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# The role and growth of celebritization in presidential campaign coverage

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The Role and Growth of Celebritization in Presidential Campaign Coverage

By

Jonathan Bradford Long

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Senior Thesis Submitted In Partial Fulfillment  
of the requirements for  
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## ABSTRACT

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ADVISOR: Professor Zoe Oxley

The thesis covers the growing role of entertainment and celebrity-style news in the domain of hard presidential campaign television news coverage. Having done prior research on such entertainment news outlets as *E! News*, *Entertainment Tonight*, *Access Hollywood*, among others, I found that I was seeing the same treatment of celebrities as hard news programs were giving to presidential candidates. In light of this thought, the study covers what has been written about the evolution of presidential campaigns and the integration of celebrity news elements into campaigns. This study also performs a media analysis on the network news programs in order to establish the presence of, what I have called, “celebritized” campaign coverage. The thesis concludes with a reflection on the strengths and weaknesses of this study, future improvements, and the broader implications of the results from the media analysis.

The literature analysis is split into two chapters of the thesis. The first chapter pertains to the evolution of presidential campaigns. Within this chapter, the two subsections are: how the campaigns have changed their presentation and strategy; and how the media has changed its coverage of the campaign. The literature that pertains to the change in campaign strategy recognizes a number of patterns. The foremost, as it pertains to this study, is the growth in image creation and image consciousness. The literature largely cites the Reagan campaigns as the first to fully capitalize on creating a candidate’s image. Reagan’s campaign focused its advertisements on pictures and emotional appeals within a small time frame. Before this time the campaign

advertisement focused on policy and where the candidates stood on issues. These advertisements were played out over longer periods of time with an emphasis on minutes rather than seconds. After Reagan, the literature almost universally notes the change in presidential campaigns as being a shift towards personalization and carefully planned social functions and rallies. In terms of supporting my thesis one can see that image creation, public relations, personalization, and planned social functions are all elements that are transferrable to celebrities and how they present themselves. With few exceptions, the literature does not make this connection.

In terms of how the media has changed its coverage, the literature largely points at the rise of television as a turning point. With the rise of television came a bombardment of images and the ability to cover aspects of the campaign unseen to that point. From there the literature documents the growing role of video, still-shots, and multimedia in the presentation of the news. In terms of campaign coverage, the television media is noted as increasing its emphasis on scandal, personal story lines, the presentation of the campaign, and the appearance of the candidate. In reviewing the literature on the change in media coverage one finds an emphasis on an increase in soft news, as well as a path that parallels the changes in campaign strategy.

The second chapter deals with the effect that celebrity and entertainment news has had on campaigns and campaign coverage. The goal of this portion of the literature review is to lay down characteristics of celebrity coverage. This chapter documents the rise celebrity news and the growing importance of image that corresponds almost directly with the growing emphasis on celebrities. This chapter also offers examples of instances where celebrity-style news and campaigns inadvertently or advertently cross paths.

These examples act as foundations for the set of guidelines that I lay out as representative of the celebritization of presidential campaigns. Most of the literature that does connect celebrity to the presidential candidate does so in passing and as an aside from a larger point. Because of this I grew in confidence that the concept of celebritization is one unique to research already completed about campaigns and campaign coverage.

The media analysis is the original contribution that my thesis makes to the study of presidential campaigns. In this chapter I offer a series of tenets in which one can code whether or not hard news programs are covering campaigns in a celebrity style. These qualities are based on the literature review and prior research into the properties of celebrity news programs. The qualities are as follows:

- Stressing personality traits/image, such as clothing, likability, how they are living their private lives
- Who celebrities are hanging out with/ befriending
- Where they are hanging out
- What talk shows they are on, their upcoming game/album/movie
- Showing trailers or previews of said game/album/movie
- Personal lives, especially if it involves scandal or affairs
- The back story- where they came from, growing up
- How they carry themselves- their style and modus operandi
- Showing clips of signature lines and catch-phrases
- Gossip- what rumors are there on the street about these people
- Feuding- who they are not friendly with and what the celebrities are saying about each other's personal lives and personalities

I also use this chapter to clarify the difference between soft news and celebritization. Soft news is a broad category refers to a number of content and presentation strategies associated with all aspects of news programs. These strategies include dramatization, personalization, the influx of images and multimedia, and shorter segments. Soft news also refers to how the news presents the content, no matter the content. Celebritization isolates the individual, specifically presidential campaigns. Celebritization occurs when not only is the news seeking to change the presentation, but

the individual is also presenting a crafted image and presentation. Unlike with soft news, the defining and differing feature celebrity-style news coverage offers a considerable give and take between subject and reporting entity. This concept isolates the individual- how that individual presents him/herself and is then presented on television. However celebrityization does not exclusively imply an absence of useful policy debate or information. Just as Brad Pitt or Britney Spears can be asked a political question, so too, can candidates be asked an informative question with a celebrity-style interview. The fact is that the context is different. The general rule that I used in governing whether or not there was celebrity-style news involved was to ask myself the question- “Could I substitute Celebrity A for the name John McCain or PR Firm for Campaign and still have a segment or statement that made sense?”

The actual analysis studied the transcripts of *NBC Nightly News*, *ABC World News*, and *CBS Evening News* from October 1, 2008 to November 3, 2008. This period allowed me to read over 140,000 words in 245 campaign segments over 86 shows. The study coded for whether or not a broadcast contained any celebrity statements, the number of segments with celebrity statements, the number of segments dedicated entirely to celebrity coverage, the number of celebrity-style words spoken in a segment, and the number segments containing promotional videos.

This material was used both in compiling both comparative and summation results. The comparative results were used largely to show that all three programs contained aspects of celebrityization. The summation results showed that, based on the aforementioned coding criteria, almost 98% of the broadcasts contained some celebrityization. Almost 69% of the campaign segments contained some celebrity-style

statement. Almost 16% of the campaign segments were dedicated entirely to celebrity-style coverage. Almost 16% of all campaign segments contained some sort of promotional video. About 20% of words spoken about the campaign were within the context of celebritization.

The conclusion covers what these numbers mean in broader terms. I believe that these numbers exemplify the real presence of celebritization. The campaigns and the news media are aware of what is being presented and shown on television. The question remains as to whether or not this is good for the American public and democracy in this country. I find that, although these numbers are significant, these are safe values for hard campaign news coverage. The news media is still responsibly exercising its role in informing the public. The information is just being disseminated in a different manner. If, as the literature suggests, celebritization draws in a larger audience, one cannot be displeased with greater voter participation. Additionally, since celebritization does not imply an absence of substance, the current percentages show that there is still plenty of information within news broadcasts.

However, I warn that celebritization is inherently tied to a watered-down form of policy and informative content. Thus, if the percentages grow much higher than this one has to worry about the capacity of television news to maintain its role informing society, and society's ability to make educated decisions regarding politics (If there major source of information in television news). What that can lead to is an *American Idol* effect. Everyone at home has some grasp of what singers sound good, but are not experts in the field. When voting on *American Idol*, the public does so with a little music knowledge, but mostly based on looks, performance, personality, and what other people think. If

celebritization grows to the point that there is still general policy knowledge passed on, but overwhelmed in a context of personality, looks, attacks, image-creation, it cannot bode well for American democracy.



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## Introduction

It is without doubt that presidential campaigns and their coverage have changed over the years. That is essentially without question. However little has been done to qualify just exactly what the campaign and its coverage are evolving into. It is under these auspices that this research is undertaken. This thesis research seeks to qualify the state and direction of presidential campaigns and their coverage. Though there has been extensive research on the evolution of the presidential campaign, the evolution of how the campaign is presented in the media, and the growth of celebrity-based news, there has been little reported on how presidential campaign coverage has evolved into a field increasingly like that of entertainment news coverage.

In making this point, chapter one will review all existing literature, noting where it falls short and also using its findings to support the follow-up media and comparative analysis. The literature review will begin with a discussion of relevant definitions of celebrity in order to set the backdrop for what is a thesis discussing the convergence of political campaigns and celebrity. The chapter then focuses on the evolving presidential campaign strategy and the evolving media coverage of the presidential campaign. At the conclusion of this chapter major themes reviewed in the literature will be summarized. These themes will set the direction for the second chapter.

The second chapter will begin making connections between the major themes reviewed in chapter one and how they are related to the definition of celebrity. This section will provide the basis by which a connection can be drawn between the changing presidential campaign and the “celebratization” of politics. The second chapter will also

include a literature review discussing characteristics of celebrity news and the growth of presidential candidates appearing on soft news and entertainment programs. This second chapter will work to reaffirm the connection between celebrity and politics, as will be included in the conclusion. However the literature review will also make clear the need for additional original research as it will show that the leap from soft campaign coverage to celebrity politicians and campaigns has rarely been made before now.

On the strong foundation of the literature review which lays out the fundamentals of entertainment and celebrity-style news, there will be a follow-up media analysis of the network news coverage of the 2008 presidential campaigns of Barack Obama and John McCain. The summative and comparative media analysis, which appears in later chapters, will examine whether presidential campaign coverage is increasingly intersecting with that of celebrity news coverage.

To conclude this thesis I will delve briefly into the long-term connotations of this research. Specifically, I will review the impact an intersection between entertainment and politics has on the face of democracy. I will also conclude with my expectations of the continued evolution of campaign strategy and coverage into the future.

## Chapter One, The Evolution of Presidential Campaigns

The literature that exists regarding presidential campaigns is largely divided into two major sections. The first is that which covers the evolution of presidential campaigns. This literature follows campaign strategy and how campaign managers have differed in their attempts to navigate the campaign trail. The review of this literature in chapter one will delve into what has been said about the growth of image-oriented campaign strategies. It is these strategies that help most in making the connections between celebrity and candidate. The literature on campaign strategy is divided into three areas of interest that will be reviewed here: a history of campaigns, the growth in candidate packaging, and why this image-oriented evolution has occurred.

The second section that presidential campaign literature covers is that written of the media's role in campaign coverage. In terms of the celebritization of presidential campaigns, this is vital for review because the media is literally responsible for what is reported on the campaign trail. This literature is also divided into areas of interest that will be reviewed here: the rise of television and the evolution of contemporary television news coverage. It is within these two major sections- campaign management and media coverage- that I will be able to discuss the changes toward image-orientation that have occurred throughout presidential campaigns. Furthermore these ideas of image-consciousness and packaging, among others, are vital in incorporating the role of celebrity in presidential campaigns.

## **The Evolving Presidential Campaign Strategy**

The literature that exists on presidential campaigns is unanimous on one factor: the presidential campaign has undergone a drastic reconstruction from even just fifty years ago, not to mention from the beginning of presidential elections. This section will deal with the degree to which this campaign evolution has led to the presidential candidates being treated as though they are celebrities, and their campaigns being run like a series of public relations events. As the evolution of the presidential campaign strategy unfolds, one will see that the current aspects of this strategy could just as easily apply to a celebrity's image consultant. However it is noted that, with few exceptions, none of the literature as it exists actually makes the connection between politicians and celebrities

Having mentioned celebrity, it is important to qualify the different meanings it will take on during this thesis. Corner and Pels (2003, 5) note that in terms of media coverage, celebrity involves "sustained performance within conditions of expanded media visibility and, quite often, vigorous media scrutiny, [and is] a major feature of contemporary culture." Corner and Pels continue to note that celebrity is "sustained by the busy circuits of publicity and promotion within audio-visual and print culture." Essentially celebrities are covered and scrutinized as individuals immediately and often, with very little follow-up analysis or context. They are identities forged through media and public relations, not because the individuals have done anything of substance, per se. Corner and Pels (2003, 8) also define celebrity within the realm of personalization, stating they "embody stylized forms of individuality....Within this context, individuals attempt to make sense of social experience through celebrating and selectively

identifying with the lifestyles of public personalities.” This is an area in which one can see why campaign managers would like to style their candidates after celebrities. In order to gain votes from citizens who only casually follow politics, candidates want people to identify with their personalities and lifestyles as similar to their own, just as Corner and Pels state that celebrity culture attempts to do. Corner and Pels (2003, 42) briefly mention that celebrity and politician can combine through a “personality campaign” where politicians eschew party affiliations in favor of “politics of stylish individuality and personalized trust,” where speeches, events, and debates are home to “fun” anecdotes and “soap opera” drama. Through these definitions of celebrity and how they relate to politics, the term itself will be used within this chapter and the thesis in general, alternatively to suggest personalization to the point of lacking substance, individualizing the candidate and his lifestyle (for scrutiny and praise, apart from policy) and in terms of turning events of traditional substance into opportunities to provide entertainment in lieu of substantial policy debate.

. There are three major issues that will be discussed within the literature on presidential campaign strategy. First there is the work that has documented the literal historical changes in presidential campaigns. These works outline where campaigns have come from, making the point that there is indeed a change underway, whether or not the literature characterizes what this change may be. Secondly, the literature, after assuming the changes are understood, takes note of how campaigns attempt to package their candidate as the next president. This literature discusses how the campaign strategists attempt to take the positive, wholesome qualities of the candidate and essentially mold him (for our sake it refers solely to men) into that person, absence of quirks or any sort of

dangerous past. And the third aspect is a brief discussion of literature that has tried to explain why these changes toward image-consciousness have occurred and how it can be theorized that the campaign managers are simply responding to what the public wants to see in a presumptive presidential nominee.

As can be seen in the fact that some sources are cross-referenced in multiple sections, there is a degree of overlap in these three issues. Although authors have covered multiple portions of this topic, few have done more than infer that presidential candidates are covered and position themselves like celebrities. With few exceptions, there have been no direct relationships created between celebrity and presidential candidate coverage.

### **The History of Presidential Campaigns and Their Lasting Effect**

This subsection also has numerous points that are important in understanding how campaigns have evolved and the fact that the campaigns we see today are far from being detached from recent history. There is substantial literature that suggests that there is a vague linear pattern in election years that show how we have come to this point in presidential campaigns. In order to recognize this point, first one must recognize the history of change that has occurred over the last century. This is not simply a history of elections, rather a review of the changes that occurred in certain campaigns that had a profound effect on future campaigns.

Benoit (2007) covers a number of firsts in campaign history that correspond to the growth of television. One of the most influential moments in campaign history that



Benoit notes is that the first televised campaign spots were aired in the election of 1952. Similarly he notes that the first televised presidential debate was in 1960 between Vice President Richard Nixon and John F. Kennedy (Benoit 2007). In terms of influential moments, these two cannot be discounted to the degree that they introduced television to the campaign, adding what would turn out to be the most revolutionary medium to the media.

As early as Spencer (1972, 80), former FCC head Newton Minow prophesized that the “ever-increasing use of television and radio in political campaigns may be fundamentally altering the nature of the political process in America and may raise important issues of public policy.” Even during the debate itself, Nixon and Kennedy recognized the significance of where they were. It was at this point that both candidates understood that they could do more than convey words, but also adopt an attitude for the people via the television screen. To the degree that Kennedy and Nixon knew that they were embarking on a new era of campaigning, Waterman (1999, 16) says that it was the beginning of “pseudo-events [which since then] have long been an important part of a president’s political resources, [just] in recent years presidents and their political consultants have become ever more skilled at utilizing them.” As Waterman (1999) alludes to, pseudo-events, events that are almost only being put together to gain media attention and would not exist otherwise (press conferences and photo opportunities), began a strong ascension up the campaign ladder shortly after the Kennedy-Nixon debate.

Waterman (1999) uses early debates as the definition of, and precursor to, future pseudo-events. In addition to Waterman’s Kennedy-Nixon debate, the literature has documented how much the televised debate has changed over the last fifty years.

Moving from what seemed to be a seminal moment with the Nixon-Kennedy debate, the candidate debating landscape has drastically changed to the present incarnation of the event, largely due to the development of television. Although presidential debates existed before television, the 1956 presidential primary debate between Adlai Stevenson and Estes Kefauver was decidedly different than what we see today because it was televised. “Stevenson’s reluctance to recast himself in the image desired by media advisors marked him as the last of a kind,” in 1956 (Jamieson 1996, 64). Since then, the debate, though containing policy matters, has become an image spectacle. Benoit (2007) notes that advisors have shifted their focus just as much now to the opportunity to display personality and physical characteristics as they do on outlining policy beliefs. However, it is not just the way that the candidates approach the debate that has changed. The substance has also been adjusted for the audiences, such that “in the September 9, 2003 Democratic primary debate, Farai Chideya asked the candidates, ‘What’s your favorite song?’ ....The candidates appeared to have considered this question and had answers ready” (Benoit 2007, 74). In context, Benoit (2007) addresses this issue as a problem with the campaign in that all of the candidates had ready answers for this question, however the remaining question is why such a question has become commonplace on the campaign.

So much as some pseudo-events have become common-place, others have been completely transformed since their fundamental founding in the 1970s. Waterman (1999) uses pseudo-event to describe an actual event, however with the evolution of political marketing and campaign strategy it can actually describe the bulk of campaign strategy. Pseudo-events have evolved from being used to describe actual political events that take

on additional meaning, to including infomercials and appearances that look as though they are meaningful, but are actually set up specifically for public reception. For example, Kessel (1992) states that Carter used advertisements ranging between two and five minutes on television. Although revolutionary for 1976, the practice today is almost obsolete. Today, candidates either follow in the tradition of pseudo-events, and create an infomercial on the merits that it can be deemed a biopic, or simply strip any disguise from it, and place an advertisement no greater than one minute in length. Although Waterman does not make the leap, one can see how pseudo-event planning is something that does not stray far from the celebrity public appearance, or press conference.

More of the campaign norms of today saw their start in 1960s and 1970s. In addition to pseudo-events, there was greater attention devoted to using the events during the presidency and incumbency to set a tone regarding reelection. Dover (1994) claims that Lyndon Johnson was the first to use his incumbency, and the television coverage of the presidency, to establish himself as the candidate for re-election. Dover believes that Johnson used the coverage of Vietnam, the arms crisis with the Soviets, and the ongoing investigation of Kennedy's assassination to allude to the public that his presidency was more than a one year ascent. Of course today using the incumbency and the television coverage afforded to the position is a prerequisite to being re-elected.

The literature also marks the growth and decline of mediums in relation to the progression of campaigns. Benoit (2007) points out that the influence of television as a medium parallels the decline (1952-2000) of radio, magazines, and newspapers as influences on people relative to presidential campaigns. Over that same time period Benoit (2007) also points to the increasing impact of television. Similarly Jamieson

(1996, 44) points out that “in 1952 for the last time in the twentieth century, the amount spent on radio (\$3,111,050) exceeded that spent on television (\$2,951,328).” This is simple and straight-forward evidence that campaign strategies were shifting towards television, and permanently altering themselves.

### **Campaigns Packaging the Presidency**

The idea of being camera-friendly, and having the capability to sell oneself to the American public via television is a second major issue in the evolution of the presidential campaign. As campaigning has progressed, so, too, has packaging the candidates. This refers largely to the campaign’s growing attempt to capitalize and accentuate the personality characteristics of the candidate. Much like advertising a product, packaging hopes to sell the candidate to the people. Although policy can be packaged in an attempt to simplify initiatives for the electorate, the impetus here is on the growing trend of personality packaging. Many sources have discussed the packaging and its growth in depth. However very few of these sources make the comparison to what packaging represents when compared to entertainment news, and how celebrities strive for publicity and sell themselves to the masses in order to stay in the spotlight.

First one has to delve into the growth of packaging and its origin, which brings the literature back to Waterman (1999) and his recognition of pseudo-events. These are tailor-made for the packaging, as they are created by campaigns, so they can be manipulated such that they send a certain message to the public. Because of the degree to which packaging involves message control and image creation, the literature on those

topics will be referenced here, but will also be covered more extensively further on. Despite his troubles with Kennedy in 1960, Jamieson (1996) and Wyckoff (1972) refer to Nixon as beginning packaging. Wyckoff (1972, 342) notes that, when he was called on to create a Nixon campaign video, Wyckoff recalled a “college course in propaganda taken long ago,” and that selling an otherwise cynical audience on a glorifying piece such as a campaign video calls for forcing that audience to “detach the audience from their own reality...so that their minds are open to persuasion.” Jamieson (1996) works to clarify packaging with regards to Nixon’s 1972 campaign by introducing the packaging technique of message insinuation, or message control. “In 1972 Nixon would run not as a candidate but as The President...He accomplished that [ad campaign] with the indirect aid of George McGovern who violated the public’s sense of how a prospective president should look, act, and sound” (Jamieson 1996, 277). Jamieson (1996) looks at the growth of advertising here, but does not examine the fundamental change in the campaign itself. Nixon’s ad people had constructed an image of what “The President” was, and furthermore, distinguished George McGovern as not being that man. It was the ultimate step in image media.

Jamieson (1996), however, is not naïve enough to contend that packaging and selling the presidency started with Nixon. She states its acceleration within his 1968 and 1972 campaigns, but also notes that Eisenhower’s campaign foreshadowed the future of campaigning. Jamieson showed the dichotomy between the reluctant leadership of Adlai Stevenson in the 1952 campaign juxtaposed with an Eisenhower campaign that sought out the image of Eisenhower the war hero, and worked to capitalize on the general’s military glory and prestige. “In their relationships with their advertising agencies,

Eisenhower forecast the future of politics while Stevenson was a throwback to the past,” because in capitalizing on that image, Eisenhower hired an advertising team that had previously worked in Hollywood to polish his image (Jamieson 1996, 43). Today we have witnessed such growth that candidates surround themselves not with policy and legislative people. Instead “the candidate’s advisors are called ‘choreographers’ and ‘handlers,’” and their sole purpose is to monitor and adjust the image of the nominee, such that the public is seeing exactly what the campaign wants it to see (Jamieson 1992, 171). Benoit (2007, 182) illustrates the rise in packaging in reporting that “studies found that about four times as many minutes of presidential spots as minutes of news coverage of the presidential campaign were aired.” Although this statistic does not directly reflect the entertainment value of campaigning, it does imply that campaigns are packaging candidates and overwhelming the people with their form of images in favor of letting the news shape the candidate.

The idea of packaging the presidency is contingent upon the importance of image. One can only package a candidate if the campaign staff believes that the product of that package- a certain look or sound-bite or attitude- actually affects the voters. Although image can include policy decisions, the popularity within campaigns to package the candidates’ family, appearance, beliefs, interests, and morals, as Jamieson (1996) showed, implies that there is a fundamental interest in the Hollywood aspect of the president. Early literature, such as Brown (1960), understands the belief that the public has an understanding of who the president should be. Although in 1960 Brown is just portraying how a campaign and campaign biographers cover elections, he is absolutely laying the groundwork for the argument that there is an image to sell, and that image

actually changes over the years, and some outtakes from the images he speaks on are timeless. Campaigns are “well aware of the simultaneous tendencies toward pride in lineage...and the democratic insistence that a man is to be evaluated upon the basis of what he himself has achieved,” but which parts of that success and lineage are important is what changes from election to election (Brown 1960, 17). Brown points out that farming or being a war hero were prerequisites to the presidency, but moving beyond Brown into contemporary presidential campaigns, such characteristics now seem to be added bonuses more than anything else. Blume (1985, 13) makes the argument for the existence of such an image to be the product of the television age when he says “more than once during the 1984 campaign, the question was raised, ‘Could Washington, Lincoln, or even FDR have been elected in the video age?’...Washington was too ineffective a communicator, Lincoln too ugly, and Roosevelt too feeble...to be accepted by the modern image-conscious American electorate.” This message adds to the argument that there is stronger weight now on the materialism and image of the president than what is behind the suit.

The literature on the subject of image-creation is also fairly adamant that this is not new. It may be more prevalent today, but the pattern of voting behavior and campaign strategy is not unique. Brown (1960) is well-versed enough in it at that point that he can critically assess how well certain presidents played to the stereotypes. And one of the great image presidents was also elected in 1960. It is unquestionable that “one of Kennedy’s greatest assets was his ability to project a favorable personality and style through television” (Dover 1994, 29). Dover, O’Rourke (1997), and Kessel (1992) all recognize this as a sitting president’s strengths- the ability to sell the public on the image

that they want to see. Again, though, they see it through the lens of the President catering to the image that the public elected, not through the critical lens of what type of news coverage would allow that to be passed off as substance, or why does the campaign sell the image and the one-liners over the nuts and bolts of passed legislation or political stances. The importance of image is the turning point in whether or not to get elected. Kessel (1992, 70) supports this with an example where there was an incidence with unnecessary “meanness...that developed in the 1980 campaign when President Carter was viewed as making unnecessarily vindictive statements about Governor Reagan.” This was seen as un-presidential, and worked to undermine Carter’s campaign.

From a critical standpoint literature exists to support why such image-making is successful, and persists in the form it does today. The first point is the importance of images, literally. The television was an entirely different medium than anything else when it first emerged, subjecting candidates to another level of personalized scrutiny that they could not avoid. With the dawn of the television age “the criteria for candidates have also been modified. The candidate needs sufficient money, sufficient looks, and sufficient style to communicate via television” (Alexander 1972, 371). That being said the only reason there was a shift of criteria was due to the important ramifications of the television. Because of television “viewers may flatter themselves that they can discern via television something about the character, intellect, and personality- perhaps even the competence- of the nominees....John Kennedy’s television image became the classic illustration of the power of persona” (Adams 1983, 167).

One of the greatest tools to convey presidential images is advertising. The candidates not only advertise themselves in interviews, but also do so directly, and



shamelessly, through television ads and promotions. Benoit (2007, 69) notes the general pattern of election advertising as having four main stages: “First candidates use ID spots....The second phase, argument spots, tell us ‘what the candidate stands for.’ Most argument spots are not very specific. The third phase is to attack opponents. The last phase...is the vision spot.” It cannot be discounted that Benoit, in making a simple statement with regards to advertising, makes a point regarding the role of images. One must note the degree to which these are general, and largely rely on incorporating images associated with the candidate’s viability during these spots. There are very few practical policy implications within the vision spots and personal attacks. As Benoit (2007) points out, the candidates are anything but candid. They are selling an image of themselves and attacking the image of their opponent, no more. Of course O’Rourke (1997, 464) argues that sometimes the imagery and nostalgia is so blatant that “being six, [his son] is the one most affected by campaign ads.” Yet even within this little quip, O’Rourke makes the point that images and the simplicity of the ads work to make choosing a president much more about who or what do you like than about policy and critical viewing of their plans.

However there are limitations to advertisements and selling candidates through a soap opera lens. Advertisements “cannot erase a candidate’s weaknesses. They can remind voters of a candidate’s strengths, but advertising could not make Richard Nixon come across as a warm and open human being, or portray Ronald Reagan as having a first-class mind, or convince reporters that Jimmy Carter was being precise on the issues” (Kessel 1992, 132-3). Although they cannot just lie, this point underscores the fact that the goal is to create an image of all positives by downplaying any unsightly portions of a president.

Advertisements are just one way, albeit the most effective way, of controlling the message that reaches the public. This is another aspect of modern campaigning where everything is done in order to make a certain statement, both literally and subliminally. Just as I just said that advertisements cannot lie, they can create a new truth through implying messages for the public. George H.W. Bush revolutionized this practice through his ad campaign against Michael Dukakis regarding Willie Horton. “The power of the Horton mini-series was magnified as it unfolded soap-opera-like in news and ads; broadcasts that focused on the tale’s strategic intent and effect couldn’t effectively challenge its typicality” (Jamieson 1992, 42). The Bush campaign made the ad series enthralling to the point that it was reality television. It was a carefully concocted view of reality through the prism of how the Bush campaign wanted the public to see it. It was like opposite of a fictional series such as *Law and Order* that deals with issues of the day under the veil of fiction. The advertisements create a somewhat fictional message under the veil of factual advertising.

As it pertains to message control the Willie Horton ads were resounding successes. Jamieson (1992) points out that message control is contingent upon the ability of advertising permeating within the actual news media. In the Horton case “whenever a sound bite about Horton made its way into news, the requirement that reporters create a context evoked the whole Horton story. As a result it was told and retold” (Jamieson 1992, 26). Campaign managers are very aware that “a journalist’s ideas about what constitutes ‘real news’ is influenced by campaign managers and editors and the rest of the press pack” (Skewes 2007, 43). The press reports whatever they deem to be newsworthy, whether it be so because it actually is newsworthy (policy, public interest) or because it

will attract viewers. In the case of presidential elections, if all the press receives is a tightly wound message that is created to attract attention, they have to report on that. In 1988, the Bush campaign gave the media nothing worth criticizing, whereas Dukakis left something to be desired. “Bush’s media advisors planned the vice-president’s appearances in camera-ready settings that provided excellent videotape for the newscasts....Dukakis made speech after speech in front of the backdrop of a drab blue curtain, behind a wooden podium” (Polsby and Wildvasky 1991, 219). The message from the Bush camp was all-encompassing in that even his backdrop said what his campaign wanted it to say.

The ability to generate such a tight message extends beyond advertisements. The party conventions have become the signature time to send a message to a national audience and the ultimate pseudo-event. It is no coincidence that nominees almost without fail leave the conventions with a bump in their approval. “The candidates carefully control what is shown to the public: ‘Both parties in 1996 and 2000 presented tightly choreographed gatherings that kept any sign of division off the convention floor’ and therefore off television sets,” making the actual nomination process an absolute love-fest and haven for symbolic speech and visually pleasing aesthetics (Benoit 2007, 81).

In very close relation to message control is the concept of image creation. As it was briefly referred to earlier, image creation does not make a person into something that he is not, rather it makes a candidate the product of only his best qualities, and presents that person to the public. Ronald Reagan is seen as a pioneer in image marketing. “In 1984, President Reagan’s media advisers abandoned nearly all aspects of the issue-oriented political commercial...and ran the most effective ‘mood and image’

commercials ever seen in a presidential campaign” (Blume 9). Reagan simply read what the people wanted him to be and created that image and advertised it repetitively, until, to the people, the image was the man. Even Michael Deaver, a Reagan image-maker thought that “in the television age, image sometimes is as useful as substance” (Waterman 53). If you can create the proper image, the actual substance can be swept under the rug, or be brought to the forefront because the public trusts the image that is trying to sell them on something.

Jamieson (1996), O’Rourke (1997), and Dover (1994) all characterize the lengths different candidates have gone in order to create and preserve an image that is either a fallacy or a misnomer to who and what the candidate really is. All three essentially read like an actor playing a part, rather than the leader of the nation directing its people.

Jamieson (1996, 295) actually presents the literal ad plan for the group responsible for Nixon’s 1972 re-election campaign:

The advertising issued by the November Group faithfully characterized The President [Nixon] in the way recommended in the strategy memo the campaign would: ‘Present the President as an activist....Present the President as a man with long-range vision....Present the President as a man who inherited a mess....Present the President as a man with courage, decisiveness, and dedication....Present the issues.’

The most telling portion of that memo is the order in which they wished to present Nixon.

Issues are the last aspect of the president that is to be presented. The implication here is that style trumps substance when trying to create a presidential image. However, at least the memo was trying to expound upon a somewhat truthful representation. In reference to Pat Buchanan, O’Rourke (1997, 72) is very critical of where his message originates.

With regards to a Buchanan stump speech, “Forget Buchanan’s draft avoidance, his Mercedes-Benz, his lack of children, his hefty personal wealth, his life of speechwriting and bullshitting; he’s a man of the people out there.” For Pat Buchanan, and many

others, “out there” is an entirely different person than the one at home. This is a legitimate parallel between celebrities and the evolving politician. No matter what the reality is, the politician and the celebrity aim for creating an image that one can present to the public. And the television offers the politician and celebrity an opportunity to construct these images.

Even more telling is that the image is not confined to simply the candidate himself. When it comes to convention time, almost everything is scripted to convey the image of solidarity. At the 1996 Republican National Convention “the paradox [of scripting the unscripted] was best shown when Liddy [Dole] went ‘down’ among them. That was a staged event, showing that the audience was merely props, but was willing props, completely tamed. She wasn’t going into a lion’s den” (O’Rourke 1997, 377). The people that Dole went to shake hands with were far from everyday men and women; they were careful appointments through the campaign committee. There was no one in that crowd that would possibly think or act negatively to Dole. There was no risk factor. Again this is not a unique occurrence. O’Rourke (1997) also points out that the set-up is equally staged at the Democratic National Convention of the same year, and judging by the exploits of Richard Nixon it is clear that this has lasted and evolved over time. Again it is Waterman (1999) who makes the connection between politics and entertainment news with regards to imagery, believing that the television accentuates and fuels the public’s need for images.

