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The Bully Pulpit and The Pulpit Bully: A Comparison of How Presidents Theodore Roosevelt and Donald Trump Used the Media To Propel Their Careers and Political Agendas.

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The Bully Pulpit and The Pulpit Bully:
A Comparison of How Presidents Theodore Roosevelt and Donald Trump Used the Media To
Propel Their Careers and Political Agendas.

A Thesis in
History

By
Scott Miller

Submitted in Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements
for the Degree of

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ABSTRACT OF THESIS

The Bully Pulpit and the Pulpit Bully: A Comparison of How Presidents Theodore Roosevelt and Donald Trump Used the Media to Propel Their Careers and Political Agendas.

This thesis compares and contrasts how two of the more media savvy American presidents, Theodore Roosevelt and Donald Trump, utilized the press/media to advance their careers and promote their agendas. Both men's ascent to power coincided with and benefited from the rise of new media outlets; Roosevelt's with the newspaper revolution and Trump's with the social media/networking explosion, specifically that of Twitter. Their groundbreaking mastery of these and other media formats share several common devices including trial balloons, manipulating news cycles and creating news distractions. However, a deeper dive reveals distinct differences as well.

Relying heavily on primary resources, including letters, speeches, autobiographies, and tweets, this historical analysis will show that though both men shared similar tactics, their aims and tones were worlds apart. While presidents before him were wary of the press, President Theodore Roosevelt aggressively pursued a relationship with newspapermen, seeing them as a valuable ally to disseminate information with the chief purpose of unifying public support around his policies to improve the country. During his time in office, President Trump has forcefully obstructed and attacked the mainstream media, viewing them not as an ally but an enemy. He has repeatedly used communication tools to divide, pitting his core base against those whom he perceives as against him. The main focus of his bully pulpit has been to protect and promote his "brand," not to advocate his agenda.

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Completing this work might have been arduous if not for the motivation and sound advice of Dr. Alex Blair. My first graduate school class was his *Emergence of Industrial America: 1877-1919*. Five minutes into the course, any doubts I had about whether returning to school was the right decision vanished. He also offered two invaluable pieces of advice. First, when constructing a reading list for that class he recommended selecting books that I might use for my future master's thesis. Second, he informed me of the Buffalo and Erie County Public Library Central branch's vast collection, something I was unaware of even though I grew-up in the area. Both of these tips saved me countless hours of reading and investigation.

In conducting research, several local sites proved immensely helpful. Thank you to the staffs at Buffalo State's Butler Library, the University of Buffalo's Libraries Annex, and the Buffalo Historical Museum. A special thank you to Lenora Henson and the team at the Theodore Roosevelt Inaugural Site.

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Introduction

Vice President Mike Pence's remarks came during a visit to what President Theodore Roosevelt called his greatest achievement, the Panama Canal.¹ With the sundrenched engineering marvel in the backdrop, Pence compared the 45th president of the United States to the one responsible for building the canal:

In President Donald Trump, I think the United States once again has a president whose vision, energy, and can-do spirit is reminiscent of President Teddy Roosevelt. Think about it. Then, as now, we have a builder of boundless optimism, who seeks to usher in a new era of shared prosperity all across this new world. Then, as now, we have a leader who sees things not just as they are, but for what they could be. And then, as now, we have a president who understands, in his words, "A nation is only living as long as it is striving." And just as President Roosevelt exhorted his fellow Americans to "dare to be great," President Donald Trump has dared our nation to make America great again.²

The Vice President is not alone in linking Roosevelt and Trump, numerous historians and politicians have connected the two.³ On the surface, there are many trivial ties that can be used to bond them. They were New Yorkers born into families of wealth and privilege, headed by strong father figures who greatly influenced them. While neither was a truly self-made man, their public perception was the opposite. They were blue bloods disguised as blue-collar. Both were larger than life characters with forceful personalities. Their brothers lost battles with alcoholism, while their daughters became media darlings. They were Republican by name, but not afraid to challenge the party's establishment. They both wrestled with how they obtained the

¹ Oscar King Davis, *Released for Publication* (New York: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1925), 129.

² Vice President Mike Pence, "Remarks by Vice President at Panama Canal," August 17, 2017, <https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefings-statements/remarks-vice-president-panama-canal/>.

³ Former Speaker of the House Newt Gingrich, former White House Director of Communications Anthony Scaramucci and former House Speaker John Boehner are among those who have linked Presidents Theodore Roosevelt and Donald Trump. The *Chicago Tribune*, *Forbes.com*, *The Huffington Post* and *Newsweek* were among those to run articles or commentaries comparing the two. Historians Daniel Ruddy and Daniel F. Harrington have written pieces on the men's similarities.

highest office in the land; TR saw himself as an “accidental” president, while Trump is haunted by the perception that Russian interference won him the election.

But there are also stark differences between the men. Roosevelt was an intellectual, a voracious reader, unsuccessful in business, and worked his way up the political ranks. By contrast, Trump claims he does not have time to read. He is a successful businessman with an estimated net worth in the billions and had never held a political office before entering the White House. As President, TR created 150 national forests and five national parks, went after monopolies and trusts, and looked to expand America’s global presence. Conversely, Trump has rolled back environmental protection, reduced corporate tax rates, and has removed the United States from several international agreements (Iran nuclear deal, Paris Climate accord, Trans-Pacific Partnership).

Their presidencies can be tied by similarities in the state of the nation during their rises to power. Life at the turn of the 20th century and the start of the 21st were tumultuous times in American history. During both periods the nation saw the creation of a new class of uber-rich. While many citizens found themselves left out of the economic prosperity. Technological advances both unified and divided people. The nation of immigrants grappled with closing doors and building walls. Racial tensions boiled over, making people wonder if America could ever truly be “one nation, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.”⁴ Clouds of division, discontent and doubt hung over the country.

⁴ This quote comes from the first version of the Pledge of Allegiance. Written in 1892, it was not until 1954 that the phrase “under God” was added to the pledge. Rev. George M. Docherty was the leader in the movement to add “under God.” He found sympathetic ears in President Dwight D. Eisenhower who threw his support behind it.

However, their eras saw a major difference on how Americans perceived the role of government. Roosevelt came into office as the progressive movement was sweeping the country. Citizens looked to the government to be aggressive in curing society's ills, everything from poverty to corporate greed. This was a perfect fit with TR's ambitious hands-on style. President Roosevelt used the media to convince people that he had the solutions to the country's troubles.

The climate during Trump's presidency is one of frustration with the government. Americans view the government as the problem, not the solution to their problems. In a 2017 poll, over half of U.S. adults surveyed believe "the government has too much power, and more Americans say the government is doing too much to solve the country's problems, things that should be handled by individuals and businesses, than say it should be doing more."⁵ Trump has successfully used the media to tap into and promote this dissatisfaction, in the process solidifying his base.

While one could write an interesting and provocative paper on many of their similarities and differences, this thesis will focus on one specific aspect, a comparison of how Presidents Theodore Roosevelt and Donald Trump used their bully pulpit.

This paper will consist of five chapters and a conclusion. The first chapter, *Meet the Press*, traces the events in Roosevelt and Trump's pre-presidential careers that laid the foundation for their presidential media strategies. Chapter two, *The Road to the White House*, explores how as candidates for the highest office in the land they employed the media to get elected. The third chapter, *Face the Nation*, studies the methods they developed as president to

⁵ Jeffrey M. Jones, Frank Newport and Lydia Saad. "How Americans Perceive Government in 2017," Gallup.com, November 1, 2017. <https://news.gallup.com/opinion/polling-matters/221171/americans-perceive-government-2017.aspx>

deal with the press on a daily basis. *Outfront*, the fourth chapter, reveals how the two pioneered the use of “new” forms of media to spread their message. For Roosevelt, this meant the newspaper, which at the time, was undergoing an industry transformation. In Trump’s case, Twitter and social media. The final chapter, *Crossfire*, examines the relationships each man had with their “friends” and “enemies” in the media.

Researching this thesis demanded investigating two different subjects; one who has been dead for nearly a century, the other who is currently in office. This created interesting challenges, including requiring the use of a wide range of sources.

In studying Roosevelt’s use of the bully pulpit, several secondary sources provided a fantastic starting point. For most people, the first book that comes to mind is Doris Kearns Goodwin’s *The Bully Pulpit: Theodore Roosevelt, William Howard Taft, and the Golden Age of Journalism*. Her book does a terrific job detailing the relationship between Roosevelt and the reform-minded journalists known as muckrakers. While they may not have made the *New York Times Bestseller* list, George Juergens’ *News from the White House: The Presidential-Press Relationship in the Progressive Era* and Stephen Ponder’s *Managing the Press: Origins of the Media Presidency, 1897-1933* were essential reading for this project. Excellently researched and documented, they offer comprehensive looks at TR’s presidential relationship with the press. Both works emphasize Roosevelt’s mastery of press management skills as a key to the success of his presidency. A recent addition to the politics-press connection library is David Greenberg’s *Republic of Spin*. Greenberg argues that spin is nothing new, tracing its American political roots back to the early days of the republic. But he makes it very clear that spin’s “big bang moment” came with Theodore Roosevelt’s presidency. He credits TR with drawing the bully pulpit blueprint that other presidents followed for the next century. Greenberg may receive some

criticism for not giving pre-Roosevelt presidents more proper attention; however, that is a small knock in an otherwise solid work. The author found the right mix of educational and entertaining, which makes for an easy and informative read.

Thanks in large part to the wealth of material penned by Roosevelt himself, there is a treasure trove of primary sources available for analysis. Roosevelt's biography is helpful, but his papers offer a naked peek into his own thoughts. Etling Morrison's eight-volume set of Roosevelt letters is a terrific starting point, covering everything from his Harvard days to post-presidency years. While not as complete as Morrison's work, the Theodore Roosevelt Center at Dickinson State University's Digital Library is a valuable source of Roosevelt material. Unlike Morrison's work, it also contains letters sent to Roosevelt, as well as magazine and newspaper clippings.

Roosevelt's personal connection with journalists led several of them to write extensively about him. William Allen White, Joseph Bishop, Lincoln Steffens and Oscar K. Davis wrote memoirs that offer a glimpse into what it was like to be one of Roosevelt's trusted correspondents. Newspapers from the late 19th/early 20th centuries allow an examination of Roosevelt from both his press "enemies" and "allies" point of view. The Library of Congress' Chronicling America newspaper database contains millions of papers published between 1880 and 1922. It's free, easy to operate and often delivers pleasant unexpected results.

While studying the Roosevelt portion of this thesis meant countless hours in the library, the Trump portion required a different plan of attack. Yes, Trump has *authored* several best-sellers; everything from a biography, *Trump: The Art of the Deal*, to business advice books, *Surviving at the Top*. However, these books are more propaganda pieces than hardcore historical works and they must be judged accordingly. The same must be said of the recent wave of Trump

books. Trump insiders, including Corey Lewandowski, Roger Stone and Sean Spicer, have authored works that painted a rather glowing portrait of him, even if it came at their own expense. Likewise, books critical of the Trump deserve equal scrutiny. Does Omarosa Manigault Newman's book have any historical value or is it nothing more than a poor White House tell-all?

The real goldmine for Trump researchers comes in the more than 39,000 tweets he has sent. They are the modern-day equivalent of Roosevelt's letters, offering an unfiltered look into Trump's thinking. Thanks to the explosion of online news sites, both mainstream and alternative, accessing video or transcripts of Trump's speeches, rallies and media interactions is simply a few clicks away.

These men were polarizing figures during their times in office. A fellow politician called him "the most dangerous man of the age." Newspapers claimed, "he is the most dangerous foe to human liberty that has ever set foot on American soil," and had "no respect for the truth."⁶ His enemies cried that he was "the worst president we ever had" and "the most formidable disaster that has befallen this country since the Civil War."⁷ And some went so far as to question his sanity, warning he was "of unsound mind," "insane" and a "maniac."⁸ All this was said about President Theodore Roosevelt.

⁶ Edmund Morris, *The Rise of Theodore Roosevelt* (New York: Coward, McCann & Georghagan, Inc, 1979), 12.

⁷ Mark Twain and Bernard De Voto, *Mark Twain in Eruption: Hitherto Unpublished Pages about Men and Events* (Ann Arbor, MI: University Microfilms International, 1980).

⁸ Adams to Elizabeth Cameron, February 25, 1912, in *The Letters of Henry Adams*, ed. J.C. Levenson, Ernest Samuels, Charles Vandersee, and Viola Hopkins Winner (London: The Belnap Press of Harvard University Press, 1988), 516.

"Roosevelt's Detractors," *The Evening Standard*, May 4, 1912, Page 4.

Today, President Donald Trump has faced almost the identical charges—“Is Donald Trump Just Plain Crazy?,” “The Dangerous Case of Donald Trump: 27 Psychiatrists and Mental Health Experts Assess a President,” and “The President Is Mentally Unwell and Everyone Around Him Knows It.”⁹ Comparing Trump to anyone makes many historians and political pundits uncomfortable and nervous. And it would be easy to fall into the trap of confirmation bias when writing this paper. This thesis encompasses a wide range of both primary and secondary sources in hopes of providing an objective comparison. By conducting an unbiased analysis of the available material, not only do we acquire a better understanding of these men and their bully pulpits, but we also get a glimpse into what we might expect from future presidents.

⁹ Eugene Robinson, “Is Donald Trump Just Plain Crazy?,” *The Washington Post*, August 1, 2016, https://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/is-donald-trump-just-plain-crazy/2016/08/01/cd171e86-581d-11e6-831d-0324760ca856_story.html?utm_term=.1bdbc38d1e97

Eric Levitz, “The President Is Mentally Unwell and Everyone Around Him Knows It,” *New York*, January 4, 2018. <http://nymag.com/intelligencer/2018/01/trump-is-mentally-unwell-and-everyone-around-him-knows-it.html>

Chapter 1: Meet the Press

In November 1881, twenty-three-year-old Theodore Roosevelt had just been elected to the New York State Assembly when he wrote to a former Harvard classmate, “Too True! I have become a ‘political hack’... But I don’t think I’m going to go into politics after this year, for I am not.”¹⁰

Just under a century later, in 1980, gossip columnist Rona Barrett asked budding real estate magnate Donald Trump what must have seemed like an innocuous question at the time, “Would you like to be president of the United States?” Trump replied:

I really don’t believe I would, because I think it’s a very mean life. I would love, and I would dedicate my life to this country but I see it as being a mean life, and I also see it in somebody with strong views, and somebody with the kind of views that are maybe a little bit unpopular, which may be right, but may be unpopular, wouldn’t necessarily have a chance of getting elected against somebody with no great brain but a big smile. That’s a sad commentary for the political process.¹¹

They did not know it at the time, but both Theodore Roosevelt and Donald Trump ended up embarking on two of the more remarkable political careers in American history. A major key to their success was the ability early on to understand the importance of the press/media. Roosevelt and Trump’s pre-presidential media strategies shared three significant things in common: (1) They both actively pursued a relationship with the press. (2) Each saw the press as a way to promote and shape public opinion regarding their agenda. In Roosevelt’s case it was an essential tool to push his political policies forward. For Trump, it was establishing and selling the Trump brand. (3) And finally, each used the press to craft advantageous images of

¹⁰ Roosevelt to Charles Grenfill Washburn, New York, November 10, 1881, in *The Letters of Theodore Roosevelt*, ed. Elting E. Morison (Cambridge, Ma.: Harvard University Press, 1954, Vol. 1), 55.

¹¹ Donald Trump, interview by Ron Barrett, October 6, 1980, <https://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-stat/graphics/politics/trump-archive/docs/rona-barrett-1980-interview-of-donald-trump.pdf>.

themselves. Roosevelt, the reformer, the cowboy and the war hero. Trump, the populist billionaire.

This chapter explores in detail the roots of these men's bully pulpit blueprints. From Roosevelt's climb up the political ladder to Trump's transformation from businessman tycoon to reality TV star; along their journeys each man developed revolutionary tactics and techniques to deal with the media that became the foundation of their White House press strategies and methods.

“My first days in the Legislature were much like those of a boy in a strange school. My fellow-legislators and I eyed one another with mutual distrust,” Theodore Roosevelt reminisced about his start in the New York State Assembly.¹² “To a young man, life in the New York Legislature was always interesting and often entertaining. There was always a struggle of some kind on hand.”¹³ Although Roosevelt was the Assembly's youngest member, he wasted no time joining the struggle. Within 48 hours of being appointed to the Committee on Cities, Roosevelt introduced four bills aimed at everything from election reform to purifying the state's water supply.¹⁴ At a time when people saw politicians as corrupt and ineffective, Roosevelt's boundless energy and zeal for reform caught the immediate attention of many, including the press. As a result, he became an overnight media sensation and began capturing newspaper headlines: “Roosevelt's Brilliant Assault on Corruption,” “Theodore, the Cyclone Hero of the

¹² Theodore Roosevelt, *Theodore Roosevelt: An Autobiography* (New York: Scribner's Sons, 1925), 65.

¹³ *Ibid*, 89.

¹⁴ Morris, *The Rise of Theodore Roosevelt*, 169.

Robert C. Kennedy, “Reform Without Watershed,” *New York Times on the Web*, accessed January 10, 2018, <http://movies2.nytimes.com/learning/general/onthisday/harp/0419.html>

Assembly” and “Roosevelt on a Rampage: Whacking the Heads off Republican Office-Holders in This City.”¹⁵ Even though he was a political newcomer, Roosevelt quickly grasped the power of the press. TR discovered that by using the newspapers he could circumvent political parties and machines to get his message to the people and influence public opinion. To make this happen, Roosevelt made himself available to newspapermen, cultivating personal relationships with them, which was unique at that time. By doing so, he endeared himself to journalists; turning many of them into virtual policy parrots, repeating whatever TR said. In an age before publicists and spokesman, TR figured out how to use the press as his political megaphone.

Among those journalists captivated by Roosevelt was the *New York Times*' legislative correspondent George Spinney. A well-respected reporter, who one day rose to the ranks of *Times* publisher, Spinney took an instant liking to TR. “He was a good-hearted man,” Spinney commented, “He knew more about state politics at the end of that first session than ninety percent of them (other assemblymen) did.”¹⁶ He also understood that the dynamic Roosevelt made great copy. TR befriended Spinney; the two shared dinners, drinks, opinions and even a few rounds in the boxing ring.¹⁷ Roosevelt soon found himself the subject of favorable *Times*' headlines and editorials. The paper praised his “rugged independence” and declared “Whatever boldness the minority (Republicans) has exhibited in the Assembly is due to his (Roosevelt's)

¹⁵ Kennedy, “Reform without Bloodshed,” *New York Times on the Web*, accessed January 10, 2018.

¹⁶ Doris Kearns Goodwin, *The Bully Pulpit: Theodore Roosevelt, William Howard Taft, and the Golden Age of Journalism* (New York: Simon & Schuster Paperbacks, 2013), 70.

¹⁷ In *The Bully Pulpit*, Historian Doris Kearns Goodwin shares the story of Roosevelt challenging the taller and bigger Spinney to a few friendly rounds in the ring. Spinney threw in the towel after three rounds and Roosevelt was declared the winner.

influence, and whatever weakness and cowardice it has displayed is attributed to its unwillingness to follow where he led.”¹⁸

But Roosevelt’s friendship with Spinney did more than help earn him flattering exposure; it helped him create headlines. Such was the case during the Judge Theodore R. Westbrook scandal. A State Supreme Court Justice, Westbrook was rumored to be corrupt; he was under suspicion after making several questionable rulings in favor of financier Jay Gould. Many wondered if Westbrook and Gould were in cahoots. Roosevelt was determined to get to the bottom of it and turned to the *Times* for assistance. One day, he showed up at their office, where he picked the brains of reporters and editors who had been covering the case. He was also granted access to the *Times*’ archives, where he pored over mounds of articles and documents.¹⁹ Among Roosevelt’s finds was a Westbrook letter that had been leaked to the paper, but never published. In it, Westbrook brazenly wrote to Gould saying, "I am willing to go to the very verge of judicial discretion to protect your vast interests.”²⁰

With the smoking gun letter in hand, Roosevelt returned to the Assembly and delivered a blistering speech condemning Westbrook and calling for an immediate investigation. The next day the front page of the *Times* featured a detailed account of Roosevelt’s actions and characterized him as “full of grit and common sense.” A few pages later the paper heaped more praise on Roosevelt in a glowing editorial:

Mr. Roosevelt has a most refreshing habit of calling men and things by their right names, and in these days of judicial, ecclesiastical and journalistic subserviency to the robber barons of the Street it needs some little courage in any public man to characterize them

¹⁸ Edward Kohn, *Heir to the Empire City: New York and the Making of Theodore Roosevelt* (New York: Basic Books, 2014), 71.

¹⁹ The *New York Times* had been investigating and reporting on Westbrook for months. Roosevelt remembered reading a *Times* article about Westbrook, hence why he decided to visit in hopes of learning more.

²⁰ Paul Grondahl, *I Rose Like a Rocket* (New York: Free Press, 2004), 91.

and their acts in fitting terms. There is a splendid career open for a young man of position, character and independence like Mr. Roosevelt.²¹

Roosevelt's three years in the State Assembly laid the foundation for his future dealings with the press; as New York police commissioner he built upon that foundation and developed new tactics. In the 1890s, Manhattan was home to more than 30,000 prostitutes, more horse thefts than Texas, over 300 gambling joints and rampant police corruption.²² In charge of New York's police force was the Board of Police Commissioners, a four-man board that pretty much defined "ineffective." In May 1895, Roosevelt was sworn in as police commissioner and voted president of the Police Board. In typical TR style, on day one he attacked cleaning up the city and the police force like a pit bull going after raw meat. And just like he did in Albany, he quickly established beneficial relationships with key members of the press.

On his first day on the job, Roosevelt sprang up the stairs to police headquarters and yelled out, "Hello, Jake," and then motioned to the newspapermen to follow him. "Jake" was Jacob Riis. A crime reporter for the *New York Evening Sun*, Riis had gained Roosevelt's attention years before with his pioneering book *How the Other Half Lives*, a photojournalistic work that exposed the horrific conditions of New York's slums. TR admitted that he "knew nothing of police management."²³ So he called upon "the best American" he ever knew, Riis, for a crash course in the city's troubles.²⁴

Just hours into his tenure, Roosevelt dragged Riis and the *New York Evening Post's* Lincoln Steffens into his office for an intel session. "It was all breathless and sudden," Steffens

²¹ *New York Times*, April 6, 1882, 4.

²² Richard Zacks, *Island of Vice: Theodore Roosevelt's Doomed Quest to Clean Up Sin-Loving New York* (New York: Anchor Books, 2012), 3-4.

²³ *Ibid*, 71.

²⁴ Theodore Roosevelt, *Fear God and Take Your Own Part* (New York: George H. Doran, 1915), 142.

recalled in his autobiography. “Riis and I were soon describing the situation to him, telling him which higher officers to consult, which to ignore and punish... It was just as if we three were the police board.”²⁵ But a brainstorming session was just the tip of the iceberg for Roosevelt’s interactions with journalists. He took things to a whole new level with a “boots on the ground” strategy. Eager to learn what exactly was going on in New York, Roosevelt began accompanying Riis on midnight strolls through the city’s infamous east side. This on-the-job training served Roosevelt two purposes—the first was to see with his own eyes what was going on in the streets and to conduct surprise inspections of the police officers he now supervised.

Roosevelt found the walks “great fun” and an opportunity to “get a glimpse of the real life of the swarming millions.”²⁶ But the midnight rambles proved more than just educational field trips; they created enormous positive publicity for Roosevelt. While Riis had promised to keep their jaunts a secret, word soon leaked and the stories of their strolls filled the papers. Tales of Roosevelt catching unsuspecting officers sleeping, relaxing in bars or talking with prostitutes, helped build momentum behind his reforms.²⁷ As historian Edmund Morris pointed out, “A subhead in the *World* summed up the new commissioner’s policy in these words: Publicity, publicity, publicity. He seemed determined to expose to general scrutiny every aspect of his department’s work.”²⁸

Even when Roosevelt was on the end of bad press, he found a way to capitalize on it. In the fall of 1895, he was the subject of heavy criticism for enforcing the dry Sunday laws, which

²⁵ Lincoln Steffens, *The Autobiography of Lincoln Steffens* (New York: Harcourt, Brace and Company, 1931), 258.

²⁶ Roosevelt to Anna Roosevelt, Oyster Bay, June 16, 1895, in *The Letters of Theodore Roosevelt*, v.1, 463-4.

²⁷ “Mr. Roosevelt is a Roundsman,” *New York Tribune*, June 11, 189, 7.
<https://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn83030214/1895-06-11/ed-1/seq-7/>.

²⁸ Morris, *The Rise of Theodore Roosevelt*, 488.

prevented the sale of alcohol. The crackdown made Roosevelt public enemy #1 in the minds of many beer loving New Yorkers. To show their displeasure, the United Societies for Liberal Sunday Laws organized a protest parade down Lexington Avenue. And with tongues planted firmly in their cheeks, organizers invited Roosevelt. To their amazement, on parade day at 3:15 pm, the smiling police commissioner took a seat in the review stand. He joyfully watched as 30,000 marchers proceed by, many of them carrying anti-Roosevelt signs. TR found two of the signs so amusing that he asked to have them as souvenirs. As he went to leave, Roosevelt was heard saying, “It’s been great fun. I never had a better time in my life.”²⁹ According to some reports, he repeated this loudly several times, thus making sure that newspapermen heard him. The publicity stunt worked, TR’s good nature and charisma won over several protestors and journalists, leading to praise in Monday’s papers.

While a young Roosevelt used the press to help propel his political aspirations and agenda; a young Donald Trump learned how to manipulate the media to help achieve his goals of building real estate empire and becoming famous. Like Roosevelt, Trump developed his own bully pulpit blueprint; one drawn from his experiences in the business, sports and celebrity worlds. His approach consisted of four core strategies, that read like something out of an online Marketing 101 course: (1) Get the word out. (2) Do not hesitate to take risks and be controversial. (3) When attacked, fight back. (4) Straight talk and a touch of “truthful hyperbole,” is a powerful tool. The on-the-job media training he experienced unexpectedly helped him gain the White House in 2016.

²⁹ “Parade for Sunday Beer”, *The Sun*, September 26, 1895, Front page.
<https://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn83030272/1895-09-26/ed-1/seq-1/>.

In the early 1970s, Donald Trump was a promising property developer. His last name was known in New York real estate circles, thanks to his father Fred's success building middle class housing in Queens and Brooklyn. But the younger Trump had bigger goals than his father, setting his sights on making a mark on Manhattan's real estate market, something Fred never achieved.³⁰ Having yet to establish his own reputation, Donald turned to the press to help put his name on the radar. And Trump felt that there was no better person to drive his publicity machine than himself. "One way is to hire public relations people and pay them a lot of money to sell whatever you've got. But to me, that's like hiring outside consultants to study the market. It's never as good as doing it yourself," he stated.³¹ He quickly became a master of self-promotion, doing whatever it took to spread the word of Trump.

Trump's emergence on the New York business and social scenes coincided with the growth of the New York tabloids. In 1976, Rupert Murdoch bought the *New York Post* and gave it a sensationalistic tone. That same year, legendary gossip reporter Liz Smith's column began running in the *Daily News*. These papers were hungry for juicy stories and Trump was more than happy to feed them; encouraged in part by guidance from a new advisor. Trump had befriended notorious lawyer Roy Cohen; a man with a long history of working the media to advance his causes.³² Cohen became a mentor figure to Trump and urged him to use the gossip

³⁰ Donald Trump and Tony Schwartz, *Trump: The Art of the Deal* (New York: Ballantine Books, 1987), 93.

³¹ *Ibid.*, 56.

³² Roy Cohn burst on the scene in the 1950s; first as a prosecuting attorney in the Rosenberg's espionage trial, then as Senator Joseph McCarthy's right-hand man during the Red Scare. In the early 1970s, Donald Trump's company found itself the target of a government lawsuit alleging racially discriminating housing practices. When Trump asked Cohen for advice, the polarizing lawyer replied, "Tell them to go to hell and fight the thing in court." Trump liked Cohen's ruthless style and unwavering loyalty. Cohen preached principles that Trump would come to embrace: Always counter-attack. Never surrender. Not matter what happens always claim victory and never admit defeat.

pages to his advantage. Trump made sure to be seen at the trendiest hot spots, such as Le Club and Studio 54, and often fed or leaked stories to reporters about both his personal and business activities. During interviews he often told reporters, “This is off the record, but you can use it.”³³

Like Roosevelt, Trump learned to spot publicity opportunities where most people could not. Such as the Wollman Ice Rink project. Located in Central Park, the landmark rink had fallen into disrepair by the 1980s. Several attempts to renovate it were a massive fiasco, leading to millions of wasted taxpayer dollars. After almost six years of work, the project was still nowhere near completion. Reading about the debacle in the *New York Times*, Trump saw a great business and public relations opportunity. The brash young developer wrote a letter to New York City mayor Ed Koch offering to save him from one of his “greatest embarrassments” by taking over the project.³⁴ The mayor quickly declined Trump’s offer. But then Koch made a tactical error. He sent Trump’s letter to various news outlets; thinking they would find it as narcissistic and self-serving as he did. The press, however, quickly sided with Trump. A humiliated Koch was forced to back-pedal and award Trump the project.

Trump immediately got to work on the rink and the publicity. He held more than half a dozen press conference during its construction; the *New York Times* called some of them “mysterious news conferences” that were “held for no apparent reason.”³⁵ Even Trump admitted that those who criticized the number of press conferences may have been right, but he defended

³³ Marc Fisher, “How Liz Smith Invented Donald Trump,” *Washington Post*, November 13, 2017, https://www.washingtonpost.com/lifestyle/how-liz-smith-made-donald-trump-a-leading-character-on-the-new-york-stage/2017/11/13/1c94168e-c88f-11e7-aa9654417592cf72_story.html.

³⁴ Trump and Schwartz, *Trump: The Art of the Deal*, 303.

³⁵ Marc Fisher and Michael Kranish, *Trump Revealed: The Definitive Biography of the 45th President*. (New York: Scribner, 2016), 82.

William Geist, “Pssst, Here's a Secret: Trump Rebuilds Ice Rink,” *New York Times*, November 15, 1986, 35.

his actions arguing that “the press couldn’t get enough of the story. At least a dozen reporters showed up at every press conference.”³⁶ When it was all said and done, Trump finished the project two months early and under budget.³⁷ The rink’s completion led to an explosion of good publicity, helping establish Trump’s reputation as a maverick who could cut through government incompetence to get the job done.

The early 1980s found Trump’s business and celebrity growing, but he was far from satisfied. Trump had made a name for himself in the Big Apple, but he understood that if he was going to be a player on the national scene he had to take bold risks and not hesitate to be controversial. “If you are a little different, or a little outrageous, or if you do things that are bold or controversial, the press is going to write about you. I’ve always done things a little differently, I don’t mind controversy,” he proudly declared.³⁸ In Trump’s mind, there was no such thing as bad press.

