utilized augured his own political downfall, and the ending of his career seemed fitting, the tone of the coverage conveyed. In "Bitter Nixon Rips Newspapers, Says His Public Life Is Ended" from the *Boston Globe*, for example, this theme was elucidated:

> Nixon, his face drawn and haggard, his voice tense, his mood bitter, spoke just after he conceded the governorship of California Wednesday to his Democratic opponent, Gov. Edmund G. Brown.
>
> In a harsh and impromptu self-described final public appearance at his headquarters at the Beverly Hilton Hotel, the former Vice President, assailed the press, admitted defeat. . . .
>
> The end was as turbulent, as revealing of inner tensions and emotional introspection as Nixon's whole gaudy political career. (Hyams 10)

As discussed in the first and preceding chapters of this study, Kennedy and Nixon, two politicians and presidents who followed remarkably parallel career tracks for 14 years in the House, the Senate, and in the 1960 presidential campaign, have left diametrically divergent images in American history. Kennedy has consistently been found to be one of the most popular presidents in public opinion polls while Nixon is often ranked as one of the worst presidents. Kennedy's presidency ended in a funeral procession with dynastic obsequies befitting a king. Nixon's presidency terminated in disgrace as he became the first president in history to resign the office under threat of impeachment. Moreover, Kennedy's legacy became commemorated in the naming of a profusion of buildings, streets, and schools. Nixon, conversely, became cast as a political shyster who became ridiculed for his opportunistic prosecution of alleged communists for political gain, his failure to admit any guilt in his resignation of the presidency, and his stark physiognomy. But can these contrasting images be explained strictly in terms of the two men's respective merits and shortcomings as politicians and presidents?

In vetting the summaries of the thematic analyses of three newspapers' coverage of six critical television appearances by Kennedy and Nixon, the themes that emerged can be seen to have contributed to the forging of the two men's divergent press images in several ways. If, as discussed in Chapters I and V, the most enduring image of Kennedy is one of a fallen king of Camelot who had vibrantly and charismatically presided over a New Frontier, three newspapers' coverage of three of his television appearances certainly helped engender this image. In the same way, if Nixon's legacy is most inextricably

linked to his image as a dirty trickster of American politics who was forced to resign the presidency for suborning a cover-up of the Watergate scandal, the coverage of his television appearances also helped foster this legacy.

In the three newspapers' coverage of a foreign policy crisis handled on television, Kennedy, in his address concerning the Cuban missile crisis, gained the image of an astute, level-headed leader who had met the crisis with just the prudent measure of force and caution needed. His appearance received very favorable coverage and garnered widespread support from the papers assayed in this study. Conversely, Nixon, in his address pertaining to American forces' invasion into Cambodia, gained the image of an irresponsible leader who had likely expanded a controversial war that would cost more American lives. His appearance received critical coverage and elicited little support from the papers.

In the reporting of a political self-defense event broadcast on television, Kennedy, in his appearance before the Ministerial Association of Greater Houston, achieved the image of an articulate defender of the right for politicians to have the freedom to practice their own religion. This appearance earned him favorable coverage in the *New York Times*, *Los Angeles Times*, and *Boston Globe*. The coverage largely expressed a commendability for his statements and cast him as a victim of religious discrimination. Nixon, in his Checkers speech, also gained positive coverage in the three newspapers as a politician who had fully and unequivocally vindicated himself against unfair charges. However, while the papers painted Nixon's appearance in a mostly auspicious light, the appearances also left a bitter aftertaste with some of the newspaper writers. In some

stories, Nixon was derided for resorting to shady tactics in making an unabashedly mawkish appeal to public sentiment.

Finally, in the three newspapers' coverage of an event of political defeat broadcast on television, Kennedy, in his concession of the vice presidential nomination at the 1956 Democratic National Convention, gained scant coverage but was portrayed as a popular leader in the Democratic Party whose political star was on the rise. Contrariwise, Nixon, in his "last press conference," received extremely negative coverage in the three papers' and was depicted as a once promising presidential contender who had astoundingly ended his political career in a tirade against the press. He was written off as a politician whose character had proved to be the fount of his own undoing.

Thus the seeds of Kennedy's and Nixon's disparate images that took root over time can be seen to have been nourished somewhat by three newspapers' coverage of six television appearances that involved three types of crisis situations. Kennedy generally received advantageous coverage of his appearances on and reactions to these crisis situations on television. Nixon, though, fared far worse in the papers' evaluation of his appearances and handlings of the same crisis events on television.