To expand upon the point made in O’Rourke (1997), one must explore the degree to which image creation has grown and changed to its current incarnation. The present literature presents three distinct points of evolution that are relevant within this argument

of politicians as celebrities. Jamieson (1992; 1996) and Skewes (2007) all focus on the image-centric position of presidential campaigns, both contemporary and in their foundations. Jamieson (1996) points again to President Nixon as the first major development in image creation. Prior to Nixon, Jamieson points out that the incumbents took to the campaign trail as candidates on equal footing with the challengers. However, as can be seen in the Nixon memo of the November Group, President Nixon was the first to run as *President* Nixon, using the media attention and respect afforded the position.

Jamieson (1992) points to Bush-Dukakis as the next major turn in the image creation ladder. As has been previously alluded to, the Willie Horton ads provided a new means by which campaigns could receive television time. “News can provide a frame through which viewers are invited to see an ad. But 1988 was the year in which ads began routinely to contextualize news,” with the popularity of the Dukakis-Horton scandal (Jamieson 1992, 125). It was at this moment that campaign managers realized that their ads could not only give them the time that they had purchased, but if they were popular and entertaining enough, they could also be allotted time within regular news programs.

In another development consistent with the 1988 realization, John Kerry is documented as pioneering another campaign mechanism. “In 2004, pool reports from the Kerry press corps note that the candidate made several trips to the press section of the plane throughout the campaign season to celebrate a birthday or two, but not to talk about the issues. Candidates play to the press because they understand the role that the media play in their success or failure” (Skewes 2007, 13). In other words Kerry went out of his way, both on and off the record, to chat up the media, knowing that their opinions do

come through within their supposedly non-bias columns and television segments. In light of the fact that he was being painted as less personable than George W. Bush, Kerry mingled with reporters in an attempt to revise his image to those who helped create it. In this case, John Kerry expanded image creation to include time with the media that did not involve the general public, knowing fully that these were still the people who reported to the public.

It is important to note that even with the extensive literature that is available regarding image creation and packaging the presidency, such tactics would not be viable if the voting public could look beyond such entertainment, so the media could report on something more substantial and still retain ratings. In the next section, I review what has been written in regards to how the electorate has evolved with the campaign strategies.

### **Why has this evolution occurred?**

Ultimately campaigns only try to control what you hear if they know that the public is watching in the first place. To this extent, one must take a critical look at what has been written in regards to how voter preferences have changed. The first caveat with regards to this section is that it will not discuss opinion formation from a broad standpoint. One could write an extensive literature review on that alone. The literature seen here is directly related to the evolution of the campaign and campaign coverage. That is, it looks at the arguments already made in explaining what has pre-empted the media's change in coverage from the side of the public. Being examined here is how the independent vote is influenced, the growth of an image-centric public, and the waning

influence of party politics in response to the growing influence of the individual. This section seeks to review what has been written about the third ring of the election circus. It is important to note why this entertainment politics news media attracts ratings and voters.

The independent voter is the goal of any campaign. For the most part partisan voters will stay partisan voters throughout their lives, so it is the independents, or undecided voters that decide elections almost every time. Wattenberg (1991) explains the change in voter decision-making very simply through writing that from 1952 to 1988, sociological issues (demographics and characteristics) regarding the candidates has more than doubled as a reason to vote either for or against a candidate. With that statistical notification it is easy to see why campaigns have catered their events and the media changed its coverage of campaign events in order to draw these independent consumers themselves. However very little of the literature on this topic delves into what the campaign coverage finds itself morphing into as a result of this change in voter attributes, or whether or not the converse is true and voter attributes changed because of the way campaigns are run.

Lazarsfeld, Berelson, and Gaudet (1944) and Campbell (2008) both recognize the means that undecided voters take in order to formulate a side in support or against a candidate. That being said, right away it is important to note that in having similar view points, the following idea has been floating around in literature for over sixty years based on the publication dates of both Campbell and Lazarsfeld, Berelson, and Gaudet. We are not dealing with a fundamentally new electorate that has far different preferences than in the past. Such information tends to corroborate the major theme that campaigns have



simply evolved to better understand how voters make their decisions. On that note, Lazarsfeld, Berelson, and Gaudet and Campbell both describe the public's pattern in taking shortcuts in order to make their decisions. Campbell says that undecided voters, whose interest level is average, will want to accumulate information in the flow of their day, and not mess up their itinerary. Lazarsfeld, Berelson, Gaudet support this assertion in pointing out, as early as 1944, how undecided, less-informed voters will look to sound-bites from the candidates or conversations, and images to form their opinion. In this case one can see the obvious attraction of campaigns to cater to such needs. Make your campaign known within the eye of the general public and it may just win a point for that candidate.

Lazarsfeld, Berelson, and Gaudet point to as early as 1944 as a time where the proper image could affect the outcome of an election. Polsby and Wildvasky (1991, 6) reiterate how long-standing image-centered politics has reigned, stating:

Specific candidates of special attractiveness or unattractiveness may under certain circumstances sway voters to leave the party of their choice. The extraordinary elections of President Eisenhower are an example of this. His appeal to Democrats was quite amazing. But this was possible partially because these Democrats did not perceive Eisenhower as a partisan figure, but rather as a nonpartisan war hero.

Although this is also a point that demonstrates the theme and foundation of image creation, it is also critical evidence of voter tendencies being shaped by image as early as 1952. Eisenhower's image as war hero and above the political turmoil transcended partisan grounds. Although he ultimately was not apolitical, Eisenhower managed to create that image and won an election with help from his perceived moral superiority.

Jamieson (1992) pushes back the date of image based politics to the foundation of the country. In talking about the Jeffersonian election, Jamieson states that the attacks on

Jefferson were aimed at creating a false image of him. The attacks consisted of him being amoral, lascivious, and a French sympathizer and then preaching these ideas completely out of proportion, to create an image that would strike a chord with American voters. To that extent Jefferson's election sounds very similar to current television ads. The real point of the literature in this regard is to point out how much of a defining feature image has been in the history of United States democracy. That being said, we can also see the difference between letters written about Thomas Jefferson and national ad campaigns leading voters to believe that Michael Dukakis sympathizes with murderers. That change can be attributed to the degree in which campaigns have since set out to capitalize on the focus on image in the US culture.

Wattenberg (1991) and Jamieson (1992) set out theories as to how campaigns can use the voter preferences in adjusting their campaigns. Wattenberg (1991, 30) employs a schematic that analyzes the progression of the voters' decision-making as "demographic characteristics lead to psychological affiliations and biases which modify/screen candidate performance evaluations and issues which determine voting." Jamieson (1992, 27) adds to this explanation of campaigns as we know them by stating that images and "concrete language [are] more evocative than statistical abstractions," thus again sound-bites and photo opportunities are deemed effective based on what the voter uses to decide in elections. They simply work more efficiently than trying to explain policy positions.

Campaigns have adjusted to consumer needs for drama, imagery, and sound bites, by emphasizing the candidate over the party. "Whereas candidates were once dependent on the party organizations to get their message out, now they can appeal directly to the electorate via the media....They are instead free to craft their own individual appeals

tailored specifically to the pressing...issues of the day” (Wattenberg 1991, 21). This is not just the product of campaigns. The media and the electorate embrace the individual, and like the idea of dramatizing the effect of one man on the nation, rather than the abstract political party. The national news media “exaggerate the importance of a particular President by illustrating and describing his actions as if they are the most important events in government,” no matter how mundane the President’s actions actually are (Dover 1994, 30). However one cannot argue with the importance the media puts on the presidency because people tend to vote based on how the president is acting. “Presidential popularity has a powerful carryover effect on the outcome of midterm congressional elections” (Brody and Sigelman 1983, 325). Voters identify the president’s weaknesses as the entire party’s weaknesses, which is ironic considering the aforementioned fading of party politics. In any case it is clear that voters see the presidency more so than the party as leading the country, as if it is one man running the entire machinery of government.

In summation the literature almost universally supports the idea of an evolving campaign strategy that has to do with the interests of the campaign, the media, and the voters also evolving. The literature is also almost unanimous in not making the parallel of current political news with that of entertainment and celebrity news or making the parallel between the handlers behind a president and those behind a celebrity. However, the literature goes far enough that it does essentially spell out the degree to which this parallel can take place and the evolution to this point. The central themes that can be pulled from the literature, in terms of campaigning today include the growth of image-creation and packaging with regards to non-policy characteristics of the candidates, the

increase in attacks on personality, and dramatization (which will be covered more in depth in the next section) of advertising to the point that it is comparable to soap operas, and the personalization of the candidate and candidate coverage. Moving forward, the forthcoming literature review regarding television media coverage of presidential campaigns will create a strong foundation from which one can easily see the parallels between the president and celebrity, and celebrity coverage and the presidential campaign coverage.

## **The Evolving Media Coverage of Presidential Campaigns**

Although it has been included to some degree in the previous section, it is important to take a separate look at how the media cover presidential campaigns. Like the campaign and the voters, media coverage has evolved as well. This media coverage is both reactive and proactive in the evolution of hard news to look increasingly like celebrity news. It is on this point that this section will review the literature progressing the rise and decline of media outlets, and then using television as a focal point to shift the review towards contemporary news programs. Much like the last section, this section will show how literature has suggested a change in the news, cites that news is not what it used to be, and gives examples of what news has become. Although much has been written about the difference and transition between hard news and soft news, very little has been written about media coverage resembling celebrity news.

### **The Rise of Television**

The last section dealt with the campaigns in relation to television, without really addressing other mediums in great length. This is due in large part to the role television plays as an instigator in changing the substance of news. However we cannot just decline to mention that other mediums were/are still important, and how we arrived at this point of imagery via television as opposed to what used to be a radio and print-media dominated field of politics.

“Before 1950, most Americans used newspapers for news. Television has since then become the dominant conveyer of news” (Benoit 2007, 178). This is not a surprise but must be noted in that the last section really saw 1952 become the dawn of a new era in campaigning. It is not coincidence that this was around the same time that television took over as the national media. However television did not emerge on the scene and instantly change everything. For the first 15 years, television was essentially radio with images. “Campaign coverage as we know it today is a relatively modern invention. As recently as 1968, when Richard Nixon defeated Hubert Humphrey, media coverage of the campaigns tended to simply follow the candidates and what they were saying,” as opposed to television media as we know it today, which analyzes and critiques, and emphasizes every little thing that happens (Skewes 2007, 7). Benoit (2007) points to the 1976 debates as a major turning point in how television began to take shape as the talking heads we see today. “News coverage of the 1976 debates, across media, focused substantially less on issues or policy than the debates themselves,” and the styles, images, and reactions to the candidates (Benoit 2007, 187). This is when television recognized

itself as having the ability to critique things that did not even exist to the public before. This was the media responding to the images that the campaign was presenting.

However the television news we see today is even far different from the revolutions of 1976. “The changes are myriad. More news outlets and a 24-hour news cycle have made the media more omnipresent, and the waning political party system has made the media more important....[Campaigns] have increasingly turned to political strategists to set the tone and the agenda for the election and to costly national advertising campaigns to reach voters” (Skewes 2007, 51). As Skewes alludes to, it is under these conditions that the media began working to fill the news void with anything and everything deemed newsworthy. If it could draw an audience it is newsworthy. In the case of presidential campaigns, the candidate needed to add the political strategists to make sure that they were newsworthy for the right reasons.

However, personalizing news and critiquing details did not simply arise with the onset of cable. President Kennedy pre-empted the media’s enjoyment in reporting on his family and the White House and courted television news indirectly, such as through “the guided tour that his wife gave of the White House, and by the circumstances such as the Cuban missile crisis,” which makes him ahead of his time in terms of creating and sustaining an image of himself that was slightly fabricated, but the public loved (Dover 1994, 29). Kennedy’s White House tours proved to be foreshadowing the future of the media with regards to the presidency. Around 1968, “the media were turning up the heat on the candidates, and looking at the things they weren’t saying as much as at what they were saying” (Skewes 2007, 8). Again both of these developments are significant because they correlate with the time frame in which the campaigns are starting to portray

images and control messages, which plays into the give and take between the candidate and the media.

As much as it can be stated that media started personalizing the story in response to the carefully crafted messages coming out of the campaign, Benoit (2007, 194) also makes the argument that the news did so in order to endear itself to a shrinking television audience. “Personalization...is the overwhelming tendency to downplay the big social, economic, or political picture in favor of the human trials, tragedies, and triumphs that sit on the surface of events....[t]he journalist’s fear that probing analysis will turn off audiences to the relative ease of telling the human interest side of the story.” The key to this criticism is the degree to which the media reports the personal issues instead of major issues, and the fact that they do so in order to keep an audience. Benoit (2007) and O’Rourke (1997) also touch upon this problem with dramatization and how it too is done in the wake of waning audiences. O’Rourke (1997) covers this using 1992 as a focal point in which the personal was reported as political, even though negative attacks were based mostly on characteristics and values, not political issues at all.

The move to dramatization can also be attributed to a little animosity between politician and reporter. After years of being subject to what amounted to little more than press releases, the media began to dig deeper to find something newsworthy, since everything on the surface was so carefully crafted. The media decided to be proactive rather than reactive to the campaign trail. Van Zoonen (2003) submits that the media is actually becoming more aware of the dramatization and orchestration and is digging deeper in order to uncover newsworthy material. Skewes (2007, 27) argues that campaign coverage in itself has become such an extravaganza because “as political

campaigns became more media savvy and...the media responded by looking more closely at the contest and the political maneuvering by the candidates, resulting in the 'inside baseball' coverage that focuses on the process of getting elected." It can be attributed to this animosity that both Van Zoonen (2003) and Skewes (2007, 13) are both right, which is best summed up in that "despite the candidates' attempts to court the press, [coverage] is not always favorable....Coverage focuses on public opinion polls, campaign strategies, and stories about the candidates that put too much emphasis on the negative aspects of their characters." This argues that there is also a degree of contempt between the two sides in that one does not give enough information, and the other has no muzzle on what it will and will not report.

Although one can make a point justifying the news coverage as the literature perceives it today, one must still hold the media accountable for not critically analyzing policy. However I think the friction between the campaign and the media can be best summed up in the way that campaigns perceive news. The campaign feels as though, if worked on correctly, "news is advertising" (O'Rourke 1997, 62). The media however, fed up with the press releases and pseudo-events believe that "change is news. Stability isn't" (Benoit 2007, 194). Ultimately such competing view points find the two sides battling for coverage, and set the stage for the next section- contemporary television news.

### **Contemporary Television News**



The television news and its coverage of politics as we know it facilitates the celebrity culture that will be examined later chapters. It does this in a number of different ways and because of a number of different influences upon it. However its great power and responsibility derives from the “gate keeping” function... “[where] journalists and editors decide what stories will be covered” in the news” (Benoit 2007, 181). Because of this, television news controls what is produced in the reporting and seen in American homes. It is in this regard that television news can be held culpable for generating an entertainment news feel with regards to hard news issues. Skewes (2007) makes a number of points in this regard, arguing that most of America gains its understandings and sense of the world from the news, but their knowledge is limited to the stories that the media choose to show, and how they choose to present it. A number of sources, including Skewes (2007), Blume (1985), and Arterton (1984), expound upon this in referring to the news media’s ability to influence what issues have salience with the viewers. Arterton (1984, 6) presents statistics to show the reader how the media “is stunningly successful in telling its readers what to think about.” Arterton does not specify immediately whether this is a positive or negative, but for the sake of this argument we have documented the degree to which the media leads the viewer into the direction of the personalized, entertaining story. More telling statistics point out that “since 1968, the positive evaluations of the candidates for president have lagged behind the negative ones...and many media critics place the blame for this squarely on the negative tone of campaign coverage,” which would play right into the idea of dramatization and the aforementioned preference of the audience to have theatrics included with its news (Skewes 2007, 31). Yet within this gate keeping function, the

media stretches itself in several different directions which dictate who sees what and what gets seen.

Several years ago, when it was acceptable for news programs to operate at a loss, just reporting the news was the only direction in which news programs could proceed. However advertising income has spear-headed an appeasement to ratings in some regards. The nightly news programs simply cannot afford to be straight-forward news. If they were simply informative, they would be a disaster in this day of profits. “People don’t really want to watch or read news that does the right thing. The *McNeil-Lehrer NewsHour* was a great example of this,” because it was one of the most informative shows on television, but it simply did not rate high enough (Curtis 2007, 253).

Presumably it lost ratings to a sitcom, or *E! News*. To combat any loss in legitimacy and gain ratings back, Benoit (2007, 193) touches on one of the main secrets of news media:

At times the news media does provide useful information about the candidates; however it would be a mistake to simply assume that the news informs voters about the issues or the content of important events in a campaign....The news also has a tendency to focus on scandals....Scandal may be titillating and voters may need to know about candidates’ foibles. However, coverage of issues tends to be slighted.

Almost all irking aspects of the news media can be directly linked to the battle for ratings. “If voters think that campaigns are negative, one possible explanation is that the news coverage accentuates the negative. This emphasis is not surprising because attacks are points of conflict, and conflict is interesting” (Benoit 2007, 186). This statement is harmonious to the fact that elections play out like soap operas on TV in their conflict, resolution, bickering, and dramatization.

However this is not to say that substantive issues are not covered, but they are more likely to be covered in terms of sound-bites and images. In sound bites of personal candidate attacks, the media has found the perfect justification for those who allege that

the news does not cover enough hard topics. “Information has been replaced by entertainment...substantial campaigning by elegant marketing...and reproducible political deliberations by melodramatic personal combat” (Van Zoonen 2003, 103). This is the best of both worlds in that one reports political happenings, but still is in a position to offer images and conflict. But this growth is the product of a stronger hand at play, which is the fight to gain viewers back from entertainment programming.

In fighting with weekly sitcoms and *E! News* for viewers, the nightly news has to do the best in its ability to make its stories as interesting as possible. Curtis (2007, 135-6) writes about how the media attempts to skirt its limitations through covering every real event possible:

Mass media can't really report on hearsay such as who was seen with who, who's cheating on who, and so on, without losing credibility as a Real News Source. They can [and do]...report on factual occurrences, such as weddings, divorces, births, and funerals. While they claim to stand above the fray as far as celebrity gossip is concerned, they do exercise a certain amount of plausible deniability from time to time.

And campaign coverage is the major product of this movement to make the news more intriguing. Skewes (2007, 21) actually makes the critical leap that will be made in the later chapters here: “the celebritization...of coverage in general tends to wash away debate and discussion about issues...it's just a lot easier and the ratings are a lot better if you get people to talk about, you know, is Al Gore boring or how much money has George Bush raised, than welfare and poverty.” In an effort for ratings, it is simply more entertaining to the public if one discusses the gossip surrounding the candidates, or their overall appeal. And ultimately, with news shows not immune to ratings any more, it is an effort to gain viewership and gain sponsorship to remain on the air.

Even within the media community there is a level of recognition that the media has changed in order to maintain their necessary funding. The media covers the

candidates, not the issues because, if they did it the right way “they also wouldn’t have much of an audience,” according to one former television executive (Linsky 1983, 37). The literature is fairly supportive of this claim, with Curtis (2007) citing the CNN most popular articles section including the subjects of raw fish and surviving adrift at sea through playing air guitar during the height of the search for Bin Laden. In a response to how political news caters to viewers in this way, Timothy Garton Ash states “Europeans are watching a new American soap opera. After ‘Dallas’ and ‘Dynasty’, we have...’Democracy’” (Van Zoonen 2003, 110).

It is when discussing the current state of television news that the existing literature is beginning to make the connection between celebrity and entertainment, and the fading of traditional news stories. The pressure to maintain an audience, as well as the stagnant flow of information from the carefully tuned campaign trail has led to these comparisons being made. The future prospects of the news do not look promising either as Benoit (2007, 195) states: “It is unfortunate that some reporters apparently believe issues are boring and that they are incapable of writing about issues in a way that makes them interesting.” Simply put, without the entertainment factor, the contemporary media struggles to make campaign news a viable television option in the wake of more “entertaining” programming available.

## **Conclusion**

In reviewing this literature one sees that there is a plethora of literature on several topics regarding presidential campaigns, media coverage, and celebrities in the media, but

very little ties the three major topics together. The purpose here is to cover the general themes that will be used in making the critical connection of presidential campaigns and their coverage to celebrities and celebrity coverage. The goal is to use this literature as a basis by which one can understand and properly analyze what is seen on television with regards to presidential campaign. Moving forward the main themes to carry over from this chapter include the rise of personalization of the candidate, creating a candidate to whom people can relate, creating and packaging an image of the candidates that capitalizes on characteristics and personality traits, rather than policy beliefs, the increased materialized scrutiny of presidential candidates (and their families), the growth of pseudo-events, the role of television and audiences in promoting this change, and the role of the media in accepting the change.

Going into the next chapter, first there will be connections made from those themes previously mentioned to the definition of celebrity coverage as it was given at the beginning of chapter one (pages three and four), as one may have noticed that the leap between campaign and celebrity is rarely made. After reviewing the favorable comparison, we will move to reviewing the literature on celebrity coverage, presidential candidates utilizing soft news outlets, and the inevitable intersection between celebrity coverage and presidential campaign coverage. Chapter two and parts of chapter three will also work to define celebrity news as different from and also a subsection to soft news. These two chapters will be an exercise in clarifying the unique niche of celebrity news within the well-covered hard news – soft news debate.

Moving forward chapter three will be a media analysis that covers network news coverage of the presidential campaign. Using that analysis, and what is reviewed here,

there will then be an analysis the infiltration of celebrity news into hard news networks. The hypothesis based on the literature review is that there is a significant celebrity news presence in network news channels. As it has been reviewed, the media analysis will show that presidential candidates (touching on themes from chapter one), although not treated exactly like celebrities, will cultivate an image and be treated in a manner such that there will be some common characteristics between the candidates and celebrities.

To conclude this research, there will be final verdict as to whether or not the hypothesis was correct, and a debriefing that will include the implications of the research. Most importantly in this final conclusion, there will be a brief synopsis of the findings and a qualitative assessment as to whether or not the evolving presidential campaign coverage and the move towards more celebrity-esque coverage is a positive (involves a greater amount of the electorate) or negative (does not inform anyone with substantial issues of a campaign) with respect to American democracy.

## **Chapter Two:**

### **Celebrity and Entertainment News and Its Effect on Campaign Coverage**

This section deals with the rise in entertainment news coverage in terms of its origins, what it offers, and how it has seeped itself into mainstream news culture. The literature available in this context is largely flawed in that, with the exception of excerpts from Curtis (2007), it is not comparative in nature. The literature either simply looks at celebrity-based and entertainment news independently, or comments on how the hard news media has changed its coverage (and candidates have changed their campaigns), but does not tie such a change to the popularity of entertainment news. With that said, the literature does cover the topic thoroughly enough such that one only needs to make one additional step on a linear path to see how it connects to the campaign coverage that has made up the bulk of chapter one. Through reviewing the celebrity literature one sees the inevitable parallels between it and the patterns that have emerged in campaign formation and coverage. So this chapter will include a brief synopsis of the emergence of celebrity news, and more importantly what constitutes celebrity coverage. Using this information, the chapter will move to use the analysis of campaign coverage literature in the first chapter to make connections between what is recognized as celebrity coverage and give examples as to how it is infiltrating the presidential campaign trail. This chapter and chapter three also hope to clarify the place of celebrity in the realm of soft and hard news. Ultimately this chapter will be a historical background for the new research that will be provided in subsequent chapters.

## Celebrity News, and Its Characteristics

Celebrity news emerged as a home for popular culture interest stories that did not have a home on hard news outlets. It was created as niche programming so that hard news outlets could maintain their focus on actual hard news, and delegate soft news to other shows (Curtis 2007, 247). This is not a new trend, as the same can be said for the newspaper industry. Many of the newspaper corporations that own a number of publications also own at least one tabloid. This is seen as a marketing strategy, but also a strategy in maintaining the integrity of the newspapers by allowing them to keep their focus on hard news (Curtis 2007, 135).

Celebrity news' actual growth is largely credited to the growing influence celebrities are having on the culture (i.e. using their fan base to enact change) and the previously alluded to 24-hour news void. Curtis (2007, 140) attributes the fascination with celebrity gossip and movements to the need to talk about something even when there is nothing of substantial value to report. Additionally such attention is cyclical in that celebrities now use the new time allotted to their influence to make carefully crafted political statements that are deemed newsworthy in that void. "During his stint on *The West Wing*, Martin Sheen who played the president developed a habit of making political announcements to the media just like his make-believe character did.... There's no real good explanation for why Mass Media would even bother to print his statements" other than that somewhere along the line as these shows covering celebrities grew in ratings, it



became acceptable and noteworthy to cover such events (Curtis 2007, 139-40). So to explain the growth of celebrity news is to look at how the ratings for such coverage were high enough for it to warrant media attention. Considering all of the references to ratings in the previous chapter, the next logical step would be to cover politics like celebrities and open up campaigns to wholly new audiences. In the wake of the celebrity success, hard news found itself behind the market. The realization was that “people don’t really want to watch or read news that does the right thing. The *McNeil-Lehrer NewsHour* was a great example of this. Quality news, mostly information, and no one watched it,” especially when there is a softer, more distilled alternative waiting on another program (Curtis 2007, 253). Now we see a re-emergence of celebrity news within hard news outlets because of the growing audience that tunes into the entertainment news programs. As evidence to this point, Curtis (2007, 155) notes that “entertainment and celebrity gossip attract a lot of Web site traffic....What better way to attract even more traffic than to dress up [gossip] as real news?” That being said it is important to discuss exactly what kind of coverage is characteristic of celebrity news, as opposed to hard, political campaign reporting.

When referring to the way in which celebrities are covered, there are two avenues that are of most use in comparison to presidential campaigns. Celebrity coverage will either refer to how the celebrities are seen in their personal lives (i.e. what is seen on *E! Entertainment News*) or how they are received performing their craft. This is of most use to this study in terms of actors. Many of the references that the literature makes to presidential candidates as celebrities refer to candidates making themselves, or the media making them out to be, protagonists or antagonists in a plot-line. Celebrity coverage, in

this sense, is summed up in Benoit (2007) and O'Rourke (1997) as instances in which there is overt dramatization and entertainment, without sufficient substance. Celebrity coverage in this sense can also refer to what Corner and Pels (2003, 2) call "a 'culture industry,'" where popularity of the persona or image is more important than the substance and implications. Later in this chapter when there will be a breakdown into how celebrity coverage has seeped into political life, some references will be made to the omnipresence of a "soap opera-like atmosphere" or instances where a candidate is made out to look like a sitcom star. All of these are areas where celebrity treatment has aligned with presidential campaigns.

The other way to categorize celebrity coverage is by defining how celebrities as individuals are covered on entertainment news outlets or tabloids. Wattenberg (1991) notes specifically that entertainment news is distinct in its personalization. Highlighting family, appearance, beliefs, interests, and morals are all things that actors and sports stars attempt to use in order to win their way into households across the country. In categorizing how this benefits a celebrity Waterman (1999, 11) notes "if a rock or rap star's 'bad-boy' image no longer sells records, then have him clean up his act, get married, and find God...present a more saleable image to the American public." So not only does celebrity-based news cover such a transformation of personal characteristics, but it also inadvertently highlights the degree to which image is part of a celebrity's occupation. Celebrities stay that way through managing the media, thus celebrity coverage should be closer to a press release or staged event than that of hard political coverage. Street (2003, 92) supports this conclusion stating that "celebrity status is a matter of managing the image of, and access to, their stars. It is about deciding on what

interviews, with whom, when and managing....Managing access is also about insuring that it reaches its target audience.” Because celebrities manage their images so carefully, such soft news should be entirely divided from political news, however that is not necessarily the case.

A celebrity is called such because of the attention he or she is given by the general public. This attention is received because of occupation, but maintained because the public sees this person either living in a different world than the general populace, or because, despite their occupation, they live much like everyone else. Pels (2003) refers to this sociological and psychological response to celebrities when he states that celebrity news is a vehicle which turns the celebrity into a neighbor through blending the professional and private images into one familiar face. And this is done through emphasizing stylized personal characteristics. From a media standpoint, this is reported as (celebrity) news because that is what the people want to hear.

Style in itself is another characteristic of celebrities. Pels (2003, 45) says that “style refers to an heterogeneous ensemble of ways of speaking, acting, looking, displaying, and handling things, which merge into a... manner, message and package.” Although everyone, even the most mundane of politicians can lay claim to having some sort of style, it is the emphasis on style in reporting that separates celebrity news and celebrities from the traditional idea of politics and hard news. Soft news is often said to emphasis style over substance, and hard news being more substantial. However in celebrity coverage of campaign it is not the style of the broadcast or presentation that is the focus, but the style and presentation of the presidential candidate.

Despite having these descriptions of what constitutes soft and hard news, very little of the literature diagnoses the change in presidential campaigning and coverage relative to an increased emphasis on celebrity-like treatment. Using the aforementioned descriptions of what to look for in celebrity coverage, news, and treatment, the next section will look into examples where celebrity treatment and soft news tactics have already invaded the traditional ideas of campaigning and campaign coverage.

### **The Influence of Celebrity News on the Public and the Campaign Trail**

The first question to ask when noting that a celebrity atmosphere has overcome campaigns is what characteristics make the presidential campaign a perfect fit for such a transition. Elliot (1998, 834) rationalizes the infatuation with celebrity in a manner that fits nicely with why a similar infatuation occurs with the celebratory aspects of presidential campaigns. He states that “celebrity has been analyzed as a central structuring point for self-constitution, and as a phenomenon that shapes narratives of the self and of interaction with others.” Essentially the audience for celebrity news is one that seeks to compare themselves with those that are deemed most influential. On top of that it can also be a point of bonding between oneself and others. Sociological interpretation aside, Street (2003) makes a point that can be transferred rather easily to the presidential candidate-as-celebrity phenomenon in that one wants to know the president as a person in comparison to oneself and representative of one’s own characteristics, not as an ideologue who deals in matters that the average person does not delve.

Aside from who this audience is and why they exist, there is a legitimate reason to be targeting them- they have a vote. “Focusing on candidates’ personal qualities rather than ‘arcane’ policy debates...appeal to their apolitical, entertainment-seeking audiences,” and can summarily gain the candidates votes from people who would not have shown up before (Baum 2005, 214). Just like viewers make the determination as to who is a good guy amongst actors, athletes, television sitcom characters, so too do they want characterize their presidential candidates in the same manner. Since an audience for entertainers and celebrities exists and the media spends a great deal of time on them, it would be illogical for political groups and candidates not to address this substantial audience in some way as well.

One can argue as to which group- the population, the media, or the campaigns- has facilitated the incorporation of celebrity treatment onto presidential candidates the most, but what cannot be argued is the existence of entertainment news coverage in presidential campaigns. Curtis (2007, 258) writes that on his website that explores the worlds of entertainment-as-news and hard news, since “1999, only two breaking news stories have caused a crush of traffic so high it brought our servers to their knees. The first was 9/11. That’s understandable. The other one? Michael Jackson Verdict Reached.” So no matter who brought this craving of juicy, personalized, dramatized, and scandalous news upon society, it is fact that it is actually here. Pels (2003, 46) goes as far as saying that celebrity is the driving force of a secularized American culture and actually acknowledges that this transformation has been ongoing for quite some time:

The proximate features of what is generally described as an ‘Americanisation’ of political culture or as the rise of ‘designer’ or an ‘audience’ democracy have already been hinted at: the blurring of traditional political distinctions following the demise of the politics of principle, the rise of the floating voter and the experiment-prone political consumer, the drift towards the political middle...and especially, the mediatization and commercialization of political campaigning.

So as will be shown in this section is that there are various instances in the past where celebrity coverage and treatment has been attributed to presidential campaigns. There are examples where the media will paint the presidential campaign as a celebrity, star-studded affair, or overly dramatize a political scenario. There will be examples of political campaigns and leadership intermingling with celebrities because of their influence on the people and the media. And most prevalent are the examples from the literature in which the campaigns market their candidates as a celebrity. What will be seen here is that past literature has covered the fact that campaigns and campaign coverage have changed, but the literature has not consistently applied such changes to what is seen in the world of celebrity coverage and news.