In 1980, Trump experienced a media firestorm that found him the target of negative press. He had purchased the landmark Bonwit Teller building and begun demolition, clearing the way for the future home of Trump Tower. Controversy erupted over the stunning Art Deco sculptures and grillwork that laced the building’s exterior. Trump had originally promised to preserve the iconic items for the Metropolitan Museum of Art. But once he discovered that properly removing the pieces would delay construction, costing him hundreds of thousands of dollars, Trump ordered the jackhammers taken to them. In turn, the New York press took a

³⁶ Trump, *Trump: The Art of the Deal*, 317.

³⁷ Geist. “Pssst, Here’s a Secret: Trump Rebuilds Ice Rink,” 35.

³⁸ Trump, *Trump: The Art of the Deal*, 56.

hammer to Trump. Headlines screamed “Developer Scraps Bonwit Sculptures” and “Developer Smashes Panels.”³⁹

Despite being battered by the media, Trump saw an upside. The press attracted a lot of attention to Trump Tower that according to Trump contributed to an increase in apartment sales. He also learned a valuable lesson that shaped his dealings with the media going forward, “Good publicity is preferable to bad, but from a bottom-line perspective, bad publicity is sometimes better than no publicity at all. Controversy, in short, sells,” he admitted.⁴⁰

Three years later, Trump decided to roll the dice on a risky business venture, the United States Football League (USFL). What seemed, at the time, as an investment in sports franchise turned out to actually be another move by Trump to expand his brand. Trump claimed he had always wanted to own a football team and liked the challenge of going up against the “smug, self-satisfied monopoly” National Football League (NFL), which he believed was “vulnerable to an aggressive competitor.”⁴¹ However, skeptics argued that Trump’s motives were more about self-promotion than a passion for the pigskin. “He’s in love with himself. He’s always promoting Donald Trump... That’s why he wound up with the USFL. He bought a team because he wants people to know who he is,” claimed a New York developer.⁴²

Formed with the purpose of profiting off America’s apparent unquenchable thirst for football; the USFL faced several major hurdles, including playing in the spring, little television

³⁹ Diana Budds, “Hey Remember When Trump Destroyed Precious Art?,” *Fast Company*, August 8, 2017, <https://www.fastcompany.com/90137202/hey-remember-when-trump-destroyed-precious-art-history>, <https://timesmachine.nytimes.com/timesmachine/1980/06/06/120997165.pdf>

⁴⁰ Trump, *Trump: The Art of the Deal*, 176.

⁴¹ *Ibid*, 273.

⁴² Robert Boyle, “The USFL’s Trump Card,” *Sports Illustrated*, February 13, 1984, <https://www.si.com/vault/1984/02/13/619725/the-usfls-trump-card>.

money and finding talented players. In the fall of 1983, despite red flags that might scare off many investors, Trump bought the league's New Jersey franchise, the Generals. While the team might not have been turning a profit, just being involved with the USFL paid immediate dividends for Trump. Being a team owner gave Trump exposure that turned the New York sensation into a national celebrity. During his first six months of ownership, Trump's name appeared 161 times in newspapers across the country, which is more than it appeared the previous four years combined. Plus, he was interviewed during several of the league's television broadcasts and was the focus of a *Sports Illustrated* feature story, his first national magazine article.⁴³

While not involved in the team's day-to-day football operations, Trump made sure his name and face were attached to anything that could attract publicity. From press conferences with star players like Doug Flutie and Herschel Walker to holding cheerleader tryouts at Trump Tower; when there was a team event that attracted cameras Trump was front and center. The Generals' radio announcer Charlie Steiner summed it up, "In terms of the Generals, it was just a small part of his big basket of things. The USFL was born the same year Trump Tower opened. The Generals were just a part of expanding the brand. That was job one for him."⁴⁴

However, the upstart USFL committed football suicide, with many blaming Trump. He convinced his fellow owners to take the precarious steps of shifting to a fall schedule and suing the NFL in an anti-trust case, arguing that the NFL was a monopoly. Many football experts believed Trump's goal was not to save and grow the USFL, but to force the NFL into a merger

⁴³ Boyle, "The USFL's Trump Card."

⁴⁴ Drew Jubera, "How Donald Trump Destroyed A Football League: An Oral History of the Rise and Fall of the USFL," *Esquire*, January 13, 2016, <https://www.esquire.com/news-politics/a41135/donald-trump-usfl/>.

and end up owning an NFL team. While the USFL won the court case, it was awarded just \$3.76 in damages, leading to the league quickly collapsing.

While the USFL looks like a loss on Trump's record, he did not see it that way. His ownership brought him the national name recognition he craved. Years after the USFL folded, Trump looked back at the upside of the investment, "(Before the league) I was well known, but not really well known. After taxes, I would say I lost \$3 million. And I got a billion dollars of free publicity."⁴⁵

The Wollman Rink, Trump Tower and the USFL made Trump one of the hottest names in the business world. He rode that wave of popularity into countless free and paid publicity opportunities that enhanced his image as an ultra-successful businessman. He appeared in films (*Home Alone 2*, *Ghosts Can't Do It*), television shows (*The Fresh Prince of Bel-Air*, *The Nanny*), commercials (*Pizza Hut*, *McDonalds*), radio programs (*The Howard Stern Show*) and even landed a book deal.⁴⁶ *Trump: The Art of the Deal* was part autobiography, part propaganda, that unabashedly drove home the image of Trump as the ultimate dealmaker. In the "Greed is good" era of the 1980s, Trump's words connected with countless Gordon Gekko wannabes. As a result, the book spent 51 weeks on the *New York Times Best Seller* List. Manipulating the media for free exposure became a vital strategy that Trump used decades later to win the White House.

A chapter title in Trump's book *Never Give Up* says everything one needs to know about his attitude towards dealing with members of the media he felt treated him unfairly: "When

⁴⁵ Jeff Horwitz, "How a Young, Brash Donald Trump Took on the NFL," *PBS News Hour*. February 8, 2016, <https://www.pbs.org/newshour/politics/how-donald-trump-took-on-the-nfl>.

⁴⁶ Meena Jang and Natalie Stone, "Donald Trump: 18 Memorable Cameos, From 'Home Alone 2' to 'Sex and the City'," *Hollywood Reporter*, March 10, 2016, <https://www.hollywoodreporter.com/lists/donald-trump-18-memorable-cameos-873520/item/ghosts-can-t-do-donald-873562>.

You're Attacked, Bite Back.”⁴⁷ Donald Trump has never been one to turn the other cheek. Whenever he felt mistreated or disrespected his impulse was to “fight back hard.”⁴⁸ In recent years, newswoman Megyn Kelly, MSNBC host Joe Scarborough and CNN's Anderson Cooper were just a few journalists who found themselves in Trump's crosshairs. But media feuds are nothing new to Trump. Almost as soon as he started garnering press attention Trump found himself clashing with media members. While Trump is far from the first celebrity or politician to fight with the press; Trump's counter attacks took a distinctly personal tone; frequently condemning the author and not their facts or story angles. Often, Trump did not rely on publicists or lawyers to fight his battles; he did the grunt work himself. Reporters who went to interview Trump often found him armed with clippings of previous “negative” articles they had written about him. He became infamous for sending journalists handwritten notes on articles they had published about him.⁴⁹

In 1997, *New Yorker* staff writer Mark Singer was assigned the task of writing a profile on Trump. The less than flattering piece climaxed with Singer stating that Trump “had aspired to and achieved the ultimate luxury, an existence unmolested by the rumbling of a soul.”⁵⁰ Needless to say, Trump was not happy. When the article became part of a book, Trump sent a letter to the *New York Times* calling Singer a “loser” and stating, “he was not born with

⁴⁷ Donald Trump and Meredith McIver, *Trump Never Give up: How I Turned My Biggest Challenges into Success*, (Hoboken: Wiley, 2013), Chapter 38.

⁴⁸ Trump and Schwartz, *Trump: The Art of the Deal*, 59.

⁴⁹ Rachele Combs, “Wanna Know What Donald Trump is Really Thinking? Read Maggie Haberman,” *Elle*, July 2017, <https://www.elle.com/culture/career-politics/a45485/maggie-haberman-new-york-times-trump-profile/>.

Mattea Kramer, “The Donald Trump Inside Your Head,” October 2, 2017, *The Nation*, <https://www.thenation.com/article/the-donald-trump-inside-your-own-head/>

⁵⁰ Marc Singer, “Trump Solo,” *The New Yorker*, May 19, 1997. <https://www.newyorker.com/magazine/1997/05/19/trump-solo>.

great writing ability.”⁵¹ Thanks to the publicity created by Trump, the book saw an increase in sales. In a satirical gesture, Singer sent Trump a thank you card and gift, a check for \$37.82. A few days later, Trump sent the card back with a handwritten note, all in caps—MARK_YOU ARE A TOTAL LOSER_AND YOUR BOOK (AND YOUR WRITINGS) SUCK! BEST WISHES DONALD P.S. AND I HEAR IT IS SELLING BADLY.⁵²

After Gail Collins wrote a *New York Times* piece critical of Trump’s role in the birther movement, Trump penned a letter to the paper questioning her “storytelling ability and word usage.” But Trump did offer a sarcastic compliment when he stated that he had great respect for Collins since “she has survived so long with so little talent.”⁵³

Some have called Donald Trump thin-skinned, and few things get under his skin more than people questioning his financial status. When Tim O’Brien was writing his 2005 book, *TrumpNation*, he researched Trump’s net worth. Based on documents and expert interviews, O’Brien estimated it between \$150 and \$250 million. A furious Trump countered that the actual figure was between five and six billion dollars. Trump spent the better part of two years suing O’Brien. He claimed that the reporter’s low estimate cost him billions in business. A judge eventually dismissed the case. Later Trump admitted he had greater motives than establishing the truth or being awarded money for damages, “I did it to make his (O’Brien’s) life miserable, which I’m happy about.”⁵⁴

⁵¹ Donald Trump, “Letter to Editor” *New York Times*, September 11, 1997.

<https://www.nytimes.com/2005/09/11/opinion/character-studies-815985.html>.

⁵² Marc Singer, “Donald Trump Was Not Happy With His ’97 New Yorker Profile,” accessed April 1, 2018, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZKXOep4Mv8c/>.

⁵³ Donald Trump, “Donald Trump Responds,” *New York Times*, April 8, 2011, <https://www.nytimes.com/2011/04/08/opinion/1web08trump.html>.

⁵⁴ David Cay Johnston, *The Making of Donald Trump* (London: Melville House, 2017.) 149.

Trump's longest running media battle has been with Graydon Carter. When the satirical *Spy* magazine began targeting Trump in the mid-80s, famously referring to him as "short fingered vulgarian," it began a decades long feud with its co-founder Carter. For years, Trump sent Carter pictures of his hands with handwritten notes such as "See, not so short."⁵⁵ The advent of Twitter gave Trump a new counter-attack tool. Over the years he sent Carter 42 negative tweets. Carter had them printed out, framed and hung on his office wall.⁵⁶

With or without the help of publicists or focus groups, potential presidential candidates have long been aware of the importance of their image. Matthew Brady's photos of candidate Abraham Lincoln, with a high collar to hide his unattractive long neck, made him look presidential.⁵⁷ John F. Kennedy exploited the PT 109 incident to define himself as a war hero. Playing sax on *The Arsenio Hall Show* helped Bill Clinton bolster his image as the young cool baby boomer. Of course, sometimes these moves backfire and tank; such was the case with Michael Dukakis' failed attempt to harden his image by riding in M1 Abrams tank. Theodore Roosevelt and Donald Trump were well aware of the value of crafting their image long before they entered the White House.

Early in his career, Roosevelt began transcending the label politician and became a political celebrity. In an age before publicists and media handlers, Roosevelt was crafting a

⁵⁵ David Folkenflik, "Decades Later, 'Spy' Magazine Founders Continue to Torment Trump," *NPR*, March 7, 2016, <https://www.npr.org/2016/03/07/469209254/decades-later-spy-magazine-founders-continue-to-torment-trump>.

⁵⁶ Michael Grynbaum, "Grayson Carter to End 25-Year Run as Vanity Fair's Editor," *New York Times*, September 7, 2017, https://www.nytimes.com/2017/09/07/business/media/graydon-carter-vanity-fair.html?_r=0.

⁵⁷ What would Abraham Lincoln's presidency have been like if he lived in a time of publicists and handlers? Comedian Bob Newhart's classic "Lincoln versus Madison Avenue" routine offers a hysterical glimpse of what could have been. Newhart plays Lincoln's press agent advising him over the phone, just before his Gettysburg Address. The bit is a must listen for presidential historians.

public persona for himself. One could point to his time spent in the Badlands of North Dakota as the dawn of Roosevelt the image maker. After the deaths of his wife and mother on the same day, Roosevelt retreated to the Badlands in search of escape and recovery. But before becoming a cowboy, Roosevelt decided to dress the part. Just before heading west, TR posed for a series of photographs, outfitted like a cowboy right out of central casting. The first set of pictures found Roosevelt in a tailored fringed buckskin jacket, chaps, silver dagger, hunting cap and hunting rifle. Roosevelt boasted to his sister, “I now look like a regular cowboy dandy, with all my equipments finished in the most expensive style.”⁵⁸ These photos helped create the impression of TR the cowboy. How aware was he of his image? Roosevelt did not wear his glasses in these photos, something he rarely did because of his extreme myopia.⁵⁹

His amateurish wardrobe, eastern vocabulary and lack of ranching experience had people on both sides of the Mississippi mocking him. But over the course of time, TR earned the respect of his fellow ranchers and the press. Just a few years earlier, his squeaky voice and dapper suits had colleagues in the New York Assembly calling him “Weakling,” “Jane-Dandy” and “Punkin-Lily.”⁶⁰ But thirteen hours a day in the saddle had turned the Easterner into a hardened cowboy and the press could not get enough. One paper shouted, “he is now brown as a berry and has increased 30 pounds in weight” and his high-pitched voice was now “hearty and strong enough to drive oxygen.”⁶¹ Reviews of Roosevelt’s western themed writings, such as

⁵⁸ Theodore Roosevelt to Anna Roosevelt, August 12, 1884, Theodore Roosevelt Digital Library, Dickinson State University

<https://www.theodorerooseveltcenter.org/Research/Digital-Library/Record?libID=o279998>.

⁵⁹ Milton Bruce Shields and Louis Victor Priebe, “Theodore Roosevelt’s Vision,” *Theodore Roosevelt Association Journal* (Fall 2011, no. 4) 7.

⁶⁰ Joshua Polster, *Stage of Engagement: U.S. Theatre and Performance 1849-1949* (New York: Routledge Taylor & Francis Group, 2016), 19.

⁶¹ Sarah Watt, *Rough Rider in the White House: Theodore Roosevelt and the Politics of Desire* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2006), 130.

Hunting Trips of a Ranchman and *The Wilderness Hunter*, were universally positive and only enhanced his reputation as a genuine cowboy.⁶²

The publicity Roosevelt received as police commissioner enhanced the reformer image that was created during his time in the Assembly; that of renegade crusader, not afraid to patrol the mean streets of New York or take on the political establishment. Helping cement this image were TR's press connections. Jacob Riis raved in a glowing *The Outlook* magazine piece, "It is a long time since New York policemen has been brought into contact with a gentleman so intent upon doing his work and making others do theirs... He is the born enemy of the machine and the spoilsman... He is altogether a fine representative of the best type of the contemporary American."⁶³ Another paper, the *World*, proclaimed "We have a real Police Commissioner. His name is Theodore Roosevelt. His teeth are big and white, his eyes are small... His heart is full of reform."⁶⁴

Roosevelt the cowboy had become Roosevelt the reformer. But his image was about to undergo another metamorphosis. World events combined with his savvy press skills were about to turn him into a national hero. In April 1898, the Spanish-American war commenced. This conflict became America's coming out party on the world stage and there was no way Roosevelt was going to miss out. The ink was barely dry on President McKinley's declaration of war when Roosevelt resigned his post as Assistant Secretary of the Navy and formed a unit that became known as the Rough Riders—a volunteer cavalry regiment comprised of all walks of life, everyone from ranchers to miners to Ivy Leaguers, led in part by the war hungry Roosevelt.⁶⁵

⁶² Ibid, 130.

⁶³ Jacob Riis, "A Representative American," *The Outlook*, June 22, 1895, 1086.

⁶⁴ H.W. Brands, *TR: The Last Romantic* (New York: Basic Books, 1997), 280.

⁶⁵ It would not an exaggeration to say that Roosevelt had an appetite for war; some historians have even called him a war lover. Though he worshiped his father, the younger Roosevelt was

The creation of the Rough Riders provided journalists a gold mine of stories. And as he had done in Albany and New York City, Roosevelt gave the press unprecedented access. When journalists arrived at the San Antonio camp where the Rough Riders were training they were greeted with a sign stating “All Civilians, Except Reporters, Prohibited from Camp.”⁶⁶ Even before a single shot was fired, Roosevelt offered his war story to Robert Bridges, the editor of *Scribner’s*. The two agreed on a six-installment magazine release about TR’s war experience; which eventually turned into a book that Roosevelt confidentially predicted to become a “permanent historical work.”⁶⁷

The war only heightened Roosevelt’s awareness to possible publicity opportunities. While his regiment was squeezing aboard the already packed SS *Yucatan*, headed to Cuba, Roosevelt spotted two men standing on the dock next to a motion picture camera. When TR inquired what they were up to one of the men responded, “We are the Vitagraph Company, Colonel Roosevelt, and we are going to Cuba to take moving pictures of the war.”⁶⁸ Even though by some accounts the ship was already filled to double her capacity, Roosevelt instructed the men to board.⁶⁹ It proved to be a wise PR move, as newsreels provided another avenue to circulate Roosevelt’s heroics.⁷⁰

haunted by the fact that Theodore Sr. hired a substitute fighter in the Civil War. He craved an opportunity to prove himself on the battlefield. He also worried that Americans were getting soft. In a speech, TR once stated, “all the great masterful races have been fighting races. And the minute that a race loses its hard fighting virtues, it has lost its proud right to stand as the equal of the best.”

⁶⁶ David Greenberg, *Republic of Spin: An Inside History of The American Presidency* (New York: W.W Norton & Company, 2016), 14.

⁶⁷ Roosevelt to Robert Bridges, San Antonio, May 21, 1898, in *The Letters of Theodore Roosevelt*, v.2, 832.

⁶⁸ Morris, *The Rise of Theodore Roosevelt*, 629.

⁶⁹ *Ibid*, 629.

⁷⁰ Films shorts such as *Roosevelt’s Rough Riders at Drill* and *Col. Roosevelt and Officers of his Staff* were immensely popular with audiences.

Once in Cuba, Roosevelt took a page from his press playbook, granting extraordinary access to select members of the press. He embedded some of the most read and influential journalists with his troops. Long before modern-day reporters such as David Bloom and Bob Woodruff crossed Iraqi sand with America troops, the *Journal's* Edward Marshall and the *World's* Stephen Crane found themselves marching alongside the Rough Riders. However, Crane was not a favorite of TR, so he was relegated to the back of the pack. Roosevelt's preferred reporters not only received the prime locations, they received inside information as well. Reporter Burr McIntosh was not party of Roosevelt's inner circle. After the Battle of Las Guasimas, Burr wrote "The names of several men were in the newspapers before the names of several others, and a number of newspaper men, who were sure to write things in the proper spirit, were given the necessary 'tip.'"⁷¹

Unquestionably, the best spot belonged to *New York Herald/Scribner's* reporter Richard Harding Davis. Davis was one of the most celebrated journalists of the times. Years earlier, he had earned TR's trust by accompanying him on one of his midnight rambles as police commissioner. Davis' account of the Rough Riders assault on Kettle Hill ran in newspapers around the country and helped generate the image of Roosevelt "the war hero." "No man who saw Roosevelt take that ride expected he would finish alive," Davis gushed, "Charging the rifle-pits at a gallop and quite alone made you feel that you would like to cheer."⁷²

The media attention he received because of the Spanish-American War elevated Roosevelt into a national figure. In 1898, looking to capitalize on his fame, New York Republicans nominated him for governor. Roosevelt won the election, confirming to him the

⁷¹ Burr McIntosh, *The Little I Saw of Cuba* (New York: F. Tennyson Neely, 1899), 89-90.

⁷² Greenberg, *Republic of Spin*, 15.

power of the press. In less than five years, he had gone from police commissioner to leader of biggest state in the union. TR's skillful use of the media put him on the political map and got him elected, as governor he used that media savvy to get things done.

Roosevelt realized that if he was going to get his reform agenda instituted he had to battle his own party bosses. He accepted the fact that he did not have the "training nor the capacity" to defeat the political machine on his own. So he decided to go "over the heads of the men holding public office and of the men in control of organizations, and appealing directly to the people behind them."⁷³ To reach those people, Roosevelt again turned to the press. As governor, he augmented the lessons learned as an assemblyman and police commissioner, becoming even more proactive in dealing with the media. He did not wait to react to journalists and their work, he increased his availability and made journalists work for him. Twice a day in his second-floor office, Roosevelt met with reporters for a quick Q&A session that he used to spout his message. While today, a daily press conference does not seem revolutionary, but at the time this was unheard of access. Morris painted a colorful picture of a comfortable and secure Roosevelt holding court:

Relaxed as a child, he would perch on the edge of his huge desk, often with a leg tucked under him, and pour forth confidences, anecdotes, jokes, and legislative gossip. When required to make a formal statement, he spoke with deliberate precision, "punctuating" every phrase with his own dentifical sound effects; the performance was rather like that of an Edison cylinder played at slow speed and maximum volume.⁷⁴

Morris' depiction may give the appearance of an easygoing Roosevelt presiding over an informal gathering. But make no mistake of it, these press conferences were a calculated political act. Roosevelt used the sessions to float ideas, leak information, promote his policies

⁷³ Roosevelt, *Theodore Roosevelt: An Autobiography*, 289.

⁷⁴ Morris, *The Rise of Theodore Roosevelt*, 693.

and attack opponents. Though he served only two years in office; his method of dealing with the press was clearly rooted in his previous experiences and foreshadowed what was to come during his time in the White House.

As a young boy, Theodore Roosevelt used exercise to transform himself from sickly child to the poster boy for the strenuous life. As an adult, TR used the media to transform his image from “Jane-Dandy” assemblyman to cowboy and war hero. As the 21st century began, Donald Trump was also looking to reboot his image. The nineties had not been kind to him, professionally or personally. A highly publicized divorce and several bankruptcies threatened his financial empire and his reputation as the golden boy businessman. Two decades earlier he had written, “I play to people’s fantasies. People may not always think big themselves, but they can still get very excited by those who do. That’s why a little hyperbole never hurts. People want to believe that something is the biggest and the greatest and the most spectacular. I call it truthful hyperbole. It’s an innocent form of exaggeration—and a very effective form of promotion.”⁷⁵ Trump needed an opportunity to play to people’s fantasies and reintroduce himself to the American public, a chance that came with *The Apprentice*.

In the spring of 2002, the blockbuster television show *Survivor* was shooting its season finale at Trump’s Wollman Ice Rink. During filming, the show’s executive producer Mark Burnett introduced himself to the businessman. A mutual admiration club was formed; Burnett credited reading *The Art of the Deal* as having a profound impact on him and referred to Trump as “his soulmate.” While Trump, a fan of the show, called Burnett “a great visionary.”⁷⁶ Just a

⁷⁵ Trump and Schwartz, *Trump: The Art of the Deal*, 58.

⁷⁶ Abby Ellin, “Business; ‘Survivor’ Meets Millionaire, and a Show Is Born” *New York Times*, October 19, 2003, <https://www.nytimes.com/2003/10/19/business/business-survivor-meets-millionaire-and-a-show-is-born.html>.

few weeks later at Trump Tower, Burnett pitched Trump the concept for a realty competition show set not on a deserted island, but in a boardroom.

Burnett and Trump's timing could not have been better. President of NBC Entertainment Jeff Zucker was desperately seeking replacements for the network's "Must See TV" line-up; hit shows like *Friends* and *Frazier* were ending their runs. Greenlighting the project was a no-brainer for Zucker; Burnett was one of the hottest names in the industry and publicity followed Trump wherever he went. The show became an instant hit, finishing 2004 as the seventh highest-rated show on television, averaging nearly 21 million viewers per week.⁷⁷

How exactly did what was supposed to be just a one-season spot on a reality television show help catapult Donald Trump to the White House? First, it resuscitated his image. *The Apprentice* promoted Trump as the consummate dealmaker and businessman. In the process, Trump's reputation and brand name were reenergized. While it was classified as reality television, the show was a virtual commercial for all things Trump—the hotels, casinos, properties and lifestyle. "My jet's going to be in every episode," he said before the show began to air. "The Taj is going to be featured. Even if it doesn't get ratings, it's still going to be great for my brand."⁷⁸ Many Americans saw Trump's life and belongings as proof that he was successful and admired that, in their eyes, he had done it on his own terms. Mark Burnett had done for Trump what newspapermen like Richard Harding Davis had done for Roosevelt, help rebrand his image.

⁷⁷ Steve Johnson. "Donald Trump a 'Reality Star Genius'? TV Ratings Tell Different Story" *Chicago Tribune*, February 2, 2016, <http://www.chicagotribune.com/entertainment/tv/ct-donald-trump-not-a-reality-star-genius-20160201-column.html>.

⁷⁸ Fisher and Kranish, *Trump Revealed: The Definitive Biography of the 45th President*, 195.

What impact did the show have on Trump's political stature? Trump had dipped his toes in the political waters several times over the decades, even teasing presidential runs. Though he was not an official candidate, a 2011 survey of Republican primary voters found Trump tied for second behind Mitt Romney among potential presidential candidates.⁷⁹ Apparently, the impact did not fade. A poll conducted during the 2016 presidential campaign showed Trump's approval rating among *Apprentice* viewers was almost double that of nonviewers.⁸⁰

The show also gave Trump a vehicle to sharpen and show-off his media skills. He rarely used cue cards or a teleprompter; instead preferring to improvise. In fact, his famed "You're fired" line was an adlib. Producers had written softer lines, but Trump decided to improvise.⁸¹ "You're fired" was short, to the point, and cold. The popularity of the line reinforced to Trump the power of a blunt catch phrase, a tool he also employed throughout his presidential campaign ("Make America Great Again", "Crooked Hillary," "Fake News").

Ironically, before landing in the Oval Office, Trump had another opportunity to refine his media skills and solidify his image, this time in the squared circle. In 2007, Trump took part in an on-camera scripted feud with World Wrestling Entertainment (WWE) President Vince McMahon. The storyline became known as the "Battle of the Billionaires." McMahon was cast as the stereotypical evil rich boss, who looked down on the average Joe. Meanwhile, Trump was portrayed as the populist billionaire. He was rich, but he was anti-establishment rich, the people's billionaire. During one of his televised wrestling appearances Trump had thousands of

⁷⁹ Ibid, 275.

⁸⁰ David Axelrod, "Reality TV bites: 'The Apprentice' effect aids Trump," CNN, March 9, 2016, <https://www.cnn.com/2015/09/27/opinions/axelrod-trump-the-apprentice/index.html>.

⁸¹ Abby Ellin, "Business; 'Survivor' Meets Millionaire, and a Show Is Born."

dollars dropped from the ceiling into the arms of adoring fans.⁸² (Of course, in actuality the money was supplied by the WWE.)

A WWE executive during this time, Bruce Prichard credited Trump with studying the crowd. Before he went out to the ring, Trump was glued to the backstage monitors examining the audience. “He was better than anyone at reading the room. He loved to take the temperature of the room, and he loved the instantaneous feedback,” Prichard recalled. While writers often gave him lines, Trump was never afraid to go off script and adlib. His no-filter attitude was a hit with the WWE’s blue-collar fan base. “People who go to wrestling matches don’t tend to like people who make more money in one day than they make in their lifetimes,” stated wrestling fan Michael Axelrod. “But he didn’t take shit from anyone and made his own rules, and people seem to like that in their wrestling characters.”⁸³

The skills Trump honed in the squared circle were on full display during his campaign rallies. Long-time professional wrestling announcer Jim Ross saw an obvious connection between Trump whipping his rally crowds into a frenzy and what WWE stars do in the ring. “Vintage WWE... Watch the mannerisms. Walk to the mic, and the crowd quiets. Walk away, and the decibel level rises. Step back to the podium, step away, all the while pumping a throng that is ready to hang on every word and thought,” Ross analyzed.⁸⁴

⁸² Josh Dawsey, “Trump’s obsession with WrestleMania and Fake Drama,” Politico, January 16, 2016, <https://www.politico.com/story/2017/01/trump-wrestlemania-fake-233615>.

⁸³ Ibid.

⁸⁴ Chauncey Devega, “How Trump learned to be a Heel Through Wrestling,” *Newsweek*, April 17, 2016, <http://www.newsweek.com/user/21460>.

In 2013, Trump was inducted into the WWE Hall of Fame. During his speech presenting Trump for enshrinement, Vince McMahon wryly uttered, "When you think about it, second only to me, Donald might very well be a great president of the United States."⁸⁵

An examination of the early stages of Theodore Roosevelt and Donald Trump's careers reveal that these two men were media mavericks, ahead of their times in aggressively using unconventional strategies and tactics to promote their agendas. Roosevelt was such a pioneer that he was managing the media before the word "media" was even a familiar part of the American lexicon.

They carefully crafted favorable public images that struck a chord with Americans. This allowed them to shed the shadow of their privileged upbringings and recast themselves as self-made men of the people, a tactic that helped them win election. Roosevelt the cowboy and war hero, Trump the populist billionaire.

Roosevelt's modus operandi was to cultivate personal connections, thus endearing himself to journalists. Trump was out to make headlines and profit, not friends. His win-at-all-costs attitude meant that he was not afraid to take chances or clash with the mainstream media.

In retrospect, it appears that from an early age Theodore Roosevelt was on a path to the White House. The same, however, cannot be said of Donald Trump. As the next chapter will

⁸⁵Aaron Oster, "Donald Trump and WWE: How the Road to the White House Began at 'WrestleMania'," *Rolling Stone*, January 1, 2016, <https://www.rollingstone.com/politics/politics-news/donald-trump-and-wwe-how-the-road-to-the-white-house-began-at-wrestlemania-35697/>.

Trump has a long history with Vince McMahon and the WWE. Twice the Trump Plaza in Atlantic City hosted the WWE's biggest yearly event, *WrestleMania*. After winning the Presidency, Trump appointed Linda McMahon, Vince's wife and a former WWE executive, Administrator of the Small Business Administration.

reveal, the bully pulpit blueprints they developed during their pre-presidencies can be directly linked to them capturing the White House.

Chapter 2: The Road to the White House

It was the most important election of his life. In Theodore Roosevelt's mind, the 1904 election was an opportunity to erase the stigma of his "accidental" presidency and validate his right to the office. Even though he was the headliner on the Republican ticket, Roosevelt found himself handcuffed in the role of dignified bystander. Political protocol of the day called for the president to stay off the campaign trail. To no surprise, this drove the always energetic TR insane. He agonized to his son Kermit that he wished he could "be on the stump" and face his Democratic opponent, Judge Alton Parker, whom he "could cut to ribbons" if given the chance.⁸⁶ He complained to Senator Henry Cabot Lodge that "there is little active" part for him in the campaign.⁸⁷ Lodge understood how hard it was for Roosevelt "to sit by and say nothing" and sympathized that he was "the only man in the country who cannot take part in the campaign for the presidency."⁸⁸

A century transformed the presidential campaign in ways political pundits could never have imagined in 1904. In 2016, 11,000 strong gathered at Buffalo's First Niagara Center. Rock-n-roll music blared through the sound system and a professional football coach introduced the Republican candidate; a candidate who had never held a political office before. Like a musician playing to the crowd, Donald Trump performed his greatest hits—"Lyn' Ted," "We

⁸⁶ Roosevelt to Kermit Roosevelt, October 26, 1904, Theodore Roosevelt Digital Library, Dickinson State University, <https://www.theodorerooseveltcenter.org/Research/Digital-Library/Record?libID=o280507>.

