PERTINACIOUS IMAGE: INVESTIGATING A DIMENSION OF IMAGE
MANAGEMENT IN SPORTS PUBLIC RELATIONS

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PERTINACIOUS IMAGE: INVESTIGATING A DIMENSION OF IMAGE
MANAGEMENT IN SPORTS PUBLIC RELATIONS

Presented by Adam E. Horn

A candidate for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

And hereby certify that in their opinion it is worthy of acceptance.

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DEDICATION

I would like to dedicate this dissertation to my wife Tricia, and my children Cameron, Ashleigh and Raegan.

Tricia I cannot thank you enough for all the sacrifices and hard work you put in to help me through this long journey. You were a constant source of love and encouragement, managing to say just the right thing at the right time to motivate me and lift me up when things got tough. I know that you were a prayer warrior for me throughout this process and I thank God for you every day. I am so blessed that you were willing to wade through the mountain of data with me, while helping me really think through some tough information. You allowed me bounce ideas and concepts off of you even when you were too tired listen. You did all of this with such a loving attitude. I am truly thankful that you helped keep me focused, never allowing me stray too far off my goal. Some might call it tough love. I call it true love. You truly are a blessing sent by God. Thank you.

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Shortly after I started my doctoral program, my daughter Ashleigh was diagnosed with a brain tumor. Not knowing where this little bump in our life would take our family,

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ABSTRACT

Seeking to explore new areas of image management, this dissertation applied the constant comparative method to in-depth interviews of sports public relations practitioners. The result is the discovery of a new concept not found in current image management literature: pertinacious image. Pertinacious image occurs after an athlete (individual) has committed or allegedly committed some type of offensive act and, as a result, is now saddled with a new, more negative image based on the offensive act. Though the new image is considered undesired, evidence suggests that the athlete could leverage the new undesired image for profitable gain. The evidence offered in this dissertation redresses traditional assumptions found in the current image management literature and in traditional image management practice in the marketplace. The pertinacious image model is advanced as a way of helping to explain and understand the concept. The implications of the findings offer a new concept for scholars to study and for practitioners to employ relating to the field of sports public relations, with the possibility of extending into other areas of public relations.

Chapter One: Introduction

Los Angeles Lakers' all-star guard Kobe Bryant surrendered July 4, 2003 to the

Eagle County (Colorado) sheriff's department after Sheriff Joseph Hoy issued a warrant

for his arrest. The arrest followed allegations that Bryant had sexually assaulted a 19-

year-old woman who worked at the Lodge and Spa at Cordillera (near Vail, CO) where

Bryant had stayed.

Bryant left Los Angeles on June 30 to have surgery at Steadman Hawkins Clinic

in Vail the next day for tendonitis. According to news reports, he checked into the hotel

around 11 p.m. and called his wife from his hotel room about 15 minutes later. Bryant's

accuser, who was a concierge/receptionist at the Lodge and Spa, went off duty shortly

after Bryant checked in. Sometime later that evening, the female spa worker visited

Bryant's room and that is when the alleged sexual assault occurred.

The next morning, Bryant underwent his surgery. While Bryant was in surgery,

the young spa worker told the Eagle County sheriff's department that Bryant had sexually

assaulted her the night before. The young woman went to the Vail Valley Medical

Center for tests, while sheriff's office investigators "quizzed Bryant in his room and

collected evidence. Hours later, technicians at Valley View Hospital took samples of

Bryant's DNA" (Corliss, 2003, p. 45).

After being questioned, Bryant flew back to California. He returned to Colorado

four days later to face a single count of felony sexual assault. Bryant was released after

posting $25,000 bond, thus beginning a criminal case that would last for more than a year

before the judge dismissed it. Although Bryant never stood trial in the courtroom, the

court of public opinion was already in session. *Sports Illustrated* writer Jack McCallum (2003) put it best when he wrote:

> It seems naïve in the extreme to profess amazement that a professional athlete might have extramarital sex, given the privileges of the lifestyle, the ease with which the stars attract women, and the fact that so many high-profile males (a president, for one) have been unfaithful. While some who never bought into Bryant's squeaky-clean persona were still surprised by the allegation of violence, others have long believed he has a darker side. The excavation of his life and character has begun. (p. 42)

Since being drafted out of high school by the Charlotte Hornets in 1996 (and traded later that year to the Lakers) many NBA pundits claimed that Bryant would likely become the next Michael Jordan both on and off the court. Undoubtedly this was an unrealistic comparison to make between the two, especially at Bryant's young age. At the time, Jordan was known for his super human efforts on the court, which were equally matched with his star appeal as a positive role model off the court. Certainly these were big shoes for Bryant to fill.

However, nearly a year before the alleged sexual assault occurred a poll conducted by Burns Sports & Celebrities Inc. "rated him the third-best product endorser in sports, behind Tiger Woods and Michael Jordan" (Kobe acknowledged adultery espn.go.com/nba/news/2003/0718/1582691.html, 2003, ¶ 12). It only took six seasons to prove the pundits right. Bryant not only became a five-time NBA all-star and won three NBA Championships, but he inked a new endorsement deal with Nike worth a reported

$40 million to $50 million a year before the alleged assault. The following quote sums up Bryant's image value:

> [Bryant's] 'personality and his skills are the two things that are very important to his endorsement skills,' said Matt Powell, athletic footwear and retail analyst for Princeton Retail Analysis and contributing editor to *Sports Executive Weekly*. 'His [clean-cut] personality is a big part of his appeal'. (as quoted in Zmuda, 2003, p. 8)

In addition to the legal trouble Bryant faced if convicted – four years to life in prison or 20 years to life on probation and up to a $750,000 fine – Bryant's reputation suffered some damage the moment he surrendered to police. Not only did Bryant face prison if convicted in a court of law, but many believed that he had already been convicted in the court of public opinion.

Needless to say, Bryant had both a legal and a public relations crisis. Bryant was at the top of his game (literally and figuratively) when he was sought by Colorado police for rape. At the time, Bryant was the most popular NBA player for a number of reasons. At 26, his exploits on the court were already legendary, but it was his "squeaky clean" image and boyish charm off the court that made him popular with teammates, fans and with kids who wanted to be "like Kobe."

This case is unique in that seldom has a professional athlete with "superstar" status been accused of rape (a strong case could be made that Mike Tyson's rape charge in the boxing world was as prominent, suggesting comparative analysis of the two cases). This is not to say that athletes in the past have not been accused of this crime, the line of demarcation is Bryant's superstar status. It is this status that makes the case unique.

Following the criminal trial against him, which resulted in the case being dismissed, Bryant soon embraced this new "bad boy" image even though he was the NBA's "golden boy" just a few years before the incident. In his first commercial endorsement (Nike) following the criminal trial, Bryant played on this bad boy image. The ad read as follows: "**Love me or hate me, it's one or the other. Always has been. Hate my game, my swagger. Hate my fadeaway, my hunger. Hate that I'm a veteran. A champion. Hate that. Hate it with all your heart. And hate that I'm loved, for the exact same reasons.**"

In a landmark public relations move, Bryant and his public relations team embraced the negative image assigned to him by public perception in the wake of rape charges and turned it into a powerful marketing tool. Essentially, Bryant's public relations team convinced him to embrace and develop this new negative image because he was not likely to ever regain his golden boy image, at least not for some time. It worked. Unlike in traditional image management where public relations practitioners try to repair and restore the offending individual's image to its past state, Bryant's public relations team decided it was better for him to cultivate his new seemingly negative image and leverage it for financial gain.

This move is something public relations professionals would do well to study, understand and develop methods for replicating. That is the purpose of the study undertaken here. This dissertation takes a detailed look at the concept of image, redressing traditional assumptions of desirable positive images, while developing (speculating about) an alternative concept called "pertinacious" (undesired) image and how it might be used for desirable ends. A January 2010 announcement by NASCAR

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president Mike Helton made it clear that the sport is turning from its squeaky clean image and it one driven by competition that will "loosen it up" because "NASCAR is relaxing some of its rule this season, and encouraging drivers to show more aggression and emotion, in large part to answer a growing fan sentiment that the sport had gone stale" (NASCAR, http://sports.espn.go.com/rpm/nascar/cup/news/story?id=4845878, 2010, ¶ 1). NASCAR is moving from careful policing of "on-track aggression and off-track emotion" to a sport that encourages "the competitors….for their character and their personality, within reason, to be unfolded" (NASCAR,

http://sports.espn.go.com/rpm/nascar/cup/news/story?id=4845878, ¶ 20).

Pertinacious Image Defined

Pertinacious is an adjective defined in the *Merriam-Webster Online Dictionary* as "perversely persistent." This research project operationalized a "pertinacious image" as a "perversely" persistent image. An image that is perversely persistent is grounded in the quality of being "turned around from what is right or good" or "obstinate in opposing what is right, reasonable or accepted" (*Merriam-Webster Online Dictionary*). For example, if an athlete who has enjoyed a largely positive public image is suddenly accused of rape, that individual is forever going to be known as a rapist which leads to a largely negative image. An example of this is, Kobe Bryant was accused of and tried for rape, but was not convicted in a court of law for the crime. However, he appears to have been convicted by the court of public opinion. When an athlete is saddled with a pertinacious image it means that he or she is essentially "stuck" with some semblance of that negative image forever – even if the individual makes his or her best efforts to overcome that negative image through future good deeds. Pertinacious image does not

necessarily supersede or replace a desirable image, but some sense of it does prevail. A

pertinacious image is not desired by those who hold and/or leverage the desirable image,

yet it appears over and over again in various forms of public discourse. Traditional

approaches to image deal with those seen as desirable, those that are associated with what

is right or good, reasonable or accepted. It is important to note that a pertinacious image

is imaginable only if some form of desirable image pre-exists. Pertinacious images, then,

are those much like the one that developed around Bryant, initially perceived by his

public relations practitioners as undesirable or unacceptable. They wanted to keep the

good boy image alive until someone master-minded a plan to embrace the bad boy image

and leverage it for profitability.

The desirability of a pertinacious image does not exist in the reputation and image

management literature. This dissertation focuses on the rhetorical perspectives and

criteria that lend understanding to the idea of pertinacious image and the ability to engage

it in a constructive way. It also presents a model of the concept, simply for reflective

purposes.

Pertinacious Image and Assumed Image Management

When discussing image formation and management at any level it is highly

important to note that images are not static things, nor are they easily confined to

description. For example, an athlete may hold a largely positive enduring image as a

philanthropist, while also holding an image as a poor media interviewee. At the same

time, that philanthropic image may be overshadowed at some point in the athlete's career

by professional accomplishments (i.e., breaking the single-season home run record,

breaking the all-time scoring record, or signing a contract to become the highest paid

athlete in his or her respective sport). Former Indiana University and Texas Tech

basketball coach Bobby Knight, for instance, appears to have two different public

images. Knight's cantankerous relationship with the media is well documented. Because

Knight appeared to outwardly despise most of the media and acted gruffly in interviews,

some might argue that the media portrayed Knight as a mean and overbearing person.

Ultimately, the media's portrayal of Knight is what the public saw and heard. In addition

to his mean/overbearing public persona, Knight's other less publicly recorded image (as

seen through the eyes of his former players and assistants) was that of the paternal mentor

who ran a clean program, graduated most of his players, and who went out of his way to

help others. Simply put, many of his former players have praised their beloved mentor

for the opportunities that Knight helped provide for them.

Moffitt (1994) directed her readers' attention to the complex nature of studying

image and/or trying to leverage image for desirable ends. She was careful to draw

attention to the idea that there are "multiple factors dictating multiple images" (p. 160)

and that "image is not dictated solely by the organization but that image is the product of

multiple organizational, environmental, personal experience and other factors processed

by the individual receiver" (p. 160). Moffitt advised that public relations professionals be

cautious about targeting messages to the common denominator of an entire group and,

instead, "treat publics…as groups *of individuals*, each individual having multiple

positions toward the organization" (p. 160). While Moffitt's admonitions are well-taken,

Benoit (1997b) argued that "even if we are moving away from a notion of image as a

single impression shared by an audience…image is still a central concept to the field of

public relations" (p. 177).

An image is not static. It exists on multiple communicative levels. It does not have easily described boundaries. Yet, the academic literature and professional dialogue are filled with discussions of image as an imaginable thing, as a real thing, and as a thing to be managed and addressed. The reality of this is seen daily on Wall Street. An organization's publicly traded stock can open at $55 a share. One undesired comment to the press from a source (one who holds a desirable image in the financial arena) and that stock can plummet in a matter of hours to $15 a share. The August 2000 Emulex crisis was an example. Following a bogus news release sent over Internet Wire, Emulex's stock prices plunged more than 60 percent in the first hour of trading.

Coaches and players are not faceless organizations like Emulex. They are truly tangible to their publics. They are also celebrities. The idea of celebrity carries with it some level of public awareness, fame, and prestige. James Gronbeck (1997) discussed the realm of celebrity.

> To be celebrated – famous, likable, worthy of public interest – is in part a matter of accomplishment in some area of endeavor, but also a matter of attractiveness. Further, celebrity status is an interactive variable; that is, celebrity is conferred upon a personage by a public, for to be known as likable and worthy of attention is to be molded into a kind of honored or appreciated object by another. And, of course, the kind of object into which a person is made depends, once again, upon tokens – visible behavior and discourse that serve as markers. (p. 137)

In light of celebrated individuals committing offensive acts, Lull and Hinerman's (1997) discussion of moral violations is useful. They adopted Lulls 1995 argument and claimed that a "star's [celebrity's] moral violations…are always contextualized in terms

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of his or her 'image system' (Lull, 1995). By this [they meant] that any particular transgression is constructed and read against an image in circulation" (p. 21). Current offensiveness is mediated by associated image.

Another important dimension of celebrity came from Denis McQuail (2000). He argued that "the media have a virtual monopoly over…status and celebrity in the wider society" (p. 488). In addition,

dealing in celebrity is generally a matter of mutual self-interest, since the media themselves need to provide their audiences with images of celebrity. Fame and celebrity usually depend on wider systems of meaning that have developed over time and which the mass media did not create nor completely control. They also depend on social networks and hierarchies in the society and on interpersonal processes of discourse, rumour [sic] and gossip. (p. 488)

It is clear that celebrity image is not a simple thing. It is also clear, as recently argued by Summers and Morgan (2008),

a sporting celebrity is subjected to unprecedented scrutiny and the increasingly high expectations of fans. However, the expectations of fans are not based on the simple notion of hero worship and role models…fans are capable of very complex reactions to the behavior and marketing personas of sporting celebrities" (p. 176).

A pertinacious image can form when a "salient audience" (fans) begins to view an individual of some celebrity status differently after seeing/hearing media (media influenced message) reports about the individual's offensive actions. A salient audience is, as articulated by Scott and Lane (2000), the group of stakeholders believed to have "a direct influence on organizational performance and survival" (p. 11). The concept of a

salient audience is used here as Benoit (1997b) used it. It is organizationally relevant, given priority notice by an organization, and "must be thought to disapprove" or approve of an act (p. 178). For a sports figure a salient audience could consist of fans, sponsors, coaches, public relations agents, bloggers, or journalists. The members of this audience are consumers of the image associated with the individual.

It is not always easy to know what an audience will find offensive, or at least offensive enough to change image perceptions to less than favorable. In an effort to better define what pertinacious image is, we must think about what criteria contribute to it. For example, a pertinacious image could stem from general transgressions such as an individual breaking the law (or governing rules), violating a social norm (what society generally believes to be socially acceptable behavior), or demonstrating poor public character. Each of these issues, among others, can shape the individual's pertinacious image.

To illustrate this further, take Bryant and former NFL football player O.J. Simpson, for examples. Bryant will forever be known as a rapist, while Simpson will forever be known as a murderer. Keep in mind; neither was convicted in a criminal proceeding for their alleged crimes. However, it could be argued that both were convicted in the court of public opinion – hence they now have a pertinacious image. This certainly did not help Simpson in 2008 when he was convicted of kidnapping and armed robbery. Bryant used his pertinacious image for gain. Simpson did or could not.

Pertinacious image could carry a positive valence through a set of beloved characteristics (i.e., although baseball legend Babe Ruth was said to be a womanizer and a drunk, he is still beloved as the greatest baseball player of all-time). However,

pertinacious images could have varying degrees of negativity. For example, the public

may view some offenses (i.e., breaking the law, violating social norms, or demonstrating

poor character) as more severe than others. The public may view raping a woman or a

child as worse than being a thief or a drug pusher/dealer. Some may consider murdering

someone not as bad as rape, or vice versa.

With all of the above in mind, I contend that depending on how the public might

view an individual's pertinacious image it is possible to cultivate, promote and leverage it

into financial profitability when addressing a salient audience. A salient audience is part

of the public, but not all members of the public are members of the salient audience. The

term public refers to all individuals who have varying degrees of self-interest pertaining

to the offending individual. A salient audience is one with levels of self-interest and

ability to act that signal it out as important to public relations objectives. More narrowly

in this particular research project, the term salient audience is one with levels of self-

interest and ability and/or willingness to act toward the offending individual that signal it

out as important to public relations objectives.

Pertinacious Image Criteria

An image is not static or easily confined to a description. It is complex in nature;

composed of multiple factors; not dictated solely by an organization; and is a product of

multiple organizational, environmental and personal experience factors. Individuals'

images, such as those addressed here, are mitigated by components of celebrity status and

fame, tied to media discourse and influence, and are products and producers of social

systems of meaning. Individuals can have varying perceptions of an organization's or

individual's intended image. Pertinacious images, then, can only be recognized in

relation to an established desirable image. They can only result when social

transgressions are committed and recognized as offensive by a salient audience. When a

pertinacious image occurs, it is, by its very nature, presented and represented in various

forms and levels of public discourse. Public relations practitioners are left with one of

three decisions to make. They can (1) ignore it, (2) address it with the goal of repairing it

to some desirable state, or (3) they can embrace it with the goal of leveraging it into

"profitable gain." As addressed here, profitable gain refers to making money, generating

desired publicity, facilitating sponsorship deals or leveraging merchandising.

To begin the process of better defining pertinacious image it seems prudent to

explore areas of social transgression, specifically those most obvious ones such as

violating social norms, breaking the law or governing rules and character issues.

Norms, Rules and Laws: A Discussion

Shimanoff (1980) argued that there is and should be a perceived difference

between rules and norms. Even though "communication scholars often use the terms rule

and norm interchangeably" (p. 63), Shimanoff made the case that rules differ from norms

on two accounts. The first is statistical comparisons of average values of variables

representing the means through which a population is compared. Relevant to the

discussion of a pertinacious image, is her second differentiation. She argued that rules

also differ from norms when comparing normal or average types of behaviors among a

group being studied. Shimanoff defined rules, then, as prescribed sets of behavior among

a social group, in which violation results in some sort of generally understood

sanctioning. She went on to argue that,

norms represent average behavior; some rules do not. Rules prescribe behavior; some norms do not. Norms that prescribe obligated, prohibited, or preferred behavior are rules. Rules that reflect the behavior of most members in a community are norms…or normative rules. (p. 65).

Cialdini, Reno and Kallgren (1990) made an attempt to solve problems of clearly defining the concept of norms. In doing so, they blurred the definitional lines set up by Shimanoff. "When considering normative influence on behavior it is crucial to discriminate between the *is* (descriptive) and the *ought* (injunctive) meaning of social norms" (p. 1015). Descriptive norms guide behavior through what is "typical or *normal*" while "the injunctive meaning of norms refers to rules or beliefs as to what constitutes morally approved and disapproved conduct" (p. 1015). While Shimanoff (1980) equates prescribed behavior accompanied with sanctions as rules, Cialdini, Reno and Kallgren (1990) suggested that instead of rules these are injunctive norms.

Manstead's (2000) distinction and definition of a moral norm is also worthy of discussion. He defined it as "the individual's conviction that acting in a certain way is right or wrong. This conviction that some forms of behavior are inherently right or wrong, regardless of their personal or social consequences, is what is meant by the term *moral norm* (p. 12). Manstead also discussed and defined "subjective norms." He made clear that the two, moral and social norms are not the same thing. While moral norms may arrive from social perceptions and pressure, they are recognized as "internalized" by an individual, having become "independent of the immediate expectations of others" (p. 13). Social norms, however, are not independent of others' expectations and in fact, Manstead proposed "perceived social pressure" as another label for them.

Nolan, Schultz, Cialdini, Goldstein and Griskevicius (2009) addressed "how most people behave in a given situation" (p. 913) and labeled that "communicating a descriptive norm" (p. 913). They found in their study that even though subjects thought that "the behavior of their neighbors—the descriptive norm—had the least impact on their own energy conservation [behavior under study], results showed that the descriptive norm actually had the strongest effect on participant's energy conservation behavior" (p. 921). Both Manstead (2000) and Nolan, Schultz, Cialdini, Goldstein and Griskevicius (2009) made it clear that what is perceived as "normal" plays a significant role in behavior and communication patterns.

Len-Ríos (2008) operationalized "norms that dictate what is socially acceptable communication based on the cultural values of norms of the communicators" (p. 181) as "communication rules." Communication rules theory is rooted in sociolinguistics, and it "suggests that communication is an essential factor in establishing, maintaining, and ending relationships" (p. 182). She argued that,

> In short, rules are followable, contextual, and prescriptive or proscriptive (obligatory, prohibitive, or preferred). They may be explicitly stated or implicitly inferred in situations. People follow communication rules because of social force and to meet their relational goals. Communication-generated behavior may violate, meet, or surpass rule prescriptions and has varying consequences. (p. 186).

Interestingly enough, the very nature of communication rules, as articulated by Len-Ríos makes them "criticizable because others can evaluate it [them] as appropriate or inappropriate" (p. 184). It seems that salient audiences of all types have the opportunity

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to engage in communication rules and to criticize an athlete's behavior in light of those rules.

While further exploration of Shimanoff's (1980) descriptions between norms and rules; Cialdini, Reno, and Kallgren's (1990) descriptive and injunctive norms; Manstead's (2000) moral and social norms; Nolan, Schultz, Cialdini, Goldstein and Griskevicius's (2009) perspective on descriptive norms, and Len-Ríos' (2008) communication rules may play a part in a salient audience's perception of a sports celebrity's image, I argue that for the purposes of the present project, it is simply important to accept that the perceived violation of behavioral norms and acceptable communication rules, have the potential to mitigate his or her image.

Violates social norms. Despite living in an era where society is asked to be sensitive to political correctness and to redefine what socially accepted behaviors (norms) are, the majority of society still maintains a hard set of core beliefs that is many times unwavering. More specifically, society still ostracizes individuals who violate these core social beliefs and behaviors (norms).

For example, Billie Jean King was initially ostracized for having a sexual relationship with another woman while she was married to her husband. This came at a time when society did not want to believe that a superstar athlete could be a lesbian. Actor Pee Wee Herman was arrested for masturbating in a movie theater. Parents were outraged that an actor, who their small children looked up to and watched, could engage in lewd behavior in public. His show was subsequently canceled.

Social norm violations could include smoking, drinking, illegal drug use (steroids, cocaine, marijuana, etc.), legal drug abuse (pain killers), abortion, eating disorders, tax

evasion, homosexuality, same sex marriage, not being environmentally conscious, gambling, womanizing (dating around, visiting strip clubs, etc.), violating cultural stereotypes (e.g., Whites accused of "acting like" Blacks [rappers Eminem and Vanilla Ice], Blacks accused of "acting like" Whites [actors Bill Cosby and Will Smith]).

Individuals who violate social norms are often looked down upon and cast out by society as no longer being acceptable. More specifically, those who violate social norms have violated what society generally believes to be socially acceptable behavior.

Breaks the law or governing rules. For the purposes of this dissertation, rules are operationalized apart from individual perception. They are taken as sets of expected behavior whose violation of are punishable by formally proscribed sets of sanctions. Specifically, they are crystallized by the United States legal system. This is in line with Shimanoff's (1980) clear distinction between what is a norm and what is a formal rule.

Individuals who break the law (especially on more than one occasion) can develop a pertinacious image that tends to define (or labels) them as a troublemakers or lawbreakers. More specifically, I contend that those who break the law tend to be labeled by the crime they committed or, in some cases; by the crime they allegedly committed (though the individual may be exonerated in a court of law, but convicted in the court of public opinion). For example, while Kobe Bryant admits to committing adultery (a misdemeanor offense), he was charged with raping (a felony offense) a female hotel worker. Most people (including lawmakers) would agree that rape is considered more offensive than committing adultery – though both are unlawful acts. With that in mind, I contend that an active audience is more likely (than a passive or uninterested audience) to label Bryant as a rapist than an adulterer because rape is generally considered more

negative. As a society, we tend to convict/condemn people in the court of public opinion before the individual has been convicted or exonerated in a court of law. In the Bryant case, I argue that his conviction in the court of public opinion led to his pertinacious image as a rapist rather than as an adulterer.

Character issues. Sometimes individuals can have a pertinacious image despite not breaking the law or violating social norms. In this case, an individual's pertinacious image might be due to demonstrating poor character qualities. Character can be understood from Ware and Linkugel (1973) as they equated an attack on someone's character as an attack upon one's "worth as a human being" or as questioning of one's "*moral nature, motives, or reputation*" (p. 274).

For example, an individual might be known as difficult to work with, demonstrate frequent angry behavior, may engage in unethical behavior, or may demonstrate a lack of self confidence in a public situation where strong leadership is required. These are just a few situations where one's character could define one's pertinacious image.

Ware and Linkugel viewed an attack on one's character as different from the questioning of one's policies. Questioning of one's policies can be understood as be questioning one's adherence to or deviation from laws, rules and norms as addressed above. For the purposes of this dissertation, I define character much as Ware and Linkugel did. It represents one's worth as a human being, netting others' trust in who an athlete is and what he/she stands for as an individual. Character issues come into play when others begin question an athlete's trust, reliability, and so on.

Chapter Two: Literature Review

In the early 1990s, a young tennis player named Andre Agassi proclaimed "image is everything" in television ads for Canon cameras. It was a simple three-word ad slogan that succinctly made its point through dualistic meaning. Although the advertiser's overarching message was that Canon cameras produced superior images compared to its competition, the underlying message was that one's personal image was the most important thing.

When public relations practitioners and scholars use the term "image," we must necessarily ask what they. How do they define image? It can be argued that the term image can be defined in several ways based on its situational use (organizational, individual or both). For example, Kotler (1994) generally defined image as "the set of beliefs, ideas, and impressions that a person holds of an object" (p. 599). Newsom, Turk and Kruckeberg (2004) defined image in organizational terms by stating that "the collective perception of all publics for an organization – based on what it says and does – constitute an image" (p. 100). Benoit (1997a) defined image in both organizational and individual terms as "the perception of a person (or group, or organization) held by the audience, shaped by the words and actions of that person, as well as by the discourse and behavior of other relevant actors" (p. 251). A few years earlier, Botan (1993) introduced to the image discussion, the notion of meta-level understanding. He classified all images as falling into one category or another, that of instrumentalism or humanitarianism. Instrumental images (i-images) involve "attempts to manage publics by managing the organization's communication with them" (p. 71). They are essentially "one-way and monological" (p. 71). In addition, Botan argued that i-images are generally unethical in

nature because of disregard for truth or public involvement. Humanitarian images (h-images), then, "represent our unique personal understandings of a thing or process" (p. 72). Practitioners using this approach engage in two-way dialogue with each other "and accept the ethical responsibility to enhance, not degrade, the humanity of all parties involved in public relationships" (p. 71). Botan's arguments draw attention to a meta-level understanding of image. In this project, understanding an image as something to be leveraged for profitability would be called an instrumental use of image (although I argue not necessarily unethical). However, a pertinacious image would necessarily be the product of two-way communication between an individual (or public relations practitioners acting on behalf of the individual) and a salient audience. It would be based on some sort of two-way communication and, hence, has elements of instrumentalism and humanitarianism. Most importantly, Botan's arguments remind the reader that the concept of image is multi-level and multi-faceted.

For years, the term image has been both valued and despised by public relations practitioners and scholars alike. Coombs (2005) put it this way, "The term image is one of the most controversial in the lexicon of public relations. It has been heralded as essential to an organization and dismissed as irrelevant to an organization. Edward Bernays condemned the concept, but others embrace it and corporations spend millions of dollars a year to build them" (p. 405).

Similarly, Newsom et al. (2004) wrote,

Most PR practitioners would gladly ban use of the word image because it's so often misused and misunderstood and because they don't like being depicted as "image makers." Nonetheless, image does describe the perception of an

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organization or individual, and this perception is based largely on what the organization or individual does. (p. 100)

Image has long held a place of importance in the practice of public relations. Remembering this, I define image as the ongoing yet describable perceptions of a salient audience about a celebrity individual that have been and are shaped by the words and actions of that person, as well as by media, and social discourse and behavior toward and about that individual.

Although some public relations practitioners and scholars dislike the term image, both groups would agree that image is extremely important to the organizations and clients they represent. In today's media-centric society, publics are inundated with information and subsequently intrigued by the latest political or celebrity scandals, as well as organizational crises. With the help of both traditional (print, radio and television) and non-traditional media (Internet, blogs, social media, etc.), publics, at times, cannot seem to get enough of an individual's or an organization's scandalous behavior. The media's willingness to feed the public's insatiable appetite for scandal necessitates and accentuates the importance that public relations practitioners must do their best to manage their organization's and client's images.

To further illustrate this point and to contextualize the media scandal concept, Rowe (1997) wrote,

Media scandals are constructed out of certain moral absolutism that accompanies the condition of modernity; yet the mass-media spectacles, wild significatory spirals, paraphernalia merchandizing, on-the-street jokes, stand-up comedy routines, and induction into everyday speech that such outrages provoke are more

obviously the products of the moral relativism and ironic detachment of

postmodernity. A simultaneous confirmation and subversion of consensual moral

order are, then, accomplished by media scandal, operating first to trace the

boundaries of acceptable behavior through a process of (essentially Durkheimian)

public shaming and attachment of a "deviant" label, only to compromise the

integrity of this structure of conformity and deviancy by eliciting a response of

private moral ambivalence and guilty pleasure (principally of voyeuristic gaze).

(pp. 204-205)

Following Rowe's train of thought, it may be that the very existence of pertinacious

image results from a clash between modern and postmodern thought and action. He

highlights the spectacular or scandalous role, perhaps, played by the media as individuals

develop their perceptions of reality. Rowe provides some interesting food for thought as

I begin my exploration of pertinacious image.

Never-the-less, image has become extremely important to almost everyone, from

athletes and celebrities, to business leaders and corporations, to politicians, to royalty and

even to the average citizen. The importance of having a positive image can mean

millions of dollars in endorsement and movie contracts, millions in business revenues,

more votes at election time, or simply people holding you in high regard. However,

when faced with having a negative image the opposite is true, businesses and public

figures can lose money, politicians can lose elections and people can lose friends. Image

has become so important that when we have a negative image, we have a natural

tendency to want to defend ourselves. Benoit (1997a) put it this way, "our face, image,

or reputation is so important to us that threats to our image impel us to attempt to restore our reputation" (p. 251).

Although I generally agree with Benoit that we need to defend ourselves when faced with a negative image and try to repair that image to some sense of its former state, I also contend that in some circumstances involving high-profile (superstar) athletes and celebrities (A-list) having a negative image is not necessarily a bad thing. In fact, I believe that in some cases it might be better to promote/leverage the new negative image than try to repair the old one. It can be a more profitable endeavor. Rowe (1997) illustrated this point when he wrote, "Some sportsmen cultivate an outlaw, 'bad boy' image, establishing this claim on the basis of denying the hypocrisy of altruism in sport, and unselfconsciously bringing the often ugly dimensions of the private into the public sporting arena" (pp. 214-215).

Although I believe that the pertinacious image concept exists, it does not currently exist in the public relations literature. However, there are several theories that provide small pieces to the pertinacious image puzzle. They are agenda-setting theory (McCombs & Shaw, 1972), media dependency theory (Ball-Rokeach & DeFleur, 1976), image repair theory (Benoit, 1995), situational crisis communication theory (Coombs & Holladay, 2002), and contingency theory (Cancel, Cameron, Sallot & Mitrook, 1997).

Agenda-Setting Theory

In a pertinacious image model, a salient audience must rely on media influenced messages to know about an offender's actions. This is important to note because without the media's messages, an audience may never see or hear about the offensive acts. In this

instance, the media have the opportunity to influence the audience. Cohen (1963) put it best when he wrote,

> The press is significantly more than a purveyor of information and opinion. It may not be successful much of the time in telling people what to think, but it is stunningly successful in telling its readers what to think about. And it follows from this that the world looks different to different people, depending not only on their personal interests, but also on the map that is drawn for them by the writers, editors, and publishers of the papers they read. (p. 13)

Nearly a decade later, McCombs and Shaw (1972) put Cohen's idea to the test when they studied public opinion and media reports of key issues in Chapel Hill, NC, during the 1968 presidential campaign. They found a strong relationship between what voters said was important and what the media were reporting as important. This finding led McCombs and Shaw to believe that the media set the agenda for public discourse – thus dawned agenda-setting theory. Carroll and McCombs (2003) put it this way, "the core proposition of agenda-setting theory is the prominence of elements in the news influences the prominence of those elements among the public" (p. 37).