Whether or not it is to blame for the transition to personalization of the political campaign, there is no doubt that the media now follows and covers the personal image stories of candidates. As was mentioned earlier, today's media is dealing with a ratings game that previously did not apply to television news. Early television news was allowed to operate at a loss, and be supported by the other network's other programming. Today the news is not immune to profit margin. So now the reporting has to cater to an audience. "Mass Media isn't fabricating news. The information is all there, it's just being emphasized and organized differently, not by importance but by what people are most likely interested in....This general lack of interest in real, hard news forces Mass Media to take complex topics, distill them to their base components, then overdramatize some facets of them...to draw eyeballs" (Curtis 2007, 251). Although one cannot paint the media as totally faultless, Curtis hits on the trends that are occurring in presidential campaign reporting- dramatization and trying to draw attention. Some of this reporting is

due to what is given to the press. The campaigns continue to embellish the celebrity status of their candidate, and the media continues to treat their every move much in the same way that they do Brad Pitt because there is a major market for such information. However the media does its fair share of adding entertainment value.

There are still opportunities to give good, hard, informative media attention to presidential campaigns. During those opportunities where the media could give a hearty examination of healthcare policy or welfare reform, instead there is a growing propensity to delve into polling, much like what *American Idol* has become- an entertainment vehicle where it is more about the elimination and leading than the singing at some points. As one will see in the forthcoming media analysis, polling is an aspect of celebrity news. Although it is not coded for in the media analysis it is important to be aware of the degree that polling has increased over time. Referring to the results of the media analysis one will see that polling is no longer limited to who is winning, or who has a stronger stance on this policy. Today polling covers much more personal issues, such as likability, speaking ability, strength for the job. These are areas that close in on celebrity style popularity polling.

This is not a new phenomenon. Judging of some sort, if not polling, has taken on an increasingly entertainment-style approach. Jamieson (1992, 171) reports in 1988 where there was an opportunity to do some investigative candidate reporting, the campaign beat writers more closely resembled “theatre critics.” Instead of judging a party platform, campaign stories and reports were more concerned with the candidate’s gala, a potential scandal, a strong sound-bite, or documenting what the recent poll said.

Jamieson essentially described reporters as being the Simon Cowells (of *American Idol* fame) of presidential campaigns.

A potential scandal is the ultimate entertainment on the campaign trail. Reporters will go out of their way to find one, because they are personalized. Considering the fact that almost everyone is in tune to when Lindsay Lohan or Britney Spears does something crazy, television media would love to attract that audience to the campaign trail. The scandals are the entertainment; they are the juicy portion of news, no matter how little they actually have to do with the state of the union. An added incentive to the attention that the reporter and the network that report the scandal may receive is the opportunity to exact a certain level of revenge on a candidate that has so carefully crafted an image. Curtis (2007, 204) brings up the Dick Cheney incident where Dick Cheney shot a friend with quail shot. Curtis notes that this happened more regularly on hunting trips than one would think, and although it is noteworthy, it is not worth more than a day of news. However “Mass Media would have none of that....[It] happened during a slow news week...[involving] an administration that regularly punished members of the media for asking harsh questions by sending them to the back of the room during press conferences. The media was ready to rip someone a new one, and they had a bunch of column inches that needed filling.” Add to this that Cheney is notoriously blunt, harsh, and straight-laced, and this becomes an entertaining piece that could be run for a week, remembered for years, and joked about incessantly. Although all of what Curtis mentions in regards to the Cheney story is interesting, none of the jokes and week of columns adds up to an informative use of news time.



Based on this case, it would seem that the television media can be very vindictive to presidential candidates, which would explain the tight-knit public relations unit that surrounds the candidate. However the media can be just as accommodating. In so much that rock stars and movie stars always comment on their charity work, so too do presidents send out press releases about all the good things that they are doing or will do. In covering the president one would think that such a press release would be dealt with differently than a celebrity. There would be fact checking, seeing if there was another side to the story, and unraveling the tight spin on the candidate or president's action (if it were spun). This is not always the case. Just as rock stars get their charitable work on the airwaves as easily they do their concert dates, sometimes the presidential press releases are dealt with the same velvet gloves. "Nothing embodies laziness quite like the Unpaid Placement Masquerading as Actual Article...Not only are press releases picked up as articles, they're usually picked up word for word with no changes whatsoever" (Curtis 2007, 59). It is here that the media gives politicians a free pass that should only be afforded to celebrities. Presidential candidates are often times going to deal with some of the toughest issues in the world, and should be held to task. However they are allowed a certain amount of leeway because the audience tunes out complicated, alien ideologue talk. To this extent "media [also] interviews celebrities the same way it does politicians for the most part," and presidential nominees give exclusives to soft news shows at the same frequency as they do hard news (Curtis 2007, 137). It is because the nightly hard news is not the only show around that the media also has to compromise its own stringent reporting. There is a fear that if they ask difficult questions, the presidential candidate

will get just as much air time on the entertainment news shows, on the talk shows, or appearing with celebrities and might even reach a greater audience.

Because of the attention dedicated to celebrities, and the audience that they attract, presidential candidates are not blind to the benefits of mingling with the rock stars, movie stars, and athletes of the world. Most likely the audience that they will attract is one larger than what they will see in their usual realm of media, and one that is important to whether or not they are elected. According to Van Zoonen (2003, 110), “Celebrity endorsements provide the two crucial ingredients that spin doctors and journalists crave during election campaigns: a new storyline, and with a bit of luck, an attractive female twenty-something.” Van Zoonen’s most important point may be her second one. In appearing with celebrities, the presidential candidates reach a new demographic. Even if the candidate says nothing at all, though, there is still a photo opportunity in which that “attractive female twenty-something” looks absolutely enthralled with the candidate. That is a picture that can sell to others like (or attracted to) that female. A photo opportunity like that becomes a commercial opportunity. If an alcoholic beverage wants to target young adults, its advertisements will feature such young adults. An appearance with a celebrity gives the candidate an opportunity to reach the fans of that celebrity.

The influence of celebrities on voting patterns is not lost on either the candidate or the celebrity. Curtis (2007, 242) uses an example from England regarding singer Thom Yorke trying to sit down with Tony Blair about environmental issues. The group Friends of the Earth “chose Yorke because they know that politicians are more likely to talk to pop stars about climate change. Especially stars with more influence over the nonvoting

slacker youth demographic than no-name boring scientists.” Like the environmental group, Blair also realized what he was receiving out of the meeting. Even if nothing was accomplished, there would still be an introductory photograph which then could be released to the press. With any luck, such a photo would be taken as newsworthy, no questions asked. Then it would receive television time, with no comment towards the fact that Yorke and Blair did not agree on anything. If nothing else, Tony Blair’s name reaches a new demographic.

This example alludes to the new strength of the celebrity endorsement. Thom Yorke has no policy background and his support signifies nothing in the world politics. However Blair would be receptive to meeting him because of his Q rating. Having the endorsement of Thom Yorke would lead to Tony Blair’s name reaching a new demographic. So politicians like Blair reach out to celebrities and publicize these endorsements for their own image. On top of that news programs cover this as though it is a substantial and meaningful endorsement with policy implications.

Politicians are cognizant of the greater audience that celebrities and entertainment can reach. This is not a series of coincidences. Although it does not deal with presidential candidates, Van Zoonen (2003, 109) points to examples throughout English parliament that have taken the United States’ lead in incorporating entertainment into politics. “The Labour government has also considered how to get their messages across in TV-scripts....The Tories would like the British soaps to include storylines that encourage marriage....Both New Labour and the Tories have constructed their election broadcasts as small soap narratives....Soap celebrities have backed the Labour campaign in particular, just like Bill Clinton had a strong constituency in Hollywood.”

There is a major benefit to the presidential candidate in having support from the realm of celebrity. In addition to speaking on your own behalf, the candidate, if he or she is lucky, will then have people who are also prominent media figures, also speaking on your behalf. Refer back to the beginning of this chapter when Martin Sheen spoke out about political issues via the platform he was given because of his drama series. Not only do celebrities speak out, but they are given avenues to reach an audience. So if a candidate can garner the support of, or just appear with, a celebrity, then that celebrity's audience has now tied one's candidacy to a celebrity who they already view favorably. A presidential candidate teaming with a celebrity is by no means an accident. In an age where the argument is that an image can sway voters, the candidate wants to align him or herself with a well established image. The perfect match is aligning oneself with a celebrity, whose job and ability to maintain the role of celebrity, depends on carefully crafting an image.

It is fashionable for presidential campaigns to claim that they try to stick to the issues, but it is the media and the public that love to hear only sound bites and about personal stories and characteristics. However the campaigns are far from faultless in this consolidation of entertainment and news. "Even as political elites blame the people for their political apathy...they also endeavor as far as possible to connect popular culture forms for electoral competition in order to reduce voter apathy....Like celebrities, they develop recognizable images with which people can and wish to identify, sometimes drawing on their skills as popular culture performers in their efforts to become celebrities and sustain their public visibility" (Simons 2003, 183). The popular origin of the president as an image is with the Reagan administration.

Reagan revolutionized the political commercial as it is seen today. “In 1984, President Reagan’s media advisers abandoned nearly all aspects of the issue oriented political commercial, which had been accepted form in previous elections, and ran the most effective ‘mood and image’ commercials ever seen in a presidential campaign” (Blume 1985, 9). Prior to Reagan the “issue oriented political commercial” was more infomercial than commercial because of its extended length. Reagan’s “mood and image” commercials are similar to what is seen today, with images, a narrator, and the inclusion of mood changing sound bites. Of course this has evolved over the years from still images, which were the trademark of Reagan, to carefully crafted video of the candidate interacting amongst the people, or charitably as a person apart from the people. Political commercials are comparable to celebrity coverage in that they are tailored public appearances. Like celebrities, the presidential candidates are now fully aware of their image as part of their job description. Robert Reich, Bill Clinton’s labor secretary said “political consultants ‘sell candidates exactly the way Madison Avenue sells corn flakes and soap,” and one could easily add celebrities to that list (Waterman 1999, 12). Although some advertisements still expound upon policy initiatives, they are now largely based on selling the image and brand of the candidate. These image and brand commercials can resemble movie trailers in that they offer the best glimpse of the product without giving away too much of the plot and action, just as a candidate offers the best representation of himself without revealing too much of his policies and plan in office.

Polsby and Wildavsky (1991, 218) is one of the few examples of existing literature that recognizes that campaign advertisements are crafted to blend in with the entertainment that it is interrupting. The undecided “middle-aged housewives...are partial

to family-oriented or charismatic image spots during afternoon soap operas.” In addition to crafting commercials based on the mood of the audience (like a sitcom), there is the added element of partial truth. Blume (1985, 9) points out that “campaign commercials allow the candidate to be packaged in a totally controlled environment, exploiting the candidate’s assets and avoiding any weaknesses, with the assistance of the best (so the candidate hopes) media specialists and advertising people that money can buy.”

Although they can be truthful, campaign commercials contain an important element of entertainment and soap opera fiction. Neither ever contains the mundane, or the anything that does not follow a distinct plot line. In the case of soap operas, one never sees a star going to the bathroom on screen unless it follows the plot. In campaign commercials, one never sees a negative or mundane point because they do not follow the strictly positive plot line.

Despite the growth in presidential campaign commercials, the candidates are still exposed to the news media regularly. To counteract this, there are as many staged public relations events as possible. Blume (1985, 194) again refers to the Reagan campaign as a seminal moment in presidential public relations.

Former White House press secretary Jody Powell summed it up best...[the President’s men] ‘spent an unprecedented amount of time on both long-range strategy and short-term tactics necessary to get what they wanted on the evening news each day. Their approach was to make the boss... visible but not vulnerable. Shield him from cross-examination while presenting him in an astounding array of skillfully staged scenarios that are irresistible to the cameras.’

The most important point Blume makes is that the television news has to run the event because it is newsworthy that a presidential candidate speaks, despite the fact that it is as staged as a television show. To this extent the Reagan candidacy was the first to use its candidate’s strengths while simultaneously exploiting the news’ need for entertaining images.

The staged event is now a staple of the campaign trail. Every candidate is filmed harvesting potatoes in Idaho or making cheese in Wisconsin. Politicians craft events to endear themselves to the people just as celebrities do. Celebrities create crafted publicity stunts in order to put their name in lights once again. Jamieson (1992) makes the connection that political photo opportunities are very comparable to an actor making a charity appearance, knowing full-well that it will be publicized to great extent and generates good will towards that actor.

This tactic of crafted public relations activities that are put together in advance has only increased over the years. Some of the greatest examples are the nomination conventions. Since the institution of greater primary importance the convention has been little more than a Hollywood premier- everything looks like an Oscar-winning movie, even if it really is a box office bomb. There are essentially pre-ordained results, a red carpet, light and video shows, and a careful order of events. The convention makes for the best parallel between celebrity and politics. It is literally put together as a gala or awards show. Even the convention organizers are usually taken from Hollywood to create such a spectacle.

The tie between presidential candidates and celebrities only grows deeper with the increase in media and public relations consultants on the campaign trail. The integration of celebrity coverage and presidential campaigns reaches a head when the candidate actually shows up in atmospheres usually designated for celebrities. As much as the preceding text has shown the extent to which the media caters to ratings, it is important to note that the candidates will migrate to wherever the audience is located. In many cases, that audience has moved away from nightly news and into the entertainment world.

Corner (2003) points to this and rationalizes the new form of celebrity campaigning as a logical step to smaller audiences watching hard news programs. The candidates naturally have to find different ways to present themselves to people. So they simply go to where the audiences are flocking. Most of the time this means that candidates go to talk shows, game shows, and late night television- areas most heavily populated by traditional celebrities.

During the 1996 campaign, after appearing on *Saturday Night Live*, Steve Forbes appeared on *The Tonight Show* with Jay Leno. “Forbes turns up in between the actor Charlie Sheen... and a sadomasochistic woman magician whose act has her gored on an industrial-size corkscrew. She seems to have surgically enhanced breasts” (O’Rourke 1997, 173-4). Standing alone, this can be seen as just another way to find airtime for the candidate, but when one thinks about the context the realization occurs that both *Saturday Night Live* and *The Tonight Show* are traditionally appearances that celebrities make for promotional or public relations purposes. Even Bill Clinton’s appearance on *60 Minutes* is straight from a event promoter or agent’s playbook in that his “appearance on one of the nation’s most popular television programs, and particularly the edition that occurred immediately after the most-watched sporting event of the year, provided him with an audience that he could not hope to generate by any other means” (Dover 1994, 154). Benoit quantifies this appearance in terms of its impact on Clinton’s campaign in that talk shows “reach a significant number of viewers. Second, talk show programs are a source of news for many people....Ten percent of those polled reported that they gained [current event news] from talk shows” (Benoit 2007, 87). Without saying so, Benoit presents the case for the growing celebrity-infusion into campaigns as a means to better inform the



electorate. This also alludes to the fact that campaigns see more than just a change in preferred mediums, they see the changes in the preferred modes of that medium. In an election, that is ten percent of the population that would not register the candidate had he not made the talk show appearance.

What is seen here is that no one side, people, media, or campaign is solely responsible for the acceleration of celebrity coverage in presidential campaigns. What is seen, though, is that since it began, entertainment has been infused into the presidential campaign every election year. It is something that is simply fact. And this is not campaigns simply taking on the characteristics of soft news (which it is), but a definite pattern in the candidates being treated, covered, and projecting themselves as celebrities.

## **Conclusion**

To reiterate a previous point, this chapter works to make the connection of presidential candidate to celebrity. In doing so it tries to isolate celebrity news as a unique subsection in the hard and soft news debate. Although soft news implies some extent of story content, it also focuses on presentation and placement of the story. Celebrity news looks strictly at story content and where there are distinct parallels between the coverage of presidential candidates and celebrities. Essentially celebrity and entertainment style coverage of campaigns refers to the instances where a celebrity's name or image could have replaced that of a candidate, and the story could have continued without a hitch.

The ultimate goal of the chapter is to be able to tie in presidential candidates into the grander category of celebrity. This is significant because one doubts that the people fifty and sixty years ago immediately classified President Truman or President Eisenhower as celebrities. Heroes and leaders, maybe, but they were usually not referred to as celebrities. Even if they were, that was not the goal of their campaigns. Today we see presidential candidates with goals of positioning themselves as celebrities, if not trying to be celebrities all together. This chapter briefly explains what categorizes celebrity treatment, coverage, and traits, and then gives a variety of examples where such celebrity finds its way into the presidential campaign. After reading this chapter concluding that “there are...four main types of celebrities: Politicians, Actors, Musicians, and Sports Stars,” should not be a stretch (Curtis 2007, 136).

This chapter should provide a strong basis by which one can understand the upcoming media analysis. Understanding what constitutes celebrity coverage is important in understanding how one would go about analyzing campaign coverage, deciding whether or not there were celebrity elements involved. That being said the following chapter will deal with the actual media analysis, how it will be constructed, what will be analyzed, and the results of such an analysis. And with the conclusion of this chapter, there is a strong background on the literature that touches this subject and an established pattern of celebrity coverage in past presidential campaigns, elections, and coverage.

## Chapter 3

### The Media Analysis

Having created a historical backdrop of the coverage of presidential campaigns and elements that represent celebrity style news coverage in past chapters, this chapter puts forth an independent and original analysis of network television news programs. Based on what has been reported in chapters one and two, there has been a great deal of literature on the evolution of campaigns and the evolution of news coverage. However, what has been lacking throughout the literature is an isolated look at how much the campaigns and the news coverage model themselves after celebrities and entertainment news. This is what I have been referring to as the “celebritization” of presidential campaigns.

This television news analysis is undertaken with the explicit goals of quantifying and qualifying the degree to which news programming has exhibited a celebrity feel and attitude towards campaign coverage. A subsidiary goal is show how much the campaigns set themselves up for such coverage because of the time they spend actually acting like celebrities (actors, musicians, athletes). In no way is this study going to define who is more responsible for a shift (if there is one) toward a celebrity news-style broadcast. However the goals are to simply realize how much or how little of this celebritization is underway. To summarize, this chapter and the news analysis that it contains aim for five goals: qualify what makes up celebrity-style news; quantify via raw data how much celebrity style news is seen across network television news programs; and quantify what

percent of network news has celebrity elements. And in the midst of the quantifiable portions of the news analysis, there will also be comparative elements interspersed so that one can come to realize which news show is “most guilty” of celebrity news coverage.

### **Expectations**

As the researcher, my expectations were based on past research. It seems as though every political scientist, pundit, and scholar is outraged at the direction of political news. There is a strongly held belief (with a few exceptions) that hard-hitting, informative, policy-based news coverage is scarcely found in today’s television news. In addition to this, there is an influx of rhetorical flourishes, timely public appearances, and style, where there could be significant policy content. At its worst, running for president has become like the old Andre Agassi, Canon Camera commercials: image is everything.

However having grown up in such an age, I was not convinced that television news was a hopeless feature of a bygone era, replaced by gossip, drama, and scripted actors. I figured that this could not be true considering that, as a child, I still found the news far too boring for my attention. This tells me that either it was not as bad as it seemed, or the news shows were doing a terrible job in their effort to entertain. All this being said, I believe that the news is still news, but it is covered in a different way. Referencing back to how the candidates present themselves, it reminded me of how another set of public figures present themselves- celebrities. On top of this, I realized the degree to which shows like *Entertainment Tonight*, *E! News*, and *Access Hollywood* were gaining market share. So it became my theory that there may be more soft news, but there is definitely a shift towards celebrity-type news coverage in a fight for ratings.

In terms of expectations, across the board I believed that there would be a significant portion of celebrity style coverage. From a quality perspective, I did not expect to see full-fledged segments about the friendship between Barack Obama and basketball player Baron Davis, and paparazzi following them around at local night spots. I felt that news coverage had not been that blatantly similar to the celebrity news. The expectation was that in certain news segments there would be sprinkled in references to how the candidate dressed, or the candidate talking about his friend Baron Davis.

From a quantitative perspective there was the expectation that there would be a significant portion of the nightly news that would be devoted to celebrity style coverage. By significant portion, that implies that of the political segments on the show, I expected between ten and forty percent of the material to have some celebrity connotation. These percentages were determined because of my belief that celebrity-style coverage is present to a degree that it is significant (ten percent), but that hard news programs are still dominated by policy-oriented and informative campaign segments. Thus the clear majority of campaign reporting are without entertainment and celebrity-style elements (forty percent). I respected that there were some celebrity statements, but that the integrity of the news programs would still be relatively intact.

In terms of comparative analysis, there were no preconceived notions that one network news program was more or less inundated with celebrity gossip than any other. The expectation was that they would all be comparable because they fight for ratings amongst themselves, so any difference between the three would inevitably be replicated within the other two programs. However the overarching expectation, in both the qualitative and quantitative analysis, was that there would be something of interest here.

I would be able to report something that had not been previously recorded, and would be worthwhile to deliver.

## **The Chapter**

This chapter will proceed to do a number of things in terms of putting a substantial analysis and study behind the literature review and topic of celebritization. This chapter will begin with a description of the shows that were used in the analysis, why they were chosen, the dates of study, and why. Secondly the study methods will cover what was coded, the definition of the statistics, and explanations or examples to supplement definitions and coding categories.

The next portion of this chapter will cover the results. The results section will first qualify and refer to examples where celebritization can easily and best be seen. After such qualitative analysis is complete we will move to the quantitative side of this analysis. Referencing the considerable appendages, this portion of the results will look first at the raw and percentile data amongst the three news stations, detailing how much celebrity style news is in the nightly news via percentages and total data. The next portion of the quantitative results will deal with a comparative look at the three news stations examined. The goal in doing so is to see if any one station is much more prone or less prone to celebrity-style coverage of campaigns. Also one can compare the style of broadcasting amongst three major networks. These results will be the bridge into the final chapter in which one can draw some broader conclusions, assumptions, and predictions based on this data. Thus as one concludes this chapter there should be a definitive grasp on what constitutes celebrity-style news, where is it prevalent, and how prevalent is it in news programs.

## Study Methods

### The Programs

This study focused on three nightly network news programs- *NBC Nightly News*, *ABC World News*, and *CBS Evening News*. These three programs were chosen for a number of reasons. First and foremost is their stature. The network news programs are traditionally the longest running and most well-respected news broadcasts. That being said, if there was celebrity-style coverage on these programs, it could be seen on the cable news programs as well. Another obvious reason is that they are nationwide. Because of their network broadcast capabilities, they have large budgets and span across the nation, even the globe, in their coverage. This would allow these news telecasts to take on the most extensive and nationally focused campaign coverage. There would very little niche or local coverage. These programs also tend to have the largest audiences and have a long-standing record of quality, dating back before the rise of cable news. Amidst discussions referenced in the first chapter of news programs being subject to the same ratings race as everyone else, it became a point of interest as to whether or not these broadcasts had succumbed to ratings pressure, and added celebrity-style coverage. A final reason, from a more subjective stand-point, is what the network news broadcast stand for in terms of stability and consistency. The anchors are journalists and they are trademarks. The shows, in terms of content and personnel do not vary. However election season does bring its own news cycle.

Because of the intensity of a presidential election, the time frame for the study is October 1, 2008 to November 3, 2008. This chronicles the month before the November

4, 2008 election between John McCain and Barack Obama. As the focus of this study is presidential election coverage, one can be no more inundated with election coverage than the month before the election. It is during this period that one can safely assume the networks will unveil all of their resources to capitalize on the longest and most intense news cycle every four years. In terms of data, these are each thirty minute long news shows and air at least five days per week thus there was very little concern over lacking sufficient data. It is important to note at this point that over this time period that *NBC Nightly News* aired daily for a total of 34 shows. *ABC World News* airs six nights per week, but missed one show for a total of 28 shows. *CBS Evening News* airs five nights per week, but skipped an additional show for a total of 24 shows.

In terms of measuring the length of shows, this study focused on the number and length of the campaign segments on the shows. Length is measured here in words, which is imperfect as some words can be said faster or more efficiently than others. However due to the fact that this study dealt with transcripts, not live action, it was the best method with which to measure. Referring to Appendix D one can see that over the course of *NBC's* 34 shows there were 92 campaign and candidate segments that covered 49,589 total words. *ABC's* 28 shows contained 64 campaign and candidate segments that covered 48,002 total words. *CBS's* 24 shows contained 89 campaign and candidate segments that covered a total of 42,602 words. Combined this gave the study 86 shows with 245 campaign segments and 140,193 words for analysis.

To clarify, segment refers to a story within the show. The transcripts, as this study was privy to them, were pre-separated into stories/segments, with a given word count. It is from these specified segments and word counts that one has based that



respective data on in this study. These aforementioned counts are the most strictly quantitative, and lacking for subjectivity, data in this study.

### **Coding Procedure and Definitions**

The coding results, appendices A, B, and C, are separated by news programs. Appendix A refers to the raw data from *NBC Nightly News*. Appendix B refers to the raw data from *ABC World News*. Appendix C refers to the data gathered from *CBS Evening News*. In every appendix the first column refers to the date in which the data was gathered. The next two columns, as referenced above, are strictly quantitative. The column labeled “Segments on the Campaign” refer to the number, per show, of segments in which the presidential campaign, and/or its candidates are discussed. It is important to note that these segments only refer to instances when John McCain and Barack Obama are subjects as candidates, not as senators. There were segments throughout this study that referred to the broader topic of national politics, and talked about Senators McCain and Obama as people of note. In these instances the segment was not counted because it did not refer to the campaign, or extensively refer to either man as a presidential candidate.

The column labeled “Segment Word Count,” refers to the given word count of each campaign segment that is noted in “Segments on the Campaign” column. This word count is given for the actual number of spoken words in a news segment. Thus this column is used in the results frequently as a baseline for percentages and averages. This is another strictly quantitative statistic that was not tied to any subjectivity. Quite literally it was taken from the transcript and placed into the corresponding appendix.

The column labeled “Topic” is simply used as a point of reference. Many times the topic as listed in the appendices is an abridged version of the topic as cited on the transcripts. In some cases it is actually a telling point of reference of the celebrity style news that is sure to follow. For example one such abridged segment title is labeled “Personal Attacks.” This refers to a segment whose whole title is “On the Attack” (*ABC World*, Oct. 5, 2008, See Appendix B). As one notes in Appendix B, this whole segment was categorized as celebrity style news because it essentially spoke solely on personal attacks and jabs taken at one another (why this was categorized as celebrity news will be covered shortly). But this coding was useful in that it could hint at how much celebrity style news was to come. However it was also interesting when the segment title implied a hard-hitting, policy-oriented column, but came back with a series of celebrity statements. One such example is a segment for which the short-hand title is given as “Early Voting,” referring to states that opened up their polls early. It is an 1162 word segment (very lengthy), from which one could assume that the topic would be the strategic advantages of gaining an early lead, where early voting is allowed, or if the candidates were encouraging their supporters to vote early. Instead, through the coding sheet, one can see that this segment had four celebrity-style statements totaling over 300 words. This segment also included a clip from *Saturday Night Live* (*ABC World*, Oct. 20, 2008, See Appendix B). These titles were useful as a gauge (although not included in the results) as to how the title frames the story, and what the story actually includes.

Included in these segments were “Celebrity Statements,” the title of the next column. From a literal point of view, this column sorts through each segment for the number of words (hand-counted) that are used on celebrity news reporting. In some

cases this column also notes that the whole segment is celebrity-style news. These situations include segments in which over ninety percent of the segment is qualified as celebrity-style news. Additionally this column includes whether or not campaign ads or talk show appearance clips were aired during the segment. If there is a “+” sign next to the additional information it implies that the words played during the campaign ad or clip were included in the word count. If there is an “and” next to the additional information, this implies that the transcript simply said that the clip, ad, or skit was played, but did not account for the words spoken.

The word “statement” can be misleading in that many cases are recorded in which the “statement” is actually an extensive dialogue or monologue, rather than just one sentence or phrase. It is in this section that the objective and subjective slightly mesh.

This study’s goal was to use existing literature to define exactly what celebrity-style news referred to, and then code for distinct styles of celebrity style news. It was supposed to be an overwhelmingly quantitative process. However, as one can derive from chapters one and two, there is not much literature existent that stresses the relationship between the current hard news format and the celebrity outlets. As this became apparent, coding for celebrity statements and instances still set out to be objective, but the fact is that the coding is based on the researcher’s impressions after watching a number of celebrity outposts. After viewing *E! News*, *Access Hollywood*, *Entertainment Tonight*, *Pardon the Interruption*, and *Around the Horn*, a rough coding was created in order to signify what was celebrity news and what was simply soft or hard news.

A difficult portion of this coding is the degree to which celebrity news and soft news overlap. However the belief is that all celebrity news can be considered soft news, but not all soft news can be considered celebrity news. Soft news is a broad category that includes, but is not limited to dramatization, personalization, reporting and exaggerating the fantastic, and short, non-policy issues. Soft news also refers to the decrease in segment length, the inundation of graphics and television screen activity (scroll bars, clips, still images), and stressing tragedy, loss, the lewd and gratuitous (Curtis 2007, 251). Celebrity-style news is a specific subset of this category. Based on prior research of entertainment news programs, the criteria for celebrity style news, as it pertains to celebrities is as follows:

- Stressing personality traits/image, such as clothing, likability, how they are living their private lives
- Who celebrities are hanging out with/ befriending
- Where they are hanging out
- What talk shows they are on, their upcoming game/album/movie
- Showing trailers or previews of said game/album/movie
- Personal lives, especially if it involves scandal or affairs
- The back story- where they came from, growing up
- How they carry themselves- their style and modus operandi
- Showing clips of signature lines and catch-phrases
- Gossip- what rumors are there on the street about these people
- Feuding- who they are not friendly with and what the celebrities are saying about each other's personal lives and personalities

These are all aspects of celebrity news that include both how the celebrities present themselves, and how they are covered through the media. The point of this study is to show how, too easily, many of these coverage and presentation techniques have found their way into political campaigns. However the disclaimer is the overlap between historical campaigning and celebrity status. For example part of the “where are they hanging out” bullet could apply to reporters following the campaigns around. One has to understand that following the campaigns around is not a paparazzi type following, but a newsworthy trailing. Political and policy news is made on the campaign trail, so one cannot categorize the political type of “where they are” with the celebrity type of “where they are.”

Similarly this study did not include segments regarding human interest surrounding the campaign. A few times the network news shows spent brief segments canvassing the campaign’s workers and supporters that inevitably told reporters how much they loved working for the candidate and how they would do anything for the campaign. Although this is comparable to celebrity fans detailing their love for their celebrity, this is more qualified for human interest, than for celebrity news. Again the focus of celebrity-style campaign coverage is the single candidate, just as entertainment news’ focus is on the celebrity. These segments did not focus on the candidates or their associations, but rather how the people are affected in this campaign.

Another major issue that cannot be counted as celebrity style news is the prevalence of polling. After watching entertainment news and sports pundit shows, one realizes the degree to which polling is used to create fan interaction, gauge popularity, and create a friendlier feel. Having stated this, the polling in campaign news coverage

could not be counted, in bulk, as an example of the celebritization of news. Polling has long held a spot in campaign coverage, even before its position in entertainment news. Additionally, campaign polling sometimes generates intriguing and useful data for study and consideration. So although several segments dealt solely with polling, and its ramifications, those segments were not included as “Celebrity Statements.” One such example is a 107 word segment (very short) that dealt simply with the fact that Obama led McCain in a *Newsweek* poll (*NBC Nightly*, Oct. 10, 2008, See Appendices A, E). However one instance in which the polling was relevant appeared in which all that was being polled was who had the better personality between McCain and Obama. This poll, found in the context of the article towards the bottom of page one of Appendix F, could not be overlooked as it prescribed exactly to the first bullet of celebrity style news (*CBS Evening*, Oct. 23, 2008, See Appendices C, F). Although some of the polls in this appendix have some political value, the *New York Times* poll at the bottom of the appendix (first page) is clearly a personalized issue. The polls simply state that people generally like Obama’s personality, comfort, and he exudes more confidence. Although these are nice character traits, it is a significantly personalized way to use polling.

As one can see with the polling example, even with the criteria already laid out, there is somewhat of a subjective feel to coding the celebritization of campaign coverage. When reviewing transcripts, there is a sense of symmetry between celebrity news and the nightly news programs that can be blatant, but can also be a product of context. It is not an exact science. The coding process can be generally summed up as: which situations the nightly news could easily replace the name Obama with that of Jolie or Pitt, or that “campaign” could be replaced with “advertising agency.” With that in mind, there are

times where entire segments are labeled as celebrity coverage, even if there is a line or two of substantial facts. The idea is that the context surrounding that substantial line nullifies its value as substance. As follows, there will be an explanation and examples of what was coded for throughout this process.

**Stressing Personality Traits and Image-** This bullet applies to campaigns in a number of ways. First is the poll that has already been chronicled (See Appendix F), where the poll at the bottom of the first page asked if Obama or McCain had the personality best fit for the presidency, and also asked who the voters with whom they felt more comfortable, not with whom they felt more comfortable as president (*CBS Evening*, Oct. 23, 2008). It is in situations such as these that one can suggest that Britney Spears and Christina Aguilera be put in the same poll on one of the entertainment news programs. It adds nothing to the policy debate or to the readiness of the candidate. It is a poll literally modeled after those seen on celebrity news.