⁸⁷ Roosevelt to Henry Cabot Lodge, Washington, June 25, 1900, in *Selections from the Correspondence of Theodore Roosevelt and Henry Cabot Lodge*, (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1925, v. 2), 84.

⁸⁸ Lodge to Theodore Roosevelt, Nahant, June 29, 1900 in *Selections from the Correspondence of Theodore Roosevelt and Henry Cabot Lodge*, v.2., 86.

will build a wall,” “Rigged election system,” and “Crooked Hillary.”⁸⁹ The zealous crowd embraced every word; cheering, chanting and holding up signs imploring Trump to “Make America Great Again.”⁹⁰ Meanwhile, outside protestors carried signs pleading “No to Fascist Trump” and “Dump Trump.”⁹¹

This chapter explores how these two candidates used their bully pulpits during their respective presidential campaigns. While separated by over 100 years, and by what seems as light years in technology, the election strategies of Roosevelt and Trump had several details in common. Firstly, the candidates were both unquestionably the leaders of their campaigns and unafraid to ignore the advice of advisors when it came to media management. Both men understood the power of their celebrity. They were bigger than their parties or any political issue and used that to help get elected. Roosevelt invented the role of celebrity-in-chief, Trump took it to new heights. Their celebrity and dynamic personalities attracted media attention that was unmatched during their times. They also relied on groundbreaking techniques to get their message out. Roosevelt tapped into the power of the press like no nominee before, while Trump utilized Twitter, social media and free media unlike any previous candidate. Lastly, each depended on influential media moguls to help support their campaigns.

But the two men also had very clear differences on the campaign trail, especially the way they treated the media. As he had done before, Roosevelt looked to cultivate a relationship with the press. He had respect for journalists and saw them as an effective instrument to help disseminate his message. Conversely, Trump tried to manipulate the media and came to see

⁸⁹ Sara Meehan and Denise Jewell Gee, “Trump: “We Love this State. And We Love New York Values,”” *The Buffalo News*, April 18, 2016, <http://buffalonews.com/2016/04/18/line-trump-supporters-forms-early-outside-arena-2/>.

⁹⁰ Ibid.

⁹¹ Ibid.

them as the enemy; often referring to them as “dishonest” and “scum.”⁹² He demonized and discredit the media as a way to deflect criticism and energize his base.

Theodore Roosevelt’s first real hardcore taste of a presidential campaign came in 1900. Though he was the second spot on the Republican ticket, TR was the engine that drove the campaign. After accepting the nomination for vice president, party leaders looked to Roosevelt to be “the central figure of the active campaign” and appear everywhere as a “champion of the President,” as political decorum called for President McKinley not to actively campaign.⁹³ Roosevelt wrote Senator Mark Hanna, McKinley’s campaign manager, “I am as strong as a bull moose, and you can use me to the limit.”⁹⁴ He lived up to those words. Over the last four months of the campaign, he visited 23 states, made 480 stops, delivered more than 670 speeches and traveled over 21,000 miles.⁹⁵ Meanwhile, his running mate, President William McKinley spent a relatively relaxing summer between the White House and his front porch in Ohio.

A campaign visit to Buffalo was emblematic of Roosevelt’s stumping style. The *Buffalo Evening News* headline spoke volumes, “Teddy Receives the Greatest Ovation Ever Given a Candidate in Buffalo. Vast Crowds Listen to His Splendid Addresses.” The Republican vice-presidential candidate’s appearance in the Queen City drew enthusiastic crowds estimated at over 120,000. Even though it was already his seventh stop of the day; Roosevelt’s time was a

⁹² Jeremy Diamon, “Trump Launches all-out attack on the press,” CNN, June 1, 2016, <https://www.cnn.com/2016/05/31/politics/donald-trump-veterans-announcement/index.html>

⁹³ Lodge to Theodore Roosevelt, June 29, 1900, in *Selections from the Correspondence of Theodore Roosevelt and Henry Cabot Lodge*, v.1, 467-468.

⁹⁴ Roosevelt to Marcus Hanna, Oyster Bay, June 27, 1900, in *The Letters of Theodore Roosevelt*. v.3, 1342-1343.

⁹⁵ John M. Hilpert, *American Cyclone* (Jackson: University Press of Mississippi, 2015), 265 and 291.

whirlwind of activity as he toured the grounds of the future Pan American Exposition, attended three rallies and delivered five speeches.⁹⁶

The 1900 campaign played to Roosevelt's strengths, showcasing his unlimited supply of energy, charisma and contagious enthusiasm. It also capitalized on his newfound stardom. The image crafted during the Spanish-American war paid huge dividends during the campaign. As he crisscrossed the country, many in the huge crowds turned out to see the Rough Rider, not the candidate. Roosevelt noticed that at almost every stop he was greeted by "bands of men and boys on horseback wearing rough rider uniforms."⁹⁷ Roosevelt marked a turning point in presidential elections; his charismatic larger-than-life character and media savvy combined to transform elections from party or issue driven to a political popularity contest. His personality, his antics and even his family captivated the media and the nation. Though people did not know it at the time, Roosevelt dominated the next four presidential elections.

As they did earlier in Roosevelt's career, newspapermen did not hesitate to hitch their wagons to his rising star. A band of 23 reporters, including correspondents from the Associate Press and the major New York and Chicago newspapers, covered TR's every move in 1900. They became known as "Camp #2 of the Roosevelt's Rough Writers."⁹⁸ Relying on the successful methodology he had developed, Roosevelt went the extra mile to create personal bonds with these reporters.

⁹⁶ "Cheering Hosts Greet and Shout for Gov. Roosevelt," *Buffalo Evening News*, November 1, 1900, Front page.

⁹⁷ Theodore Roosevelt to Kermit Roosevelt, September 9, 1904, Theodore Roosevelt Digital Library, Dickinson State University, <http://www.theodorerooseveltcenter.org/Research/Digital-Library/Record?libID=o281394>.

⁹⁸ "Roosevelted," *The Yankton Weekly Gazette*, September 12, 1900, Front Page.

Even Roosevelt's enemies within the Republican Party gave him proper credit for being the driving force behind the victory; the McKinley-Roosevelt ticket captured 292 electoral votes to opponent William Jennings Bryan's 155. Roosevelt traveled more miles and delivered more speeches than any vice presidential candidate before, earning the praise of his toughest critics, including Senator Thomas Platt. Platt declared, "Is it not plain that the candidate for Vice-President did not make Roosevelt, but that Roosevelt made the candidate for Vice-President the leading and central figure in one of the most important and remarkable campaigns since the foundation of the Republic?"⁹⁹

In 1904, Roosevelt sought the highest office in the land. While tradition called for him not to actively campaign; Roosevelt was a force behind the scenes, adding his two cents to even the smallest campaign detail. Not having to be on the road and with Congress in recess left him plenty of free time to put his stamp on the campaign. He helped write speeches, directed campaign workers on the scripting of pamphlets, and inundated Chairman of the Republican Party National Committee George Cortelyou and other party operatives with advice. During the last month of the campaign he bombarded Cortelyou with three letters a day full of guidance, instruction and opinions.¹⁰⁰

Once again, a group of loyal newspapermen played a key role in his campaign. Roosevelt did not just look for these men to spread his message; but also turned to them for information and advice. They were more than just correspondents and more than just friends. They were devoted comrades in the Roosevelt crusade.

⁹⁹ Thomas Collier Platt and Louis J. Lang, *The Autobiography of Thomas Collier Platt* (New York: B.W. Dodge & Co., 1910), 397.

¹⁰⁰ Kathleen Dalton, *Theodore Roosevelt: A Strenuous Life* (New York: Alfred A Knopf, 2002) 265.

One such Roosevelt enthusiast was William Allan White, the editor of the influential Republican Kansas paper the *Emporia Gazette*. Upon meeting Roosevelt, White was instantly mesmerized by him:

I had never known such a man as he, and never shall again. He overcame me...he poured into my heart with such vision, such ideas, such hopes, such new attitude toward life and patriotism and the meaning of things, as I had never dreamed men had...After that I was his man.¹⁰¹

While it is impossible to imagine a journalist today writing such glowing praise for a candidate, White was one of many newsmen drawn into the “cult of Roosevelt.” White earned a trusted spot in Roosevelt’s inner circle: he was even among the small group who dined with Roosevelt on his first night in Washington after becoming president. During his presidency, Roosevelt often turned to White for the political pulse of the Midwest. The 1904 campaign provided White the opportunity to turn his Republican paper into a Roosevelt paper. He wrote countless articles and editorials endorsing the president’s candidacy. He also offered advice and shared any political information or gossip he heard with Roosevelt. White was even willing to go as far as to take a side job to help the cause. The *Chicago Tribune* offered him \$8,000 to write a series of articles. “I don’t care for the work except for one contingency; that I may be able to help you during this campaign. It might be that I could help direct public sentiment in a helpful way. Of course, there must not be the slightest hint of the source of my inspiration,” he wrote Roosevelt.¹⁰²

¹⁰¹ Sally Foreman Griffith, *Home Town News: William Allen White and the Emporia Gazette*, (Baltimore: The John Hopkins University Press, 1991), 95.

¹⁰² William Allen White to Theodore Roosevelt, February 12, 1904, Theodore Roosevelt Digital Library, Dickinson State University, <http://www.theodorerooseveltcenter.org/Research/Digital-Library/Record?libID=o44204>.

Another passionate TR supporter was Joseph Bucklin Bishop, editor of New York City's *Globe and Commercial Advertiser*. Their friendship spanned several decades and more than 600 letters.¹⁰³ In January 1904, Bishop's paper cut its price in half, to just one cent. Overnight, one of the city's most conservative papers became affordable to the masses. The timing could not have been more beneficial to Roosevelt's campaign. Bishop was confident the paper could have a huge impact on the upcoming election. "It gives me unspeakable pleasure to think that I can be of really valuable service in the campaign," Bishop happily declared.¹⁰⁴ Bishop lived up to his words and then some. He turned out numerous favorable editorials, attended campaign strategy meetings and even investigated a rival newspaper that was endorsing Judge Parker.¹⁰⁵

As the campaign progressed into the fall, most observers viewed it as rather boring. Neither candidate was hitting the campaign trail and it looked like a Roosevelt victory was a foregone conclusion. It was not until October, when implored by Democratic party leaders, that candidate Parker finally went on the offensive. With just a few weeks left, the election ignited into a firestorm when Parker accused the Roosevelt campaign of taking part "in a conspiracy to blackmail corporations."¹⁰⁶ The challenger alleged that the president's campaign team had used insider information to extort large donations from major trusts, such as Standard Oil. It was the final straw for Roosevelt, a man who prided himself on cleaning up government.

¹⁰³ Chip Bishop, An Interview with Chip Bishop, Theodore Roosevelt Center at Dickinson State University, November 8, 2011, <http://www.theodorerooseveltcenter.org/Blog/Item/An%20Interview%20with%20Chip%20Bishop>.

¹⁰⁴ Joseph Bucklin Bishop to Theodore Roosevelt, June 24, 1904, Theodore Roosevelt Digital Library, Dickinson State University, <http://www.theodorerooseveltcenter.org/Research/Digital-Library/Record?libID=o45789>.

¹⁰⁵ Chip Bishop, *The Lion and the Journalist* (Guilford: Lyons Press, 2012), 159.

¹⁰⁶ "President Replies to Parker Charges," *Buffalo Evening News*, November 5, 1904, Front page.

While several campaign and party leaders implored Roosevelt to maintain presidential etiquette and not respond; Roosevelt had none of it. He ignored his advisors and broke with tradition. He wrote Republican Party Chairmen Cortelyou demanding action:

Moreover, I do not believe that the action should be taken by you but by me. I'm the man against whom Parker's assaults are really directed.... I should feel an intolerable humiliation if I were beaten because infamous charges had been made against me and good people regarded my silence as acquiescence in them.... Let me say again that I am unwilling to let this matter go by default.¹⁰⁷

A heated Roosevelt crafted a fiery thousand-word reply; calling Parker's accusations "monstrous" and "unqualifiedly and atrociously false." The President declared that his opponent "had neither produced or could produce any proof" to the charges.¹⁰⁸ While Roosevelt's words may seem tame by today's standard, they were considered hard-hitting and blistering in 1904. In a calculated move, the statement was released to the press late on a Friday night; thus insuring that it dominated the weekend's news cycle. Roosevelt's plan worked perfectly as his response ruled both headlines and conversations. Parker had to wait until Monday's papers to have his reply published, but by then it was too late. A cartoon that circulated in papers nationwide, showing Uncle Sam reprimanding a timid and tiny Parker for "telling lies," encapsulated the effect of Roosevelt's statement.¹⁰⁹ TR had masterfully used the print press to successfully counterpunch Parker's attack.

Just a few days later, Roosevelt won in a landslide, winning 56 to 36 percent of the popular vote and 336 to 140 electoral votes, the largest margins to that time. The morning after the victory, a giddy Bishop could not contain his excitement. He wrote Roosevelt, "I have been

¹⁰⁷Roosevelt to George Cortelyou, Washington, November 1,1904, in *The Letters of Theodore Roosevelt*, v. 4, 1008-1013.

¹⁰⁸ Ibid.

¹⁰⁹ Uncle Sam Cartoon. *Buffalo Evening News*, November 6, 1904, Front page.

literally drunk with joy since seven o'clock last night. I need not say to you that the result is more than I dared dream of."¹¹⁰

While Theodore Roosevelt was the heavy favorite in 1904, the same cannot be said of Donald Trump in 2016. So, how did a man who was a political neophyte, first emerge out of a field of 16 challengers to capture the Republican party nomination? Then beat the odds and defeat a seasoned political veteran who outspent him almost two-to-one, ran nearly three times as many television ads, had a staff five times the size of his, and received endorsements from 57 major newspapers compared to just two for Trump?¹¹¹ Trump did so by running one of the most unconventional presidential campaigns to date; but it was a campaign whose roots can be traced back to the formula he honed over decades of working to establish the Trump brand. And the first part of that formula was "get the word out." To do that Trump turned to his old friend, television.

In 1952, Republican candidate Dwight D. Eisenhower's political team was looking for a way to overcome their candidate's less than dynamic speaking ability. They found the answer on the small-screen. The team created campaign television ads that did what Ike could not, deliver his message in an inspiring way. At first, many political experts thought the move was a mistake, warning that Eisenhower might come across as a used car salesman selling himself. In

¹¹⁰ Bishop, *The Lion and the Journalist*, 162.

¹¹¹ Bill Allison, Mira Rojanasakul, Brittany Harris and Cedric Sam, "Tracking the 2016 Presidential Money Race," *Bloomberg*, December 12, 2016, <https://www.bloomberg.com/politics/graphics/2016-presidential-campaign-fundraising/>. Bob Fredericks, "Clinton's campaign staff is five times the size of Trump's," *New York Post*, October 7, 2016, <https://nypost.com/2016/10/07/clintons-campaign-staff-is-five-times-the-size-of-trumps/>. Max Kutner, "In Age of Donald Trump, Newspaper Endorsements No Longer Matter," *Newsweek*, November 9, 2016, <http://www.newsweek.com/donald-trump-newspaper-endorsements-519041>.

fact, both CBS and NBC originally refused to air the ads feeling it was beneath a potential president.¹¹² However, the effectiveness of the ads quickly changed everyone's mind. And for the better part of the next seven decades, presidential candidates used television as their primary means of delivering his or her message.

In 2016, no candidate understood the influence of television better than Donald Trump. While other candidates depended upon conventional television strategies, focusing on traditional news programs (*Meet the Press*, *Face the Nation*) and campaign ads; Trump broke the mold by flooding all television avenues. In true Trump style, he relied heavily on free media to get his message out. Free media includes everything from non-purchased television time to mentions in newspaper editorials. Where he once did cameos in movies and television shows to boost his name and brand, candidate Trump appeared on everything from *Saturday Night Live* to the morning news shows to boost his candidacy.¹¹³ It is estimated that Trump received \$5.6 billion worth of free media during the 2016 campaign, \$800 million of which was from broadcast media. In comparison, Hillary Clinton's numbers were \$3.2 billion and \$666 million.¹¹⁴ This free media helped Trump defeat Clinton, even though her campaign vastly out spent his, \$768 million to \$398 million.¹¹⁵

¹¹² Michael Beschloss, "How TV Commercials Made America Like Ike," *The New York Times*, November 11, 2015, <https://www.nytimes.com/2015/11/01/upshot/eisenhower-an-unlikely-pioneer-of-tv-ads.html>.

¹¹³ While other candidates made outside-the-box television appearances, most notably Bill Clinton on MTV and *The Arsenio Hall Show*, no candidate matched the sheer volume of candidate Trump.

¹¹⁴ Max Kutner, "In the Age of Donald Trump, Newspaper Endorsements No Longer Matter," *Newsweek*, November 9, 2016, <http://www.mediaquant.net/2016/11/a-media-post-mortem-on-the-2016-presidential-election/>.

¹¹⁵ Christopher Ingraham, "Somebody just put a price tag on the 2016 election. It's a doozy," *Washington Post*, April 14, 2017, https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/wonk/wp/2017/04/14/somebody-just-put-a-price-tag-on-the-2016-election-its-a-doozy/?utm_term=.8ec88a3aced6.

He was a made for television candidate and made in part by television. In the early days of the campaign, with a crowded Republican field of less than charismatic personalities, Trump provided a story thirsty media with entertaining and engaging material. Trump dominated coverage in a way usually reserved for front runners. As one reporter wrote, Trump was “A presidential candidate who was a human breaking-news event.”¹¹⁶ For cable news networks, such as CNN and Fox News, Trump was television ratings gold.¹¹⁷ CBS President and CEO Leslie Moonves was brutally honest about the Trump phenomenon, “It may not be good for America, but it’s damn good for CBS.”¹¹⁸

Ironically, in the case of CNN’s vast coverage, Trump had an old friend to thank. Former head of NBC Entertainment Jeff Zucker, the executive who green lit *The Apprentice*, was now president of CNN Worldwide. Zucker helped make Trump a television star and now, unknowingly, helped turn him into a serious candidate for President of the United States. Candidate Trump was a frequent guest on CNN’s studio shows and his rallies and speeches were often covered live. To supplement their coverage, CNN hired 12 pro-Trump supporters to serve as panelists, most notably Jeffrey Lord and Kayleigh McEnany.¹¹⁹

Early on in the campaign, Trump benefited from more than just extensive of media exposure. He also benefited from largely positive coverage. A study done by Harvard Kennedy School’s Shorenstein Center on Media, Politics and Public Policy revealed that during the critical

¹¹⁶ Jonathan Mahler, “CNN Had a Problem. Donald Trump Solved It,” *The New York Times Magazine*, April 4, 2017, <https://www.nytimes.com/2017/04/04/magazine/cnn-had-a-problem-donald-trump-solved-it.html?>

¹¹⁷ Ibid.

¹¹⁸ John Sides and Kalev Leetaru, “A Deep Dive into the News Media’s Role in the Rise of Donald J. Trump,” *Washington Post*, June 24, 2016, https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/monkey-cage/wp/2016/06/24/a-deep-dive-into-the-news-medias-role-in-the-rise-of-donald-j-trump/?utm_term=.19ec35ad3515.

¹¹⁹ Mahler, “CNN Had a Problem. Donald Trump Solved It.”

“invisible primary,” the year leading up to the primaries, Trump received more “good press” than “bad press.” For example, *USA Today*’s coverage was positive or neutral 74% of the time, the *New York Times* was 63%. The focus of most news reports was Trump’s emergence from the pack of candidates; not his policies or beliefs. The study noted that even when news outlets were critical of him; the criticism was often followed by positive soundbites from Trump supporters who agreed with his views or style.¹²⁰ This positive press was crucial in helping Trump rise in the polls and be taken seriously among the electorate.

Even more than Theodore Roosevelt, Trump was surrounded by campaign advisers and managers. And even more than Roosevelt, Trump was not afraid to run his own campaign. Trump, the businessman, believed hiring a public relations people was a waste of money and that doing it himself was the best method. Similarly, Trump, the candidate, believed he knew the path to victory better than his campaign team.

If political pundits had any question who was in charge of Trump’s campaign, that question was answered on the first day. In preparation for his campaign kick-off event, Trump’s staff wrote a speech that clocked in at just under eight minutes. But when Trump hit the podium the speech hit the floor. The man, who did not like using a teleprompter or reading a prepared script during his television appearances, went off script again delivering a rambling 45-minute speech that called Mexicans rapists, criticized President Obama for the amount of golf he played, and bragged about being “really rich.”¹²¹

¹²⁰ Thomas Patterson, “Pre-Primary News Coverage of the 2016 Presidential Race: Trump’s Rise, Sanders’ Emergence, Clinton’s Struggle,” Shorenstein Center on Media, Politics and Public Policy, June 13, 2016, <https://shorensteincenter.org/pre-primary-news-coverage-2016-trump-clinton-sanders/>.

¹²¹ Donald Trump, “Donald Trump Presidential Campaign Announcement Full Speech,” filmed June 16, 2015 at Trump Tower, 47:18, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=apjNfkysjbM>.

Members of his staff came to refer to Trump's ability to ignore their strongest advice and follow his own instincts as "Defiance Disorder."¹²² These "Disorders" became a regular occurrence during the campaign. On Cinco de Mayo, Trump thought it was a good idea to tweet a picture of himself eating a taco bowl with the caption "Happy #CincoDeMayo! The best taco bowls are made in Trump Tower Grill. I love Hispanics!"¹²³ His campaign manager Paul Manafort worried that it might come across as condescending and warned against posting. Trump ignored him and a controversy immediately erupted. Trump's strategists pleaded with him not to attack Khizr and Ghazala Khan, the parents of an American army captain killed in Iraq. The Khans had delivered a powerful speech in support of Hillary Clinton at the Democratic Convention. Trump's team implored him to focus his criticisms on Clinton instead. But Trump instead doubled down and continued to go after the Khans in interviews and on Twitter. In February 2016, Trump accused Judge Gonzalo Curiel of being biased against him while overseeing several class action lawsuits regarding Trump University. Trump claimed Curiel was prejudiced because of the judge's Mexican heritage. Once again, Manafort appealed to Trump to stop talking about it; explaining that they had lost "three days on message" on someone who was not their opponent. "He understood the intellectual part of the argument, totally understood it. But he just didn't accept that it was the right thing to do," said Manafort.¹²⁴ The candidate repeatedly berated Curiel in interviews, rallies and texts for months.

Among the issues Trump and his team most debated was his extensive use of the media. At the start of his campaign, Trump used the same strategy that helped make his brand succeed,

¹²² Howard Kurt, *Media Madness* (Washington DC: Regnery Publishing, 2018), 42.

¹²³ Dal Blaz and Philip Rucker, "How Donald Trump won: The insiders tell their story," *The Washington Post*, November 9, 2016, <https://www.washingtonpost.com/graphics/politics/2016-election/how-donald-trump-won-the-inside-story>.

¹²⁴ Ibid.

“all press is good press.” With his early success in the primaries, his original campaign manager Corey Lewandowski preached “Let Trump be Trump.” Lewandowski compared his role in the campaign to that of a jockey, “My job was to maybe drive that horse into the corners a little bit and put some blinders on, but you gotta let it run,” he stated.¹²⁵

After Trump became the Republican party’s presumptive nominee his advisors called for him to cut back on television appearances. They worried that he was overexposing himself and in the process opening himself up to mistakes. His team also asked him to stop going off script and stick to the teleprompter. “Trump is a remarkable entrepreneurial personality. The entrepreneurial personalities find it hard to operate in a corporate environment... And also, he had no habit of having to be disciplined and having to be aware of the fact that both his opponents and the news media would be watching every word and every gesture,” analyzed Newt Gingrich.¹²⁶

By most insider accounts, it was not until Kellyanne Conway joined his staff that Trump began taking advice regarding the media. A longtime Republican pollster, Conway worked for Senator Ted Cruz’s campaign until jumping to the Trump team late in the campaign. She implored the candidate that “all press is not good when you’re running for president of the United States.”¹²⁷ Under pressure from Conway and other staffers, Trump finally conceded to cut back his appearances. When he did appear, it was predominantly on the Trump friendly Fox News channel.

¹²⁵ Corey Lewandowski, “The FRONTLINE Interviews: Trump’s Road to the White House,” PBS, accessed June 26, 2018, <http://apps.frontline.org/trumps-road-whitehouse-frontline-interviews/index.html>.

¹²⁶ Blaz and Rucker, “How Donald Trump won: The insiders tell their story.”

¹²⁷ Kurtz, *Media Madness*, 16.

In the early days of the republic, becoming president of the United States often required friends in high places. That normally meant a high-ranking party official or a political powerbroker, men like Mark Hanna and Henry Clay. But as the influence of the press grew, so did the clout of media moguls. Candidates Roosevelt and Trump understood the importance of having powerful communications titans in their corner.

Disappointed by his successor President William Taft, Roosevelt came out of political retirement in 1912 and sought the presidency. With the incumbent Taft the favorite of the Republican establishment, TR faced an uphill battle. If Roosevelt was going to pull off a victory he needed even more help from his powerful allies in the press. Enter Frank Munsey, the early 20th century's Rupert Murdoch, a media mogul who owned a magazine and newspaper empire. In January 1912, several of Munsey's papers carried a lengthy editorial pledging support for Roosevelt, who had yet to even announce his candidacy. Munsey followed it up with a letter to Roosevelt urging him to run. Once Roosevelt threw his hat in the ring, Munsey threw his full support and checkbook behind TR. He helped underwrite Roosevelt's campaign with more than \$200,000 in donations, earning him the nickname the "dough moose."¹²⁸ But that was just the start of his contributions. A year prior (1911), he tried to unload unsuccessful papers he owned in Philadelphia and Boston. But Munsey changed his mind, deciding to keep them so that they could spread the word of Roosevelt, even though this meant incurring financial losses. Then, in September of 1912, he paid \$1 million to buy the *New York Press*. The reason behind the purchase was to give Roosevelt a platform in the morning dailies.¹²⁹ There should be no mistaking that while other press members support of Roosevelt was often based on personal

¹²⁸ George Britt, *Forty Years-Forty Millions* (Washington: Kennikat Press, 1935), 159.

¹²⁹ *Ibid*, 185.

admiration, loyalty or shared ideology; Munsey's support was first and foremost a business decision. Munsey's chief goal was to make sure that the economic policies of the Republican party were voted in.¹³⁰

While Roosevelt had the support of the early 20th century's Rupert Murdoch, Donald Trump had the support of the actual Rupert Murdoch. The Australian-born media mogul had known Trump for years, but the two were far from best friends. The reserved Murdoch saw Trump as a "phony" who exaggerated his net worth and importance. Early in the campaign, Murdoch's *The Wall Street Journal* published a blistering editorial calling Trump a "catastrophe" and asking how much longer people on the right "will keep pretending he is a serious candidate."¹³¹ After Trump insulted war hero Senator John McCain, his *New York Post*'s front page read "DON VOYAGE", implying that the candidate's campaign was sunk. Murdoch even tweeted "When is Donald Trump going to stop embarrassing his friends, let alone the whole country?"¹³² When an NBC News/Wall Street Journal poll placed Trump in second, while others

¹³⁰ Several factors influenced Munsey supporting Roosevelt over Taft. The chief factor was Munsey's belief that Roosevelt was the better candidate to execute Republican economic policies. Munsey abhorred Taft's aggressive use of the Sherman Antitrust Act, especially towards U.S. Steel which he owned stock in. TR's moderate regulation of business was more to his liking. A second factor was Munsey's personal relationship with the two candidates. Taft never attempted to win Munsey's favor. Their first meeting ended with Taft less than impressed, telling people afterwards that he could not remember what they talked about. Meanwhile, Roosevelt understood what a great asset Munsey could be and, despite finding him annoying, went out of his way to establish a personal connection. A final, less influential, issue was Taft's weight. Munsey was a nutritional freak obsessed with fitness and diet. He was less than impressed with the 300-pound Taft.

¹³¹ "Trump and His Apologists," *The Wall Street Journal*, July 19, 2015, <https://www.wsj.com/articles/trump-and-his-apologists-1437345060>.

¹³² Rupert Murdoch (@rupertmurdoch), "When is Donald Trump going to stop embarrassing his friends, let alone the whole country?," Twitter, July 18, 2015, 5:06 p.m., <https://twitter.com/rupertmurdoch/status/622558129742573568>.

had him in the lead, the defiant candidate fired back that it was a “fix” and claimed “it was a Rupert Murdoch hit.”¹³³

But by the spring of 2016, it appeared that Trump had the Republican nomination locked up. So, Murdoch made a calculated business decision to embrace the candidate. The two men met several times, including at a Trump golf course in Scotland where they reached a *détente*. Call their relationship frenemies with benefits. The *Post* endorsed Trump in the New York primary and proclaimed him “King Donald” after he won. Trump made Murdoch’s Fox News his go-to network; where he received highly favorable coverage and the network received high ratings in return. Finally, a Trump victory gave Murdoch a direct connection to the White House.¹³⁴

While Roosevelt and Trump’s campaigns had similarities, they also had glaring contrasts. Most notably, this involved how they treated the press. During his campaigns, Theodore Roosevelt tried to cultivate a positive relationship with reporters. TR went out of his way to remember their names and recall the smallest details from previous encounters. He even looked to make their jobs easier. In the early 20th century, life on the road for campaign reporters could be very tedious. They often spent the day following a candidate around as he delivered basically the same stump speech over and over. This meant hopping off a train, traveling to the speech location, fighting for a good spot in the crowd, listening closely to detect anything new in the speech, rushing to the nearest telegraph office to wire anything fresh back to their paper, and

¹³³ Dylan Byers, “Donald Trump says ‘phony’ WSJ poll ‘a Rupert Murdoch hit,’” CNN, February 18, 2016, <http://money.cnn.com/2016/02/18/media/donald-trump-rupert-murdoch-wall-street-journal-poll/index.html>.