In a pertinacious image model, a salient audience may either hear/see the news regarding the offensive act for the first time or they may have some prior knowledge, either way, a salient audience will rely on media reports to provide them with information to make an informed decision about the offender. The reason agenda-setting theory is important to the pertinacious image concept is because how the offensive act is reported (tone) or positioned (how frequently it is repeated) will have an effect on what people think about the offender now and in the future.

This is demonstrated in what Carroll and McCombs (2003) called first and second-level agenda-setting. In first-level agenda-setting, "the salience of objects on the media agenda influences the salience of those objects on the public agenda" (p. 38). At the first level, the media brings what it believes to be an important issue to the public's attention. "For all news media, repeated attention to an object day after day is the most powerful message of all about its salience. The public uses these salience cues from the media to organize their own agenda, to decide which issues, persons or other objects are the most important" (p. 37). Carroll and McCombs added that once this occurs – establishing salience among the public – it becomes the "initial stage in formation of public opinion" (p. 37).

In first-level agenda-setting, the focus is on the salience of "objects." However, in second-level agenda-setting, the focus is on the salience of "attributes." Carroll and McCombs (2003) defined second-level agenda-setting this way, "At the second level of agenda-setting, the salience of attributes on the media agenda influences the salience of those attributes on the public agenda" (p. 38). At the second level, agenda-setting effects focus on comprehension. To contextualize first and second-level agenda-setting using the primary characters (athletes) in this dissertation it could be said that the objects (first level) are the athletes and the attributes (second level) are their various traits. In conjunction, both help define the athlete's image in the media among a salient audience.

There is an additional dimension to second-level agenda-setting that needs brief discussion. Carroll and McCombs added that the public's ability to comprehend second-level (attribute) agenda-setting effects can be defined along two dimensions – substantive (cognitive) and evaluative (affective).

Examples of substantive attributes include ideology and issue positions, competency, experience, or personal traits. In turn, each of these substantive attributes can be arrayed along an affective dimension, typically defined as positive, negative, neutral and mixed. This evaluative dimension at the second-level of agenda-setting recognizes that news coverage conveys more than just facts; it also conveys feeling and tone. Both are absorbed by the public. (Carroll and McCombs, 2003, pp. 38-39)

So not only are members of a salient audience told what to think about, they are also influenced by nuances of tone from the ways the media presents its reports.

To briefly recap, agenda-setting theory is rooted in the concept that the media does not tell the audience necessarily what to think, but rather, it tells the audience what to think about. Ball-Rokeach and DeFleur's (1976) media dependency theory offers a slightly different view. A brief discussion of media dependency theory is necessary.

Media Dependency Theory

Ball-Rokeach and DeFleur defined dependency "as a relationship in which the satisfaction needs or the attainment of goals by one party is contingent upon the resources of another party" (p. 6). Taken together with Weiss' (1969) notion that audiences come to media exposure opportunities with pre-established beliefs that can readily ground or filter them, we have a glimpse of media dependency theory. Weiss addressed this tendency in his discussions of audience cognition, comprehension, exposure, attitudes and behavior as they are all mitigating factors in media effects research. Ball-Rokeach and DeFleur (1976) credited Weiss (1969) with arriving at the generalization "that audiences frequently encounter media messages about which they have pre-established

beliefs and norms that are anchored in their group association and that filter or recreate media messages to conform to the established social realities of the audience" (p. 4).

Ball-Rokeach and DeFleur's generalization of Weiss' research is important to the pertinacious image model because salient audiences have pre-established beliefs about athletes – not only at a micro or individual level (i.e., they know who Barry Bonds, O.J. Simpson or Mike Tyson are and hold perceptions of their traits), but also at a macro level (i.e., they know what it means to be a professional athlete and the lifestyle that accompanies it; fans young and old know what it's like to worship athletes as larger than life Godlike heroes). Both levels have been mediated to some extent by media influence. As Ball-Rokeach and DeFleur would put it, these pre-established beliefs are anchored in the group association of "fan" and these fans then filter media messages about the athletes that conform to their established social realities.

Weiss' notion regarding audiences with pre-established beliefs during mass media message encounters is similar to Sherif and Hovland's (1961) social judgment theory. For example, once a salient audience sees/hears the initial story (media message) regarding the offender's actions, they decide to accept or reject the information. This decision is based on (or anchored by) past experience with, or prior knowledge of, the offender. It is also mitigated by ego-involvement. At this point in social judgment theory, a salient audience (based on ego-involvement) judges where the information should be placed on the attitude scale in their minds and then they weigh each new piece by comparing it with currently held views about the offender. The judgment made can result in assimilation or varying degrees of contrast. Attitude change can begin to occur depending on the judgments made and contrasts taking place. In this case, social

judgment theory is important to a pertinacious image model insomuch as depending on the audiences' acceptance level of the media's messages, public relations practitioners must then determine how to best repair the old image. Or, more importantly, how they might promote and leverage the new pertinacious image.

Turning back to the discussion regarding media dependency theory, it can be said that the theory stems from the idea that individuals rely on the media to satisfy their information needs and, in the case of ambiguous (the result of insufficient or conflicting) information, individuals turn to the media seeking resolution as to what to think. For example,

> Social conflict or social change usually involve challenges to established institutions, beliefs, or practices. When such challenges are effective, established social arrangements become, to one degree or another, inadequate as frameworks with which members of society can cope with their life situations. People's dependence on media information resources is intensified during such periods…In societies with developed media systems, audience dependency on media information increases as the level of structural conflict and change increases. (Ball-Rokeach & DeFleur, 1976, p. 7)

One of the cognitive effects of media dependency is ambiguity, especially in the areas of conflict and change. Ambiguity occurs because people either "lack enough information to understand the meaning of the event, or because they lack adequate information to determine which of several possible interpretations of an event is the correct one" (Ball-Rokeach & DeFleur, 1976, p. 9). As a result of incomplete media information, audience members develop feelings of ambiguity. In this instance, audience

members are aware that an event has occurred, but do not know what it means or how to interpret it. This is when they seek out more information in an attempt to resolve the ambiguity. Ball-Rokeach and DeFleur (1976) summarized how ambiguity is resolved this way,

> When people become heavily dependent upon the mass media for the information they need to resolve ambiguity, the defining structuring effect of mass-mediated information is considerable. The media do not have the power to determine uniformly the exact content of the interpretations or "definitions of the situation" that every person constructs. But, by controlling what information is and is not delivered and how that information is presented, the media can play a large role in limiting the range of interpretations that audiences are able to make. (p. 10)

The media clearly play a role in the salient audience's process of reducing uncertainty.

The other four cognitive effects that Ball-Rokeach and DeFleur discussed in media dependency theory included attitude formation, the media's role in agenda-setting, expansion of people's belief systems, and the media's impact on values. In terms of attitude formation, audiences rely on the media to help them adapt to a changing world. "New attitudes are continually being formed as various persons gain the public eye. In modern society there is a constant parade of new political figures, religious leaders, sports personalities, scientists and artists" (Ball-Rokeach & DeFleur, 1976, p. 11). As a result of this information, audiences formulate feelings towards these individuals.

The expansion of people's belief systems is the result of the mass media helping people learn about other people, places and things. With regards to the media's impact on values (e.g., salvation, equality, freedom, honesty, forgiveness, capability), mass

mediated messages can play a role in what Ball-Rokeach and DeFleur term "value

clarification." This means that once the media clarifies the values (and any potential

conflict), "audience members are moved to articulate their own value positions" (Ball-

Rokeach & DeFleur, 1976, p. 14).

Media dependency theory is important to a pertinacious image model because a

salient audience seeking more information may rely on the media to tell them what to

think about the offender. If the individual accepts (or, in this case, if the individual's

information needs are met) the media's report (portrayal) about the offender's actions, it

may lead to a pertinacious image of the offender.

Another interaction to consider when discussing a pertinacious image model is the

offender's level of fame or celebrity (i.e., how famous he/she is) and how the media

handles reporting the offender's transgressions. According to McQuail (2000),

Fame is a zero-sum commodity – there is only so much to go around before it

becomes diluted – and subject to intense competition between the media as well

as between the would-be famous. One way in which the supply can be expanded

is by turning fame into infamy, as when a prominent or popular figure falls into

disgrace. The limits are still set by the amount of public attention (in terms of

time), which is not in elastic supply...While the famous may increasingly need the

media, the media constantly need the famous in order to attract attention and

certify their own importance. Without famous or celebrated performers, there are

unlikely to be devoted fans. There is a good deal of scope for developing theory

in relation to these matters. (p. 488)

McQuail clearly claimed that a symbiotic relationship exists between the media and celebrities.

To better address the practitioner's quandary (dichotomous position) – whether to repair the old image or to promote a new pertinacious image – we must review the prominent image management literature. Substantial space is devoted here to discussions of image repair theory and situational crisis communication theory for three reasons. This is not to say that other image management authors will be ignored – quite the contrary – they too will be discussed. However, the reasons for focusing on works published by Benoit and Coombs are: (1) both authors and their respective co-authors are some of the most widely published in the image management literature; (2) results of their studies offer significant descriptive and proscriptive insights into how public relations scholars study and practitioners manage image; and (3) Benoit and Coombs offer typologies that help repair a damaged image, which appears to be the antithesis of what this dissertation suggests public relations practitioners do (i.e., promote and leverage the damaged image). Because literature regarding how to promote a pertinacious image does not exist, it is important to fully discuss, as a means of comparison, what appear to be opposite views.

Image Repair Theory

The concept "image is everything" is, without argument, important to everyone to some degree. We are all concerned, to some extent, with what other people think about us and our character, or our worth as a human being represented through our moral nature, motives or reputation. It could be argued that that it is our character that defines who we are in the eyes of others. Thus, it is other people's perception of who we are that

conjures up a positive or negative image. When our character is attacked, some argue that we need to respond in defense. Ware and Linkugel (1973) stated, "in life, an attack upon a person's character, upon his worth as a human being, does seem to demand a direct response. The questioning of a man's moral nature, motives, or reputation is qualitatively different from the challenging of his policies" (p. 274).

When a person or organization does decide to respond and defend his/her or its character/image, "each [chooses] to take his case to the people in the form of an *apologia*, the speech of self-defense" (Ware & Linkugel, p. 273). The strategic approach an individual or organization takes to defend him/herself or itself, in hopes of restoring a negative image, varies depending on what the public's current perception of that individual is and how serious or offensive the individual's actions were. "People speak in defense of themselves against diverse charges, in varied situations, and through the use of many different strategies. Each apology, therefore, is in some sense unique" (Ware & Linkugel, p. 273).

Although individuals may employ different strategies, thus making each repair effort unique, some scholars argue that sports figures and sports teams employ strategies that are no different than any other individual. Kruse (1981) illustrated this point when he claimed that,

> The apologetic responses of sport figures do not differ strategically from the
> character defenses offered by those in the sociopolitical world…a principal
> objective of the team sport apologist is the repair of a damaged public image; the
> strategies the individual employs are the same ones used by all apologists.
> (p. 280)

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Benoit's (1995) image repair theory offers a typology of five general defense strategies to those who need to conduct an apologia, or self-defense (i.e., those who want to repair their image in some way). The five general defense strategies offered are: denial, evasion of responsibility, reducing offensiveness, corrective action, and mortification. While my pertinacious image model primarily focuses on promoting a new pertinacious image, Benoit's image repair typology is important to this discussion because it offers an alternative for practitioners who do not wish to promote a new pertinacious image.

However, before further discussion of image repair theory begins, it should be noted that image repair theory was formerly known as image restoration theory. According to the theory's founder, Benoit (2000), it was important to articulate the name change from image restoration to image repair this way, "indeed, I now tend to prefer image 'repair' to image 'restoration' because 'restoration' might imply that one's image has been restored to its prior state" (p. 40).

Born out of the theory of apologia (the speech of self-defense, Ware & Linkugel, 1973), Benoit's (1995) theory further extends the discourse of how individuals and organizations can attempt to repair damaged images to some form of desirability. Through a typology of strategies, the theory offers several options available to individuals and organizations that need to conduct an apologia or self-defense. According to Benoit (1995), the theory posits two foundational assumptions. "First, communication is best conceptualized as a goal-directed activity. Second, maintaining a positive reputation is one of the central goals of communication" (p. 63). The theory

further contends that image is "so valuable that those accused of wrongdoing are motivated to repair their tattered reputations" (Len-Ríos & Benoit, 2004, p. 96).

The key to understanding image repair theory is to examine the nature of the attack or complaint held against the individual. Benoit (1997b) argued that there are two components of an attack: (1) the accused is held responsible for an action, and (2) the act is considered offensive. Benoit believed that an unfavorable impression of the individual or organization is not warranted unless the accused is actually responsible for the act or if the action was actually offensive. The caveat here is that "a salient audience must be thought to disapprove of the act" (p. 177). How the audience perceives the act and its level of offensiveness is, in some cases, more important than reality. With this in mind, Benoit offered, "the most important question is whether the salient audience believes the act to be offensive" (p. 177).

Although differences exist in how an individual or an organization may go about repairing its image, the same basic strategies exist for both (individuals and organizations) in the repair process. With that in mind, the following image repair strategy descriptions are described from an individual's point of reference (i.e., he/his, she/hers), although the descriptions also apply to organizations. As stated before, Benoit's image repair typology includes five general defense strategies with several variants. The five defense strategies are: denial, evasion of responsibility, reducing offensiveness, corrective action and mortification.

Before moving onto Benoit's specific image repair strategies, it should be pointed out that other scholars have developed similar typologies. In fact, Benoit (1995) offered the typology of accounts by Sykes and Matza (1957); Scott and Lyman (1968); Goffman

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(1971); Schenkler (1980); Schobach (1990, 1980); Tedeschi and Reiss (1981); and Semin and Manstead (1983). Coombs (1995) developed a similar typology – situational crisis communication theory – which will follow this discussion regarding image repair theory.

Image Repair Strategies: A Typology

Denial. The denial strategy has two variants: "simple denial" and "shifting the blame." When an individual is accused of wrongdoing, he/she can simply deny the offensive act occurred (Ware & Linkugel, 1973). An individual can also shift the blame by arguing that another person or organization is responsible for the offensive act.

Evasion of responsibility. Evasion of responsibility is a strategy an individual can use when he/she cannot deny performing the offensive act. There are four variants that fall under evasion of responsibility: provocation, defeasibility, accident and good intentions. When an individual employs the "provocation" strategy, he/she states that they were responding to another individual's offensive act as a reason for his/her own offensive act, therefore providing a reasonable response. "*Defeasibility* is used when the accused argues that he/she had no control over the offensive act" (Len-Ríos & Benoit, 2004, p. 97). If the accused can claim the offensive act was an "accident" that could help lessen the damage to his/her image. An individual could also diminish damage by claiming that he/she engaged in the offensive behavior because he/she had "good intentions" that went awry.

Reducing offensiveness. The reducing offensiveness strategy has six variants: bolstering, minimization, differentiation, transcendence, attacking one's accusers and compensation. "Bolstering" is used when the accused discusses personal positive attributes and actions in an effort to offset the offensive act. "When he bolsters, a speaker

attempts to identify himself with something viewed favorably by the audience" (Ware & Linkugel, 1973, p. 277). An individual may also try to "minimize" or downplay the negative feelings associated with the offensive act. "Differentiation" is used when an individual wants to place the offensive act in a context with other more offensive acts, thus one can argue that the act committed pales by comparison. Ware and Linkugel offered, "The presence of differentiation as an important factor in apologia is often signaled by the accused's request for a suspension of judgment until his actions can be viewed from a different temporal perspective" (p. 278). An individual uses "transcendence" when attempting to place the offensive act in a broader context, "so that the end justifies the means" (Len-Ríos & Benoit, 2004, p. 97). Another strategy is to "attack one's accuser," which is used when the accused blames the victim or in some cases the press for the offensive act. This strategy is also used in an effort to undermine the accuser's credibility. An individual may offer "compensation" to the victim of the offensive act. This could come in the form of monetary or similar restitution agreeable with the victim.

Corrective action. An individual can take "corrective action" by promising to correct the offensive act. This can be accomplished in one of two ways. The individual can attempt to restore the "state of affairs" that existed before the offensive act occurred or the individual can promise to prevent another reoccurrence of the same offensive act.

Mortification. This is the final strategy discussed in image repair theory. Mortification is used to accept responsibility for the offensive act. It is accomplished through statements of remorse and regret, a formal apology, or asking for forgiveness. Some lawyers may advise against this strategy as it may lead to further legal trouble.

Benoit and his colleagues, as well as other scholars, have examined image repair theory and its strategies as they relate to the apologia or self-defense of athletes, celebrities, corporations, countries, political figures and politicians, and royal celebrities. The body of published research is considerable in various areas of image repair. Some of these studies warrant further discussion here for the purpose of providing a framework from which to contextualize image repair by putting the theory into practice.

Athletes

In an early study examining the image repair discourse of an athlete, Nelson (1984) found that tennis star Billie Jean King used bolstering and differentiation in an attempt "to show the American people that if they understood her true feelings, beliefs, and motives, they would refrain from condemning her" (p. 93). King's attempt at image repair came after it was learned that she had engaged in a love affair with her former secretary Marilyn Barnett, while King was married to her husband Larry. She used a major news conference, appeared on *20/20* and was interviewed for *People* magazine in an effort to repair her image. Nelson concluded that King's career might have suffered a little, but not significantly.

Although Nelson believed that the general public gives athletic heroes some latitude, he does admit that some limitations exist. "These stars to a significant extent embody the American Dream and are expected to adopt a manner of living complementing that fantasy. A major divergence imperils the myth and engenders grave public concern" (p. 92). In King's case, her practice of lesbianism represented a significant deviation from the myth at that time.

Benoit and Hanczor (1994) examined the image repair strategy of Olympic skater Tonya Harding in the wake of the Jan. 6, 1994, knee clubbing of rival skater Nancy Kerrigan. It happened after practice at the Cobo Arena in Detroit, MI. Benoit found that Harding's image repair discourse on Connie Chung's *Eye-to-Eye* television program included bolstering, denial and attacking her accuser, while defeasibility played a minor role. He concluded that Harding's attempt to repair her image was ineffective, which he claims was evidenced by public opinion polls. The studies by Nelson, and Benoit and Hanczor provide reviews of what rhetorical strategies have been invoked, with the goal of image repair, when a high-profile athlete engaged in some form of social transgression. In neither case was there any attempt to engage the developing pertinacious image for profitability.

Brazeal (2008) examined NFL wide receiver Terrell Owens' image repair efforts following a press conference held by him and his agent Drew Rosenhaus. The press conference was a tactic used to try to repair Owens' image in the wake of a failed contract renegotiation with his former employer – the Philadelphia Eagles. During the contract talks, Owens "became sullen with the press, belligerent with the coaching staff, and publicly critical of his team and quarterback" (p. 145). And, "When the strategy got him dismissed from the team, Owens was forced to publicly make amends if he had any hope of playing again" (p. 146).

According to Brazeal, the press conference was a failure. Owens opened the press conference with a prepared statement that utilized two strategies: bolstering and mortification. He used bolstering by highlighting his on-field accomplishments as a self-described "fighter," while also emphasizing his devotion to the team. He used these

qualities as a means to justify his behavior. During the press conference, "Owens apologized directly to his fans, teammates, coach, quarterback, team president, and CEO" (p. 148). But, he did not admit fault, "often glossing over his role in the conflict" (p. 148). Brazeal concluded, "Taken together, the vague apologies and lack of corrective action strongly suggest that Owens did not truly believe he was in the wrong" (p. 148). Once Owens finished, Rosenhaus spoke on behalf of his client.

Rosenhaus used several strategies: attack the accuser, bolstering, mortification, and good intentions. Rosenhaus attacked the Eagles for their treatment of Owens. He also attacked the media for portraying "Owens negatively without cause" (p. 148). Rosenhaus attempted to bolster Owens' image by praising his character through terms like "genuine" and "sincere." Rosenhaus used mortification to repeatedly say that Owens was sorry. Unfortunately, much like Owens' attempt at mortification, Brazeal concluded that Rosenhaus' mortification attempt was also unsuccessful because he failed to show how Owens "accept[ed] responsibility for any aspect of the conflict, or offer any form of corrective action" (p. 148.) With regards to the good intentions strategy, Rosenhaus stated that "Owens did not set out to disparage [Donovan] McNabb" (p. 148), but rather "he was trying to be a good interview subject" (p. 148). Brazeal summarized the failed press conference this way,

> Owens might have had a chance at redemption had his agent remained silent, but Rosenhaus' contempt destroyed any good will his client had created. Such indignation might have been warranted in different circumstances, but Owens' transgression had been so thoroughly documented that Rosenhaus had no claim on the moral high ground. Though his bolstering of Owens' competitiveness and

talent was fitting, his over-reliance on words like "genuine" made him appear

disingenuous, and his praise seemed like a set of talking points. Furthermore, by

aggressively promoting the image of Owens as a victim, he confirmed that Owens

did not accept responsibility for his actions or intend to change them. If

Rosenhaus hoped to shame the Eagles or generate a groundswell of public

sympathy for Owens, he seriously misjudged the situation. (p. 149)

Celebrities

Actor Hugh Grant's 1995 arrest for lewd behavior with a prostitute came just as

his career was on the upswing. As a result, Grant appeared on five major network

television shows to defend his image, while promoting his new movie. Benoit (1997a)

found that Grant used mortification, bolstering, attacking one's accuser and denial to help

repair his image. Benoit concluded that Grant's efforts were generally effective.

Benoit and Nill (1998b) examined film director Oliver Stone's image repair

discourse following the release of his film *JFK*, which advanced the belief that

Kennedy's death was part of a conspiracy theory. As a result, Stone was the subject of

scathing attacks in the mainstream press. Benoit and Nill found that Stone effectively

defended his image through attacking his accusers (those who defended the Warren

Commissions results, as well as reporters who stood much to lose by what they reported

at the time), bolstering (his sources) and denial (of the lone gunman theory). Stone

accomplished this by writing articles in *Premiere* and the *Washington Post*. He wrote

letters to the *New York Times*, *Time*, *Esquire*, *The L.A. Times*, N*ew York Magazine* and

The Nation. Additionally, he delivered a speech to the National Press Club and he

appeared on *The Today Show*, *48 Hours*, *Later*, and *Prime Time Live*. The authors

concluded, "The defense strategies were generally appropriate and the attacks failed to prevent JFK from attracting millions of movie-goers, provoking a public re-examination of Kennedy's assassination, and spurring renewed calls for release of classified documents" (p. 140). Rhetorical strategies were invoked in Grant's and Stone's defenses, with a generally favorable return to image desirability. No attempt was made to leverage a pertinacious image.

Corporations

USAir provides an example of a corporation using image repair strategies to restore its reputation. Benoit and Czerwinski (1997) examined the USAir image repair strategies stemming from a Sept. 8, 1994, crash of a USAir Boeing 737 near Pittsburgh that killed 132 people. As a result, the airline experienced some economic problems. As part of its image repair strategy, USAir did three things. First, it appointed a former highly decorated U.S. Air Force command pilot General Robert C. Oaks to oversee safety. Second, it selected an outside aviation auditing company to audit USAir's operations. Third, it developed an advertising campaign. The ad campaign consisted of three, one, full-page letters that appeared in 47 newspapers throughout the country. The first letter was signed by the Chairman and CEO of USAir Seth E. Schofield. The second letter was from the USAir pilots and the third letter was from the flight attendants. The strategies used in the letters were: bolstering, denial and corrective action. Benoit and Czerwinski found that "the company chose individual strategies that were appropriate but did not develop them well in their messages" (p. 52). Thus, they concluded that the campaign was ineffectual.

In 1996, Texaco faced an image crisis when a secret tape of an executive board meeting surfaced which included racially insensitive comments about African Americans being labeled "black jelly beans" who were "glued to the bottom of the jar" (Brinson & Benoit, 1999, p. 483). The racial slurs came at a time when Texaco was trying to reach the very demographic defamed on the audiotape. According to Brinson and Benoit, Peter Bijur, chairman of Texaco, created a series of six messages aimed at two primary audiences, Texaco employees and the general public. Those six messages included an initial news release, a letter to the employees, a video address to the employees, a live appearance on ABC's *Nightline*, another statement about the employee misconduct and a statement following a meeting with African American leaders. In the news release, Bijur used bolstering and corrective action. The letter to the employees also used bolstering and corrective action, while a third strategy was introduced – shifting the blame. Bijur used bolstering, corrective action, shifting the blame and mortification in the video address to employees, his appearance on *Nightline* and in his statement about the employee misconduct. The statement Bijur made following his meeting with African American leaders employed bolstering, corrective action and shifting the blame – missing from this statement was mortification. Brinson and Benoit concluded, "The image restoration strategies he (Bijur) chose were very effective at both getting Texaco out of the spotlight and escaping with a damaged – but not thoroughly destroyed – public image" (p. 507).

Coombs and Schmidt (2000) empirically tested and analyzed the Texaco case using the results of Brinson and Benoit's case study as stimulus materials with survey participants. Coombs and Schmidt wanted to empirically test Brinson and Benoit's

qualitative analysis and subsequent conclusions to see if they were accurate with regards to how external publics (as opposed to a scholar's rhetorical analysis and conclusions or an organization's crisis communication manager's analysis) might view the organization's image repair efforts. While Brinson and Benoit concluded that Texaco's use of bolstering, corrective action, shifting the blame and mortification strategies were all necessary in assisting the organization in its image repair efforts, Coombs and Schmidt's study concluded,

> The empirical tests of the Texaco image restoration case do not support some of the major conclusions drawn from the case study. Neither mortification or separation (separation was a fifth strategy Coombs and Schmidt identified, which they believed was a combination of strategies [bolstering, shifting the blame and corrective action] working together in concert, in an effort to separate/shift the blame from the entire organization to a small bad part of the organization) were more effective than the other image restoration strategies at protecting the organizational image. (p. 173)

Although not in the same social setting, Coombs and Schmidt's study did provide tentative evidence that there was no real difference between any one of the five strategies. They stated, "Crisis managers could derive virtually the same social benefits by using only the bolstering or corrective action strategies" (p. 175).

Baker (2001) examined how Eddie Bauer and American Airlines attempted to revitalize their damaged images as the result of what appeared to be two different race-related offenses. A uniformed county police officer approached two African American boys in an Eddie Bauer clothing store, where one of the boys was wearing an Eddie

Bauer shirt he had purchased the day before. The officer suspected it was stolen and told the boy "to take the shirt off, go home, get the receipt and return to the store" (p. 516). The boy left the store humiliated and without his shirt. The story was published in the *Washington Post*. Rushing to the boys' aid were critics, activists, the media and lawyers. Initially Eddie Bauer management used denial and shifted the blame to the officer. As a result of Eddie Bauer failing to take the accusations seriously, the boys were encouraged to sue Eddie Bauer for $85 million (claiming false imprisonment, defamation and violation of civil rights). Eddie Bauer then realized that it had a serious problem and retained public relations firms Hill and Knowlton to manage its communications. Eddie Bauer decided to use corrective action as a strategy (the CEO made an official statement admitting wrongdoing, he met with the NAACP and had the company distribute clothes to homeless shelters in Prince George's County), but it was a little too late. The jury awarded one youth $850,000 and the other received $75,000.

In the American Airlines case, a pilot's manual containing a section titled "Survival in Latin America" was found during an investigation into a 1995 American Airlines crash. The section stated that Latin American passengers "do not expect to depart on time," "will call in a false bomb threat if they think they'll be late," and "unruly and/or intoxicated passengers are not infrequent" (Baker, 2001, p. 517). Because American Airlines could not deny the manual existed, it moved swiftly to take corrective action and issue an apology. The manuals were immediately removed from circulation, the company agreed to hire more minorities, increase donations to Hispanic causes, and review all of the manuals and remove the offensive content, and donate travel for community and youth organizations. As a result, "Prominent Latino leaders were quick

to applaud American Airlines for its actions" (p. 517) and American Airlines was not sued.

Other articles that examine image repair theory and corporations include: Benoit and Lindsey's (1987) examination of Johnson and Johnson's defense strategies of its Tylenol brand in the wake of the cyanide poisonings; Hearit's (1994) examination of the corporate apologetic efforts of Chrysler, Toshiba and Volvo; Hearit's (1995) close look at how Exxon tried to repair its image in the wake to the 1989 oil spill off the coast of Alaska and how Domino's Pizza handled its image crisis following the death of a pizza delivery driver, who died trying to honor organization's delivery policy ("thirty minutes or less"); Brinson and Benoit's (1996) study of Dow Corning's image repair efforts during its breast implant crisis; and Blaney, Benoit and Brazeal's (2002) look at how Firestone (and to a lesser degree Ford) tried to repair its image after 271 people died driving Ford Explorer's with Firestone tires. While all the research studies reviewed above illustrate the results of image repair strategies in use, none suggest the idea of engaging a developing pertinacious image and leveraging it for profitable means.

Political Figures and Politicians

In November 1998, Kenneth Starr appeared in an interview with Diane Sawyer on *20/20* in what Benoit and McHale (1999) claimed was an obvious attempt to repair his image, which was apparently damaged following repeated attacks from President Bill Clinton, Clinton supporters and the news media. Throughout the interview, Starr employed denial and bolstering as his two primary strategies, while making a minor attempt at mortification. Despite the fact that Starr had no control over the edited interview or the line of questioning, Benoit and McHale concluded that Starr's repair

strategy was generally ineffectual. They used public opinion data to substantiate their evaluation.

When Washington D.C. intern Chandra Levy disappeared in May 2001, U.S. Congressman Gary Condit came under suspicion that he may have had something to do with her disappearance. From May to August 2001, Condit's image continued to sustain damage as it was learned that he had had an extramarital affair with Levy, coupled with Levy's parents pleading on national television for Condit to reveal what he knew about their daughter's disappearance. In an effort to repair his image, Condit released a letter (via the media) to his constituents and appeared on ABC's *PrimeTime* with Connie Chung. Len-Ríos and Benoit (2004) examined both the letter and the television interview and found that Condit used several defense strategies: denial, shifting the blame, bolstering, attacking one's accuser and differentiation. Len-Ríos and Benoit believe that, "Condit's lack of candor, unpersuasive denials, and failure to shoulder responsibility for any mistakes, doomed his efforts to failure" (p. 95). Their evaluation of Condit's strategies was corroborated with the results from five public opinion polls.

Additional studies that analyzed the image repair strategies of political figures and politicians include: Benoit's (1982) examination of President Nixon's image repair efforts, in the wake of the Watergate break-in. Benoit found that Nixon unsuccessfully used five different image repair strategies (bolstering, shifting the blame, minimization, transcendence and corrective action) in his defense. According to Benoit, Guillifor and Panici (1991), President Regan successfully used three repair strategies (denial, good intentions and mortification) following his involvement in the Iran-Contra affair. Benoit and Nill (1998a) looked at Supreme Court Justice nominee Clarence Thomas' image

repair effort following accusations of sexual harassment by former co-worker Anita Hill. Thomas successfully used denial, bolstering and attacking his accusers to repair his image and was subsequently confirmed to the Supreme Court. As politicians, Starr, Condit, and Nixon were all some form of celebrity. The three studies reviewed above illustrate how rhetorical strategies were invoked, in varying degrees of success, to repair the politicians' images to some sort of desirable states.

Royal Celebrities

Benoit and Brinson (1999) examined the image repair strategies the Queen of England utilized after the sudden death of Princess Diana. As shocking as Diana's death was to many people around the world, the public sentiment was that the British Royal Family did not show the same grief. This perceived lack of public concern created a royal public relations problem, one which forced the Queen to give an unprecedented (in that she only makes two public speeches a year: the annual Christmas address and the opening of Parliament) public address to defend the Royal Family's image. In her speech, Benoit and Brinson found that the Queen used two primary strategies (denial and bolstering) and two secondary strategies (defeasibility and transcendence). Benoit and Brinson believed that the speech was well crafted, "denying the accusations within the speech, bolstering her and the Royals, and briefly offering an excuse for their behavior and suggesting that the viewers turn their attention to another issue" (p. 155). As another form of celebrity, the Queen was found to put to use strategically selected rhetorical strategies to establish her family's image to a state of desirability.

While image repair theory and its strategies appear systematic and ready-made for practitioners to utilize, even critics of image repair theory like Burns and Bruner (2000)

find that, "the theory is flexible in that it can encompass many variations and combinations of strategies…the theory [has] considerable practical value" (p. 29).

As practical as the theory and its strategies are to the public relations practitioner and scholar alike, Benoit (2000) points out one important caveat to remember with regards to restoring one's image, "We should realize that image is dynamic and almost certainly cannot be 'restored' to exactly its state before the offensive act" (p. 42). Therefore, it behooves us to pursue additional theories as means of exploring traditional assumptions about image.