Another instance in which this occurs is what this study has termed “the movie review treatment.” Here respected political analysts treat debates as though they are Ebert and Roeper. An example of such coverage occurs after the vice presidential debate, when the commentators refer to Palin trying to regain her image, and espouse how she has to remodel herself (*CBS Evening*, Oct. 3, 2008, See Appendices C, G). Both the beginning and end of this segment refer to how far Palin went to restoring her image, with only brief comments as to how she did on the issues. Again this is comparable to a point made in chapter two, where “if a rock or rap star’s ‘bad-boy’ image no longer sells records, then have him clean up his act, get married, and find God...present a more saleable image to the American public” (Waterman 1999, 11). Similarly if Sarah Palin

strays too far away from her designated image, she uses a debate to correct this matter, and the news programs acknowledge this.

One of the most interesting stories in this election cycle that received air-time was the Sarah Palin clothing controversy. One can argue that campaign finances and how they are spent are newsworthy, and this study agrees. However the attention Palin received has little to do with campaign spending, and more to do with image. Because Sarah Palin's image is carefully modeled as a hockey mom (See Appendix G), clothing that does not fit that image becomes news. This is comparable to red carpet coverage where the actual image of the celebrity is criticized or acclaimed based on what (s)he is wearing, especially when Palin takes time afterwards to talk about her favorite pieces of clothing (*ABC World*, Oct. 26, 2008, See Appendices B, K).

**Celebrity Friends-** This topic is interesting because there is no perfect parallel in the campaign world. In celebrity news celebrity friendships are a reporter's dream. Even casual observers know of the friendship between Matt Damon and Ben Affleck, or Larry Bird and Magic Johnson. This is because they are reported ad nauseam through their respective outlets. The direct descendant in the campaigning world is the endorsement. There are some instances where this is actually newsworthy, for example Colin Powell's endorsement of Barack Obama became newsworthy because Powell crossed party lines to do so. However there comes a point in the coverage where such news resembles the celebrity world, as news outlets begin to stress that Powell is a friend of John McCain; Barack Obama is talking (un-provoked) about Powell's endorsement; or George Bush cannot be happy about the Powell endorsement. It is this ad-nauseam coverage that makes such seemingly important endorsements convoluted. *ABC World News* actually covered



the Powell endorsement with a full segment, which is understandable. However following that segment, the program referred back to that endorsement in its three remaining campaign segments of the evening (*ABC World*, Oct. 19, 2008, See Appendices B, H).

The much simpler descendant from the celebrity friends' relationship is the celebrity endorsement. In these cases the candidate is literally taking advantage of the celebrity's status in order to advance his popular culture rating. For example Tampa Bay Rays pitcher David Price, of notable fame because he is the pitcher that made the last out in order for his team to move on to the world series, introduced Barack Obama at a rally in Florida. Mr. Price is of nominal popularity nationwide, but in Florida he is very well-known. However he has no political prowess to speak of, so this relationship was merely for Obama to try to generate popularity amongst Florida voters. This event was covered as newsworthy on *CBS Evening News* as well (*CBS Evening*, Oct. 20, 2008, See Appendices C, I).

**Where They Hang Out-** As mentioned earlier this aspect of celebrity news does not translate well to the campaign. Although much of the campaign news details where the candidates are coming and going, this is more a product of campaign coverage rather than the influence of celebrity style news. Additionally the celebrity style coverage is more geared towards paparazzi and stalking, as opposed to campaign coverage which is much more legitimate and welcomed. However there is a degree of lost privacy that Obama espouses about in an interview on *NBC Nightly News*. It is this comparable idea

of being followed anywhere and everywhere that can make the coverage take on a celebrity feel (*NBC Nightly*, Oct. 31, 2008, See Appendices A, J).<sup>1</sup>

**The Talk Show Circuit-** This is the most obvious link from celebrity to presidential campaign. Until recently the talk show circuit was a vehicle for celebrities to chat and laugh with talk show hosts while promoting their movies/shows/albums/tours/games. However this has quickly become a popular destination for candidates as well. Referencing back to chapter two, it becomes an obvious connection. Talk shows “reach a significant number of viewers. Second, talk show programs are a source of news for many people....Ten percent of those polled reported that they gained [current event news] from talk shows” (Benoit 2007, 87). This is a clear intersection of celebrity and political life, and one that has evolved over the last twenty years, thus making it a candidate for celebritization. One also has to look at the way it has accelerated. During the election studied here, one ticket made several appearances on *Saturday Night Live*, under the role of celebrity guest.

On top of this, the nightly news covered these *Saturday Night Live* and talk show appearances as news. An entire segment of *NBC Nightly News* was devoted to the candidates’ trips on talk shows. This shows both an accurate example of celebrity coverage of campaigns, but also what an entire segment of celebrity-style news looks like. Of course as Appendices A, B, C, point out, *NBC Nightly News* was not the only one guilty of reverting to *Saturday Night Live* clips on the nightly news telecast (*NBC Nightly*, Oct. 19, 2008, See Appendix L).

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<sup>1</sup> Note that this segment was not coded for being a campaign version of “where they hang out,” rather it was noted because of Mr. Obama being asked soft, personal questions rather than anything dealing with issues.

**Promotional Trailers and Ads-** Chapter two contains a quote which states, “nothing embodies laziness quite like the Unpaid Placement Masquerading as Actual Article....Not only are press releases picked up as articles, they’re usually picked up word for word with no changes whatsoever” (Curtis 2007, 59). Curtis is referring to hard journalists placing advertisements in columns, rather than stories. However in the world of entertainment news, this is a regular occurrence, in which it is actually considered advantageous to promote that said show is showing a “sneak peak” of a new movie. This “sneak peak” is simply an advertisement within the body of the entertainment news show. It is a staple of the entertainment news setup.

Although not as overt with their placement, nightly news is just as guilty, albeit not as willingly. Many of the segments reported in this study show that campaign advertisements, not just clips from campaign rallies, receive free air time on nightly news. If the advertisement is so bombastic it is aired free of charge and reported on as though it is a news piece. Granted, to some extent this is necessary; so personal attacks do not run unchallenged and people can hear the actual facts about the attack. However, when the campaign advertisement is run, no refuting evidence is given, and the segment or statement’s lone goal is to create a reaction out of the candidates and the audience; it becomes simply additional advertising time for the candidates. It feels very similar to the sneak peaks on the entertainment shows.

The example here comes from *CBS Evening News*, in which the entire segment refers to personal attacks and nasty campaign ads, but at no points confirms or refutes the advertisements’ messages. Furthermore the reporter actually repeats several of the accusations given in the advertisement. Thus the ad time is actually increased compared

to when they are aired as commercials (*CBS Evening*, Oct. 6, 2008, See Appendix M). By explaining the ad the segment is giving the fifteen second McCain-Palin campaign advertisement five or ten minutes of prime time exposure for free.

**Personal Scandal or Affair-** Nothing appeals to the entertainment world more than a good scandal. This is an area where celebrity news and soft news clearly overlap. Soft news also spends a great deal of time exploiting and investigating potential scandals. Referring back to the quail shot from Dick Cheney, this should have been a day's worth of news. However with the potential of scandal in the air, "Mass Media would have none of that....[It] happened during a slow news week...[involving] an administration that regularly punished members of the media for asking harsh questions by sending them to the back of the room during press conferences. The media was ready to rip someone a new one, and they had a bunch of column inches that needed filling" (Curtis 2007, 204).

In the celebrity realm, there is nothing like a good personal scandal. The common man and woman know about Brad Pitt and Jennifer Aniston's former relationship, and most know how it ended as well- with Pitt becoming acquainted with Angelina Jolie. As was the case with celebrity friendships, celebrity scandals are reported on as in depth as possible. As evidence of this, look back to chapter two again. Curtis (2007, 258) writes, that on his website, since "1999, only two breaking news stories have caused a crush of traffic so high it brought our servers to their knees. The first was 9/11. That's understandable. The other one? Michael Jackson Verdict Reached." Because of such information, one begins to see the emphasis on mudslinging in presidential campaigns.

Now campaigns have had personal attacks since before the rise of entertainment news, however a couple elements have evolved. Now, with the rise of television, the

sound bite, and the thirty-second spot, the ratio of attack ads to policy ads and campaigning has shifted towards personal attacks. Secondly, it is important to note that attack advertisements, alone, are not congruent with celebrity news. However, when attacks have to do with style, personal lives, upbringings, and friends, they take on a decidedly scandalous tone.

As an example, the study will refer back to the segment previously mentioned in which personal attacks on campaign ads is the only topic. As with campaign advertisements, there is a time and a place to refute any fallacies within the personal attack, but other than that, there should be little else to report. As stated earlier, this segment does little more than repeat the personal attacks (*CBS Evening*, Oct. 6, 2008, See Appendix M). Even where the segment refutes the personal attack, it does so briefly and in the context of Mr. Obama returning fire with attacks of his own.

**The Back Story-** There is a degree to which one wants to know the history of the candidates. There should be information regarding where they are from, if they ever did anything illegal, where they went to school, and how they rose to the footstep of the presidency. However one would figure that such basics should or would be covered briefly and succinctly. One can also argue that this is an area in which there is a natural overlap between celebrity and candidate coverage, and this study does not oppose such beliefs. The problem lies in when the back story is interspersed far into the process (one month before the election is sufficiently past the time in which the backgrounds should have been covered on the news). In celebrity news coverage, the back story does not get old. One cannot hear enough about Justin Timberlake growing up from being a Mouseketeer or Tiger Woods being trained since he could walk to be a golfer. It is

entertaining story-telling. There is a dramatic effect perfectly fit for entertainment style news. However one would not expect to hear about John McCain's childhood or Barack Obama's father 23 months into the campaign.

The example used here is a sensitive one. The prime example is the coverage surrounding the death of Barack Obama's grandmother. As a sign of respect for the candidate it warrants being reported, and be mentioned as the reason that Obama was forced to suspend his campaigning. It is a sad moment. However, the degree to which the news repeatedly conveyed the story of Obama's childhood and her influence was overdone. Although there may not have been other campaign news to report about with Obama on leave, there was other news in the world.

The comparable celebrity moment is one familiar to sports fans. In 2006 the Pittsburgh Steelers won their fifth Super Bowl. As with every Super Bowl, since the advent of ESPN, there is a two week news void to fill. This lead to story upon heart-wrenching story about how legendary Steelers running back Jerome Bettis was from Detroit, site of the Super Bowl. At the time Bettis was on the downside of his career and only used in certain situations. As with Obama, Bettis, because of his status, deserved the right to have it mentioned that he was from Detroit. However since he was only a bit player in the game, there should have been more stories about larger facets of the game. However, that which could conjure up the most drama was the Jerome Bettis story.

Now in no way is this comparison between losing a grandmother that raised you and returning home to play in a football game. This comparison is between the uses of the stories. Obama's grandmother's story was reported in lieu of pressing worldwide news. On a different scale, Bettis' story was reported in lieu of more important stories to

the game. The example within the news analysis refers not only to the repetitive references to Obama's grandmother, but also to the way in which there was paparazzi-style cameras following his "private" meeting with his grandmother (*ABC World*, Oct. 24, 2008, See Appendix N).

**Style-** Style refers heavily back to the aforementioned "movie review treatment." Here the reporters, hosts, and respected journalists channel their inner movie critic when critiquing the candidates and/or their campaigns. The dialogue and reports deal largely with how everything looks, with themes, and with the environment surrounding the campaign. Sometimes this even delves into award show, or movie premier red carpet reporting. "Style refers to an heterogeneous ensemble of ways of speaking, acting, looking, displaying, and handling things, which merge into a... manner, message and package" (Pels 2003, 45). As stated in chapter two, everyone, even the most mundane of politicians can lay claim to having some sort of style. However it is the emphasis on style in reporting that separates celebrity news and celebrities from the traditional idea of politics and hard news. This study saw an increase in the movie review treatment before and after debates. The attached example of this is a segment taken before the vice presidential debate. The reporter refers exclusively to how the vice presidential candidates need to look, act, and speak, without delving into one issue that they should cover (*CBS Evening*, Oct. 2, 2008, See Appendix O).

The second most glaring portion of this study with regards to style is the controversy surrounding Sarah Palin's wardrobe. This story actually merges three different styles of celebrity news, as it contained gossip, style, and has been already referenced in the image portion. However it fits here as well with respect to the red

carpet treatment that the news networks used in covering the story. The example used talks some of Palin's hurt image, but speaks more to the actual clothes, who would wear them, and what they look like (*CBS Evening*, Oct. 22, 2008, See Appendix P).

**The Catch Phrase-** Coverage of the catch phrase or signature line compares more favorably to movies than celebrity news, but it is still a move employed more by celebrities than politicians. In this case, it is not as much the media covering something as it is a case of the candidates creating something in the style of a movie. This does not refer to campaign signs or slogans, but to the actual use of verbal sound bites. This was an area when the research had to use somewhat subjective restraint. There is a history of presidents tying themselves to slogans and sound bites that are relevant to the time and place that the United States is in- think Theodore Roosevelt (Walk softly, but carry a big stick) or John Kennedy (Ask not what your country can do for you, but what you can do for your country). As much as these are sound bites and signature lines, they are also somewhat relevant to the country's attitude.

However the example that is set forth here is a simple, but repeated act of John McCain referring to himself as "The Mack," channeling an attitude from the primaries in which a ground swell of support rallied around John McCain as Mack (*NBC Nightly*, Nov. 2, 2008, See Appendix Q). This is a case in which the "The Mack is Back" is not referring to any scenario involving the country, but trying to define a character and tie oneself to a character trait or image. This catch phrase was more image-oriented and personal than either John Kennedy or Theodore Roosevelt intended their messages to be. Far from resembling Kennedy or Roosevelt, this comes closer to "What you talking 'bout Willis?" Even Barack Obama's messages of "Hope" and "Change We Believe In,"



which were visually omnipresent on the campaign trail, were usually used within the greater concept of some policy speech.

**Gossip-** Celebrity style gossip is somewhat of a catch-all in terms of this study. One would be hard-pressed to pick up a tabloid or watch a celebrity news program and not find a page or segment dedicated solely to speculation and rumors. In terms of presidential campaigns one sees speculation and rumor around every corner. One type emerges from the personal attacks. This segment of advertising and speeches is aimed solely at the idea of creating doubt. There is no better way of creating doubt than putting half-truths together that are convincing enough to create a following. One can refer back to Appendix M, comprehend the style of personal attacks being thrown, and then ask oneself that, if the names were changed, could this just as easily be seen on *E! News*? If the rumor was that Celebrity A had been gallivanting around town with Celebrity B, who is linked with Celebrity C, it would be gossip page story for a celebrity news outlet. Instead network news replays the attack ads in which Barack Obama is rumored to be best friends with Bill Ayers, who is linked to the terrorist group The Weathermen.

Another example of celebrity gossip can be seen in the previously mentioned Palin wardrobe controversy. Here there is reporting on what brand of clothing it is, how much it may have cost, and what are the real plans for the clothes after the campaign is over (See Appendix P). The entire story revolves around speculation as to whose idea it was to purchase the clothes and whether or not they are really going to charity after the race. The gossip and speculation category is the one most telling of the direction of network news. As one can surmise, this category can be jointly applied with almost any other one on the list. And it is the degree to which this rumor-mill type journalism enters

into the realm of network news that one can be most concerned about the health of campaign news coverage. As of right now, the monopoly on rumors and speculation is in the tabloids and on the entertainment news programs, and rightfully so.

**Feuds-** Feuds and in-fighting are some of the most dominant headlines in entertainment-style news. Anytime two pop-stars or two athletes or an actor and director make their dirty laundry public, it is a major topic of conversation in the realm of entertainment news. Segments will be dedicated to the relationship and the latest news from either camp. And by camp this includes family, friends, publicity and marketing agencies or anyone at all that may have some sort of credential. One can see where there would be a home for this in the presidential campaign, yet that does not necessarily make it correct to cover such back and forth mudslinging. In the campaign one finds this type of celebrity news enter in two different formats. There is the back and forth and typical mudslinging of the campaign and then there is the in-fighting within the tickets and the parties.

With regards to mudslinging, one can argue that it is another element of the campaign that has gone on for awhile. However chapter one and chapter two point out that there has been an evolution. The mudslinging has devolved into more and more personal feuding than anything policy based. When the banter strays from policy, it becomes similar to the celebrity feud. The segment used as an example in this case brings into question why the campaign becomes so personal and also why the media needs to cover non-policy speech. This segment, from *NBC Nightly News* presents almost an entire story dedicated to how Obama and McCain have been making their

attacks as though it were a combination chess and boxing match (*NBC Nightly*, Oct. 5, 2008, See Appendix R).

The other source of feuding that is more intriguing, both in celebrity news and to the network news teams looking for ratings, is the in-fighting. In both celebrity and political realms, the aforementioned camps are supposed to show a unified front. In the rare situation that a rumor emerges that there is some division, it makes for a juicy, gossip story (thus could be used in the gossip category as well). The example here is a report that came out later in the election that Sarah Palin's people and John McCain's people were unhappy with one another. Although it was reported through an anonymous source, this story broke as though it were a threat to democracy (*ABC World*, Oct. 26, 2008, See Appendix K).

As one can see there is a great deal to which one can make a distinct category within and around soft news that is celebrity and entertainment style coverage. Based on the examples given, and the detailed explanation of each sub-category one can also see that it has infiltrated the ranks of network news. Moving forward there will be an unveiling of what the quantitative analysis shows as results to this study.

In the following results, it is important to note the subjective objectivity that was used in coding this study. Being the first study to distinguish celebrity-style news from soft news, these categories are primarily original, thus they were created by the researcher on the basis of findings that make up chapter one and chapter two. The findings are not based on a previously-used schematic, but on what prior research suggested could be coded as celebrity style news. One will also notice when referring to

the study and its results (Appendices A, B, C, D) that there is no coding for the eleven separate categories of celebrity style news listed above. This is because there is frequent overlap. In a given story several statements could have been listed as a few different types of celebrity news. Ultimately the goal of this study is not to determine which aspect of celebrity news is most prevalent, but whether or not celebrity news is prevalent.

## **The Results**

The results are separated into two distinct sections. The first is the overall findings. This covers network news as a whole, and is used as a representative sample of campaign coverage in general. The results in this section will deal with the raw data as it was collected in summation from the three news stations. It will also use that data in the forms of percentages and averages as additional means to grasp the results.

The second section of the results pertains to the comparative portion of the study. This portion will actually compare how the network news programs fared in comparison to one another, and against the averages. This section is more of an examination of the news stations individually rather than as a representative sample of the whole. This section will delve into the differences between the stations and how they are doing in the combat or acceptance of celebritization.

### **The Summation Results**

Covering three half-hour long news programs over the course of a month offers a great deal of data. Referring to Appendix D, under the second group of results, one can see, in raw data, exactly how large a sample was analyzed. The transcripts of 86 shows were read, specifically the content in the 245 political segments. This amounted to over 140,000 words spoken regarding the presidential campaign in just one month's time.

Having laid out that raw data one can refer to the averages as seen on Appendix D. The average news program aired almost 29 shows over the course of the 34 days covered during the extent of this study. Within each one of these news programs there was an average of 46731 words spoken about the presidential campaign over the course of about 82 campaign segments. In terms of scope this data shows that one month, covering three shows, lends itself to a fairly expansive representation of campaign coverage.

In terms of the extent in which celebrity style coverage has infiltrated the hard news coverage of campaigns, one can deduct from this study that the infiltration is essentially complete. Although the degree to which celebrity statements appears varies, the data shows that almost every show during the period of this study contained a celebrity-news style statement. Of the 86 shows covered during the course of this study, 84 shows across all three programs contained a campaign-related celebrity statement that falls into one of the categories listed above. On average, of the almost 29 shows that aired of a given news program, 28 of those broadcasts contained some version of entertainment or celebrity style news. That amounts to almost 98% of all shows of a given network news program contained a campaign segment with a statement that simply did not belong.

Referring to the top of Appendix D, one can see that the lone shows without celebrity statements came from *NBC Nightly News*. The two broadcasts without a celebrity statement happened on back to back nights- October 13 and October 14. Those two nights combined for three campaign segments with a total of 1,093 words. However none of those words spoken contained any type of entertainment news-type statement (Appendix A). So had *NBC Nightly News* been removed from the study, one would find

data to support that 100% of news shows covering the campaign contain some form of celebrity-style coverage. Although without the 34 show contribution of *NBC Nightly News*, the study would be much less of a representative sample.

Now although almost 98% of the shows studied contained celebrity statements, the actual number of segments (relative to the total number of campaign segments) containing celebrity statements is much lower, but still significant. Among all three programs, there were 168 segments that contained celebrity statements. Considering there were a total of 245 campaign segments, this amounts to about 69%. This means that almost 69% of all campaign stories on the nightly news programs lingered into celebrity style coverage at some point. On an average show basis, this implies that of the almost 82 campaign segments on a given program over the course of about 29 shows, 56 of those segments contained some type of celebrity coverage. One also has to realize that this is without counting polling and campaign finance information, which- as mentioned in the coding definitions- can be a major part of entertainment news shows. Still, without diving into hypothetical situations, 69% is still a significant portion of campaign segments that spent some time devoted to celebrity style reporting.

Staying with results related to segments, the next result looks at entire segments devoted to celebrity-style content. Appendix T offers a solid example of what a segment entirely devoted to entertainment-type news looks like. The example segment comes from one of a series of candidate interviews on *CBS Evening News*. On these segments anchor Katie Couric asks the candidates a series of completely off-policy questions (*CBS Evening*, Oct. 8, 2008, See Appendix T). And even though some of these questions, individually, waver from being considered celebrity-style, the context of the questions

and the presentation of the interview are similar to a celebrity interview. Referring back to study methods, this interview, as whole, falls under the umbrella of: could these questions be asked of Angelina Jolie or Brad Pitt? Although the candidates give exemplary presidential candidate answers, it does not change the fact that the questions and format would fit just as well on an entertainment news program during election season.

Of the 245 segments across the three programs, 38 of those segments were entirely celebrity-modeled segments. This implies that, on an average program over the course of this 34 day period, almost 13 of the almost 82 campaign segments are celebrity-style coverage in their format, questions, and/or content. Given that the average program aired about 29 shows over the 34 day period, one can reasonably estimate that about 44% of that program's shows will have a segment devoid of a candidate mentioning policy initiatives. As seen in Appendix D, the average news program devotes almost 16% of all its campaign stories to entire segments of celebrity-style reporting.

Having reviewed results in the form of celebrity statements and celebrity segments, the most elaborate means of quantifying the infiltration of celebritization is through the word count. As impressive as 140,193 is as a number words attributed to campaign coverage, equally as impressive is 27,543. That number is the number of words, out of 140,193, that are attributed to solely entertainment news-type coverage. An important caveat is that the celebrity word count is a manual count, with exception to the word counts that accompanied entire celebrity segments. Although miscounting can occur, one can assume that the number is not thousands, nor probably hundreds off of the count of 27,543.

The analysis shows that a given program over the course of the study aired 46,731 spoken words of campaign coverage. Accepting 27,543 as the correct number, this implies that the average network news program devoted 9,181 of those words to celebrity-style reports and statements. To put this number in perspective, one can look at the percentages, as given in Appendix D. On the average program, almost 20% of all campaign-related words spoken were issued in some sort of celebrity-style statement and/or style. That is almost one in every five words. Taking the opposite point of view, when one tunes into news coverage for insight as to how the candidates feel on issues, only about 80% of the campaign material on the show will cover policy substance or cover the candidates in a format consistent with that associated to hard news.

However words are not the only means of transferring a message via television news. Video and pictures are also a large part of how the news presents itself. Although this is coded for in the study, one can assume that the celebritization of images is actually understated in this study. Because blatant photo-opportunity images could not be coded for within transcripts, such celebrity-style techniques were not included. However the transcripts did offer notification when talk show clips or campaign advertisements were shown on given shows. And they were shown in 38 of the total 245 campaign segments. Again it is important to note that this coding does not include clips from the campaign trail, but actual promotional appearances (talk shows) or paid advertisements. The raw number of 38 averages out to almost 13 out of the 82 campaign segments per program included some sort of re-aired talk show clip or advertisement. On an average program, about 16% of all campaign segments included an advertisement, a talk show clip, or *Saturday Night Live* footage. *ABC World News* even went so far as to present an entire



campaign rewind, in the mold of a video montage one would see at the culmination of a sports season or at a movie or music awards show (*ABC World*, Nov. 3, 2008, See Appendix U).

In summation, the important numbers are 98, 69, and 20. Almost 98% of the shows studied contained some sort of celebritization in their campaign coverage. Almost 69%, over two-thirds, of all campaign segments included some foray into entertainment news coverage. And 20% of all words spoken regarding this campaign on the news programs studied were tied to celebritization. On average, one in five words heard during the last month of campaign '08 were used within a celebrity news-style format or dealt with entertainment issues as outlined in the study methods.

### **Comparative Results**

Having used the separate programs in summation to show the celebritization, and lack thereof, of campaign news coverage, it is important to also distinguish among the three programs. The coverage of *NBC Nightly News*, *ABC World News*, and *CBS Evening News* was not the same. The comparative results will review all of the categories seen in the summation results. However this time around there will be an effort to distinguish among the three programs, and ultimately gauge how they compare to the average- seeing who is fighting certain aspects of celebritization, and who is implementing its practices.

The comparative results will also look at the last seven shows in particular. First it is important to note that the last seven shows do not necessarily fall on the same days, given that *ABC World News* and *CBS Evening News* airs five times per week and *NBC Nightly News* airs seven days per week. In any case this separation was done due to the

belief that more campaign segments will be concentrated towards the end of the campaign in a last rush to capitalize on campaign season.

Comparatively *NBC Nightly News* had the most programs over the course of the 34 day study period, with 34. Thus as *NBC* fell above the average of almost 29 shows, *ABC World News* and *CBS Evening News* fell below the average at 28 shows and 24 shows respectively. However as one refers to Appendices A – D for this section, results support that the most shows do not necessarily correlate with the most celebritization.

*NBC Nightly News* led the way in both campaign words spoken and campaign segments. However, it was trailed closely in campaign words by *ABC World News*, despite the fact that *ABC* was third of the three in campaign segments, airing 28 fewer than *NBC* (Appendix D). *CBS Evening News* had only three fewer campaign segments than *NBC* (89), but was third in words, implying that they aired much shorter segments than *NBC* and *ABC*.

Referring to the bottom of Appendices A-C, one can also use this metric of campaign segments to see that the study is correct in isolating the last seven shows. Every program had a higher proportion of campaign segments and words in their last seven shows than the proportion of the last seven shows to the total amount of shows. For example with *ABC World News*, the last seven shows accounted for 25% of the total shows covered, however the number of campaign segments and words over those last seven shows were about 28% and 31% of their totals, respectively. The same can be said for both *NBC Nightly News* and *CBS Evening News*. The last seven shows for *NBC* accounted for about 21% of all shows covered. Over that period about 34% of all campaign segments aired and about 31% of all campaign words were spoken. The last

seven shows for *CBS* accounted for about 29% of all shows studied. Over that period about 34% of all segments were aired and about 31% of words were spoken. Clearly one can see that *NBC Nightly News* shows the biggest jump over the last seven shows. More generally speaking, one sees that every program validates the isolation of the last seven shows because of the jumps in campaign segments and campaign words spoken.

In terms of the individual celebritization of programs, only *NBC Nightly News* aired any shows (two) over the 34 days without any sort of entertainment or celebrity style statement. The other two programs were completely infiltrated in some way by celebrity coverage. However one cannot discount that over the last seven shows, every news program was completely infiltrated by celebrity news. So over the busiest time of campaign coverage, 100% of shows aired contained a degree of entertainment news.

As to the extent of celebritization, *ABC World News* led the way in one category. In terms of the percent of total campaign segments that contained celebrity statements, *ABC* had nearly 72%. So of its 64 campaign segments, 46 contained some kind of celebrity statement or message. Despite the leadership of *ABC* all three of the news programs were above 65%. Almost 70% of *NBC Nightly News*' 92 campaign segments contained a type of celebrity style reporting. The lowest in this regard was *CBS Evening News*. Although statistically close to the other two programs, only about 65% of *CBS*'s campaign segments contained celebritization to some reportable degree.

The last seven shows prove to be a slightly different story. *ABC World News* still leads, but its percentage increased about 6%. Over the last seven shows, about 78% of *ABC*'s 18 campaign segments contained celebrity reporting. The second most celebritized program over the last seven shows becomes *CBS Evening News*. Showing a

jump of about 5%, 70% of *CBS*'s 30 campaign segments contained celebrity segments. *NBC Nightly News* actually bucked the trend of increases over the last seven shows. Showing a decrease of around 5%, *NBC*'s percentages fell from about 70% to about 65%. So only (using the term relatively speaking) 65% of *NBC*'s 31 campaign segments contained an entertainment-style report or statement. However it is important to note that one cannot use statements within segments as the only barometer of celebritization. For example, although *ABC World News* led the field with percentages of about 70 and 78, one must remember that *ABC* also showed far fewer total segments over both periods than both *NBC Nightly News* and *CBS Evening News*. A more revealing statistic is the degree to which each show devoted entire segments to celebrity style news.

In terms of whole segments dedicated to celebrity style news, *CBS Evening News* led the way in both percentage and raw count. Over the course of its shows, *CBS* aired 19 segments entirely dedicated to celebrity-style reporting. One can refer to Appendix T to see a sample of what was actually a recurring feature of its news program. Those 19 segments actually accounted for over 21% of all the campaign-related segments shown on *CBS Evening News* over the course of the study. *CBS* is also the only program that goes above the reported average of about 16%. The next highest is *NBC Nightly News*, with about 15% of its campaign segments entirely dedicated to celebrity style news. In a departure from the last set of results, *ABC World News* actually lands at the bottom of this category. Only about 8% of its 64 campaign segments are actually dedicated solely to entertainment news reporting. Although this does show a degree of separation, one notes that no program is without a celebrity segment.

Over the last seven shows, the data shows a similar flip as seen in the last section of results. *NBC Nightly News* actually decreases its celebrity-style segments by about 5%. Over the last seven shows, only about 10% of its 31 segments are dedicated to solely to celebrity reporting. *CBS Evening News* actually increases its percentage by about 6%, such that almost 27% of its 30 campaign segments are dedicated to celebrity reporting. *ABC World News* finds itself in the middle at about 11%. So again *CBS Evening News* proves itself to be the unquestioned leader in this category; however every program shows a significant portion of celebrity segments. Additionally two out of the three programs in the study showed an increase reliance on celebritization over the course of their last seven shows.

Despite the emphasis thus far on segments, the most definitive opportunity that this study has to show the infiltration of celebritization is through the word count and word percentages. Although thus far it has been shown that *ABC World News* has the highest percentage of segments with celebrity statements, the study also shows that *ABC* shows the least number of segments and the longest segments on average. Thus one has not yet been able to discern whether or not *ABC* devotes large portions of their segments to celebritization, or if the statements are just small sentences in the midst of larger, more policy-related segments.

The percentage of segment words devoted to celebrity statements shows that *ABC World News* is in fact the least likely to devote words to celebrity-style reporting. Only about 13% of its 48,002 campaign words are seen as celebrity statements. *CBS Evening News* is the leader in this category by about 5%. With about 26% of its 42,602 campaign words seen as entertainment reporting, *CBS* holds about a 5% lead over *NBC Nightly*

*News*. *NBC* used about 21% of its 49,589 campaign words on celebrity-style statements. In terms of raw word use, the gap between *ABC* and the other programs becomes even more apparent.

Although *CBS Evening News* dedicated the least amount of words to campaign coverage, it actually used the most words on celebrity-style reporting. 10,884 of *CBS*'s 42,602 words are used on celebrity statements. Comparatively speaking, the next highest percent word user, and the highest in total campaign word count- *NBC Nightly News*- used 10,263 of its 49,589 words on celebrity statements. Of its 48,002 campaign words, *ABC* only dedicated 6,396 words to celebrity statements. Despite the accomplishments of *ABC World News*, one must still realize the relevancy of the data. Even though it was the lowest, still over one in ten campaign words spoken on *ABC* were tied to some sort of celebrity statement.