¹³⁴ Skeptics would argue that Murdoch’s support has already paid for itself through Trump supporting the Disney-Fox merger. Meanwhile, the President’s administration attempted to block the AT&T-Time Warner Merger, the parent company of Trump’s self-professed enemy CNN.

then hurrying back to the train. This was repeated several times throughout the day. Roosevelt simplified things for reporters by tipping them off to what he was going to say. Before arriving in a town, Roosevelt made his way to the reporters' train car and informed them if he was going to deliver his standard speech or if they should be on the alert for "new stuff." As one reporter noted, this was a huge help that "not only saved us useless physical and mental work but, economized our time and systemized our schedules."¹³⁵

Reporter Charles Willis Thompson described the relationship between the Roosevelt campaign team and reporters as "like one big family." Thompson experienced Roosevelt's affable side first-hand. During a thirty-day campaign swing in 1912, Thompson suffered a finger infection that caused larger health issues. Aware of Thompson's problems, Roosevelt went out of his way time and time again to get updates on the reporter. During a stop in Portland, Roosevelt threw a reception into a panic when he suddenly darted from a procession into the reporters' pit when he spotted Thompson. "The Colonel was inquiring anxiously whether I felt better or worse," recalled Thompson. "I wouldn't for anything have you risk your health, and it's in pretty risky shape. And so he (Roosevelt) went on questioning and advising, while the crowd wondered and eminences fretted."¹³⁶

While Roosevelt's relationship with the press may have had a family feel, Trump's relationship had the feel of a dysfunctional family. After initially receiving largely favorable press, when the mainstream media coverage turned and became more critical Trump reverted to one of his old tricks, "when attacked fight back." Instead of covering the story, Trump made the press part of the story. His media campaign became a scorched earth attack on the mainstream

¹³⁵ Charles Willis Thompson, *Presidents I've Known and Two Near Presidents* (Indianapolis: The Bobbs-Merrill Company, 1929), 143.

¹³⁶ *Ibid*, 138.

media. This anti-media angle played well with Trump's base, serving to unity them against what they perceived to be a biased media. Sixty percent of Trump supporters gave the press a failing grade on their campaign coverage.¹³⁷

While other candidates have clashed with the press, Trump's full frontal assaults were unlike anything ever seen before. In the past politicians normally targeted their venom at organizations, such as newspapers or networks. Any serious grievances towards individual reporters were usually kept behind closed doors or handled privately. But Trump repeatedly took public aim at specific reporters. Megyn Kelly ("dopey"), Tom Llamas ("a sleaze"), Sarah Murray ("absolutely terrible") and Jill Colvin ("one of the truly bad reporters") all felt the wrath of Trump.¹³⁸ But there appeared to be a method to his madness. Some political analyst claimed that Trump's goal was to smear any media member who questioned his "facts" or policies. Thus, causing people to doubt the reporter's accuracy. Trump admitted using this strategy to CBS reporter Lesley Stahl. In a down moment while filming a *60 Minutes* interview, Stahl asked Trump why he spent so much time and energy attacking the press. "You know why I do it? I do it to discredit you all and demean you all so that when you write negative stories about me no one will believe you," replied Trump.¹³⁹

¹³⁷ "Low Marks for Major Players in 2016 Elections- Including the Winner," *Pew Research Center*, November 21, 2016, <http://www.people-press.org/2016/11/21/voters-evaluations-of-the-campaign/>.

¹³⁸ Aaron Klieglman, "Donald Trump Calls ABC Reporter Tom Llamas 'A Sleaze'," *The Washington Free Beacon*, May 31, 2016, <https://freebeacon.com/politics/donald-trump-calls-abc-reporter-tom-llamas-sleaze/>.

Paul Farhi, "Insults, threats and more insults: What it's like to be a reporter covering Trump," *The Washington Post*, February 4, 2016, https://www.washingtonpost.com/lifestyle/style/insults-threats-and-more-insults-what-its-like-to-be-a-reporter-covering-trump/2016/02/04/561743a8-c9eb-11e5-ae11-57b6aeab993f_story.html?utm_term=.f89f18272ac9.

¹³⁹ "Lesley Stahl: Trump admitted mission to "discredit" press," *CBSNews.com*, May 23 2018, <https://www.cbsnews.com/news/lesley-stahl-donald-trump-said-attacking-press-to-discredit-negative-stories/>.

Among the first to feel Trump's rage was NBC News reporter Katy Tur. In July 2015, Tur conducted a sit-down interview with the candidate. When Tur questioned Trump over immigration he called her "naïve." When she stumbled trying to deliver statistics he pounced, "Try getting it out. Try getting it out. I mean, I don't know if you're going to put this on television. But you don't even know what you're talking about. Try getting it out, go ahead," he added condescendingly.¹⁴⁰

The contentious interview was just the beginning of Trump's assault on Tur. On Twitter, Trump called Tur a "third-rate reporter," "incompetent" and "dishonest."¹⁴¹ But Twitter assaults were tame compared to what happened during campaign stops. During several rallies Trump mentioned Tur by name in front of what could be called "less than media friendly crowds." At a Miami rally, the candidate called her out for "not reporting" what he believed was the political movement going on. In South Carolina, Trump pointed out "little Katy" and again called her a "third-rate reporter." Stoked by Trump's words, the crowd worked itself into such a frenzy that the secret service had to escort Tur to her car.

Roosevelt and Trump may have had campaign managers, but they were campaign managers in name only. There is no question that the candidates themselves were in charge of their campaigns. Both were not afraid to ignore the guidance of their advisors and use the media how they felt best. Their dynamic personalities captivated the public and made their every move on the campaign trail newsworthy; a point they understood and used to garner free media

¹⁴⁰ Donald Trump, "Watch the Full, Unedited Donald Trump Interview," interview by Katy Tur, NBC, video, July 8, 2015, 28:52, <https://www.nbcnews.com/video/watch-the-full-unedited-donald-trump-interview-480244291643?v=a>.

Katy Tur, *Unbelievable* (New York: Harper Collins, 2017), 32.

¹⁴¹ *Ibid*, 68. 81.

attention. It's no exaggeration to state that Donald Trump's radical use of media (mainstream media, social media and alternative media) was pioneering. It will be interesting to see if future campaigns will be able to borrow from his strategies, or is he such a unique candidate that what worked for him will be ineffective for others? Not only is Trump a once in a lifetime candidate, he is a perfect fit for the times. His "drain the swamp" refrain connected with a cynical public that viewed the government as full of ineffective and corrupt bureaucrats.

Once again, the major difference between the men was their attitude towards the press. Building on what he had learned early in his career, Roosevelt looked to foster a positive connection with journalists. Trump's relationship was focused on working the press, then working with the press. As his campaign wore on, Trump discovered that he could use the media not just for coverage, but to unify his base by framing them as the enemy.

Chapter 3: Face the Nation

An assassin's bullet thrust Theodore Roosevelt to the highest office in the land. His dream job obtained via a nightmare. Roosevelt had just returned from President McKinley's funeral when he summoned three correspondents from the leading news agencies to the White House. He knew the importance the press could play in his presidency's success, so he looked to open the lines of communication and set some ground rules. Roosevelt guaranteed to make himself accessible to the press; an unheard-of promise at the time. But he also warned that if he was misquoted or mistreated, he would not hesitate to blacklist a reporter or a paper. "All right, gentlemen, now we understand each other," stated a smiling Roosevelt, abruptly ending the conversation.¹⁴²

A few weeks after being elected president, Donald Trump held a similar meeting with several television news anchors and executives. Those attending the Trump Tower meeting expected the tone to be one of entente—let's let bygones be bygones and move forward. Instead, Trump went on the offensive and scolded his guests, referring to them as a "room of liars, the deceitful, dishonest media who got it all wrong."¹⁴³ The invitees were left stunned. As one person who was in attendance recounted, "It was like a f---ing firing squad."¹⁴⁴

These two stories neatly encapsulate the relationship Roosevelt and Trump had with the press during their administrations. This chapter examines how both men clearly understood the role the press could play in their success or failure, or at least the public perception of their success or failure. Both sought to control the press, but had very different methods for achieving

¹⁴² David S. Barry, *Forty Years in Washington* (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1924) 269.

¹⁴³ Emily Smith and David Halper, "Donald Trump's media summit was a 'f---ing firing squad'," *New York Post*, November 11, 2016, <https://nypost.com/2016/11/21/donald-trumps-media-summit-was-a-f-ing-firing-squad/>.

¹⁴⁴ Ibid.

that goal. Roosevelt expanded the relationship between the president and the press; making himself more available than any previous president. Meanwhile, Trump shrunk the mainstream media's accessibility. The man who at one time actively pursued coverage and preached that "no press was bad press" cut back access to levels not seen in over a century. And his war against the media has only intensified.

This chapter also reveals how these men clearly had the temperature of the country and used it to their advantage. Roosevelt was the perfect president for the Progressive Era. A man of action, the nationwide fervor for reform gave TR the opportunity he craved to aggressively pursue change. On the other end of the spectrum, Trump sensed the discontent many Americans felt toward their government. He tapped into their anger, fear and frustration to get elected and as president continued to use his bully pulpit to stoke those emotions. Roosevelt and Trump's approach towards rallies highlights how they sensed the nation's mood and utilized it to their benefit. Roosevelt used rallies to build momentum behind his proposals, while Trump used them to rile up his base by playing the division card.

For much of the early republic, the president took a backseat to Congress. While leaders like Abraham Lincoln and Andrew Jackson expanded the powers of the office, the true action was on Capitol Hill. And it was where the press was. At the end of the 19th century; the White House beat was pretty much the domain of William "Fatty" Price. The 300-plus pound Price hung outside the building, grabbing interviews with visitors as they came and went. The result was the creation of a popular recurring column in the *Washington Evening Star* called "At the

White House.”¹⁴⁵ Price’s success soon led to other reporters joining him, and eventually, the White House press corps was born. While President William McKinley interacted with these journalists; it was not until Theodore Roosevelt took office that a president actively sought out interactions with correspondents, looking to exploit the full potential of the press.

President Roosevelt was driven to make America a global power. He infused the country with an infectious energy, confidence and enthusiasm that had never been seen before. But to turn those qualities into actual achievements, he was going to need public and political support. To help gain that, he took the successful press techniques he developed during his political education, expanded upon them and applied them to the White House press corps. Among the key components of his bully pulpit blueprint was granting the correspondents unheard of access. Roosevelt had promised the leading heads of the news agencies to make himself available; he more than lived up to that promise.

Always looking to get the most out of every second, the President turned his afternoon shave into a Q&A session by inviting a small group of reporters to join him. In an age before daily briefings and formal press conferences, these shaving sessions gave reporters unique access to the President. As journalist Louis Brownlow recalled, “A more skillful barber never existed.” Watching the barber try to do his job while the always animated Roosevelt was “waving both arms, jumping up, speaking excitedly” was “more fun to see than a circus.”¹⁴⁶ Reporter Lincoln

¹⁴⁵ George Juergens, *News from the White House: The Presidential-Press Relationship During the Progressive Era* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1981), 14.

¹⁴⁶ Louis Brownlow, *A Passion for Politics: The Autobiography of Louis Brownlow* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1955) 399.

Steffens learned that timing was everything; the key was sneaking in a question while “the razor was upon T.R.’s lower lip,” thus temporarily silencing the President.¹⁴⁷

However, interviews with Roosevelt were not so much interviews as “lectures.”¹⁴⁸ There was not much back and forth. The talkative Roosevelt dominated the conversation and reporters were often left scrambling to keep up their note taking. Journalist Isaac Marcossou described it as an “avalanche of speech” and that “few could stand up against the Roosevelt barrage of words,” often leaving the reporter “speechless” and indoctrinated with Roosevelt’s views.¹⁴⁹ Today it is called “spin,” in the early 20th century TR was the original spin doctor.

However, while Roosevelt made himself more available to the press than any president before, he never did a proper formal sit-down interview. The president was always in control.

As reporter Charles Willis Thompson noted:

He gave out many statements, some of them in the form of interviews, and sometimes, too, he was actually interviewed, but in such cases he always directed the form the interview should take. Now, a real interview is an unpremeditated thing, in which the reporter asks what questions he pleases and takes the answers with merciless accuracy... It may be short, but it spontaneous and revealing. No one ever heard of an interview being given by Roosevelt as he got off a train or entered a hotel corridor- unless it was something he had determined to stay.¹⁵⁰

Roosevelt did more than just make time for reporters. He also gave them a permanent home in the White House. According to legend, TR was looking out his second-story office window and noticed several reporters ducking the rain under the North Portico. He then reached out to architects who were doing White House renovations and ordered a press room

¹⁴⁷ Steffens, *The Autobiography of Lincoln Steffens*, 258.

¹⁴⁸ Juergens, *News from the White House: The Presidential-Press Relationship during the Progressive Era*, 19.

¹⁴⁹ Isaac Marcossou, *Adventures in Interviewing* (New York, John Lane Company, 1919), 87, <https://babel.hathitrust.org/cgi/pt?id=mdp.39015016876164;view=1up;seq=105> (accessed May 13, 2018).

¹⁵⁰ Charles Willis Thompson, *Presidents I’ve Known and Two Near Presidents*, 118.

constructed.¹⁵¹ The result was a tiny space that was barely bigger than the nearby men's restroom.¹⁵² The creation of the room was a major turning point in presidential-press relations. It gave reporters their first dedicated home in the White House, in the process giving them a stamp of legitimacy. The installation of three telephones allowed reporters to call in stories for the first time, an enormous time and energy saver.¹⁵³ Finally, it was a shrewd move by Roosevelt. By giving journalists a nearby space they were at his beck and call. If he wanted to feed them a story or a quote, they were conveniently located just one floor below his office.

While Roosevelt provided groundbreaking access for reporters, the Trump administration has been restricting it. President Trump has been highly critical of the mainstream media and has looked for ways to curb their contact with him and his administration. A clear-cut example can be found in the number of formal press conferences held during his time in office. President Trump had a record low number of formal press conferences during his first twelve months in office: one. To put that in perspective, Trump's recent predecessors held the following number of press conferences during their first year:

- Barack Obama: 11
- George W. Bush: 5
- Bill Clinton: 12

¹⁵¹ W. Dale Nelson, *Who Speaks for the President?* (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 1998), 18.

¹⁵² Evan Phifer (White House Historical Association), email to author containing White House map, March 26, 2018.
John Dickerson, "Meet the Press," *Slate*, March 14, 2013, http://www.slate.com/articles/news_and_politics/politics/2013/03/woodrow_wilson_held_the_first_presidential_press_conference_100_years_ago.html (Accessed May 5, 2018).

¹⁵³ W. Dale Nelson, *Who Speaks for the President?*, 19.

- George H. W. Bush: 28¹⁵⁴

Trump is also the first president in fifteen years not to hold an end-of-the-year press conference; which is surprising since it provides an opportunity for the president to boast about his past year's achievements. Trump has interacted with the press, but he has made sure that these interactions happen on his terms. He appears to be most comfortable taking questions during "pool sprays." This is when a few members of the press corps, who follow the president, can attempt to ask questions around such events as cabinet meetings, bill signings, or the president's walk to Marine One. Trump did 170 short question-and-answer sessions, as compared to 55 for President Barack Obama at the same point in his first term.¹⁵⁵

These pool spray allows Trump to control the interaction, similar to how Roosevelt commanded his shaving sessions. The president can pick which questions to answer, ignore those he does not want to touch and sidestep tough follow-up questions. These abbreviated pressers are the press conference equivalent of Twitter; allowing Trump to give short off-the-cuff answers, something he feels comfortable doing. An example of President Trump using this format to his full advantage came on May 9, 2018. Before a cabinet meeting, Trump spent nine minutes delivering a verbal highlight reel—Korean hostages release, a strong military, a good economy, etc. Then reporters began shouting out questions. Among a flurry of hard-hitting

¹⁵⁴ The American Presidency Project, *Presidential News Conferences: Coolidge-Trump*, accessed May 9, 2018, <http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/data/newsconferences.php>.

¹⁵⁵ Erik Wemple, "'Thank you,' now get out of here! The difficult job of a Trump press wrangler," *The Washington Post*, May 18, 2018, https://www.washingtonpost.com/blogs/erik-wemple/wp/2018/05/18/thank-you-now-get-out-of-here-the-difficult-job-of-a-trump-press-wrangler/?utm_term=.2d6f3ff71e4a. (Accessed May 20, 2018).

inquires, Trump chose to answer the softball question, “Do you deserve the Nobel (peace) prize, do you think?” “Everyone thinks so, but I would never say it.,” replied a smiling Trump.¹⁵⁶

Even when Trump appeared to be opening the doors to more media, it was met with a cloud of skepticism. Shortly after taking office, his staff discussed moving the press room from the West Wing to the Old Executive Office building, part of the White House complex. Why the move? Administration officials argued that the current briefing room only fit 49 reporters. Moving it to a larger room allowed more correspondents to take part. “The room is too small,” Trump said, “So, we said we’re going to move it to a larger room in a nearby area.”¹⁵⁷ Critics claimed the real reason Trump wanted a larger room was so that it “would allow the administration to fill seats with ‘alt-right’ fringe journalists, rightwing social media, Trump supporters and paid staffers.”¹⁵⁸

President Theodore Roosevelt opened the White House doors to the press; to help manage them he turned to his personal secretary William Loeb Jr.¹⁵⁹ Loeb’s relationship with Roosevelt dated back to TR’s time as New York governor; where he served as Roosevelt’s

¹⁵⁶White House Cabinet Meeting, C-SPAN, May 9, 2018. <https://www.c-span.org/video/?445321-1/president-trump-home-american-detainees-north-korea>.

¹⁵⁷ Callum Borchers, “Virtual seats in the White House media room could serve the public interest — or just serve Trump,” *The Washington Post*, January 24, 2017, https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/the-fix/wp/2017/01/24/virtual-seats-in-the-white-house-media-room-could-serve-the-public-interest-or-just-serve-trump/?utm_term=.b9a2a0b0e35e.

¹⁵⁸Robert Reich, “America is About to Crown Trump King,” *Newsweek*, January 16, 2017. <http://www.newsweek.com/robert-reich-america-about-crown-king-trump-543237>

¹⁵⁹Before William Loeb served as Roosevelt’s secretary, George Cortelyou filled that role. Cortelyou was a holdover from the President McKinley’s administration. Both he and McKinley deserve credit for taking initial steps in modernizing the president-press relationship through such steps as establishing a system of press releases and making the president more accessible to the press.

stenographer and secretary. Loeb was more than a secretary. He was a trusted loyal confidant with a deep knowledge of the inner workings of the Republican political machine.¹⁶⁰

Loeb followed Roosevelt to Washington, eventually becoming his presidential secretary in 1903. His assigned duties included a wide range of responsibilities—overseeing the president’s personal finances, managing the White House staff, and coordinating the president’s schedule. But Loeb found handling the press among his chief obligations. Before the terms ‘press secretary’ and ‘communication director’ were created, Loeb was filling those roles for Roosevelt single-handedly. He held briefings, issued daily press releases, policed which journalists got time with the president, and monitored what the press was writing. He was on call 24/7, often he received calls in the middle of the night from reporters in need of a quote or fact to complete a story.

Historian George Juergens wrote that “above all, a presidential spokesman must know what is going on. Nothing is more likely to antagonize the press than weak or misleading answers arising out of ignorance.”¹⁶¹ Loeb’s spot as Roosevelt’s trusted right-hand man gave him unquestioned credibility with the press. There was never any doubt among journalists that he and Roosevelt were on the same page.

While Roosevelt had a respected single figure leading his press relations. Trump has seen a revolving door of press secretaries and communications directors. Trump’s communication directors have averaged just 88 days on the job, the shortest average duration

¹⁶⁰Louis William Koenig, *The Invisible Presidency*. (New York: Rinehart, 1960), 139.

¹⁶¹ Juergens, *News from the White House: The Presidential-Press Relationship during the Progressive Era*, 48.

since the position was created by President Richard Nixon.¹⁶² And while Roosevelt surrounded himself with the experienced Loeb, Trump's third communications director had a shocking lack of experience. Hope Hicks was a former model who in just three years went from having nothing on her political resume to being one of president's most trusted aides. Insiders have said her main duty was managing Trump's moods and impulses, she appeared to be one of the few people whose advice he sought and took. She is also credited with keeping morale up by baking cookies, swapping country music song recommendations and sending funny videos to colleagues.¹⁶³

The role of press secretary has also seen turnover during the Trump administration, Sean Spicer lasted only 182 days before resigning and being replaced by Sarah Huckabee Sanders. But turnover has not been the biggest issue regarding Trump's press secretaries—credibility has been. Where Loeb carried a high level of trust amongst reporters, Trump's press secretaries have been battling an accuracy issue since day one, literally. During his first White House briefing, press secretary Sean Spicer attacked the press for “deliberately false reporting” the size of the crowd at Trump's presidential inauguration. He exclaimed that, “This was the largest audience ever to witness an inauguration, period, both in person... These attempts to lessen the enthusiasm of the inauguration are shameful and wrong.”¹⁶⁴ For the record, Spicer was spurred on to do this by President Trump, who was obsessed with having the largest crowd in inaugural history.

¹⁶² Harry Enten, “Trump's communication directors average last less than 100 days,” CNN, February 28, 2018, <https://www.cnn.com/2018/02/28/politics/trump-communication-directors-record-short-stints/index.html>.

¹⁶³ Maggie Haberman and Kate Rogers, “Hope Hicks Is Gone, and It's Not Clear Who Can Replace Her,” *New York Times*, March 29, 2018, <https://www.nytimes.com/2018/03/29/us/politics/hope-hicks-white-house.html>.

¹⁶⁴ Matt Ford, “False Claims,” *The Atlantic*, January 21, 2017, <https://www.theatlantic.com/politics/archive/2017/01/inauguration-crowd-size/514058/>.

Spicer just had one big problem, photographic evidence and Nielsen television numbers clearly revealed a smaller crowd watched in person and on television. Spicer later admitted that he had “screwed up royally.”¹⁶⁵ But the damage was already done, a skeptical press was now questioning anything that came from his mouth.

But Spicer was not alone in having credibility issues. His replacement, Sarah Huckabee Sanders, was caught off guard when Trump’s lawyer Rudy Giuliani revealed that the President had reimbursed attorney Michael Cohen for the \$130,000 payment made to adult film actress Stormy Daniels, apparent hush money for an alleged tryst with Trump. When asked about it during briefing, Sanders responded, “We give the best information that we have at the time.”¹⁶⁶ The press wondered out loud if Sanders had previously lied to them, or if she was just out of the know. The previous March, she stated that the President knew nothing of payments to Daniels. “I’ve had conversations with the president about this,” she said. “This case has already been won in arbitration, and there was no knowledge of any payments from the president, and he has denied all these allegations.”¹⁶⁷

To counter the credibility issue, President Trump even floated the idea of ending White House press briefings, tweeting “As a very active President with lots of things happening, it is not possible for my surrogates to stand at the podium with perfect accuracy.”¹⁶⁸ He followed

¹⁶⁵Jessica Estepa, “Sean Spicer: ‘I screwed up’ as press secretary,” *USA Today*, January 4, 2008, <https://www.usatoday.com/story/news/politics/onpolitics/2018/01/04/sean-spicer-screwed-up-press-secretary/1005381001/>.

¹⁶⁶ Aaron Blake, “Sarah Huckabee Sanders basically just blamed Trump for misleading her,” *The Washington Post*, May 3, 2018, https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/the-fix/wp/2018/05/03/sarah-huckabee-sanders-basically-just-blamed-trump-for-misleading-her/?utm_term=.60f410acfcae.

¹⁶⁷ Ibid.

¹⁶⁸ Donald Trump (@realDonaldTrump), Twitter, May 12, 2017, 4:59 a.m., “As a very active President with lots of things happening, it is not possible for my surrogates to stand at podium with perfect accuracy!....”

that tweet up by stating that he was considering doing fewer briefings and possibly doing them himself or communicating via written response. While he has not done away with briefings, the number and length of briefings have shrunk drastically. By comparison, President Barack Obama's last press secretary Josh Earnest held briefings on 44% of possible days and they averaged 69 minutes in length. Since becoming Trump's press secretary, Sarah Huckabee Sanders held briefings on 35% of the potential days and they averaged only 20 minutes.¹⁶⁹

Of course, the biggest criticism regarding credibility has been directed at President Trump himself. Among Trump's most egregious factual errors was a series of tweets regarding the Puerto Rican hurricane death toll. In an early morning Twitter storm, Trump claimed that the death toll was not 3,000. He argued that the number had been inflated by Democrats trying to make him look bad. Trump's count was in direct opposition to several studies that put the number around 3,000.¹⁷⁰ Members of his own party broke ranks to publicly criticize the president for his comments.

Unfortunately, Trump's false Puerto Rico claims were not an isolated incident. According to the *Washington Post's* "The Fact Checker," in his first 601 days in office, President Trump made over 5,000 false or misleading claims. That averages out to be 8.3 claims

¹⁶⁹ Philip Bump, "It Seems As If Maybe the White House Doesn't Really Want to Talk to the Press," *Washington Post*, May 25, 2018, https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/politics/wp/2018/05/25/it-seems-like-maybe-the-white-house-doesnt-really-want-to-talk-to-the-press/?utm_term=.28929a8ef4b2.

¹⁷⁰ Philip Rucker, Robert Costa and Josh Dawsey, "Trump creates political storm with false claims on Puerto Rico hurricane death toll," September 13, 2017, https://www.washingtonpost.com/politics/trump-creates-political-storm-with-false-claim-on-puerto-rico-hurricane-death-toll/2018/09/13/151a6572-b76b-11e8-a2c5-3187f427e253_story.html?utm_term=.de66b118ea77.

Besty Klein and Maegan Vazques, "Trump falsely claims nearly 3,000 Americans in Puerto Rico 'did not die'," CNN, September 14, 2018, <https://www.cnn.com/2018/09/13/politics/trump-puerto-rico-death-toll/index.html>

a day.¹⁷¹ To put that in perspective, one needs to compare Trump to past presidents. The nonpartisan website PolitiFact has tracked both President Obama and Trump. By its measuring system, PolitiFact determined that Obama misleads or lied in about 26% of his statements. President Trump set off of the lie-meter an astounding 69% of the time.¹⁷²

As they did during their pre-presidency days and during campaigns, both Roosevelt and Trump were not afraid to sidestep the press and take their message directly to the people, face to face. Presidents have long used speaking tours to try to achieve a purpose; George Washington toured the South in 1791. His goal was part fact finding mission, “to see with my own eyes the situation of the country ...and learn more accurately the disposition of the people,” and part attempt to unify the country.¹⁷³ Rutherford Hayes conducted six tours during his administration, delivering over 100 speeches that mainly focused on reconciliation and national unity.¹⁷⁴ In Roosevelt’s time they were called “swings around the circle.” In Trump’s, “rallies.”

In the 1800s, the vast majority of presidential speeches were not policy speeches trying to sway public opinion. Often they were given at ceremonial events and had a patriotic theme.¹⁷⁵ But Theodore Roosevelt shattered that tradition. He saw speaking tours as a way to deliver messages straight to the people; circumventing both the press and his own party. Nothing better

¹⁷¹ Glenn Kessler, Salvador Rizzo and Meg Kelly, *The Washington Post*, September 13, 2018, https://www.washingtonpost.com/politics/2018/09/13/president-trump-has-made-more-than-false-or-misleading-claims/?utm_term=.50af7f4edaf7.

¹⁷² “Barack Obama’s File, Politico, <https://www.politifact.com/personalities/barack-obama/>, accessed June 16, 2018.

¹⁷³ George Washington to David Humphreys, July 20, 1791, Founders Online, <https://founders.archives.gov/documents/Washington/05-08-02-0251>.

¹⁷⁴ Jeffrey Tulis, *The Rhetorical Presidency* (Princeton: Princeton University Press: 1987), 84.

¹⁷⁵ Like the old saying, “There is an exception to every rule.” The exception to the rule of early Presidents not using speeches to push policy was Andrew Johnson’s “Swing Around the Circle” speaking tour in 1866. Johnson used the campaign to push his Reconstruction policies. The tour started off well, but as he ventured into the Radical Republican Midwest he faced hecklers.

exemplifies this than his battle to regulate the railroads. During the late 19th/early 20th century, few industries wielded the power that railroads did; they influenced everything from the creation of time zones to the formation of frontier towns. In 1905, President Roosevelt looked to curb the influence of the iron horse by passing legislation that gave the Interstate Commerce Commission (ICC) more power to regulate them. But TR faced strong opposition from the powerful railroad industry, factions of the press and members of his own party. So, he took to the road in a series of tours to present his case right to the masses. Early in the year he hit the Northeast; then the Midwest and Southwest in the spring, finishing up in the South in the fall. During a stop in Raleigh, Roosevelt delivered a speech that clearly stated his desire for greater control over the railroads:

I believe with equal firmness that it is out of the question that the government not to exercise a supervisory and regulatory right over the railroads; for it is vital to the well-being of the public that they should be managed in a spirit of fairness and justice toward the public. Actual experience has shown that it is not possible to leave the railroads uncontrolled.¹⁷⁶

Roosevelt's swing around the circle unified public opinion in his favor, and as a result forced Congress to act. In 1906, the Hepburn Act easily passed giving the ICC new controls over the railroads. His campaign had worked, giving future presidents such as Woodrow Wilson (League of Nations Tour) and Lyndon Johnson (Poverty Tour) a blueprint to follow.

Donald Trump broke from that blueprint, using speaking engagements not to rally the public around a cause or convert people to his thinking, but to solidify his base. He had not even taken the oath of office when the president-elect launched a "U.S.A. Thank You Tour." The post-election nine-city tour was not designed to promote a specific policy or to unify a divided

¹⁷⁶ Theodore Roosevelt, *A Compilation of the Messages and Speeches of Theodore Roosevelt Theodore Roosevelt*, ed. Alfred Henry Lewis (Bureau of National Literature and Arts, 1906), 676.

nation, but served more as a victory lap. According to presidential historian David Brinkley it was an unprecedented move: “I’ve never seen a president that continues to campaign instead of reaching out to voters that didn’t like him... I think he sees himself as a revolutionary figure, and you’re either going to join the Trump revolution or you’re not,” stated Brinkley.¹⁷⁷

Not surprisingly, the president-elect did not seem to mind what his critics thought. “They’re saying, ‘As president, he shouldn’t be doing rallies.’ But I think we should, right? We’ve done everything else the opposite. This is the way you get an honest word out,” Trump explained during a rally.¹⁷⁸

In his first office sixteen months in office, Trump held 14 rallies that continued a campaign style tone. On April 28, 2018 Trump skipped the White House Correspondents’ dinner to hold a rally in Michigan. However, reporters were not out of his mind. One of his main topics, or maybe “targets” is the better word, during the rally was the mainstream media. Over his 120-minute speech, the President saved some of his strongest words not to push a policy, but to attack the media.

You know in the old days when the newspapers used to write they put names down today they say sources have said that President Trump sources they never say who the sources they don't have sources. The sources don't exist. In many cases they don't have sources and the sources in many cases don't exist. These are very dishonest people, many of them they are very, very dishonest people, fake news.¹⁷⁹

¹⁷⁷ Philip Rucker and John Wagner, “Trump is stoking his base on his pre-inaugural tour. But is he building bridges?,” *The Washington Post*, December 16, 2016, https://www.washingtonpost.com/politics/trump-is-stoking-his-base-on-his-pre-inaugural-tour-but-is-he-building-bridges/2016/12/17/a74a0f0a-c3ad-11e6-8422-eac61c0ef74d_story.html?utm_term=.d7f98ff270c4.

¹⁷⁸ Ibid.