Situational Crisis Communication Theory

Similar to Benoit's typology, Coombs and Holladay (2002) articulated their ideas toward situational crisis communication theory (SCCT) as it helps practitioners repair a client's damaged image by matching the appropriate crisis response strategy with the crisis type. SCCT "assumes that an organization's reputation, that is, how the organization is perceived by its publics, is a valued resource that is threatened by crisis" (p. 167). Coombs (2007) provided "the initial detailed presentation of SCCT and its recommendation for crisis communication in an article in *Corporate Reputation Review*. He claimed it:

> provides an evidence-based framework for understanding how to maximize the
> reputational protection afforded by post-crisis communication. Research using
> SCCT relies on experimental methods rather than case studies. SCCT identifies
> how key facets of the crisis situation influence attributions about the crisis and the
> reputations help by stakeholders…The empirical research from SCCT provides a

set of guidelines for how crisis managers can use crisis response strategies to protect a reputation from the ravages of a crisis. (p. 163)

The crisis response strategies earlier identified by Coombs (1995, 1998) were attack the accuser, denial, excuse, justification, ingratiation, corrective action and full apology. Coombs' (2007) and Coombs and Holladay's (2002) SCCT is important to the pertinacious image discussion for the same reasons Benoit's image repair theory is.

According to Coombs and Schmidt (2000), "image restoration (repair theory) is a qualitative method that identifies the crisis-response strategies (image repair strategies) an organization employs," while through the use of the symbolic approach, quantitative data can be generated to "test the social effects of those strategies in that particular crisis situation – actual strategies are tested in their original crisis milieu" (p. 176). The authors continued to argue that while "image restoration literature is heavy on description and retrospection sense-making through case studies" (p. 163), it falls short of having any predictive value and it does not demonstrate any causal inferences. Additionally, they claimed,

> [image repair theory] is actually a taxonomy and not a true theory in the sense of making predictions. There is nothing wrong with case studies or using image restoration theory. Such analysis can discover interesting phenomena and suggest directions for future study…[However] assumptions about the success of the strategies become dubious without hard evidence. (p. 175)

Coombs and Schmidt further argued "we must become more prescriptive so that crisis managers have clearer guidelines for selecting their image restoration and crisis-response strategies" (p. 164). They believed there are at least two ways to develop more

exact "prescriptive" knowledge. First, they contended that we need to examine a series

of similar case studies and through this process identify patterns "that would indicate the

effect of specific strategies in a particular type of crisis" (p. 164). Second, they believed

researchers should empirically examine the effect of various strategies that were used in

the crisis case. This could be accomplished by identifying the list of strategies used in

the case study and developing testable materials to determine their true effects on publics.

Symbolic Approach

Coombs and Holladay (1996) argued that their symbolic approach (the merging of

neoinstitionalism and attribution theory) could be used to empirically test, in an effort to

predict, specific strategies to be used in a crisis situation. "The term *symbolic* is used

because the emphasis is on how communication strategies (symbolic resources) are used

in attempts to protect organizational images. [Both neoinstitionalism and attribution

theory] share the belief that communication helps shape an organization's image and that

a crisis-response should be linked to the type of crisis situation" (p. 283).

An example of this is seen in Coombs and Schmidt's (2000) empirical study of

Brinson and Benoit's (1996) Texaco case study, where Coombs and Schmidt took the

case study's descriptive analysis and applied it empirically through survey research. The

results of Coombs and Schmidt's empirical study somewhat contradicted the conclusions

made in Brinson and Benoit's qualitative case study.

Neoinstitutionalism. According to Coombs and Holladay (1996),

"neoinstitutionalism is predicated on the concept of organizational legitimacy…[it is

when] an organization is granted legitimacy if stakeholders believe an organization is

good and/or has a right to continue operations" (p. 280). Essentially, legitimacy is

established when an individual or organization conforms to social rules and expectations by the public or stakeholders. In this, a crisis is a threat or challenge to this legitimacy.

Similar to what Coombs and Holladay call neoinstitutionalism, Hearit (1995) called corporate social legitimacy theory, which argues, "that corporations exist in a state of dependency upon their environments and, hence, can only survive to the extent that they can convince their social environment that their use of exchange power is 'rightful and proper'" (p. 2). Succinctly put, social legitimacy theory proposes, "that organizations are legitimate to the degree that their values are reflective of larger societal values" (Hearit, 2001, p. 502). With regards to organizations, a corporate apologiae (or self-defense that explains, denies, or justifies its actions) occurs when an organization responds to ethical charges against it and uses its image as a primary motive to defend itself.

Attribution theory. Bernard Weiner was one of the first scholars to take Fritz Heider's theory of attribution and apply it to social psychology. According to Weiner and Handel (1985), attribution theory "is based on the principle that individuals seek to know why particular events have occurred; people are presumed to search the physical and the social world for casual explanations" (p. 102).

Coombs was one of the first researchers to apply attribution theory to the study of crisis management. Using attribution theory as a framework for conceptualizing crisis management, Coombs (1995) stated that attribution theory "posits that people make judgments about the causes of events based on the dimensions of locus, stability and controllability" (p. 448). According to Coombs (1995, 1998), locus refers to locus of control. Stability alludes to whether the event's cause is always present or if it varies

over time. Controllability is determined by whether the actor can affect the cause or if the cause is out of the actor's control.

Publics tend to evaluate an organizational crisis by whether the cause of the crisis was "internal" (i.e., attributions of internal locus, controllability and stability, which would create the perception that the organization is responsible for the crisis) or "external" (i.e., attributions of external locus, controllability and stability, which would create the perception that the organization is not responsible for the crisis) to the organization.

Crisis Response Strategies

Much like Benoit (1995), Coombs (1995) developed a repertoire of what he termed "crisis-response strategies" (very analogous to image repair strategies, in fact some strategies even share the same name), which were the result of integrating the strategies discussed in both impression management literature and the apologia literature.

Coombs identified five crisis-response strategies: nonexistence, distance, ingratiation, mortification and suffering. Just like Benoit's image repair strategies were described from an individual's point of reference and though the descriptions also apply to organizations, Coombs' crisis-response strategies will be described in the same manner.

Nonexistence strategies. Nonexistence strategies seek to eliminate the crisis and have four variants through which to accomplish this goal: denial, clarification, attack and intimidation. "Denial" is when the individual simply articulates that nothing happened (i.e., there is no crisis). In an effort to explain why there is no crisis, a "clarification" strategy is employed to extend the denial. The "attack" strategy is used when an

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individual confronts the individual(s) who wrongly reported the nonexistent crisis. The most aggressive nonexistence strategy is "intimidation," which is used when an individual uses his or her power against some actor.

Distance strategies. Distance strategies are employed when an individual acknowledges the crisis and attempts to create public acceptance of the crisis. This is done by trying to weaken the linkage between the individual and the crisis in question. Two distance strategies are used: excuse and justification. "Excuse" is used when an individual tries to minimize his or her responsibility for the crisis, while "justification" is employed when the individual seeks to minimize the damage associated with the crisis.

Ingratiation strategies. When an individual seeks to gain public approval, ingratiation strategies are used. Variants of ingratiation strategies include: bolstering, transcendence and praising others. An individual employs "bolstering" by reminding the public of his or her positive attributes. Much like Benoit's definition of "transcendence," this strategy is used to place the crisis in a larger context. "Praising others" occurs when an individual tries to win approval from the target of the praise.

Mortification strategies. Mortification is an individual's strategic attempt to win forgiveness from the public and to create acceptance for the crisis. This is accomplished in one of three ways: remediation, repentance and rectification. Analogous to Benoit's compensation strategy, "remediation" is the individual's willingness to offer the victim compensation. Asking for forgiveness is the essence of the "repentance" strategy. Similar to Benoit's corrective action strategy, "rectification" seeks to accomplish the same thing (i.e., taking action to prevent recurrence of the same crisis in the future).

Suffering strategy. According to Coombs, the suffering strategy "is unique among crisis-response strategies. The idea behind suffering is to win sympathy from publics; a positive rather than negative is drawn from the link to the crisis" (p. 453). What this means is the individual accused of the wrongdoing is the unfair victim of some malicious, outside entity.

Crisis Communication Strategies

The crisis-response strategies just discussed were termed in Coombs' (1998) later works as crisis communication strategies (CCSs). Although both crisis-response (or CCSs) and image repair strategies are hybrid typologies developed out of the crisis management and apologia literature, Coombs (1998) argued that it is not productive to debate the exact number of crisis or image repair strategies, but what is productive is to "identify some underlying connection between the strategies" (p. 179). More specifically, the connection acts as a mechanism for organizing the strategies in such a way that crisis communication managers can utilize them effectively. What Coombs (1995, 1998; 2007) suggested by this is that through empirical research, crisis types (according to Coombs four crisis types exist: faux pas, accidents, transgressions and terrorism; more on these in a moment) and crisis-response or image repair strategies (i.e., "connections made") can be identified and subsequently matched together and put into a matrix that would allow a crisis manager to more effectively evaluate and utilize the appropriate image repair strategy (or strategies) for use given the specific crisis situation. For example, if an accident within an organization occurred (due to its unintentional nature and that accidents tend to lead to attributions of minimal organizational responsibility), Coombs would argue the best strategy to employ would be the excuse

strategy. According to Coombs (1995), the reason the excuse strategy is the best is

because it serves "to reinforce the organization's lack of responsibility for the crisis" (p.

456). Essentially, Coombs attempted to design a crisis type/image repair matrix that

crisis managers can utilize in a crisis situation (i.e., analogous to a Bingo sheet where the

crisis manager would find the appropriate crisis and match it up with the appropriate

image repair strategies).

In an attempt to develop this matrix that matches strategies with crisis situations,

Coombs first identified four factors that affect the attributions that publics make about an

organization during a crisis. The four factors are: crisis type, veracity of evidence,

damage and performance history.

According to Coombs, two criteria guide the development of the "crisis type"

matrix: (1) "the dimensions of the matrix had to be relevant to attribution theory, as

attribution theory undergirds this approach to crisis management, and (2) the dimensions

must be orthogonal so that when the dimensions are crossed, mutually exclusive crisis are

formed" (p. 454). With this in mind, it was discovered that two dimensions met this

criteria: internal-external and intentional-unintentional. Accordingly, "internal" refers to

the organization itself as being responsible for the crisis. "External" means the crisis

occurred as the result of someone or some group outside of the organization. The

intentional-unintentional dimension refers to the controllability dimension in attribution

theory. For example, "intentional" means the crisis was the result of a purposefully

committed act, whereas "unintentional" means the crisis was not purposefully committed.

Using the internal-external and intentional-unintentional dimensions, Coombs

identified four different types of crises: faux pas (unintentional-external), accidents

(unintentional-internal), transgressions (intentional-internal) and terrorism (intentional-external). Coombs (1995) described an organizational "faux pas" as "an unintentional actions that an external agent tries to transform into a crisis. A faux pas begins when an organization considers actions it believes are appropriate" (p. 455). The organization subsequently considered its actions appropriate and believed it has done nothing wrong. However, the crisis occurs when someone outside (external) the organization redefines the organization's actions as inappropriate. Coombs argued the best crisis-response strategies to use in a faux pas crisis are distance and nonexistence strategies.

Much like a faux pas, "accidents" are also unintentional. However, accidents (product defects, employee injuries and natural disasters) occur during the course of normal business operations. What this means is, while accidents are unintentional (internal) and generally random, this may lead to attributions of minimal organizational responsibility. In the case of an accident crisis, Coombs believed the best crisis-response strategy is the excuse strategy because it weakens the link between the organization and the cause of the crisis.

"Transgressions" are intentional actions where the organization (internally) knowingly put the public at risk. According to Coombs, mortification strategies are the best response to transgressions. Mortification strategies do not deny organizational responsibility, but they do try to atone for the crisis.

"*Terrorism* refers to intentional actions taken by external actors. These intentional actions are designed to harm the organization directly or indirectly" (Coombs, 1995, p. 457). Acts of terrorism could include product tampering, sabotage, hostage taking and violence in the workplace. Because the natural of the attack is external,

Coombs argues that the suffering strategy seems to be the best fit in this crisis because the organization is the victim of an external agent.

In an effort to help crisis communication managers apply the internal-external, intentional-unintentional matrix to crisis situations, Coombs examined the remaining three factors (the first factor being crisis type, which was just discussed) that affect the attributions that publics make about an organization during a crisis. Examining those three factors (veracity of evidence, damage and performance history), Coombs used these factors to create what he termed a decision flow chart, which when used in conjunction with the matrix would aid crisis managers in determining which strategy to use in a crisis.

"Veracity of evidence" simply refers to whether or not there is proof the crisis event occurred. In this case, evidence can be true, false or ambiguous. Accordingly, "true evidence" denotes that a crisis did happen, "false evidence" (sometimes referred to as rumors) happens when a crisis is reported and circulated publicly, and "ambiguous evidence" (found only in faux pas) involves questions of morality and ethics.

Deaths, injuries, property destruction and environmental harm are all considered "damage." Related to locus of control, damage can be classified as severe or minor and is considered a central feature in most crisis situation typologies. Damage can be attributed to the organization itself, to the external publics or both.

Another key determinant in the decision flow chart is an organization's "performance history" (how an organization has performed in crisis situations in the past). Coombs argued, "a positive performance history creates credibility for an organization among its many publics" (p. 460), thus publics may be more willing to forgive an organization. A neutral performance history is one in which the public knows

nothing about the organization prior to the crisis. A negative performance history indicates the public is aware that the organization is a repeat offender in similar crisis situations.

To briefly summarize what Coombs and his colleagues (Coombs, 1995, 1998, 2005, 2007; Coombs and Holladay, 1996, 2001, 2002; Coombs and Schmidt, 2000) have attempted to do in their empirical research of crisis management and image repair is to use the dimensions (locus of control, stability and controllability) of attribution theory to develop a repertoire of crisis-response strategies (nonexistence, distance, ingratiation, mortification, and suffering) that crisis managers can apply to a specific crisis type matrix (faux pas, external-unintentional; accidents; internal-unintentional; transgressions, internal-intentional; terrorism, external-intentional) and cross-reference it with a decision flow chart (that includes the factors: veracity of evidence, damage and performance history) to determine what the appropriate response strategy is during a crisis.

In Coombs and Holladay's (1996) initial empirical examination of matching crisis type and crisis-response strategy, they found strong support for developing this type of crisis management and image repair procedure (matching crisis type and crisis-response strategy). In this particular experiment, crisis type, organization performance (i.e., performance history) and crisis-response were used to associate the organization with an image. What they found was that participants attributed stronger internal locus (i.e., they perceived the act to be intentional) to the transgression crisis condition than the accident crisis condition. Participants' attributions of the accident crisis and transgression crisis conditions did not differ in terms of external control and stability dimensions. Participants held more positive organizational images in the matched response condition

than in the no response or mismatched response condition. In the accident crisis

condition, participants held more positive images of the organization than in the

transgression condition. Finally, participants in the positive performance history

condition held more positive organizational images than participants in the poor

performance history condition. Based on their findings, Coombs and Holladay

demonstrated that the use of the symbolic approach was an appropriate means for

"explaining and predicting the dynamics between crisis-response strategies and

reputational damage" (p. 292).

Contingency Theory

Cancel, Cameron, Sallot and Mitrook's (1997) contingency theory offers yet

another perspective in the image management literature. It examines how practitioners

can relate to their publics (in this case a salient audience) through a given stance

depending on the crisis situation. Because a crisis is dynamic and ever-changing,

contingency theory demonstrates how a stance can change almost instantaneously. The

theory also offers a set of factors that can influence the change in stance. The stance can

be measured on a continuum with pure accommodation at one extreme and pure

advocacy at the other extreme. Contingency theory is important to a pertinacious image

model because it helps explain the variation in stances that can occur when practitioners

try to promote and leverage (public relations influenced message) a new (negative)

pertinacious image.

In the absence of existing pertinacious image literature, it is thought that this

review of general categories of social transgressions, agenda-setting theory, media

dependency theory, image repair theory, situational crisis communication theory and

contingency theory explain some elements that would likely be part of the pertinacious

image model should it exist. I propose that the model would look something like the one

presented in Figure 1. The presented model is simply a representation of my reflexive

thought as it has been informed by an examination of the relevant literature.

<div align="center">**Pertinacious Image Model**</div>

The pertinacious image model proposed here is a visual representation (See

Figure 1) of how an offending individual's image could change from its current

(desirable) state to a different state (usually undesirable) once that individual violates

social norms, breaks the law (or governing rules), and/or demonstrates poor character. It

should be noted that an offending individual could potentially be accused of two or more

of these social transgressions at the same time.

After the impropriety is committed, the media then reports it to the public. If the

media does not report the transgression, then the remainder of the pertinacious model is

rendered moot. However, once the media reports the transgression to the public the

salient audience continues to seek more information about the impropriety through

traditional (television, newspaper, radio, magazines, Internet news sources) and non-

traditional media (social media networks, blogs, etc.) sources.

At this point, agenda-setting and media dependency play a role in the pertinacious

model. Because a salient audience is actively engaged in information seeking (or, at the

very least, passively listening for updates about the situation), traditional media have an

opportunity to influence the audience through its news accounts (hard news, commentary,

etc.) – which is to say, the media can tell the salient audience what to think about

(agenda-setting) or simply tell them what to think (media dependency). Likewise, in

terms of non-traditional media, a salient audience generally seeks out information

through channels (i.e., their favorite blog, discussion board or other social media site) that

are in line with previous held beliefs and these messages also hold influence.

Figure 1

Pertinacious image model

Public relations practitioner markets and leverages individual's pertinacious image in traditional and non-traditional media

Public relations practitioner determines individual's pertinacious image is not marketable

Offending individual's image becomes pertinacious

Public relations practitioner determines individual's pertinacious image is marketable

Salient audience accepts information about the offending individual

Salient audience disregards information about the offending individual

Salient audience makes a determination about the offending individual and makes assessment about individual's image

Salient audience receives media message

PR practitioner may or may not have direct access to salient audience

Media influenced message

Public relations practitioner influenced message

message exchange

Information from traditional media (newspapers, magazines, radio, television, Internet news sources)

Information from non-traditional media (social media Web sites, blogs, discussion boards)

Salient audience seeks more information

Media reports social transgression

Individual breaks law or rules

Individual violates social norms

Individual demonstrates poor character

Individual's current image

May commit one or more social transgressions

While the media is reporting the impropriety to the salient audience (media influenced message), public relations practitioners are actively and simultaneously engaging two publics: the media and the salient audience (though more publics may exist, practitioners primarily focus on these two). Practitioners begin to send messages to the traditional and non-traditional media in an effort to better position their client publicly (public relations influenced messages), which could include promoting the new pertinacious image. They do this by various means. For example, with traditional media, practitioners may hold a press conference, schedule one-on-one interviews with specific media members, and/or write and disseminate press releases detailing the offender's position. With regards to non-traditional media, practitioners may establish a Web site to help get a client's message out and allow their client to directly answer questions from the salient audience through the site. Similarly, practitioners may address the situation and get their client's message out through blogging, posts on discussion boards and in chat rooms, and/or through tweeting, just to name a few. During this message exchange, practitioners also could conduct environmental scanning to continually assess the situation's severity and how the salient audience now views the offending individual. Depending on the situation, practitioners have an important decision to make. They can do nothing, they can try to repair the individual's image to a variation of its former state or they can try to promote and leverage the individual's new pertinacious image.

This type of image posturing (positioning) is seen in traditional approaches to image repair much like those discussed in image repair theory and SCCT, where the practitioner selects and implements strategies in an attempt to return the offender's image to a desirable state. Similarly, the concept of image posturing is ever-present in

contingency theory. Here a public relations practitioner takes a stance or multiple stances (depending on the situation) and positions the offender's image according to which publics are affected.

Returning to the discussion about the media's role in the pertinacious model, depending on how the traditional media reports (frequency – how often it is reported/repeated) and/or positions (various perspectives given by experts or pundits with special knowledge of the situation or the reporter's tone) the impropriety, a salient audience then must make a decision about what is reported. The salient audience either accepts (believes) or rejects the allegations.

Based on what the salient audience sees/hears through traditional and non-traditional media (media influenced message), they will begin accept or reject the new information about the offensive act. As described in social judgment theory, the audience's decision to accept or reject the new information about the offender is based on past experience with, or prior knowledge of, the offender and it is compared against the new information they received. Now the salient audience judges where the new information should be placed on the attitude scale in their minds as they weigh each new piece of information by comparing it with currently held views about the offender.

If the salient audience rejects the new information about the offender, that audience member may disregard the accusations as true and no damage is likely done to the individual's image and the model ends. However, if the salient audience believes the allegations to be true, the offending individual's image sustains damage (i.e., the individual has a new pertinacious image). This may or may not reduce profitability. It may also hold the potential to be leveraged to generate profitability.

Purposes and Research Questions

A discussion of generally perceived social transgressions necessarily includes violating social norms, breaking the law (or governing rules), and developing character issues. An understanding of the relationship between these transgressions and perceptions held by a salient audience necessitate an exploration of media influence and agenda-setting, especially when trying to understand how a pertinacious image may develop around a sports celebrity and how that image may be leveraged for profitable gain. Furthermore, image repair theory and SCCT, while seemingly irrelevant to the discussion at first, do lead to the possibility that engaging a pertinacious image for profit is really just an effort to repair a meta-level image of profitability. And finally, a contingency theory approach would have us ask if the act is a series of posturing through selected stances to relate to a salient audience. All of these revolve around the idea of engaging an image for a purpose on some level of interaction. In this case, profitability is the purpose. As a result of the many directions in which discussions of social transgressions and explanatory theories take us, and because the presence of pertinacious image in professional sports public relations is simply up to this point, two purposes and nine research questions drive this study.

Purpose One: To discover if the idea of a pertinacious image that may be leveraged for profitable gain, exists among the selected research participants.

Purpose Two: To develop general descriptions of pertinacious image that may be compared to the model articulated here.

RQ1a: If the idea of pertinacious image does exist, is the social transgression of violating social norms supported as a contributor?

RQ1b: If the social transgression of violating social norms is supported, in what recognizable ways is that articulated?

RQ2a: If the idea of pertinacious image does exist, is the social transgression of breaking the law (governing rule) supported as a contributor?

RQ2b: If the social transgression of breaking the law (governing rules) is supported, in what recognizable ways is that articulated?

RQ3a: If the idea of pertinacious image does exist, is the social transgression of developing character issues supported as a contributor?

RQ3b: If the social transgression of developing character issues is supported, in what recognizable ways is that articulated?

RQ4: What role does the media play in setting the agenda for the possibility of a pertinacious image?

RQ5: In what ways is pertinacious image dependent on a salient audience's encounters with media messages?

RQ6: What assumptions do sports public relations practitioners hold about the ability and need to manage an athlete's image?

RQ7: Is it possible, that the act of engaging a pertinacious image for profitable gain is really a strategy to repair the image at a meta-level to an image perceived as desirable because it is profitable?

RQ8: Is it possible, that the act of engaging a pertinacious image for profitable gain is really an act to match the appropriate crisis response strategy with the crisis type in an effort to repair the image at a meta-level to an image perceived as desirable because it is profitable?

RQ9: Is it possible, that the act of engaging a pertinacious image for profitable

gain is a series of posturing through selected stances to relate to a salient

audience?

Justification

There are several professional and academic reasons why the pertinacious image

concept should be studied. In today's society of increased media scrutiny, image

management has become increasingly important. In fact, how a public relations

practitioner handles a client's image can be critical to the client's financial well-being.

With that said, public relations practitioners have both the burden and an opportunity to

develop best practices (often measured in terms of profitable gain) with regards to image

management. This situation is evidenced through athletes like Kobe Bryant and

entertainers like Britney Spears. The question then becomes, how does one handle a

pertinacious image in light of multi-million dollar product endorsement contracts where

the athlete or entertainer's image is paramount?

At a much broader level, professional sports are a multi-billion dollar industry.

With this in mind we might ask, what type of financial impact does it have on the

industry when well-known athletes like boxer Mike Tyson or Atlanta Falcons Pro Bowl

quarterback Michael Vick are incarcerated during the primes of their respective careers?

Similarly, how can the industry be affected when celebrities like former baseball great

Pete Rose and six-time NBA champion Michael Jordan are suspected of gambling? What

kinds of judgment calls do public relations practitioners have to make when an auto-

racing celebrity like Helio Castroneves is charged with conspiracy and six counts of tax

evasion by a grand jury? Even though eventually acquitted, Castroneves' public relations

staff had to plan strategically for the future should he not be acquitted. More to the point, these athletes play major roles in generating millions of dollars in revenues through ticket sales and merchandising, as well as banking millions in advertising endorsements. Basically, we need to explore more thoroughly how an athlete's pertinacious image can affect or be used to affect the industry.

Studying pertinacious image may help public relations practitioners better understand the parameters (i.e., broken laws or governing rules, social norm violations, character issues) behind when and how to cultivate, promote and leverage a pertinacious image. At an academic level, by exploring and identifying some of these parameters, it may lead to establishing criteria that are both predictable and testable.

Studying pertinacious image will also answer the call for more theory development in public relations. While pertinacious image is merely at the conceptual level, extensive study may result in theory development.

As public relations educators, we teach our students the value of lessening the damage to one's image following a crisis and then implementing image repair strategies in an attempt to restore the image to some desirable form of its former state. As practitioners, without much forethought, it is intuitive for us to begin repairing and restoring a damaged image immediately following a crisis. This leads me to my final reason for studying pertinacious image. Suggesting that practitioners cultivate, promote, and leverage a pertinacious image redresses conventional image management wisdom. I believe that practitioners have and do engage in this tactic, but rarely admit it because it borders along ethical lines and common decency. Imagine, for a moment, the potential to legitimize a concept/action that exists in public relations, but no one has formally

articulated it because of resistance to redressing generally held assumptions about what

public relations should be.

Chapter Three: Method

While the literature review provides intriguing discussion points of what pertinacious image might be and the powers it may or may not hold, it does not answer the question of whether pertinacious image does, in fact, exist beyond the anecdotal evidence given to this point. It does not help us examine any potential contributors and relationships among them. It also does not help us explore the possibility of how pertinacious image, if it does exist, might be leveraged for profitable gain. This dissertation involved a field exploration of the existence of the pertinacious image concept. Because it was the beginning examination of the possibility of pertinacious image as an image that can be used for gain, all questions asked were necessarily exploratory in nature and designed to solicit the most descriptive power possible. With that in mind, qualitative methodologies were well-suited for this type of research. Creswell (2003) put it this way,

> Qualitative research is exploratory and is useful when the researcher does not
> know the important variables to examine. This type of approach may be needed
> because the topic is new, the topic has never been addressed with a certain sample
> or group of people, or existing theories do not apply with the particular sample or
> group under study. (p. 22)

Morse (1991) wrote that researchers can use qualitative methods when there is a "need to explore and describe the phenomena and to develop theory" (p. 120). Because it is clear that, to date, no one in the public relations field has explicitly or implicitly addressed the idea of pertinacious image, there is a need to explore and describe its possibility.

Theory building is extremely important to the field. Some public relations

scholars argue that both scholars and public relations practitioners alike need to do a

better job of developing public relations theories. In fact, Botan (1989) argued that

scholars and practitioners need to act in concert to help advance public relations theory.

"Possibly the most immediate contribution that practitioners can make to advancing

public relations theory is making broader use of the research [activities] currently being

conducted" (p. 107). He continued, "Scholars have a responsibility to join practitioners

in the forefront of developing new public relations theory and techniques" (p. 108).

Overt attempts to begin fulfilling this are found in two recent edited texts devoted

to public relations theory. Botan and Hazelton's (2006) text is in its second edition.

Hansen-Horn and Dostal Neff's (2008) text is in its first edition. Although both texts

were authored to promote theory development, Hansen-Horn and Dostal Neff also

consciously facilitate the implementation of public relations theory into practice.

I agree with Botan that public relations theory development is needed. And,

conducting exploratory research about pertinacious image is a first step in that direction.

It may be that this phenomenon is already in action. It may be that a new theoretical idea

can emerge from its exploration. With this in mind, I argue that the qualitative processes

of in-depth interviews and Constant Comparative Method (CCM) analysis were the best

means through which to explore the concept's possible existence.

In-depth/Long Interviews

According to McCracken (1988),

the long interview is one of the most powerful methods in the qualitative armory.

For certain descriptive and analytic purposes, no instrument of inquiry is more

revealing…The long interview gives us the opportunity to step into the mind of

another person, to see and experience the world as they do themselves. (p. 9)

Spending long amounts of time engaged in conversation with interviewees allowed the

researcher to carefully probe participants' minds, thoughts and projections. Keeping the

door open for follow-up questions (explanations) throughout the research process was

also important. The goal of exploring the possibility of pertinacious image, how it might

be described by practitioners should they perceive its presence, and the ability to ask after

strategies used in engaging the image for strategic purposes, demanded that the

researcher be able to get into the minds of the interviewees.

McCracken's (1988) admonition is key,

Qualitative research does not survey the terrain, it mines it…The selection of

respondents must be made accordingly. The first principle is that "less is more."

It is more important to work longer, and with greater care, with a few people than

more superficially with many of them. For many research projects, eight

respondents will be perfectly sufficient. (p. 17)

This project mined the experiences, thoughts and projections of public relations

practitioners who have spent years highly involved in leveraging celebrity sports figures

for profitable gain. It was important that each of these individuals received in-depth

attention as the research questions were asked. Depth, not breadth, is what was most

important to this study. The ability to achieve depth was facilitated by keeping the

number of interviewees limited.

Constant Comparative Method

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Constant comparative method (Glaser & Strauss, 1967, Boeije, 2002) provided a framework through which this study's two purposes and none research questions were addressed. CCM is closely tied to grounded theory. This project was a search for the possibility of a model, not theory that could simply emerge from the data. The analysis undertaken here was approached from a set of proposed propositions about pertinacious image that I derived from my own professional experience and observations, and the project's literature review. This was in line with Goetz and LeCompte's (1981) argument that it is all right to use "some form of typological analysis for observation [questioning]…devised from a theoretical frame or set of propositions or from common sense or mundane perceptions of reality" (p. 59). The search for the presence of pertinacious image, and its possible groundings, came from the researcher's common sense or mundane perceptions of reality in the arena of professional sports.

This fit the research situation well for two reasons. The first is that the research participants' positions precluded observation of them over time or data gathering through repeat interviews, only following up questions via email were possible. The participants' time commitments and hierarchal positions within their respective organizations permitted one time data gathering in the manner needed. Each interview had to be somewhat directed, then, by preconceived ideas in order to mine the participants' minds, experiences, and so on as much as possible. The second reason for the fit related directly to the nature of a dissertation project. Before proceeding with analysis, a researcher must, in essence, "theorize" the presence of something he or she wants to analyze. Regardless of the fact that I necessarily approached this project with some preconceptions, a discussion of grounded theory is useful for contextualizing CCM.

More than four decades ago, Glaser and Strauss (1967) offered grounded theory as a way for researchers to discover and generate theory through data they systematically collected. More recently, Strauss and Corbin (1998) defined grounded theory as,

> Theory that was derived from data, systematically gathered and analyzed through the research process. In this method, data collection, analysis, and eventual theory stand in close relationship with one another. A researcher does not begin a project with a preconceived theory in mind (unless his or her purpose is to elaborate and extend existing theory). Rather, the researcher begins with an area of study and allows the theory to emerge from the data. Theory derived from data is more likely to resemble the "reality" than is theory derived by putting together a series of concepts based on experience or solely through speculation (how things ought to work). Grounded theories, because they are drawn from data, are likely to offer insight, enhance understanding and provide a meaningful guide to action. (p. 12)

While the present study is guilty of speculation, the nature of it necessitates that speculation. However, the analysis of the data derived from the questions was treated as much as possible from a grounded theory perspective.

Closely related to grounded theory, is CCM. According to Boeije (2002), "The constant comparative method, together with theoretical sampling, constitute the core of qualitative analysis in the grounded theory approach developed by Glaser and Strauss" (p. 391).

In an effort to mine and analyze the long interview data, Glaser and Strauss' (1967) CCM was used in conjunction with theoretical sampling. Theoretical sampling is

the data collection process where the researcher "jointly collects, codes and analyzes data and decides what data to collect next and where to find it, in order to develop his theory as it emerges" (p. 45). Theoretical sampling took place in this research study as interviews were conducted, questions were asked, reformed and re-asked, and redundancy was reached.

CCM is a method of analysis that can be described in four stages. In the first stage, the researcher codes each incident in the data and places it into as many categories of analysis as possible. While coding each incident to be placed in a category, the researcher compares it with previous incidents coded in the same category – all the while recording memos of the comparisons made for future analysis.

In stage two, the researcher continues to code incidents, but "the constant comparative units change from comparison of incident with incident to incident with properties of the category which resulted from initial comparison of incidents" (Glaser 1965, p. 440). Dimensions are also developed during analysis. Category "properties" are the general or specific characteristics or attributes of a category" (Strauss & Corbin, 1998, p. 117). Category "dimensions" "represent the location of a property along a continuum or range" (p. 117). An example of a category that could emerge is "image as profit." A property that could emerge for the category of "profit" is "brand equity." An emergent dimension of the property of brand equity could be the continuum of "individual brand equity to organizational brand equity."