Over the course of the last seven shows, the programs followed the hypothesized trend. Every program increased the percentage of words dedicated to celebrity statements. The order stayed the same, but the percent increases show some variety. *CBS Evening News* is first on both accords, as it increased its percentage to about 30%, which accounts for an increase of about 4% from the overall study. This implies that, over the course of the last seven shows, three out of every ten words spoken about the campaign were tied to some kind of celebrity statement. The second highest percentage remained with *NBC Nightly News*. However, as it has been throughout this study, its movement over the last seven shows is barely significant. The increase in percentage is only about 0.2%, keeping the overall percentage right around 21% still. Keep in mind that this still implies that throughout the study, a little over one out of every five words is

used in the form of a celebrity statement. And as was the case in the entire portion of this portion of the study, *ABC World News* finished last. However, its percentage increase is only second to *CBS Evening News*. *ABC* increased about 3%, from about 13% to a little over 16% of total words dedicated to celebrity statements. Even as the least among the three programs, *ABC*'s coverage over the last seven shows lends about three out of every twenty words to celebrity statements.

The last comparative statistic relates to promotional videos. This portion actually eschews the prevailing pattern thus far about which program is most prone to entertainment style reporting. Leading the way with about 21% of its 92 campaign segments containing some sort of promotional appearance or campaign advertisement clip is *NBC Nightly News*. The second most prevalent user of promotional clips is *ABC World News*. About 16% of its 64 campaign segments contain such clips. The most surprising of the results, though, has to be *CBS Evening News*. Using promotional clips in only about 10% of its 89 campaign segments, it is the lowest. And this does not change as the focus shifts to the last seven shows.

As with word percentage, every program displays an increase in promotional video use over the last seven shows. Despite the unanimous increases, *CBS Evening News* remains at the bottom of the list. Only increasing by about 3% to 13%, *CBS* still falls well below the other two programs in terms of promotional video use. Increasing 8%, *ABC World News* shows the largest percent increase in promotional video use. Yet even at about 22%, *ABC* remained the second most prevalent video user over their last seven shows. *NBC Nightly News* remained at the top of the list over their last seven shows. Increasing about 5% percent to about 26% of segments using promotional videos,

*NBC* led all three programs to drive well over the average percentage of segments using promotional videos, over the course of each program's last seven shows.

## **Conclusions**

From a pure statistical standpoint one can conclude that the media analysis achieved exactly what it set out to achieve. Statistically speaking, the study shows a mountain of evidence supporting the conclusion that celebrity-style campaign coverage has a significant foothold in nightly news programs. There is considerable numerical evidence to support that the campaigns are covered like celebrities.

Without over-extrapolating the analysis, one can also use this data as a template for other news programs. This study chose the network news programs based on their reputation for respectability and responsible news journalism. So having found celebritization in the midst of these programs, one can safely deduce that there is a significant presence in other, comparatively less-prestigious news programs.

However even without extrapolating the data, one can draw a number of safe conclusions simply on the sample. The study reaches one goal is setting down a template by which one can gauge the celebritization of campaign coverage. The study also tests this template extensively over the span of 34 days, across three news programs, and 245 total campaign news stories. In and of itself, the fact that a template for celebritization has gone through such a broad test can be considered a success.

From a summation perspective, the data simply shows that celebritization of campaign coverage is prevalent across three prestigious network news programs. The fact that about 98% of the broadcasts over a 34 day period contained some sort of celebrity-style statement establishes the breadth of celebritization. Within those



broadcasts, the fact that about 69% of all reports dealing with the campaign contained some sort of celebrity statement displays the depth of the celebritization. Realizing that almost one in every five words spoken about the campaign across the three networks was tied to a celebrity statement puts into perspective exactly what kind of impact celebrity news coverage is having on campaign news coverage. So from a summation standpoint one can say that this study succeeds in providing a template, breadth, depth, and numerical perspective of celebritization.

The comparative study did little to establish one network more clearly superior than the others in terms of avoiding celebrity coverage of campaigns. However that was hardly the primary goal of the comparison. The comparative focus of the study was used to provide evidence that one or two broadcasts did not skew the results. The comparative analysis shows the parity which governs network news content. Based on the results given, there is very little support for one broadcast being clearly superior to the next- and that was the point. In showing the news programs to be relatively alike in their embrace of celebritization, one can reasonably conclude that it is not a one or two network phenomenon. Over the course of the comparative analysis, each network led a given category. This establishes that not one of the news programs is exempt from the grasp of celebritization and the sample subjects are valid.

Moving on, the next chapter will take these quantitative conclusions and expand them into overarching conclusions and implications of the study. The concluding chapter will pull from all the content presented thus far to define the direction of campaign coverage and its effects on democracy and presidential elections. The concluding chapter will also discuss shortcomings of this study as they pertain to what still needs to be done

in studying celebritization of campaigns. Shortcomings will also cover the degree to which this study is flawed and should be recognized as such. Most importantly, however, the concluding chapter will draw upon the statistical results in order to discuss directions and implications upon all three sides- the campaign, the media, and the audience.

# Chapter 4

## Conclusions

This concluding chapter represents an effort to wrap up the literature review, the analysis, and the results. In doing so the hope is that such results can be seen as more than the statistical data used to represent them. So in addition to offering a synopsis of results and research techniques, this conclusion aims to relate this study to broader implications on presidential campaigns, campaign coverage, and the democratic process. However to create these opinions, this chapter will first look at how this study was conducted, quickly recap of the results, and discuss possible flaws that need to be acknowledged in order to draw any conclusions.

Firstly this chapter examines the template. As it is the major original contribution put forth in this study, a critical assessment of template is necessary for its own legitimacy. This portion of the conclusions recaps the extent to which existing literature was used to create this template. In reviewing its creation, this area is also used to explore possible shortcomings in the template, as well as a reminder of what is actually included in the study guidelines. Discussion of the study template and guidelines also includes what would need to be done to include the study template for future contributions.

The conclusions will also cover the research design. Again, to add legitimacy to the results and broader implications one must critically assess the research design. This section reviews why certain procedures were followed, and what could be improved

going forward. Here is also the area where the study will seek to acknowledge the possibility of error in design, but defend the results and the study's veracity.

The analysis of the research design leads into the analysis of results. This section will refer to the statistical results and review what the essential findings were. However this section will also recognize what the statistics did not find, and for what they did not code. It is here that the discussion will delve into what conclusions one can draw from such a bevy of statistics as well as for what could have been additionally coded. The discussion of general conclusions leads into the section of broader implications.

Broader implications will take on three major subtopics. Amidst these statistics and general conclusions, this section recognizes that the results speak to broader trends in presidential campaigning and American democracy. In terms of the three subtopics, they cover how these results demonstrate the evolution of presidential campaigns, media coverage, and the audience- the voting public. This section is the summation of what this study shows as a predictive tool. It is on this note that the analysis and study together will conclude, recognizing its small, but hopefully significant contribution to the study of presidential campaigning.

## **The Template**

To clear any ambiguity, the template refers to the eleven points of emphasis that were shown in chapter three as the basis for the media analysis. To review, they are as follows:

- Stressing personality traits/image, such as clothing, likability, how they are living their private lives
- Who celebrities are hanging out with/ befriending

- Where they are hanging out
- What talk shows they are on, their upcoming game/album/movie
- Showing trailers or previews of said game/album/movie
- Personal lives, especially if it involves scandal or affairs
- The back story- where they came from, growing up
- How they carry themselves- their style and modus operandi
- Showing clips of signature lines and catch-phrases
- Gossip- what rumors are there on the street about these people
- Feuding- who they are not friendly with and what the celebrities are saying about each other's personal lives and personalities

As one recalls, these were found through a general knowledge and review of entertainment news programming, such sports pundit shows, *Access Hollywood*, *E! News*, and *Entertainment Tonight*. This section reviews the creation of the template, its effectiveness and shortcomings, and what can be done to improve this original template.

As previously stated, this template is based on a rather informal review of what the researcher deemed entertainment news shows. The content of these shows (those listed above) is that of celebrity coverage. Whether those celebrities be actors, musicians, or sports stars, these programs' sole goals are to cover these celebrities. Within the context of these shows, there is no hard news covered. When reviewing these shows the focus was not on hard or soft news, because these pertain largely to segment and content presentation techniques such as segment length, sound bites, and dramatization.

Although, as one can see from the template, there is some overlap, the major focus was

on the individual's presentation. In covering celebrities, what exactly is included in stories and segments?

Celebrity news differs from the broader topic of soft news in that respect. Despite the techniques, the individual is the focus of the presentation. The format of interviews and stories is personal. Although questions can range, and the literature review speaks to instances where celebrities are asked political questions, the idea is that the celebrity is asked questions to see what (s)he says next, not for the informative value of their answers. Although one of the characteristics of soft news is personalization, celebrity news tackles personalization from a different angle. Celebrity news recognizes that the subject is consciously presenting an image and the coverage examines that image, looking for holes or support for that image. The personalization, as generalized in soft news, is that in which the media covers a story from a personal perspective or angle. Usually the subject is not consciously presenting an image to the media. From this type of analysis, the template was born.

In terms of shortcomings and creation, the informality is a definite issue. Going forward one would have to formalize the process to code exactly what goes into a celebrity story. There is also the issue of elimination. As noted in Chapter Three, polling and financial concerns have large stakes in celebrity news coverage. However based on research, this study did not include either in its quest for celebritization. From a standpoint of shortcomings, one must also include that, although elimination from consideration is based on educated review, it can still be considered somewhat arbitrary. The question remains as to whether categories can be added or subtracted to the template.

One can imagine that some of the eleven coding flags have both arguments for and against their inclusion.

The eleven points of emphasis could also be a target of criticism. Chapter Three briefly mentions that the individual categories were not coded because of extensive overlap. This overlap could imply that the points of emphasis can be better organized. There is a possibility that this template comes in a more succinct version. This of course would be welcome as an asset towards greater efficiency and detail in studying celebritization.

In noting the potential problem of overlap, one can also look at that as a sign of due diligence. Having espoused on the potential shortfalls of the template, one must also defend its validity. Although there is no formal research study to act as a guide in creating such a template, this creation is based on an extensive literature review in addition to the survey of entertainment news programs. Additionally the overlap can be recognized as a strength of the study. Since the study's goals did not include coding for individual signs of celebritization, the current template is useful in simply recognizing the presence of celebrity style news. From that standpoint, the fact that there is some overlap in points of emphasis simply implies the study's intense focus on capturing as much celebrity-style news as possible. In this case, overlap is a sign of the study's comprehensiveness.

One can also look at the template itself as a success of the study. Based on prior research cited in this study, there is no evidence of prior investigations into celebritization. From this knowledge one can draw a reasonable conclusion that this

template is version 1.0. So this study is responsible for creating a baseline from which subsequent versions can develop.

## **Improvements**

This section has already alluded to several potential improvements. As is recognized in the preceding paragraph, this template (although effective for the purpose of this study) is very open to such improvements. To start with, there is a clear opportunity to increase background information. Two studies could be used as a prequel to the template given in this study. The first would be a comprehensive analysis of entertainment programming. From such an analysis, one could come to a number of conclusions beneficial to this study. Such a study could conclude that there are reporting elements unique to celebrity news and exactly what is included in those elements. From such a study there would be a broad list of elements to draw from in order to determine whether or not there is a celebritization of campaign coverage.

The second study that could improve this one would build of an analysis of entertainment programming. Such a study would take the broad list of elements unique to celebrity reporting and specifically define whether or not any can be disqualified as celebrity-style campaign coverage. Such a disqualification would occur if the element has long been associated with campaigning- long before the emergence of entertainment news. As is, this study drew from scarce literature in order to conclude that polling and candidate fund-raising should be eliminated, but there was far from a comprehensive study to support such elimination.

In terms of this study, the template could be redesigned. One could make the argument that a more succinct template could create less gray area when looking over



transcripts. Because of the categorical overlap, some segments and statements were not clear examples of celebritization. Despite this, there is fair certainty behind the veracity and effectiveness of the template in its current form. As it is currently established the template and points of emphasis are satisfactory in helping to achieve the goals of this study.

## **The Research Methods**

The research methods include the techniques used in gathering the data and how that data was recorded. This section looks at the procedural aspects of this study and simply comments on their shortcomings and effectiveness. Based on those shortcomings, the conclusion of this section looks for areas where the research method can be improved.

### **The Methods**

The methods used for data gathering here are fairly straight forward. This study accessed transcripts of *NBC Nightly News*, *ABC World News*, and *CBS Evening News*, in that order. Those transcripts dated from October 1, 2008 to November 3, 2008- the eve of Election Day. Those transcripts were separated into segments on the show for a given day, such that each segment had its own electric transcript. Using the template described above, the research reviewed each transcript individually looking for statements that fell under the categories of celebrity coverage. The statement was then manually counted and the word count was recorded in spreadsheets, as was other relevant data, as can be seen in Appendices A, B, and C.

In terms of gathering the results, the statistics that were gathered in Appendices A, B, and C were then calculated into a number of relevant statistics, using the calculation tools that are made available in computer spreadsheet applications. Those

results are seen in part at the bottom of Appendices A, B, and C, and also more clearly in Appendix D. It is from this methodology and data gathering that the results in Chapter Three are based.

### **Shortcomings and Effectiveness**

Because of its reliance on manual addition, one can see the potential shortcomings in the data gathering. That is where the shortcomings section will lead off. At times the data gathering required the researcher to count over two hundred words without the aid of computer programming. The implication here is that there could be addition issues. This is a potentially major concern given the degree to which statistical analysis is a backbone of the results shown in Chapter Three. Had there been a more effective and efficient application on which to do such statistical gathering, the study would be stronger from a scientific sense. However it is the stance of this study that any residual errors from counting do not take away from the overall conclusions about celebrityization being present in news programs' coverage of campaigns.

Another shortcoming to reaching the goals of this study is the use of transcripts. Although transcripts provide the most effective and efficient means of gathering data, without the rush of being in real time, they also present significant obstacles to a study looking for entertainment style news. Having watched entertainment news programs, the study could not discount the role images have in the creating a celebrity-style atmosphere. Since transcripts do not provide such imagery, a portion of celebrityization is not fully recognized. It is important to note that the transcripts did take note of when campaign images were played, but it is the belief of this study that there are some instances where the transcripts could be unreliable on that account.

The lack of images also works as a bridge to effective portions of this study. Because the analysis is based on transcripts, this study was exempt from the confusing influences of soft news. As has been stated there is somewhat of a natural mesh between soft news and celebrity style news. Although celebrity news emphasizes content over soft news techniques, there still tends to be a natural relationship. That being said, reading transcripts allowed the study to be excluded from the possibly damaging effects of soft news techniques. Given the possibility that soft news techniques, such as an inundation of images and sounds, could be at play there is the possibility that it could convince one that celebrity-style news is being reported. However the reality is that soft news techniques can be employed with incorporating celebritization of content.

Ultimately the transcripts proved to be the most effective mode of data processing. Had one attempted to gather data via a word count or timer of live or taped television there would be a far larger degree of error. Timing segments and statements would have been inexact at best. Similarly trying to count words on television would also prove to be time-consuming and prone to inaccuracies. So, again, despite shortcomings, the study is well positioned to make a credible contribution to the field of campaign coverage.

### **Improvements**

In terms of data gathering, improvements are somewhat scarcer than they are in the model of the template. Generally speaking the data gathering process was efficient and effective, with a low degree of error. Of course an improvement could be seen for the counting process. An efficient application by which one could tabulate word counts would have been of great use in this data gathering process.

From a scope perspective, a more exact template could have afforded the study an opportunity to increase scope. If the improvements from the template section had been taken into account, one could have improved the coding process. Instead of simply coding for celebrity statements, additional coding could have been performed for what type of celebrity statement was used. However to the extent that the data gathering covered the scope of the analysis as is, one cannot discard the research methods. They proved to be effective in reaching the proposed ends for this study.

## **The Results**

The section aims to do two things. Firstly from the statistical results seen in Chapter Three, the goal is to draw general conclusions as to what this study exactly displays. The second section will look at what the study does not show. Here there will be an appraisal of what one cannot extrapolate from this data, simply because it was not the focus of this study. This section will provide a gateway into the larger implications one can associate with these findings.

### **General Conclusions**

Chapter Three comprehensively deals with the statistical analysis that goes into the data results. However it does not surmise any verbal conclusions that can be made based on the data. Simply stated this analysis shows that celebritization is real, and it is ingrained in campaign coverage. The statistical analysis puts a percentage number behind aspects of campaign coverage. For example this study shows that some celebrity-style campaign coverage is included in about 98% of broadcasts that cover the campaign. From there, the statistics break into smaller subsets. As a qualitative summation, one can conclude that celebritization is present in significant portions throughout campaign

coverage. Even the smallest statistical percentages hold that a form of celebritization is present in almost 10% of coverage. If the lowest percentage associated with celebrity-style news is around 10% this study is extremely confident in concluding that celebritization is a significant area of study in campaign coverage. Considering that this study covered over 140,000 campaign words across 245 segments, I believe that having over 14,000 words or 24.5 of those segments having some celebrity-style news is beyond accidental, especially when one applies that percentage to more than just one month worth of coverage across three programs. Furthermore the study is legitimized in that statistics support its presence in news media.

The comparative analysis is useful in supporting conclusions associated with general news broadcasts. This portion of the statistical analysis was undertaken to support the assumption that celebrity-style campaign coverage is not a singular phenomenon. In the simplest of explanations, the comparative analysis was done to prove that if three of the most well-respected news programs share their incorporation of celebrity news, than it is reasonable to conclude that every news program enlists some sort of celebrity-style campaign coverage. In reviewing the parity in results from that comparative analysis, this study feels safe in confirming those assumptions.

Celebritization of campaign coverage has in fact seeped its way into campaign news coverage across the board.

### **What is not Covered**

The most important thing not to conclude from this study is that celebritization is over-taking all news coverage relating to individuals. Although one can hypothesize as much, this study kept its focus solely on campaign coverage. Even segments that referred

to the candidates as senators, independent of their presidential aspirations, were not counted for this analysis. So to use this data as a condemnation on all news coverage of politicians would be a complete misinterpretation.

Although one can make assumptions based on this data, one cannot draw any conclusions that celebritization is any worse or better than the last election cycle. Because the data here only captures the 2008 election, one cannot make any comparative suggestions regarding past election cycles. However this will not deter this study from offering assumptions as to what this means for the future in the forthcoming implications section.

This study also does not seek to place blame. Whenever a seemingly undesirable aspect seeps its way into any industry or operation, the first instinct is to place blame. This study simply recognizes the existence of celebritization. Although Chapters One and Two look into how each of three groups- campaigns, media, public- has added fuel to fire, no part of this study has sought to place blame. Again, in the implications portion this study will note how this study affects all three groups, but will not place blame on any. This study recognized the existence of such celebrity-style coverage and puts numerical values on its prevalence.

From a comparative view, one cannot judge which of the three sample programs is more or less prone to celebrity-style news. Because there is such a parity of results, one cannot decidedly confirm one as being better or worse than the rest. One can look at Appendix D and safely conclude that a certain program is less inclined to air a single aspect of celebrity campaign coverage, but cannot decide that, across the board one network is simply better than the others. In order to do so, one would have to weight

certain aspects of celebritization and confirm equality in sample sizes, among other requirements. As the goal of this study was to simply find a relationship among the three sample programs, such measures were not undertaken.

Despite what cannot be surely concluded out of this study, the actual conclusions and educated opinions that surface provide a strong baseline from which one can draw broader implications. The following section will use these general conclusions to put together macro theories that have come about because of the research from this study.

## **Broader Implications**

As much as the general conclusions provide proof of the validity and value of this study, one must also draw broader opinions about how the celebritization of campaign coverage affects the pillars of American politics. This final section uses the general conclusions, data, and review of the existing literature to put together educated and researched thoughts regarding how these findings are a microcosm of movements within American politics. The implications here will be divided into three subsections. These will look at how the campaigns, the media, and the public are connected to these results and what it means moving forward for all three groups.

### **The Campaigns**

The fact of the matter is that campaigns understand the role of celebrity in campaigns. As Chapters One and Two point out, there are image consultants and public relations firms behind candidates. The image presented to the media is well thought out and planned. Such planning is what makes Sarah Palin's wardrobe, or Joe Biden's misspeaking newsworthy events. The image and the rehearsal and the planning are all aspects of celebrity that have been adopted in campaigns. This much is noted in the

literature review. The question remains how far does this go? Where is the threshold? At what point does the increase in celebritization stop, and the percentages, as they are seen in this study stay the same or begin to retract?

The statistics from this study support that it could go much farther. As is, only around 20% of all words spoken about the campaign are packaged in a celebrity statement. So that leaves 80% that can still be transformed into celebrity-style news. Theoretically, American presidential campaigns could go to the extreme of *American Idol*, where candidates are part of some sort of reality show. However even then one would think that policy debates would have to ensue.

This leads to the conversation regarding thresholds. The fact is, there is a reason the most popular celebrities are not presidents. There is still some regard for policy knowledge and experience that are innate skills to be president. The point is that there are thresholds. One can even believe that a threshold was almost reached this election. There was considerable debate as to whether Barack Obama was speaking solely in rhetorical flourishes, rather than anything substantial. Of course the flip side of this is that the man who almost reached the threshold ended up winning the election. The other debate surrounded the personal attacks. A signature celebrity news story, the personal attack, is perpetually debated as something that may cross the line. They are well researched, have nothing to with policy, and sound similar to middle school children. This campaign brought increased scrutiny on to whether or not these personal attacks were in line with a presidential campaign, and what use they truly had- so another example of reaching a threshold.



The belief here is that moving forward the campaigns will continue to carefully present an image. The presidency is simply too important not to try and fix as many variables as possible. Campaigns have simply found a time tested method to create the best presentation possible- follow what celebrities have been doing forever. That being said, there is a fine line that campaigns will always walk. The media and American voters will seek out differences in candidates. If both candidates present themselves as squeaky clean models of society, the best way to differentiate one candidate from the other is through policy. No matter the acceleration in celebritization, policy still remains the X-factor. Even celebrities, no matter their images, are differentiated from one another through their work. Paris Hilton and Christina Aguilera may both try to present similar images (hypothetical), but when they each release albums, one can discern having musical talent from not. Campaigns will always contain policy talk because the line of work is politics. What differentiates one politician from the next is policy.

### **The Media**

One could make the case that this study is media-centric, and it would be correct because the most easily available way the country has to judge a campaign or voter reaction is through the media's lens. One makes inferences as to what the campaign trail looks like and what the viewers want based on what the media presents. Television news is a medium between the news-makers and the news-takers. That is why this study covered news programs.

This study suspects the influence that the entertainment quotient is having on news programs. Other than realizing that campaigns are producing entertainment-friendly material, the only other reason for such a significant portion of campaign

coverage to be dedicated to celebrity-style coverage is ratings. News programs are looking to entertain their audiences to some degree. They are reaching out to a wider scope of viewers.

This will not change. So long as ratings are the key statistic that drives advertising, which drives revenue, news programs will cater to what viewers want to see, as much as it dictates what they should see. However there is a threshold here as well. Now that this study shows the presence of celebritization, there is very little reasonable belief that it will disappear. One must look at the positives, though. Still about 80% of all words spoken about campaigns are dedicated to non-celebritized information. The news still realizes its role as an information provider. The fact is that 20% of the time they are just providing a different sort of information.

Although they do provide this alternative type of celebrity information, there is reason to believe that it will not become the dominant piece of information. News programs have a niche in television- they are the news. Just as there are soap operas, sitcoms, and reality shows, daily news is a type of programming that draws an audience. That is the niche of news. If news programs attempt to take on a greater bulk of entertainment-style stories they will enter the niche of entertainment news. If it goes that far, news programs will not beat or even compete with the established entertainment news programs. In an edition of an old saying: it is tough to beat someone at their own game. And that is exactly what news programs would be trying to do if they added increased celebrity-style coverage. As it stands, the news media is still covering presidential candidates. This serves a succinct purpose in American democracy, as news reports are the easiest and most accessible way to learn who is representing the American

people. Although there is celebritization, the media is still serving the populace because it is supplying the people with information regarding its politicians. Because there is still an audience for that information (even if only 50% of the population votes), the news media will still offer non-celebritized campaign coverage.

As is, the news programs are simply offering some lighter fare for their current viewers within the competition that comes from the internet and other news programs. It is an effort to distance oneself from the competition, not enter a new competition. With that in mind one can feel fairly secure that television news will remain predominantly policy-informative with regards to campaign coverage.

### **The Public**

In the section regarding the media, ratings are mentioned extensively. Of course ratings are tied directly to the viewing public. What the last sections implies is that, in an effort to differentiate itself from others, a news program will add some celebrity-style information. The broadcasts do this because they feel that it will draw additional ratings. If they do draw additional ratings it is because that is what the public likes or thinks they need to see. This would imply that any change toward celebritization is the public's fault. However, it is not that simple. First, the media is also tied to report what campaigns give them. If a campaign stump speech only contains family history information, or whose going to win the World Series, then that is all it can report. Secondly, the media is facing competition from not only other news networks, but also internet sources. The public may still want all policy news, but it may get it from other sources. In these cases the news media fights that competition with exclusive interviews and investigative reporting, using resources that other sources do not have.

Of all the groups that this study affects, the hardest to analyze is the public. One cannot simply deduce that it cares less about policy because there are so many additional sources to receive policy information. Yet, at the same time, one cannot conclude from the results of this study that the voting public is as informed as ever. Drawing broader conclusions about the public's campaign competency is not something with which one can use these results.

What one can do is discuss the effect that the public has on both the media and the campaign. Ratings and votes are very similar in their function and they are coveted by news programs and campaigns, respectively. In this sense, the public has the power to influence the direction of celebritization. Referring back to the section regarding campaigns, thresholds were almost met in the 2008 election because of public outcry. It was the public who thought Mr. Obama spoke with too little substance and it was the public who thought that the personal attacks were becoming too reminiscent of tabloid fodder. The thresholds are set by the public, and from that perspective one can conclude that the direction this celebritization takes lies almost solely on the voters' needs and wants.

That being said, this should not be misconstrued for putting the emphasis on the public for the entrance of celebritization in campaign coverage. None of the literature or the media analysis supports any statement of the type. However it is the view of this study that public perception has an incredible influence on the direction of celebritization moving forward. To this extent one can conclude this entire study with thoughts regarding the power of the public.

The broadest implication that this study can reach is the overwhelming respect both the media and the campaigns have for the American public. In some ways it is a forced respect because both campaigns and news programs rely on public perception as a barometer of success. Despite the perceived influence of campaign financing or advertisements for news programs, favorable coverage or exclusive stories, the ultimate influence lies with the public. News programs and campaigns are not pursuing celebrity-style campaigning and campaign coverage just for the sake of it. The perception is that it draws more people. In the wake that it no longer draws more people, then the phenomenon of celebrity-style campaign coverage will go the way of the Macarena, the pet rock, and leisure suits.

If it is not a fad, and celebritization is here to stay as a way to draw more viewers, one has to wonder what the effects are on public. Based on the results seen here, celebritization is significant and measurable, but does not overwhelm campaign news. In its current form one should look at celebritization as a positive. If one was to turn to campaign news with or without entertainment-style news coverage, its presence does not hinder the message. However if one is drawn to the entertainment-style news coverage, then its inclusion has increased public participation in politics. Celebritization does not exclusively imply a complete absence in policy or information, just a different presentation. So increased participation due to the current levels of celebritization can only be seen as a positive.

If celebritization drastically increases, then there should be cause to worry about the public's level of competency on political issues. Even though celebritization does not exclusively imply non-policy reporting, there is a level of watering down and

generalization that occurs. If campaign coverage increasingly relies upon celebrity-style news to draw viewers, one has to question the public's willingness to comprehend complex policy issues. What that can lead to is an *American Idol* effect. Everyone at home has some grasp of what singers sound good, but are not experts in the field. When voting on *American Idol*, the public does so with a little music knowledge, but mostly based on looks, performance, personality, and what other people think. If celebritization grows to the point that there is still general policy knowledge passed on, but overwhelmed in a context of personality, looks, attacks, image-creation, it cannot bode well for American democracy.