* * *

The conclusions drawn from the *New York Times*', *Los Angeles Times*', and *Boston Globe*'s two-day coverage of six crucial television appearances of Kennedy and Nixon suggest two recommendations to this writer for future research involving a newspaper thematic analysis of these two men's appearances.

First, a longer time period should be examined after each appearance covered in this study to allow for more editorial opinion be included. In only examining coverage in the two days after each of the six selected appearances, the research in some instances seemed to leave out editorial analysis that requires more than a couple of days to be formulated and published. For example, in the three papers' two-day coverage of Kennedy's appearance before the Ministerial Association of Greater Houston a total of only two editorials appeared that referenced the event. In addition, in only examining coverage from the two days after each appearance, letters to the editor are necessarily excluded to a certain extent as local mail takes at the least one day for transit from a writer's home to a newspaper office. Consequently, only the second day of coverage after each appearance can include letters to the editor. Furthermore, letters to the editor pertaining to the newspaper coverage itself in the two days after each appearance cannot be included by surveying such a brief period of coverage after each appearance.

A second recommendation for this type of research is to include news magazines as a source for thematic analysis along with newspapers. While newspapers, on average, concern themselves with the reporting of news that happens on one particular day and meet seven different deadlines to report a week's worth of news, news magazines such as *Time* or *Newsweek* have the luxury of being able to take an entire week to report on the news of that week. Magazine journalists, in most cases, therefore have more time to reflect upon and develop points of view or opinions about news stories that happen within a week. Such coverage of the television appearances analyzed in this study could offer valuable insight into how an appearance may have impacted Kennedy's or Nixon's

images or their standing among viewers of that appearance. By examining magazine coverage, like extending the number of days examined in newspapers after each television appearance, the researcher could be afforded with coverage that more fully encompasses the major themes that developed in relation to particular television appearances.

* * *

The 20th century has seen the evolution of the American presidency from an institution subordinate to the will of Congress to the most powerful leadership position in the world. Beginning with Franklin Roosevelt in 1933, the office underwent a transformation from one in which the president served as a chief magistrate of the will of the American people as expressed through Congress to one in which the president is viewed as the preeminent source of moral leadership, legislative guidance, and public policy. In this transformation from what is classified as the traditional presidency (spanning from the presidencies of George Washington to Herbert Hoover, 1789-1933) to what is defined as the modern presidency (extending from the term of Franklin Roosevelt to Richard Nixon, 1933-1974) it devolved upon the president to fulfill at least eight roles: commander-in-chief, chief executive, chief of state (ceremonial and symbolic), chief diplomat, chief legislator, chief of party, voice of the people, and manager of prosperity (Edwards and Wayne 2-11).

As well, the office also saw a transformation of its relationship with the press -- as the presidency became singularly more important so did press-president relations. While at the beginning of this period (1930s) newspapers represented the primary medium

through which news concerning the presidency was communicated, the new media of radio and newsreels quickly burgeoned to challenge newspapers as vehicles for transmission of news about the president. Yet, the advent of television was the juggernaut that crucially reshaped the dynamics of the press-president relationship in this century. It enabled Americans for the first time to experience the sights and sounds of events involving presidents and future presidents in their own homes. Equally as important, television grew to a dominant mass medium more quickly than any other new medium had up to that point in time (Shaw 9). For these reasons, it deserves special attention as a medium in how it impacted the nature of the relationship between the press and president.

In this thesis it is shown that the themes of three newspapers' coverage of six critical television appearances involving John F. Kennedy or Richard M. Nixon indicate that in some cases the conduct of their appearance seemingly played a significant part in the newspaper treatment of their appearances while in other cases it clearly did not. How these three newspapers' coverage contributed to the divergent images of Kennedy and Nixon can never be determined exactly. Newspapers do not represent the entire public of an era, but they can be taken to represent the smaller markets who support the publications by buying it. And while it cannot be known how individuals interpreted the messages in newspapers, it can be discerned what the messengers told them (Caudill xv, 141, 143).

Kennedy's and Nixon's appearances on this century's most important mass medium -- television -- seem instrumental to understanding the genesis of their contrasting legacies. Television is at once a magnifying glass that allows viewers to see

politicians close-up for what they truly are and a curved mirror that facilitates a distortion of style over substance. It is a medium that facilitates immediacy; it is a medium that threatens to bring big changes. Newspaper coverage of Kennedy's and Nixon's experiences with television, at least, shows that much.