What all the above means, is that through constant comparison, categories start to become integrated and, as a result, the researcher is forced to make some theoretical

sense of each comparison; "hypothesis generation (relationship discovery) begins" (Dye,

Schatz, Rosenberg & Coleman, 2000, Constant Comparison Method section, para. 3).

As the theoretical sense-making continues, the researcher then begins to delimit

the theory (stage three), or in this case to delimit the evidence for or against the existence

of the phenomenon of pertinacious image. Here, the theory starts to solidify as the

categories become theoretically saturated. This means that major comparisons between

incidents and the properties of categories become fewer and fewer.

> As the theory grows, reduces, and increasingly works better in ordering a mass of
>
> qualitative data, the analyst becomes committed to it. This commitment now
>
> allows him to delimit the original list of categories for coding according to the
>
> boundaries of this theory. In turn, his consideration, coding, and analyzing of
>
> incidents become more select and focused. He can devote more time to the
>
> constant comparison of incidents clearly applicable to a smaller set of categories.
>
> (Glaser & Strauss, 1967, p. 441)

In CCM's final stage, a theory emerges based on analyzed coded data,

comparisons made, and written memos that explain comparisons or ideas. This is when

theory is written. The researcher collates the written memos on each category,

summarizes (further analyzes the coded data) them and then writes the theory.

In this dissertation, and to the extent possible, I took a grounded approach as I

explored the possibility that the idea of pertinacious image that can be leveraged for

profitable gain exists in the minds and experiences of professional sports public relations

practitioners. A second purpose was to gather evidence of its elements, contributors and

how it functions. In the spirit of the grounded theory culture and its reflexivity, it is

important to note that what I found altered what I asked, what I asked changed what I thought the model might be, and the concepts changed as I progressed. Supportive and contradictory evidence was coded for, as were relational and potential contributors.

Procedure

With this in mind, I conducted in-depth interviews with selected public relations practitioners representing four major American professional sports: football, baseball, auto racing, and basketball. These four professional sports were chosen based on the 2008 "The Harris Poll$^®$ #13" report "Professional Football Still America's Favorite Sport." The survey asked 2,302 U.S. adult respondents, "If you had to choose, which ONE of these sports would you say is your favorite?" The Harris Interactive$^®$ survey was conducted online between Jan. 15 and Jan. 22, 2008, and though "each of the major sports has had some image problems recently, their popularity all remains relatively unchanged since last year," concluded that the top-rated professional sports were football (30%), followed by professional baseball (15%), auto racing (10%), professional hockey (5%), and professional basketball (4%). It should be mentioned that college football was the third-rated most popular sport overall with 12%. Of the top five professional sports, football, baseball, auto racing, and basketball were chosen for this dissertation. Basketball was chosen over hockey because it has long been more popular in the U.S. than hockey. This is evidenced by the previous 13 Harris Polls, dating back to 1985, that indicate that basketball has been more popular than hockey 11 times (1985 basketball 6%, hockey 2%; 1989 basketball 7%, hockey 3%; 1992 basketball 12%, hockey 3%; 1994 basketball 11%, hockey 5%; 1997 basketball 13%, hockey 4%; 1998 basketball 13%, hockey 3%; 2002 basketball 11%, hockey 3%; 2003 basketball 10%, hockey 3%;

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2004 basketball 7%, hockey 4%; 2006 basketball 7%, hockey 4%). The two times hockey out-ranked basketball (2005 hockey 5%, basketball 4%; 2008 hockey 5%, basketball 4%), it only out-ranked it by 1 percentage point.

Targeted professionals had more than 10 years of sports public relations experience at a director's level. This experience level was chosen for two reasons. First, those who hold director level posts in professional sports are usually part of the dominant coalition and are the ones responsible for dealing with the media in times of crisis. Second, they were able to provide a multitude of examples based on their experiences with professional athletes and with the media (i.e., providing adequate depth to answers).

Each interviewee was selected on his or her professional position in one of the four sports included in the study. Years of experience and expertise were assumed, given each one held a position of prestige and influence in his or her respected sport and, hence, over celebrity individuals largely seen as the public relations practitioners' clients. At first glance, these public relations practitioners may not be viewed as a salient audience. However, every person serving as a public relations practitioner in the world of professional sports has to be part of a salient audience. If not, there would be no passion about and ownership of the client's image. Front office persons in the world of professional sports are consumers and fans of the sport they represent. That is part of the nature of professional sports. Additionally, while only a small part of a salient audience, the public relations practitioners have to retain some sense of the larger salient audience's perceptions of the celebrity individuals. This is what makes it possible to do their job. In addition, these practitioners were key in their ability to help fulfill the purposes of this study. The two purposes were to explore for the possible existence of a pertinacious

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image that can be leveraged for profitable gain and, if found, explore for what that might look like and what might contribute to it. General members of a salient audience could not provide the kind of data needed.

Keeping the number of involved participants small was strategic. At the same time, it was important that interviewees be added to the study until a point of saturation among responses was reached such that it was judged that more interviewee responses would be redundant. The number of interviewees included in this study was determined by my judgment of saturation among responses, along with a judged amount of rich description useful to the research purposes and questions. Personal contacts with professional sports public relations practitioners were mined for participants, asking for each contact's participation as well as for their recommendations and endorsements for additional participants. I began recruiting potential interviewees in June 2009, following receipt of University of Missouri Institutional Review Board approval, and recruited my final candidate in November 2009.

I started the recruiting process by orally asking (face-to-face of by phone) sports public relations practitioners, with whom I had developed professional relationships throughout my 16-year sports public relations career, if they wanted to participate in a doctoral study that examined image in professional sports. Those candidates that I did not ask in-person, I e-mailed asking if they would like to participate (see Appendix A for a representative letter of invitation used to solicit participants).

I got a few commitments right away. In a few cases, I was able to do the interviews within a couple of days of the request. However, the majority of the interviews took weeks and months to schedule and complete. In fact, some individuals

asked if they could be interviewed after their respective sport had completed its season. This meant I had to wait as much as four months to complete an interview. Meanwhile, I continued to recruit potential interviewees hoping they could complete the interviews in a more timely fashion.

At first, many candidates were excited about the topic. However, after they learned that I would need them to devote one to two hours of their time to the interview, depending on their answers, many respectfully declined the opportunity. They simply stated that they did not want to or could not devote that much of their time to the project (i.e., their job demands were too great). Needless to say, the recruiting process was quite a challenge.

After I exhausted all of my personal sports public relations contacts, I asked my other public relations colleagues for help. I knew that some of my non-sports public relations colleagues had personal connections with other sports public relations practitioners who I did not know. This tactic netted me two more interviewees. Still needing more participants for my study, I turned to my interviewees for help. Because they had just been interviewed and knew what the process was like, I asked them if they knew of a fellow sports public relations practitioner who would be willing to participate in this study. This tactic also netted me two more interviews. As an ongoing process searching for redundancy among responses, this eventually led me to a total of 12 interviewees. For purposes of confidentiality, names and associations of my interviewees are not provided in this dissertation.

In advance of the interview, each candidate was given an informed consent form to review and ask questions about in the days, in some cases weeks, leading up to the

interview. Prior to an in-person interview, I asked the interviewee if he or she had any questions about the informed consent form. If he or she had questions, I answered them and then collected the signed consent form. If there were no questions, I collected the signed form.

Prior to Web-based Skype interviews, I asked each interviewee if he or she had any questions about the informed consent form. If a question was asked, I answered it. In all cases but one, I received the signed informed consent form by conventional mail after the interview was complete; however, each had signed and mailed the document before the actual interview took place. The one exception e-mailed the signed informed consent form to me before the interview as a .pdf file.

After the informed consent form discussion was complete, I began each interview by telling the participant that the interview would be recorded so that I could transcribe and analyze the information at a later date. I then provided a very brief overview about how the interview would go. I stated that some questions may have what seem to be obvious answers, but asked if he or she would answer the questions to the best of his or her ability. I also asked each participant to provide specific examples to support answers where applicable. I suggested that, based on answers, I may ask follow-up questions for clarification purposes. Wanting to be sensitive to the time allotted me for the interview, I verified with each participant by asking, "How are we on time today?" Based on the answer, I structured the interview accordingly.

One interview took four hours and fifteen minutes to complete. This particular interview took place in-person over a two-day period at a professional baseball stadium located in the Midwest. On the first day, the interview ended after about two hours and

forty-five minutes. However, the interview was not complete. With that in mind, the

interviewee agreed to complete the interview two days later. The interview resumed

then. But, due to the interviewee's schedule, the interview was necessarily sandwiched

around a major press conference announcing the signing of a first round draft pick.

Nearly 30 minutes into the interview, the interviewee and I headed for the scheduled

press conference. The interviewee moderated the press conference and after it was

complete, the interviewee and I resumed the interview. It was complete about an hour

later.

Another interview took place at the Kansas Speedway. The interviewee had a

client competing in the NASCAR Nextel Cup race. I secured a press pass beforehand as

well as permission to use Kansas Speedway facilities for my research purposes. I

arranged to conduct the interview in one of the radio rooms located just inside the media

interview room. The media interview room is where the track's press conferences are

held. A little more than an hour and a half into the interview, we had to suspend it so that

the interviewee could attend a press conference for her client. After the press conference

was over, we could not go back to the radio room we had been using for the interview.

Unfortunately, a local radio station needed the room to go on air. So, I decided to

conduct the final 30 minutes near the media interview room stage. This was a bit

distracting at times because we could hear the cars going around the track.

Another interview was conducted via Skype. It took more than three hours and

thirty minutes over three days to complete. On the first day, this interviewee answered

the questions with a lot of depth and with specific examples. Due to the depth of

information, we did not get even a third of the way through the questions in the one hour

scheduled interview. Prior to the interview, the interviewee agreed to devote one hour

total to the interview. Once the hour was up, I told him that we were only about one-third

of the way through the interview and that I would appreciate it if he would be willing to

resume the interview another day. He agreed. The interview resumed the next day and,

much like the first interview, he provided a lot of depth with specific examples. At the

end of an hour and a half, we still were not done. We were now two-thirds of the way

through the interview. At this point, the interviewee agreed to finish the interview the

next day. The interview resumed on the third day and we completed it a little more than

one hour later.

Overall, four interviews were conducted in-person, while eight were conducted

via Skype. As mentioned, one interview took four hours and fifteen minutes. Another

interview took more than three hours and thirty minutes. Three interviews took about

two hours and thirty minutes. Six interviews took about one hour and thirty minutes.

One interview took a little more than an hour to complete.

The questions posed to the interviewees were loosely coupled as required by the

spirit of the culture of grounded theory (see Appendix B for an example of the

moderately scheduled interview guide used with the participants). Except for

contextualizing the first question in relation to "famous athletes" so as to direct each

interviewee's thoughts in that direction, they were as open-ended as possible when asking

for definitions of image. Questions two through six directed the "conversation" through

the reflective areas of image, image marketability, positive image, undesirable positive

image, negative image, desirable negative image, marketable negative image, violated

social norms, breaking the law or governing rules, character issues, media agenda-setting,

media salience, and public relations practitioner assumptions. Although not directly addressed by the questions asked, the plan was to discontinue an interview if no evidence of a pertinacious image emerged. None of the 12 interviews was discontinued.

As I directed each interview toward the area of social transgressions, and because it seemed that respondents would feel more comfortable speaking about breaking the law before thinking about how athletes might be involved in the more tenable idea of violating social norms, I asked about breaking the law before violated social norms. This was a variation in the pattern developed from the literature review, but it presented no problem for the analysis. It is important to note that because I knew I would not be the recipient of the focused attention of these high-powered public relations professionals again anytime soon, I also asked questions about image repair, crisis response strategies and contingency theory as a means of possibly informing my speculations about pertinacious image from other angles.

The term pertinacious image was not used with, nor the model introduced to, the interviewees until each interview was drawing to a close and each participant had had ample time and opportunity to provide feedback on all questions asked (and generated as the interview proceeded). The intent was to let subjects define and describe, in unlimited ways, what they perceived as relevant to the questions. Finally, when each interviewee had had plenty of opportunity to answer my questions about image, its potential forms and its contributors, I proposed the idea of a pertinacious image and gave the example of Kobe Bryant and Nike. I asked each respondent the following question, "Based on your experience, what do you believe about the pertinacious concept (i.e., Do you agree with

it? Do you disagree with it? Why or why not?") This process provided another

dimension of exploration.

The questions and the order in which they were asked were designed specifically

to alleviate as much researcher bias as possible in allowing the interviewees to articulate

the presence or absence of the idea of pertinacious image. All of the interviewees, except

three, were able to respond to every question on the interview guide. The three who were

unable to answer fully were constrained by other time commitments. For the purposes of

consistency and, because I knew the respondents were short on time before the interviews

took place, I choose to remove the same three sets of questions for all, those revolving

around breaking the law, violating social norms, and character issues. The saturation of

the responses among the nine who did answer these questions, however, testified to the

fact that omitting these question sets for the other three respondents was not problematic

in light of gaining a usable data set.

In summary, the interview guide was designed with the purpose of facilitating

responses that might provide descriptions of and identify possible relationships for the

areas asked after by the study's nine research questions, and allow me to engage in

analysis such that the two purposes of the research study could be addressed. It was a

search for data capable of yielding evidence, relationship and possibility.

Each of the interviews was digitally recorded. Each was transcribed in its

entirety, making sure to retain originality of thought and response of participants'

answers as signaled by voice inflection, rate, volume and pauses. Beginning conceptual

coding, code notes and theoretical notes were mentally noted by me throughout the

transcription process. These notes were put to use as questions were framed and reframed from one interview to the next.

The interview-transcription-and-mental-note-process was discontinued when a judged state of redundancy was reached. Following transcription of the final interview, further and systematic analysis of the data took place. Two of the five steps recommended by Boeije (2002) were followed. In an effort to provide a CCM analysis, which gives careful account of the systematic process through which results are arrived at, Boeije recommended five steps when comparing relational dyads under study: "comparison within a single interview," "comparison between interviews within the same group," "comparison of interviews from different groups," "comparison in pairs at the level of the couple" and "comparing couples" (p. 395). Because the participants in the present study were taken as largely homogenous in their director status, their experience, and their involvement as a salient audience in professional sports, only two of Boeije's steps were relevant. There were no dyads in this research project, nor groups of subjects. There were also no interpersonal relationships, per se, under study. However, relationships among incidents, codes and categories were. Therefore, this analysis involved comparison within a single interview and comparison among all interview data within the group searching the whole for evidence, relationship and possibility.

Specifically, this study was conducted with the claim made by Strauss and Corbin (1998) in mind, that conceptual ordering can be "the desired end point of some investigators" (p. 20). To a large degree, conceptual ordering was the end point of this dissertation, as its purposes were to explore the possible presence of pertinacious image and should its presence be uncovered, its possible contributors. However, Strauss and

Corbin's admonition to include within a conceptual ordering analysis the "larger

theoretical schemes that explain what drives the central or organizing process, that is, the

conditions that explain how, when, where, and why persons and organizations proceed

from one step to another" (p. 20) was also taken into account. In this spirit, the analysis

performed here drew from Scott's attempts to consider "a specific method for engaging

relational questions in constant comparison" (p. 114). While an exploration of

pertinacious image did not involve interpersonal issues, it did involve relationships

among codes, categories and sub-categories along the lines of properties and dimensions.

As a means of facilitating these ends, Scott's (2004) proposed relational questions were

used to facilitate my first open-ended coding of interviewee responses. Those questions

were:

- What is [the category]? (Using a participant's words helps avoid bias.)

- When does [the category] occur? (Using "during…" helps form the answer.)

- Where does [the category] occur? (Using "in…" helps form the answer.)

- Why does [the category] occur? (Using "because…" helps form the answer.)

- How does [the category] occur? (Using "by…" helps form the answer.) (p. 115).

The sixth relational question proposed by Scott, "With what Consequence does [the

category] occur or is [the category] understood?" was also used to guide the analysis.

This final question also contained the idea of contradictions inherent in responses.

Consequences, differences in understanding and/or contradictions were taken as a

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question searching for deviations. Asking this question

(consequence/understanding/contradiction) during the research process helped me

uncover "deviations from the average or within a pattern" (Strauss & Corbin, 1998, p.

20), another concern articulated by Strauss and Corbin when a researcher engages in

conceptual ordering for the purposes of exploration, relationship building, and definition

(or evidence, relationship and possibility). Purposely coding for deviations allowed me

to redress some of the bias that naturally occurred from the interview questions asked and

the way in which they were asked and ordered.

Given that the point at which to enter a set of data and begin a qualitative analysis

is necessarily a subjective choice, I drew on my commonsense or mundane

preconceptions about image. I chose a systematic approach to the data that I developed

from a framework designed around the most consistently addressed research topics

facilitated by this study's literature review. There were 16 categorical entry points used

to frame the data analysis: image, image marketability, positive image, undesirable

positive image, negative image, desirable negative image, marketable negative image,

violated social norms, breaking the law or governing rules, character issues, media

agenda-setting, media salience, public relations practitioner assumptions, image repair, a

systematic image repair process, and stances.

Questions of image, image marketability, positive image, undesirable positive

image, negative image, desirable negative image, and marketable negative image were

initially thought to be most relevant to Purpose One: "To discover if the idea of a

pertinacious image that may be leveraged for profitable gain, exists among the selected

research participants;" and Purpose Two: "To develop general descriptions of

pertinacious image that may be compared to the model articulated here." Questions of violated social norms related to RQ1: "If the idea of pertinacious image does exist, is the social transgression of violating social norms supported as a contributor?" and RQ2: "If the social transgression of violating social norms is supported, in what recognizable ways is that articulated?" Questions of breaking the law or governing rules related to RQ3: "If the idea of pertinacious image does exist, is the social transgression of breaking the law (or governing rule) supported as a contributor?" and RQ4: "If the social transgression of breaking the law (governing rule) is supported, in what recognizable ways is that articulated?" Questions of character related to RQ5: "If the idea of pertinacious image does exist, is the social transgression of developing character issues supported as a contributor?" and RQ6: "If the social transgression of developing character issues is supported, in what recognizable ways is that articulated?" Questions of the roles media play in setting an agenda for image related to RQ7: "What roles does the media play in setting the agenda for the possibility of a pertinacious image?" Questions of media messages that an audience receives related to RQ8: "In what ways is pertinacious image dependent on a salient audience's encounters with media messages?" Questions of public relations sports practitioners' assumptions about the ability and need to manage an athlete's image related to RQ9: "What assumptions do sports public relations practitioners hold about the ability and need to manage an athlete's image?" It is important to note, however, that the data was allowed to speak for itself as much as possible. This means that codes and categories did emerge from questions asked that were not initially assumed to inform a particular categorical entry point. For example, the idea of positive image, while initially expected to be informed by answers to the

following interview questions: "How would you describe a positive image?", "What types of things contribute to an athlete's positive image?", and "Is a positive image the same thing as a desirable image when it comes to marketability", (all framed for discovering relationships through asking what, when, where, why, how and with what consequences/contradictions when coding), coding and comparison did not stop there. Specifically, positive image was informed by a respondent's answers to an interview question relating to character issues. In providing his thoughts about character issues, he said, "It really comes down to the way you interact with other people. If there are any flaws in the way you interact with others and treat others, then I think your character is going to destroy your image" (5RK-154). The relational questions of what, why and how were embedded in the answer. Lack of character flaws were a "what" is positive image, the "why" was because of interaction with and treatment of others, and a "how" of positive image was because "flaws" can "destroy your image."

The unit of analysis chosen for the purposes of this analysis was determined by my judgments about thought, and thought completion. Entire responses to questions were ruled out as a possible unit of analysis because an interviewee often addressed multiple issues within a response, sometimes referring back to previous interview responses and sometimes bringing up issues tangential to or radically different from the topic proposed by an interview question. Sentences were also discarded as a unit of analysis, because true to the nature of conversation, it was very difficult to determine where one sentence, and therefore assumed thought, ended and another began. A thought was defined in this study, much as that described by Neibergall (2003), as "an overarching proposition used to organize successive utterances in a conversation" (p. 24).

Neibergall's definition of a topic paralleled the claim made by Cegala, Dewhurst, Galanes, Burggraf, Thorpe, Keyton, and MaKay (1989); "topic is defined by the direct or implied propositional content of discourse" (p. 63). I separated all responses by topic, marking the transcriptions at judged beginning and ending points of topics. Topic changes were signaled much like Neibergall (2003) did using summative statements such as "In a nutshell, image is…." and "And so, you have…." Specifically I used the following list of by words and phrases to make complete thought judgments: "I think…," "All that adds up…," "Let's face it…," "First and foremost…," "But…," "As we talked about earlier…," "Again, as a…," "Let me put it to you this way…" "As I said…" and "Now it's…" Long pauses, sentence fragments or incomplete thoughts, and changes in voice were also taken to signal thought completion or change. Judgments had to be informed by the data in instances such as recognizing that for one interviewee, "first and foremost" simply signaled a new sentence with no prioritized ideas to follow. When transcribing the interviews, I did my best to indicate long pauses and changes in voice. When in doubt while working through the printed transcripts, I reverted to the audio recording to determine topic change.

Two thousand seven hundred and nine units of analysis were determined. I arranged the units in a two-column table (one table for each set of interview data), each unit occupying its own cell and identified with its own code number (see Appendix C for an example). This was done to make it easier to record notes, suggestive codes, move through the reflexive process, and physically reference back and forth through the data.

When paired with Scott's (2004) relational questions, I entered the data from each interview asking of it the 96 category-of-analytic-entry-paired-questions contained in the

third column of the Coding Guide Matrix (see Appendix D). The 96 questions were a

product of inserting for "[the category]" each of the following words or phrases: image,

image marketability, a positive image, an undesirable positive image, a negative image, a

negative image contributor, an undesirable negative image, a desirable negative image, a

marketable negative image, violated social norms, breaking the law (or governing rules), ,

character issues, and media agenda-setting of the image, respectively; into Scott's

proposed relational questions of: What is [the category]? When does [the category]

occur? Where does [the category] occur? Why does [the category] occur? How does [the

category] occur? And with what consequence does [the category] occur or is [the

category] understood [or are contradictions apparent]? Asking "what is" enabled

exploration of the study's preconceptions. The relational questions of when, where, why,

and how helped me uncover category properties and dimensions. Asking after

consequences, and/or contradictions in articulated understanding, helped me, in the spirit

of grounded theory, uncover new ideas, meaning and/or relationship.

Asking these questions resulted in an array of open codes as "incidents" (Wimmer

& Dominick, 2006, p. 117) comparatively assigned to categories, categories elaborated

and refined, relationships and themes searched for among categories, and data simplified

and integrated "into a coherent theoretical [in this case descriptive and explorative]

structure" (Wimmer & Dominick, 2006, p. 117). The "Open Coding Matrix for Purposes

and Research Questions" (see Appendix E) provides an example of how I first moved

through the data at stage one of the CCM process, code each incident and place it into as

many categories of analysis as possible. I conducted this level of analysis for each

categorical point of entry, first using data unique to each individual interview or

"comparison within a single interview." I then performed the same type analysis for each categorical point of entry across data received from all the interviews, of "comparison between interviews within the same group." Stage two was conducted next, I continued to code incidents, but the units change from comparison of incident with incident to incident with properties of the category, as well as searching for dimensions of categories. A form of conceptual mapping was useful as I went through this process. I mapped codes, categories, dimensions and properties to the best of my ability. Stages one and two were performed across each data set emerging from the 16 categorical entry points per interview, then across the same sets derived as a repository from all interviews, and finally across data sets grouped in this dissertation as relevant to the two purposes and nine research questions.

Stage three, begin to describe and record evidence for or against the existence of pertinacious image, was conducted as I recorded here the categories, properties and dimensions that emerged from that data. Stage four, writing theory (or a model emerging from the actual research data) is found in the discussion section of this dissertation.

Chapter Four: Results

Purpose One: To discover if the idea of a pertinacious image that may be leveraged for profitable gain, exists among the selected research participants.

Six strategic open-ended interview questions were of primary importance as I set out to discover if my idea of a pertinacious image existed for my respondents. Those six questions were: "Are negative images always undesirable? Why or why not? Explain." "Can you have a desirable negative image? Why or why not? Explain." "Can a negative image be marketable? Why or why not? Explain." "In your experience, has anyone ever been able to take a negative image and use it for profitable gain? In other words, found the negative image marketable?" "Can you describe what occurred?" And, "What made the image, in that case, marketable?" I assumed pertinacious image was closely linked to the concepts of "desirable negative image" and "marketable negative image."

Before asking the six target questions, I led each interviewee down what, I assumed, was a natural path of progression in thought as he or she thought about image. I started out each interview with the following eight questions: "With regards to how people perceive someone famous (i.e., an athlete) how would you define 'image'?" "What makes an image marketable?" "How would you describe a positive image?" "What types of things contribute to an athlete's positive image?" "Is a positive image the same thing as a desirable image when it comes to marketability?" "Can you have an undesirable positive image?" "How would you describe a negative image?" And, "What types of things contribute to an athlete's negative image?" The six questions most relevant to the overarching purpose of this dissertation research were asked next.

Following the interviews and my CCM analysis of the data, **I did, indeed, discover that the idea of a pertinacious image that may be leveraged for profitable gain, existed among the research participants.** A desirable negative image was thought of as "possible" by every respondent. A marketable negative image was thought of as possible and "potentially usable" by every respondent.

The categories, properties and dimensions associated with "a desirable negative image" and "a marketable negative image" are found in my answer for Purpose Two: To develop general descriptions of pertinacious image that may be compared to the model articulated here.

Purpose Two: To develop general descriptions of pertinacious image that may be compared to the model articulated here.

Purpose Two can be answered through a presentation of the categories, properties and dimensions that emerged from the data for two phenomena: "desirable negative image" and "marketable negative image."

Desirable Negative Image. One category, "existence," emerged from the data. Six properties emerged from the data in relation to a desirable negative image. The six were: "possibility," "need," "value," "location," "expectation," and "messaging." The category of existence was linked to the property of "possibility." The property of possibility was linked to the dimension of "real to unreal." The respondents' understandings of this property and its dimension unfolded in a variety of interesting ways. The excerpts provided below were most rich in descriptive power. (Note: the phrases I judge to be most salient to my discussions of a desirable negative image and a marketable negative image are underlined within the quotes for emphasis.)

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"Yes, you can [have a desirable negative image]." (MB-45)

"I think in some respects, yes [you can have a desirable negative image]. Dennis Rodman jumps to mind as a guy who became a cartoon character after a while. People are going to remember him as a fantastic defensive player, a great rebounder and a tough guy. He can go to the Hall of Fame without having ever scored 100 points in his career. Obviously that's an exaggeration. He has a desirable impact on a team and, frankly, gave that team the image 'bad boys.' He was every bit the leader of that group - him and Bill Laimbeer. They won championships because of it." (RK-62 & 63).

"I think the San Francisco Giants did quite well with one [having a desirable negative image]. I think as a sports fan being raised in Kansas City, and since this is the right week to say this, I think the Oakland Raiders have fed off of something like that for their whole, from day one. I think Al Davis, though he's probably passed his prime as an owner now, I think he thrives on the fact that he's the villain, and is portrayed as a villain. I think that that franchise has been successful, you know, catering to the black hole, I mean, there's Raiders who are the one-eyed patch people and then there's these people that I saw on television Monday night. I don't even know what they are. It's an image that they've been a success at feeding off of." (SM-46 & 47)

"I say no [not in professional sports]. I wouldn't want to represent anyone that would embarrass me or my organization. I mean, if you take another entertainment business like Hollywood, I mean some of the actors and actresses have made a life and a career out of being "bad boys" and that's ok. I mean in that particular form of entertainment I think you know people like that kind of stuff." (BR-37)

"I'd say yes because people like a villain sometimes. So in our sport, can I give a specific example? In our sport you have like a Tony Stewart, who is a champion, who also does amazing things for people and for charities. And he's got a huge heart, but he's not afraid to, if Goodyear didn't bring a good tire he calls them out on it. If NASCAR does something, he calls them out on it. He'll get in somebody's face. He'll speak his mind and he'll show somebody a wheel if he needs to, you know that's an open wheel racing term, and so that's desirable." (BK-19 & 20)

"Yeah, I think you can have it. I think it does exist. Is it good? I would argue, probably not. But, some other people would probably think that it is." (MR-41)

Based on the responses like, it is clear that PR practitioners believe that a possibility of a desirable negative image exists.

The property of need was linked to the dimension of "necessary to unnecessary."

One respondent put it best in the following excerpt,

> "I think <u>a lot of people relate to negative things that happen</u>. I think there are a lot of people who can relate to Michael Vick." (ST-40a)

A second interviewee articulated the need to allow fans to identify with "their" athletes.

> "<u>There are members of society who sort of identify with the bad boys</u>, so to speak. <u>They will sometimes embrace the celebrity who has the bad boy image</u>." (RB-29)

In terms of property of need, the data suggests that there is a need for a desirable negative image because there is a certain segment of the population who can relate and identify with it.

The property of value was linked in various interesting ways to the dimension of "beneficial to non-beneficial." The rich variety of linkages is seen in the excerpts presented below.

> "I think the fact that you can overcome a lot of horrible things if you're an absolutely excellent player and that you go out and win games. I think that it certainly, whether it [the negative image] goes away completely, it certainly diminishes it to some extent, if you are successful. You may not be successful all the time. But, I think people can respect Larry Johnson. I mean, Larry Johnson was the one whose name was being chanted out here in games when he was running with the ball. Everybody respected Larry for his toughness. <u>[But], they may have thought his behavior off the field was a little bit different and not one they found desirable. But, once he got on the field they kind of forgot about it.</u>" (MB-46 & 47)

> "But that's okay. There are a lot of different tastes and things out there. It's what keeps life interesting." (MR-46)

> "<u>Rose [was] because he had such a great playing career – accused and found guilty of betting on his team, banned from the Hall of Fame. Whether it's the martyr syndrome, or whatever, he's sort of turned it into profitable gain</u>. He's

still out there making appearances. He still shows up in Cooperstown, separate from the Hall, and signs [autographs]. He's still in demand, to some degree, around the country for appearances." (MR-49)

"I mean, if you take another entertainment business like Hollywood, I mean some of the actors and actresses have made a life and a career out of being "bad boys" and that's ok. I mean in that particular form of entertainment I think you know people like that kind of stuff." (BR-38)

"Well, I think corporate America sort of wants to keep arms length from the NBA at times because of the "urban image" – the fights, some of the players and their rap albums and those types of things. Whereas, on the other hand, there is a fan base that can connect with that because that is their background." (RB-20)

"You look at TV shows like "Survivor" or something like that. Some of the people on there, the negative people, or for lack of a better term – the assholes – go the farthest and are the most liked by the audience. It's [the negative image] what makes them [audience] watch. A lot of these reality shows try to create villains because it makes for engaging TV." (CK-37)

Here the respondents clearly articulated that there is value in a desirable negative image.

In one case, while an athlete's actions off the field led to a largely negative image, that

same athlete was praised on the field for his success. This led the respondent to identify

this player as having a desirable negative image. In another instance, a valued desirable

negative image could help a contestant on a popular reality TV show win the grand prize.

The property of location was linked to the dimension of "public to private." It,

unfolded in two dimensions, one physical and perceptual.

"But I don't think as professional athletes people want their athletes, they want them to do good on the court or off the court, or on the field or off the field." (BR-39)

"For example, when we played with the read and react defense. The public did not want that in their defense. They wanted toughness and physicalness. We were better served promoting a penalty laden team than we would be promoting a smart team, because that's not what people wanted in their defense. So, even if you are failing, which we failed on both sides [of the ball], you would rather fail with an image of being a tough sloppy team than a smart team that did not have

toughness in them or wasn't a physical team. You know what I mean on that?" (MB-50)

According to the respondents, a desirable negative image can exist anywhere (location).

Many fans view an athlete or a team depending on what they do on and off the field,

court or racetrack.

The property of expectations was linked to the dimension of "real to imagined."

The irrefutable reality of perceptual expectation was addressed.

> "But, if I'm a fan of that team it is probably desirable for me. Look at the Oakland Raiders, I sort of pulled it back to Rose and the 'Bad Boys' images. Once again, in sports and in competition you can have that tough guy mentality. You can have that win at all costs approach to playing the game that can be perceived by opponents or opposing fans as negative." (MR-34b & 35)

> "The public did not want that in their defense. They wanted toughness and physicalness. We were better served promoting a penalty laden team than we would be promoting a smart team, because that's not what people wanted in their defense." (MB-50a)

> "**…**they [the fans] really don't want to watch 250 laps with 43 cars going around a track without somebody cracking up." (SM-49b)

The respondents articulated that there seems to be an expectation, whether real or

imagined, that goes with a desirable negative image. One respondent identified a

situation where having a "win at all costs" approach to the game could be both desirable

and undesirable based on how fans perceive that approach to game. Another respondent

recognizes that fans expect to see at least one wreck during a race and that they might be

disappointed if they don't see one because they expect to see it.