Appendix A						
NBC Nightly News	Segments on the Campaign	Segment Word Count	Topics	Celebrity Statements	Statement Word Count	Category of Celebrity Statement
1-Oct	2	443	Biden in Pennsylvania	1	28 Words + Video	Personalization-Obama Family
		497	VP Debate, Polling	2	12 Words + Clip	Critical of Palin Interview- not policy
					17 Word Sound Bite	Palin- wanting to represent Joe Six-Pack
2-Oct	4	401	VP Debate, Polling	None		
		463	Social Security	None		
		558	VP Debate, Polling	2	49 Words	Critical of Palin Interview + Debate being suspenseful
					60 Words	Descriptive of Palin and Biden-loose cannon and scary. Palin's persona.
		450	Obama as a community organiz.	Whole segment	450 + clips + sound bites	Obama as a community organizer- no mention of policy or its relation to today
3-Oct	3	548	VP Debate, Polling	1	26+ Debate Clip	Debating style-Palin's charm
		57	Biden's son going to Iraq	Whole Segment	57 words	Personalization-Biden's son to Iraq
		323	Campaign Direction, Polling	None		
4-Oct	2	415	Candidates on Abortion	None		
		579	Campaign Direction, Polling	4	32 Words	Obama history with William Ayres
					18 Words + Campaign Ad	Questioning Obama's honesty- Personalized
					21 Words + Clip	Campaign Style-Going to take the gloves off

Appendix A						
					29 Words + Clip	Style- shows useless clip of Palin meeting with military moms
5-Oct	3	129	Campaign attack on Obama	Whole segment	129	Obama attack, Palin Style, campaign "fighting back"
		601	Campaign Strategies	4	12+ Campaign Ad	McCain is erratic, out of touch, ignorant
					71 Words	Obama hangs out with terrorists, not the real Obama
					24 Words	McCain taking the gloves off, questioning Obama's associations
					42 Words	Obama's use of the word erratic in Campaign Ad. Attacking Age?
		375	Polling	None		
6-Oct	3	438	Obama gaining + economy	1	80 Words including Clip	Obama's character, attacking character, Obama record
		488	Palin Qualifications	1	30 Words	Palin's likability, why she is the attack dog in McCain campaign
		480	Candidates on Supreme Court	None		
7-Oct	2	368	Presidential Debate	Whole Segment	368	Characteristics of a President- Trust, Hope, Opaque Things
		719	Presidential Debate	2	76 Words and Campaign Clips	McCain-Palin criticizing the Obama's person
					100 Words and Campaign Clips	Points where the McCain campaign has looked racist or prejudice
8-Oct	3	579	Presidential Debate	3	79 Words and Clips	Points where the McCain supporters were overtly rowdy



Appendix A						
					98 Words and Debate Clips	Style points of McCain debating
					61 Words + Debate Clip	McCain allegedly patronizing a questioner
		376	Campaign Direction + Polling	2	38 Words	Money spent advertising- Obama's advantage
					84 Words	Campaign Style- Figuring out how to "use" Palin
		486	McCain- Obama on War	None		
9-Oct	2	628	Campaign on Earmarks	None		
		796	Campaign Stops	Whole segment except 57 words	739 Words + Campaign Clips and Ads	Reports from both camps about personal attacks, what kind of people the candidates are. Only non-personalized stuff was Obama comment on McCain's mortgage bailout
10-Oct	2	785	Campaign Stops	2	31 Words and Clip	Calling McCain campaign angry, inspiring meanness
					Running Clip of the McCain Ad	Ad admonishes Obama as a liar
		108	Polling	None		
11-Oct	2	690	McCain Campaigning	Whole Segment	690 Words and Clips	Talking about the personal attacks on Obama, what people think about the person
		400	Obama Campaigning	Whole Segment	400 Words and Clips	Complimenting McCain, Running Clips of a Photo Op in Philly

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12-Oct	1	1020	VP Campaigning	3	150 Words and Clips	Talking about the personal attacks on Obama and the criticisms of Obama. Clips of the attacks and of people saying Obama should have apologized to McCain
					24 Words	Clinton family support
					50 Words and Clips	McCain negative ads, personal ties to PA of Bidens and Clintons
13-Oct	1	566	Campaign Trail	None		
14-Oct	2	197	Obama on Economy	None		
		330	McCain on Economy	None		
15-Oct	2	486	McCain on Debate	2	18 Words + Interview Clip	Portraying Democratic Leaders as schemers-Caricature
					17 Words + Interview Clip	Analyst saying that Obama needs to look presidential
		523	McCain vs. the Republican Party	2	15 Words	Obama campaign "casting" Bush as McCain's running mate
					18 Words	McCain campaign must "raise doubts" about Obama's judgement
16-Oct	2	525	Joe the Plumber	2	18 Words	Joe being cast as a middle-American in the campaign
					40 Words	The style and strategy of using Joe by McCain
				Whole Segment		Not necessarily celebrity, but how it is a paparazzi like scene around those who come into the campaign

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		508	Campaign Trail	2	69 Words + Debate Clips	Joe the plumber/McCain "painting" Obama as a liberal in the worst way
					20 Words + Debate Clip	Showing McCain's "best zinger" of the night
17-Oct	2	1110	Campaign Trail	4	26 Words	Joe the Plumber is a metaphor
					15 Words	McCain campaign strategy- Obama's ties to Ayers
					77 Words and SNL clips	McCain campaign strategy- using comedy
					Clip from SNL	Satirizing Obama's money
		74	Cindy McCain's tax return	whole segment	74 Words	Talking about Cindy McCain's money
18-Oct	1	807	Polling	5	35 Words + Sound Bites	McCain talking about Joe "keeping his dough" and other fake middle-class people
					22 Words + Sound Bite	Palin imploring Philly to vote for an "underdog" like Rocky
					30 Words + Sound Bite	McCain talking about SNL and Tina Fey
					Campaign Clip	Showed blatant advertisement for Obama
					33 Words	Commenting on Newspaper Endorsements
19-Oct	3	1233	Colin Powell endorsement	5	13 Words	Hoping Powell's endorsement's "presence will be felt"
					29 Words + Clips	Obama feeling humbled that Powell thought he's acted "presidential"
					57 Words	Powell concerned about McCain's personal attacks

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					18 Words	McCain's daughter talking about him as a dad
					50 Words and SNL clip	The ratings Palin received on her SNL debut
		476	Candidates on Late Night TV	Whole Segment	476 Words + Late Night Clips	A multitude of Clips of candidates on TV and how funny they are
		419	Polling	None		
20-Oct	2	405	Early Voting	2	24 Words	Biden comparing Obama to Kennedy image
					15 Words and SNL clip	Palin is "fighting the image war"
		418	Candidates on Medicare	None		
21-Oct	2	745	Obama ahead in the Polls	1	86 Words + Clip	Palin not being smarter than a third grader- not knowing what VP does
		491	Polling	2	23 Words	Referring to the Powell endorsement in comparison to a baseball play
					34 Words	Commenting on Obama's lead in the hopeful and optimistic category
22-Oct	2	1979	McCain-Palin interview	5	48 Words	Palin and Family wardrobe crisis
					88 Words	Palin's medical records
					28 Words	Obama's spending more
					72 Words	Powell's endorsement, was it hurtful to McCain?
					21 Words	McCain's endorsed by 5 secretary of states and war heroes
		228	Biden Comments	1	31 Words	Obama's grandmother's role

Appendix A						
23-Oct	2	1392	McCain-Palin interview	4	34 Words	Palin's smarts, her wardrobe, and Alaska "Troopergate"
					102 Words	Bill Ayers and terrorism tied to Obama
					86 Words	Obama's connection to Rev. Wright
					38 Words	Bill Ayers and His Wife- The Weathermen
		338	Obama leaving to see grandma	1	139 Words	Obama's Grandmother's history and her birthday
24-Oct	5	309	Polling	1	42 Words	Piece on NY Times about behind-the-scenes McCain campaign
		492	Where they stand on free trade	None		
		794	Palin Interview	2	40 Words	Palin's smarts, her wardrobe, and Alaska "Troopergate"
					234 Words	Palin talking about false allegations, lies
		155	Campaign Stops	1	24 Words	Troopergate
		93	Campaign Worker-McCain	Whole Segment	93 Words	Campaign worker makes up attack for McCain ticket
25-Oct	2	472	Campaign Nevada	None		
		1173	Campaign Stops	3	27 Words + Campaign Clip	Obama has never been south of the border
					35 Words + Campaign Clip	The jacket Palin was wearing
					18 Words	Talking about the length of Obama's TV ad
26-Oct	2	1340	Campaign Stops	2	51 Words + Campaign Clips	Endorsement from Liz Hasselback, talking about clothes

Appendix A						
					40 Words + Campaign Clips	Palin talking about her wardrobe
		511	Candidates on Homeland Security	None		
27-Oct	2	445	Courting Latino Voters	None		
		845	Final Campaign Rounds	4	48 Words	Bringing Up Joe the Plumber's effects
					24 Words + Interview Clip	Questions about rumors that Obama is a Marxist
					80 Words	McCain bringing up that Obama is a socialist
					52 Words + Campaign Clip	Palin talking about her wardrobe and rumors that she's not happy
28-Oct	2	438	Obama in North Carolina	None		
		843	Campaign Stops	2	14 Words	Gossiping about sniping within McCain campaign
					20 Words + "Tonight Show" Clip	Malia Obama's concern over Dad's campaign ad ruining her TV
29-Oct	2	528	McCain attacks Obama	1	53 Words	McCain calls Obama a reverse Indian-giver in financing department
		481	Obama's 30 Min. TV Ad	2	44 Words + Campaign Clip	Obama calling McCain a name-caller, comedy
					72 Words + Campaign Ad	Obama essentially calling Palin stupid
30-Oct	3	1235	Barack Interview	1	126 Words	Any Friction between him and Clintons, "star power"
		454	McCain vs. Obama-Environment	None		

Appendix A						
		265	McCain in Ohio	1	20 Words	McCain brings out Joe the Plumber for a photo op
31-Oct	4	674	Barack Interview	1	525 Words	Whole story about being a father, privacy, his kids, the whole deal
		470	McCain Campaign Stops	2	77 Words + Campaign Clips	Calling out Obama, Bringing up Joe the Plumber, cracking jokes in Clip
					23 Words + SNL Clip	Reporting that McCain is going back on SNL
		341	Obama in Ohio	2	44 Words	Obama making photo ops in Idaho, "sentimental journey"
					82 Words + Campaign Clip	Making fun of McCain's campaign, report of Obama trick-or-treating
		71	Palin's Health Records	Whole Segment	71 Words	Gossip about Palin's health
1-Nov	4	670	Obama Campaign Stop	1	70 Words	Obama's half-aunt is an illegal; Obama's election "going according to script"
		307	Polling	None		
		387	Report on how candidates stay healthy	Whole Segment	387 Words	Who cares about how the politicians wash their hands?
		610	McCain Campaign Report	1	144 Words	Jokes on Palin and McCain, McCain on SNL
2-Nov	4	350	Polling	None		
		457	Campaigns in PA	None, just soft news		
		1240	Campaign Stops	5	43 Words + Campaign Clip	Springsteen and Obama hanging out together

Appendix A

					58 Words and Campaign Ad	"Controlling the message and taking advantage of any opportunities" McCain being endorsed by Cheney
					31 Words	Biden spending time with his family
					52 Words + Campaign Clip	"Mack is Back" slogan and McCain nicknames
					75 Words and SNL Clip	Talking about McCain on SNL and his jokes
		388	Length of Election Cycle	2	7 Words and SNL Clip	What the campaign has done for Tina Fey
					10 Words and SNL Clip	Talking about Obama Girl and Joe the Plumber and SNL
3-Nov	12	393	Polling	1	30 Words	Obama's inexperience and McCain's chumming with Bush
		408	Campaigning in Missouri	None		
		622	Pundits on Campaign	2	82 Words	"McCain brand" and his tone getting in the way of his brand
					97 Words	"Genuine Flash" of McCain as opposed to fake McCain
		167	Campaign Stops	1	55 Words	Passing of Obama's grandmother-mentioned on Campaign
		371	Biden in Ohio	None		
		807	Candidates as President	None		



Appendix A						
		591	Obama Campaign	3	153 Words + Campaign Clip	Obama's grandmother legacy, gaff in Florida
					16 Words + Campaign Clip	McCain as being out of touch
					36 Words	Whether or not Obama will make his grandma's funeral
		335	McCain Campaign	2	11 Words + Campaign Clip	Joe the Plumber as "Pepe el plumero"
					16 Words + Campaign Clip	Obama is far left
		429	Campaign Firsts	None		
		176	VA Campaign	None		
		323	Palin's Campaigning	1	18 Words and Campaign Clip	Rallies feeling like a "pep rally" or a movie tour
		679	Seth Meyers (SNL) on Campaign	Whole Segment	679 Words and SNL clips	A literal actor interview about the candidates on his show
Last Seven Shows	31	15510		32 + 3 Whole Segments	3241 Words and 8 Campaign Ads or Late Night TV clips shown	
34	92	49589		110 + 14 Whole Segments	10263 Words and 19 Campaign Ads or Late Night TV clips shown	
20.59%	33.70%	31.28%		29.10% and 21.43%	31.58% and 42.11%	

Appendix B

ABC World News	Segments on the Campaign	Segment Word Count	Topics	Celebrity Statements	Statement Word Count	Category of Celebrity Statement
1-Oct	2	552	Campaign back to D.C.	2	12 Words	Obama says that McCain is out of touch
					24 Words	McCain's "dramatized campaign suspension"
		459	Battleground States	None		
2-Oct	1	624	VP Debate	2	17 Words + Campaign Clip	Showing Palin landing with her kids-photo op.
					18 Words + Debate Clip	Biden attacking Giuliani in a debate
		410	VP Debate	1	63 Words	Style points for VP candidates and talking about Palin attacks
3-Oct	2	602	VP Debate	1	69 Words	Palin's style and talking about soccer games
		566	Campaign stops	None		
5-Oct	2	606	Personal Attacks	Whole Segment	606 Words + Campaign Clips	Attacks, goes through all the personal back and forth
		976	Campaign Attack Strategy	1	416 Words + Clips	Attacks of Palin about Obama and Ayers
6-Oct	2	596	Campaign Attack Strategy	2	41 Words + Campaign Clips	McCain saying that Obama is dishonest
					60 Words + Campaign Ad	Obama with Ayers and being "dishonest, dangerous, and risky"
		475	Battleground States	1	122 Words	Talking about style and McCain's personal attacks
7-Oct	1	1185	Pres. Debate	4	59 Words + Campaign Ads + Clips	Talking about Ayers and Obama, and if the attacks will continue
					38 Words + Campaign Ad	Obama calling McCain names and a smear artist
					70 Words	McCain camp saying it's truth-telling, Obama camp comparing it to "wrestle-mania"
					43 Words	Bill Clinton's style vs. George HW Bush's style in '92

Appendix B

Appendix B						
8-Oct	3	1030	Barack Interview	None		
		647	Pres. Debate	1	17 Words	Obama camp pleased with "tone and demeanor and manner" of the debate
		469	Barack Interview	Whole Segment	469 Words	McCain's attacks on Obama, Obama saying McCain won't say it in person, The Ayers controversy
9-Oct	1	1544	McCain Interview	3	85 Words	Obama is not truthful, honest man
					126 Words	Obama and Bill Ayers
					25 Words	Obama calling McCain "erratic and uncertain"
10-Oct	1	1346	Campaign Stops	3	41 Words + Campaign Ads	McCain talking about Ayers, saying he is too ambitious
					18 Words	Obama camp saying that he is "trying to look presidential"
					33 Words	Obama labeling McCain as "erratic" and quoting his campaign add saying that McCain is a smear artist
12-Oct	2	543	Negative Campaigning	1	44 Words + Campaign Clip	McCain telling a woman that Barack is not an Arab
		549	Obama Campaign	2	15 Words	Bill and Hillary knocking on doors for Barack.
					14 Words + Campaign Clip	Obama proclaiming that he will root for the Phillies now
13-Oct	2	954	Campaign stops	1	48 Words + Campaign Clips	McCain talking about his personality
		506	Polling	None		
14-Oct	3	537	Economic Plans	None		
		570	Voter Fraud Allegations	2	10 Words + Campaign Clip	McCain saying Obama works closely with ACORN
					19 Words + Archive Clip	McCain stated to be the ACORN keynote speaker at an immigration reform rally

Appendix B						
		675	Bradley Effect	None		
15-Oct	2	552	Pres. Debate	2	75 Words + Campaign Clips	McCain will bring up Ayers, voter registration fraud, fundraising. Barack said it means nothing until McCain brings it up in a debate
					18 Words + Campaign Clip	Obama saying that McCain is a smear artist again
		1049	Debate Strategy	1	25 Words	McCain needs to say something "dramatic" about Bill Ayers
16-Oct	4	881	Closing Strategies	2	21 Words + Sound Bite	RNC phone message saying that Obama is boys with Ayers
					43 Words	McCain vs. Letterman feud
		445	Polling	None		
		564	Debate	2	37 Words + Debate Clips	Who Joe the Plumber is
					50 Words	Fact checks on the man Joe the Plumber
		546	Joe the Plumber	Whole Segment	546 Words + Campaign Clips	What the campaigns are saying about Joe the Plumber, "fifteen minutes of fame," "the networks battled over him as if he were Britney"
17-Oct	2	637	Campaign stops	2	63 Words + Dinner Clip	Useless information from essentially an awards dinner
					36 Words + Sound Bites + Campaign Clips	RNC phone messages and McCain complaining about them in 2000
		429	Campaign Strategy	None		
19-Oct	4	554	Powell Endorsement	Whole Segment	554 Words + Interview Clips	All on Powell endorsement, what it adds to Obama's campaign, and the controversy
		425	Campaign Stops	1	18 Words + Campaign Clip	Obama talking about having Powell on his side

Appendix B						
		371	McCain Campaign	1	108 Words + Interview Clip	Analyzing Powell, McCain talking about the Secretaries of State that support him. Comparing entourages
		383	Polling	1	99 Words	McCain's attitude and style, mannerisms that need to be improved
20-Oct	3	1162	Early Voting	4	27 Words + Campaign Clip	Obama talking and standing with Tampa Bay Rays players
					38 Words + Campaign Clip	McCain talking about Joe the Plumber
					9 Words + Campaign Clip	Palin calling Obama a socialist
					34 Words + SNL Clip	Ratings of SNL when Palin goes on the show
		531	Polling	None		
		700	Tax Comparison	None		
21-Oct	2	1178	Campaign Stops	4	59 Words + Campaign Clips	Jumping on Biden's style and rhetoric
					33 Words + Campaign Clips	Obama's Grandmother
					43 Words + Campaign Clip	Joe the Plumber and Shawn the Ironworker
					182 Words + Campaign Clips	Obama's Grandmother
		564	Campaign Money	None		
22-Oct	3	1027	Campaign Stops	2	22 Words + Campaign Clip	Joe the Plumber and Joe the Hedge Fund Manager
					40 Words	Palin's wardrobe
		642	Polling	None		
		688	Health Care Comparison	None		
23-Oct	1	1036	Campaign Stops	1	40 Words + YouTube Clips	McCain campaign's "Joe the Plumber" competition
24-Oct	3	939	Campaign Stops	2	91 Words + Interview Clips	Obama's Grandmother, paparazzi-esque scene

Appendix B						
					26 Words + Campaign Clips	Biden bickering about phone calls
		688	War Comparison	None		
		614	Palin on Special Needs	1	43 Words	Palin "exploiting" certain aspects of her life
26-Oct	2	603	McCain camp in-fighting	3	83 Words	McCain campaign in-fighting; Palin people saying the McCain messed up "her role," McCain people calling her "a diva"
					90 Words + Campaign Clips	Wardrobe-Gate
					30 Words	More in-fighting gossip with McCain camp
		925	Campaign Stops	2	8 Words + Campaign Ad	Obama accusing McCain of being a smear artist
					88 Words	More in-fighting gossip with McCain camp
27-Oct	1	1020	Campaign Stops	2	56 Words	Obama talking about themes of his campaign
					52 Words + Campaign Clips	Obama and McCain bickering about something Obama said
28-Oct	2	977	Campaign Stops	2	36 Words and Campaign Ads	Talking about McCain's style and his attacks on Obama
					47 Words	Obama's scripts, teleprompters, style
		439	Polling	None		
29-Oct	3	1091	Barack Interview	1	71 Words	About McCain attacks, John McCain rip
		712	Campaign Stops	2	15 Words + Campaign Clip	McCain talking about Obama's "infomercial" and the World Series
					49 Words + Interview Clip	Palin on Good Morning America talking about McCain and Obama's characters

Appendix B						
		240	Barack Interview	Whole Segment	240 Words	What Barack doesn't like about the campaign trail
30-Oct	2	661	Campaign Stops	2	29 Words + Campaign Ad	Obama talking about needing a better driver than McCain
					36 Words	McCain attacking Obama, saying that he is stubborn would go through a "second act" in four years if he lost
		688	Polling	1	65 Words	Charles Gibson asking about names of the donors to Obama's campaign. Why he hasn't released the names
31-Oct	3	673	Campaign Stops	1	69 Words + Campaign Clip	Obama calling McCain a low-ball smear artist
		1192	McCain Interview	1	77 Words	Talking about what John doesn't like about the campaign trail
		473	Polling	None		
3-Nov	5	1097	Campaign Stops	2	139 Words	Obama's Grandmother
					10 Words + Campaign Clip	John McCain's nickname "The Mac"
		439	Polling	None		
		819	Campaign Speeches	None		
		1857	Campaign Stops	2	75 Words	Obama talking about his grandmother
					29 Words + Campaign Clips	McCain and Obama sound bites and photo ops. From the campaign
		1070	Campaign Rewind	Whole Segment	1070 Words + Everything	Useless information from the campaign, sound bites, SNL skits, Oprah, personal attacks, photo ops., scandals
Last 7 Shows	18	14976		21 + 2 Whole Segments	2464 Words 5 promotional video	

Appendix B						
28 Shows	64	48002		74 + 5 Whole Segments	6396 Words 10 promotional video	
25%	28.13%	31.20%		28.38% and 40%	38.52% and 50%	



Appendix C

CBS Evening News	Segments on the Campaign	Segment Word Count	Topics	Celebrity Statements	Statement Word Count	Category of Celebrity Statement
1-Oct	2	531	Polling	1	22 Words + Clip	Debate style, woman talks about how respectful Obama looked
		384	Polling	1	24 Words	McCain should bash Obama on his Reverend more often
2-Oct	4	623	VP Debate	3	52 Words	Debate style, see who will make a style and presentation mistake first
					34 Words + Clip	Palin firing shots at "mainstream media"
					69 Words + Archive Clip	Showing historical speech gaffes in campaign debates- like a funniest home video show
		270	VP Debate	1	59 Words	Treating the style like a movie review, why is Biden calling Palin "Governor, but only calling McCain "John"
		662	VP Debate	1	62 Words + File Footage	Everyone talking and reminiscing about Biden and his style gaffes
		818	VP Questions	Whole Segment	818 Words + Clips	Softball questions from Couric like "who is your favorite former VP," and "what's your favorite movie"
3-Oct	4	484	VP Debate Fact Check	None		
		506	VP Debate Audience reaction	2	31 Words + Debate Clips	Palin playing to the crowd, trying to regain her image
					57 Words + Debate Clips	Personal beliefs on families and tragedy
		137	Polling	1	32 Words + Campaign Clip	Sound Bite of Biden talking about love, and family note that his son is going overseas
		342	VP Debate	1	51 Words	How VPs shape the president's campaign image
6-Oct	2	523	Character Attacks	Whole Segment - 37 Words	586 Words + Campaign Clips + Ad Clips	Personal attacks on both Obama being a mystery man and McCain's 20 year old Keating scandal

Appendix C						
		394	Republican Campaign Strategy	1	51 Words	Karl Rove saying that they have to attack Obama's values and the Republican history in straying from the issues
7-Oct	3	346	Campaign Stops	None		
		415	Campaign Fact Check	1	65 Words	The fact check strayed from issues to Bill Ayers' life
		1077	Comparison on Small Business	None		
8-Oct	4	882	Personal Questions for Candidates	Whole Segment	882 Words	Softball questions to the candidates of best and worst, most admired people
		209	Obama Campaign	None		
		213	McCain Campaign	1	20 Words + Campaign Clips	Casting doubts on Obama and calling him a liar
		377	President Debate Fact Check	None		
9-Oct	3	381	Campaign Attacks	1	122 Words + Campaign Clips	Bill Ayers, Obama is a liar, McCain is too old
		334	Polling	None		
		1246	Comparison on Health Care	None		
10-Oct	3	406	Negative Campaigning	2	27 Words + Archive Campaign Clip	anti-McGovern ad that showed how much he changed his mind
					26 Words + Archive Campaign Clip	anti-Clinton ad that tried to draw Arkansas as a disaster from a "Stephen King novel"
		181	Campaign Stops	1	60 Words + Campaign Ad	Tying Obama to Bill Ayers
		371	McCain Campaign	1	114 Words + Campaign Clip	McCain talking about Obama being a decent man, the nastiness of the campaign
13-Oct	1	776	Economic Plans	1	23 Words	McCain needs to revert back to his old image
14-Oct	3	1092	Candidates on AIDS	None		

Appendix C						
		653	Polling	2	27 Words	Obama's energy, attitude, fresh air
					55 Words	Obama's personality and temperament and associations, McCain's preparation
		413	McCain and Economy	None		
15-Oct	5	203	Debate Coverage	1	45 Words	Obama is going to go negative on McCain if McCain starts it
		477	Debate Attacks	Whole Segment	477 Words	Going negative, style, what is vulgar and what's not
		885	Presidential Questions	Whole Segment	885 Words	Asking about scandals, lifestyles, personal stories
		156	McCain in Debate	Whole Segment	156 Words	Talking about style, McCain taking the gloves off and going personal
		412	Debate Coverage	Whole Segment	412 Words	Style, Going personal, demeanor
16-Oct	4	738	Campaigns post-debate	3	89 Words + Debate Clips	Joe the Plumber back story, no mention of what policy brought him up
					56 Words + TV clip	covering McCain's appearance on Letterman
					26 Words + Debate Clip	Obama attacking the McCain campaign going negative
		1185	Comparison on Education Reform	None		
		430	Debate Fact Check on Taxes	None		
		269	Debate Coverage	1	38 Words	Talking about McCain trying to "get in [Obama's] face" and rattle him
17-Oct	5	614	Campaigns in NC	None		
		356	McCain in the Battleground	None		
		467	Florida Campaign	None		

Appendix C						
		68	Chicago Tribune endorses Obama	Whole Segment	68 Words	Has nothing to say other than that Tribune never endorses, but picks Obama
		232	Upcoming Election	None		
20-Oct	4	495	Ohio Campaign	1	134 Words + Telephone recordings	Campaign coordinators talking about negative advertising, possible racism, Obama being fake
		324	Indiana Campaign	None		
		480	Florida Campaign	2	33 Words + Campaign Clip	Rays Pitcher David Price endorses Obama
					50 Words + Campaign Clip	Obama attacks the McCain campaign and Palin
		437	McCain in Missouri	1	39 Words	McCain adding a new attack to to his campaign
21-Oct	5	386	McCain in PA	None		
		1183	Candidates on job market	None		
		386	Obama in Florida	2	6 Words + Campaign Clip	Obama attacks Republican party with no substance
					118 Words	Obama's grandmother, backstory, Obama's style
		188	Obama vs. McCain finances	None		
		355	Campaign Fact Check-Taxes	None		
22-Oct	4	660	Personal Questions for Candidates	Whole Segment	660 Words	Entertainment style interview of both candidates
		416	Obama defending Biden	1	46 Words	Obama criticizing McCain campaign style
		385	McCain Campaign	3	76 Words and Campaign Ad + Campaign Clips	McCain talking about Joe the Plumber, not about taxes though

Appendix C						
					24 Words + Campaign Clip	Obama talking about "Joe the Hedge Fund Manager"
					48 Words	Gretchen Wilson endorsement and negative phone calls
		374	Palin's Wardrobe	Whole Segment	374 Words	Palin's wardrobe, how much it costs, can she dress less expensively
23-Oct	3	543	Obama's Crowds	2	22 Words + Campaign Clip	Obama sound bite about McCain and Bush- it rhymes
					17 Words + Graphic	Poll about who has better temperament and personality
		354	McCain Campaign	None		
		886	McCain vs. Obama on Islamic Extremism	None		
24-Oct	4	265	Polling	None		
		447	Endorsements	Whole Segment	447 Words	McCain being endorsed by Vegas more than Obama
		30	Obama in Hawaii	Whole Segment	30 Words	Obama in Hawaii with sick grandmother
		377	McCain Campaign	3	46 Words + Campaign Clip	McCain being endorsed by John Elway
					14 Words + Campaign Clip	McCain sound bite- fight for America
					15 Words + SNL Clip	Showing SNL clip of George Bush endorsing McCain
27-Oct	4	551	Obama vs. McCain finances	Whole Segment	551 Words + Graphics	Who is endorsing Obama financially
		412	McCain Campaign	1	144 Words + Campaign Clips	McCain phone call and campaign attacks and Obama attacks back
		315	Obama Campaign	1	35 Words + Campaign Ad	Obama style of framing attacks as counterpunches
		99	Palin Accusation	Whole Segment	99 Words	Palin attack is false that Obama has rented out victory site
28-Oct	3	448	McCain Campaign	1	40 Words + Campaign Clip	Joe the Plumber hitting the campaign trail

Appendix C						
		211	Campaign on Taxes	1	10 Words	Obama calls McCain a clone of Bush
		1044	McCain vs. Obama on Medicare	None		
29-Oct	4	564	McCain Campaign	1	13 Words	Obama is over-confident
		430	Obama Campaign	Whole Segment	430 Words + Campaign Ad	Obama's spending, airing clips of his Campaign Ad, his relationship with the Clintons, overall style
		273	Polling	None		
		622	Personal Questions for Candidates	Whole Segment	622 Words	Asking about their tombstones, favorite books, and relationship with their staff
30-Oct	4	585	Campaign Stops	2	52 Words + Campaign Clips	Clintons' endorsement of Obama, and what it represents to his image
					37 Words + Campaign Clips	Obama attacking Republicans on being selfish
		405	McCain in Ohio	2	39 Words + Campaign Clip	McCain sound bite and commenting on the tone of the campaign
					32 Words + Campaign Clip	Joe the Plumber out campaigning
		435	Obama campaign promise fact check	None		
		388	McCain vs. Obama on the middle class	None		
31-Oct	4	503	New Mexico Campaign	None		
		252	Campaign Coverage	1	91 Words	The absence of George Bush, and what that means for the image of McCain and the Republicans
		491	McCain Campaign	1	50 Words + Campaign Clip	Governor SCHWARZENEGGER sound bite endorsement and Obama endorsed by a Republican

Appendix C						
		372	Obama Campaign in Iowa	None		
3-Nov	7	838	Obama on the Outcome	3	39 Words	Is Obama going to be anxious election night
					96 Words	Q and A about negative ads and whose behind them
					120 Words	The meaning of being a black president
		206	McCain Campaign	None		
		830	Campaign Trail	1	101 Words	Obama Campaign Tone, His Grandmother passing
		988	Campaign Stops	4	146 Words	Obama Campaign Tone, His Grandmother passing
					58 Words	McCain's sending condolences to Obama
					17 Words + Campaign Clip	Sound Bite of McCain calling himself "the Mack"
					30 Words and Campaign Ad	Negative attack on Obama's old Reverend
		639	Campaign Coverage	None		
		114	Obama on Election Day	Whole Segment	114 Words	Obama spending election day playing basketball
		78	Obama on his Grandma	Whole Segment	78 Words + Campaign Clip	Obama talking about his grandmother
Last 7 Shows	30	13212		22 and 8 whole segments	3956 and 4 promotional videos	
24 Shows	89	42602		61 and 19 whole segments	10884 and 9 promotional videos	
29.17%	33.71%	31.01%		36.07% and 42.11%	36.35% and 44.44%	

Appendix D

	# of Shows	# of Pres. Words	# of Pres. Segments	% of Shows with Celeb. Statement	% of Segments w/ Celeb Statement	% of Segments Entirely Devoted to Celeb. Cover.	% of Segment Words That Are Celeb. Statements	% of Segments Contain Promo. Video
NBC Nightly News	34	49589	92	94.12%	69.57%	15.22%	20.70%	20.65%
ABC World News	28	48002	64	100%	71.88%	7.81%	13.32%	15.63%
CBS Evening News	24	42602	89	100%	65.17%	21.35%	25.55%	10.11%
NBC Nightly News	Last Seven	15510	31	100%	64.52%	9.68%	20.90%	25.81%
ABC World News	Last Seven	14976	18	100%	77.78%	11.11%	16.45%	22.22%
CBS Evening News	Last Seven	13212	30	100%	70%	26.67%	29.94%	13.33%
	Total # Of Shows	Total # of Pol. Words	Total # of Pol. Segments	Total # of Shows with Celeb. Statements	Total # of Segments w/ Celeb. Statements	Total # of Segments Entirely Devoted to Celeb. Cover.	Total # of Segment Words That Are Celeb. Statements	Total # of Segments Contain Promo. Videos
All Three Shows	86	140193	245	84	168	38	27543	38
	Mean # of Shows	Mean # of Pol. Words	Mean # of Pol. Segments	Mean # of Shows with Celeb. Statements	Mean # of Segments w/ Celeb. Statements	Mean # of Segments Entirely Devoted to Celeb. Cover.	Mean # of Segment Words That Are Celeb. Statements	Mean # of Segments Contain Promo Videos



Appendix D

All Three Shows	28.67	46731	81.67	28	56	12.67	9181	12.67
	Average Number of Shows	Average Number of Political Words	Average Number of Political Segments	Average % of Shows with Celebrity Statements	Average % of Segments w/ Celebrity Statements	Average % of Segments Entirely Dedicated to Celebrity Coverage	Average % of Segments Words That Are Celebrity Statements	Average % of Segments Containing Promotional Videos
Average Show	28.67	46731	81.67	97.66%	68.57%	15.51%	19.65%	15.51%

Appendix E

NBC News Transcripts

October 10, 2008 Friday

**SHOW:** NBC Nightly News 6:30 PM EST NBC

Newsweek poll shows Obama with 11 point lead

**ANCHORS:** BRIAN WILLIAMS

**LENGTH:** 107 words

BRIAN WILLIAMS, anchor:

This next item will get some play over the weekend. It's a new poll out tonight showing dramatically how this economy is shaping this campaign. Newsweek magazine's new poll, conducted over these past two day, tonight shows the Obama-Biden ticket leading McCain-Palin 52-41. That's an 11 point margin. If you believe the polls, this is how quickly this has all happened. Newsweek's last poll, conducted a month ago, had these two candidates tied at 46. Now it's grown to 11 points.

We'll take a break. When NIGHTLY NEWS continues this Friday night, MAKING A DIFFERENCE at the top of your game and in the prime of your life.

**LOAD-DATE:** October 11, 2008

**LANGUAGE:** ENGLISH

**DOCUMENT-TYPE:** Newscast

**PUBLICATION-TYPE:** Transcript

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Appendix F

CBS News Transcripts

October 23, 2008 Thursday

**SHOW:** CBS Evening News 6:30 PM EST CBS

**Barack Obama drawing big crowds**

**ANCHORS:** KATIE COURIC

**REPORTERS:** DEAN REYNOLDS

**LENGTH:** 543 words

KATIE COURIC, anchor:

It is simple math, but a very difficult task. John McCain has just 12 days to make up a 13 point deficit in the presidential race. A poll released just moments ago by CBS News and The New York Times shows he's trailing Barack Obama 52 percent to 39 among likely voters. Working in Senator Obama's favor, voters see him as spending far more time explaining what he would do than attacking his opponent. With Senator McCain, it's the other way around.

(Graphic on screen)

CBS News New York Times Poll

Among Registered Voters

What are the candidates spending more time doing?

Obama McCain 69% Explaining 27% 22% Attacking 64%

Margin of Error: 3 pts.

COURIC: Reflecting Senator Obama's growing confidence, he campaigned today in a state past Democratic candidates would have written off. Here's Dean Reynolds.

DEAN REYNOLDS reporting:

A sea of 35,000 supporters greeted Barack Obama in downtown Indianapolis this afternoon, physical evidence that one of the most reliably Republican states in the nation is suddenly very much in play very late in this game.

Senator BARACK OBAMA (Democratic Presidential Nominee): How's it going Indiana? Wow, what a crowd! What a unbelievable crowd! Thank you so much!

REYNOLDS: By themselves big crowds prove little, but where Obama is drawing them now is impressive: in Virginia yesterday, in Florida the day before, in Missouri over

the weekend, all states won twice by George W. Bush, but all highly competitive now and apparently receptive to Obama's message.