¹⁷⁹ Donald Trump, Trump speech in Washington, Michigan, April 28, 2018, video, <https://factba.se/transcript/donald-trump-speech-maga-rally-washington-michigan-april-28-2018>

Where the aim of Roosevelt’s rallies was to win people over and unify them around a cause, Trump used them to cement his base by driving a wedge between his supporters and their “enemies.” He frequently talked about the same topics and targeted the same list of opponents as he did during his presidential campaign rallies. “The Democrats don’t care about our military. They don’t and they don’t care about our borders, and I don’t think they care much about crime. ... Nancy Pelosi and her gang, they’ve got to be voted out of office,” Trump stated during a rally, firing up his core.¹⁸⁰

One of the most popular tools a president has to garner attention is the photo-op. These carefully staged events can help mold a president’s image, creating a positive public perception. Photos of Ronald Reagan chopping wood, JFK playing with his kids in the Oval Office, and Richard Nixon shaking hands with Elvis Presley demonstrate the influence a single image can have on man’s tenure. Roosevelt and Trump understood this power coming into the White House and used it to control the front pages through photo-ops, publicity stunts and distractions.

As historian George Juergens declared, “He (Roosevelt) also knew the importance of ‘image’ long before Madison Avenue introduced the term to the vocabulary.”¹⁸¹ Before becoming president, Roosevelt used photography to create his image as a cowboy and a war hero. As president, Roosevelt was photographed behind the controls of a steam shovel at the Panama Canal, chopping wood and hiking through Yosemite. All this bolstered the image of Roosevelt as the man of action, built from the seeds of a strenuous life.

¹⁸⁰Tom Porter, “Trump Greeted with Chants of ‘Nobel’ at Michigan Rally After North Korea Peace Talks,” *Newsweek*, April 29, 2018, <http://www.newsweek.com/chants-nobel-greet-trump-michigan-rally-following-north-korea-peace-talks-905177>.

¹⁸¹ Juergens, *News from the White House*, 29.

Arthur Wallace Dunn, *From Harrison to Harding* (New York: G.P. Putnam’s Sons, 1922), 25. <https://babel.hathitrust.org/cgi/pt?id=coo1.ark:/13960/t9m33dk6h;view=1up;seq=13>.

Roosevelt's publicity sensors were always turned on. He once postponed a routine Thanksgiving proclamation signing because he understood that the story would not make the front pages without an accompanying photo. So, he delayed the signing until the Associated Press could get a photographer to the White House. When the photographer finally arrived, Roosevelt interrupted a meeting with Secretary of State John Hay to take pictures. Another time, Roosevelt was photographed jumping a particularly high fence on horseback. When the photographer informed Roosevelt that he missed the shot the President did not hesitate to do the risky jump again. TR even made sure his hunting trips were press friendly. While planning a bear hunt in 1905, the President wrote a friend that "the first bear must fall to my rifle... This sounds selfish, but you know the kind of talk there will be in the newspapers about such a hunt, and if I go it must be a success and the success must come to me."¹⁸²

TR was also well aware that not all press was good press; a belief he shared with his potential successor. 1908 Republican presidential candidate William Taft was an avid golfer. During the campaign, pictures of Taft playing began frequenting newspapers. Over the course of several interactions, Roosevelt warned him that playing the game created the public perception that he was an elitist who was not focused on the election. The president pleaded with Taft to stop playing "the rich man's game" of golf. "I myself play tennis, but that game is a little familiar; besides you never saw a photograph of me playing tennis. I'm careful about that; photographs on horseback, yes; tennis no. And golf is fatal."¹⁸³

¹⁸² Henry Pringle, *Theodore Roosevelt: A Biography*, (New York: Brace and Co., 1931), 345.

¹⁸³ Roosevelt to William Howard Taft, Oyster Bay, September 5, 1908 and September 14, 1908, in *The Letters of Theodore Roosevelt*, v.6, 1209 and 1234.

Mark Sullivan, *Our Times: The War Begins* (New York, Charles Scribner's Sons) Vol IV, 1946 305-306

And if he was not getting favorable press, Roosevelt was not above using diversion tactics to push something off the headlines. Reporter Richard Oulahan claimed that was exactly what Roosevelt did after reading Upton Sinclair's *The Jungle*. According to Oulahan, TR called for an immediate investigation into the meatpacking industry to beat a "first page feature which was not to his liking."¹⁸⁴

Trump has carried on the tradition of publicity stunts—photo-ops with Kanye West and Kim Kardashian, touring a factory producing border wall prototypes, and donating his quarterly salary to such causes as the National Park Service and the fight against the opioid epidemic. And while he sells himself as a master of the art of the deal, Trump has proven to be a master at the art of deception. He has frequently used topics like "Spygate" and MS-13 gangs as misdirection plays.

One of Trump's go-to distractions has been his old nemesis the National Football League. In September of 2016, San Francisco quarterback Colin Kaepernick began taking a knee during the playing of the national anthem to protest police brutality. Kaepernick's action ignited a firestorm that polarized the nation over issues of patriotism, race and freedom of speech. A year later a monster hurricane devastated Puerto Rico leaving millions without water or electricity. But the island barely received a mention from President Trump during a rally in Alabama a few days later. Instead, he decided to blast the NFL's national anthem controversy. Trump seized the opportunity to say, "Wouldn't you love to see one of these NFL owners, when somebody disrespects our flag." Then added, "Get that son of a bitch off the field right now. Out. He's fired. He's fired!"¹⁸⁵

¹⁸⁴ Ponder, *Managing the Press*, 26.

¹⁸⁵ Aric Jenkins, "Read President Trump's NFL Speech on National Anthem Protests," *Time*, September 23, 2017, <http://time.com/4954684/donald-trump-nfl-speech-anthem-protests/>.

A few weeks later Trump orchestrated what many perceived as a publicity stunt when he instructed Vice President Mike Pence to leave an NFL game if any players knelt during the anthem.¹⁸⁶ Since the contest Pence was attending involved the San Francisco 49ers, a team that had at least one player protest in every game, it was a pretty safe bet that Pence would not be sticking around. In fact, the media pool following Pence was not brought into the stadium; instead they were kept in vans so that they could quickly depart with the Vice President.¹⁸⁷ To no one's surprise, several players knelt and Pence left. The next day, newspapers and cable news networks gave plenty of ink and airtime to the story; relegating the crisis in Puerto Rico to a secondary story.

In the spring of 2018, with ongoing investigations into possible Russian collusion and porn star payments; Trump once again used the NFL to deflect the focus off negative press. The NFL announced a new national anthem policy that required players to stand or stay in the locker room. Trump quickly pounced on the announcement to change the news cycle. "I think that's good," Trump said about the policy during an appearance on *Fox & Friends*. "I don't think people should be staying in locker rooms but still I think it's good, you have to stand proudly for

¹⁸⁶ Donald Trump (@realDonaldTrump), Twitter, October 8, 2017, 11:16 a.m., "I asked @VP Pence to leave stadium if any players kneeled, disrespecting our country. I am proud of him and @SecondLady Karen."

¹⁸⁷ Cindy Boren, "Trump says He Directed Pence to Walk Out if 49ers Protested During National Anthem," *The Washington Post*, October 8, 2017.

https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/sports/wp/2017/10/08/vice-president-pence-walks-out-of-colts-game-over-49ers-national-anthem-protests/?utm_term=.acaadce34812.

Ironically, Donald Trump would not have the NFL to kick around if it was not for Theodore Roosevelt. In 1905, 18 people died playing the sport. There were calls to outlaw the sport. TR was a huge fan of football and called leading coaches and university athletic heads to the White House. The president implored them to make changes to the game. This led to several rule changes that made the game safer, thus saving its existence.

the national anthem. Or you shouldn't be playing, you shouldn't be there. Maybe you shouldn't be in the country.”¹⁸⁸ Once again, Trump created a distraction to control a news cycle.

When comparing how Roosevelt and Trump used the press; it is necessary to dissect how the “impulse factor” affected their use of the bully pulpit. There is no questioning that both men were big personalities that could easily fill a room or dominate a conversation. However, one should not mistake Roosevelt’s fire, animated gestures and passionate speech for recklessness. While it may appear to some that he was impulsive, that was not the case. *New York Times* Correspondent Charles Willis Thompson said of Roosevelt, “No man ever counted the effect of his words more closely or knew more exactly the precise weigh of each one of them.”¹⁸⁹ Naturalist John Burroughs believed that the charge against Roosevelt of being impulsive was undeserved. What some saw as Roosevelt being rash was, in Burroughs’ mind, “the action of a mind of extraordinary quickness and precision.”¹⁹⁰

On election night 1904, shortly after winning the presidency, Roosevelt proclaimed to a room of reporters that “The wise custom which limits the President to two terms regards the substance and not the form. Under no circumstance will I be a candidate for or accept another nomination.”¹⁹¹ The announcement shocked the press and most Americans. Many historians have pointed to this as an example of Roosevelt’s impulsiveness getting the best of him, arguing

¹⁸⁸ Donald Trump, “Donald on ‘Fox & Friends’,” interview by Brian Kilmeade, *Fox & Friends*, Fox, 2:58, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Me3b2bYQnz4>.

¹⁸⁹ Willis, *Presidents I’ve Known and Two Near Presidents*, 115.

¹⁹⁰ John Burroughs, “Theodore Roosevelt Memorial Addresses,” accessed April 30, 2018, <https://books.google.com/books?id=fCVRAQAAMAAJ&pg=PA58&dq=theodore+roosevelt+manysided+electric&hl=en&sa=X&ved=0ahUKEwjOuY6EoJPcAhUFy1kKHVXeDoIQ6AEILDAB#v=onepage&q=impulsive&f=false>.

¹⁹¹ Jules Witchcover, “The Curse of the two-term limit,” *Chicago Tribune*, January 26, 2014, http://articles.chicagotribune.com/2014-01-26/opinion/sns-201401241700--tms--poltodayctnyq-a20140126-20140126_1_third-term-two-term-limit-curse.

that he was swept up in the moment. But this was not a spur of the moment decision. Roosevelt had been discussing it for weeks, telling friends privately that “nothing would make me a candidate again.”¹⁹² There is little doubt that Roosevelt later regretted the announcement, but at the time it was a thought-out decision.

On the other end of the spectrum, President Trump’s spontaneous moments seem to be truly impetuous, not calculated or grounded in fact. Trump’s tool of choice for scratching his impulsive itch has been Twitter. Twitter is the perfect outlet for Trump’s spontaneous thoughts and feelings, providing him with an instant way to connect with his 53 million followers. The next chapter of this paper will examine the Trump-Twitter relationship in more depth, but for purposes of examining his impulsive nature an examination of his use of Twitter following a terror attack in London is useful. In June 2017, three terrorists drove a van into pedestrians on London Bridge, then launched a knife attack. Eight people were killed and 48 left injured. In the hours following the incident, President Trump went on a Twitter rampage targeting London’s Mayor Sadiq Khan. “At least 7 dead and 48 wounded in terror attack and Mayor of London says there is no reason to be alarmed!” and “Pathetic excuse by London Mayor Sadiq Khan who had to think fast on his ‘no reason to be alarmed’ statement. MSM (main stream media) is working hard to sell it!” the President tweeted.¹⁹³ Trump’s tweets however were taking Khan’s comments

¹⁹² Roosevelt to Arthur Von Briesen, Washington, October 27, 1904, in *The Letters of Theodore Roosevelt*, v.4, 1000.

¹⁹³ Donald Trump (@realDonaldTrump), Twitter, June 7, 2014, 4:31 a.m., At least 7 dead and 48 wounded in terror attack and Mayor of London says there is "no reason to be alarmed!," https://twitter.com/realDonaldTrump/status/871328428963901440?ef_url=http%3A%2F%2Ftime.com%2F4805285%2Fdonald-trump-twitter-london-attack%2F Donald Trump (@realDonaldTrump), Twitter, June 5, 2014, 6:49 a.m., “Pathetic excuse by London Mayor Sadiq Khan who had to think fast on his "no reason to be alarmed" statement. MSM is working hard to sell it!.” <https://twitter.com/realdonaldtrump/status/871725780535062528>

out of context; the Mayor told people that there was “no reason for alarm” due to the increased police presence they would see in the coming days, not the attack. Not surprisingly, these Trump tweets were posted at 4:31 am and 6:49 am; not exactly times of the day when the President is surrounded by advisors who can try to control his impulses.

While Roosevelt and Trump’s presidential bully pulpits have clear distinctions, both shared an uncanny ability to coin or popularize phrases and words into the American vernacular. Linguist and author Paul Dickson said of Roosevelt’s impact, “So many of his constructions are still around and still have his imprint on them. He just seems to have been the most colorful presidential contributor to the language.”¹⁹⁴ While people connect such political phrases as “bully pulpit,” “muckraker,” “square deal,” “my hat is in the ring” and “speak softly and carry a big stick” with Roosevelt, he also helped popularize such terms as “pack rat,” “loose cannon” and “lunatic fringe.”

Like his pre-presidential days, Trump relied heavily on catch phrases and key words to drive his message home. “Drain the Swamp,” “Witch Hunt” and “Sad” are among his go-to words. As this paper will discuss in future chapters, while he did not create these phrases or words, he has reintroduced them and in some cases given them new meaning.

Control. That is what Roosevelt and Trump looked to have when it came to getting their message out. Roosevelt sought it through harnessing the press. By such actions as creating a White House press office, granting never before seen access, photo-ops, and dedicating staff to

¹⁹⁴ Christopher Klein, “10 Words and Phrases Popularized by Presidents,” History.com, accessed May 1, 2018, <https://www.history.com/news/10-words-and-phrases-popularized-by-presidents>.

press management; he revolutionized the presidential bully pulpit. But these were also structured practices that placed control in Roosevelt's hand. Where Roosevelt took a subtle clever approach, President Trump has taken an abrasive confrontational style. He has not tried to hide his contempt for the media or his desire to control it. In fact, he has tried to exploit it to his advantage.

If one was to say, "the press is a body of flowing water," then Roosevelt was like a hydroelectric dam, looking to harness the power of that water to create electricity to push his agenda forward. Meanwhile, Trump is like a seawall that attempts to hold back the water. Basically, when it comes to dealing with the press during his administration, Trump does not give a damn.

Chapter 4: Outfront

It was approximately 8:30 pm when former President Theodore Roosevelt began his speech before what the *Milwaukee Sentinel* called “The greatest audience Milwaukee ever presented under one roof.”¹⁹⁵ He was the guest of the Milwaukee Press Club at their silver anniversary celebration. “In our country, I’m inclined to think that almost, if not quite, the most important profession is that of the newspaperman,” declared Roosevelt.¹⁹⁶ This was not hyperbole or a speaker playing to his crowd. As longtime reporter David Barry wrote, “President Roosevelt knew the value and potent influence of a news paragraph written as he wanted it written and disseminated through the proper influential channels better than any man whoever occupied the White House, before him, or since.”¹⁹⁷

Fast forward nearly a century later; a new means of communications, Twitter, had just arrived on the scene. On Monday May 4, 2009, the power of this real-time platform had yet to be fully unleashed. That Monday was a relatively slow news day. The H1N1 virus outbreak, rumors of quarterback Brett Favre signing with the Minnesota Vikings and the passing of comedian Dom DeLuise dominated headlines. But little did people know that at 2:54 pm history was forever changed. At that exact moment Donald Trump sent his first ever tweet; promoting his upcoming appearance on the *Late Show with David Letterman*.¹⁹⁸ 38,000 tweets later, Twitter has become President Trump’s preferred means of communications. “Well, let me tell

¹⁹⁵ “Great Work for Youth Lauded,” *Milwaukee Sentinel*, September 8, 1910, Front Page. <https://news.google.com/newspapers?nid=wZJMF1LD7PcC&dat=19100908&printsec=frontpage&hl=en>.

¹⁹⁶ Theodore Roosevelt, Milwaukee speech, September 7, 1910, accessed June 1, 2018, <http://www.theodore-roosevelt.com/images/research/txtspeeches/698.pdf>.

¹⁹⁷ Barry, *Forty Years in Washington*, 270.

¹⁹⁸ Donald Trump (@realDonaldTrump) Twitter, May 4, 2009, 11:54 a.m., “Be sure to tune in and watch Donald Trump on Late Night with David Letterman as he presents the Top Ten List tonight!” <https://twitter.com/realdonaldtrump/status/1698308935>.

you about Twitter,” Trump told Fox News host Carlson Tucker during a 2017 interview, “I think that maybe I wouldn't be here (president) if it wasn't for Twitter... And when I have close to 100 million people watching me on Twitter, including Facebook, including all of the Instagram, including POTUS, including lots of things... I have my own form of media.”¹⁹⁹

Theodore Roosevelt did not invent the newspaper. Donald Trump did not invent Twitter. But both men were innovators of how presidents used these mediums to deliver their message, sway the mainstream media’s agenda and influence public opinion. It is no coincidence that their political ascensions coincided with the evolution of these communication tools. Whatever you think of their politics, whatever you think of their tactics, there is no denying that these men were pioneers in maximizing the power of these communication outlets. This chapter examines how these men developed innovative tactics to exploit the full capability of these mediums.

When Theodore Roosevelt was born in 1858, there were approximately 387 daily newspapers in the country. When he left the Oval Office in 1909, there were more than 2,600 dailies.²⁰⁰ TR’s rise to power overlapped with the newspaper industry experiencing an unprecedented expansion. Several factors came together—technological advances, economic changes in both the country and the industry, and a journalistic evolution—to increase the circulation and impact of papers.

Rapid innovation in technology was drastically changing all facets of American life, including the newspaper business. The typewriter, telegraph and telephone enabled news to be

¹⁹⁹ Donald Trump, “Trump: Twitter allows me to get my message out,” interview by Tucker Carlson, Tucker Carlson Tonight, Fox News, video, 5:44, March 5, 2017, https://www.youtube.com/watch?time_continue=1&v=hKnv7krVni0.

²⁰⁰ Alfred McClung Lee, *The Daily Newspaper in America* (New York: the MacMillan Company, 1947), 317.

gathered faster than ever from around the globe. Color presses and the development of the halftone process allowed for photographs and pictorial Sunday magazines to be incorporated into papers. In the 1870s, the most advanced printing press could turn out 8,000 to 10,000 papers per hour. By the end of the century, the R. Hoe & Company's "double octuple" press pumped out 72,000 32-page papers in an hour.²⁰¹ Improvements such as electricity and fold cutters also helped increase mass production while decreasing production costs.

While production costs shrank, potential revenue streams increased. Sparked in large part by the department store boom and the establishment of brand name products, advertising started to take up more space in papers. The percentage of editorial material to advertising went from 70-30 to 50-50.²⁰² As result, newspapers and magazines saw their annual take from advertisements jump from \$39 million in 1879 to \$72 million just a decade later.²⁰³ Meanwhile, a population explosion was taking place in American cities. Urbanization combined with increased literacy, cheaper newspapers and a greater demand for news led to a circulation eruption. Daily papers saw their circulation skyrocket from 2.6 million in 1870 to 15 million in 1900.²⁰⁴ Over just a few decades, newspapers had become big business.

New technologies and new customers were joined by new types of journalism. By the time Theodore Roosevelt took the presidential oath of office, newspapers had undergone several transformations. First, papers went from party propaganda organs to yellow journalism rags. This move to sensationalism was led by two media giants who were pioneers in tabloid journalism. Paper owners Joseph Pulitzer (*New York World*, *St. Louis Post-Dispatch*) and

²⁰¹ Ibid, 125.

²⁰² Michael Schudson, *Discovering the News* (New York: Basic Books, 2011), 93.

²⁰³ Juergens, *News from the White House*, 6.

²⁰⁴ Edwin Emery and Michael Emery, *The Press and America* (Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall Inc), 23.

William Randolph Hearst (*New York Journal*, *The San Francisco Examiner*). These two took part in a circulation battle that saw them trying to outdo the other with over-the-top headlines and stories. Their rivalry only stimulated the growth of the industry even more, leading to papers being read by the masses like never before.

Partisanship and yellow journalism practices were eventually challenged by fact-based reporting. The partisan party paper gave way to objective reporting; thus, by not alienating anyone they attracted more readers. The editorial took a back seat to fact-based and investigative reporting, which meant the reporter replaced the editor as the most important person in the newsroom. This was a point not lost on President Roosevelt. “It is of course a mere truism to say that no other body of our countrymen wield as extensive an influence as those who write for the daily press and for the periodicals,” declared Roosevelt. Like no president before, Roosevelt understood the reporters “capacity of molders and guides of public thought.”²⁰⁵

But readers craved more than just the dry facts, and papers quickly discovered that human-interest stories attracted buyers. The power and prestige of the office created a natural curiosity about a president’s personal life, a point proven when comprehensive coverage of President Grover Cleveland’s White House wedding attracted enormous public attention. From Theodore Roosevelt’s larger than life personality to his hobbies (big game hunting, boxing) to his family (energetic young boys and a rebellious oldest daughter, Alice); Roosevelt captured the public’s imagination. Newspapers found TR a bottomless well of entertaining stories that helped sell papers.

²⁰⁵ Theodore Roosevelt, speech at Jamestown, VA, June 10, 1907, <http://www.theodore-roosevelt.com/images/research/txtspeeches/255.txt>.

Based on his love for reading and writing, it comes as no surprise that Roosevelt was fascinated by newspapers. No matter where he was in life—a ten-year-old traveling Europe, a student at Harvard, leading the Rough Riders in Cuba—the pen always went with him. He was a prolific writer and authored more than 40 books, hundreds of speeches and over 150,000 letters.²⁰⁶ He contributed articles to a wide spectrum of magazines including *Outlook*, *Cosmopolitan*, and the *Ladies' Home Journal*. It can even be argued that writing saved Roosevelt's life. When he was shot in the chest by a would-be assassin, it was his thick 50-page double folded speech tucked in his breast pocket that helped slow the bullet, sparing him almost certain death. His appetite for writing was matched by his passion for reading. Tales of Roosevelt's reading consumption have reached mythical proportions; "read entire books before breakfast"... "read two books a night and could quote from them five years later"... "He could sit in the midst of a talking, shouting crowd and be totally oblivious of and insensible to everything but the contents of the volume in his hands."²⁰⁷ As president, he started his day devouring the morning papers; often sending notes to the reporters and editors. Reading was his self-professed "disease" and throughout his life, it influenced not just his thinking, but his policies.²⁰⁸ Works such as *How the Other Half Lives* (Riis), *The Jungle* (Sinclair) and the writings of naturalist John Muir inspired Roosevelt to enact reforms and legislation.

²⁰⁶ Thomas Bailey and Katherine Joslin, *Theodore Roosevelt: A Literary Life*, 3.

²⁰⁷ Michael Rosenwald, "Trump isn't big on reading. Teddy Roosevelt consumed whole books before breakfast," *The Washington Post*, January 9, 2018, https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/retropolis/wp/2018/01/09/trump-isnt-big-on-reading-teddy-roosevelt-consumed-whole-books-before-breakfast/?utm_term=.dc3212b5f3e6. David McCullough, *American Experience: Theodore Roosevelt*, PBS, accessed July 30, 2018, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Kxlr3h_bMIU.

J.A. Zahm, "Theodore Roosevelt is a Hunter-Naturalist," *The Outlook*, March 12, 1919, Vol 121 435.

²⁰⁸ Zahm, "Theodore Roosevelt is a Hunter-Naturalist," 434.

As president, Roosevelt went right to work establishing relationships with the Washington press corps. He did more than just learn their names; the president familiarized himself with their backstories, opinions and work. Reporters were astonished when Roosevelt knew the smallest details or breaking news about their lives. When the *Chicago Evening Post* assigned Edward Clark to the White House, the reporter was stunned when Roosevelt recognized his name as the author of a book about birds that he had read a decade ago. Clark and the president then spent almost an hour discussing wildlife.²⁰⁹ *New York Times*' correspondent Charles Willis Thompson had earned Roosevelt's trust over the years. Which made it especially awkward for Thompson when he decided to leave the *Times* and join the *New York World*, a Pulitzer paper that was no friend to Roosevelt. A nervous Thompson entered the White House to break the news to the president. But before he could get a word out Roosevelt revealed that he already knew about the job change. Thompson was dumbfounded. "As for how I know it, I know those things," a delighted president pronounced.²¹⁰

Roosevelt saw himself as a writer, which led to him having an appreciation of and admiration for journalists that many politicians did not. He felt he was one of them and at times went out of his way to give them the respect he thought they deserved. While attending a banquet in Chicago, he noticed that members of his traveling press corps had not been seated at a table. Instead, they were forced to eat at a grill located below the banquet hall. The president decreed that the reporters were part of his party and he was going to eat downstairs with them, promising to return after dinner to deliver his speech. Panicked organizers immediately rushed to accommodate the reporters, permitting TR to return to his original table.²¹¹ Gestures like this

²⁰⁹ Juergens, *News from the White House*, 27.

²¹⁰ Charles Willis Thompson, *Presidents I've Known and Two Near Presidents*, 123.

²¹¹ J. Frederick Essary, *Covering Washington* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1927), 121.

helped Roosevelt win over members of the press, something that did not hurt his cause when it came time for them to write their articles and editorials.

Roosevelt did not just know the reporters and editors, he knew about the inner workings of the paper industry. Roosevelt learned how news cycles functioned, allowing him to maximize newspapers to their fullest potential. For example, readership on Saturdays was low. So, he released bad news late on Fridays, meaning fewer people saw it. He learned that Sundays were slow news days; as a result, editors were desperate for stories to fill Monday's edition. Roosevelt reacted accordingly by withholding announcements until Sunday evening, knowing that it would receive prime real estate in the next day's papers.

Another Roosevelt technique was the 21st century version of the re-tweet. When a complimentary editorial was printed in one paper, Roosevelt asked other papers to reprint it. In one instance, he pressed William Loeb to ask Republican friendly papers to reprint a favorable editorial, including the complimentary headline word for word.²¹²

One of Roosevelt's most successful strategic moves was the leak. TR shared information with reliable reporters, who were entrusted with not revealing their source. By intentionally leaking information "off the record," Roosevelt could get a story out and make it appear to be coming from a non-partisan source, which gave it more credibility. During the coal strike of 1902, the White House leaked to newspapers that Roosevelt was going to send in the army to take over the mines. The rumor caused fear among mine owners and helped push them to agree to a fact-finding commission to study the strike and propose solutions.²¹³ A few years later, President Roosevelt leaked the threat of a tariff debate to help get his railroad reform passed.

²¹² Elmer Cromwell, *Presidential Leadership of Public Opinion* (Bloomington, Indiana University Press, 1965), 21.

²¹³ Kathleen Dalton, *Theodore Roosevelt: A Strenuous Life*, 235.

The issue of tariff reform was a political hot potato that nobody wanted to touch. It held the potential to split the Republican party which was already divided over the topic. At the same time Roosevelt was trying to get his railroad bill passed. The president disclosed that he was considering calling an extra session of Congress to discuss tariff revision. Not wanting to open the can of worms that was tariffs, Republicans turned their attention to the lesser of the two evils, railroad reform.

Eager to push his views and agenda, Roosevelt often fed story ideas and information to reporters. Shortly after becoming president, Roosevelt helped his close friend and journalist William Allen White with an unsympathetic profile on TR's rival, New York boss and Senator Thomas Platt. White called Platt "narrow, both morally and intellectually," "a dwarf on stilts," and "a cold blooded, mousey, fidgety little man."²¹⁴ White's less than flattering article appeared in *McClure's* and immediately caused Platt to snap. He accused Roosevelt of aiding the piece, demanded White be banned from the White House and even threatened a libel suit. Originally, both Roosevelt and White denied that TR had anything to do with the story. However, years later White admitted that Roosevelt had provided him with information. "I was cautious enough never to print any story that Roosevelt gave me without getting the story from another source. Generally he told me where to find the other source," admitted White.²¹⁵

Sometimes Roosevelt even went so far as to take matters into his own hands, or should it be said "his own pen." Reporter David Barry recalled that Roosevelt was not shy about writing down exactly what he wanted in an article. During the battle over the formation of a Bureau of Corporations, an office that would have the power to request corporate reports and conduct

²¹⁴ William Allen White, "Platt," *McClure's Magazine*, December 1901, 144-153.

²¹⁵ William Allen White, *The Autobiography of William Allen White* (New York: The MacMillan Company, 1946), 346.

investigations, Roosevelt was shown a telegram sent by a Standard Oil Company's attorney to various Senators and Congressmen. The telegram suggested they should be "opposed to any anti-trust legislation... it must be stopped."²¹⁶ When the story hit the presses, it caused an uproar and any attempts to block the bill failed; under public pressure it easily passed 251 to 10. According to Barry, "the man who gave the story to the newspapers and who wrote the preliminary news item that was sent to the afternoon papers was the President of the United States."²¹⁷

Stealing headlines was another favorite device of TR's. Roosevelt understood that by making news, he could keep his rivals or unflattering stories out of it. By swamping the newspapers with material or releasing a big statement at just the right time, he could suppress the coverage provided to rivals or negative press. The events of January 31, 1908 provide evidence of Roosevelt successfully using this technique. New York Governor Charles Evans Hughes was set to deliver a major speech that night, what many assumed was the launching point for his presidential campaign. With his support thrown behind William H. Taft, Roosevelt looked to steal Hughes' thunder. That evening, shortly before Hughes was scheduled to deliver his address, the president issued a forceful statement demanding a series of legislations; including calling for workmen's compensation and protection of union members.²¹⁸ Roosevelt's release dominated front pages the next morning, grabbing the spotlight from Hughes' speech. The

²¹⁶ "Trust Take a Hand," *New York Tribune*, February 8, 1903, Front page.

²¹⁷ Barry, *Forty Years in Washington*, 271.

²¹⁸ Juergens, *News from the White House*, 43.

president was less than sympathetic, telling reporters, “If Hughes is going to play the game, he must learn the tricks.”²¹⁹

As Roosevelt mastered the newspapers, future presidents also seized upon new media outlets. President Franklin D. Roosevelt conquered radio with his “fireside chats” and President John F. Kennedy pioneered the use of television. Now President Donald Trump has capitalized on Twitter, turning it into his social networking soap box.

In 2006, when Twitter co-founder Jack Dorsey sent the first tweet, “just setting up my twttr,” nobody could have predicted that it was the beginning of a communications revolution.²²⁰ What started as a 140-character real-time status sharing system became a powerful platform for social change (#metoo, #BringBackOurGirls), has been credited with feeding political revolutions and can cause a company’s stock to rise or fall based on a single tweet.²²¹ 335 million people have active accounts and one of them is the 45th president of the United States.

While Roosevelt had a tough time putting down the pen or a book, Trump never had that problem. Trump claimed he does not have to read much because he can make the right decisions “with the very little knowledge other than the knowledge I (already) had, plus the words ‘common sense,’ because I have a lot of common sense and I have a lot of business ability.”²²²

²¹⁹William Harbaugh, *Power and Responsibility: The Life and Times of Theodore Roosevelt* (Newtown, CT: American Political Biography Press, 1997), 335.

²²⁰ Jack Dorsey (@jack), Twitter, March 20, 2016, 12:50 p.m., “just setting up my twttr,” <https://twitter.com/jack/status/20>.

²²¹ Monica Anderson and Paul Hitlin, “Social Media Conversations About Race,” Pew Research Center, August 15, 2016, <http://www.pewinternet.org/2016/08/15/the-hashtag-blacklivesmatter-emerges-social-activism-on-twitter/>.

Heather Brown, Emily Guskin and Amy Mitchell, “The Role of Social Media in the Arab Uprisings,” Pew Research Center, November 28, 2013, <http://www.journalism.org/2012/11/28/role-social-media-arab-uprisings/>.