The property of messaging was linked to the dimension of "strategic to random."

Professional messaging on behalf, around or because of a desirable negative image was

understood from a variety of perspectives.

"So yeah, I think there can be desirable negative <u>image as long as there is still a level of professionalism added to it.</u>" (RK-66)

"I think Al Davis, though he's probably passed his prime as an owner now, I think he thrives on the fact that he's the villain, and is portrayed as a villain. <u>I think that that franchise has been successful, you know, catering to the black hole</u>, I mean, there's Raiders who are the one-eyed patch people and then there's these people that I saw on television Monday night. I don't even know what they are. It's an image that they've been a success at feeding off of." (SM-47b)

"Rose [was] because he had such a great playing career – accused and found guilty of betting on his team, banned from the Hall of Fame. <u>Whether it's the martyr syndrome, or whatever, he's sort of turned it into profitable gain</u>. He's still out there making appearances. He still shows up in Cooperstown, separate from the Hall, and signs [autographs]. He's still in demand, to some degree, around the country for appearances." (MR-49)

"But so yeah, <u>there is a desirable undesirable way to market</u>, I guess, you know." (SM-49b)

The respondents demonstrated that messaging is extremely important helping promote a desirable negative image. In one instance, we see how the Al Davis, the owner of the Oakland Raiders, has led the charge in allowing the franchise to be viewed a villains, which was ultimately accomplished through messaging. In another instance, we see where Pete Rose, who was found guilty of betting on baseball and is serving a lifetime ban from the game, has gotten the word out and shows up in Cooperstown, N.Y. (the city that hosts the National Baseball Hall of Fame) to sign autographs.

Consequences/Understanding/Contradictions. My interactions with the interviewees and my analysis of the resultant data, sensitized me to two key consequences of working with a desirable negative image. The first was that I have to remember that the positivity or negativity of an image depends on which side of the fence I am on. One respondent characterized it this way,

"Here in Michigan there is a big union movement with the automakers, as well as we have an issue in downtown Detroit with the various unions that handle garbage pickup. The Teamsters who drive the buses, the mechanics who work on the buses and the people who work for the Detroit city water agency. We have a mayor who's come in and said that some of those pay scales are going to have to be cut and some of those jobs are going to have to be a eliminated. If you are in those unions, you don't like to hear that. If you are a taxpayer, you can look at it two ways. One, they're going to save you money and not raise your taxes to pay those people. Or two, you can look at it as a negative and say, 'Well, my garbage isn't going to be picked up once a week.'" (CK-19)

A second consequence I was made sensitive to was the idea that there can be too much of a desirable negative image. When that happens, the image can get out of control and cause damage. One respondent put it this way,

> "He [Rodman] became a marketable figure because of it [his negative image]. But then, he went way over the edge. The interesting thing is, if you read more about Dennis Rodman, particularly before it became that cartoon character, he was a guy who was embraceable. He was good people. He had an interesting background. He was approachable. I think all of that stuff helped. But then, he became a crazy guy after that. When you learn about arrests and disturbing the peace and those kinds of things, it [his image] kind of changed. He got out of control and it showed." (RK-63b – 65)

Marketable Negative Image. One category, "existence," emerged from the data in relation to marketable negative image. Six properties emerged from the data in relation to the category of existence. The six were: "possibility," "need," "value," "location," "expectations," and "messaging." The property of possibility was linked to the dimension of "real to unreal." The respondents provided a variety of descriptions.

> "Yes. [a negative image can be marketable]. Michael Vick is the answer to that because now he's turned around. And now he's joined the animal rights folk organizations. And now, everywhere he goes he's helping protect animals and get the message out. So he's got this very negative image for it and there's people that probably don't follow Philadelphia anymore that were lifelong fans because of Michael Vick. However, now he's turning this around, trying to make it into a positive and so I think that he's a good example of that." (BK-37)

"But if that's the direction this question goes, <u>in our sport undesirable can be a positive.</u>" (SM-37)

"You used to be recognized for what you did on the field and then you know if you were out in public that night or over time or did an autograph signing or bumped into somebody at the store or something. Just as long as you were as decent a human being as you were a baseball player that would get you by with just about everybody. Now, there are more people looking for you to misstep and waiting for the opportunity to take advantage of you, from a, had a couple of beers too many to yelled and or sadly touched or abused a girlfriend, wife, child, brother, whatever. To a lot of heinous crimes that have taken place with sports figures in recent years. You know, getting behind a wheel of a car with alcohol, and the drug problems, and the steroid issues and everything that has come up in our sport and other sports. I mean, this is a long-winded answer to a very simple question, <u>but it's to portray a positive image any more, I'm not sure that person lives. You know, these squeaky clean, people aren't looking for that anymore, they're looking for the dark side of people because of where we've gone in a sense of coverage with the media and sensationalism</u>." (SM-25 & 26)

In this first set of responses, we see that respondents believe that the possibility does exist where a negative image could be marketable. It does not get any more straight forward that the statement made by the first respondent, "Yes. [a negative image can be marketable]. Michael Vick is the answer to that…"

The property of need was linked to the dimension of "necessary to unnecessary."

It unfolded in the excerpts below.

"Another example is our NASCAR team runs around 37th in points. <u>There are 36 other cars that are better than us and we've never had a prayer of winning. So, we had to push other factors like a young team bucking the economic trend</u>. A team of 10 guys taking on these large teams like Hendrick, who have a payroll team for their race teams of over 350. <u>Taking the "little guy" stand – the David and Goliath, if you will.</u>" (CK-39)

"That's a story that some of these markets that you go into, you've never heard from before, they just see a car running around at the track. <u>You have to push your own angles on those guys. I have to sell a lot harder than those big teams</u>." (CK-40)

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In terms of the property of need, it is necessary for PR practitioners to have the ability to

sell the marketable negative image, which was clearly articulated in the responses above.

The property of value was linked to two dimensions, "high to low" and "useful to

non-useful." The dimension of high to low was illustrated in the following excerpts.

"That's a good one because I had to think about that one quite a bit. What I jotted in my notes the other day was, "not necessarily." My example was you have say like a Paris Hilton, who might be a desirable image for a marketing campaign, but not necessarily positive – at least not in my mind as a consumer." (MR-23)

"I think in some respects, yes. He [Rodman] became a marketable figure because of it [his negative image]." (RK-63b)

"I use the reference of Kyle Busch in NASCAR. I guess you could say he has an undesirable positive image. He creates controversy by what he says and what he does and that brings added attention to the brand that is Kyle Busch, as well as the sponsors that he represents. One race, I believe it was the spring race at Martinsville. He ran poorly, I think he finished third, which for most of the drivers on track that would have been as close to a victory as they've ever gotten. He rolled his truck down to the tunnel where you cross underneath the track. He jumped out of the truck, threw his helmet in and walked out of the track. Well, that got more attention than the guy who won the race. To tell you the truth I don't remember who that was. The cameras were on Kyle Busch, in his driver uniform walking out of the track. Then they show the Miccosukee guys coming down to push his truck back to the trailer because he left it at the entrance to the tunnel. He didn't take it back to the hauler. It got more attention than the guy who won the race. So, he delivered value to the sponsors, whether they perceive that as value or not, it's up to them." (CK-25)

"The Tony Stewart is kind of a good. Kyle Busch is kind of the same way, kind of has a really negative image but it gets a lot of attention. And there's that fan base that likes that, again that bad boy image. So it does sell, it does sell." (BK-32b)

"But, there's a small percentage of people who will come out to get on Jose Guillen. Well, as long as they're a member of the ticket buying public, that's fine too." (SW-43)

With regards to a marketable negative image, in order for it to be marketable it must

deliver some value (either high or low). Above we see instances where a marketable

negative image delivered some value. For example, despite Kyle Busch's antics after not

winning a race, his negative actions garnered more attention, and seemingly

minimized/overshadowed the accomplishments of the person who won the race, for his

sponsor. Like the respondent said, "whether they [the sponsor] perceive that as value or

not, it's up to them."

The dimension of useful to non-useful was illustrated in a wide variety of

interesting ways.

> "For instance, Michael Vick is now doing PSAs for PETA, doing things for the
> Humane Society. You think <u>you take a negative situation and you've got to spin
> it to the masses</u>." (ST-47)

> "There are segments of our world that appreciate the bad boy stuff." (RK-12)

> "<u>Does a bench clearing brawl on Tuesday night market Wednesday's game?
> Yeah it does.</u> Did the Blue Jays and Yankees series today get just a little bit more
> important because they had a bench clear in the eighth inning last night? Yeah,
> not that they're having trouble selling tickets in New York, but there'll be a few
> more people at the ending." (SM-45)

Again, in terms of value (in this case useful or non-useful), a negative image can be

marketable when a bench clearing brawl can help sell tickets to the next night's game or

when a person like Michael Vick (a convicted dog fighter) can help PETA or the Humane

Society get the word out about animal cruelty. Both instances bring value back to the

organization or athlete.

Sometimes one organization can benefit from leveraging itself against another's

negative image. This is a change in the traditional direction of thought about marketing

negative image.

> "I mean there are protests. There was a protest here [Oakland] when the Eagles
> played the Raiders this weekend. They protested, but it doesn't change the fact

that <u>the Humane Society is leveraging that negative image</u> [Vick's negative image] that he has to insert themselves into a conversation that they otherwise would not have been in." (RK-69)

"<u>It all depends on what your goals are and what you're trying to do. If you're trying to sell tickets to a NASCAR race or a football game or an NBA game or a bad boy team that has come into town, you can take advantage of it</u>." (HA-46)

In addition, a negative image was thought to "market" an athlete for the purpose of drawing attention to him or her.

"<u>There were qualities in someone's behavior that allow them to be always focused on by the media. The negative image will always be the focus of the media</u>. And, no matter what he [the guy with the negative image] does, he will always be their focus. So you never have to worry about getting any attention from him. If he continues to win and he's a character that does things that society would look on in a negative way, they [the media] will follow him all around - even if he has little part to play in the game." (MB-60)

The property of location was linked to the dimension of "public to private" in terms where the image should and does take place.

"<u>The fact that he [Terrell Owens] is so good on the field is what makes him special. It gives him the ability to become a marketable figure. People pay attention. If he created all that controversy, talked all that trash and all of the things he does and says, and did not back it up with play, no one would care about him</u>. He'd just be a loudmouth guy that people would laugh off as a clown. Not only does he back up what he does, he usually exceeds what he says he's going to do. And, that's what makes him a guy that people pay attention to because he plays a level that not many can play at." (RK-81)

"Is it <u>mainstream? No probably not</u>." (MR-45)

Even though a player's negative image may be the result of both on and off field issues, one respondent articulated that if the player can perform at a high level with some success on the field (location), it gives him the ability to be marketable off the field.

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The property of expectations was linked to the dimension of "real to imagined."

An array of interesting understandings of this dimension unfolded from the data.

> "Branding. Image repair is you're shaping a brand; you're shaping an image. So image repair would definitely be just a rebranding really, or enhanced branding or changing the, you know it's like marketing. You know my brand, it's not your fault there's Oldsmobile, as a good example. So this is what it was and this is a good product, so my driver's brand is a good product but the Oldsmobile had a recall and something wasn't quite right. Something went amiss but that was a one-time thing. Now the Oldsmobile is, and they're rebranding it as not your father's Oldsmobile because they're trying to hit a younger market. So that would be, that's sort of an analogy. <u>So this is a good product, onetime thing happened, now we're going to not only come back as a better, you know back to where we were but come back as a better brand</u>." (BK-292 & 293)

> "I think Terrell Owens is an example. He is definitely gaining financially. There were some times where it was looking rough. He helped blow up the Eagles after having such a destructive end to his run here in San Francisco. I wouldn't have thought most people would have gone near him. <u>But, he has clearly done fine from a financial standpoint</u>. Not only in his playing contracts, that are as much to do with his skills on the field as anything else, but he also lands commercials. He lands reality shows. And, it's all based on the fact that he's a controversial figure. <u>People want to see the train wreck apparently</u>. (RK-75 & 76)

> "You look a Kyle Busch and some people love him. Some people hate him, like old Dale Earnhardt Sr. <u>Some people loved him [Earnhardt], some people hated him.</u> The guys on the other side – like a Kyle Busch or a Dale Earnhardt – didn't care who they made angry with some of their comments. They just went off and said it." (KC-11)

According to the respondents, a negative image is marketable because people have

certain expectations. For example, for all of the negative things Terrell Owens has done,

"people want to see the train wreck." This is why a person like Terrell Owens could land

a reality TV show and viewers will tune-in expecting to see, Terrell Owens "being"

Terrell Owens.

And, finally, the property of messaging was linked to the dimension of "strategic

to random." It, too, unfolded in a variety of interesting and heuristic ways.

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"There were qualities in someone's behavior that allow them to be always focused on by the media. The negative image will always be the focus of the media. And, no matter what he [the guy with the negative image] does, he will always be their focus. So you never have to worry about getting any attention from him. If he continues to win and he's a character that does things that society would look on in a negative way, they [the media] will follow him all around - even if he has little part to play in the game. Terrell Owens, I'm sure, will be seen as a greater player than he actually was because of the fact that he talked about himself. He was constantly in the news. And, even though his qualities have diminished as a player because of his age, he is getting older; he's still doing a reality series. He moved to Buffalo, as much because of his image as his playing ability, because they are a franchise in need of a boost of a character who can draw attention to their franchise. He's their guy. Nobody, they could bring in today, would bring as much attention to their franchise as Terrell Owens. And, there is no doubt that is the reason they signed him. It wasn't because of his greatness. He's not the player he once was. He's in his mid 30s I think now. There's no doubt that his negative image has helped them sell tickets." (MB-60 & 61)

"If he [Vick] toes the line, works hard and continues to do well with Humane Society [joins the conversation that initially did him harm] then yes he will [get endorsement deals] if his career last long enough. He could end up getting those again." (RK-72)

"They'll say, 'Well that's my public image. That's my race face. That's my professional image. I have to do that to try and intimidate the other guy.' That's the psychological game out of the ring. They let their fists do the talking in the ring." (CK-35)

Here we see respondents acknowledging that fact that messaging is essential to marketing a negative image. The Buffalo Bills signed Terrell Owens "as much because of his image as his playing ability" and the team will send messages that leverage his image in order to sell more tickets. Similarly, we see an example where fighters (who compete in the Ultimate Fighting Championship) leverage a negative image publicly in order "to try and intimidate the other guy. That's the psychological game out of the ring. They let their fists do the talking in the ring." Ultimately, the UFC fighters market this negative image even though that might not be the kind of person they are away from the ring.

Consequences/Understanding/Contradictions. I took away three lessons from the interviews and my analyses of the interview data. The first related to the claim that marketing a negative image will most likely restrict one's ability to be strategic. One respondent said it this way,

> "When you have that negative image, you paint yourself in a corner. You don't have as broad a brush to play with as opposed to someone with a very positive image." (RK-21)

A second lesson related to the idea of "instances of negative marketability." This redressed my notion of continual leverage of a negative image for profitable gain.

And, finally, a third lesson was linked to the claim that trying too hard to force a positive image can actually result in a negative undesirable image. Therefore, thinking in terms of shaping and not forcing is a wise path to take.

Evidence of Pertinacious Image

The evidence of pertinacious image abounded as illustrated through the categories, properties, and dimensions that were found for desirable negative image and marketable negative image.

RQ1a: If the idea of pertinacious image does exist, is the social transgression of violating social norms supported as a contributor?

As a contributor to pertinacious image, violating social norms was supported. Remembering that I defined violating social norms as the perceived violation of behavioral norms and acceptable communication rules, the emergent data showed support in various ways, especially in the ability of violated social norms to draw attention to the source.

Five categories emerged from the data: "against majority/societal expectations," "state," "resonance," "individuality," and "hierarchal." The category of against majority/societal expectations was paired with the properties of "behavior" and "conversation." Behavior had the dimensions of "normal to abnormal," "acceptable to unacceptable," and "right to wrong." Behavior as a category of social norms was illustrated through the following responses.

> "I've lived this one. I won't give you the player, but I've lived this where the guy had a couple of beers but he did nothing wrong and was asked to pose in a bar with his arm around a girl, just as a fan, and her boyfriend turned it against him and it was out on the Internet." (SM-120)

> "Charles Barkley was brought up again last night in the Rick Reilly speech. He [Reilly] talked about a famous or infamous moment he [Barkley] tackled a guy or threw a guy through a glass window at a bar. And Reilly said that he texted him after it and said, 'Do you regret it'?" (RK-132a)

> "Let's use womanizing as an example, lack of faithfulness to your spouse, why can't I think of the legal word for it, anyway, not being faithful, adultery. Adultery is obviously frowned upon in religious circles, but let's face it, it's a fact of life, but if you as an athlete or around athletics, somebody who's going to draw publicity, draw attention to yourself, commit adultery." (SM-125a)

> "It's a standard that we're all expected to follow. It's a set of rules and regulations that 'is the right way' of doing things." (BR-75)

> "I would define that as a law-abiding citizen who minds his or her own business, doesn't create waves, doesn't make a spectacle of him or herself. To me a social norm is what society expects of people and that's not necessarily keep to yourself, but don't cause problems for other people. Don't cause problems for society as a whole. Just live your life. Do what you can to be positive or whatever, but don't cause problems. To me that's considered a social norm." (HA-76)

> "Everything they do [the athletes], if it's anything abnormal, will be written about or talked about." (ST-89)

> "A social norm break, again, this is the simplistic mind of me, it could be anywhere from drinking wine out of your water glass to picking up the wrong fork for your salad or dessert. It just depends on where you are and what is considered something of the norm." (SM-133)

Conversation had the dimensions of "normal to abnormal," "acceptable to unacceptable," and "correct to incorrect."

> "I digress a little bit but it's just, I've got to give you back ground as to what my mindset is on this. As we've advanced in years and in political correctness, I will correlate political correctness with social norms, because everybody's being held to a higher standard now." (SM-112)

> "[After allegedly throwing a guy through a window of a bar and being asked about regret]…Barkley said, 'Yeah, the only regret I have is that it wasn't on the third floor.' I would say that is crossing the line of social norm. Whether the guy deserved to be pushed back or what have you, I don't know what the person did to incite Charles Barkley to respond that way, but certainly it wasn't a very positive thing for him and took some time to get over." (RK-132b)

The category of state (as in the discussion of state versus trait held in college classrooms) had the property of "boundaries" and a dimension of "legal definition to outside legal definition." The following excerpt gives an example of social norms that are legally bound.

> "The ones [social norm violations] that will land you in jail." (BR-80)

The excerpt implies, then, that there exist boundaries among social norms, boundaries determined by law and boundaries set apart from law.

The category of resonance had the properties of "excusable" and "explainable." The property of excusable was found to have a dimension of "totally to not." The property of explainable was found to have the dimension of "easily to hard to." The following excerpts are illustrative of the category of resonance and its two dimensions and their properties.

> "Well, let me go back to, I will probably contradict myself now. My definition, [X's] definition of social norm is what I kind of what I eluded to about the average American family a few minutes ago. One wife, 2.5 kids, 1.5 dogs and a recliner and a BBQ grill. Now if you have all that and one flat screen TV, you are normal now. Build either below or above that, but your normal line is right. That's my definition of social norm." (SM-107)

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"But it's harder to overcome throwing somebody through a window. That's a little tougher to explain." (RK-139)

"If you punch a guy out or do something physical like that, it's going to be harder to overcome than say, not tipping someone in the clubhouse or not tipping a waiter in a restaurant at 15 or 20%. That guy may talk about you to all of his friends, but, in reality, a lot of people would blow that off as not a big deal." (RK-138)

The category of individuality was found to have the property of "difference" and

a dimension of "conformity to non-conformity." Conformity is found in the excerpt

below.

"I think a social norm is just interacting with others in a way in your daily life. Every single athlete interacts with the public at some level. They've got to go to the store to get their groceries. They've got to get their kids to school. Every single athlete does. I would say social norms are doing what everyone else does." (RK-127)

Non-conformity was illustrated nicely in the excerpt found below.

"There is any number of those Barry Bonds stories of not tipping people, or treating people badly in public, or blowing people off. Barry is not the only one. He's just the one fresh in my head." (RK-133)

The category of hierarchy was found to have the property of "rank," that had as its

dimension "worst to least worse." The hierarchy among social norms was clearly

articulated.

"There is definitely a pecking order. The bigger the social norm violation, the more likely it's going to be a social transgression [breaking the law or cornerstone of behavior]." (RK-146)

"So yes, there is a hierarchy of social norms." (RK-140)

"Adultery is very low on the scale of don'ts because for some reason insecure wives, family members, what have you will that one to pass one time." (SM-125b)

RQ1b: If the social transgression of violating social norms is supported, in what recognizable ways is that articulated?

At least four instances of linking the violation of social norms to pertinacious image was clearly articulated. One respondent gave the example found below.

> "I think of the first episode of Survivor and the Richard Hatch that won, and he was naked all the time. And so for a lot of people that was negative [violation of social norms]. You don't run around other people naked. It's not a social norm, although is was very amusing to some." (BK-85)

A second respondent also brought up Hatch, commenting in the following way.

> "You look at the first Survivor, for example, with Richard Hatch, who walked around naked and drew attention to himself. You see the way the show marketed itself on TV. In the commercials, they would show Richard Hatch walking around naked with his private parts blurred out. People who watch them say, 'What the hell is that guy doing? I've got to watch that show.' It brings viewership. They're pushing what they've got." (CK-38)

A third example was provided in a discussion of Dennis Rodman.

> "Again, it's not always negative but there's a, and I look at it as in terms of would people sponsor this person. So Dennis Rodman might be an example of that. He sort of had the ear piercings, and the tattoos and sort of the cross dressing and all of that. So there's a lot of people that socially that's not acceptable to them. And so does that have a negative impact on his image? Yes. Would certain companies not sponsor him, or does he have a lower fan base because of that, probably yes…[but he still has a following and sponsorships]." (BK-87)

A fourth example involved Brittany Spears.

> "I think Brittany Spears would be a good example of that. You know, she's getting out of limousines with no underwear and showing the whole world everything and she's getting in cars driving drunk, again that's a law but. So I think getting in that limousine with no underwear and showing everything is a good example of not acceptable in our society…[but she has a huge following]." (BK-89)

Consequences/Understanding/Contradictions. One contradiction I picked up in trying to understand social norm violations as they relate to athletes was in the area of the public's willingness to forgive. One respondent put it best in the following except.

"[Athletes] are bigger that the rest of us. I think people hold celebrities up there on the one hand and on the other hand though, they want them to play by the same rules." (BK-92-93)

Another interesting level of understanding of social norm violations came when the idea of cyberspace was introduced into the conversation. Cyberspace problematizes the notion of the immediacy and presence of social norm violations. One respondent lamented his lesson learned.

"I've learned this lesson the hard way. The Internet, Google and Bing, and all of them, it's always going to be there regardless of what your quote was or how the context it might have been used or whatever transgression might have been committed that you were exonerated. It's still going to live with your forever." (SM-114)

He also claimed the following.

"Because of Google, they [they media] always know what baggage is coming with that player." (SM-210)

However, he later brought up the idea that "everything has a shelf life" and can go away.

"Get it over with. It'll go away. Everything has a shelf life. It's always going to be there but its story is going to go away or it's veracity of story, I should say." (SM-253)

What this respondent introduced to the conversation about social norm violations is that they have the potential to occur over and over again in salient audiences' perceived realities, because of the never-ending nature of cyberspace memory (storage and searchability).

RQ2a: If the idea of pertinacious image does exist, is the social transgression of breaking the law (governing rules) supported as a contributor?

Breaking the law (or governing rules) was not clearly supported as a contributor to pertinacious image. Two primary categories that emerged from the data were "legal" and "societal." One respondent put it best when he said,

"So, again, in our business they have to live up to two sets of laws. Those made by government and those made by the image people, the fans" (SM-83).

The category of legal had the properties of "offensiveness," "longevity," and "safety." The property of offensiveness had the dimension of "determined by legal punishment." Offensiveness was linked to the veracity of the punishment determined by legally institutionalized law.

> "The things that have the highest punishment, you know the things that are the felonies, and the things that have the higher sentences for committing those acts, that's what we as society deem to be the worst thing." (BR-74)

The property of longevity had the dimension of "short-term to long-term." Breaking legal law seemed to carry with it the potential for longer memory in a salient public's perception.

> "I would say that it has a continually enduring negative…I don't think that there's a story that will be written, even it if has nothing to do with that [the reason for the negative image], [or] what the story is about, that it won't include it [mention the offensive act]. [That includes] a story that will be written about the guy. It will always be in any in-depth tale about the person. It will always be there staring back at them." (MB-90)

Another respondent put it this way.

> "Forever. It's [breaking the legal law] forever. I've worked with plenty of athletes, that I held in high regard, and they do something like that and it forever stays with me. So, I can only imagine what it stays with their fans. I know the guys and the fans know them from a distance. So, I can only imagine. Absolutely, it will stay with them forever." (ST-63)

The property of safety had the dimension of "total to no." The property of safety was described in the following way.

> "If you break the law, you break the law. I mean the laws are there, we all want to be good people. Not necessarily meaning that if you break the law, if you get a speeding ticket, you're not a good person, but the roles are there. Basically the laws are laws to protect us and to make us safe. And if you break one of those laws then you're either doing something to make yourself or others unsafe or

you're doing something that in some way, shape or form your harming another person whether it's physically, financially…" (BR-59)

The category of a societal law that can be broken emerged from a response such as the one found below.

"There can be social laws that they can break being out at night, behind the wheel of a car, seen with the wrong people, being indiscriminate when they have a wife fifteen hundred miles from here. All things that can't get you into trouble legally but can ruin their image." (SM-78)

Another respondent claimed that,

"Breaking the law would be as much [about breaking] society's laws as much as [about breaking] legal laws." (MB-79).

The category of societal had the property of "resonance." The property of resonance was found to have the dimension of "through complete tolerance to none." Interestingly enough, athletes were seen as held to a higher standard than were members of the general public; tolerance for breaking societal laws was not seen as very high.

"They [players] are held to a higher standard. For example, if a player doesn't pay his rent on time one month, the rent collector can, and [will] get, full cooperation from a media outlet to say 'I've got a deadbeat who doesn't pay his rent.' Then it shows up in the daily paper that he doesn't pay his rent. You hear on the radio talk shows. And, consequently, even though it is a fairly [common occurrence], it can happen to anybody. He's held to a higher standard – because he is then seen as a deadbeat." (MB-80)

It is important to note that the legal category was in line with my definition of breaking the law or (governing rules); the societal category was not, hence breaking the law or (governing rules) was not clearly supported.

RQ2b: If the social transgression of breaking the law (governing rules) is supported, in what recognizable ways is that articulated?

The social transgression of breaking the legal law (or legal governing rules) as a contributor to negative image was not clearly supported by the data. There were no clear

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links to breaking the law (or governing rules) as a pertinacious image contributor, although there were links between breaking the law and development of a negative image. My questions did not, however, lead respondents to describe how breaking the law may be leveraged. In fact, the respondents universally emphasized that breaking legal laws is never good. However, the possibility of breaking societal law and its link to pertinacious image remains to be explored, especially if I explore the link between breaking societal laws and violating social norms. I did not do this in this dissertation. It may be, though, that breaking certain laws is not seen by most salient audiences as anything noteworthy in terms of negativity. Speeding is a case in point. Speeding may have been reframed by society as something "attractive" because the celebrity athlete demonstrates that "he always has to rush to his next responsibility," "he lives on the edge," or "he is rightfully daring."

Consequences/Understanding/Contradictions. Interestingly enough, the data revealed that understanding a celebrity athlete's potential to break the law (legal or societal) means one must frame that understanding differently than the review of literature would suggest. Everything an athlete does was seen as magnified ten-fold and, therefore, the result of breaking any kind of law can be much worse than if a member of the general public did the same. The following excerpt provides a context for understanding this.

> "A lot of athletes break the law. There is accountability to that. I think, on that level there is probably a little higher profile accountability to it. Breaking the law is, I don't think that really even applies to athletes—it's anyone. So, my definition of breaking the law is…I think I know where you're headed here and I think they're held to live a different standard—athletes are. And, when they break the law it's a much higher profile story." (ST-61)

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Another understood contradiction came from the fact that athletes do live in the realm of another standard. Money and power, not the realm of most publics, can change "what actually happened."

> "I guess, my point on that is that we in the business, I don't want to open up a can of worms that could start some crap, but, we also know how our business works, where some heavy-duty lawyers and a lot of money can change a lot of perceptions out there. You know, even the people who were witnesses might not have actually seen that they said they saw. Or might have said something different than what they actually saw. Well, I don't know, that's my conspiracy theorist too, but I just know how our business and how professional athletes and how things happen. It's not naïve. People are naïve if they think it doesn't happen that way sometimes." (SM-93)

And finally, a third understood contradiction was that the media and society in general do not have the same sets of laws in mind when it comes to celebrities. The media often sees breaking the law as opportunities for stories (MB-100). The general public never has this view. One respondent suggested that,

> "Concealed weapon charges are really, for some reason, a hot button for the media [even though it is not for the general public]." (ST-66)

RQ3a: If the idea of a pertinacious image does exist, is the social transgression of developing character issues supported as a contributor?

The social transgression of developing character issues as a contributor to pertinacious image was supported by the data. An incomplete list of categories of character that emerged included "reliability," "accountability," "generosity," "leadership," "temperament," and "respect." Reliability was found to have the properties of "behavior," "communicated thought" and "hard work." Dimensions of all three properties of reliability were found as "always to never" and "total to none." An example of unreliability as a character flaw was found in the response below.

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"If you're an unreliable person, if you are someone who is continually stirring things up, or not performing at a level on the field on the field or off the field, not being there for your teammates, all of those things." (RK-152)

Another description of reliability was framed in the following way.

"Character, to me, is all about reliability. Reliability is probably the biggest thing that jumps out [to me]. Is this guy reliable or not? That helps to define your character. What kind of person is he or her? How do they treat other people? What do they stand for? What kind of impact do they have on other people? All those are part of what defines your character. Ultimately, it tells me if you are a reliable person or not a reliable person." (RK-149)

Properties of accountability were "behavior" and "communicated thought."

Dimensions of both properties were "rightness to wrongness" and "teammate to individual." A respondent's example is found below.

"Not [being] accountable. Not accountable for what he is supposed to be doing on the field. You can't count on him." (MB-109)

Generosity had the properties of "willingness," "servitude," and "helpfulness." A dimension of these three properties was "voluntary to forced." A great example of voluntary generosity was found below.

"He is not somebody who necessarily does great things [contributes to the greater good], but he does do them for the reasons he likes to do them…For example, when we do programs [foundations, causes, philanthropy] here, we just don't just give players programs, they have to have a program that they bring to use. What do they like to do? What is it they feel strongly about? So he takes on a cause of some sort, and that becomes what he's involved in." (MB-117)

Leadership had the property of "action" and a dimension of "on and off the field."

Leadership was described through being a role model.

"You have Charles Barkley who says 'I'm not role model.' Well, and he's gone out of his way to prove it in his career. You've got guys that thrive on wanting to be a role model and they say they have a responsibility to be a role model. It cracks me up, this is just me again, to see a guy all tatted up from his pinky finger all the way through his shoulder and down his basketball shorts and legs, saying he wants to be a role model. That's pretty much the last thing I want my child to look up to, you know." (SM-139)

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Temperament was linked to the property of "self-control" with the dimension of "total to none." Athletes' ability to moderate temper was seen as important.

> "It's very similar to what you would expect from a fellow worker or someone even-tempered." (MB-104)

Respect was found to have the property of "model behavior" and a dimension of "upstanding to deplorable." Respect was considered to develop from everyday behavior.

> "But people of character are people who in my book whether they're athletes or just human beings are people that you want your kids, or other people's kids, or just people in general to respect." (SM-140)

The value of identifying categories of character in the data comes from my ability to know, then, that character, as defined in this dissertation (represents one's worth as a human being, netting others' trust in who an athlete is and what he/she stands for as an individual), closely aligned with the understanding of character by the interview participants. Violations of character were seen by the respondents as character flaws, often contributing to an athlete's negative image.

RQ3b: If the social transgression of developing issues is supported, in what recognizable ways is it articulated?

The respondents did not feel that a negative image developing from character flaws was always unmarketable and/or unprofitable. An example of this was found when one respondent suggested that a negative image, developed in this way, may present itself to competitors or the media as a way to engage in marketing for profitable gain (profit, ratings, and/or viewership).

> "ESPN did that top 10 meltdowns of all time. They are not the top 10 'being impatient of all times' they did top 10 meltdowns. It's temper. It's the George Brett example. The Tim Hardaway example. Those are all social temperament inadequacies." (ST-106)

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Another possibility suggested as a way to engage a pertinacious image was from the ability to allow salient audiences to identify with athletes through the athlete's own struggles. An example with an athlete's tendency to struggle with the character trait of temperament was provided.