Sen. OBAMA: We've tried it John McCain's way. We've tried it George Bush's way. And we're here to say, enough is enough.

REYNOLDS: The crowds seemed to mirror the polls. A new survey of northern states shows Obama ahead in every one. And the new CBS News-New York Times poll offers more encouragement, finding that more voters are now personally comfortable with Obama than with McCain; more have confidence in Obama dealing with a crisis; and while more say that McCain is prepared to be president, three out of four say it's Obama who has the right temperament and personality to be president, far more than feel that way about McCain.

(Graphic on screen)

CBS News New York Times Poll

Makes You Feel Comfortable Among Registered Voters

Sen. Barack Sen. John Obama 62% McCain 47%

Confidence Handling a Crisis Among Registered Voters

Sen. Barack Sen. John Obama 49% McCain 46%

Prepared to be President Among Registered Voters

Sen. Barack Sen. John Obama 56% McCain 64%

Margin of Error: 3 pts

cbsnews.com

REYNOLDS: In addition, as poll after poll shows Obama in a commanding position, voters seem to be drawing conclusions about this race because, by a three-to-one margin in our poll, they now believe that Barack Obama is going to win this election. Katie:

COURIC: And Dean, what can you tell us about Senator Obama's trip to Hawaii?

REYNOLDS: Well, he's on his way to Hawaii now. He's going to be visiting with his seriously ill grandmother. He'll be gone for about 36 hours, and then he'll be back on the trail in Reno, Nevada, on Saturday morning. The campaign does not believe this is that much of a gap in time. They'll have Michelle Obama and Joe Biden out on the trail substituting for him. Katie:

COURIC: All right. Dean Reynolds. As always, Dean, thanks so much.

**LOAD-DATE:** October 23, 2008

**LANGUAGE:** ENGLISH

**DOCUMENT-TYPE:** Newscast

**PUBLICATION-TYPE:** Transcript

Appendix G  
CBS News Transcripts

October 3, 2008 Friday

**SHOW:** CBS Evening News 6:30 PM EST CBS

Audience reaction to VP debate

**ANCHORS:** KATIE COURIC

**REPORTERS:** JEFF GREENFIELD

**LENGTH:** 506 words

KATIE COURIC, anchor:

Debates are not always a question of who's right and who's wrong, but rather how the audience perceives the candidates' performances. Here's Jeff Greenfield.

Governor SARAH PALIN: I may not answer the questions the way that either the moderator or you want to hear, but I'm going to talk straight to the American people and let them know my track record also.

JEFF GREENFIELD reporting:

Politicians often ignore a question and talk about what they want to talk about, but no one's ever announced that out loud as Governor Palin did.

Gov. PALIN: That is not so, but because that's just quick answer, I want to talk about, again, my record on energy.

GREENFIELD: It was an early clue to her core strategy: re-emerge as the feisty plain-spoken, gee-dropping frontier heroine.

Gov. PALIN: Let's commit ourselves, just everyday American people, Joe Six-Pack, hockey moms across the nation.

GREENFIELD: A CBS post-debate poll showed that 55 percent had a better opinion of her afterwards compared with 53 percent who said that of Joe Biden. And she was prepared, as well, to duke it out on foreign policy matters.

Gov. PALIN: Ahmadinejad, Kim Jong Il, the Castro brothers, others who are dangerous dictators are ones that Barack Obama has said he would be willing to meet with without pre-conditions.

GREENFIELD: Sixty-six percent in our poll said that she was knowledgeable about important issues. Only 43 percent believed that before the debate. But 98 percent gave Joe Biden high marks on knowledge about issues. Why?

(Graphic on screen)

CBS News Knowledge Networks Poll Uncommitted Voters Knowledgeable on Important Issues

D After Debate 98% Sen. Joe Before Debate 79% Biden

Margin of Error 4 Pts

Senator JOSEPH BIDEN (Democrat, Vice Presidential Nominee): If an attack comes in the homeland, it's going to come from al-Qaeda planning in the hills of Afghanistan and Pakistan.

GREENFIELD: He did it by invoking his knowledge of the world's trouble spots.

Sen. BIDEN: We're spending \$10 billion a month while the Iraqis have an \$80 billion surplus. Barack says it's time for them to spend their own money.

GREENFIELD: And in the debate's most emotional moment, Biden answered Palin's 'I understand regular folks' by recalling the death of his wife and infant daughter in a car accident.

Sen. BIDEN: The notion that somehow because I'm a man I don't know what it's like to raise to kids alone, I don't know what it's like to have a child you're not sure is going-- is going to make it...

GREENFIELD: On one key question, the gap remains very wide. While more than 90 percent now think Biden would be an effective president if necessary, far fewer think that of Palin.

(Graphic on screen)

CBS News Knowledge Networks Poll Uncommitted Voters Can Be an Effective President

D R Sen. Joe Gov. Sarah Biden 91% Palin 44%

Margin of Error 4 Pts

GREENFIELD: Probably the best thing Palin did for herself on the ticket is to restore her standing with that conservative base and to banish, at least for now, that Tina Fey deer-in-the-headlights imagine. Katie:

**LOAD-DATE:** November 12, 2008

**LANGUAGE:** ENGLISH

**DOCUMENT-TYPE:** Newscast

**PUBLICATION-TYPE:** Transcript

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Appendix H  
ABC News Transcript

October 19, 2008 Sunday

**SHOW:** WORLD NEWS SUNDAY 6:31 PM EST

**ON A ROLL;  
16 DAYS TO GO**

**ANCHORS:** DAN HARRIS

**REPORTERS:** JOHN COCHRAN (WASHINGTON, DC USA)

**LENGTH:** 554 words

**CONTENT:** OBAMA, POWELL

**GRAPHICS:** VOTE 08

**GRAPHICS:** 16 DAYS TO GO

**DAN HARRIS (ABC NEWS)**

(Off-camera) Good evening. I'm Dan Harris. This has been a very good day for Barack Obama. First, the Obama campaign announced that it raised an astounding \$150 million in September, easily an all-time record. And then, Colin Powell, a Republican who served as chairman of the Joint Chiefs and then Secretary of State under George W. Bush, endorsed Obama. It was a real blow to John McCain, who's been good friends with Powell for decades. We start tonight with the endorsement, and ABC's John Cochran in Washington.

**JOHN COCHRAN (ABC NEWS)**

(Voiceover) Today, Powell said he is sorry to disappoint his old friend John McCain, but...

**CLIP FROM "MEET THE PRESS"**

**RETIRED GENERAL COLIN POWELL (FORMER SECRETARY OF STATE)**

I think we need a transformational figure. I - think we need a president who is a generational change. And that's why I'm supporting Barack Obama. Not out of any lack of respect or admiration for Senator John McCain.

**JOHN COCHRAN (ABC NEWS)**

(Voiceover) Powell did have some cutting criticisms of McCain, his response to the financial crisis.

**RETIRED GENERAL COLIN POWELL (FORMER SECRETARY OF STATE)**

I found that he was a little unsure as to how to deal with the economic problems that we were having.

JOHN COCHRAN (ABC NEWS)

(Voiceover) McCain's choice of running mate, Sarah Palin.

RETIRED GENERAL COLIN POWELL (FORMER SECRETARY OF STATE)

I don't believe she's ready to be president of the United States.

JOHN COCHRAN (ABC NEWS)

(Voiceover) And the tenor of McCain's campaign.

CLIP FROM POLITICAL AD

COMMERCIAL VOICEOVER (FEMALE)

When convenient, he worked with terrorist Bill Ayers.

RETIRED GENERAL COLIN POWELL (FORMER SECRETARY OF STATE)

To focus on people like Mr. Ayers, these trivial issues, for the purpose of suggesting that somehow Mr. Obama would have some kind of terrorist inclinations, I thought that was over the top.

JOHN COCHRAN (ABC NEWS)

(Voiceover) Pollsters say endorsements rarely make a difference. Is Powell's an exception?

GRAPHICS: WILL POWELL ENDORSEMENT HELP?

JOHN COCHRAN (ABC NEWS)

(Voiceover) An August poll of registered voters showed 35% said it would make them more likely to vote for Obama, 19% less so. Today, a prominent Republican said Powell's wide experience in government undercuts the charge that Obama lacks experience.

CLIP FROM "THIS WEEK"

NEWT GINGRICH (REPUBLICAN, FORMER SPEAKER OF THE HOUSE)

What that just did in one sound bite, and I assume that sound bite will end up in an ad, is it eliminated the experience argument.

JOHN COCHRAN (ABC NEWS)

(Off-camera) Powell's relations with the White House were shaky even before President Bush eagerly accepted his resignation four years ago. Today, they got shakier when Powell said the next president should change some of Bush's policies.

JOHN COCHRAN (ABC NEWS)

(Voiceover) Rush Limbaugh suggested today that Obama's race may have played a part in Powell's endorsement. Powell denied race had any connection, but did say Obama's election would be historic.



RETIRED GENERAL COLIN POWELL (FORMER SECRETARY OF STATE)

It will also not only electrify our country, I think, it'll electrify the world.

JOHN COCHRAN (ABC NEWS)

(Voiceover) Powell said he is not angling for a job in an Obama administration, but would consider it if asked. John Cochran, ABC News, Washington.

**LOAD-DATE:** October 20, 2008

**LANGUAGE:** ENGLISH

**PUBLICATION-TYPE:** Transcript

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Appendix I

CBS News Transcripts

October 20, 2008 Monday

**SHOW:** CBS Evening News 6:30 PM EST CBS

## Obama campaigns in Florida

**REPORTERS:** DEAN REYNOLDS

**LENGTH:** 480 words

KATIE COURIC, anchor (St. Louis):

Behind me is, of course, the Gateway Arch, and this is one of the battleground states that will be the gateway to victory in this presidential election. States that could swing behind either John McCain or Barack Obama. Here in the Midwest, Indiana, Ohio, and Missouri are now toss-ups with a total of 42 electoral votes, and we'll be looking at all three contests tonight.

Senator McCain campaigned here in Missouri today. Senator Obama had a big rally under the arch over the weekend. And a new CBS News /New York Times poll tonight shows he's holding on to a 13-point lead nationally. Dean Reynolds is covering the Obama campaign.

DEAN REYNOLDS reporting:

Obama stormed across Florida today bidding for its 27 electoral votes.

Unidentified Sports Announcer: Ground ball to second.

REYNOLDS: And who better to introduce him than the pitcher who saved the pennant-clenching Tampa Bay win over Boston Sunday night.

Mr. DAVID PRICE (Pitcher, Tampa Bay Rays): The next president of the United States, Barack Obama.

REYNOLDS: Obama came here on the day early voting commenced statewide in Florida, where there are now 657,000 more registered Democrats than Republicans. While Obama was talking turnout in Tampa...

Senator BARACK OBAMA (Democrat, Presidential Candidate): Don't wait until November 4th.

REYNOLDS: ...Hillary Clinton was during her part in rainy Fort Lauderdale.

Senator HILLARY CLINTON (Democrat, Presidential Candidate): This is going to be a short speech. OK, will you all get out and vote?

REYNOLDS: With polls showing a close race here, Obama attacked his attackers.

Sen. OBAMA: Ugly phone calls, misleading mail, misleading TV ads, careless, outrageous comments, all aimed at keeping us from working together.

REYNOLDS: And he mocked Sarah Palin for indicating she prefers a less aggressive approach.

Sen. OBAMA: You really have to work hard to violate Governor Palin's standards on negative campaigning.

REYNOLDS: The huge crowds he's drawing may indicate the Republican tactics are ineffective. Colin Powell cited them as one reason why he's now backing Obama instead of fellow Republican McCain. And voters surveyed by CBS News and the New York Times, before the first debate and then again last week, indicated Obama's performance in his three face-offs with McCain increased their regard for the Democrat. Fully 21 percent said their opinion of Obama had improved over the last four weeks. Sixty-five percent of those voters say Obama spends most of his time talking about what he would do as president while only 28 percent say he spends most of his time attacking his rival.  
Katie:

(Graphic on screen)

Presidential Debates September 26 October 7 October 15

CBS News New York Times Poll

Opinion after Debates

Better 21% Worse 14% Same 65%

Sen Barack Obama

Margin of Error 4 Pts

COURIC: Dean Reynolds in Orlando, Florida, tonight. Dean, thank you.

**LOAD-DATE:** October 20, 2008

**LANGUAGE:** ENGLISH

**DOCUMENT-TYPE:** Newscast

**PUBLICATION-TYPE:** Transcript

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Appendix J  
NBC News Transcripts

October 31, 2008 Friday

**SHOW:** NBC Nightly News 6:30 PM EST NBC

## Barack Obama on party politics and privacy

**ANCHORS:** BRIAN WILLIAMS

**LENGTH:** 674 words

BRIAN WILLIAMS, anchor:

Tonight we have part two of our conversation yesterday in Florida with Barack Obama, and tonight's installment is about party politics and privacy.

If you're successful on election night, if your party is successful on election night, and you do well in the House and Senate, there's been a lot of concern expressed about one-party control. That it would mean a green light to the likes of Reid and Pelosi and that parties with one-party control tend to overreach.

Senator BARACK OBAMA (Democratic Presidential Nominee): Mm-hmm.

WILLIAMS: Do you have an assurance to the American people that you would rein it in and not try to overreach?

Sen. OBAMA: You know what? First of all, I think Nancy Pelosi and Harry Reid probably are getting a bad rep here in the assumption that somehow they would not show self-restraint. I think they understand, as well as anybody, that the last time Democrats had control, when Bill Clinton first came into office, we squandered a lot of opportunities, that the Republicans overreached. I think there have been some pretty good lessons over the last 15, 20 years to say that the only way we're going to solve big problems--like energy, the financial crisis, health care--is if we got an approach that reaches out to the other side and comes up with pragmatic, commonsense, nonideological solutions.

WILLIAMS: I want to ask you about--it's a press-related question. This picture was so striking to me. And according to the press pool traveling with you, you asked to just take a walk.

Sen. OBAMA: Yeah.

WILLIAMS: And be alone. You're visiting your grandmother, what may, by all accounts, be the last time you see her.

Sen. OBAMA: Right.

WILLIAMS: How have you reacted to this--I guess it's part of the contract you make...

Sen. OBAMA: Yeah.

WILLIAMS: ...when you run in such an extended campaign...

Sen. OBAMA: Yeah.

WILLIAMS: But the human in you, and the husband...

Sen. OBAMA: Yeah.

WILLIAMS: ...and father and grandson must want to just bust out sometimes, or disappear, if you can't go for a walk like that.

Sen. OBAMA: Look, there's no doubt that the hardest thing about this whole process, other than being away from my kids, is the loss of anonymity. You know, you don't have the opportunity just to do the things that ordinary folks do. Take a...

WILLIAMS: You can't walk into an Arby's today...

Sen. OBAMA: Take a walk in the park.

WILLIAMS: ...out there on the interstate.

Sen. OBAMA: Go get yourself some shaving cream.

WILLIAMS: Right. Right.

Sen. OBAMA: Coordinate with somebody to do it. And so, you know, there's been, I think--it's been written about before, the bubble that gets created. And I can feel it, and you, you know, strain against it. Now, that particular moment is one of those rare times where, even though you know what you signed up for, I was--I won't lie, I was disappointed. I would have liked to have seen the press say, you know what, this is a pretty unique situation.

WILLIAMS: Give him space.

Sen. OBAMA: Why don't we give him a--give him a couple of hours? I understand they've got a job to do. My hope is that, if I'm successful--and look, I've asked for it. I spent a lot of money advertising to be known around the country, so it'd be hypocritical of me to complain about it. But my hope is that, at least my family, the press will show more restraint if we're successful. Particularly my kids, which I care obviously deeply about, and I want to make sure that they have some normalcy. And they're going to be able to make mistakes and do what kids do without being under a spotlight constantly.

WILLIAMS: Just a part of our conversation with Barack Obama. We discussed a number of other topics, from the Taliban to the transition, in the event that he finds himself as president-elect next week. We posted the full interview on our Web site. That [nightly.msnbc.com](http://nightly.msnbc.com).

When we continue here this Friday night, more on politics. A big name in one of the roughest races in this country. And later, our Friday night MAKING A DIFFERENCE report, finding homes for kids who need them.

**LOAD-DATE:** November 1, 2008

**LANGUAGE:** ENGLISH

**DOCUMENT-TYPE:** Interview

**PUBLICATION-TYPE:** Transcript

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Appendix K  
ABC News Transcript

October 26, 2008 Sunday

**SHOW:** WORLD NEWS SUNDAY 6:30 PM EST

**VOTE 08;  
A HOUSE DIVIDED?**

**ANCHORS:** DAN HARRIS

**REPORTERS:** RON CLAIBORNE (ZANESVILLE, OH USA)

**LENGTH:** 603 words

CONTENT: MCCAIN, PALIN

GRAPHICS: VOTE 08

DAN HARRIS (ABC NEWS)

(Off-camera) Good evening. I'm Dan Harris. After nearly two years and more than a billion dollars, the presidential race is now entering its last full week.

GRAPHICS: ABC NEWS/THE WASHINGTON POST POLL

GRAPHICS: AMONG LIKELY VOTERS

GRAPHICS: OBAMA, 52%

GRAPHICS: MCCAIN, 45%

DAN HARRIS (ABC NEWS)

(Voiceover) The latest ABC News poll shows Barack Obama ahead by seven points. That is a lot of ground for John McCain to make up, even under the best of circumstances.

GRAPHICS: 9 DAYS TO GO

DAN HARRIS (ABC NEWS)

(Off-camera) But the - McCain camp is not only fighting Obama right now, there are reports that aides to McCain and his running mate Sarah Palin are fighting each other. So we're gonna start tonight with ABC's Ron Claiborne, who is in Zanesville, Ohio.

GRAPHICS: MAP OF OHIO

RON CLAIBORNE (ABC NEWS)

(Off-camera) Even as John McCain campaigns in this key battleground state, Ohio, there are reports that his campaign has been wracked by in-fighting.

SENATOR (MALE)

So welcome John McCain.

RON CLAIBORNE (ABC NEWS)

(Voiceover) Campaigning earlier today in Iowa, a state which President Bush carried four years ago and where McCain is far behind Barack Obama, McCain attacked Obama as a tax raiser, and vowed to fight on.

SENATOR JOHN MCCAIN (REPUBLICAN, PRESIDENTIAL NOMINEE)

We never quit. We never give up. Now, let's go win this election and get this country moving again.

RON CLAIBORNE (ABC NEWS)

(Voiceover) But behind the scenes, there are reports of a different kind of fight, between insiders in the McCain campaign and the Palin camp, though both sides deny it.

BEN SMITH (SENIOR POLITICAL WRITER, POLITICO)

It's about, you know, Palin's people blaming McCain for messing up her role and a senior McCain aide coming back, calling her a diva.

RON CLAIBORNE (ABC NEWS)

(Voiceover) In recent days, Palin has been delivering messages that sometimes conflict with McCain's, like criticizing automated Robocalls and calling for McCain to attack Obama over Reverend Jeremiah Wright, which he has refused to do.

MATTHEW DOWD (ABC NEWS)

(Off-camera) She's definitely, you know, mapping out her own effort, it looks like, from what people are saying, both in print and behind the scenes. They're having some difficulty keeping her on message.

RON CLAIBORNE (ABC NEWS)

(Voiceover) But in an interview today, McCain was as supportive as ever of his running mate.

CLIP FROM "MEET THE PRESS"

SENATOR JOHN MCCAIN (REPUBLICAN, PRESIDENTIAL NOMINEE)

I don't defend her. I praise her. I don't defend her.

RON CLAIBORNE (ABC NEWS)

(Voiceover) McCain did defend the Republican Party spending \$150,000 on new clothes for Palin.

SENATOR JOHN MCCAIN (REPUBLICAN, PRESIDENTIAL NOMINEE)

She lives a frugal life. She and her family are not wealthy. She and her family were thrust into this, and there was some, and some third of that money is given back.

RON CLAIBORNE (ABC NEWS)



(Voiceover) Campaigning today in Florida, Palin responded to Wardrobe Gate.

GOVERNOR SARAH PALIN (REPUBLICAN, VICE PRESIDENTIAL  
NOMINEE)

Those clothes, they are not my property. I'm not taking them with me. I'm back to wearing my own clothes from my favorite consignment shop in Anchorage, Alaska.

RON CLAIBORNE (ABC NEWS)

(Voiceover) Palin went on to say she brought her own wedding ring for \$35.

RON CLAIBORNE (ABC NEWS)

(Off-camera) This reported dissension in the ranks may be a sign of growing frustration that nothing the McCain campaign is trying to do, trying to hit Barack Obama with, seems to be sticking. And time is running out. Dan?

DAN HARRIS (ABC NEWS)

(Off-camera) Ron Claiborne, reporting from Ohio tonight. Thank you.

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**PUBLICATION-TYPE:** Transcript

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Appendix L  
NBC News Transcripts

October 19, 2008 Sunday

**SHOW:** NBC Nightly News 6:30 PM EST NBC

## Late night comedy shows becoming a necessary stop on the campaign trail

**ANCHORS:** LESTER HOLT

**REPORTERS:** JOHN LARSON

**LENGTH:** 476 words

LESTER HOLT, anchor:

Finally, late night and the candidates. In this election year, late night entertainers have seemed just as busy as the politicians, mining all the laughs they can from the campaign trail. As we reported earlier, last night's appearance of Sarah Palin herself on "Saturday Night Live" gave that program its highest ratings in more than a decade. And with millions tuning in, the shows have become a campaign stop the candidates can't afford to skip. Here's NBC's John Larson.

(Begin clip of "Saturday Night Live")

Ms. TINA FEY: (As Sarah Palin) And now, I'd like to entertain everybody with some fancy pageant walking.

JOHN LARSON reporting:

"SNL" comedian Tina Fey impersonating Sarah Palin, with the real candidate just offstage.

(Clip from "Saturday Night Live")

LARSON: You knew sooner or later their paths had to cross.

Governor SARAH PALIN: Live from New York, it's Saturday night!

LARSON: It was perhaps the year's most obvious example of life imitating art, thanks largely to the governor herself.

(Clip from "Saturday Night Live")

LARSON: With almost every comedian on the planet taking shots at the candidates, comedy viewership is hitting historic highs. Late night political comedy on cable, like "The Colbert Report"...

Mr. STEPHEN COLBERT: Barack Obama got his...(word censored by station)...handed to him.

LARSON: ...or "The Daily Show" are attracting record audiences of increasingly younger viewers.

Mr. JON STEWART: (From "The Daily Show") But his body language did not give away whether he was campaigning for the presidency or posing for the cover of a 1960s soul album.

Mr. BILL CARTER (The New York Times): They're going to cut out what they consider the spin and the blather. They're going to--they're going to get to the essence of it.

LARSON: Which may be why record numbers are now watching political humor on the Web.

Ms. FEY: (As Sarah Palin) And I can see Russia from my house.

Mr. CARTER: There have been more views of this on the Internet than actually saw it on television, more than 10 million views on the Internet, a spectacular number.

LARSON: Which also may be why you see candidates rushing back to late night. One month ago, McCain stood Letterman up and suffered the consequences.

Mr. DAVID LETTERMAN: (From file footage) Somebody's putting something in his Metamucil.

LARSON: This week, McCain hired a helicopter to make it to Letterman on time.

(Begin clip from "The Late Show")

Senator JOHN McCAIN: Duh!

Mr. LETTERMAN: I'm willing to put this behind us.

Sen. McCAIN: Thank you. Thank you very much.

(End of clip)

LARSON: Just when you thought the campaigns were exhaustingly predictable...

Sen. McCAIN: I will not raise your taxes.

Sen. OBAMA: We're all in this together.

(Clip from "Saturday Night Live")

LARSON: I mean, you just can't make this stuff up. John Larson, NBC News, Los Angeles.

HOLT: You also can't top that stuff.

**LOAD-DATE:** October 20, 2008

**LANGUAGE:** ENGLISH

**DOCUMENT-TYPE:** Newscast

**PUBLICATION-TYPE:** Transcript

Appendix M  
CBS News Transcripts

October 6, 2008 Monday

**SHOW:** CBS Evening News 6:30 PM EST CBS

## Both presidential campaigns step up character attacks

**ANCHORS:** KATIE COURIC

**REPORTERS:** DEAN REYNOLDS

**LENGTH:** 523 words

KATIE COURIC, anchor:

Turning now to the presidential campaign and our first CBS News poll since the vice presidential debate on Thursday. Barack Obama leads John McCain by four points. Just last week, Senator Obama had a nine-point lead.

(Graphic on screen)

CBS News Poll Among Registered Voters

Now 10/1 Obama 47% 49% McCain 43% 40%

Margin of error 3 pts.

COURIC: As Election Day gets closer and the polls get tighter, Dean Reynolds reports the campaign is getting nastier.

DEAN REYNOLDS reporting:

With the finish line in sight, the two presidential campaigns have abruptly downshifted from policy to personality, with the trailing Republican ticket making the first move. In New Mexico, John McCain suggested Barack Obama is a mystery man.

Senator JOHN McCAIN (Republican Presidential Nominee): And where other candidates have to explain themselves and their records, Senator Obama seems to think he's above all that. Whatever the question, whatever the issue, there's always a back story with Senator Obama.

REYNOLDS: In Florida today, McCain's running mate went a step further.

Governor SARAH PALIN (Republican Vice Presidential Nominee): I am just so fearful that this is not a man who sees America the way that you and I see America.

REYNOLDS: After weeks of dealing from a position of weakness on the economy, Republican officials said they hoped to turn Obama himself into a big issue.

(Excerpt from McCain campaign advertisement)

REYNOLDS: A new ad out today packs the words "dangerous," "dishonorable," "liberal" and "risky" into just 30 seconds. But it's Palin who is clearly the weapon of choice against Obama.

Gov. PALIN: (October 4) Our opponent is someone who sees America as imperfect enough to pal around with terrorists who targeted their own country.

REYNOLDS: She's actually referring to one person, William Ayers, a former radical and founder of the Weather Underground which carried out anti-government bombings in the late 1960s when Obama was eight years old. Ayers is currently a university professor and a neighbor of Obama's in Chicago, where the two once served together on the board of a city charity. More than a decade ago, Ayers hosted a political get together for Obama. Friends say the two are acquaintances, not pals. Obama says the Republicans are playing guilt by association.

Senator BARACK OBAMA (Democratic Presidential Nominee): (Yesterday) That's what you do when you're out of touch, out of ideas and running out of time.

REYNOLDS: But Obama can play the same game, now airing a 13-minute webcast highlighting a 20-year-old case.

Unidentified Man: (From Internet video) He knew that what was being done was improper.

REYNOLDS: McCain's admitted dealings with convicted savings and loan swindler Charles Keating, something McCain calls the worst mistake of his life, but now, in the hands of the Democrats, a way to cast doubts about his judgment. With polls showing most Americans thought Obama won the first presidential debate, this change in tone, especially by the Republicans, may foreshadow the strategy John McCain will employ tomorrow night to try to win the second. Dean Reynolds, CBS News, Albuquerque.

**LOAD-DATE:** October 6, 2008

**LANGUAGE:** ENGLISH

**DOCUMENT-TYPE:** Newscast

**PUBLICATION-TYPE:** Transcript

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Appendix N  
ABC News Transcript

October 24, 2008 Friday

**SHOW:** WORLD NEWS WITH CHARLES GIBSON 6:34 PM EST

**VOTE 08;  
11 DAYS TO GO**

**ANCHORS:** CHARLES GIBSON

**REPORTERS:** JAKE TAPPER (HONOLULU, HI), DAVID WRIGHT (DENVER, CO USA)

**LENGTH:** 939 words

CHARLES GIBSON (ABC NEWS)

(Off-camera) Going to turn next to presidential politics.

GRAPHICS: OCT 19 - 23

CHARLES GIBSON (ABC NEWS)

(Voiceover) Our daily tracking poll of the race has narrowed to where it was at the beginning of the week with Barack Obama holding a nine-point lead.

CHARLES GIBSON (ABC NEWS)

(Off-camera) The candidates today, Obama in Hawaii to visit the grandmother who raised him. And John McCain, out west, where he should be comfortably ahead, but is not.

GRAPHICS: HONOLULU

CHARLES GIBSON (ABC NEWS)

(Voiceover) We're going to start with Jake Tapper, tonight in Honolulu. Jake, good evening.

JAKE TAPPER (ABC NEWS)

(Off-camera) Good evening, Charlie. Well Senator Barack Obama is in the apartment building behind me visiting with the grandmother who helped raise him, perhaps for the last time. It's been a quiet and personal period for Senator Obama while back in the mainland, his campaign continues full steam ahead.

JAKE TAPPER (ABC NEWS)

(Voiceover) A rare, relatively solitary moment for Barack Obama to walk around the Makiki neighborhood where he grew up and went to school. Obama talked about his grandmother with ABC News' Robin Roberts.

SENATOR BARACK OBAMA (DEMOCRAT, PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDATE)

I'm still not sure whether she makes it to Election Day. You know, one of the things I want to make sure of is that I had a chance to sit down with her and talk to her. She's still alert.

ROBIN ROBERTS (ABC NEWS)

(Off-camera) For you to say she may not make it to Election Day, what would that mean if she's not still here with you?

SENATOR BARACK OBAMA (DEMOCRAT, PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDATE)

She's really been one of the cornerstones of my life.

JAKE TAPPER (ABC NEWS)

(Voiceover) One of the reasons why Obama may be able to afford to take time away from the campaign trail in these last 11 days, his vast resources. Obama's ground game, organization and infrastructure are considered, even by Republicans to be vastly superior to John McCain's. In Akron, Ohio, Michelle Obama campaigned for her husband today.

MICHELLE OBAMA (WIFE OF BARACK OBAMA)

11 days to go.

JAKE TAPPER (ABC NEWS)

(Voiceover) And she worked the phones.

GRAPHICS: OHIO

JAKE TAPPER (ABC NEWS)

(Voiceover) The Obama campaign says since Labor Day, it has contacted 1.5 million voters in that battleground, a state that went for President Bush twice.

MICHELLE OBAMA (WIFE OF BARACK OBAMA)

He's one of the brightest men I know.

JAKE TAPPER (ABC NEWS)

(Voiceover) And just as Obama's staffers and volunteers get out the vote, Obama's surrogates were out in full force today. Hillary Clinton in Pennsylvania, running mate Joe Biden hit West Virginia.

SENATOR JOSEPH BIDEN (DEMOCRAT, VICE PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDATE)

End the scurrilous phone calls that are being paid for by the McCain campaign questioning Barack Obama's patriotism, questioning his character. Enough is enough is enough.

JAKE TAPPER (ABC NEWS)

(Voiceover) Obama tonight returns to the campaign trail to visit Nevada, New Mexico, Colorado and Ohio. All of which Bush won in 2004, all now up for grabs. Jake Tapper, ABC News, Honolulu, Hawaii.

DAVID WRIGHT (ABC NEWS)

(Voiceover) I'm David Wright with the McCain campaign. Today at a rodeo ring here in Denver, John McCain used a western metaphor to mock Obama's calls for a tax increase targeted at the top 2% of income earners.

SENATOR JOHN MCCAIN (REPUBLICAN, PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDATE)

Anytime you hear talk of a targeted tax increase, you might want to double check the skill of the marksman. The US Congress has been known to fire pretty wildly.

DAVID WRIGHT (ABC NEWS)

(Voiceover) One of McCain's main lines of attack is that Obama's tax plan would be an unfair redistribution of wealth, not to mention, bad for the economy. Some McCain supporters even call the Obama plan socialism. When the subject of high taxes for the rich came up at a town hall meeting in 2000, on CNBC...

AUDIENCE MEMBER (FEMALE)

Are we getting closer and closer to like socialism?

DAVID WRIGHT (ABC NEWS)

(Voiceover) McCain defended progressive taxation.

SENATOR JOHN MCCAIN (REPUBLICAN, PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDATE)

Look, here is what I really believe. That when you are, reach a certain level of comfort, there's nothing wrong with paying somewhat more.

DAVID WRIGHT (ABC NEWS)

(Voiceover) McCain now supports keeping taxes low, even for the wealthiest Americans. McCain is clearly comfortable in cowboy country, having represented neighboring Arizona for 30 years.

GRAPHICS: SOUTHWEST STATES 2004 PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION

DAVID WRIGHT (ABC NEWS)

(Voiceover) This region went solidly for George Bush in 2004, but Obama has been coming on strong here. McCain now has a firm hold only on his home state of Arizona and conservative Utah.