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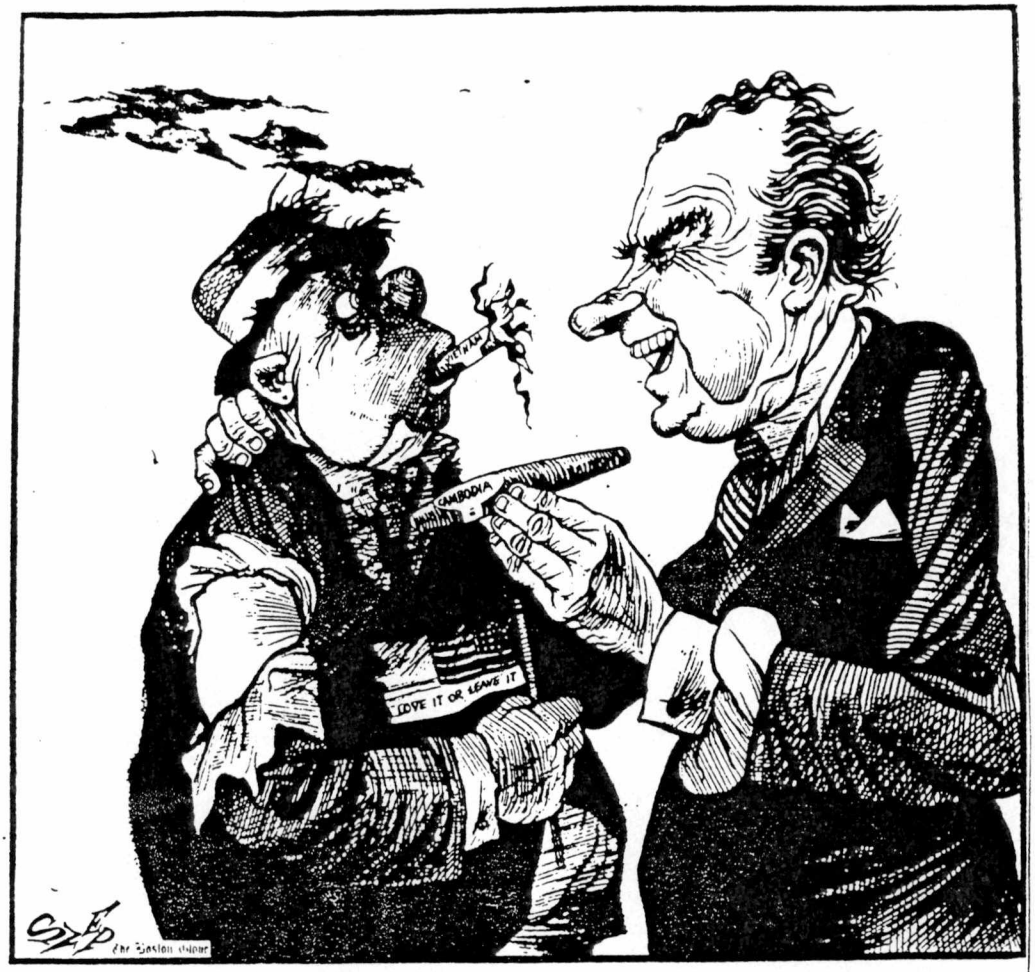
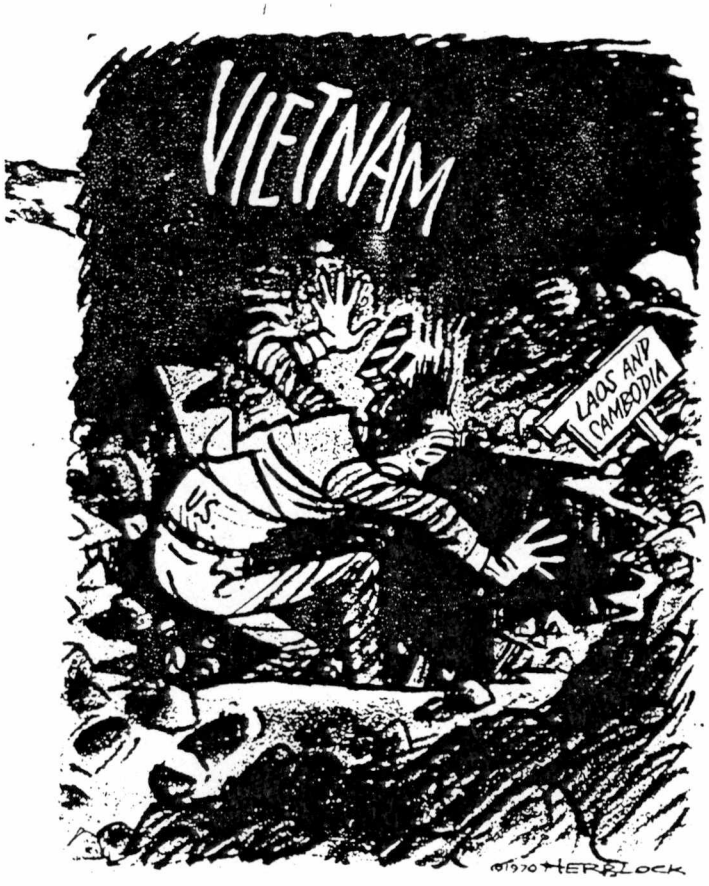
Appendices