> "I think a lot of people relate to negative things that happen. I think there are a lot of people who can relate to Michael Vick. [Some] think it's funny to see what George Brett did and he may have garnered some fans over that." (ST-40)

The value of making public Tony Stewart's struggle with temperament was outlined by another respondent.

> "Tony Stewart, when he first started, you know he went to anger management classes. That was obviously publicized because he was hitting reporters. He was screaming at people all the time. So I would think anger would be the number one, as far as I can think of right now anyway." (BR-111)

Consequences/Understanding/Contradictions. An interesting contradiction to traditional ways of thought about character was found in a response about what goes on inside and outside of the clubhouse.

> "Kevan Barlow who played for the 49ers, was accused of stealing money out of a locker. Did he do it? Don't know. Was he accused of it by his teammates? Yes. Was that a character problem or flaw? No question about it. It changed the way he was viewed on the team. And, of course, other players are going to talk to people about it, including the media. So, now all of the sudden you get a different impression of who he is based on that one accusation." (RK-166)

While some said what goes on in the clubhouse stays in the clubhouse, this respondent suggested that in the area of character flaws, that is not the case.

An additional contradiction was found with the way I characterized character flaws as social transgressions. Not all respondents thought that was the case.

> "Just because you have poor character does not mean you commit a social transgression. To me, it just tells me that you are not someone who is reliable, or we should really pay attention to." (RK-164)

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RQ4: What role does the media play in setting the agenda for the possibility of a pertinacious image?

According the data, the media play a very influential role in the development of any image. I could easily assume, then, that the media would play an influential role in setting the agenda for pertinacious image.

The notion of "role" was the assumed category for this question. It was also the only one that appeared in the data. Seven properties of the category of role emerged from the data: "size," "reality," "power," "relationship," "veracity," "purpose," and "place."

The property of size was linked to the dimension of "small to huge." This dimension was found in multiple instances within the data. A sampling of those is found below.

> "They play an enormous role, because they are more often than not, particularly now where fans and athletes themselves are now part of the media through their blogs and Facebook, TMZs, things of that nature. Because there are cell phone cameras, people are always watching you." (RK-170)

> "They play the largest role." (CK-49)

> "A huge role, they play a huge role." (BK-131)

> "I'm not so sure that that happens as much with athletes as it does maybe with politics or other aspects of the news. Because look at the most recent presidential election. You've never seen a more definite division in the media and agendas then you saw in the most recent presidential election. Where on one side you've got Fox News Channel and on the other side you've got CNBC." (HA-116)

> "The media is extraordinarily powerful and they will always have the last word. I tell that the athletes all the time. You can do whatever you want, but you know, they buy their [the media] ink by the barrel. They'll always have the last word." (ST-120)

> "The media plays an unbelievable role in a guy's perception outside these walls. Probably give them too much credit. I probably lean on the side of giving the media too much credit." (SM-163)

The property of reality was linked to the dimension of "unavoidable to avoidable." The reality around the media's role in setting agendas for athletes is found in the following excerpts that include the idea of reflected reality and unavoidable setting of reality.

> "I think it's the same whether you say they are a rapist or they are accused of rape. It's no different than the guy at Ft. Hood the other day. When they say his name and they say everything that he did, and at the very end they say, "Now keep in mind. This is alleged." At that point, [the damage is done]." (ST-118 & 119)

> "But, as it relates to the media, those guys cover the athlete every single day. They provide information to the public every single day and more information now than ever before based on this instant news ability through the Internet and through mobile phones. It's a huge piece to image." (RK-172)

> "In looking at that question in advance, in my opinion, the media has and always will set the agenda. That's what you learn in J-school. That's what, at least, I learned in journalism school. It's a big part of what media does. Media sets the agenda. I think media plays a big part in an athlete's image because the media has a means of communication to the fans." (MR-148)

> "I think media helps to set that agenda, and when you are in big media markets like that, I think it's a great opportunity for guys to capitalize on that. I think it's just favorable coverage. And, you can't do everything. I realize too, there are demands on these guys time. Certainly, I think the guys who were more amenable to it and guys who are more upfront just get perceived better in they are reflected better to fans." (MR-155)

The property of power was linked to the dimension of "to create to not create." The respondents articulated the notion that the media's power to create perception and/or reality in various ways.

> "The media can form the public's perception of our players simply by what they write. Whether it's something as simple as [a player] commits an error in the bottom of the ninth and we lose and he decides not to talk to the media. I mean our media can make him out to be a little you know, whiney crybaby. Where as if he comes out, stands up to the media and answers the questions, they're going to write what a stand up guy he is with great character." (BR-109)

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"But, they will give you a little leeway, if they feel like you 'play ball' with them." (MP-63)

"An example, the media likes Jose Guillen, for all the wrong reasons. Not because he's a good teammate, not because he can hit with power, because he gives them good sound bites. They pry, they press, they push his buttons. They know what buttons to push. It didn't take long for them to figure out where to get him. And they know what buttons to push on him to get him to say things, to get him to go on an F bomb tirade and to get the fans turned against him. Jose just doesn't come with a filter. You walk out here right now and find a hundred people, all die hard Royal's fans, and say give me your opinion of Jose Guillen. You'll have thirty percent like him, fifty percent don't like him and twenty percent would be I wish he was a better hitter, I wish he would deliver more in the clutch, I wish he had brought the numbers for a twelve million dollar player." (SM-164)

"George Brett on the other hand, because of what he brought to the city, got a hall pass with the media. Tore Jack Harry's producer up one side and down the other with an F bomb laced tirade three months ago, May the 6th I believe was the date, got a hall pass for it, because he's George Brett. The media gave him a hall pass plus the fans gave him a hall pass." (SM-165)

"So, yeah, can the media dictate? Damn right they can." (SM-169)

"In many respects they can help shape that image by their coverage with what they chose to use or not use." (MP-54)

"I give you a good example. Let's say you work at a local newspaper or radio station. You're going to talk to the general manager of a football team countless times throughout the year. Why do you then blow everything by going to the [player's] agent, who you may speak to maybe once in your lifetime? You may never speak to him again. Yet, they [the media] do that because they believe there is more hay to be made in their profession then saying, 'Well you know I've got to talk to and deal with this coach every day, and I don't want to burn that bridge - or the GM. I don't want to burn that bridge.' Yet, that happens all the time because they believe that there is more recognition." (MB-227)

The property of relationship was linked to the dimension of "one way to two way to multiplex." This was described as produce unilaterally, as a result of co-productive interpersonal relationships, among many others. The following excerpts represent the varied ways this was articulated.

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"I can give you an example of, Kyle Busch is known in the media center as not being accessible to the media, blowing off interviews, making the media stand outside the transporter, he's supposed to come out at a certain time, making them stand out there for an hour. So then when there was an incident on the track when he, I don't know what, he got out of the car and there was anger. And so when that happened, this is something that is now news because that was the big story that he threw his helmet, or whatever it was he did. I don't remember for sure. But one reporter took that as the opportunity to write something to the effect of, oh how did it go, something to the effect of anger that any candy eating child would be afraid of. So he hit him where it hurts because now you are talking about his sponsor, M&M's. And so I think that may be agenda-setting because maybe that, and I don't know this for a fact, but perhaps that reporter had been jaded by this driver many times and then when something happened that was news worthy maybe use it as an agenda to get him where it hurts. So that's an example of one." (BK-139)

"I call it putting a deposit of goodwill in the bank. Rich Aurilia [San Francisco Giants infielder] was one of the guys who did that with the media. He was available to the media. He understood that they had a job to do and he was available to answer their questions after every game – win or lose, three-run homer or game losing error. When we lost game six of the 2006 World Series, they wanted to talk to him and he said, "Hey guys not tonight." And, they [the media] understood. He had been there all year for them and throughout his career. They [the media] were willing to give him [Aurilia] a pass. Whereas, had somebody else had blown them off like that, who had not had a good track record with them, they [the media] could very well have written that player X had declined to talk to them. Whereas, in Rich's [Aurilia] case they didn't even mention that in their story." (RB-59)

"I guess I would put in these terms, if a player makes a credible effort to have a good faith relationship with the media, he will, more times than not, get the benefit of the doubt when troubling circumstances arise." (MP-59)

The property of veracity was linked to the dimension of "truthfulness to lies."

Two respondents clearly articulated the idea that the media is not always concerned with truth.

"…And, that is why many of the portrayals of players are necessarily willfully inaccurate. But, because of committing some social transgression for example that will be carried in every media report on you the rest of your career or certainly could be." (MB-145b)

"People in the media never write for the people. They really write for their peers. They don't really care [about the people]. All the work that's been done show that most of the people who work in the media don't care about the fans. They dismiss their complaints. They [fans] write them [the media] letters they send them e-mails. They [the media] don't care about that. They [the media] are interested in what their peers think. They want to know that their peers respect them. They want to know that their peers think that they are on the 'inside.' They want to know that they're in competition with them and this is a way for them to get an edge up on them." (MB-228)

The property of purpose was linked to two dimensions, "necessary to unnecessary" and "objective to subjective." The dimension of necessary to unnecessary was described in various ways.

"They [the media] play 'the' central image [role] because of the amount of media that is available to you today. Because so few people really know much about you, they [the media] will, in some way, draw a picture of you or paint a picture of you that can be either very flattering, very negative, or, in some instances, they won't paint one at all. There are obviously advantages to that as well. But, I think they play the central role because so few people are going to have a chance to meet you in person and know who you are." (MB-145a)

"The media is the outlet for the fan base to know who these people are because even though drivers are highly accessible how many of the 75 million fans actually get to meet them? A lot of them do and when they do it's generally for a handshake, a photo or maybe an autograph, so it's varied. So what they see on television, what they hear them on interviews on the radio and if the media talks about the good things they're doing then that's the image that people have. So they in essence shape the public's perception, which to me is the image of the person. So they play nearly, I think the media is the largest factor of how a driver is foreseen by the public." (BK-133)

"Like I said before, the media is the fans' window to who these people, these celebrities are. That's how they get to learn about who these people are." (RB-54)

"The media plays a huge role in that because they're the eyes and ears in the locker room, at the practice field and pretty much on the sidelines during the game." (CK-53)

The second property of purpose was linked to the dimension of objective to subjective. This dimension unfolded in the ways found below.

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"If the media feels like they've been wronged or if the media feels like, and we have a couple members of those people in town, which some are screamers and yellers; some do it with the computer. But if they have their way of doing things, it's paid off in their stratematic games or their fantasy baseball leagues or whatever, though they've never ever put a jock strap on and never stood in the dugout and never realized how fast that game actually moves, even though from where we sit upstairs it doesn't look like it moves that fast. It really truly does. If the manager doesn't do it as they [the media] suggest or if the general manager doesn't do it as they [the media] suggest it should be done, and it's just not in Kansas City, it's all over sports." (SM-173)

"It's a very competitive marketplace. And so, once a particular subject, that they believe is important, is selected by them or one of them, the others fall in line. That [then] carries across a wide spectrum of media from radio talk, to television, to print, to anything that would be considered media." (MB-149)

"ESPN, last night, did a top 10 meltdowns that athletes, coaches or managers have done." (ST-31)

The final property of place was found linked to the dimension of "valuable to non-valuable." Value was linked to fan need and marketplace competitiveness.

"I mean for the most part the media is how fans get to know the athletes, more so then any kind of endorsement thing on a TV commercial, especially in a game like baseball where our media is around our players every single day for eight months." (BR-108)

"You need to treat people with respect and professionalism. If you don't, in particular the media, they are a key touch point who delivers messages to the public on a consistent basis." (RK-55)

"They [the media] play 'the' central image [role] because of the amount of media that is available to you today." (MB-145a)

Consequences/Understanding/Contradictions. The respondents variously addressed lessons of "media agenda-setting" that I took with me. One was that the media has the power to prolong an athlete's career even after his or her physical career is over. One respondent put it this way,

"I mean, we've had players, and I won't give any specific examples of players, but you've had players that have played in the major leagues probably two or

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three years longer than they should have because they have a very, very good image and it's a guy 'we'd like to have on our team and in our clubhouse.'" (BR-110).

Another understanding I took with me, was that players and practitioners can have some influence over the agenda-setting function of the media, especially in the areas of goodwill treatment. One respondent described it as an insurance process that gives you "deposits" of goodwill that can be taken out in times of need/crisis.

A final understanding provided by one respondent was that the media is truly a salient audience itself with an influential, vested self-interested. In a sense, then, this makes it imperative that public relations people treat the media both as a targeted public, and as an influencer of other targeted publics.

RQ5: In what ways is pertinacious image dependent on a salient audience's encounters with media messages?

It appeared from the data, that the answer to this question is totally. In large part, the respondents claimed that media messages are all a salient audience has. Only two respondents mitigated this at all by mentioning that fan intelligence had the potential to receive and discard media messages in a critical way.

Five categories emerged from the data: "dominant meaning system," "purposeful meaning," "process," "informative," and "salience." The category of dominant meaning system was linked to two properties, "availability" and "accessibility." The property of availability was linked to the dimension of "saturation to scarcity." The dimension of saturation to scarcity, indicating saturated message themes versus non-saturated message themes, was illustrated in the excerpt found below.

"Because essentially what happened was [even though it] happened long time ago, it appeared in a local newspaper and it would never be seen outside the local area [it was not a big problem to the athlete's image]. But, that's not the case anymore because of the speed at which it [the story] travels now and the fact that everybody sees it in some form it [the story] just continues to spread and spread and spread until something else comes along. The next day, it [the story] kind of dies out. But, by that time, everybody has seen it, and so, I don't know if you could ever overcome it. To some extent someone will always believe it. And, depending on how severe it is, if it is a problem, then it will probably cause you problems for the rest of your career. I don't think you can ever overcome the stuff anymore. (MB-158)

"I think if you have a favorite athlete or a favorite driver you're basically looking for news on your guy. What are they up to – whether it's on the field or off the field? To make you more educated about what that person does. That also draws people in." (CK-62)

"The nature of media has changed, obviously. When I was a kid, I used to look forward to reading the Sporting News every week and I would look back at all of the box scores for games that had been played the week prior. I would look for my favorite guys in there. That was how we followed baseball 40 years ago…[but now]…Certainly, the research and amount of material that is out there is overwhelming today compared to what it used to be. Somebody has got to be out there writing. Somebody has got to be out there providing the data." (MR-162 & 164)

The property of accessibility was found to have the dimension of "total to little." It was illustrated in the excerpt found below.

"The convenience and the accessibility that fans have now is just phenomenal. It's off the charts compared to what it used to be." (MR-165)

The category of purposeful meaning was linked to the property of "intentional." The property of intentional was found linked to the dimensions of "multiple purposes to unitary purposes" and "fan desired to fan rejected." The idea of multiple purposes to unitary purposes was found in the excerpts below.

"If you're an athlete who's not at that level but you're somebody who's out there competing, sometimes the media can have an effect on shaping your image. It

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would depend on how the athlete interacts with the media and conducts interviews and things of that nature." (HA-126)

"Michael Jordon's image [message] was not shaped by the media as much as it was by Gatorade and Wheaties and the way he played the game…If you are a bonafide super star, like Michael Jordon or Tiger Woods, you're going to have sponsors helping shape your image." (HA-123 & 124)

"I think that's why you're seeing more athletes getting aggressive in their approach to getting in touch with the fans, reaching out and communicating with the fans. That's why more athletes are doing blogs, tweeting and other things because they can deliver their own messages directly to the fan rather than rely on the media to do it." (RK-216)

With the advent of social media and the Internet really becoming a huge thing and guys [players] out there on social media themselves. Media has really changed in the last 18 to 24 months, where media before was talking at the consumer and now the consumer is being able to talk back and have a two-way conversation." (RB-74)

The dimension of fan desired to fan rejected was found in the excerpt given below.

"Let me give you two schools of thought. One is, the fan is unbelievably thirsty for information. Fan is short for fanatic. They have a thirst for information about the people they're purchasing tickets to come watch or turn on their TV and settle in and watch…And so good and bad, and more often it's bad, the media will take anything they hear, put it on the air and fans will instantly believe that without asking questions. And then they form an opinion without ever getting to know the person." (SM-178)

The category of process was found linked to the property of "direction." The

property of direction was linked to the dimension of "unilateral to co-productive." The

first excerpt contains the respondent's assumption that messages are the product of the

media's craftsmanship. The second excerpt outlines the idea that messages never occur

in a vacuum but, indeed, are a meeting of past with present.

"Going back to the candy eating child example. That's very specific. That media person was shaping that driver's image as not being kid friendly. (BK-147)

"Because of free agency, the odds of you [the athlete] starting and finishing your career in one spot are pretty small. You got to carry your baggage to each city you go to…If you have a negative relationship with the media in your market, they are going to make it hard on you when you go to your next market because those guys all talk to one another." (RK-233 & 234)

The category of informative was found linked to two properties, "completeness" and "plausibility." The property of completeness was linked to the dimension of "total to nothing." This dimension is illustrated in the excerpt found below.

"I think that that's how people start to form their opinions. And, that can be dangerous, because sometimes some members the media don't do much research. They go on what they hear and they're shouting out their opinions about said player, which could totally be off base…But, when it's out there, the fan are saying they think that the media obviously knows what they're talking about. So, they are going to take that as gospel." (RB-67 & 68)

"There's very little research done after you hear, read or see something in the media. There's positive and negatives to both. I've seen it happen both ways. But, I think the research stops when they [the fan] hear it. I think the fan hears it, reads it, sees what the media distributes, and it ends there. That's what they believe." (ST-126)

The property of plausibility was found linked to the dimension of "subjective to objective." It was illustrated in the excerpt found below.

"And [now], you're dealing with a 10 inch story on a slow news day that may not have any follow-up. Even though four days later, they may come to the conclusion that this girl wasn't raped, they had the wrong player. It wasn't even the same guy they thought it was. It doesn't really matter, you know. You [the media] just claim ignorance and go onto the next thing. But, it's a problem." (MB-155)

The category of salience was found linked to the property of "duration." The property of duration was found linked to the dimension of "continual to sporadic." This dimension is illustrated in the two excerpts found below.

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"My point to that is, if these guys who do this for a living and dedicate all of their hours and livelihood to the betterment of that sport, how can somebody sit at a TV desk, at a radio microphone, at a computer in a press box, and have informed, knowledgeable, finalization opinions about how that team should operate their team, and do it in all sports. Be able to tell us how to operate out baseball team. Tell the Chiefs how to operate their football team, tell Mark Mangino how to run his offense, tell Gary Pinkel how to run his defense, tell Bill Snyder that he can or can't coach any more, tell Frank Martin, Bill Self, Anderson, I forgot his first name, Mike Anderson, and still tell Bill Belichick how to coach the New England Patriots and Lou Piniella how to manage the Chicago Cubs and also have an opinion on why arena football is not working here in Kansas City. How can, and do this as a part time job, because they have fabulous hours, how can they have more knowledge about how all of us can operate our franchises then us who operate the franchises? And that's my answer to how it's perceived outside by the fans. That's the question I have." (SM-185)

"Personally, I used to make this point clear to the players and the team that the most valuable group in the media is your local newspaper writers. They shape everything, frankly. They cover you every day. Generally the story they put out about you are the ones that get scooped up by the ESPN, Sports Illustrated. They get the most turns at the plate. To me that's the most valuable spot. That's the one you really want to impress." (RK-231)

Consequences/Understanding/Contradictions. The majority of the respondents clearly assigned a lot of power to the media in terms of messages given and received. However, two respondents believed that fans were not unsuspecting recipients of media messages. One made the following claim,

"I don't think people do that intentionally at all. I think they read whatever is written. I don't think anyone goes to a Web site and says I haven't decided whether I like Alex Rodriguez or not. I'm going to read you know John Hammons' column on it. I don't know that that happens. I think that they just say hey there's a story about Alex Rodriguez. I'm going to read it. And from there they might form an opinion but I don't believe that people go to the media looking for the media's help in forming an opinion of anyone. I think people go looking for facts. I don't think they go; well John Hammons likes John Smith so I think I like John Smith. I don't think that happens….I think people are intelligent enough to make their own decisions based on the facts as opposed to always agreeing with something that they read. I mean just because you like a certain writer doesn't mean that you're always going to agree with what they say. I think that insults people's intelligence to say I don't know if I like this guy. I'm going to see what he has to say about it and form my opinion." (BR-130 & 132)

A second respondent framed it in other words,

> "I really think that's a situation, for the most part, [where] fans are pretty savvy, particularly with the amount of access they have to information online, on blogs, Twitter, and a variety of new media. I think for the most part, fans go ahead and make their own judgments, while I think they'll use the media to supplement that. I think they do a pretty good job of finding the facts for themselves and certainly the more rabid fans, I believe, they do pretty good job of that." (MP-65)

The respondents shed light on the phenomenon of media dependency in three additionally interesting ways. The first is the idea suggested by the data to frame media dependency as a form of "satisficing," or a process though which media itself, and fans, seek knowledge for their own purposes and feel content with only part of what is really going on. Meaning, the picture is never complete.

A second point of understanding, pointed to the changing nature, make-up and purpose of what could be considered "the media." The data suggests that athletes are now part of the media, when they choose to be (i.e., through tweeting and the athlete's Web sites). Fans are also part of the media (i.e., through blogs and camera phones). Traditional notions of media are mitigated by the notion of fragmentation. And, with the ever-changing nature of society, the purposes and intents of any "part" of the media can change instantly. The lesson, here, is to make sure the idea of media is approached from a multi-complex perspective.

And finally, one respondent brought to my attention, the power of connectedness made possible by social media. He claimed that "Tweeting" can circumvent and/or overshadow any other messages. He said the following,

> "That type of stuff Tweeting to a fans' inbox directly from an athlete] gets people pretty excited and changes your whole perception. Now you're having a real conversation. Or you're feeling like, "I'm really connected with the athlete…That's the one thing that Twitter has done better than the rest at this

point in my opinion. I would say they've taken the lead, but I don't know that anyone has truly established themselves as *the* leader." (RK-240 & 241)

RQ6: What assumptions do sports public relations practitioners hold about the ability and need to manage an athlete's image?

The interviewed practitioners assumed there was both a need and an ability on their part to manage an athlete's image. The reasons ranged from claims that some athletes need communication help, to media need our help, to the idea that image can and should be managed by a strategist. These assumptions lend themselves to the idea that a public relations practitioner would be instrumental to any possibility of engaging a pertinacious image for profitable gain.

The category that emerged in the data was "role," which was no surprise as the interview questions were position directly around the idea of role. Six properties were linked to role, "advisory," "persuasive," "protective," "agency," "value," and "presence." The property of advisory was linked to the dimension of "managed to non-managed." The dimension of the need to manage through advising was articulated in various ways.

> "I guess it just depends on the athlete you are dealing with. Some strategies are to make them [the athletes] bigger from a national standpoint. Some might be to establish somebody in the local market because they are a little deeper on the roster." (RK-274)

> "[PR people] make suggestions on how to handle certain situations. [PR people] can steer the athlete or your driver away from media that maybe have an axe to grind or could potentially derail their plan. Of course, you could coach him or her on not necessarily on what to say, but the how to handle messages in certain situations." (CK-91)

> "It all starts with being trusted and being able to communicate because every athlete is different in the way that they listen, and the way they receive direction and guidance. So you have to establish relationships with every guy on your team, or at least develop a relationship in which they trust you and trust your direction." (RK-392)

The property of persuasive was linked to one dimension, "advocacy to accommodation." The dimension of advocacy to accommodation was found in the following responses.

"For example, Bronson Arroyo this year, very outspoken about steroids you know that kind of stuff during the 2004 season with the Red Sox. And he received several interview requests after he spoke to the local media that I would not facilitate because I didn't want him talking about it. I mean that doesn't mean that these media outlets couldn't contact his agent and his agent set up something and he do them. As far as, it was not, it did not lend itself to positive public relations for our team so I did not facilitate it. That doesn't mean I would have kept you know Boston TV station from getting a credential to come to the ballpark and asking him themselves but I certainly wasn't going to put him on a phone and be proactive in facilitating any of those interviews that I knew was not going to be good for us. Anyone, any legitimate member of the media is welcome into our clubhouse and ask any of our people anything they want but don't expect me to, when the story is not going to be good, to go out of our way to give the player to you. I won't do that." (BR-156)

"What we all desire, what we want, not only doesn't really exist, I don't think those people ever really existed. We're all finding out things about, and again I'm going to bore you with this, but I have to put this disclaimer out there. When I think of image, I think of the ball players that the organization I've worked for have tried to put out there on that pedestal market, run your whole program around, one two or three of them depending on what you're coming off of with a club but, what you hope for and what there actually is are two different things sometimes, if that makes sense. Well I don't know, you can sit and listen to that and say I don't know what he's trying to say there. But I'm not sure that I know what I want to say except that…" (SM-31)

"I think PR people always ought to be thinking. I always like to think this way, "How's this going to impact [the athlete or organization]? How's this going to play in the media? How's this going to play for our fans or publics? How's it going to be for our employees? When we make this decision, what's the employee backlash going to be?" (MR-190)

The property of protective was linked to the dimension of "control to no control."

The dimension of control to no control was articulated in the following ways.

"Because you control access, you can trot out whoever the hell you want. If you have some very good people on the team, that people listen to, you can drag them out and they become your spokesperson." (MB-204)

"One thing you'll find out about me, it drives my GM nuts sometimes. Why do we have to tell them that? Because if we don't tell them that, if we don't accept responsibility, they're going to continue to dig. And the more they dig, when they finally get the answer they're going to take out their frustration on us for having to dig so hard and it's going to be worse than it would have been." (SM-251)

The property of agency was linked to two dimensions, "mitigated to non-mitigated" and "choice to non-choice." The dimension of mitigated to non-mitigated was represented in the various following ways.

"It's different for everybody. It honestly depends on what the athlete allows you to do. There are some athletes that won't let you tell them anything. They know it all and they're just going to be who they're going to be. I'm fortunate enough to work with people that listen when you talk to them." (BK-171)

"I think that just depends upon how much the athlete wants help with that. A lot of athletes don't. Some players will be proactive and come to you and ask for advice or seek out speaking points and messaging. Some players like Luke Ridnour could care less about any of that." (ST-161)

"Obviously, I think the stronger relationship I have with the media person, the better shot I have a spinning something my way or getting a story written that we really want to pitch. The pitch is a lot easier if you have strong relationship, obviously." (ST-169)

"Well it would depend on the player whether he's willing to do what you ask him to do. I'll give you a perfect example. The MLB has a thing for the All-Star game where the fans vote for the final roster spot. Ideally you want a player, when the MLB I think they take it down to five players and they give fans three or four days to vote on line to fill the final spot. Shane Victorino won it this year for the Phillies. And I know they did a bunch of stuff for him. They put him on TV, they put him on radio, anyone that would talk to him the PR people proactively went out and tried to talk to as many TV stations, radio stations, Internet sites as possible. But that's going to depend on the player. Some players will do that. Shane did want to do that and it helped him." (BR-159 & 160)

"I don't think the relationship between the media person and the media affects it at all. It's the relationship between the writer and the athlete. I mean all we can do is let the media know that something has happened that is a good story.

Whether they use that or not would depend on whether they want to make the guy look good or not. I mean there are certain events that happen that are news worthy that they will cover regardless." (BR-175)

The dimension of choice to non-choice was represented in the following excerpts.

"As a team PR person, your number one thing has to be that you are thinking what's in the best interest for your team. When you make a decision on who is this guy on our team that has a really cool story [you have to think what is in the best interest of the team.] If it's a negative story where you've crossed a social norm or you've committed a social transgression, do you walk away from it? [Do you say] I'm not going to get in the middle of that one? Do you attack it head on so that it shortens the lifespan of the story? The answer always has to come back to is this a benefit to our team? If I go this route here are the consequences. If I go this route here are the consequences. Which one is a better one for our team? There are times when you are a bit hindered. Pushing something from a player's perspective may not fit into that one criterion of, is this best for your organization? That doesn't happen very often." (RK-205)

"For example, Bronson Arroyo this year, very outspoken about steroids you know that kind of stuff during the 2004 season with the Red Sox. And he received several interview requests after he spoke to the local media that I would not facilitate because I didn't want him talking about it. I mean that doesn't mean that these media outlets couldn't contact his agent and his agent set up something and he do them. As far as, it was not, it did not lend itself to positive public relations for our team so I did not facilitate it." (BR-156a)

"At some level, the PR person has to be empowered to speak on behalf of the team and be able to squelch minor things like that. If they get blown out proportion, that's when you've got to sit all of the players down, who speak on behalf of the team, and say, 'Here's the situation and here's how are going to handle it.' And, make sure that everybody is in lockstep with that plan." (CK-97)

The property of value was linked to the dimension of "necessary to non-

necessary." That dimension was articulated in many varied ways.

"They could play a tremendous role in it. They could play a vital role in it. The key to that is trust. Many PR people in sports are afraid of their own shadow. They just won't make decisions or won't rock boats because they don't want to step in harm's way. A lot of those guys aren't equipped to truly develop a PR strategy for an athlete because it does mean making decisions and taking some risks in some cases. I think the majority of PR people, particularly if they're dealing with a relatively high profile or a growing profile athlete, are more apt to

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say no than they are to say yes. So they get into a groove of [saying no]. It's always easier to say no and the ramifications aren't going to be negative on me, in terms of my organization or my head coach or whatever. Those guys will be happy that you didn't do that extra interview or you didn't participate in this particular program or what have you. Even though it might have enhanced or given the athlete a real platform to do something. It's [that situation with the PR guy] a very prominent." (RK-179)

"You think of some of these great older PR guys who, Kevin Byrne [Baltimore Ravens] comes to mind, Harvey Greene [Miami Dolphins], are guys who were in the NFL and still are, in some of these cases, been in the NFL or baseball or basketball for years. Harvey Greene, for example, it's not necessarily dating him, but he was around when the PR guy had to go from newspaper to newspaper in the opposing markets when they were coming into town and try and sell tickets. He had an aggressive approach to try to get the word out about the team and the game. I think those guys are built in a way to seek opportunities." (RK-196)

"We had a goal for Matt to try and get him to the All-Star Game, and frankly he should have been in it. But, he did not quite make it. So, how do you do that? Well, fans are voting, so you want to connect with fans. How do you do that? Well, they might be listening to [talk radio]. I think talk radio, in the particular case, is important because you get on a national show that hits 200 markets. And, depending on the market size itself; your audience size could be pretty significant. It could be 50,000. It could be 100,000. You times that by 200 and you've got a pretty big audience that is tuning into a particular show and listening to this athlete who they've never really necessarily heard before. But, they have heard really cool things about. That can help boost an image." (RK-277)

"But, there has been a debate in the past [about breaking your own stories] and that it was wrong and you shouldn't do that. I think, for one, that it's foolish [not to break your own story]. I think you should do anything and use anything you can to get your message out [it's necessary]." (MB-198)

"In Zack's case right now with three weeks to go in the season, four starts to go in the season, or whatever. He's not going to pitch in New York but we're going to be in New York. And if his next three starts before we get to New York are what his first thirty or thirty-one have been like it's incumbent on me at Yankee Stadium with all the media that's there covering the Yankees, to make sure they know who Zack Grienke is because they're not going to get to watch him pitch. They didn't get to watch him pitch against them the first week of the season either. They missed him twice. I have a responsibility there." (SM-222)

"I think PR people can help steer writers, broadcasters in a direction – maybe soften blow sometimes in a potential negative situation. [PR people can provide] background [to] media folks before they begin an interview. If you've cultivated that type of relationship with media people over the years, as a good PR person

will, then if they know they [the media] can trust you, then I think you have a much better chance of succeeding in the way you want to direct or shape the story." (MR-192)

"There are times when you can let the PR person do the dirty work for you. Or, by the same token, you can let them say some things that you'd maybe like to say but would come off as self-promoting if you said them yourself." (MP-102 & 103)

And, finally, the property of presence was linked to the dimension of "real to perceived." It was articulated by the respondents in multiple interesting ways.