JACK BURKMAN (REPUBLICAN STRATEGIST)

He should be winning a state like Colorado. The fact that he's not shows you where he is. I think he should be winning Arizona, Colorado, New Mexico, no problem. If he loses Colorado, he loses the election. That is as key a state as Virginia or Pennsylvania.

DAVID WRIGHT (ABC NEWS)

(Off-camera) In the sheer volume of campaign ads, Obama is simply overwhelming McCain. And on the ground, he may be out organizing him, too. Here in Colorado, the Obama campaign boasts 10,000 volunteers and 51 field offices. The McCain campaign claims half that many volunteers and just 13 offices. Charlie?



CHARLES GIBSON (ABC NEWS)

(Off-camera) David Wright in Denver tonight with the McCain campaign.

CHARLES GIBSON (ABC NEWS)

(Voiceover) And one other note. So many Americans are voting early this year, even president and Mr Bush who filled out their ballots today, voting absentee in Texas. They, of course, didn't leave much mystery to whom they were voting for.

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**LANGUAGE:** ENGLISH

**PUBLICATION-TYPE:** Transcript

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Appendix O  
CBS News Transcripts

October 2, 2008 Thursday

**SHOW:** CBS Evening News 6:30 PM EST CBS

## Bob Schieffer on vice presidential debates

**REPORTERS:** BOB SCHIEFFER

**LENGTH:** 270 words

KATIE COURIC, anchor (St. Louis):

Bob Schieffer is our chief Washington correspondent and anchor of "Face the Nation."

So, Bob, what does Sarah Palin need to do tonight?

BOB SCHIEFFER reporting:

I think she needs to reassure voters that she has a basic grasp of the important issues. You know, she made a very good first impression at the Republican convention. But since then, in a series of interviews--many of them with you, Katie--as she's had such great difficulty expressing herself that it is beginning to show in the polls. And her popularity and her ability to be ready, most voters say, it's shrinking in their minds. So she's just got to show that she knows what she's talking about here.

COURIC: Because polls show she's declining in her ability to understand complex issues, as well.

SCHIEFFER: Yes.

COURIC: Meanwhile, what does Joe Biden need not do tonight?

SCHIEFFER: I think the main thing Joe Biden needs to do is just not come off as some sort of blabber mouth who is condescending, who acts like he's some know it all. Joe Biden's a very smart guy. I think if he sticks to the issues and goes after McCain, not Palin, I think it'll be a good night for him.

COURIC: And apparently he's going to be very respectful, call her Governor Palin, and refer to John McCain as John. So it'll be interesting to watch the dynamics.

SCHIEFFER: Absolutely.

COURIC: Bob Schieffer. Bob, thank you so much.

Later in the broadcast, we'll have a kind of pre-debate debate, as Joe Biden and Sarah Palin respond to our VICE PRESIDENTIAL QUESTIONS. Then the main event, our live coverage begins at 9 Eastern, 8 Central and 6 in the west.

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**LANGUAGE:** ENGLISH

**DOCUMENT-TYPE:** Analysis

**PUBLICATION-TYPE:** Transcript

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Appendix P  
CBS News Transcripts

October 22, 2008 Wednesday

**SHOW:** CBS Evening News 6:30 PM EST CBS

## Republican Party buys wardrobe for Sarah Palin

**ANCHORS:** KATIE COURIC

**REPORTERS:** NANCY CORDES

**LENGTH:** 374 words

KATIE COURIC, anchor:

Meanwhile, Sarah Palin may think the world of "Joe The Plumber" too, but that doesn't mean she intends to dress like him. In fact, the Republican Party has spent \$150,000 on Governor Palin's wardrobe, something that may not square with her image as a down-to-earth everywoman. Here's Nancy Cordes.

NANCY CORDES reporting:

On the night she addressed the Republican convention, Governor Palin was dressed for success. The self-described...

Governor SARAH PALIN: I was just your average hockey mom.

CORDES: ...sporting a \$2500 Valentino blazer. Palin's carefully cultivated "Joe Six Pack" image is now bumping up against a six-figure wardrobe. Federal records show, in the 54 days since she joined McCain's ticket, the Republican National Committee has spent \$75,000 for clothes at Neiman Marcus, 49,000 at Saks Fifth Avenue.

(Graphic on screen)

RNC Expenditures

Governor Sarah Palin

Neiman Marcus \$75,062.63 Saks Fifth Avenue \$49,425.74

CORDES: Perfectly legal says this former chairman of the Federal Election Commission, although....

Mr. SCOTT THOMAS (Former Chairman, Federal Election Commission): I would be the first to tell you, public relationswise it is a mess.

CORDES: As it was for Hillary Clinton when her \$3,000 hairstylist bill came to light. Or John McCain with his \$520 Italian loafers. Or John Edwards, whose \$400 haircut spawned satire online.

Ms. MAXINE RIZIK (Owner, Rizik Bros., Inc.): This is a three-quarter sleeve...

CORDES: Candidates have a tough needle to thread, says Maxine Rizik, who's been dressing Washington power women for 58 years.

Ms. RIZIK: They do need to spend some money.

CORDES: Does it have to be 150,000 for three months?

Ms. RIZIK: You can do it for less, much less, yes.

CORDES: Palin is also facing questions today about the 55 grand she charged Alaska taxpayers so her family could travel with her to events the past two years. Alaska law is vague. But when it comes to the clothes, the campaign is crystal clear. After the fashion faux pas came to light, they announced that all the pricey duds would go to charity. Nancy Cordes, CBS News, Washington.

COURIC: And coming up next right here on the CBS EVENING NEWS, our special series PRESIDENTIAL QUESTIONS.

When was the last time you cried and why?

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**DOCUMENT-TYPE:** Newscast

**PUBLICATION-TYPE:** Transcript

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Appendix Q  
NBC News Transcripts

November 2, 2008 Sunday

**SHOW:** NBC Nightly News 6:30 PM EST NBC

## Obama exploits inroads in Republican states as McCain appeals to undecided voters

**ANCHORS:** LESTER HOLT

**REPORTERS:** LEE COWAN, RON ALLEN, KELLY O'DONNELL, SAVANNAH GUTHRIE

**LENGTH:** 1240 words

LESTER HOLT, anchor:

It's crunch time. There are now just two days left until the presidential election. And tonight in these waning hours, the candidates face very different challenges. For Barack Obama, it's about securing critical inroads he's managed to forge in some traditionally Republican states. For John McCain, it's about how to exploit emerging targets of opportunity, especially among undecided voters. We're following the candidates, the changing battlegrounds and what's in store for voters. Let's get right to it. We start with Lee Cowan on the road in Cleveland tonight with Barack Obama. Lee:

LEE COWAN reporting:

Hi, Lester. Yeah, with just these two days left, Barack Obama decided to spend his entire day here in Ohio going to the state's major metropolitan areas, Cincinnati, Columbus. Here in Cleveland, where an event just wrapped up, despite the rain, all the while hoping for a win here in Ohio, but not desperate for one. After a 60,000-person rally in Columbus, Barack Obama, with a little help from Bruce Springsteen...

Mr. BRUCE SPRINGSTEEN: (Singing) Yes we can.

COWAN: ...drew another huge crowd in Cleveland, Ohio's most populous country, a punctuation mark to his buckeye efforts.

Senator BARACK OBAMA: But I know this, Ohio, the time for change has come.

COWAN: He's spent more time in Ohio than any other state since winning the nomination, but it's a state he doesn't necessarily have to win. A loss in electoral-rich Ohio and even one in Pennsylvania could be offset by wins in places like North Carolina, Virginia and Indiana.

Mr. DAVID PLOUFFE (Obama Campaign Manager): Here we find ourselves two days out from the election with a lot of different ways to get to 270 electoral votes. We do not have to pull an inside straight.

COWAN: In fact, Obama hasn't been in a blue state in almost a week. The last time was a miserable, rainy day outside Pennsylvania.

Sen. OBAMA: This is an unbelievable crowd for this kind of weather.

COWAN: He hasn't had a press conference, either, something he told an anxious press corps today that he may remedy...

Sen. OBAMA: I will. On Wednesday.

COWAN: ...the day after the election. It's all about controlling the message and taking advantage of any opportunities. The campaign practically sent a thank you note to Dick Cheney this weekend. After his endorsement of John McCain, Obama's media consultant quickly turned it around and made it into an anti-McCain ad.

(Clip from campaign advertisement)

COWAN: Likely to be one of the last new campaign commercials to hit the air this season. With Ohio blanketed, his running mate Joe Biden was making a last-minute pitch in the other big battleground, Florida.

Senator JOE BIDEN: Go get 'em, Gators!

COWAN: NBC's Ron Allen is traveling with the vice presidential nominee.

RON ALLEN reporting:

He's been targeting Republican areas that voted for President Bush in 2004. Even if they can't win these GOP districts, the Democrats hope to narrow the margins and then push for a big Democratic turnout in other parts of the state to help put them over the top.

COWAN: Obama holds one more rally in Jacksonville, Florida, tomorrow, his last one in the Sunshine State as he makes his way up the eastern seaboard to North Carolina and then Virginia. And just where is he going to be on Election Day itself? Well, he's making one last trip on Tuesday back to Indiana. That will be his fourth trip there in just the last couple of weeks. It's a state that he's been spending a lot of time in, but a state that hasn't voted for a Democrat since 1964. Lester:

HOLT: And then, Lee, after Indiana, where does he wait out the results?

COWAN: Well, he comes back to Chicago. He'll spend some time at home with his family, who he hasn't spent a whole lot of time with of late, then he's going to go the Hyatt Hotel to watch the results. And then, of course, a big, big rally in Grant Park there in Chicago. The mayor says they could get as much as a million people in that park sometime late on Tuesday night along the shores of Lake Michigan. It's supposed to be a relatively warm day for this time of year. That's what everybody's fingers are crossed for. Lester:

HOLT: All right. Lee Cowan in Cleveland tonight. Lee, thank you.

John McCain has his own road map to 270 electoral votes, and today it has taken him to places he thinks he can peel away from his opponent. Let's move on to New Hampshire, where Kelly O'Donnell is with the McCain campaign tonight. Kelly:

KELLY O'DONNELL reporting:

Hello again, Lester. John McCain is getting back to basics, holding his last town hall of this campaign. He's done more than 100 of them here in New Hampshire. It's part nostalgia, part strategy, trying to reach independent voters. And at this point in the campaign, most candidates are really into the big rallies, and that's how McCain started his day, too.

Senator JOHN McCAIN: America, two days. Two days to victory.

O'DONNELL: And two stops today in Pennsylvania, a fight to the finish for the big prize of 21 electoral votes, a blue state where McCain has been behind in polling. But his advisers claim that their own field research shows promise.

Sen. McCAIN: The pundits have written us off, just like they've done before. My friends, the "Mack" is back.

O'DONNELL: Funny thing. Aides say McCain has never been known as Mack, but that slogan, "Mack is back," caught on when he won the New Hampshire primary and returned here in the final stretch against Obama.

Sen. OBAMA: Senator is running to spread the wealth. I'm running to create more wealth.

Governor SARAH PALIN: Ohio, are you ready to help us carry your state to victory?

O'DONNELL: NBC's Savannah Guthrie is with the governor.

SAVANNAH GUTHRIE reporting:

Sarah Palin is sticking to one state today, four stops in Ohio, with two clear missions: to keep the enthusiasm going so that it will generate big turnout on Tuesday and to continue to bring the fight to Barack Obama.

Gov. PALIN: He chose the side of bigger government and taking more from you what you earn and produce. And now Barack Obama has committed to almost a trillion dollars more in new government spending.

O'DONNELL: On the road separately, but McCain had fun with that other Sarah Palin, Tina Fey.

(Clip from "Saturday Night Live")

O'DONNELL: The highs and lows of this campaign, like McCain's money disadvantage, turned into punch lines on "Saturday Night Live."

Sen. McCAIN: (From "Saturday Night Live") Barack Obama purchased air time on three major networks. We, however, can only afford QVC.

O'DONNELL: And the reviews were in in Scranton.

Sen. McCAIN: By the way, how was "Saturday Night Live" last night? OK? I see a lot of you were up late.

O'DONNELL: And John McCain will be up late again tonight. From here, heading to Miami for a midnight rally. Tomorrow, it's heading west, covering about a half dozen battleground states, heading back home to Arizona. Lester:



HOLT: And, Kelly, is it fair to say New Hampshire is not just any campaign stop for John McCain?

O'DONNELL: It really has a sentimental feeling to it, Lester. It's a battleground state, four electoral votes. It went blue last time, but John McCain's got a history here. He won an upset against George Bush in 2000. In this election cycle, it was the win in New Hampshire that revived his campaign and put him here tonight. So there's a strong connection, and he's hoping that personal tie may give him New Hampshire one more time. Lester:

HOLT: Kelly O'Donnell. Thank you, Kelly

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Appendix R  
NBC News Transcripts

October 5, 2008 Sunday

**SHOW:** NBC Nightly News 6:30 PM EST NBC

As election nears, campaign strategies becomes harsher

**ANCHORS:** LESTER HOLT

**REPORTERS:** LEE COWAN

**LENGTH:** 601 words

LESTER HOLT, anchor:

We are now just 30 days and two debates away from the 2008 presidential election. Tonight, with Barack Obama doing well in several battleground states, John McCain is making a strong push on what for him is a shrinking but still very much fertile political landscape, a landscape that in these final weeks is being shaped by the fragile US economy. And while the two prepare to do battle in Tuesday's town hall-style debate, they have spent this weekend prepping the battleground with sharp attacks. NBC's Lee Cowan starts us off tonight.

LEE COWAN reporting:

For Barack Obama, the final month push is all about voters' pocketbooks, and today he again sliced into John McCain's health care plan, saying it would put a dent in wallets across the country.

Senator BARACK OBAMA: It's a shell game. Senator McCain gives you a tax credit with one hand but he raises your taxes with the other.

COWAN: But the greatest threat, he says, is McCain's apparent plan to largely ignore the economy altogether, the charge highlighted in a new TV ad out today.

Unidentified Man: (From Obama advertisement) Erratic in crisis. Out of touch on the economy. No wonder his campaign wants to change the subject.

COWAN: And change it to what? Sarah Palin, at least, wants it to be about Obama's past.

Governor SARAH PALIN: It's really important for Americans to start knowing who the real Barack Obama is.

COWAN: She was defending comments she made yesterday in Carson, California.

Gov. PALIN: Our opponent is someone who sees America as imperfect enough to pal around with terrorists who targeted their own country.

COWAN: She's speaking of Bill Ayers, the former 1960s radical who did work on education projects in Chicago with Obama. But the Illinois senator says he isn't palling around with Ayers. His interactions, the campaign says, were sporadic at best.

Sen. OBAMA: Senator McCain and his operatives are gambling that they can distract you with smears rather than talk to you about substance. That's what you do when you're out of touch, out of ideas and running out of time.

COWAN: The clock is ticking. Deadlines for voter registration in places like South Carolina are drawing crowds, and early voting has already started in many states. But as the stock market dropped last week, so did John McCain's poll numbers, which is why his aides say a change has to be made. Look for it, they say, on Tuesday night at the next presidential debate, when McCain says the gloves will come off. Many Republicans expect to see more a referendum on Obama, his judgment, his experience and Obama's personal associations. Now, the McCain camp is hoping to keep it just tight enough over the next several days and weeks that either a strong debate performance or some unforeseen event could move the momentum back his way.

One other note tonight. We should mention that Joe Biden has canceled all his campaign appearances for Monday and Tuesday because of the death of his mother-in-law. Jill Biden's mother-in-law died of a long illness early this morning. Joe Biden may be back on the campaign trail as early as Wednesday. Lester:

HOLT: And Lee, let me just get you to take me back for a moment to that new Obama ad. He uses the term "erratic" in describing McCain. I know that's being seen by some as a loaded word. Explain.

COWAN: Well it is. I think some people see it as a not-so-subtle attack on John McCain's age. They say that's unfair. The Obama campaign says that is not the case. They are simply referring to how he managed himself in those days after the Wall Street crisis first hit.

HOLT: All right. Lee Cowan, thanks.

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Appendix S  
ABC News Transcript

October 26, 2008 Sunday

**SHOW:** WORLD NEWS SUNDAY 6:30 PM EST

**VOTE 08;  
A HOUSE DIVIDED?**

**ANCHORS:** DAN HARRIS

**REPORTERS:** RON CLAIBORNE (ZANESVILLE, OH USA)

**LENGTH:** 603 words

CONTENT: MCCAIN, PALIN

GRAPHICS: VOTE 08

DAN HARRIS (ABC NEWS)

(Off-camera) Good evening. I'm Dan Harris. After nearly two years and more than a billion dollars, the presidential race is now entering its last full week.

GRAPHICS: ABC NEWS/THE WASHINGTON POST POLL

GRAPHICS: AMONG LIKELY VOTERS

GRAPHICS: OBAMA, 52%

GRAPHICS: MCCAIN, 45%

DAN HARRIS (ABC NEWS)

(Voiceover) The latest ABC News poll shows Barack Obama ahead by seven points. That is a lot of ground for John McCain to make up, even under the best of circumstances.

GRAPHICS: 9 DAYS TO GO

DAN HARRIS (ABC NEWS)

(Off-camera) But the - McCain camp is not only fighting Obama right now, there are reports that aides to McCain and his running mate Sarah Palin are fighting each other. So we're gonna start tonight with ABC's Ron Claiborne, who is in Zanesville, Ohio.

GRAPHICS: MAP OF OHIO

RON CLAIBORNE (ABC NEWS)

(Off-camera) Even as John McCain campaigns in this key battleground state, Ohio, there are reports that his campaign has been wracked by in-fighting.

SENATOR (MALE)

So welcome John McCain.

RON CLAIBORNE (ABC NEWS)

(Voiceover) Campaigning earlier today in Iowa, a state which President Bush carried four years ago and where McCain is far behind Barack Obama, McCain attacked Obama as a tax raiser, and vowed to fight on.

SENATOR JOHN MCCAIN (REPUBLICAN, PRESIDENTIAL NOMINEE)

We never quit. We never give up. Now, let's go win this election and get this country moving again.

RON CLAIBORNE (ABC NEWS)

(Voiceover) But behind the scenes, there are reports of a different kind of fight, between insiders in the McCain campaign and the Palin camp, though both sides deny it.

BEN SMITH (SENIOR POLITICAL WRITER, POLITICO)

It's about, you know, Palin's people blaming McCain for messing up her role and a senior McCain aide coming back, calling her a diva.

RON CLAIBORNE (ABC NEWS)

(Voiceover) In recent days, Palin has been delivering messages that sometimes conflict with McCain's, like criticizing automated Robocalls and calling for McCain to attack Obama over Reverend Jeremiah Wright, which he has refused to do.

MATTHEW DOWD (ABC NEWS)

(Off-camera) She's definitely, you know, mapping out her own effort, it looks like, from what people are saying, both in print and behind the scenes. They're having some difficulty keeping her on message.

RON CLAIBORNE (ABC NEWS)

(Voiceover) But in an interview today, McCain was as supportive as ever of his running mate.

CLIP FROM "MEET THE PRESS"

SENATOR JOHN MCCAIN (REPUBLICAN, PRESIDENTIAL NOMINEE)

I don't defend her. I praise her. I don't defend her.

RON CLAIBORNE (ABC NEWS)

(Voiceover) McCain did defend the Republican Party spending \$150,000 on new clothes for Palin.

SENATOR JOHN MCCAIN (REPUBLICAN, PRESIDENTIAL NOMINEE)

She lives a frugal life. She and her family are not wealthy. She and her family were thrust into this, and there was some, and some third of that money is given back.

RON CLAIBORNE (ABC NEWS)

(Voiceover) Campaigning today in Florida, Palin responded to Wardrobe Gate.

GOVERNOR SARAH PALIN (REPUBLICAN, VICE PRESIDENTIAL  
NOMINEE)

Those clothes, they are not my property. I'm not taking them with me. I'm back to wearing my own clothes from my favorite consignment shop in Anchorage, Alaska.

RON CLAIBORNE (ABC NEWS)

(Voiceover) Palin went on to say she brought her own wedding ring for \$35.

RON CLAIBORNE (ABC NEWS)

(Off-camera) This reported dissension in the ranks may be a sign of growing frustration that nothing the McCain campaign is trying to do, trying to hit Barack Obama with, seems to be sticking. And time is running out. Dan?

DAN HARRIS (ABC NEWS)

(Off-camera) Ron Claiborne, reporting from Ohio tonight. Thank you.

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Appendix T  
CBS News Transcripts

October 8, 2008 Wednesday

**SHOW:** CBS Evening News 6:30 PM EST CBS

## Presidential Questions; Obama and McCain answer personal questions

**ANCHORS:** KATIE COURIC

**LENGTH:** 882 words

KATIE COURIC, anchor:

As the election approaches, we're trying to give you more insight into them men who want to be president. We asked them about matters that go beyond the news of the day for our special series PRESIDENTIAL QUESTIONS: character, leadership, and the candidates.

What do you think is the best and the worst thing that has ever happened to this country?

Senator JOHN McCAIN (Republican, Presidential Candidate): Boy, that's a good--that's an excellent question. Obviously, our founding was the best thing that ever happened to our country because there was a unique collection of the most wise and informed and incredible individuals who joined together to found our nation and create a document that is still a model to the--to the rest of the world.

Maybe the worst thing that happened to America is, in modern times, probably is the Great Depression. It affected probably more, a greater percentage of our--of our population than any other economic or other impact that we experienced. I mean, literally half of our population, or 40 percent, whatever it was, huge numbers that are incomprehensible, were out of work and people literally starved in America. And that--we can't ever repeat that.

Senator BARACK OBAMA (Democrat, Presidential Candidate): The best thing that ever happened in the--in this country was its founding fathers and the starting premise of America, you know. "We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, endowed by our creator with certain inalienable rights, among these life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness." That idea just kept on pushing through throughout the centuries, through a civil war, through civil rights, through women's rights. It became the North Star for people not just in America but all around the world.

And I think, you know, the worst probably would have to be slavery in this country, although the treatment of Native Americans oftentimes was--showed great cruelty. You know, but slavery is a stain on this country. Fortunately we had people like Abraham Lincoln and Harriet Tubman and Dr. King and, you know, so many who were able to

battle through that legacy. And we're still wrestling with it, but it's one where I think all of us have to feel more optimistic about the direction of this country.

COURIC: Who are the three people who are alive you would most like to have dinner with--other than me?

Sen. OBAMA: I would love to have dinner with Nelson Mandela before he passes away. Obviously he's getting on in years. The last time I saw him he was very sharp, but he is having hearing problems and he's getting frail. You know, I--sitting down with him is something that I would--I would enjoy doing.

You know, somebody who I always love having a conversation with is Warren Buffet, who I talk to fairly frequently. We've become good friends. He's a good economic adviser of mine. And whenever I'm with him, what I'm always struck by is how much he enjoys what he's doing and how unaffected he's been by his success. I mean, he's just a plain-spoken, you know, funny--he's like your favorite uncle. Except worth \$56 billion and really smart. So he's somebody I enjoy spending time with.

The third person that I think I'd like to spend time with--well, this is my family. But I'd like to spend some time with my grandmother, who I've only seen once over the last 19 months. She's been the rock of my family. She worked very hard all her life and made a lot of sacrifices on my behalf, and she's now--she can't travel. She's got osteoporosis that's very bad. She is as sharp as they come. She explained to me the other day, you know, the problem with getting old is you're the same person, just your body's falling apart and it's very frustrating, and that's how she feels. And so, you know, spending some time with her is something that is going to be a priority after this election's over.

Sen. McCain: I would think David Petraeus, General David Petraeus is one of them. I have appreciated his leadership and his ability to inspire the young Americans, men and women who serve under him. I find him a fascinating individual.

Obviously, I think that Meg Whitman, who I admire enormously, started out with five employees 12 years ago, now a million and a half people make a living off eBay. She understands the American dream for young women in America as well as all Americans.

And of course, being a real sports nut, I would be--I would consider it a great, great pleasure to have dinner with any major league football player, baseball player. I--you know, right now springs to mind, Michael Phelps, you know, the--our Olympic champion. He's inspired America and a lot of young Americans to do what he's done. There's a young man who grew up here in Arizona and moved to New Mexico. He just won a gold medal in wrestling in the Olympics for the first time in 16 years, and his name, as I recall is @Henry Cejudo, young man, child of illegal immigrants who became an Olympic champion. I'd love to have dinner with him. By the way, I'd also like to have dinner with our 400-meter relay team who dropped the baton and tell them that we still love them.

COURIC: And tomorrow night, more about the candidates. We'll tell you how you would do under their health care plans in our series WHERE THEY STAND.

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Appendix U  
ABC News Transcript

November 3, 2008 Monday

**SHOW:** WORLD NEWS WITH CHARLES GIBSON 7:22 PM EST

**VOTE 08;**  
**CAMPAIGN SCRAPBOOK**

**ANCHORS:** CHARLES GIBSON

**REPORTERS:** CHARLES GIBSON (NEW YORK, NY USA)

**LENGTH:** 1070 words

CHARLES GIBSON (ABC NEWS)

(Off-camera) Finally tonight, we approach the end of a long, long road. This historic campaign is now down to its last few hours. It has been a significant journey and it has produced more than its share of memorable moments. We have put together something of a campaign scrapbook, the highlights, the events that have brought us to election eve.

SENATOR BARACK OBAMA (DEMOCRAT

I stand before you today.

SENATOR JOHN MCCAIN (REPUBLICAN

Today, I announce my candidacy.

SENATOR BARACK OBAMA (DEMOCRAT

My candidacy for president.

SENATOR JOHN MCCAIN (REPUBLICAN

For president.

SENATOR BARACK OBAMA (DEMOCRAT

Of the United States.

SENATOR JOHN MCCAIN (REPUBLICAN

Of the United States.

SENATOR BARACK OBAMA (DEMOCRAT

Our time for change has come.

SENATOR JOHN MCCAIN (REPUBLICAN

Feeling good.

SENATOR BARACK OBAMA (DEMOCRAT

Let's go change the world.

SENATOR JOHN MCCAIN (REPUBLICAN)

I look forward to the day of standing in the Rose Garden.

OPRAH WINFREY (TALK SHOW HOST)

Cedar Rapids, I know he is the one.

SENATOR BARACK OBAMA (DEMOCRAT)

We are not a collection of red states and blue states. We are the United States of America. Thank you, Iowa.

SENATOR JOHN MCCAIN (REPUBLICAN)

Congratulate Governor Huckabee for his victory in Iowa.

SENATOR JOHN MCCAIN (REPUBLICAN)

Tonight, we sure showed them what a comeback looks like.

GEORGE STEPHANOPOULOS (ABC NEWS)

(Voiceover) What a comeback for John McCain. Last summer his campaign collapsed.

SENATOR BARACK OBAMA (DEMOCRAT)

I want to congratulate Senator Clinton on a hard-fought victory here in New Hampshire.

SENATOR HILLARY CLINTON (DEMOCRAT)

He's very likable. I agree with that.

SENATOR BARACK OBAMA (DEMOCRAT)

You're likable enough, Hillary, no doubt.

SENATOR HILLARY CLINTON (DEMOCRAT)

Thank you.

SENATOR JOHN MCCAIN (REPUBLICAN)

You are the candidate of change.

GEORGE STEPHANOPOULOS (ABC NEWS)

(Voiceover) John McCain got the treasure trove tonight. New York, New Jersey, Connecticut, Delaware, Arizona.

CHARLES GIBSON (ABC NEWS)

(Voiceover) He can then come forward tomorrow, George, and say, I can't be stopped.

SENATOR JOHN MCCAIN (REPUBLICAN)

We are the Republican Party front-runner for the nomination.

CHARLES GIBSON (ABC NEWS)

(Voiceover) The Democratic race keeps going and going and going.

SENATOR HILLARY CLINTON (DEMOCRAT

And we're going all the way.

SENATOR BARACK OBAMA (DEMOCRAT

Tonight, I can stand here and say that I will be the Democratic nominee for the president of the United States of America.

SENATOR BARACK OBAMA (DEMOCRAT

People of the world, this is our moment.

SENATOR JOHN MCCAIN (REPUBLICAN

I'd rather lose an election than see my country lose a war.

REVEREND JEREMIAH WRIGHT (UNITED TRINITY CHURCH)

Not God bless America, God damn America.

SENATOR BARACK OBAMA (DEMOCRAT

I have already condemned in unequivocal terms the statements of Reverend Wright.

SENATOR JOHN MCCAIN (REPUBLICAN

I got to look you in the face and give you a little straight talk.

SENATOR BARACK OBAMA (DEMOCRAT

Yes, we can.

SENATOR JOHN MCCAIN (REPUBLICAN

I have to give you some straight talk.

SENATOR BARACK OBAMA (DEMOCRAT

Yes, we can.

MCCAIN SUPPORTER (MALE)

We can keep a secret. So if you'd like to announce your VP. Perfect, perfect. Thank you.

SENATOR JOHN MCCAIN (REPUBLICAN

Next vice president of the United States - Governor Sarah Palin of the great state of Alaska.

GOVERNOR SARAH PALIN (REPUBLICAN

The difference between a hockey mom and a pit bull - lipstick.

AMY POEHLER ("SATURDAY NIGHT LIVE")

I believe that diplomacy should be the cornerstone of any foreign policy.

TINA FEY ("SATURDAY NIGHT LIVE")

And I can see Russia from my house.

SENATOR BARACK OBAMA (DEMOCRAT

The next vice president of the United States of America, Joe Biden.

SENATOR BARACK OBAMA (DEMOCRAT

I accept your nomination for presidency of the United States.

SENATOR JOHN MCCAIN (REPUBLICAN

I have a privilege given few Americans, the privilege of accepting our party's nomination for president of the United States.

SENATOR JOHN MCCAIN (REPUBLICAN

Tomorrow morning, I'll suspend my campaign and return to Washington.

SENATOR BARACK OBAMA (DEMOCRAT

John, you like pretend like the war started in 2007.

SENATOR JOHN MCCAIN (REPUBLICAN

You know who voted for it? You might never know. That one.

SENATOR BARACK OBAMA (DEMOCRAT

Joe the plumber.

SENATOR JOHN MCCAIN (REPUBLICAN

Joe.

SENATOR BARACK OBAMA (DEMOCRAT

Joe.

SENATOR JOHN MCCAIN (REPUBLICAN

Now my old buddy, Joe.

GOVERNOR SARAH PALIN (REPUBLICAN

Say it ain't so, Joe, there you go again.

NARRATOR (POLITICAL AD)

He's the biggest celebrity in the world.

NARRATOR (POLITICAL AD)

They call themselves mavericks. Whoa.

REPORTER (POLITICO)

How many houses do you and Mrs. McCain have?

SENATOR JOHN MCCAIN (REPUBLICAN

I'll have my staff get to you.

SENATOR BARACK OBAMA (DEMOCRAT

True quote. I'm not sure. I'll have to check with my staff.

SENATOR JOHN MCCAIN (REPUBLICAN

I voted with the president over 90% of the time.

SENATOR JOHN MCCAIN (REPUBLICAN

He even has a pet name for me - George Bush.

SENATOR JOHN MCCAIN (REPUBLICAN

Senator Obama is running to be redistributionist in chief. I'm running to be commander in chief.

SENATOR BARACK OBAMA (DEMOCRAT

By the end of the week he'll be accusing me of being a secret communist because I shared my toys in kindergarten.

SENATOR BARACK OBAMA (DEMOCRAT

If you'll stand with me and fight with me, I promise you we will not just win Florida, we'll win this election.

SENATOR JOHN MCCAIN (REPUBLICAN

I am an American and I choose to fight. Don't give up hope. Be strong. Have courage and fight.

SENATOR BARACK OBAMA (DEMOCRAT

You and I together, we'll change this country. We'll change the world.

SENATOR JOHN MCCAIN (REPUBLICAN

Now, let's go win this election and get this country moving again. God bless you.

SENATOR BARACK OBAMA (DEMOCRAT

God bless the United States of America.

CHARLES GIBSON (ABC NEWS)

(Off-camera) Quite a journey it has been. That is our special edition of "World News" for this election eve. Join us tomorrow night for continuing coverage of the vote '08 results. We will be here for many hours beginning at 7:00 Eastern, 6:00 Central, 4:00 Pacific. When we finish the evening, we will know who will occupy the White House and what the makeup of the next Congress will be.

CHARLES GIBSON (ABC NEWS)

(Off-camera) I'm Charles Gibson. I hope you've had a good day. For all of us at ABC News, have a good night.

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