²²² Marc Fisher, “Donald Trump doesn’t read much. Being president probably wouldn’t change that,” *The Washington Post*, July 16, 2016,

He also believes that he has conquered the world of literature, having co-written over a dozen books. During a 2016 campaign stop, Trump bragged, “I’m very highly educated. I know words, I know the best words.”²²³ The president’s critics suggest that while he may have mastered the art of the deal, he has not mastered the English language. His tweets frequently contain fragmented sentences, misspellings and capitalized words, drawing the wrath of wordsmiths and proofreaders.

Responding to his critics, Trump tweeted:

After having written many best selling books, and somewhat priding myself on my ability to write, it should be noted that Fake News constantly likes to pour over my tweets looking for a mistake. I capitalize certain words only for emphasis, not b/c they should be capitalized!²²⁴

Not surprisingly, the Twitter grammar police quickly pounced on the fact that Trump had used the wrong “pour.” Pour means “to cause to flow in a stream,” whereas pore means “to read or study attentively—usually used with the word over.”²²⁵

Twitter is the perfect outlet for the impulsive Trump. It lets him instantly get his unfiltered message out at any time, day or night. During his first year in office, he averaged

https://www.washingtonpost.com/politics/donald-trump-doesnt-read-much-being-president-probably-wouldnt-change-that/2016/07/17/d2ddf2bc-4932-11e6-90a8-fb84201e0645_story.html?utm_term=.3d93a07b6148.

²²³ Donald Trump, “Trump: ‘I have the best words’,” filmed December 30, 2015 in South Carolina, video, :34, https://www.washingtonpost.com/video/national/trump-i-have-the-best-words/2017/04/05/53a9ae4a-19fd-11e7-8598-9a99da559f9e_video.html?utm_term=.f52ce8aeed9b.

²²⁴ Donald Trump (@realDonaldTrump), Twitter, July 3, 2018, 4:13 pm, “After having written many best selling books, and somewhat priding myself on my ability to write, it should be noted that the Fake News constantly likes to pore over my tweets looking for a mistake. I capitalize certain words only for emphasis, not b/c they should be capitalized!,”

<https://twitter.com/realdonaldtrump/status/1014286054805987330?lang=en>

²²⁵ Merriam Webster Dictionary, accessed July 1, 2018, <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/pore>.

roughly ten tweets per day.²²⁶ Capped at 280 characters, Trump has to be short and direct, which meshes with his speaking style. His short catch phrases and slogans play perfectly on Twitter. The social networking outlet allows the president to directly reach his 53 million followers.²²⁷ Interestingly, only 4% of Americans read Trump’s tweets directly on Twitter and more Democrats read them than Republicans.²²⁸ The real effectiveness of Trump’s tweets comes not from the number of people reading them, but the attention the national media gives them. Cable news and newspapers now treat the president’s tweets like press releases or official statements, giving them ample coverage, in the process, exposing them to a much larger audience than Twitter alone can provide—a point obviously not lost on Trump. Like Roosevelt, Trump understands news cycles. By releasing an early morning tweet, President Trump can dictate the entire day’s news coverage.

Twitter also provides Trump with a “weapon of mass deception.”²²⁹ As Roosevelt stole headlines and released stories to distract from negative press, Trump attempts to use Twitter in a similar way. In August 2018, Trump’s former political aide Omarosa Manigault Newman released a book, *Unhinged: An Insider’s Account of the Trump White House*. The book was a tell-all memoir that painted the president as “a racist, bigot and a misogynist” who is in “mental

²²⁶ Amanda Willis and Alysha Love, “All the President’s Tweets,” CNN, October 30, 2018, <http://edition.cnn.com/interactive/2017/politics/trump-tweets/>.

²²⁷ Donald Trump (@realDonaldTrump), Twitter, accessed May 4, 2018, https://twitter.com/realDonaldTrump?ref_src=twsrc%5Egoogle%7Ctwcamp%5Eserp%7Ctwgr%5Eauthor.

²²⁸ Frank Newport, “Deconstructing Trump’s Use of Twitter,” Gallop, May 16, 2018, <https://news.gallup.com/poll/234509/deconstructing-trump-twitter.aspx>.

²²⁹ Paul Fahri, “Were Trump’s ‘Hamilton’ tweets ‘weapons of mass distraction’?,” *The Washington Post*, November 11, 2016, https://www.washingtonpost.com/lifestyle/style/were-trumps-hamilton-tweets-weapons-of-mass-distraction/2016/11/21/4367dfda-af8a-11e6-8616-52b15787add0_story.html?utm_term=.a5af3c382f8e.

decline.”²³⁰ In an attempt to suppress the media coverage Manigault Newman was receiving, Trump tried to change the national narrative by threatening to revoke the security clearances of former government officials. The president found his distraction bogeyman in former CIA director John Brennan. Trump tweeted that Brennan “will go down as easily the WORST” CIA director in history and “a loudmouth, partisan, political hack who cannot be trusted with the secrets to our country!”²³¹

After his meeting with Russian President Vladimir Putin in July of 2018, President Trump came under heavy criticism from both sides of the political aisle. Experts blasted him for what appeared at times as Trump defending Putin against charges of Russian interference in the 2016 U.S. presidential election. In the days following the summit, Trump again turned to Twitter to distract from the criticism he was receiving. He posted these tweets:

The NFL National Anthem Debate is alive and well again - can't believe it! Isn't it in contract that players must stand at attention, hand on heart? The \$40,000,000 Commissioner must now make a stand. First time kneeling, out for game. Second time kneeling, out for season/no pay!

Looking more & more like the Trump Campaign for President was illegally being spied upon (surveillance) for the political gain of Crooked Hillary Clinton and the DNC. Ask her how that worked out - she did better with Crazy Bernie. Republicans must get tough now. An illegal Scam!²³²

²³⁰Jocelyn McClurg, “Omarosa's ‘Unhinged’ bombshells: Trump racist, mentally ‘in decline,’ ‘physically’ unwell,” *USA Today*, August 12, 2018, <https://www.usatoday.com/story/life/books/2018/08/10/omarosa-unhinged-bombshells-trump-racist-mentally-decline-physically-unwell-melania-trump/951115002/>

²³¹ Donald Trump (@realDonaldTrump), Twitter, August 18, 2018, 6:12 a.m., “Has anyone looked at the mistakes that John Brennan made while serving as CIA Director? He will go down as easily the WORST in history & since getting out, he has become nothing less than a loudmouth, partisan, political hack who cannot be trusted with the secrets to our country!,” <https://twitter.com/realDonaldTrump/status/1030804685136035841>.

²³² Donald Trump (@realDonaldTrump), Twitter, July 22, 2018, 3:49 a.m., “Looking more & more like the Trump Campaign for President was illegally being spied upon (surveillance) for the political gain of Crooked Hillary Clinton and the DNC. Ask her how that worked out - she did better with Crazy Bernie. Republicans must get tough now. An illegal Scam!,” <https://twitter.com/realdonaldtrump/status/102098415235777408?lang=en>.

To Iranian President Rouhani: NEVER, EVER THREATEN THE UNITED STATES AGAIN OR YOU WILL SUFFER CONSEQUENCES THE LIKES OF WHICH FEW THROUGHOUT HISTORY HAVE EVER SUFFERED BEFORE. WE ARE NO LONGER A COUNTRY THAT WILL STAND FOR YOUR DEMENTED WORDS OF VIOLENCE & DEATH. BE CAUTIOUS!²³³

These topics had not been in the headlines. The tweets were an effort by Trump to draw attention away from his disastrous summit performance.

While Roosevelt pushed papers to republish editorials, Trump has relied upon the retweet to attract awareness to and support for various issues. However, the president has drawn fire for not only retweeting controversial material, but also then denying any accountability for their content. During the 2016 campaign, Trump retweeted one of his supporter's claims that Marco Rubio and Ted Cruz were ineligible to be president, questioning their citizenship. When an interviewer pressed Trump about the retweets he responded, "I mean, let people make their own determination. I've never looked at it, George (Stephanopoulos). I honestly have never looked at it. As somebody said, he's not [eligible]...and I retweet things and we start dialogue and it's very interesting."²³⁴ According to Trump's logic, since he did not author the original tweets it disavows him from any inaccuracies they may include.

In November 2018, President Trump retweeted three videos that claimed to show violence committed by Muslims. They had originally been posted by a far-right British

²³³Donald Trump (@realDonaldTrump), Twitter, July 22,2018, 8:24 p.m., "To Iranian President Rouhani: NEVER, EVER THREATEN THE UNITED STATES AGAIN OR YOU WILL SUFFER CONSEQUENCES THE LIKES OF WHICH FEW THROUGHOUT HISTORY HAVE EVER SUFFERED BEFORE. WE ARE NO LONGER A COUNTRY THAT WILL STAND FOR YOUR DEMENTED WORDS OF VIOLENCE & DEATH. BE CAUTIOUS!," <https://twitter.com/realDonaldTrump/status/1021234525626609666>.

²³⁴'This Week' Transcript: Ted Cruz, Marco Rubio, and Donald, accessed July 20, 2018, ABC News, <https://abcnews.go.com/Politics/week-transcript-ted-cruz-marco-rubio-donald-trump/story?id=37092853>.

nationalist who was a member of a hate group and had been convicted for harassing a Muslim woman. The retweets drew the immediate ire of British Prime Minister Theresa May who scolded Trump in a released statement saying, “the president is wrong to have done this.”²³⁵ When questioned by members of the media about the retweets, press secretary Sarah Huckabee Sanders deflected criticism by arguing, “Whether it’s a real video, the threat is real, and that’s what the president is talking about, the need for national security.”²³⁶ The president’s team spun it that he was initiating a conversation; others argued that he was promoting inflammatory videos. Trump later offered a semi-apology; “Certainly, I wasn’t endorsing anybody. I knew nothing about them,” Trump said. “If you’re telling me that they’re horrible people, horrible racist people, I would certainly apologize if you’d like me to do that.”²³⁷ Once again, Trump used the “I did not know” excuse to absolve himself of any wrong doing.

Trump’s retweeting highlights one of the dangers of Twitter use by this president, a reduction in the fact-checking layers. In the past, the president’s opinions often came through an officially released statement or via a spokesperson. Before a statement was given to the press it was reviewed by several pairs of eyes. Today, Trump can just push “send” or “retweet” without a qualified team filtering or correcting any factual inaccuracies.

Safire’s Political Dictionary defines “trial balloon” as “A testing of public reaction by suggestion of an idea through another person, causing no embarrassment to the balloonist if the

²³⁵ Peter Baker and Eileen Sullivan, “Trump Shares Inflammatory Anti-Muslim Videos, and Britain’s Leader Condemns Them,” *New York Times*, November 29, 2017, <https://www.nytimes.com/2017/11/29/us/politics/trump-anti-muslim-videos-jayda-fransen.html>.

²³⁶ Anderson Cooper, “Trump’s retweets potentially dangerous,” Anderson Cooper 360, CNN, video, 4:20 accessed July 30, 2018, <https://www.cnn.com/videos/politics/2017/12/01/keeping-them-honest-kth-trump-retweets-ac360.cnn>.

²³⁷ Henry Chu, “Donald Trump Say He Would Apologize,” *Variety*, January 26, 2018, <https://variety.com/2018/politics/news/donald-trump-apologize-britain-over-controversial-videos-piers-morgan-1202677878/>.

reaction is not good.”²³⁸ While he did not invent the technique, President Theodore Roosevelt is credited with mastering it. During his time in office, he often floated proposals “off-the record” to reporters. These trial balloons allowed Roosevelt to test the political waters without risk.

A classic example of a Roosevelt trial balloon occurred during the early years of his presidency when TR found himself in a highly publicized feud with General Nelson A. Miles. The general’s heroics during the Civil War and Indian Wars earned him enormous popularity, but Miles had drawn the fury of President Roosevelt. First, the general criticized a naval board’s findings about the performance of U.S. admirals in the battle of Santiago Bay during the Spanish-American War. Then he alleged that American troops had engaged in “cruelties and barbarities” on Filipinos during the Philippine campaign. Roosevelt had enough, and wrote a friend that “General Miles’ usefulness is at an end, he must go.”²³⁹ But getting rid of the war hero was easier said than done. At the same time, TR was trying to get an army reorganizational bill through Congress. Roosevelt worried that axing the popular military figure might be a public relations nightmare and jeopardize the bill’s chances of passing. So, he sent out a few trial balloons to gauge public opinion on forcing the general into retirement. First, he wrote several journalist friends to measure their thoughts on the subject. Then, the administration leaked to newspaper men that it was looking into forcing Miles into retirement.

The *Evening Times* headlines screamed “Gen. Miles Retirement Has Been Decided Upon.” the attached article announced that the administration was so displeased with the general

²³⁸ William Safire, *Safire’s Political Dictionary* (Oxford: University Press, 2008), 750.

²³⁹ Theodore Roosevelt to Oswald Garrison Villard, March 22, 1902, Theodore Roosevelt Digital Library, Dickinson State University, <http://www.theodorerooseveltcenter.org/Research/Digital-Library/Record/ImageViewer?libID=o283040&imageNo=1>.

that he might be “retired from active duty in the near future.”²⁴⁰ It did not take long for Roosevelt to get the feedback he was looking for. The rumor caused a stir; Republican Senator Nelson Aldrich declared that if the president forced Miles out that he would discover that “General Miles has many friends in and out of Congress, and they will be heard from vigorously.”²⁴¹ With strong support from veterans’ groups and both sides of the political aisle, Roosevelt decided against sacking Miles. It proved a wise move; the army bill eventually passed and Roosevelt cured his Miles headache by sending the general half way around the world to the Philippines on a fact-finding mission.

Twitter allows President Trump to release trial balloons without the assistance of any middleman. University of California at Berkeley Professor George Lakoff argues that trial balloons are one of Trump’s cornerstone Twitter devices. As an example, Lakoff points to a Trump tweet from December 2017:

“The United States must greatly strengthen and expand its nuclear capability until such time as the world comes to its senses regarding nukes.”²⁴²

This tweet was a way for Trump to get the nation’s pulse on nuclear escalation. The tweet made news for about a day, then faded from the headlines. Lakoff contends that this told Trump that he could push the issue of nuclear escalation further without fear of public backlash.

One of President Trump’s favorite trial balloon Twitter targets has been special counsel Robert Mueller’s investigation into Russian interference during the 2016 Presidential election.

²⁴⁰ “Gen. Miles’ Retirement Has Been Decided Upon,” *The Evening Times*, March 22, 1902 Front Page.

²⁴¹ Ibid.

²⁴² Donald Trump (@realDonaldTrump), Twitter, December 22, 2016, 8:50 a.m., “The United States must greatly strengthen and expand its nuclear capability until such time as the world comes to its senses regarding nukes,” <https://twitter.com/realdonaldtrump/status/811977223326625792?lang=en>.

In March 2018, Trump unleashed a series of highly critical tweets; among other things he questioned “Why does the Mueller team have 13 hardened Democrats, some big Crooked Hillary supporters, and Zero Republicans?” and called it a “WITCH HUNT.”²⁴³ Senate Minority Leader Charles Schumer took to Twitter to respond, accusing Trump of “floating trial balloons about derailing” the investigation.²⁴⁴

A few months later, Trump sent out this tweet in regards to the Mueller investigation:

As has been stated by numerous legal scholars, I have the absolute right to PARDON myself, but why would I do that when I have done nothing wrong? In the meantime, the never ending Witch Hunt, led by 13 very Angry and Conflicted Democrats (& others) continues into the mid-terms!²⁴⁵

It appeared the president was sending out a trial balloon regarding possibly using his executive powers for a self-pardon. Trump sent the tweet on a Monday; the previous day his attorney Rudolph Giuliani appeared on several Sunday morning news programs sending out trail balloons by arguing that Trump “probably does” have the right to pardon himself.²⁴⁶

²⁴³ Donald Trump (@realDonaldTrump), Twitter, March 18, 2018, 5:35 am, “Why does the Mueller team have 13 hardened Democrats, some big Crooked Hillary supporters, and Zero Republicans? Another Dem recently added...does anyone think this is fair? And yet, there is NOCOLLUSION!,
[“https://twitter.com/realDonaldTrump/status/975350027169206273?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw%7Ctwcamp%5Etweetembed%7Ctwterm%5E975350027169206273&ref_url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.washingtonpost.com%2Fnews%2Fpost-politics%2Fwp%2F2018%2F03%2F18%2Ftrump-said-muellers-team-has-13-hardened-democrats-here-are-the-facts%2F](https://twitter.com/realDonaldTrump/status/975350027169206273?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw%7Ctwcamp%5Etweetembed%7Ctwterm%5E975350027169206273&ref_url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.washingtonpost.com%2Fnews%2Fpost-politics%2Fwp%2F2018%2F03%2F18%2Ftrump-said-muellers-team-has-13-hardened-democrats-here-are-the-facts%2F).”

²⁴⁴ Chuck Schumer (@SenSchumer), Twitter, March 18, 2018, 6:46 p.m., “. @realDonaldTrump is floating trial balloons about derailing the Mueller investigation. Our GOP colleagues, particularly the leadership, have an obligation to our country to stand up now and make it clear that firing Mueller is a red line for our democracy that cannot be crossed,”
<https://twitter.com/senschumer/status/975367746899861506?lang=en>.

²⁴⁵ Donald Trump (@realDonaldTrump), Twitter, June 4, 2018, “As has been stated by numerous legal scholars, I have the absolute right to PARDON myself, but why would I do that when I have done nothing wrong? In the meantime, the never ending Witch Hunt, led by 13 very Angry and Conflicted Democrats (& others) continues into the mid-terms!,”
<https://twitter.com/realDonaldTrump/status/1003616210922147841>.

²⁴⁶ John Wagner, “Trump says he has ‘absolute right’ to pardon himself of federal crimes but denies any wrongdoing,” *The Washington Post*, June 4, 2018,

Centuries from now, history books will label both President Roosevelt and Trump as “Republican,” but in many ways they were party crashers—men who were not blindly loyal to the GOP; and often put what they thought was best for the country, or themselves, ahead of the party. President Roosevelt had to balance the conservative stalwarts and the progressives wing of the party. As a candidate, Trump found himself a dividing wedge among Republicans. Some Republicans referred to him as a RINO (Republican In Name Only) and attempted to block him from winning the nomination, as witnessed in the “Never Trump” campaign. Roosevelt and Trump had a level of independence and were not afraid to use their press outlets to circumvent, bring public pressure upon or, in Trump’s case, personally attack their own party.

Scuffling with the Republican establishment was old hat for Theodore Roosevelt by the time he became president. After helping him get elected Governor of New York, the Republican machine, led by Senator Thomas Platt, expected Roosevelt to be their political puppet. But Roosevelt wasted no time establishing his independence. When Platt told TR whom to appoint to the coveted Superintendent of Public Works patronage job, Roosevelt refused. “It was necessary to have it understood at the outset that the Administration was my Administration and no one else’s but mine... So I told the Senator very politely that I was sorry, but that I could not appoint this man. This caused an explosion,” Roosevelt wrote in his autobiography.²⁴⁷ Roosevelt’s support of a bill to tax public services only worsened his relationship with the party. Thomas Platt had had enough. He worked hard behind the scenes to help get Roosevelt the

https://www.washingtonpost.com/politics/trump-says-he-has-absolute-right-to-pardon-himself-of-federal-crimes-but-denies-any-wrongdoing/2018/06/04/3d78348c-67dd-11e8-bea7-c8eb28bc52b1_story.html?noredirect=on&utm_term=.23f74511a0d3.

²⁴⁷ Roosevelt, *Theodore Roosevelt: An Autobiography*, 294-5.

second spot on the 1900 Republican ticket, so to get him out of New York State and exiled to the vice presidency.

Even his immense popularity as president was not enough to satisfy some Republicans who looked to replace him as the party's nominee in 1904. At the Ohio Republican convention in 1903, some party members pushed the kingmaker Mark Hanna to endorse Roosevelt, he hesitated. Republican Senator Nathan Scott (WV) warned his party that "If we renominate Roosevelt, it means defeat."²⁴⁸ "I do not believe the wiser heads of the Republican Party want him as the nominee," revealed Senator John Morgan (D-AL). "The trouble is they cannot keep him where they can rely on him. Every now and then he bucks and runs off. They have to lasso him and haul him back."²⁴⁹

President Roosevelt continued to flash his independent streak throughout his time in office. During his administration he butted heads with various factions of the Republican party over his intervention in the coal strike of 1902, support of the Hepburn Act, use of the Sherman Anti-Trust Act to break-up the Northern Securities Company, and his dining with African-American leader Booker T. Washington. Fed up with the inner party fighting, a frustrated Roosevelt vented that "there are several eminent statesmen at the other end of Pennsylvania Avenue whom I would gladly lend to the Russian Government, if they cared to expend them as bodyguards for grand dukes whenever there was a likelihood of dynamite bombs being exploded."²⁵⁰ Feeling stifled by his fellow Republicans, Roosevelt declared that he "was forced to abandon the effort to persuade them (Republicans) to come my way, and then I achieved

²⁴⁸ Lewis Gould, *The Presidency of Theodore Roosevelt* (Lawrence: University of Kansas Press, 1991) 132.

²⁴⁹ Kearns Goodwin, *The Bully Pulpit*, 321.

²⁵⁰ Roosevelt, *Letters of Theodore Roosevelt*, vol. 4, 1129.

results only by appealing over the heads of the Senate and the House leaders to the people; who were the masters of both of us.”²⁵¹

Meat safety was an issue that found Roosevelt at odds with many fellow Republicans. For decades, activists had unsuccessfully crusaded to get pure food and drug regulations passed. But by 1906, public support for consumer protection was growing, sparked in part by the publication of Upton Sinclair’s *The Jungle*; a novel that provided a horrific look inside the meatpacking industry.

Theodore Roosevelt was no fan of Upton Sinclair; even referring to him as “crackpot.”²⁵² Still the two shared a desire to change the meatpacking industry. While Sinclair was focused on helping the plight of workers, the president’s focus was on enacting meat inspection legislation. It may seem puzzling today, but Roosevelt faced stiff resistance to food regulation, and not just from the powerful meatpacking industry. Conservative members of his own party were opposed to food or drug legislation; they were against any federal regulation of industry, not to mention that they did not want to anger the powerful meat industry.

Several Republicans, such as Senator Nelson Aldrich, Representatives Joseph Cannon, James Wadsworth and William Lorimer, contested regulation. However, opponents came to realize that the public was demanding some level of reform. Grasping that they were fighting a losing battle, Wadsworth and Lorimer wrote a very meatpacking industry friendly bill that they hoped to sneak through Congress. Roosevelt saw right through what they were up to and used the press to launch a counter attack. He had commissioned an investigation of the meatpacking industry; the result was the explosive Neill-Reynold report which confirmed the gory facts

²⁵¹ Roosevelt, *Theodore Roosevelt: An Autobiography*, 367.

²⁵² Fulton Ourlser, *Behold This Dreamer!* (Boston: Little Brown, 1964), 417.

Sinclair had exposed. Roosevelt leaked details of the report to the papers and then released a letter that he had sent to Wadsworth demanding legislation.²⁵³ Realizing that all hope was lost, Cannon and other Republicans reached a compromise with Roosevelt, leading to the passage of the Meat Inspection Act of 1906. Roosevelt had masterfully used the newspapers to place political pressure on Congress and push through his agenda, a point not lost on Upton Sinclair who attributed much of the buzz around and impact of *The Jungle* to “the greatest publicity man of that time,” President Roosevelt.²⁵⁴

Roosevelt was not afraid to use his bully pulpit to advance his agenda, even at the expense of his own party. The same can be said of Donald Trump. While trying to win the presidential nomination, Donald Trump did not hesitate to use Twitter to strike hard at his Republican competition or party leadership. It was clear that Trump’s loyalty was not to the party or any conservative ideology, but to himself. While some saw his winning the party’s nomination as the equivalent of a hostile takeover, there was hope that once in office he would act more “presidential” and become a team player who unified the party. That has not been the case. Republican Senators Lindsay Graham (“He just can’t forget his election trouncing”), Jeff Flake (“toxic”) and Bob Corker (“couldn’t get elected dog catcher in Tennessee”) were among those slammed by Trump insult tweets.²⁵⁵

As president, Trump continues to use his Twitter account to take personal shots at fellow Republicans. The battle to repeal and replace the Affordable Health Care Act, often called

²⁵³ “Packers Not Agreed,” *New York Tribune*, June 9, 1906, Front page.

²⁵⁴ Upton Sinclair, *The Autobiography of Upton Sinclair* (New York: Harcourt, Brace & World, 1962), 118.

²⁵⁵ Christian Ingraham, “Trump attacks Republicans on Twitter, but Democrats? Not so much,” *The Washington Post*, August 25, 2018, https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/wonk/wp/2017/08/25/trump-attacks-republicans-on-twitter-but-democrats-not-so-much/?utm_term=.909ed3dd01f1.

Obamacare, highlighted Trump’s fearlessness in using Twitter to take on members of his own party.

In the summer of 2017, Republicans in Congress attempted to overhaul the healthcare system. Anxious to deliver on one of his campaign promises, Trump eagerly supported their effort to get rid of Obamacare. The president even threw a premature celebratory photo-op in the White House Rose Garden in honor of a Republican healthcare bill passing the House of Representatives. However, Trump became frustrated when it looked like Republicans in the Senate could not muster the necessary votes to pass the legislation. Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell soon found himself in Trump’s tweet crosshairs:

Senator Mitch McConnell said I had “excessive expectations,” but I don’t think so. After seven years of hearing repeal and replace, why not done?²⁵⁶

Can you believe that Mitch McConnell, who has screamed repeal and replace for seven years, couldn’t get it done?²⁵⁷

Mitch, get back to work and put repeal and replace, tax reform and cuts and a great infrastructure bill on my desk for signing.²⁵⁸

Most politicians are scared of alienating their own party. Trump feared no repercussions. Trump’s Twitter barbs allowed him to distance himself from the bill’s defeat, placing the blame

²⁵⁶ Donald Trump (@realDonaldTrump), Twitter, August 9, 2017, 11:14 a.m., “Senator Mitch McConnell said I had “excessive expectations,” but I don't think so. After 7 years of hearing Repeal & Replace, why not done?,”

<https://twitter.com/realdonaldtrump/status/895347654431035393?lang=en>.

²⁵⁷ Donald Trump (@realDonaldTrump), Twitter, August 10, 2017, 3:54 a.m., “Can you believe that Mitch McConnell, who has screamed Repeal & Replace for 7 years, couldn't get it done. Must Repeal & Replace ObamaCare!,”

<https://twitter.com/realdonaldtrump/status/895599179522650112?lang=en>.

²⁵⁸ Donald Trump (@realDonaldTrump), Twitter, August 10, 2017, 9:40 a.m., “Mitch, get back to work and put Repeal & Replace, Tax Reform & Cuts and a great Infrastructure Bill on my desk for signing. You can do it!,”

<https://twitter.com/realdonaldtrump/status/895686351529672704?lang=en>.

on McConnell and the Republican party. In the process, this only solidified Trump's image as the "outsider," looking to drain the swamp of an ineffective government, with his base.

Although both Presidents Roosevelt and Trump aggressively used newspapers and Twitter to confront their own party, there were sharp contrasts in their tone and targets. As seen in his fight to get meatpacking legislation passed. President Roosevelt relied on newspapers to promote his meatpacking reforms; his focus was on gaining support for agenda, not in specifically attacking the party or individuals. During the fight to pass health care reform, President Trump's use of Twitter was not centered on unifying support for repeal and replace, but more on threatening and insulting those he felt responsible if it failed.

A comparison of how the two presidents handled clashes with military heroes is also very telling and again underlines their differences. As previously mentioned, President Roosevelt feuded with General Nelson Miles during his first administration. Roosevelt fumed about Miles in private, in meetings, and in personal letters. At one point, Roosevelt drafted an open letter to send to Miles that harshly rebuked the general. Though tame by today's standards, the president's staff considered it too strong and it was never released.²⁵⁹ Roosevelt raged privately, but showed self-restraint publicly. He understood there was nothing to gain for himself, or his agenda, from a nasty public spat with a popular war hero

The saying is "silence is deafening." However, sometimes, silence speaks volumes. This was exactly the case regarding President Trump's reaction to the death of his rival and war hero, Senator John McCain. The Trump-McCain feud began just weeks after Trump declared his candidacy for the presidency. After Trump's controversial speech announcing his run for president, where he called Mexican's rapist, McCain quickly distanced himself from the

²⁵⁹ Morris, *Theodore Rex*, 97.

candidate. Things got even more tense when Trump disparaged McCain saying the Senator was “a war hero because he was captured” and that he liked “people that weren’t captured.” Their relationship went from bad to worse when Trump became president, climaxing in McCain’s dramatic “nay” vote that killed the GOP plan to repeal the Affordable Care Act in the Senate. Afterwards, Trump continually hammered on McCain at numerous rallies. Then in August 2018, as the Senator battled brain cancer, Trump never mentioned McCain’s name during the signing of the John S. McCain National Defense Authorization Act For Fiscal Year 2019.

When McCain passed away in late August 2018, Trump was uncharacteristically silent. He sent a brief tweet sending condolences to McCain’s family, but made no mention of the late Senator’s achievements or service to the country. Reportedly, Trump rejected a longer statement prepared by his staff that praised McCain’s life.²⁶⁰ During encounters with the press a few days later, he ignored several questions about McCain. While Trump could not bring himself to acknowledge McCain’s contributions, just days before, he could not stop tweeting praise for his former campaign chairman Paul Manafort, who had just been convicted of tax and bank fraud. The president sent a tweet calling Manafort a “brave man” with a “wonderful family.”²⁶¹ It was not until Trump came under heavy pressure from veteran’s groups and White House senior level staffers that he finally released a statement paying McCain proper respect.

²⁶⁰ Felicia Sonmez, Josh Dawsey, and Josh Wagner, “Trump turns McCain’s death into another political firestorm about Trump,” *The Washington Post*, August 27, 2018, https://www.washingtonpost.com/politics/trump-turns-mccains-death-into-another-political-firestorm-about-trump/2018/08/27/fd1ece86-aa36-11e8-8a0c-70b618c98d3c_story.html?utm_term=.4be4fb4f331e.

²⁶¹ Donald Trump (@realDonaldTrump), Twitter, August 22, 2018, 6:21 a.m., “I feel very badly for Paul Manafort and his wonderful family. “Justice” took a 12 year old tax case, among other things, applied tremendous pressure on him and, unlike Michael Cohen, he refused to “break” - make up stories in order to get a “deal.” Such respect for a brave man!,” <https://twitter.com/realdonaldtrump/status/1032256443985084417?lang=en>.

In one last act of Twitter pettiness, Trump sent out several tweets during Senator McCain's memorial service at the Washington National Cathedral, a move many felt was disrespectful. During the service, McCain's daughter Meghan took a shot at Trump during her eulogy stating, "The America of John McCain has no need to be made great again because America was always great."²⁶² Trump fired back on Twitter, MAKE AMERICA GREAT AGAIN.²⁶³

President Trump's public feud with McCain illustrates how he uses the bully pulpit provided by Twitter with a very confrontational tone. Trump put his ego first, above plain political common sense. He could have easily taken the high road and avoided any controversy. But his ego would not let him, and Twitter gave him an outlet to express his views.