"People ask for an interview, he's [the driver] accessible. We make him very accessible. We've done that from a very early time. And then sort of being in the middle of that, working with them to let them, and if we can't do something then what can I do for you. So being sort of that intermediary when [the driver] isn't accessible, that I can play the part; like you know what, I can't get him but I can get you quotes. So let me do that for you." (BK-202b)

"It wasn't so much me, but a member of our staff. A number of years ago, there was an incident at training camp that involved [a well-known quarterback]. He wasn't involved in the incident himself. Yes he was, but he wasn't involved in the actual incident from the standpoint of actually being involved, but he was there. He became a part of it [the incident] in an attempt to stop it. By the next day, we tried to control the image of [the quarterback]. It [the players] was their day off and they went to a bar. [The quarterback] was with a group of other players. They [the media] highlighted his name out of the incident because he was the biggest name. The other players were incidental figures on the team and did not play a large role on the team. They [the media] would have had much less interest [in the story] had it just been those guys. But, to have him [the quarterback] play a part [in the story], even when he was trying to break something up, it [the story] quickly got out of control." (MB-231)

"Our business is based on relationships. We have relationships with the players. We have relationships with the media. And, our job is to make it to where there is a relationship between the media and the players." (RB-92)

"We had a situation on our team, here, three weeks ago with the team owner. He [the team owner] believed he was just having a casual conversation with a journalist who took down verbatim what he said and published it. [It said] that we were contemplating switching from being a Chevrolet team to a Dodge team. Well what that did, it got printed and it steamrolled. Our Chevrolet contact got calls from other teams, who weren't getting the support level we were getting, and were upset about it, which put them in a compromising position. Well, we had to

try to reverse some of that. First, you call up your representative and you apologize and say, 'That's not what we meant.' Then we got hooked up with a couple of, what we considered to be, friendly sources to help tell our story. One of them was NASCAR.com. NASCAR's own Web site. We did that. Then we went on Wind Tunnel and explained it – took to the airwaves basically. Yes, the damage was done. But, we were able to, number one, minimized that damage. And, number two, turn a negative into a positive. Number three, put our guy [the team owner] out there. Somebody these folks want and should talk to." (CK-93)

"It is much more of a 'public relations' approach to the job than it used to be, as opposed to when it was nothing more than a media relations department – which served up the usual package of quotes, clips, media guides, a couple of opportunities to talk to a few people, by a few beers for the guys after the game and then call it a day. That old-style [of public relations] is disappearing." (MB-206)

Consequences/Understanding/Contradictions. One perspective I came away from the interviews with involved the realm of job security as it might influence public relations practitioners' attempts to do their jobs. Sometimes things don't happen because practitioners fear they will lose their job if they get "rock the boat." One respondent put it this way,

"From that kind of background, there are enough of these guys who are afraid to lose their positions. I'm in the NFL. I'm in the NBA. I'm in baseball. I'm not going to rock the boat because I don't want the owner or the coach or the manager to be upset, and then try to shove me out of here because I know there are plenty of guys out there that want my job. I would say this, there are a good chunk of older, longer-term guys, because when they started it was different [time] you had to go out and promote your game and your players, I would say those guys are more apt to and more established to provide a voice of reason to a head coach or to an owner to say this is the right thing and here's why. As opposed to a younger up-and-coming guy who isn't willing to rock the boat because he doesn't want to get in trouble or hasn't developed a deep relationship with that owner that allows him to really be a voice of reason saying, 'This is a good thing. We need to do it.' (RK-199 & 200).

A second perspective on the "political game," if you will, was offered up through the idea of "watch your back, even among friends." One respondent put it this way,

"Obviously, I think the stronger relationship I have with the media person, the better shot I have a spinning something my way or getting a story written that we really want to pitch. The pitch is a lot easier if you have strong relationship, obviously. That being said, sometimes you think you got a media person in your back pocket and they'll reach up and get you on a column or something you did not see coming, which I've had that happen too." (ST-169 &170)

The third lesson was really in contradiction with many professionals' ideas of

"befriending" the media so they know you are real. This was articulated in the following

way,

"The relationship between a PR person and the media person is somewhat fake, unless over time it becomes a true friendship. But, the media person knows exactly why you're befriending them…Maybe 'fake' is not the right word. But, I'm becoming friends with this person initially for one reason. It's a very 'surface' friendship and they know. The media person knows exactly why you're taking him out to dinner on the road and why you go have cocktails with them, or whatever." (ST-171 & 173a)

RQ7: Is it possible, that the act of engaging a pertinacious image for profitable gain

is really a strategy to repair the image at a meta-level to an image perceived as

desirable because it is profitable?

It was clear that part of the image repair process was not about promoting the

negative image per se, but over time the respondents did one of three things. They acted

immediately to mitigate or contain damage to marketability, they laid low for a period of

time so the issue lost its luster, or they did nothing at all, hoping the issue would simply

go quiet. However, I argue that at some meta-level that all the respondents viewed image

repair as an attempt to repair an image to some form of its previous state, at least to the

point where it retained its marketability.

Five categories were identified: "presence," "perception," "context,"

"responsibility," and "process." The category of presence was linked to the property of

"endurance." The property of endurance was linked to the dimension of "one time to

recurring." Evidence of this dimension was found in the following excerpt.

> "If it's a once-in-a-lifetime thing, hit it right away that day. Get it off the agenda.
> That's the thing. Get it out. Get it over with. And, get on with it. The longer
> you screw around and fool around with it, the more it sits there and gets worse.
> The key thing is, is to get it handled, to the extent you can, then it goes away
> faster. (MB-316)

> "Because essentially if you've been in trouble before and it's been a series of
> nothing but trouble, they're [the media] going to come after you every single day
> to try to get you to say something. In that particular instance, you beg for
> forgiveness, which is generally what most people say and do. And then, you go
> away for a while. You don't get out there every day and constantly talk about it.
> You take a very low-level, out of the public eye position because you've got a
> long way to go. This is been a series of problems for you. Yes, you got to
> address it. You've got to talk about it. You've got to go find your teammates and
> maybe they'll talk about you as being a good teammate, a good guy." (MB-315)

The category of perception was found to have a property of "agency" with a

dimension of "individual to organizational." The notion of agency, and who has the right

or power to be an agent of repair, was reported as residing among various levels and

actors.

> "The organization as a whole [determines if an image repair effort is warranted]."
> (BR-280)

> "Well you [the PR practitioner] consider it for every one of them. I mean you
> don't want to let them hang them out to dry. You want to at least give the
> impression that they're sorry whether it's in person or you know other means, be
> it a statement or whatever. I mean if a guy's not good in front of a camera you
> don't put him in front of a camera." (BR-276)

> "I think it's a combination of the athlete and a public relations guy, unless
> management says, 'I don't want to hear this guy talking anymore about anything.'
> And, that may be all you hear." (MB-325)

> "You may say, 'I got an idea. What do you think about doing this?' Management
> may say, 'Hey look, not that guy. He's not the guy to do that. We don't want
> him talking. We don't want him doing that thing.' And, at that point, you may

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say, 'You know what so-and-so, you're going to have to go upstairs and talk to the guys on top [management] and say, Hey, I've got to do something for myself. I know I screwed up. I'm having a problem. What do you suggest I do?"' (MB-326)

"If the athlete doesn't want to do it or management says, 'Go down and talk to the PR department and get something out because I don't want to go into this crap anymore,' that may be a part of it too." (MB-329)

"You know, I was thinking through that question and I would really include all of those groups. I think it can be anyone of the publics [who makes the decision to engage in image repair]. I think it's one of the beauties; I think it's one of the challenges of the PR that you deal with everybody." (MR-283)

"The other wild cards out there. You don't know what the agent or anyone else, or the guy's wife, or the dad, or whoever is going to be in the guy's ear also. It's not only the organization [who is involved]. Sometimes there are outside influences at play too." (MR-288)

The category of context was found to have two properties, "definition" and

"situation." The property of definition was linked to the dimension of "situational to

prescribed." The dimension of situational to prescribed was found in excerpts like those

found below.

"It just depends on who it is. Management might say, 'Wait a second, we may have a way to do this that I think we will do well. We've got a get a statement from this guy or this is not going to go away. We're going to be stuck with this forever. We've got to get it out of the news. Let's get it out of there.' And, if you wait two days, you've got problems. Essentially, that thing has got a shelf life. It may be gone and then they [the media] don't care about your response." (MB-330)

"Well first you've got to get over the initial hump of communicating around or for exactly what the crisis was about. Provide the proper information. Make sure the messages are those that you and your client want out there. Once those messages are out there and in the process, and people understand exactly what happened and the ramifications, then you have a shot at how we can repair this or if we can repair it at all. Sometime you can't." (CK-165)

"It's back to their perception of it is a reality. In the scheme of things, you may sort of roll your eyes and say, 'That's not that big a deal. But you know what, it's

my job. I'm going to help the guy and we'll figure this out.' It might be important to the person. It's hard to say." (MR-278)

The property of situation was linked to the dimension of "beginning and end to ongoing."

> "If this is one in a series of image problems that he has had, then it is not going to be corrected in a single statement. It's got to be corrected over time." (MB-314)

> "The first and foremost one for me would be whether that person continues as a member of our team. If something so egregious happens that he gets fired, I'm under the employ of the team, he no longer is, that stops right there – basically no longer a client." (CK-167)

> "There are many times when you just leave it alone because if you try and do something it just resurfaces again. There have been many times where I've just said let's let this baby go." (ST-234)

> The category of responsibility was found to have the property of "management."

The property of management was linked to the dimension of "assumed to assigned." The

need to or the ability to manage image was important.

> "You're pretty much responsible for the message, whether the crisis happens at the track or in between races." (CK-162)

> "At some level, the PR person has to be empowered to speak on behalf of the team and be able to squelch minor things like that. If they get blown out proportion, that's when you've got to sit all of the players down, who speak on behalf of the team, and say, 'Here's the situation and here's how are going to handle it.' And, make sure that everybody is in lockstep with that plan." (CK-97)

> The category of process was found to have three properties: "trust," "state," and

"complexity." The property of trust was linked the dimension of "total to no."

> "It all starts with being trusted and being able to communicate because every athlete is different in the way that they listen, and the way they receive direction and guidance. So you have to establish relationships with every guy on your team, or at least develop a relationship in which they trust you and trust your direction." (RK-392)

"The bottom line is, as a PR guy, you need to have the trusting relationship where a guy will listen to you – that's number one. The most important is getting these guys to hear what you believe is the best course of action and adjusting the situation into a positive. Or, at least, stamp out the negative." (RK-394)

Trust was also understood through a player's relations with his organization.

"But our job and our mission is, when they are ours understand that they will screw up both on and off the field, and it's our responsibility to support them like you would your family. So no. I would never consider anything but going into immediate reparation or whatever. (SM-360)

The property of state was linked to the dimension of "systematic to accidental."

"I think you have to let things play out to a certain extent so that you have all the factors before you go back and start building up the image." (RB-156)

The property of complexity was linked to the dimension of "controlled to non-

controlled." The dimension of controlled to non-controlled was variously illustrated.

"The image repair job, in this particular instance, maybe there is no image repair job. You just don't let him out. His image is in the background. He is no longer a major figure that you're going to traipse out. (MB-317)

"With saying that, I sort of go back to what I said last night, sometimes it's like trying to put toothpaste back in the tube – repairing somebody's image." (RB-156)

Consequences/Understanding/Contradictions. A major discovery during the

interviews was through how one respondent redressed my own notions of images needing

repair. I generally approach the idea of an undesirable image as having occurred from an

offensive act, legal violation and so on. This particular professional made it clear that

sometimes an undesirable image takes form because it has simply not kept up with the

times. She put it best when she discussed the process of branding.

"Branding. Image repair is you're shaping a brand; you're shaping an image. So image repair would definitely be just a rebranding really, or enhanced branding or

changing the, you know it's like marketing. You know my brand, it's not your fault there's Oldsmobile, as a good example. So this is what it was and this is a good product, so my driver's brand is a good product but the Oldsmobile had a recall and something wasn't quite right. Something went amiss but that was a one-time thing. Now the Oldsmobile is, and they're rebranding it as not your father's Oldsmobile because they're trying to hit a younger market. So that would be, that's sort of an analogy. So this is a good product, onetime thing happened, now we're going to not only come back as a better, you know back to where we were but come back as a better brand." (BK-292 & 293)

Another respondent built an even more varied picture of a crisis [instance of image damage] when he made clear that there are time of personal crises, such being diagnosed with something or recovering from a non-race-related auto injury, that also demand image repair. However, the repair comes in the form of letting fans perceive that the athlete is personally okay with life (fans want to offer some sort of support), or letting sponsors know that a athlete is mentally and physically stable. He said,

> "There are a million things you could call a crisis from it being personal to a member of their family being diagnosed with something to getting busted for drunk driving. It could be any number of things. And, just hope that you are not the last to know." (CK-164)

I also found it interesting that interviewees seemed to understand the difference between image restoration and image repair. A damaged image was understood as something that could not be leveraged to its pre-damaged state. One respondent put it best.

> "[Know] whose image is being attacked, so to speak, or diminished and sort of talk to them in terms of almost like a defense attorney. Say, 'Okay, tell me everything so I know what I am dealing with.' And, then you start thinking of ways that can start building your case, so to speak, to build that image back up in a positive light. With the understanding that, you're never probably going to get back to the level you had before these allegations came up." (RB-159)

Conversely, however, the respondents also acknowledged that in certain "fields of play," the salience of a negative image could be overcome. It appeared that a player's performance on the field could often overshadow anything off the field, or stemming from the player's personal behavior on the field. One respondent said the following.

> "But, then if you try to say 'he's a good player.' Let's see what his play on the field is like. Then it [the process] begins. Then you begin to repair [his image]. His problems off the field began to take second place to his success on the field. If he does not have any success on the field, then you have real issues." (MB-318)

RQ8: Is it possible, that the act of engaging a pertinacious image for profitable gain is really an act to match the appropriate crisis response strategy with the crisis type in an effort to repair the image at a meta-level to an image perceived as desirable because it is profitable?

It was quite clear, through the questions asked about the utility of pairing crisis response strategies with a crisis type (i.e., the ability to match strategies to a crisis type resulting in a crisis response matrix), that the majority of the respondents felt that while it was a valuable idea in theory, it was impossible in practice. I found no support for the idea that matching an appropriate crisis response strategy with the crisis type could result in a desirable image at a meta-level.

The lack of support was made clear as the categories, properties and dimensions emerged. Three categories emerged: "situational," "theoretical," and "practical." The category of situational had as its properties, "method," "dependence," and "boundaries." The property of method had as its dimensions "loosely coupled to rigid" and "systematic to non-systematic." The following excerpt illustrated method through coupling.

"It's pretty loose. I mean, we have a crisis communications plan. We had it at IndyCar, as well. Every situation is just so different." (ST-212)

"…there is certainly some parameters that we set up. IndyCar was just a little different because of the chance of serious injury or fatalities. And, the NBA has a crisis communication plan. But, it's pretty loose." (ST-214)

"We definitely did not have a set matrix. But, we had general rules that we wanted to follow. And each crisis changes it a little bit. But the fundamental rules are always in place." (RK-365 & 366)

The dimension of systematic to non-systematic was found in the following excerpt.

"So, you work through your fundamental rules of engagement in communication. You apply those fundamentals to each of these crises and develop them based on the size and significance of the moment." (RK-379)

"So NASCAR's going to play a role and then the team, [sponsor] is going to play a role and then we are going to play a role, [NASCAR driver] Incorporated is going to play a role. So it's kind of the sort of deployment, like where you go when, who you work with, how information flows, and who is on your list of call, you know. Here's the phone call." (BK-285)

The property of dependence had as its dimensions "total to none" and "highly variable to non-variable." Both dimensions are found in the excerpts below.

"…it depends on what the crisis is." (RK-367)

"The answer is no, because every situation was different. In the cases of what I've done in the past, it's almost been fly by the seat of your pants. Each situation is different. You just go with what you think is the best thing to do at that time." (HA-219)

"Not a lot is going to surprise me, [but] I mean, a five a.m. phone call telling me that Mike is going to jail because he tried to light some woman's ass on fire in a bar. I was ready, I mean I wasn't ready for it, but I knew what we had to do. I knew I wasn't going to sleep and I knew when I got to the ballpark that afternoon I was going to be really some kind of pissed off at Mike. But it wasn't just me whose day was ruined…So you kind of put that all in perspective too." (SM-336)

"…realize that every situation is different because of the stature of the people who are involved." (MP-184)

The property of bound had a dimension of "legal to non-legal."

> "If it is a criminal offense, our position is to continually side with the legal system, not the player. We are supporters of the legal system." (MB-307)

> "I mean there are a lot of thinks that organizations can't, when a player's involved in something illegal whether it's a DUI or whatever. They supposedly broke the law, I mean we're not allowed to comment on it. We can't do anything to influence or to make it appear that you know we believe he's guilty or innocent. That's not our place." (BR-261)

The category of theoretical had two properties, "academic" and "business-

oriented." The property of academic was found to have a dimension of "total to non-

academic."

> "Quite frankly, I've never heard of a matrix. I'd be curious to find out how many of your other practitioners have used a matrix because, quite frankly, I've never heard of it and I wonder if it is a think of academia" (RB-148)

> "Yes it does. It makes a lot of sense. I mean in theory it does. I never have used a matrix like that to that degree." (MR-262)

> "This is where, again, where we offend professors and allow people to be people. Common sense just gets in the way here. You sit down, you talk to all of the parties. You talk to the player, you talk to the agent, you talk to the general manager, the manager, someone who was with him. You get in a room and you just, you make sure that, the incident in Seattle two weeks ago was a perfect example but I have to plead off the record on that. There was no turn on the computer and go to a crisis management matrix or an outline or anything. It was 'I've got to talk to the player A, talk to player B, I've gotta get with the manager, I've got to get with the press, I have to call my owner, I have to call my general manager, and I have to call my specific senior VP boss. I have to put off going dinner for at least two hours. I've got a lot of shit going on that, these two guys have ruined my night now. They've got me mad. They might be mad at each other but now they've pissed me off. But I've got to get my emotions in check and go through my mental checklist of things to make sure they, a) know they've screwed up, and b) know what the message is going to be, and c) make sure I have all the facts straight and I guess, d) would be make sure I have all the facts straight so that the message doesn't stray off what needs to be delivered and hen, e) get the word out or keep the word in, in this case." (SM-330)

The property of business-oriented was found to have a dimension of "plausible to non-

plausible."

> "I don't think a matrix is truly effective because there are too many varying circumstances in each of these things. To have a cookie cutter matrix—I don't want to simplify or make fun of an idea of a matrix, because I'm not trying to do that—but I don't think, at least in my view, that's why I was saying we have fundamental rules of communication a time of crisis and depending on what that crisis is, we still follow those rules of engagement in communication." (RK-376)

> "Why not? Being on the operations side of the business now, when you talk to the first responder community or people who deal in disaster and disaster recovery they'll tell you, 'If you've seen one crisis, you've seen one crisis.' Every situation is different. I will say that in general." (MR-263)

The category of practicality had two properties, "possibility: and "usability." The

property of possibility had two dimensions, "workable to non-workable" and "thinkable

to non-thinkable." The dimension of workable to non-workable was illustrated in the

following excerpts.

> "But, if something happens, where you need to go into that mode, everybody has a responsibility on it. We don't say something like, 'Alright, let's go do our crisis communication plan and let's do it.' I don't think that there is anything that really sets it off. The action sort of triggers the plan into place or into motion." (ST-216)

> "When Garrison Hurst [former NFL player] made some pretty inflammatory about homosexuals in the NFL, it was a much different matter than say Jeff Garcia getting stopped for drunk driving in San Jose. They both happened in the same area. But because the issues [homosexual] in San Francisco are much different than the ones in San Jose, it was an entirely different process to manage that crisis. Having a general matrix would not have fit those two things." (RK-378)

> "You have a player snap in the clubhouse on a day that you didn't expect anybody to snap in the clubhouse, you don't have time to go to you little file folder and see what plan b is on this or plan a. You've got to get into action immediately." (SM-333).

The dimension of thinkable to non-thinkable was found in the following excerpts.

"That's the thing, it sort of sounds like it's a playbook, almost. 'If you come up against this, this is what you say.' I guess I can see it in a certain sense, you know, as a framework." (BR-152)

"I literally, truly other than leaning on my thirty-one years of experience and other things that have happened, I don't have time nor am I organized enough to go to a book and flip a page and say this is what we're doing." (SM-329)

"The best matrix you can use is called common sense, and sometimes that's in short supply, but I think that's the best thing you can apply to any situation is common sense." (MP-179)

The property of usability was found to have two dimensions, "valuable to non-valuable,"

and "immediate to non-immediate." The dimension of valuable to non-valuable was

found in the following excerpt.

"For example, in our crisis plan, would go to a factory team that's running two cars. If one of the cars goes off track and the driver is killed, what happens? First and foremost, someone has the assignment to go to the hospital with that person. Somebody stays back at the track to handle the messages there. With all this being said, you have regulations that come into play here. The track, here in the states, will hide behind the HIPAA laws and things like that. But, you being part of the team, you have to take on those roles and the messages have to be executed. And then, it goes beyond that. Is the car that's left, is that car taken out of competition or does the car continue to compete? Basically, it just follows the matrix from beginning to end. Then end being go back and see how you did. Quantify the results and, if necessary, modify your plan for the future. And, there's also, I think the most important element in there is a, for the lack of a better word, a calling table. This person calls this person. Everybody has a job." (CK-159)

"I can see how, as a guide, a matrix might be valuable to say, 'Okay, if you've got a domestic abuse situation, this might be a reasonable response. If you've got a DWI situation [this might be a reasonable response]. If you've got a gun violation [this might be a reasonable response]. If you've got a drug violation [this might be a reasonable response].' My sense is they would probably all be relatively similar if it crossed the line into law." (MR-267)

"Matrix is an interesting concept, and I think there could be some validity." (MR-269)

The dimension of immediacy to non-immediacy was found in the following excerpts.

"But I'm a firm believer in responding immediately otherwise it looks like you're hiding it." (BR-262)

"That's how quick, you just got to, you start and it goes. And then after it happens, after you can't take the words back, you grab him, get his ass out of the room and then you go call your GM and the manager and go, guess what just happened fellows. Now, what do we do? What do you want to do? Here's what we're going to do." (SM-334)

"We always need to be responsive – immediately. The principal people, who are involved in a crisis, if it is a major crisis, the team leaders have to be involved. The general manager and head coach have to be involved." (MB-309)

Consequences/Understanding/Contradictions. One respondent made it very clear, the value or usability of a matrix was totally dependent on whether or not those using it and affected by it truly understand it.

"This provides a bit of a road map. It provides a piece of mind that a document like that actually exists. But, with that said, people have to understand it." (CK-157)

RQ9: Is it possible, that the act of engaging a pertinacious image for profitable gain is a series of posturing through selected stances to relate to a salient audience?

There was no clear link between stance taking and leveraging a pertinacious image. However, this may have been a result of questions asked and timing (these questions occurred at the end of the interviews and respondents were tired). However, if I could engage in further research to explore the potential links, I think there would be some clear connections. As I searched for categories, properties and dimensions it was clear that the understanding of stance taking, as articulated by my interviewees, was closely aligned to the explanatory power of contingency theory.

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One category, "courses of action," emerged from the data. It was linked to the three properties of "mitigation," "derived," and "situational." The property of mitigation was linked to the dimension of "individual to organizational to legal." Respondents articulated this dimension in various ways.

"As a PR agency we would determine it." (BK-320)

"A lot of times we have to run things by for approval. So we've got to get sometimes the approval of our sponsor and our driver. So it would probably be, as the experts we would come up with a decision about what needs to be done, but sometimes you do have to get approval as to what that action is. If [sponsor] said no we want to do it this way and it's against our better judgment, you have to if it's not a moral, illegal or unethical." (BK-321)

"But sometimes, as long as you give them fair warning, this could possibly be the result of taking this route and they completely know what the consequences could be. But for the most part, again they hired you as professionals they're going to listen to your advice." (BK-322)

"Ultimately it starts with ownership. I mean, if ownership wants to continue to have the professional relationship with the athlete, we as employees of that ownership will do whatever we have to do to carry out his wishes. If an owner, as I've used the term several times now, wants to fish or cut bait, they want to cut bait we can make that happen with the way the message is [put] out." (SM-363)

"It starts at the top and like anything, shit rolls down hill. It's eventually going to land in my department. The message will get there one way or the other. Whether it's from the ownership or if the ownership says to the general manager, look you brought him here. You assured me that this guy can play, can do this, can help our club. Is he worth the risk? Is he worth the gamble? Do we cut bait now or do we keep going? And the general manager at that point, he's the decision maker. Bottom line is, it's not a unilateral decision made by me. It's not a decision that I would walk in and go, x player has been a, regardless of how heinous, again, the offense could be, x player has been a model citizen his whole life." (SM-364)

"It's a combination depending on the personalities within your organization. Certainly the PR person takes a lead role. The owner weighs in. Depending on the relationship you have with the owner, often times, if it's a strong one, the owner will lean on you to provide the direction. That goes back to having the ability to communicate and be trusted within all levels of the organization. Generally it's a combination because, as a PR guy, you should have better insight

as to what the public reactions going to be to all of this based on the information gathering you've been doing through the media and other forms – phone calls you're getting and things of that nature. Generally, you are the one who lays the initial strategy and then you develop it with the other leaders in the organization so that it feels good from top to bottom. Truly, the top has to weigh in." (RK-424)

The property of derived was linked to the dimension of "fan perception to player agent perception to organizational perception."

"Oh, there's a lot of publics in our world. There's a lot of publics. So ok, you have your fan base which is one public and then you have your sponsors, and you have your race team, you have maybe families of the athlete. It depends on the circumstances but there's a lot of publics. The media could be a public in that situation. So you really have to consider all the publics when you craft what you're going to do. Like how is this going to affect this group of people?" (BK-324)

"And not everybody trusts you and they sleep with one eye open and that's the mentality that I think a lot of people have toward anything. You know, if we're going to get you for that kind of price, why are you charging so much, is this, or whatever." (SM-372)

The property of situational was linked to the dimension of "cued to non-cued."

"It would really just be whatever the situation is. Because like you said, somebody has done research that there's this, there's this, this happens. There's these things so it's really, the situation determines what course of action." (BK-323)

"By ignoring what they [the audience] are thinking or feeling is a dramatic and sizable mistake that can only increase the life of the negative story rather than stop it…There are definitely times where organizations don't respond according to the audience's response and [their] feelings and that's a mistake." (RK-430 & 432)

Consequences/Understanding/Contradictions. One new factor of understanding stance taking was introduced when one respondent spoke of the "weirdness" of having to deal with athlete's personal public relations people. He saw this as something relatively new to the field of sports. He described it in the following way.

"It's weird because in pro sports anymore there is a PR person for the team and then the athletes have, through their agent, PR people. At the end of the day, my responsibility and my allegiance is to the team, not necessarily the athlete, although the athlete is a huge image definer for our team. I'm loyal to the [team] brand, not necessarily the [player] brand, which is where the agent's PR person would become involved in that. It is certainly the team PR person's responsibility is the team." (ST-243 & 244)

Another respondent described the process of stance making as productive of

perceptions at a level above that of the athlete under consideration. He cautioned that in

taking stances it is possible that the public relations professional's own image [or that of

the entire organization] could be damaged. This can happen from something as simple as

not doing enough homework. It can lead to skepticism among the media and fans. He

put it this way,

"One that comes to mind, I completely forgot about it. It's another one for the textbook, the [W.B.] situation in Arizona. We hired him for two days as our manager in the winter of 2004 and turned out that somebody uncovered the fact he had some legal problems up in Portland. It was written in the New York Times. We didn't know about it. We were not smart enough to run a FBI check on him. Google was coming into its own and [W] managed to Google it and read about that. They called [W] in and said, [W] if this is your only transgression in your life, we're fine with that. You apologize for it and we'll go forward. That's it. Looked him right in the eye and said that's it. As the next twenty-four hours unfolded, it turned out there was a warrant out for him because he had skipped bail, or not skipped bail, he was on probation for an alleged abuse charge where a lady went after him with a bat and he popped her. It was not pretty by any stretch, but he had been put on probation for that but within a two-year period he couldn't have any more transgressions. And three of the transgressions that got all of the publicity happened in that two year period. So it made our decision relatively easy. They called [W] and said, [W] you can't be the manager of this team because you're probably going to end up in jail up in Portland, or up in Oregon because of all the publicity that you've gotten on these transgressions. That was a bitch of a week. When I think about that story because I don't know where you can use this, if you can even use this, but while it's on my mind…" (SM-365)

He continued his train of thought in the following manner,

"The media has a reason to be skeptical sometimes. We do it to ourselves sometimes. So sometimes our message is going to be viewed with a sense of jade

in there, where they'll look at you and go, ok that's what you say. All right, ok, we understand. It just goes back to something I was saying at my desk earlier. I'm not trying to cast blame toward the media that they won't totally deliver our message that we want. They're skeptical about doing it. Well there's reason that they're skeptical. We do things sometimes where we actually damage our own credibility." (SM-369)

Another respondent brought to my attention the reality that employed persons must necessarily take certain kinds of stances. For instance, I interviewed some public relations practitioners employed by sports organizations who also, because of that employment represented individual athletes employed by the same organization. In these cases, the practitioners held job-related allegiance to their employing organization. He put it this way,

> "We take a stance on behalf of the team, not the athlete. If we take a stance on behalf of the athlete, you are looked at as being protective of him." (MB-342 & 343)

A second respondent put it this way,

> "That's where you get into a situation where you sort of have to look at the team pays my paycheck. The player doesn't pay my paycheck. My job is to make sure that the club's image [is good]. My primary focus is that my team still has a positive image out there." (RB-177)

The distinctions made here, suggest my future research efforts need to include asking many of the same questions of athlete's personal public relations agents. They would likely have different rich perspectives.

A final insightful observation related to the connections fans make between player salary amounts and those who make those amounts possible. The connection shapes fans' perceptions of and expectations for what does and should go on.

> "Sure, especially when you're talking about the sport of NASCAR, which is regarded as the biggest sport on the planet in terms of attendance and in money.

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The people in those stands ultimately pay the salaries of the guys who are in the infield on the teams and the drivers. They buy their product or an image that has been created." (CK-179)

"So you have to take into effect all of those people that pay their $300 to come in and watch a race for a three-day weekend. Ultimately, it's going to affect the level or quality of product that you're going to be able to put on the track (i.e., a track sponsorship)." (CK-181)

Discussion

As a result of in-depth interviews, this dissertation uncovered that the concept of pertinacious image does, in fact, exist and that it can be leveraged for profitable gain. I operationalized "pertinacious image" as a "perversely" persistent image. An image that is perversely persistent is grounded in the quality of being "turned around from what is right or good" or "obstinate in opposing what is right, reasonable or accepted" (*Merriam-Webster Online Dictionary*). For example, if an athlete who has enjoyed a largely positive public image is suddenly accused of rape, that individual is forever going to be known as a rapist, which leads to a largely negative image. An example of this is, Kobe Bryant was accused of and tried for rape, but was not convicted in a court of law for the crime. However, he appears to have been convicted by the court of public opinion. When an athlete is saddled with a pertinacious image it means that he or she is essentially "stuck" with some semblance of that negative image forever – even if the individual makes his or her best efforts to overcome that negative image through future good deeds. The Bryant example is a good representation of what it means to have a pertinacious image.

Most athletes' careers are relatively short – especially in contact sports (exceptions would include sports like golf and bowling). This means that an athlete has a

limited amount (only a few years) of time to earn a living playing his or her respective

sport. This leads to the question, if an athlete now has a pertinacious image, how can he

or she leverage the pertinacious image for profitable gain?

One respondent clearly answered this question and articulated how it is possible

to leverage a pertinacious image into profitability,

> I think Terrell Owens is an example. He is definitely gaining financially. There were some times where it was looking rough. He helped blow up the Eagles after having such a destructive end to his run here in San Francisco. I wouldn't have thought most people would have gone near him. But, he has clearly done fine from a financial standpoint. Not only in his playing contracts, that are as much to do with his skills on the field as anything else, but he also lands commercials. He lands reality shows. And, it's all based on the fact that he's a controversial figure. People want to see the train wreck apparently.

The discovery of a pertinacious image is important for several reasons. First, it

defines/describes, for public relations scholars and practitioners, what occurs when an

individual commits or is accused of some type of wrongdoing and, as a result, is stuck

with some semblance of the undesired image (i.e., it provides public relations

practitioners and scholars a term to describe the action).

Second, now that we know a pertinacious image exists, by definition, scholars and

practitioners can further study and examine the concept. Moreover, we now have some

identifiable parameters (i.e., broken laws or governing rules, social norm violations,

character issues) that can help practitioners learn how to cultivate, promote and leverage

a pertinacious image. Additionally, those same parameters can be used by scholars to

establish criteria that can be tested in future research.

Third, while the pertinacious image concept is just that – a concept, its discovery

is a new addition to the public relations and image management literature. More to the

point, through a combination of future descriptive and empirical research, the

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pertinacious image concept has the potential to become a new image management theory – thus answering the call for more public relations theory development.

The final reason is a bit more pragmatic. As public relations scholars and practitioners, we were taught to always promote a positive image for our client or organization – or, at the very least, try to downplay a negative image if our client or organization did something wrong. This dissertation's findings suggest that it might, in some cases, be more profitable to promote an undesired image than to try to promote the old image that may no longer be viable or cannot be leveraged in the marketplace. Essentially, the pertinacious image concept redresses traditional assumptions found in the current image management literature and how traditional image management is practiced in the marketplace. Simply put, this is the first study that really examines and advances the idea of promoting and leveraging an undesired image for profitable gain.

This dissertation advances an idea that contradicts what many public relations scholars and practitioners would advise their students, clients and organizations against doing – leveraging a pertinacious image for profitable gain. In fact, many of the interviewees for this dissertation acknowledged that athletes do leverage their own pertinacious image. However, none of the interviewees wanted to be associated with such a practice (i.e., helping the athlete promote and leverage a pertinacious image). This is an interesting revelation, but not surprising.