Appendix A



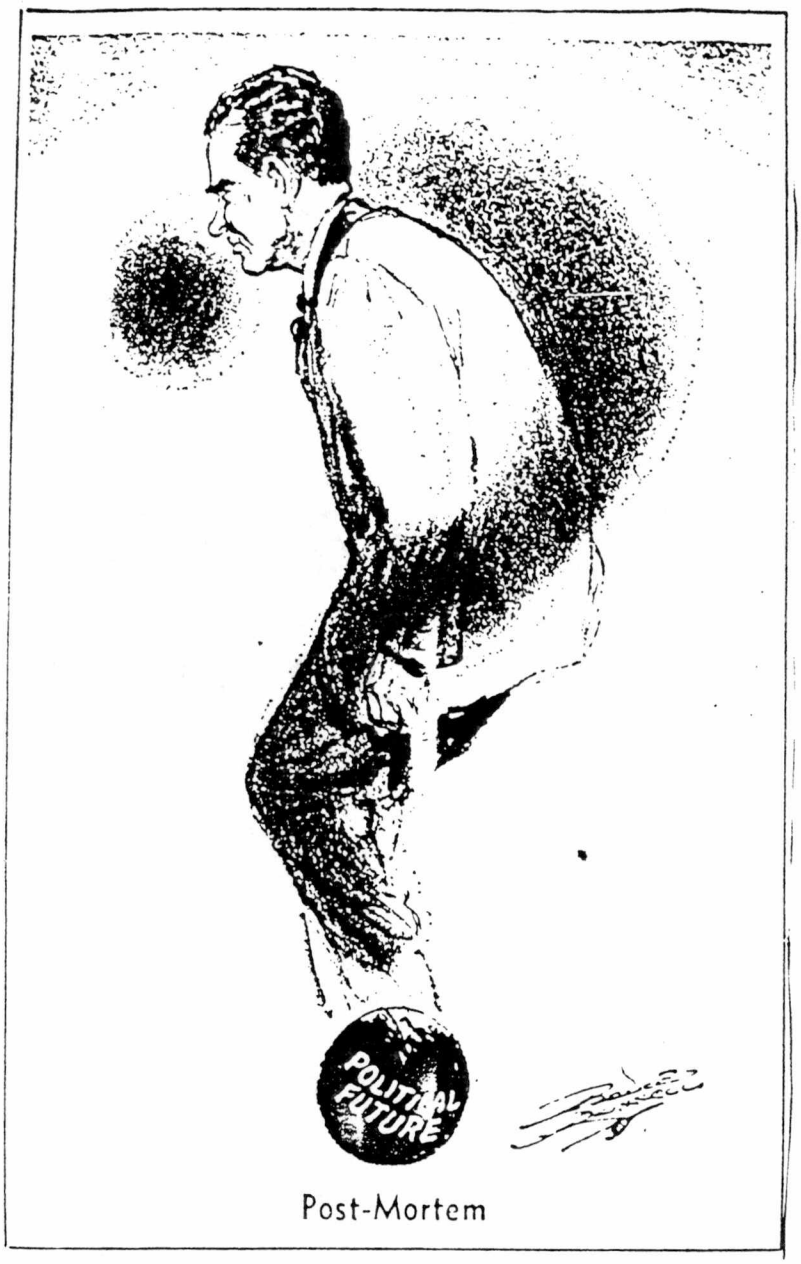
'Here . . . have another one.'

Appendix B



The tunnel at the end of the tunnel

Appendix C



Post-Mortem

Vita

Joseph Priest was born in Chicago, Illinois, on April 3, 1969. He attended schools in the public system of Tampa, Florida, the Hillsborough County Public School System, where he graduated from Chamberlain High School in June, 1987. He attended one year of college at the University of South Florida from 1987 to 1988 in Tampa before entering Auburn University in 1988, where he graduated with a Bachelor of Arts in Mass Communication in December, 1991. After working as a production assistant and then a news editor at WTVT-TV, a CBS/Fox television affiliate in Tampa, for four years, he entered the master's program in communications at The University of Tennessee, Knoxville, in August, 1996. He received his master's degree in August, 1998.