The old saying is "A carpenter is only as good as his tools." That saying is a half-truth. You can give a carpenter all the tools needed to do a job, but if the carpenter does not have the skill set to work them, they are useless. Roosevelt and Trump were master craftsmen at using the communications tools provided to them. While newspapers and Twitter were available to politicians before them, these two men transformed how they could be used to sell their agendas. Not surprisingly, these formats played to their user's strengths. Roosevelt was a literary man, a lover of words who appeared to be as fascinated with newspapers as they were with him.

²⁶² Dan Nowicki and A.J. Perez, "Meghan McCain says father's 'America was always great' during speech at National Cathedral," *USA Today*, September 2, 2018, <https://www.usatoday.com/story/news/politics/2018/09/01/john-mccain-funeral-obama-and-bush-deliver-eulogies/1162019002/>.

²⁶³ Donald Trump (@realDonaldTrump), Twitter, September 1, 2018, 3:53 p.m., "MAKE AMERICA GREAT AGAIN!," <https://twitter.com/realDonaldTrump/status/1036024180087644160>.

Combine that with his dynamic people skills, which allowed him to establish personal bonds with journalists, it is no surprise that he conquered the medium.

Twitter allows Trump to be Trump: direct, impulsive, brash, and blunt. He can deliver his message in real-time without any filter or middleman. Trump's critics see his tweets as rants of a self-obsessed loose cannon. His defenders see it otherwise. In the age of polished politicians, controlled by handlers and speech writers, Trump's supporters applauded his tweets as straightforward authentic talk with no spin. What Trump has done is make no-spin the new spin.

Chapter 5: Crossfire

Editor and author, William Roscoe Thayer wrote that no president ever had a better relationship with the press than his Harvard classmate, Theodore Roosevelt. He quotes TR as saying, “It is generally supposed that newspaper men have no sense of honor, but that is not true. If you treat them fairly, they will treat you fairly.”²⁶⁴ Thayer proclaimed President Roosevelt “treated them all in perfect fairness, according no special favors.”²⁶⁵ However, that statement is unquestionably false. Roosevelt had clear favorites, a group of reporters who were known as the “fair-haired boys” or “cuckoos.”

No one ever claimed that President Trump treats all members of the press equally. It does not take a year-long study of his tweets and interactions with journalists to conclude that Fox News is his preferred media outlet. The president’s relationship with the network has been called “a love story;” some have gone as far as to refer to Fox as “state run TV.”²⁶⁶ Not only does President Trump watch the network, appear on the network, but he also promotes the network. “@MSNBC & @CNN are unwatchable. @foxandfriends is great!” he once tweeted. According to a *New York Times* report, the president is such a superfan that he ordered all of Air Force One’s televisions be tuned to Fox News.²⁶⁷

²⁶⁴ William Roscoe Thayer, *Theodore Roosevelt: An Intimate Biography* (New York: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1919) 272.

²⁶⁵ *Ibid*, 272.

²⁶⁶ Nicholas Fondacaro, “CNN: ‘Never’ Has there Been A Love Story Like Trump and Fox,” July 8, 2018, <https://www.newsbusters.org/blogs/nb/nicholas-fondacaro/2018/07/08/cnn-never-has-there-been-love-story-trumpfox-news>.

Greg Evans, “CNN’s Jeff Zucker Says Fox News Is State-Run Propaganda: “TASS Has Nothing On Them,” *Deadline*, March 22, 2018, <https://deadline.com/2018/03/cnn-jeff-zucker-fox-news-state-run-propaganda-tass-1202351663/>

²⁶⁷ Katie Rogers and Maggie Haberman, “Spotting CNN on a TV Aboard Air Force One, Trump Rages Against Reality,” *New York Times*, July 25, 2018, <https://www.nytimes.com/2018/07/24/us/politics/trump-putin-cnn.html>.

Presidents have long played favorites with the press. Abraham Lincoln's editor of choice was John Forney; Forney was so obedient to Lincoln's wishes that rival journalists called him "Lincoln's Dog."²⁶⁸ President Kennedy's friendship with *Newsweek* reporter, and future *Washington Post* editor, Ben Bradlee is well-known. They vacationed together in Hyannis Port and JFK fed him exclusives; including the news that captured U-2 spy plane pilot Gary Powers had been exchanged for a communist spy. And Barack Obama was partial to *60 Minutes* correspondent Steve Kroft. Kroft interviewed Obama 17 times over the years, including his first and last interviews as president.²⁶⁹

But just as they had friends, both men had members of the press whom they saw as foes. Roosevelt and Trump liked to be in control, and when they could not control the message or the messenger, they were not afraid to take things into their own hands. Roosevelt blacklisted correspondents, while Trump called the press "the enemy of the American people" and praised a congressman who body-slammed a reporter.²⁷⁰

This chapter is divided into two parts. The first section will examine how Presidents Roosevelt and Trump cultivated friendships with media outlets and used them to their advantage. The second half of the chapter will explore how these men dealt with their perceived adversaries in the media.

²⁶⁸ Gabor Boritt, *The Gettysburg Gospel* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2006), 60.

²⁶⁹ "A President and a Journalist: 17 Interviews," CBS News, January 15, 2017, <https://www.cbsnews.com/news/60-minutes-president-obama-steve-kroft-17-interviews/>.

²⁷⁰ Jenna Johnson and Metea Gold, "Trump calls the media 'the enemy of the American People'," *The Washington Post*, February 17, 2018, https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/post-politics/wp/2017/02/17/trump-calls-the-media-the-enemy-of-the-american-people/?utm_term=.c49226923578.

Throughout Theodore Roosevelt's early political career he played favorites among reporters and his time in the White House was no different. Where most previous presidents were suspicious of the press and kept them at a distance, Roosevelt eagerly befriended correspondents. Journalist and Roosevelt friend Charles Willis Thompson claimed that the president possessed a "magic" and that reporters "loved to be put under the spell." A spell created "by a large generous soul with real manliness at the back of it."²⁷¹ Those correspondents who earned his respect and trust received preferential treatment, and even earned nicknames such as the "fair-haired boys" or "cuckoos."²⁷² These reporters not only received unrivaled time with the President, but also a frank and candid Roosevelt who held nothing back. For reporters, this was a goldmine. "Ten minutes of conversation with President Roosevelt usually gave me more material for my press dispatches than longer interviews with each of half a dozen principal officers of government," one of the fair-haired reporters disclosed.²⁷³

But there was a price to pay for being in Roosevelt's confidences. In return, Roosevelt placed firm restrictions on these interactions. First, he was never to be quoted—his comments were not to be attributed to him. With no fear of repercussion, Roosevelt was free to speak openly about any topic. Second, there was an unspoken rule that the reporter's spin on the story

²⁷¹ Charles Willis Thompson, "To Know Roosevelt Was To Love Him," *New York Times*, January 7, 1904, 5.

²⁷² Cuckoo was a derogatory nickname given to the reporters in President Roosevelt's inner circle. In a *Harper's Weekly* article titled "Theodore Roosevelt: Press-Agent," J.J. Dickinson defined a "cuckoo" as "a journalistic bird that is permitted to make its principal roost close to the Executive chamber and report for the delectation of his editor, for the enlightenment of the public and the accommodation of the President, such outgivings or internal operations of the Presidential mind as may suit the purpose or the whim of the nation's Chief Magistrate."

²⁷³ Ponder, *Press Relations in the Progressive Era*, 25.

was expected to be aligned with Roosevelt's view.²⁷⁴ If Roosevelt felt a reporter broke allegiance, he quickly exiled him from his inner circle.

If a reporter wanted the story he needed access and that lay in Roosevelt's hands. Journalists had to abide by TR's rules or be left on the outside. Many reporters did not think twice about playing along. During this period, journalism was a developing profession that did not have a set code of ethics; thus, collecting a paycheck was priority number one for many reporters. For those on the outside, there was little they could do to change things. They did not have the power or prestige to challenge the president. In the early 20th century, there was no White House Correspondents Association or National Press Club to set professional standards or push back on Roosevelt's guidelines.

In an age before television and Twitter, TR still had to depend largely on newspapermen to deliver his message. How effective were Roosevelt's cuckoos? In an article titled "Theodore Roosevelt: Press-Agent," J.J. Dickinson gave a frank assessment when explaining the impact the fair-haired boys and cuckoos' work had on swaying public opinion, which in turn led to agenda victories for TR:

The President has at his side the agents of publicity, and is pouring into the public mind and imagination the thoughts that seethe and sizzle in his own, so that when the time for action arrives he has the battle more than half won... The unbroken chain of personal triumphs Mr. Roosevelt has one since been President can be traced directly to the press bureau for which he is sole manager. His assistants, or cuckoos, are mere reporters of his views and attitudes.²⁷⁵

²⁷⁴ Essary, *Covering Washington*, 88.

²⁷⁵ J.J. Dickinson, "Theodore Roosevelt : Press-Agent," *Harper's Weekly*, July 6, 1907, 1409, https://books.google.com/books?id=_iNqrb0ucIIC&pg=PA1410&lpg=PA1410&dq=theodore+roosevelt+cuckoos&source=bl&ots=zVXKiVxejH&sig=vfPa2H4RKml3MhR9gOooaenbi0&hl=en&sa=X&ved=2ahUKEwjOmOf8-JjeAhUp8IMKHbJ8AloQ6AEwFnoECAoQAQ#v=onepage&q=theodore%20roosevelt%20cuckoos&f=false.

What lends even more weight to Dickinson's words is the fact the he was a self-professed cuckoo.

What was it like being a reporter on Roosevelt's good side? Oscar King Davis was a correspondent who was part of TR's "news cabinet" for decades. His relationship with Roosevelt provides a prism into the world of a fair-haired reporter. Davis meet Roosevelt in 1898. The battleship *Maine* had just exploded, and the young reporter asked the then Assistant Secretary of the Navy for a letter of introduction to the fleet commander headed to the Philippines. Roosevelt happily obliged and Davis was soon off to cover the war.²⁷⁶

Three years later their paths crossed again while riding a train to the Pan-American Exposition in Buffalo. A timid Davis interrupted a reading Roosevelt and asked the vice president if he remembered him. "By George! Of course I do," TR replied, once again displaying his uncanny ability to recall names and faces. The always inquisitive Roosevelt then bombarded Davis with "a hundred questions" about the Philippines.²⁷⁷

Their next interactions took place at the White House. Roosevelt was now president of the United States, Davis a correspondent for the *New York Times*' Washington Bureau. Even though he worked for the *Times*, which, according to Davis "never lost an opportunity of pound him (Roosevelt) on any and every subject," TR trusted and confided in Davis.²⁷⁸ Two or three times a week, the reporter meet with the president for a private wrap session. Davis was amazed at TR's ability to multi-task during these get-togethers:

He had an amazing facility for carrying on conversation while he was going over mail. He would glance over a letter, make an addition or alteration with his pen, and sign his

²⁷⁶ Davis, *Released for Publication*, 2.

²⁷⁷ Davis, *Released for Publication*, 26.

²⁷⁸ *Ibid*, 269.

name at the same time that he was keeping up a steady fire of talk about whatever subject happened to be under discussion.²⁷⁹

Davis proved a valuable Roosevelt ally in TR's battle against the *New York World* and *Indianapolis News*. In 1908, these papers published a series of articles alleging that Roosevelt had structured the purchase of the Panama Canal in such a way that his brother-in-law, Daniel Robinson, and Charles Taft, brother of future president William Howard Taft, reaped huge profits. Determined to clear his name, Roosevelt used all the resources available to him to help Davis gather information the reporter needed to craft a retort article in the *New York Times*. When Davis was unsuccessful tracking down papers connected with the purchase, the president personally reached out to everyone from the Secretary of War to senators to the United States Ambassador in France in an attempt to find the desired documents.

According to Davis, the published *Times* story had a tremendous impact on several fronts. First, the article helped clear the president of any wrongdoing, having the normally anti-Roosevelt *Times* publish a piece declaring the president's innocence carried extra weight, and "little more was heard" of the controversy.²⁸⁰ Second, having again proven his loyalty and usefulness to Roosevelt led to a windfall of stories for the reporter. "Within the next twelve days I had nine stories from the president," Davis boasted.²⁸¹

The Roosevelt-Davis connection lasted even after Roosevelt left the White House in 1908. Four years later, when Roosevelt decided to run for president, his campaign asked Davis to join the team. Davis was still working at the *New York Times*, but he was hopeful the paper

²⁷⁹ Ibid, XXVI.

²⁸⁰ While Davis may be exaggerating the impact of his *Times*' article, it undoubtedly helped the president in the court of public opinion.

²⁸¹ Ibid, 121.

would let him take a leave of absence. The *Times* declined his request. Davis promptly resigned and took a role as the campaign's secretary and publicity chief.²⁸²

President Trump's tumultuous relationship with the press has garnered countless headlines and editorials. He has regularly called the media "the enemy of the people" and claims that 90% of the coverage of his administration is negative.²⁸³ However, he has had one consistent press pal in Fox News. While President Roosevelt began his day reviewing the major papers and other Presidents with intelligence briefings, President Trump starts his day by watching *Fox & Friends* and reportedly ends it on the phone with the network's Sean Hannity.

Trump's history with the *Fox & Friends* dates back to 2011, when in a move to boost ratings, the show's producers made him a regular guest on Mondays. As a presidential candidate, he often appeared on or called into the show. During the 2016 campaign, former Speaker of the House Newt Gingrich told the program's hosts, "You could say Trump is the candidate *Fox & Friends* invented. He was on your show more than any other show."²⁸⁴ And since taking office, the relationship between Trump and the morning show has reached new levels. It's a win-win for both sides, giving the president an open mic to speak his mind and the show unmatched access and high ratings. One television critic called *Fox & Friends* "the most powerful TV show in America."²⁸⁵

²⁸² *Ibid*, 269.

²⁸³ Samuel Chamberlain, "Trump fires back at 'insane' media after NY Times publisher calls rhetoric 'divisive' and 'dangerous,'" Fox News, July 29, 2018, <http://www.foxnews.com/politics/2018/07/29/trump-fires-back-at-insane-media-after-ny-times-publisher-calls-rhetoric-divisive-and-dangerous.html>- twitter.

²⁸⁴ Newt Gingrich, "Newt Gingrich to Fox hosts: 'Trump is the candidate Fox & Friends invented,'" *Fox & Friends*, Fox News, video, 3:05, accessed August 8, 2018, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=k-p6nzpuWB8>.

²⁸⁵ James Poniewozik, "Watching 'Fox & Friends,' Trump Sees a Two-Way Mirror," *New York Times*, July 19, 2017, <https://www.nytimes.com/2017/07/19/arts/television/donald-trump-fox-friends.html>.

Unlike their network counterparts, who aim for the largest viewership possible, cable news morning shows are geared more towards a specific target audience. Accordingly, they are not afraid to be opinionated or skew towards a certain political ideology. With its Republican friendly slant, *Fox & Friends* offers Trump a safe haven, a place where he knows he can promote his agenda, and himself, without fear of being grilled by an overly aggressive reporter.

Fox News and Fox Business Network have conducted 23 interviews with President Trump, which is nearly two-thirds of all his interviews.²⁸⁶ In June of 2018, *Fox & Friends*' number one fan surprised viewers and the show's staff when he did an impromptu interview on the White House lawn. Trump noticed the Fox crew on the grounds and tweeted that he might have to "take an announced trip to see them."²⁸⁷ Minutes later co-host Steve Doocy gleefully proclaimed, "You are about to see something on the Fox News that has never happened, that we believe, in the history of White House reporting. And that is the president of the United States is just outside the press room and it looks like he is en route to our location."²⁸⁸ The result was a 30-minute interview that covered a wide range of topics, from North Korea to Special Counsel Mueller to separating children from their parents at the border. It was the kind of publicity stunt that Trump loves to orchestrate, putting himself on center stage and in control of the situation. It

²⁸⁶ Michael Grynbaum, "Fox News Once Gave Trump a Perch. Now It's His Bullhorn," *New York Times*, July 1, 2018, <https://www.nytimes.com/2018/07/01/business/media/fox-news-trump-bill-shine.html>.

²⁸⁷ Ibid.

²⁸⁸ President Trump, "President Trump makes surprise appearance on 'Fox & Friends'," *Fox & Friends*, Fox News, video, 30:24, June 15, 2018, https://www.youtube.com/watch?time_continue=1824&v=KCVSx_4V0wo-interview.

also helped *Fox & Friends* finish the month as the number one rated cable news network morning show, a fact President Trump was more than happy to mention on Twitter.²⁸⁹

One of the more interesting side-effects of the Trump-*Fox & Friends* relationship has been the program's impact on Trump's Twitter habits. A 2017 study of Trump's Twitter account revealed that 6 am to 9 am is the President's peak tweet time, exactly when *Fox & Friends* airs.²⁹⁰ During his first year in office, Trump mentioned or retweeted a *Fox & Friends* tweet 105 times. That was more references than Russia or building a wall along the U.S.-Mexico border.²⁹¹ But name drops are only a small part of the Trump-*Fox and Friends* Twitter connection. It appears that many of Trump's morning tweets are direct responses to what he has viewed on the program, for example:

- March 3, 2017. At 6:13 am *Fox & Friends* shows a graphic stating that 122 Guantanamo prisoners had re-engaged in terrorism. 51 minutes later Trump tweets "122 vicious prisoners, released by the Obama Administration from Gitmo, have returned to the battlefield. Just another terrible decision!"²⁹²
- September 23, 2017. At 8:24 am *Fox & Friends* airs comments from basketball star Steph Curry that the NBA Champions Golden State Warriors might skip the

²⁸⁹ A.J. Katz, "Here Are the Cable News Morning Show Ratings for July 2018," TVNewser, August 1, 2018, <https://www.adweek.com/tvnewser/here-are-the-cable-news-morning-show-ratings-for-july-2018/372255>.

²⁹⁰ Trump Tweet Density," accessed June 30, 2018, <https://www.reddit.com/user/foxfriendstrumptweet>.

²⁹¹ Callum Borchers, "Trump tweets about 'Fox & Friends' almost three times more often than about the border wall," *The Washington Post*, February 5, 2018, https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/the-fix/wp/2018/02/05/trump-tweets-about-fox-friends-three-times-more-often-than-about-the-border-wall/?utm_term=.9960639640c6.

²⁹² Ibid.

customary visit to the White House. 31 minutes later President Trump tweets “Stephen Curry is hesitating, therefore invitation is withdrawn!”²⁹³

- October 18, 2017. At 6:28 am Fox & Friends runs a segment on the NFL national anthem controversy. 38 minutes later President Trump tweets “The NFL has decided that it will not force players to stand for the playing of our National Anthem. Total disrespect for our great country!”²⁹⁴

Not only does President Trump wake-up to Fox News, it has been reported that one of the last people he talks to each night is the face of the network, Sean Hannity. Donald Trump and Sean Hannity were raised only 12 miles from each other, but it was worlds apart. While Trump was attending military school and learning the real estate business from his millionaire father, Hannity, the son of working-class parents, was taking gun lessons and listening to right-wing radio talks shows. After dropping out of college, Hannity worked a series of odd jobs, everything from housepainter to line cook to wallpaperer. In 1989, he turned his two passions, radio and conservative politics, into a career. He landed a radio gig in liberal Santa Barbara, California, where his controversial views raised eyebrows and got him fired. But it also brought him national attention and just a few short years later television executive Roger Ailes hired him for his new Fox News cable channel. Sean became a co-host on *Hannity & Combs*, the conservative voice on the “point-counter point” formatted show. “Frankly, he (Ailes) should

²⁹³ Callum Borchers, “Trump tweets about 'Fox & Friends' almost three times more often than about the border wall.”

²⁹⁴ Matthew Gertz (@MattGertz), Twitter, October 18, 2017, 6:28 a.m., “Left, Fox and Friends, 6:28 am. Right, Trump, 7:06 a.m.,” <https://twitter.com/MattGertz/status/920629828163915777>.

have fired me,” remembers Hannity, who had trouble reading off a teleprompter. “I was god-awful. Then one day, it finally clicked.”²⁹⁵

It was while working at Fox News that Hannity first met Donald Trump. The Donald became a frequent guest on his show to discuss birtherism, the controversial theory that President Barack Obama was not born in the United States. But their relationship did not really take off until Trump’s 2016 presidential run. While Trump’s campaign went through a series of controversies, the Khan family attacks to the *Access Hollywood* tape to poor debate performances, Hannity’s backing never wavered. Not only did Hannity unconditionally support Trump—he also attacked Republicans who did not. “The bottom line is, during the heat of the campaign when relationships are forged, he was always there, offering good advice, in person and on television,” said former deputy Trump campaign manager David Bossie about Hannity. “The president sees him as incredibly smart and articulate spokesman for the agenda.”²⁹⁶ Bossie’s use of the word “spokesman” is telling; the president does not see Hannity as a journalist or talk show host but as a publicist. Hannity had publicly stated that he “never claimed to be a journalist.” But recently he changed stating, “I’m a journalist. But I’m an advocacy journalist, or an opinion journalist.”²⁹⁷

Trump’s capturing the White House only strengthened their bond. *New York* magazine reported that Trump and Hannity talk nightly. A White House official called Hannity “the leader

²⁹⁵ Michael Lipton, “The Far Right Stuff,” *People*, February 2, 2002, <https://people.com/archive/the-far-right-stuff-vol-57-no-5/>.

²⁹⁶ Robert Costa, Sarah Ellison, and Josh Dawsey, “Hannity’s rising role in Trump’s world: ‘He basically has a desk in the place,’” *The Washington Post*, April 17, 2018, https://www.washingtonpost.com/politics/hannitys-rising-role-in-trumps-world-he-basically-has-a-desk-in-the-place/2018/04/17/e2483018-4260-11e8-8569-26fda6b404c7_story.html?utm_term=.a4067fc9a07.6.

²⁹⁷ Matthew Shaer, “How Far Will Sean Hannity Go?,” *New York Times Magazine*, November 28, 2017, <https://www.nytimes.com/2017/11/28/magazine/how-far-will-sean-hannity-go.html>.

of the outside kitchen cabinet.”²⁹⁸ His role appears to be part friend, advisor, cheerleader and therapist. *The Washington Post* printed that the two men review the biggest stories of the day, discuss the performance of the Trump’s staff and the president’s Twitter.²⁹⁹ Hannity denies the nightly chat sessions, “I don’t have a nightly call with anybody. I read these things about me that are total bullshit,” countered Hannity.³⁰⁰

As Roosevelt utilized O.K. Davis to answer his critics, so did Trump turn to Hannity. The president granted Hannity the first interviews after controversial meetings with North Korean leader Kim Jong Un and Russian President Vladimir Putin. *Hannity* is the top-rated nightly news cable show, even topping popular non-news programs such as Discovery’s famed Shark Week programming and professional wrestling’s WWE Raw in the ratings, which translates to Hannity defending the president to three million people nightly.³⁰¹ Besides providing a supportive outlet for the President’s agenda, Hannity helps Trump stay in touch with his base. The host’s hardline segments on issues like border security and immigration serve as a reminder to the President of what matters to his core supporters.

²⁹⁸Oliva Nuzzi, "Donald Trump and Sean Hannity Like to Talk at Bedtime," *New York Magazine*, accessed July 11, 2018, <http://nymag.com/daily/intelligencer/2018/05/sean-hannity-donald-trump-late-night-calls.html>.

²⁹⁹Robert Costa, Sarah Ellison, and Josh Dawsey, “Hannity’s rising role in Trump’s world: ‘He basically has a desk in the place.’”

³⁰⁰Mark Joyella, “Sean Hannity, Entrenched As Cable News’ No. 1 Host, Spends ‘Zero’ Time Caring About His Critics,” *Forbes*, July 31, 2018, <https://www.forbes.com/sites/markjoyella/2018/07/31/sean-hannity-nobody-has-ever-gotten-my-relationship-with-donald-trump-right-ever/#678cd4236982>.

³⁰¹“Fox News Devours Cable News Competition, Shark Week in Ratings For July,” *Mediaite.com*, July 31, 2018, <https://www.mediaite.com/online/fox-news-devours-cable-news-competition-shark-week-in-ratings-for-july/>.

While Trump’s closeness with Fox News gives him an outlet to promote his policies, it appears this relationship is a two-way street. There is evidence that shows that the network has influence over Trump’s policies and decisions.

- March 2017. Less than 24 hours after Sean Hannity called on the president to “purge” all of President Obama’s appointees, Trump fired 46 federal attorneys who had been appointed by Obama.³⁰²
- January 2018. Trump tweeted that he is rethinking the extension of Section 702 of the Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act. This tweet came shortly after Judge Andrew Napolitano criticized the act on a “Fox and Friends.”³⁰³
- August 218. Fox Business Network’s Lou Dobbs anchors a segment claiming that 96% of Google search results for Trump were from “left-leaning news outlets.” The president follows up with a tweet complaining about Google. Trump advisor Larry Kudlow tells reporters that the administration is taking a look at whether Google searches should be regulated.³⁰⁴
- August 2018. After Tucker Carlson runs a segment about the South African government allegedly seizing property from white landowners, President Trump

³⁰² Luke Parsnow, “Fox News’ Influence on Trump is Alarming,” *Syracuse Newtimes*, January 8, 2018, <https://www.syracusenewtimes.com/fox-news-influence-trump-alarming/>.

³⁰³ Daniel Drezner, “The Fox News Effect,” *The Washington Post*, January 17, 2018, https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/posteverything/wp/2018/01/17/the-fox-news-effect/?utm_term=.21eb6af0eb74.

³⁰⁴ Anne Gearan and Sarah Ellison, “How Trump relies on his cable news cabinet as much as the real one,” *The Washington Post*, August 28, 2018, https://www.washingtonpost.com/politics/the-cable-news-cabinet-how-trumps-television-diet-has-become-a-to-do-list-for-aides/2018/08/28/e3fabce0-a710-11e8-97ce-cc9042272f07_story.html?utm_term=.f085c5f62541.

quickly responds via Twitter that he is having Secretary of State Mike Pompeo investigate.³⁰⁵

During their administrations, Presidents Roosevelt and Trump used members of the press as sounding boards and advisors. They also used the media as their own personal staffing agencies. In 1905, Roosevelt appointed the *New York Tribune*'s editor Whitelaw Reid as ambassador to Great Britain. That same year, journalist and TR's good friend, Joseph Bucklin Bishop was named Secretary of the Isthmian Canal Commission. In 1908, the *Chicago Tribune*'s John Callan O'Laughlin served as a go-between Roosevelt and the Japanese government while the countries worked out immigration issues.

When running for president, Donald Trump promised to "hire the best people."³⁰⁶ Time and time again he's turned to Fox News to fill positions in his administration. Former Fox contributors John Bolton, Scott Brown and John D. McEntee have all found employment in Trump's government. To lead his communications department, Trump hired former Fox Executive Bill Shine. While working at Fox News, Shine gave Trump valuable airtime during the campaign. The fact that Shine resigned after being accused of covering up a series of sexual harassment scandals at the network did not deter Trump from employing him.

Roosevelt and Trump understood the value of having allies in the media. But both men had adversaries as well, and at times questioned the motives and integrity of the press. In a speech labeled "The Man with the Muck-raker," President Theodore Roosevelt said of the press,

³⁰⁵Erik Wemple, "Tucker Carlson easily snookers Trump on South Africa," August 23, 2018, https://www.washingtonpost.com/blogs/erik-wemple/wp/2018/08/23/tucker-carlson-easily-snookers-trump-on-south-africa/?utm_term=.108fa4a9a090.

³⁰⁶Donald Trump, "Trump: I'll choose the best people for my administration," filmed September 15, 2018, video, 6:12, <https://www.cnn.com/video/2016/09/15/trump-ill-choose-the-best-people-for-my-administration.html>.

“The liar is no whit better than the thief, and if his mendacity takes the form of slander, he may be worse than most thieves.”³⁰⁷ In a speech before the Veterans of Foreign Wars convention in Kansas City, Missouri, President Trump blasted the journalists in attendance. “Don’t believe the crap you see from these people, the fake news,” Trump said, pointing towards the press pit. “Just remember: What you’re seeing and what you’re reading is not what’s happening.”³⁰⁸

Feuds between the President and the media are nothing new. While he championed the free press, Thomas Jefferson said “Nothing can now be believed which is seen in a newspaper. Truth itself becomes suspicious by being put into that polluted vehicle.”³⁰⁹ President Harry S. Truman wrote:

Presidents and the members of their Cabinets and their staff members have been slandered and misrepresented since George Washington. When the press is friendly to an administration the opposition has been lied about and treated to the excrescence of paid prostitutes of the mind.”³¹⁰

³⁰⁷ Theodore Roosevelt speech April 14, 1906, “The Man with the Muck-Rake,” <http://voicesofdemocracy.umd.edu/theodore-roosevelt-the-man-with-the-muck-rake-speech-text/>.

³⁰⁸ Philip Rucker, “Trump accuses ‘very unpatriotic’ journalists of putting the ‘lives of many’ in peril,” *The Washington Post*, July 29, 2018, https://www.washingtonpost.com/politics/trump-says-he-called-media-enemy-of-the-people-in-meeting-with-ny-times-publisher/2018/07/29/fec5adee-9330-11e8-810c-5fa705927d54_story.html?utm_term=.8919990773b6.

³⁰⁹ Thomas Jefferson to John Norvell, June 14, 180, *The Founders’ Constitution*, http://press-pubs.uchicago.edu/founders/documents/amendI_speechs29.html.

³¹⁰ Linda Massarella, “Harry Truman once compared the press to ‘prostitutes,’” *The New York Post*, May 17, 2017, <https://nypost.com/2017/05/17/harry-truman-trashed-the-media-long-before-donald-trump/>.

Truman saved his strongest words for a music critic who gave his daughter Margaret’s singing a negative review. “It seems to me that you are a frustrated old man who wishes he could have been successful. When you write such poppy-cock as was in the back section of the paper you work for it shows conclusively that you’re off the beam and at least four of your ulcers are at work. Some day I hope to meet you. When that happens you’ll need a new nose, a lot of beefsteak for black eyes, and perhaps a supporter below!”

But no president's hatred and paranoia for the press has been as well documented as Richard Nixon's. "Never forget," he lectured advisers, "the press is the enemy, the press is the enemy... Write that on a blackboard 100 times."³¹¹ President Nixon even kept a secret "enemies list" of those who he thought were in direct opposition to his administration, including journalists Daniel Schorr, Mary McGrory, and Edwin Guthman.³¹² He had these enemies targeted for tax audits or trailed by private detectives.

While the revelation of Nixon's enemies list shocked the nation, he was not the only president who kept track of his perceived opponents. President Theodore Roosevelt had what was called the "Ananias Club," a group of journalists he blacklisted for breaking his trust. President Donald Trump does not even try to hide his disdain for certain segments of the mainstream media he thinks are out to get him. He tweeted, "The FAKE NEWS media (failing @nytimes, @NBCNews, @ABC, @CBS, @CNN) is not my enemy, it is the enemy of the American People!"³¹³

While President Roosevelt often went the extra mile to win over reporters; those who crossed him quickly found themselves members of his "Ananias Club." Named after the biblical liar, membership in the club was granted to those Roosevelt felt had done him wrong.³¹⁴ Unlike

³¹¹ Dan Glaister, "Tricky Dicky," *The Guardian*, December 3, 2008, <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2008/dec/04/richard-nixon-recordings>.

³¹² Ellen Cranley, "The White House May Strip 9 Former Officials Their Security Clearances, And It's Reminding People of Nixon's Enemies List," *BusinessInsider.com*, August 29, 2018, <https://www.businessinsider.com/nixons-enemy-list-trump-security-clearance-2018-8>

³¹³ Donald Trump (@realDonaldTrump), Twitter, February 17, 2017, 1:48 p.m., "The FAKE NEWS media (failing @nytimes, @NBCNews, @ABC, @CBS, @CNN) is not my enemy, it is the enemy of the American People!," <https://twitter.com/realdonaldtrump/status/832708293516632065?lang=en>.

³¹⁴ In the New Testament, Ananias and his wife sold a piece of property. They decided to keep a portion of the money for themselves, and give the rest to the Apostle Peter. However, Ananias made it seem like he had donated all the proceeds. Peter called him out for lying and seconds later Ananias fell to the ground dead.

Nixon's secret enemies list, the Ananias Club was well known and was frequently written about in papers and magazines to the point that membership in it became almost a badge of honor for some reporters. However, admittance was no laughing matter for journalists because it meant banishment from TR's inner circle. Not only did reporters lose access to the president, but Roosevelt also went so far as to disseminate the wrongdoers' names to his cabinet departments, thus preventing any reporter from sneaking around him to get information.³¹⁵ Losing time with the president and his staff was a major hurdle to covering Washington's political scene. Besides individual reporters, Roosevelt quarreled with newspapers. Topping the list were the *New York World*, *Boston Herald* and *New York Journal*.

The *New York World* and its editor Joseph Pulitzer had a long running feud with Roosevelt. It dated back to TR's early years in Albany in the State Assembly, where the paper questioned his reputation as a reformer. During the 1904 election, the *World* printed a series of damaging articles on large corporate donations made to Roosevelt's campaign. As previously mentioned, it was the *World* that ran a chain of stories alleging corruption in the acquisition of the Panama Canal. Roosevelt was so incensed that he pushed the United States government to file a libel suit against the paper. The case made it all the way to the Supreme Court, where it was dismissed.

The *Boston Herald* had long drawn the ire of President Roosevelt. The paper had published several editorials, letters and articles highly critical of the president, including several written by Henry Loomis Nelson, who TR felt was "dishonorable and untruthful."³¹⁶ What a

³¹⁵ Greenberg, *Republic of Spin*, 48.

³¹⁶ Theodore Roosevelt to Joseph Bucklin Bishop, July 21, 1903, Theodore Roosevelt Digital Library, Dickinson State University, <http://theodorerooseveltcenter.org/Research/Digital-Library/Record/ImageViewer?libID=o281029&imageNo=1>.

“disingenuous paper” Roosevelt said of the *Herald*. Remarkably, the final straw for Roosevelt came about because of a seemingly harmless Thanksgiving tradition.³¹⁷

In 1904, Horace Vose, the Rhode Island “Poultry King,” sent President Roosevelt a turkey, as he had done with every president since Ulysses S. Grant. *Boston Herald* reporter Jessie Carmichael caught wind of a rumor circulating through the capitol that the president’s children abused the turkey sent by Vose. “They released it, chased it over the White House grounds, plucked and teased it until it was well-nigh exhausted while the president looked on and laughed.” The next day, the paper printed the report.³¹⁸ What seemed like an innocent story to many had Roosevelt fuming. In his eyes, the paper’s past “false dispatches” and the fact that this story attacked his children crossed the line. He quickly had Charles Loeb release an official denial declaring “As a matter of fact, the turkey was dressed when Mr. Vose sent it, and was used for Thanksgiving dinner... No such incident as that recounted has ever taken place since the President has been in the White House, and nothing in the remotest degree resembling it has ever taken place.”³¹⁹ But Roosevelt did not stop there; he had *Boston Herald* correspondents banned from the White House. He even tried to have the U.S. Weather Bureau stop sending bulletins to the paper.

Needless to say, the showdown made front page headlines around the country. The *Minneapolis Journal* printed an article supporting Roosevelt, titled “Fakers Rebuked at White House” and described how easy it is for reporters to create “fake stories.”³²⁰ (The use of the word “fake” throughout the story cannot help but make one think of President Trump’s current

³¹⁷ Ibid.

³¹⁸ “Roosevelt Turkey Not Mistreated,” *St. Louis Republic*, November 30, 1904, 7.

³¹⁹ “Tale of President’s Turkey,” *New York Times*, November 30, 1904, 8.

³²⁰ “Fakers Rebuked at White House,” *Minneapolis Journal*, December 2, 1904, Front Page.

“fake news” claims.) The *Boston Herald* eventually retracted the story and Roosevelt rescinded the ban order.

Roosevelt had not even ascended to the presidency when the seeds of one of his longest running press quarrels were planted. In 1898, William Randolph Hearst’s *The New York Journal* ran an interview with Assistant Secretary of the Navy, Roosevelt. In the piece, Roosevelt praised the paper for its accurate portrayal of events surrounding the sinking of the *Maine*. Just one problem, Roosevelt denied the interview ever took place stating he would never “have given a certificate of character to the Journal.”³²¹

When anarchist Leon Czolgosz shot President William McKinley in September 1901, Roosevelt had an opportunity to strike back at Hearst. A few months earlier, Hearst’s *Journal* printed two editorials that foreshadowed President McKinley being shot. A poem by writer Ambrose Bierce stated that a bullet “is speeding here to stretch McKinley on his bier.” An editorial stated, “If bad institutions and bad men can be got rid of only by killing, then killing must be done.”³²² Many pointed the finger at Hearst’s yellow journalism for inspiring the assassin’s actions. Adding to the hysteria were erroneous news reports claiming that the assassin had one of the *Journal*’s negative McKinley articles in his pocket.³²³ In New York, Hearst was burned in effigy. The organizers passed out flyers to promote the event: “Hearst, the real assassin

³²¹ Theodore Roosevelt, “Roosevelt says its infamous,” Theodore Roosevelt Digital Library, Dickinson State university, <http://www.theodorerooseveltcenter.org/Research/Digital-Library/Record/ImageViewer?libID=o25785>

³²² Dana Milbank, “A McKinley Moment?,” *The Washington Post*, January 11, 2011, <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2011/01/10/AR2011011006316.html>. Ambrose Bierce was journalist, author and poet who was known for his satires. The Civil War veteran’s nickname was “Bitter Bierce,” because of his sardonic wit and views.

³²³ The reports would prove to be false; during an interview, Czolgosz denied ever seeing or reading a Hearst paper.

of President McKinley will be burned tonight. Music and refreshments.” People called for a boycott of Hearst’s papers and rival newspapers vilified him on their front pages and editorials.

Vice-president Roosevelt minced no words when it came to blaming Hearst. He wrote a friend, “Every scoundrel like Hearst and his satellites who for whatever purpose appeals to evil human passion, has made himself accessory before the fact to every crime of this nature.”³²⁴

During his first address to Congress, then President Roosevelt again pointed the finger directly at Hearst:

This criminal (Czolgoz) was a professed anarchist, inflamed by the teachings of professed anarchists, and probably also by the reckless utterances of those who, on the stump and in the public press, appeal to the dark and evil spirits of malice and greed, envy and sullen hatred. The wind is sowed by the men who preach such doctrines, and they cannot escape their share of responsibility for the whirlwind that is reaped. This applies alike to the deliberate demagogue, to the exploiter of sensationalism, and to the crude and foolish visionary who, for whatever reason, apologizes for crime or excites aimless discontent.³²⁵

Throughout his presidency, Hearst’s papers and magazines were critical of President Roosevelt. And it was a series of articles in Hearst’s *Cosmopolitan* magazine, titled “The Treason of the Senate” exposing corruption in the Senate, that caused some of TR’s strongest words against the press. While Roosevelt had long supported reform journalists, developing close rapports with the likes of Lincoln Steffens, he felt “Treason” went too far. In a letter a friend, Roosevelt voiced his frustrations with Hearst and his “yellow magazine,” “These make-believe reformers, these preachers of rabid hatred, these ranters against corruption and in favor of social reform... the real enemies of every effort to secure genuine reform.”³²⁶ The very next day,

³²⁴ Roosevelt to Henry Cabot Lodge, Buffalo, September 9, 1901, in *Selections from the Correspondence of Theodore Roosevelt and Henry Cabot Lodge*, v.1, 499-502.

³²⁵ President Theodore Roosevelt, “First Annual Message,” December 3, 1901, *The American Presidency Project*, <https://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/documents/first-annual-message-16>

³²⁶ John Semeche, “Theodore Roosevelt’s “Muck-Rake Speech: A Reassessment,” *Mid-America: A Historical Review*, v. 2 (April 1974): 114-125.

in a blistering speech he denounced “the men with the muckrake who in newspapers and magazines made slanderous mendacious attacks upon men in public life and upon men in public work.”³²⁷

The 1906 New York gubernatorial race provided Roosevelt an opportunity to retaliate. Hearst made a run for Governor; Roosevelt believed that a Hearst victory would be a “very bad thing” for the Republican party and a “smashing defeat for the administration.”³²⁸ The president authorized Secretary of State Elihu Root to deliver a “corking speech” that dug up the old McKinley assassination charges against Hearst. Root declared:

What wonder that the weak and excitable brain of Czolgosz answered to such impulses as these! He never knew McKinley; he had no real or fancied wrongs of his own to avenge against McKinley or McKinley's government; he was answering to the lesson he had learned, that it was a service to mankind to rid the earth of a monster ; and the foremost of the teachers of these lessons to him and his kind was and is William Randolph Hearst with his yellow journals.³²⁹

Hearst ended up losing the election.

Roosevelt was not alone in declaring war on what he considered adversarial media foes. As a candidate for president, Donald Trump took the unprecedented step of blocking several media organizations—including the *Washington Post*, the *Huffington Post*, *Politico*, *Buzzfeed*—from being credentialed at his news conferences and rallies. The ban also prevented blacklisted reporters from flying on the press charter that shadowed Trump. The outlets were forced to obtain general admission tickets to his events and fly commercial. Trump lifted the ban with just a few months left in the campaign, when media coverage was vital to his campaign.

³²⁷ Bishop, *Theodore Roosevelt and His Times*, 10.

³²⁸ Roosevelt to Henry Cabot Lodge, Washington, October 2, 1906, in *The Letters of Theodore Roosevelt*, 439-440.

³²⁹ “Elihu Root Shows Yellow Journalist His True Colors,” *Los Angeles Herald*, November 2, 1906, Front page <https://cdnc.ucr.edu/cgi-bin/cdnc?a=d&d=LAH19061102.2.19>.

As President, Trump has only intensified his war against the press. And no media outlet felt Trump's wrath more than CNN. The news network whose campaign coverage helped separate Trump from the Republican presidential field now finds itself under assault. Trump has attacked CNN on two fronts. First, he has taken blanket condemnation swipes at the network.

CNN'S slogan is CNN, THE MOST TRUSTED NAME IN NEWS. Everyone knows this is not true, that this could, in fact, be a fraud on the American Public. There are many outlets that are far more trusted than Fake News CNN. Their slogan should be CNN, THE LEAST TRUSTED NAME IN NEWS!

Great, and we should boycott Fake News CNN. Dealing with them is a total waste of time!

While in the Philippines I was forced to watch @CNN, which I have not done in months, and again realized how bad, and FAKE, it is. Loser!

I am thinking about changing the name #FakeNews CNN to #FraudNewsCNN!

These are just a few of the tweets that Trump has directed at CNN.

Second, as he has done before, Trump has taken direct aim at specific individuals working for CNN. The president has called CNN anchor Don Lemon "the dumbest man on television."³³⁰ The president has sparred with CNN's Chief White House Correspondent Jim Acosta at White House events, with the president refusing to take his questions and attempting to get him banned. Even the man partially responsible for Trump's comeback Jeff Zucker is now referred to by the president as "little Jeff Z" who has done "a terrible job."³³¹ In July 2018, CNN

³³⁰ Donald Trump (@realDonaldTrump), Twitter, August 3, 2018, 8:37 p.m., "Lebron James was just interviewed by the dumbest man on television, Don Lemon. He made Lebron look smart, which isn't easy to do. I like Mike!," <https://twitter.com/realDonaldTrump/status/1025586524782559232>.

³³¹ Donald Trump (@realDonaldTrump), Twitter, August 30, 2018, 3:50 a.m., "The hatred and extreme bias of me by @CNN has clouded their thinking and made them unable to function. But actually, as I have always said, this has been going on for a long time. Little Jeff Z has done a terrible job, his ratings suck, & AT&T should fire him to save credibility!," <https://twitter.com/realDonaldTrump/status/1035117507839967232>.

correspondent Kaitlan Collins was barred from attending a photo op in the Rose Garden after angering administration officials. Earlier in the day, Collins was one of the pool reporters covering a meeting between Trump and European Commission President Jean-Claude Juncker. Collins asked Trump several questions about the president's former lawyer Michael Cohen, who was in the headlines for taping conversations with the President. The White House staff deemed the questions “inappropriate” and argued, “that reporter shouted questions and refused to leave despite repeatedly being asked to do so...Subsequently, our staff informed her she was not welcome to participate in the next event.”³³²

While Theodore Roosevelt benefited from one of newspaper’s golden ages, he also was not afraid to take on the biggest papers and paper barons of the day. President Trump’s political climb came at a time when many were predicting the death of the industry. While local papers fight to survive and bigger papers transition to new business models, such as focusing more on online content; they have found themselves in a war of words with President Trump.

The *Washington Post* has been a leading voice scrutinizing the Trump administration. While President Trump has not been afraid directly lash out at the paper through Twitter and speeches, he has aimed much of his venom at its owner Jeff Bezos’ company Amazon. Even though Amazon is independently operated and has nothing to do with the running of the *Post*, Trump has repeatedly connected the two. In tweets, he has referred to the paper as “the Amazon Washington Post” and claimed the “Washington Post is nothing

³³² Paul Farhi and Felicia Sonmez, “CNN reporter barred from White House event, drawing protests from journalists,” *The Washington Post*, July 25, 2018, <https://www.washingtonpost.com/lifestyle/style/cnn-reporter-barred-from-white-house-event-drawing-journalists-protests/2018/07/25/81dd6b5e-9057>.

more than an expensive (the paper loses a fortune) lobbyist for Amazon.”³³³ Trump accuses Amazon of “pay(ing) little or no state taxes,” “putting many thousands of retailers out of work” and having a sweet-heart deal with the United States Postal Service that is costing the American taxpayer billions.³³⁴ On the surface, Trump’s Amazon bashing may read like legitimate economic concerns that have little to do with the *Post*, painting the company as the 21st century version of Standard Oil, a monopoly using unscrupulous business practices. However, skeptics believe that since there is little President Trump can do to counter attack the *Post*’s coverage, except rant on social media or at rallies, he can use Amazon attacks to strike indirectly at the *Post*’s owner Bezos, hitting him where it hurts the most, his pocket book. After a series of Trump negative tweets aimed at Amazon, the company’s stock dropped 10%, costing Jeff Bezos an estimated \$16 billion.³³⁵

The *New York Times* used to be known by its famed slogan “All the news that’s fit to print.” However, President Donald Trump has tried to rebrand the paper as “the failing New York Times.” Trump has slammed the *Times*’ coverage of his presidency, referring to them as a

³³³Donald Trump (@realDonaldTrump), Twitter, July 23, 2018, 6:35 a.m., “...In my opinion the Washington Post is nothing more than an expensive (the paper loses a fortune) lobbyist for Amazon. Is it used as protection against antitrust claims which many feel should be brought?,”<https://twitter.com/realdonaldtrump/status/1021388295618682881?lang=en>.

³³⁴ Donald Trump (@realDonaldTrump), Twitter, March 29, 2018, 4:57 a.m., “I have stated my concerns with Amazon long before the Election. Unlike others, they pay little or no taxes to state & local governments, use our Postal System as their Delivery Boy (causing tremendous loss to the U.S.), and are putting many thousands of retailers out of business!”<https://twitter.com/realdonaldtrump/status/979326715272065024>.

³³⁵Brad Tuttle, “Jeff Bezos Has Lost \$16 Billion Since Donald Trump Started Tweeting About Amazon,” *Money*, April 2, 2018, <http://time.com/money/5225281/jeff-bezos-donald-trump-attacks-amazon-twitter/>.

This is an interesting side-effect of Trump’s Twitter that deserves more attention. A Trump tweet can cause a company’s stock to rise or fall. Harley-Davidson, Pfizer and Toyota are examples of a few of the companies that have seen their stock roller coaster after being mentioned in Trump tweets.

“joke” that “uses anonymous sources that don’t exist” and writes “phony stories.”³³⁶ Obviously, he is not a fan *Times*’ articles such “Trump Lies,” which listed “every outright lie” the president told during the first months of his administration, or the work of White House correspondent Maggie Haberman, whom he has called a “third rate reporter” on several occasions.³³⁷

In July 2018, the President sat down with *Times*’ editor A.G Sulzberger to talk shop. Afterwards, the two sides could not even agree about what went down during the meeting. According to Sulzberger the summit was supposed to be off the record, but a few days later Trump tweeted about the sit-down. The President stated the meeting focused on “the vast amounts of Fake News being put out by the media & how that Fake News has morphed into phrase, “Enemy of the People.”³³⁸ Sulzberger replied that the main purpose for accepting the meeting was “to raise concerns about the president’s deeply troubling anti-press rhetoric.”³³⁹

The corner stone of Trump’s anti-press rhetoric has been the cry of “fake news.” The term has been around since the late 19th century, but it was reintroduced to the public during the 2016 election. Fake news was a term used by journalists to describe made-up stories that were aimed at deceiving people online.

³³⁶ Donald Trump (@realDonaldTrump), Twitter, various tweets, http://www.trumptwitterarchive.com/archive/nytimes%20%7C%7C%20new%20york%20times/tff/1-19-2017_.

³³⁷ David Leonhardt and Stuart A. Thompson, “Trump Lies,” *New York Times*, January 11, 2018, <https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2017/06/23/opinion/trumps-lies.html>

³³⁸ Donald Trump (@realDonaldTrump), Twitter, July 29, 2018, “Had a very good and interesting meeting at the White House with A.G. Sulzberger, Publisher of the New York Times. Spent much time talking about the vast amounts of Fake News being put out by the media & how that Fake News has morphed into phrase, “Enemy of the People.” Sad!,” <https://twitter.com/realDonaldTrump/status/1023546197129224192>.

³³⁹ A.G. Sulzberger, “Press Run,” *The New York Times*, July 29, 2018, <https://www.nytimes.com/2018/07/29/nytimes/press-run.html>.

Ironically, Hillary Clinton appears to have used the term before Trump. "The epidemic of malicious fake news and false propaganda that flooded social media over the past year. It's now clear that so-called fake news can have real-world consequences," she noted during a post-election speech in December 2016.³⁴⁰ However, it did not take long for Trump to hijack the phrase and give it a new meaning. The president used the term to question not the facts behind a report, but to discredit or dismiss any reporting he does not like.

In February 2017, *The Washington Post* headline ran a headline reading "'This was the worst call by far': Trump badgered, bragged and abruptly ended phone call with Australian leader." The attached article detailed a continuous call between the new President and Australian Prime Minister Malcolm Turnbull. The conversation found the two leaders arguing over refugee agreements; Trump cut the scheduled hour-long call after only 25 minutes. When reports of the tense call hit the press, Trump took to Twitter to say the two had a "very civil conversation" and that "the FAKE NEWS media lied."³⁴¹ However, a few months later transcripts of the phone call were leaked, proving that reports of a stressful exchange were true. Obviously, Trump knew what was said on the call, but in an attempt to discredit a story he did not like, he turned to the "fake news" charge.

³⁴⁰ Mike Wendling, "The (almost) complete history of 'fake news'," BBC, January 22, 2018, <https://www.bbc.com/news/blogs-trending-42724320/>.

Callum Borchers, "How Hillary Clinton might have inspired Trump's 'fake news' attacks," *The Washington Post*, January 3, 2018, https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/the-fix/wp/2018/01/03/how-hillary-clinton-might-have-inspired-trumps-fake-news-attacks/?utm_term=.7098ea1f0b6d.

³⁴¹ Donald Trump (@realDonaldTrump), Twitter, February 3, 2017, 3:43 a.m., "Thank you to Prime Minister of Australia for telling the truth about our very civil conversation that FAKE NEWS media lied about. Very nice!," <https://twitter.com/realdonaldtrump/status/827480386120929280?lang=en>.

During his first year in office, Trump used the phrase 404 times in public appearances and tweets.³⁴² It was even named the 2017 word of the year by American Dialect Society and Collins Dictionary. And not surprisingly, it's a term he turns to when he feels under attack. In August 2018, Trump used the terms "fake" or "phony" in 46 tweets, the most in any month of his presidency.³⁴³ A review of that month's headlines reveals Trump dealing with critical press surrounding Paul Manafort's conviction, his personal lawyer Michael Cohen pleading guilty to violating federal campaign finance laws, and Omarosa Manigault Newman's book.

In an unprecedented move, more than 300 newspapers ran editorials countering Trump's media attacks and promoting freedom of the press. In typical Trump style, he counter-punched via Twitter:

There is nothing that I would want more for our Country than true FREEDOM OF THE PRESS. The fact is that the Press is FREE to write and say anything it wants, but much of what it says is FAKE NEWS, pushing a political agenda or just plain trying to hurt people. HONESTY WINS!³⁴⁴

³⁴² Brian Seltzer, "Trump averages a 'fake' insult every day. Really. We counted.," CNN, January 17, 2018, <https://money.cnn.com/2018/01/17/media/president-trump-fake-news-count/index.html>.

³⁴³ Tamara Keith, "President Trump's Description of What's 'Fake' Is Expanding," NPR, September 2, 2018, <https://www.npr.org/2018/09/02/643761979/president-trumps-description-of-whats-fake-is-expanding>.

³⁴⁴ Donald Trump (@realDonaldTrump), Twitter, August 16, 2018, 7:10 a.m., "There is nothing that I would want more for our Country than true FREEDOM OF THE PRESS. The fact is that the Press is FREE to write and say anything it wants, but much of what it says is FAKE NEWS, pushing a political agenda or just plain trying to hurt people. HONESTY WINS!," <https://twitter.com/realDonaldTrump/status/1030094399362007040>. Lindsey Beaver and Cleve Wooteon Jr., "Trump responds after hundreds of newspaper editorials criticize his attacks on the press," The Washington Post, August 16, 2018, https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/arts-and-entertainment/wp/2018/08/16/trump-responds-after-hundreds-of-newspaper-editorials-criticize-his-attacks-on-the-press/?utm_term=.4fd7594372c1.

The impact of President Roosevelt and Trump's closeness with media members cannot be underestimated. Roosevelt took advantage of a still maturing press corps that was hungry for stories, and lacked the clout or capability to push back on the President's PR machine. Meanwhile, Trump took advantage of a network hungry for ratings. These relationships were an especially necessary tool for Roosevelt. Newspapers were still the primary news outlet and medium for shaping public opinion, TR did not have the mediums of television and social media to carry his message directly to the people. Such devices allow President Trump more latitude when interacting with the press. He does not have to play nice in the media sandbox because he can just turn to Twitter to get his message out.

When it came to dealing with their enemies, both men were not afraid to confront them head on. Roosevelt did not look to initiate a fight, but when he thought he had been wronged, he came out guns blazing. On the other hand, Trump is not afraid to initiate a fight. And while Roosevelt had conflicts with individual correspondents or papers; Trump has launched full scale attacks on the media. His rhetoric has been so inflammatory that some worry that the press may become the target of violence.

In a strange twist, the Trump presidency has not just been good for headlines. It has also been good for major papers' bottom lines. In a period where many have predicted newspapers going the way of the dinosaur, the *Washington Post* and *New York Times* have seen readership surge.³⁴⁵ The president's insults directed at the papers have also driven more traffic to their

³⁴⁵ Jaclyn Peiser, "New York Times Co. Reports Revenue Growth as Digital Subscriptions Rise," *New York Times*, May 3, 2018, <https://www.nytimes.com/2018/05/03/business/media/new-york-times-earnings.html>.

websites. Trump has done what many editors have not been able to do—he has made newspapers relevant again.

There was one other striking difference between the two men when it comes to the press—While President Roosevelt had his share of run-ins, for the most part he enjoyed his interactions with reporters and editors. Roosevelt loved being president, and relished his pulpit and the attention it brought. For him, dealing with the press was a pleasurable chore. The same cannot be said of President Trump. While he craves attention, Trump often looks miserable during his dealings with the mainstream media.

“The Washington Post had 80.8 million readers in June 2018,” *The Washington Post*, July 16, 2018, https://www.washingtonpost.com/pr/wp/2018/07/16/the-washington-post-had-80-8-million-readers-in-june-2018/?utm_term=.5ac5874663db.

Conclusion

The bully pulpit was a term Theodore Roosevelt invented. “I suppose my critics will call that preaching, but I have got such a bully pulpit!” he proclaimed.³⁴⁶ He employed it to explain the terrific platform the White House offered him to advocate his agenda. In the early 21th century, the word bully was used as an adjective meaning “awesome” or “wonderful.” Over the decades, the word’s definition changed. Today, it is a noun describing “one who is habitually cruel, insulting, or threatening to others who are weaker, smaller, or in some way vulnerable.”³⁴⁷ The evolution of the word seems fitting when comparing how Roosevelt and Trump utilized their bully pulpits. They were architects of bully pulpits that often used the same building techniques, but very distinct styles, tones and purposes when it came to putting those techniques into practice.

As this paper has chronicled, the two men shared several things in common when it came to media management. By examining their past, we see that they were publicity prodigies, ahead of their times when it came to using the media to craft their image and sway public opinion. During a period when other politicians distanced themselves from journalists, Roosevelt grasped that he was living in the age of the reporter and realized the importance of communicating with them. His early pre-presidential career taught him lessons that he used decades later as president. In the age of social media, Trump exploited such formats as Twitter in ways politicians had never even considered. His pre-presidential days had equipped him with invaluable media training that instilled in him the importance of free

³⁴⁶Ron Elving, “Trump Puts A Twist On The Meaning Of 'Bully Pulpit',” NPR, July 4, 2017, <https://www.npr.org/2017/07/04/535429508/trump-s-weekend-gives-twist-to-meaning-of-bully-pulpit>.

³⁴⁷Definition of Bully, accessed August 20, 2018, <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/bully>.

media, catch phrases and counter punching critics. Whether you applauded or were appalled by their message, there is no denying they were innovators in how they delivered it.

It is fair to say that these men sought control. As they rose to prominence and were surrounded by advisors, publicists and handlers, they still did not relinquish the reigns of publicity power. Their presidential campaigns provide clear evidence of their hands-on leadership. Roosevelt bombarded his staff with instructions, overseeing even the smallest details such as pamphlet writing. Trump regularly ignored his staff's advice. "Let Trump be Trump" was not some brilliant strategy created by Corey Lewandowski. It was an approach created out of necessity. Trump was going to do what Trump wanted to do, there was no controlling him.

Despite these parallels, Roosevelt and Trump were on opposite ends of the spectrum when it came to how they viewed the press. A politician by profession, but a writer at heart, Roosevelt had an innate respect of and appreciation for journalists and the importance of their work. During his time in the New York State Assembly a bill was introduced that would have permitted newspaper editors to be sued for libel anywhere their paper was distributed.

Roosevelt voiced his displeasure with the bill, stating:

We have all of us at times suffered from the liberty of the press, but we have to take the good with the bad. I think we certainly ought to hesitate to think very seriously before passing any law that will interfere with the broadest public utterance. I think it is a great deal better to err a little bit on the side of much discussion and having too virulent language used by the press, rather than to error on the side of having them not say what they ought to say, especially with reference to public men and measures.³⁴⁸

While Roosevelt had his share of run ins with journalists, his first inclination was to cultivate a bond with members of the press. His goal was to make allies since he understood

³⁴⁸ Bishop, *Theodore Roosevelt and His Times*, 22.

that this relationship could work to the mutual benefit of both parties. But even more importantly, he understood that the press was a crucial instrument in advancing his political agenda. From creating a press room in the White House, to his shaving sessions to leaking information; President Roosevelt made himself more available to the press than any president before and opened the lines of communication with journalists.

Conversely, Trump entered the political ring looking for a fight. This should come as no surprise, considering his pre-presidential clashes with members of the press. As chapter one revealed, one of Trump's credos was "when attacked, fight back." As president, he has painted the mainstream media as the "enemy" determined to bring him and America down. His incendiary text and speeches have been part of his overall smear campaign aimed at discrediting the media and turning the public against them. Roosevelt may have attacked members of the press, but Trump has attacked freedom of the press.

Both men had enormous egos that demanded attention. Alice Roosevelt's famous quote, "My father always wanted to be the corpse at every funeral, the bride at every wedding, and the baby at every christening," perfectly sums up TR's love of the spotlight.³⁴⁹ President Trump also craved the limelight. During a photo-op with fellow NATO leaders, he pushed Montenegro's Prime Minister Dusko Markovic out of the way so that he could be front and center for the cameras.

The bully pulpit fed their egos, allowing them to command center stage and the message delivered from it. Their egos, mixed with their ambition, made for an explosive combination that drove their purpose behind their pulpit. President Roosevelt's pulpit actions were motivated by

³⁴⁹ Michael Woroch, *Unreasonable Men: Theodore Roosevelt and the Republican Rebels Who Created Progressive Politics* (New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2014) 342.

his desire to push his policies in hopes of making America great. Now unquestionably, Roosevelt was concerned about his own legacy and wanted to be remembered as a great president. He realized that his legacy was tied directly to the country's success. If the United States achieved new heights during his administration, then history would treat him accordingly.

While Roosevelt was concerned with America's place in the world, President Trump is more concerned with his place in it. As a result, he often uses his pulpit not to promote policy, but to promote or defend himself. When Republicans attempted to repeal Obama care, he was not worried if this was the best policy move for America. Trump had little desire to learn the details of their proposal. Instead, his focus was on delivering on a campaign promise and getting a "w" in the win column.³⁵⁰ And when things went south, he did not fight vehemently to save to the repeal. Instead, he put his energy towards blaming to his fellow Republicans for its collapse.

There is no debating that both these men changed the president-press dynamic. TR developed practices that empowered future presidents. After Roosevelt, there was no going back. If a president were going to be successful he needed to be able to use the press, first to get elected, and then to build support for their agenda.

It will take time to accurately judge the Trump Effect. While they may not use his tone and crassness, one has to believe that all future presidents will have to be masters of social media. Trump's aggressive, at times crude, tone and questionable use of the "facts" raises questions—Just because he has the presidential pulpit is the press obligated to cover all his statements, speeches or tweets? Is everything a president says newsworthy?

³⁵⁰ "Trumps Takeover" transcript, Frontline, PBS, accessed June 20, 2018, <https://www.pbs.org/wgbh/frontline/film/trumps-takeover/transcript/>.

President Theodore Roosevelt saw his bully pulpit as a beneficial mechanism to unify the public behind his quest to raise the nation to new heights. Despite the occasional squabble and complaint, Roosevelt benefited from an overall healthy relationship with the press. President Trump has repeatedly used his pulpit like a bully, often attacking his enemies, including the press. His contentious relationship with the media has only divided the country even more.

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