It is interesting from the standpoint that many of the interviewees acknowledged that both the term (pertinacious image) and the practice (leveraging a negative image) exists within their respective sports. But, again, it was not surprising that most of the interviewees (and colleagues they knew) said that they did not want to be associated with

promoting something negative or at least be seen as someone who contributed to promoting something negative – especially because most of these interviewees represented their employer (i.e., the team) first and the athlete second. There were only two interviewees who did admit that if they worked for the athlete and not the team, they might consider promoting an athlete's pertinacious image. However, for the majority of the other interviewees, the practice of promoting and leveraging a pertinacious image bordered along ethical lines and common decency.

Due to the exploratory nature of this dissertation (i.e., searching for the existence of pertinacious image), it was necessary to examine the image management literature and to identify/review some of the theories that might explain the process that could lead to a pertinacious image. This dissertation reviewed agenda-setting theory (McCombs & Shaw, 1972), media dependency theory (Ball-Rokeach & DeFleur, 1976), image repair theory (Benoit, 1995), situational crisis communication theory (Coombs & Holladay, 2002), and contingency theory (Cancel, Cameron, Sallot & Mitrook, 1997).

Agenda-setting theory was examined because in the pertinacious image model a salient audience relies on media to report on an offender's actions. In this instance, a salient audience sees/hears the news regarding the offensive act for the first time or they may have some prior knowledge, either way, a salient audience will rely on the media to provide them with information to make an informed decision about the offender. This is particularly important because how the offensive act is reported (tone) or positioned (how frequently it is repeated) will have an effect on what people think about the offender now and in the future. This dissertation's findings suggest that agenda-setting could have a

significant impact on how a practitioner could leverage a client's (athlete's) pertinacious image.

Closely associated with agenda-setting is media dependency theory. Media dependency stems from the idea that individuals rely on the media to satisfy their information needs and, in the case of ambiguous (the result of insufficient or conflicting) information, individuals turn to the media seeking resolution as to what to think. Media dependency theory is important to a pertinacious image model because a salient audience seeking more information may rely on the media to tell them what to think about the offender. If the individual accepts (or, in this case, if the individual's information needs are met) the media's report (portrayal) about the offender's actions, it may lead to a pertinacious image of the offender.

While image repair theory and situational crisis communication theory contradict what this dissertation advances – leveraging a pertinacious image – both theories were necessarily reviewed because they offer an alternative for practitioners who do not wish to promote a pertinacious image.

"It depends" is the moniker of contingency theory. With that in mind, contingency theory is important to a pertinacious image model because it helps explain the variation (it depends) in stances that can occur when practitioners try to promote and leverage a pertinacious image. Essentially, contingency theory discusses how practitioners can relate to their publics through a given stance depending on the crisis situation. In the case where an athlete has a pertinacious image, depending on the situation or the factors involved, the practitioner can leverage (take a particular stance) the athlete's pertinacious image among many different publics.

Constant comparative method was useful for this particular study because it allowed me to engage in theoretical sense-making as I mined the data for clues about pertinacious image. The method not only helped me identify the categories and properties of a pertinacious image, but also the dimensions along a continuum in which the concept operates. This is important to note because having a better understanding of the dimensions of a pertinacious image will help further assist in pertinacious image theory development. For example, in identifying the categories, properties and dimensions of a desirable negative image and a marketable negative image the method took me far beyond what I had originally conceived pertinacious image to be. One of the things the data uncovered, with regards to desirable negative image, was that the positivity and negativity of an image depends on which side of the fence you are on. For example, a football player might be adored by his fans for some of his "hard-nosed" play on the field, which is seen by his fans a positive. However, opposing fans might see his hard-nosed play as being a "dirty player," which can be seen as a negative by those fans.

Another interesting find was that when there is too much of a desirable negative image it can get out of control. One respondent used former NBA player Dennis Rodman as an example. He said, "He [Rodman] became a marketable figure because of it [his negative image]. But then, he went way over the edge…He became a crazy guy after that…He got out of control and it showed." This is an example of trying to leverage a pertinacious image to the extreme – extreme to the point where even the pertinacious image is no longer marketable.

With regards to an athlete trying to market a negative image, the data outlined three different lessons that can be learned. First, marketing a negative image will most

likely restrict one's ability to be strategic. One respondent illustrated this point when he said, "When you have that negative image, you paint yourself in a corner. You don't have as broad a brush to play with opposed to someone with a very positive image." The second lesson related to the idea of "instances of negative marketability." It redressed my notion of continual leverage of a negative image for profitable gain. The third lesson was linked to the idea that trying hard to force a positive image can actually result in a negative undesirable image. This is why it would be wise to think in terms of shaping an image and not forcing an image.

Another really valuable asset in the CCM method, in addition to identifying the categories, properties and dimension, was asking the question of "With what consequence[s] does [the category] occur or is [the category] understood [or are contradictions apparent]? because it led to ways of thinking and perception of image never imagined by me before.

There were other findings that urged me to reexamine the pertinacious image model offered in this dissertation in several different ways. The first area to consider starts at the base of my model with the "individual's current image." The individual's current image could be considered inherently conflictual because of questions of which "image" is the "current" one, the image that the fan holds of the athlete (i.e., maybe the fan has put that athlete on a pedestal) or the image that the athlete holds of him/herself. And, of course, agenda-setting theory and media dependency theory suggest all this is mitigated by media reporting and fan need for "satisfying" information.

Another important area to address is redefining what is considered to be non-traditional media forms. Several respondents suggested that both athletes and fans should

be considered non-traditional media forms. For example, athletes use Twitter to tweet (i.e., tell a story) about their lives and use a phone or computer as the vehicle to interact directly with fans. We see a similar process occur in traditional media. The idea that fans could be considered "media" seems foreign to many formerly "trained" journalists. However, if a fan takes a picture with a camera phone and uploads the image along with a blog to a Web site and other interested individuals read it, it could be argued that the journalistic process is similar, minus the third-party editing (i.e., a news editor) and the journalistic code of ethics. This redresses traditional notions of media as generally articulated by agenda-setting theorists among others.

One thing that respondents identified that is not accounted for in the model is how a salient audience determines if an offending individual's image is negative or not. For example, say an athlete commits adultery or is arrested for drunk driving. While many people would say that would give that individual a negative image, others might not see it as negative because they can relate to or identify with it. Maybe they themselves are guilty of the same thing. The key here might be image identification (i.e., how and if one identifies with an image). To further illustrate this point, many respondents said that there is a certain segment of the population who likes and can identify with the "bad boy" image (i.e., they like the villain). Many respondents used the Oakland Raiders, the 1980s Detroit Pistons, NASCAR drivers Tony Stewart and Kyle Busch, and NFL player Terrell Owens as examples of being able to identify with this image. Along these same lines, I used the example earlier in this discussion section about the difference between a "hard-nosed player" and a "dirty player." The difference between the two depends upon which side of the fence one sits.

Another very interesting concept that emerged from the data and one that is not accounted for in the model is what I would consider media agenda-setting with regards to athlete likability. Several respondents alluded to the fact that if the media likes the athlete, they might get a proverbial "hall pass" when something goes wrong (i.e., the media won't publicly bury the athlete by the way he covers the athlete's indiscretion). The media may like an athlete if the athlete is always accessible for a quote before and after a game (win or lose, hero or goat) or if the athlete just treats the media member well (i.e., treats him like a professional and does not blow him off). If the athlete does these things, one respondent said it was like, "putting a deposit of goodwill in the bank." However, if the athlete mistreats the media member, is never available or blows that media member off, respondents said that athlete is more likely to have negative things written about him. Again, here is where media agenda-setting plays a role in image building.

Similarly, another discovery this dissertation uncovered, but is not accounted for in the model, is whether or not the media likes or trusts the public relations person (for many of the same reasons as the athlete). Some respondents suggested that if the public relations practitioner had a good relationship with or was trusted by the media, the practitioner had a better chance of getting things covered, or getting things covered the way he or she would like them covered. This dynamic is known as agenda-building. Curtin (1999) put it this way, "should journalists start to view practitioners as cohorts in news production rather than as obstructionists, the chances increase that public relations practitioners may contribute to the media agenda, thus ultimately shaping the public agenda – a process known as agenda building" (p. 54). Kiousis, Popescu, and Mitrook

(2007), added "that the relationship between public relations professionals and journalists is not unidirectional" (p. 150). Because this relationship is not unidirectional, through agenda-building, the practitioner can ultimately become a significant contributor and influencer of public opinion with the media's help. More to the point, this relational dynamic (between practitioner and journalist) could ultimately help the practitioner better position his/her client (i.e., an athlete with a pertinacious image) in the public's mind.

Another shortcoming of the model is that it does not consider what happens when the traditional media is considered a salient audience. For example, if an athlete does something bad, but the media likes that athlete and they choose not to write anything about what happened, I would argue that the media has become a salient audience. One respondent offered this example,

> George Brett on the other hand, because of what he brought to the city, got a hall pass with the media. [He] tore Jack Harry's producer up one side and down the other with an F bomb laced tirade three months ago, May the 6th I believe was the date, got a hall pass for it, because he's George Brett. The media gave him a hall pass plus the fans gave him a hall pass…George Brett, all the media come on and said 'that's George, that's ok. I love George.' He was right in everything he said. Why does he get a hall pass and Jose [Guillen] doesn't?

Understanding the media as a salient audience is another way traditional conceptions of agenda-setting theory are redressed.

Another question is what happens when the team's public relations practitioner is not the only individual to determine how and if an athlete's pertinacious image is marketable? This is not addressed in the model. The data identified at least six (the athlete him/herself, the athlete's agent, the athlete's personal public relations person, the team owner, the sponsor, and an athlete's family) other potentially key players in making this determination. To better answer this question, one of the next steps in this area of

research is to interview the athlete, the athlete's agent, and the athlete's personal public relations person with regards to pertinacious image.

The model does not address what happens when the pertinacious image is found to be a contradictory image. For example, at times the athlete's image might sell tickets, but a sponsor does not like it, or fans like and can identify with the pertinacious image, but the team's public relations practitioner does not.

These are just a few of the areas that the model needs to address in the future. My rendering of a new pertinacious image model would also incorporate some of the information found in the areas of desirable negative image and marketable negative image.

Future research could also examine a case study where one leveraged a pertinacious image and then tried to backtrack to a clean image. Now that some time has passed since the Kobe Bryant rape case, it would be interesting to do a follow-up case study to see if Bryant has tried to revert back toward the image he had before the rape allegations. More specifically, it would be interesting to see if one can have a largely positive public image, then fall from grace, leverage the new pertinacious image, and then over time revert back to leveraging the image they had before the transgression (actually or allegedly) occurred. The documented dynamism of stance in the contingency literature certainly suggests this scenario is possible, if not likely.

The results of this dissertation might suggest some gender inequity exists with regards to men versus women leveraging a pertinacious image. The interviewees' answers to the research questions necessarily included largely male only examples/answers. I would argue that the reason for this is because those interviewed for

this dissertation were public relations practitioners employed by male professional sports franchises – save auto racing (which has less than five female competitors). As a result, these practitioners' responses were more likely to produce examples using men rather than women. However, if this study was extended to the entertainment (music and film) industry, the results might be different in regards to gender issues. With that in mind, examining pertinacious image in the entertainment industry seems to be a logical next step in advancing the pertinacious image concept.

Another area in which to further investigate the existence of pertinacious image is public affairs/politics. In an arena where the public's opinion about a candidate/incumbent is vital to whether or not that individual is elected or remains in office, it seems prudent to study how or if that official could leverage a pertinacious image and still accomplish election goals.

On a concluding note, one of the overarching weaknesses of this study is that I interviewed public relations practitioners whose priority was to represent the team's best interest first and the athlete's interests second. In the future, I would interview the athlete's personal public relations practitioner or agent who represents the athlete specifically. This has the potential to produce a richly different set of data. The lack of clear support to some answers found in the research questions may have been the result of how the interview questions were asked, phrased or positioned within the depth interview process. This could be considered another weakness in this study. Regardless, this study was highly valuable because it did, indeed, discover the existence of pertinacious image.

Appendix A
Example Letter for Participants

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CENTRAL
MISSOURI.

Department of Communication
Martin Building 136
Warrensburg, MO 64093
(660) 543-4840 phone
(660) 543-8006 fax
http://ucmo.edu/comm

Oct. 21, 2009

Dear   ,

The reason I am e-mailing you is to find out if you would be willing to be an interviewee for my dissertation. Unfortunately, I cannot tell you exactly what the dissertation is about because, if you agree to be an interviewee, I don't want your knowledge of what I am trying to find cloud the answers you may give. However, what I can tell you is that it is about image and how it relates to professional athletes. I chose to contact you given your significant experience with high profile athletes. I believe that you can provide some valuable insight into my area of study. The interview should only take about one to two hours - depending on the depth of your answers. Would you be willing to be interviewed for my dissertation?

Let me briefly explain my background. This may help you better understand where I am coming from with regards to my dissertation. I have spent the past 16 years working in college and professional sports as either a broadcaster or a PR rep. Currently, in addition to being a Ph.D. student, I am also a full-time university professor (I teach public relations) and a motorsports PR rep for Alex Job Racing, TRG, the SPEED World Challenge series, and the Muscle Milk Trans-Am series.

I also have one other request. As you may have guessed, I am in the process or recruiting subjects for my dissertation. More specifically, I am trying to recruit sports PR practitioners with more than 10 years experience dealing directly with professional athletes. With that in mind, do you know of any PR practitioners who would be willing to participate as interviewees for my dissertation and, if so, would you be willing to send me their contact info?

Adam E. Horn

Adam E. Horn

Appendix B

Moderately Scheduled Interview Guide:
Used in part or in full with each interviewee

General Image Questions

1. With regards to how people perceive someone famous (i.e., an athlete) how would you define "image?"

2. What makes an image marketable?

3. How would you describe a positive image?

    a. What types of things contribute to an athlete's positive image?

4. Is a positive image the same thing as a desirable image when it comes to marketability?

    a. Can you have an undesirable positive image?

5. How would you describe a negative image?

    a. What types of things contribute to an athlete's negative image?

    b. Are negative images always undesirable? Why or Why not? Explain.

    c. Can you have a desirable negative image? Why or Why not? Explain.

    d. Can a negative image be marketable? Why or Why not? Explain.

6. In your experience, has anyone ever been able to take a negative image and use it for profitable gain? In other words, found the negative image marketable.

    a. Can you describe what occurred?

    b. What made the image, in that case, marketable?

Social Transgression Questions

1. How would you define the term social transgression (i.e., what qualities make up a social transgression)?

Break the Law Questions

1. When you hear the term "break the law" what types of things come to mind (i.e., how would you define break the law)?

2. With regards to one's image, can breaking a certain law (i.e., burglary, murder, rape) have an enduring negative effect on that person's image?

   a. If so, which broken laws have a more negative impact on one's image than other laws, if any?

   b. Which broken laws have the biggest impact on one's image?

3. Would you consider breaking the law a social transgression (i.e., are those who break the law committing a social transgression?)? Why or why not? Explain.

Social Norms Questions

1. When you hear the phrase "social norms" what comes to mind (i.e., how would you define social norms)?

2. With regards to one's image, can violating a social norm have an enduring negative effect on that person's image?

   a. If so, which social norm violations have a more negative impact on one's image than other social norm violations?

   b. Which social norm violations have the biggest impact on one's image?

3. Would you consider social norm violations a social transgression (i.e., are those who violate social norms committing a social transgression?)? Why or why not? Explain.

Character Issue Questions

1. When you hear the term "character" what comes to mind?

2. With regards to one's character, can demonstrating poor character have a negative effect on that person's image?

3. What do you consider demonstrating poor character?

   a. Which character traits have a more negative impact on one's image than other character traits?

   b. Which character traits have the biggest impact on one's image?

4. Would you consider character issues a social transgression (i.e., are those who demonstrate poor character committing a social transgression?)? Why or why not? Explain.

Media Questions

1. With regards to an athlete's image, what roles do the media play?

2. Media agenda-setting is when the media does not necessarily tell the public what to think, but rather they tell them what to think about (i.e., they don't tell the public that the athlete is a rapist, but rather they tell the public that the athlete is accused of rape). With regards to an athlete's image, to what extent do you believe media agenda-setting plays a role in shaping an athlete's image?

3. Media dependency occurs when an individual does not know enough about a situation or does not have the time to independently research (i.e., take time to find out more about) a situation. When this occurs, the individual relies on the media to tell them what to think. With regards to an athlete's image, to what extent do you believe individuals seek out the media's opinion about an athlete and subsequently what to think about the athlete?

4. To what degree do the media shape an athlete's image?

    a. Is there a traditional news medium (i.e., newspaper, television, radio, magazine, Internet news site) that shapes an athlete's image more than another? Why? Explain.

    b. Is there a non-traditional news medium (i.e., social media, online discussion groups, online bulletin boards, Facebook, Twitter, YouTube) that shapes an athlete's image more than another? Why? Explain.

    c. Based on your experience, of all the media forms (traditional and non-traditional), which type of media has the biggest impact in shaping an athlete's image. Why? Explain.

    d. Based on your experience, of all the media forms (traditional and non-traditional), which type of media has the least impact in shaping an athlete's image. Why? Explain.

5. With regards to interacting with the media, what role does the PR practitioner play in helping shape the athlete's image?

    a. Which types of media do you use most to help shape an athlete's image? Why? Explain.

b. Which form of media have you had the most success with? Why? Explain.

c. To what degree do personal relationships with media members play in helping shape an athlete's image?

d. Can you describe an instance when you had an athlete who had a positive image and, then due to something he/she did, then they ended up with a negative image and you used your personal relationship with a media member to help shape the image the way you wanted to? Explain.

e. What tactics or "tricks of the trade" do you use to influence how the media conveys your message appropriately (i.e., how you want them to) to your desired audience?

  i. At a tactical level, have you had much success in influencing the media to convey the message you want conveyed to your desired audience. Why or why not? Explain.

f. What are the pros to using traditional media to help shape an athlete's image?

g. What are the cons to using traditional media to help shape an athlete's image?

h. What are the pros to using non-traditional media to help shape an athlete's image?

i. What are the cons to using non-traditional media to help shape an athlete's image?

6. What barriers exist between the PR practitioner and the media when trying to reach a desired audience?

7. With regards to trying to reach a desired audience, what methods do you use to try to reach them directly? In other words, how do you go about reaching a desired audience without using traditional media forms? Explain.

a. In your opinion, have you had much success with reaching a desired audience without the traditional media's help? Why or why not? Explain.

8. What barriers exist between the PR practitioner and the audience when trying to reach the audience with a desired message?

9. In your opinion, what is the most effective way to reach a desired audience? Why? Explain.

10. When you are trying to shape your athlete's image, at what point do you realize that your desired message is getting through to a desired audience? Explain.

   a. At this point, what do you do tactically?

      i. Do you continue to use all media forms to continue reinforcing the desired message?

      ii. Or, do you use only selected (i.e., one or two types) media forms to continue reinforcing the desired message?

      iii. Or, do you stop reinforcing the message altogether figuring the desired message has been received and that desired audience sides with you and your athlete?

Image Repair/Crisis Response Strategies/Contingency Theory Questions

1. As it pertains to an athlete, how would you define a crisis? Put another way, what defines a crisis where an athlete is concerned?

   a. Some scholars have developed a matrix that matches the type of crisis with the appropriate response strategy or strategies. Do you or your organization use a similar matrix when dealing with athletes? If so, how is it used or implemented? If not, why don't you use one?

2. As it pertains to an athlete, under what circumstances (i.e., what type of crisis/transgression would the athlete have to commit) would you consider engaging in image repair on behalf of the athlete?

   a. How would you define an image repair process?

   b. What are the determining factors that warrant an image repair effort?

   c. For the most part, what do your image repair efforts consist of (i.e., what do you do?)

   d. Who determines if an image repair effort is warranted? You? Or the organization? The athlete? Why? Explain.

   e. What are the factors that determine whether you engage in an image repair effort on behalf of the athlete?

   f. Assuming that you had an athlete who had a fairly good positive public image prior to that athlete committing some type of offensive act, have you ever

considered not attempting to repair an athlete's image to its former state, but rather promote and leverage the new image based on the offensive act?

    i.   If not, why not?

    ii.   If not, are there circumstances under which you would consider promoting the new image based on the offensive act?

    iii.   Or if so, explain.

3.   When an athlete commits some type of offensive act, who determines what stance or stances the organization takes on behalf of the athlete with regards to the public?

    a.   What factors determine what stance or stances the organization takes?

    b.   What publics are considered when determining the stance?

        i.   To what degree is the audience taken into account when determining what stance to take?

Pertinacious Image Questions

Some practitioners believe that one's image is a dynamic ever-changing, ever-developing thing (i.e., a person's image is not static, it can and does change). With that in mind, I am examining a concept called pertinacious image. I've defined pertinacious image as an image that is "perversely" persistent. An image that is perversely persistent is grounded in the quality of being "turned around from what is right or good" or "obstinate in opposing what is right, reasonable or accepted." For example, if an athlete who has enjoyed a largely positive public image is suddenly accused of murder, that individual is forever going to be known as a murderer which leads to a largely negative image. (i.e., O.J. Simpson was accused and tried for murder, but was not convicted in a court of law for the crime but appears to have been convicted by the court of public opinion). When one is saddled with a "pertinacious image" it means that he or she is essentially "stuck" with some semblance of that negative image forever – even if the individual makes his or her best efforts to overcome that negative image through future good deeds. The notion that someone has a negative image "forever" counters the belief that one's image is not static and that it is ever-changing, ever-developing (i.e., how can one have a negative image forever, if one's image is not static?).

1.   Based on your experience, what do you believe about the pertinacious image concept (i.e., Do you agree with it? Do you disagree with it)?

    a.   If you don't agree, why not? Explain.

    b.   If you do agree, why? Explain.

i. When an athlete appears to be saddled with a "pertinacious image," what do you do? Do you try to repair the athlete's image to it pre-pertinacious state? Or, depending on the situation/circumstances, do you try to promote and leverage the new pertinacious image?

2. Based on your experience, do you foresee a situation where it would be beneficial to the athlete and/or the organization to promote the pertinacious image?

   a. If not, why not? Explain.

   b. If so, why? Explain.

3. As a PR practitioner, would you ever consider promoting and leveraging an athlete's pertinacious image?

   a. If not, why not? Explain.

   b. If so, why? Explain.

      i. Strategically how would you go about accomplishing this? Explain.

4. Is there another more commonly used term in the industry that better describes the idea of pertinacious image?

Thank you for your time

Coded Units of Analysis Example

6KC-1.	General Image Questions
6KC-2.	7. With regards to how people perceive someone famous (i.e., an athlete) how would you define "image?"
6KC-3.	To me, and basically in my experience, image is how your public perceives you.
6KC-4.	You can craft that image.
6KC-5.	Or, I think, most people just wing it.
6KC-6.	Some of its based on personality.
6KC-7.	If you're running for president, that image carefully crafted.
6KC-8.	You look at somebody like Kyle Busch, for example, I think his image is pushed by his personality, which some people like and some people don't.
6KC-9.	8. What makes an image marketable?
6KC-10.	In my line of business, it can go either way. Some of it can be the nice guy, which could be almost a negative like Jimmie Johnson, for example. He's the best driver in NASCAR. He's leading the points now. He's working on his fourth championship in. And, he's viewed as a nice guy – middle-of-the-road, not controversial not necessarily a fan favorite.
6KC-11.	You look a Kyle Busch and some people love him. Some people hate him, like old Dale Earnhardt Sr. Some people loved him [Earnhardt], some people hated him. The guys on the other side – like a Kyle Busch or a Dale Earnhardt – didn't care who they made angry with some of their comments. They just went off and said it.
6KC-12.	I think Jimmie Johnson, or his type, and Kyle's brother Kurt [Busch] have come to the realization that they put a lot of thought into what they say. They won't make a whole lot of waves. They're very sponsor friendly and they've been very successful doing it that way. Kyle Busch wins races. He does his talking on the track, he says.
6KC-13.	9. How would you describe a positive image?
6KC-14.	It's in the eye or ear of the audience. Some people take things different ways.
6KC-15.	You know in politics, for example, if politicians are saying what the unions want to hear that is positive. On the other side, if you are a non-union person, that wouldn't be so positive.
6KC-16.	At some point you've got to take a stand for what you believe in as an individual or a company and push that agenda. And, of course craft, most of those types of agendas have to be crafted and carefully thought out.
6KC-17.	The people who speak on behalf of that person, that company or that sponsor has to be educated to deliver that message.

Appendix D

Coding Guide Matrix

Categories of analytic entry	Code	Location	Code	Location
What is a desirable negative image?	somewhat desirable	5KR-62	Dennis Rodman jumps to mind as a guy who became a cartoon character after a while. People are going to remember him as a fantastic defensive player, a great rebounder and a tough guy. He can go to the Hall of Fame without having ever scored 100 points in his career. Obviously that's an exaggeration. He has a desirable impact on a team and, frankly, gave that team the image "bad boys." He was every bit the leader of that group - him and Bill Laimbeer. They won championships because of it. I think in some respects, yes. He [Rodman] became a marketable figure because of it [his negative image]. But then, he went way over the edge.	5KR-63
When does a desirable negative image occur?	when a bad boy image is carefully crafted	5KR-66		
Where does a desirable negative image occur?	within the team and on the field	5KR-63		
Why does a desirable negative image occur?				
How does a	strategically	5KR-66		

desirable negative image occur?	and through carefully defined professional boundaries				
With what consequence[s] does a desirable negative image occur or is a desirable negative image understood [or are contradictions apparent]?	it can go too far	5KR-65	he [Rodman] became a crazy guy after that. When you learn about arrests and disturbing the peace and those kinds of things, it [his image] kind of changed. He got out of control and it showed.		5KR-65

Categories of analytic entry	**Code**	**Location**	**Code**	**Location**	**Code**
What is a marketable negative image?	something usable	5KR-67			
When does marketable negative image occur?	when an athlete's image has been damaged, he then participates in the conversation with the harmed parties about preventing future damages that can be leveraged for the athlete's future game	5KR-69	If he [Vick] tows the line, works hard and continues to do well with Humane Society then yes he will [get endorsement deals] if his career last long enough. He could end up getting those again.	5KR-72	I think Terrell Owens is an example. He is definitely gaining financially. There were some times where it was looking rough. He helped blow up the Eagles after having such a destructive end to his run here in San Francisco. I wouldn't have thought most people would have gone near him. But, he

					has clearly done fine from a financial standpoint. Not only in his playing contracts, that are as much to do with his skills on the field as anything else, but he also lands commercials. He lands reality shows. And, it's all based on the fact that he's a controversial figure.
Where does a marketable negative image occur?	on the field where the player is exceedingly good	5KR-81			
Why does a marketable negative image occur?	because an agent or an athlete strategically engages the negativity	5KR-69 - 5KR-72	people want to see the train wreck	5KR-76	
How does a marketable negative image occur?					
With what consequence[s] does a marketable negative image occur or is a marketable negative image understood [or					

are contradictions apparent]?					

Appendix E

The Open Coding Matrix for Purposes and Research Questions

Purposes	General image questions	Categories of analytic entry
Purpose 1: To discover if the idea of a pertinacious image that may be leveraged for profitable gain, exists among the selected research participants. Purpose 2: To develop general descriptions of pertinacious image that may be compared to the model articulated here.	With regards to how people perceive someone famous (i.e., an athlete) how would you define "image?"	What is image? When does image occur? Where does image occur? Why does image occur? How does image occur? With what consequence[s] does image occur or is image understood [or are contradictions apparent]?

Purposes	General image questions	Categories of analytic entry
Purpose 1: To discover if the idea of a pertinacious image that may be leveraged for profitable gain, exists among the selected research participants. Purpose 2: To develop general descriptions of pertinacious image that may be compared to the model articulated here.	What makes an image marketable?	What is image marketability? When does image marketability occur? Where does image marketability occur? Why does image marketability occur? How does image marketability occur? With what consequence[s] does image marketability occur or is image marketability understood [or are contradictions apparent]?

Purposes	General image questions	Categories of analytic entry
Purpose 1: To discover if the idea of a pertinacious image that may be leveraged for	How would you describe a positive image? What types of things	What is a positive image? When does a positive image occur?

Purposes	General image questions	Categories of analytic entry
profitable gain, exists among the selected research participants. Purpose 2: To develop general descriptions of pertinacious image that may be compared to the model articulated here.	contribute to an athlete's positive image? Is a positive image the same thing as a desirable image when it comes to marketability?	Where does a positive image occur? Why does a positive image occur? How does a positive image occur? With what consequence[s] does a positive image occur or is a positive image understood [or are contradictions apparent]?

Purposes	General image questions	Categories of analytic entry
Purpose 1: To discover if the idea of a pertinacious image that may be leveraged for profitable gain, exists among the selected research participants. Purpose 2: To develop general descriptions of pertinacious image that may be compared to the model articulated here.	Can you have an undesirable positive image?	What is an undesirable positive image? When does an undesirable positive image occur? Where does an undesirable positive image occur? Why does an undesirable positive image occur? How does an undesirable positive image occur? With what consequence[s] does an undesirable positive image occur or is an undesirable positive image understood [or are contradictions apparent]?

Purposes	General image questions	Categories of analytic entry
Purpose 1: To discover if the idea of a pertinacious image that may be leveraged for profitable gain, exists among the selected	How would you describe a negative image? What types of things contribute to an athlete's negative image?	What is a negative image? When does a negative image occur? Where does a negative image

		occur?
research participants. Purpose 2: To develop general descriptions of pertinacious image that may be compared to the model articulated here.	Are negative images always undesirable? Why or Why not? Explain.	Why does a negative image occur? How does a negative image occur? With what consequence[s] does a negative image occur or is a negative image understood [or are contradictions apparent]?

Purposes	General image questions	Categories of analytic entry
Purpose 1: To discover if the idea of a pertinacious image that may be leveraged for profitable gain, exists among the selected research participants. Purpose 2: To develop general descriptions of pertinacious image that may be compared to the model articulated here.	Can you have a desirable negative image? Why or Why not? Explain.	What is a desirable negative image? When does a desirable negative image occur? Where does a desirable negative image occur? Why does a desirable negative image occur? How does a desirable negative image occur? With what consequence[s] does a desirable negative image occur or is a desirable negative image understood [or are contradictions apparent]?

Purposes	General image questions	Categories of analytic entry
Purpose 1: To discover if the idea of a pertinacious image that may be leveraged for profitable gain, exists among the selected research participants.	Can a negative image be marketable? Why or Why not? Explain. In your experience, has anyone ever been able to take a negative image and use it for profitable gain? In	What is a marketable negative image? When does a marketable negative image occur? Where does a marketable negative image occur?

| Purpose 2: To develop general descriptions of pertinacious image that may be compared to the model articulated here. | other words, found the negative image marketable.

Assuming that you had an athlete who had a fairly good positive public image prior to that athlete committing some type of offensive act, have you ever considered not attempting to repair an athlete's image to its former state, but rather promote and leverage the new image based on the offensive act? | Why does a marketable negative image occur?

How does a marketable negative image occur?

With what consequence[s] does a marketable negative image occur or is a marketable negative image understood [or are contradictions apparent]? |

Research Questions	Social norm questions	Categories of analytic entry
RQ1: If the idea of pertinacious image does exist, is the social transgression of violating social norms supported as a contributor? RQ 1a: If the social transgression of violating social norms is supported, in what recognizable ways is that articulated?	When you hear the phrase "social norms" what comes to mind? Can violating a social norm have an enduring negative effect on that person's image? Which social norm violations have a more negative impact on one's image than other social norm violations? Which social norm violations have the biggest impact on one's image? Would you consider social norm violations a social transgression?	What are violated social norms? When do violated social norms occur? Where do violated social norms occur? Why do violated social norms occur? How do violated social norms occur? With what consequence[s] do violated social norms occur or are violated social norms understood [or are contradictions apparent]?

Purposes	Break the law Questions	Categories of analytic entry
RQ 2: If the idea of pertinacious image does exist, is the social transgression of breaking the law	When you hear the term "break the law" what types of things come to mind? Can breaking a certain law	What is breaking the law or governing rules? When does breaking the law or governing rules occur?

| (governing rule) supported as a contributor?

RQ2a: If the social transgression of breaking the law (governing rules) is supported, in what recognizable ways is that articulated? | have an enduring negative effect on that person's image?

If so, which broken laws have a more negative impact on one's image than other laws, if any?

Which broken laws have the biggest impact on one's image?

Would you consider breaking the law a social transgression? | Where does breaking the law or governing rules occur?

Why does breaking the law or governing rules occur?

How does breaking the law or governing rules occur?

With what consequence[s] does breaking the law or governing rules occur or is breaking the law or governing rules understood [or are contradictions apparent]? |
|---|---|---|

Purposes	**Character questions**	**Categories of analytic entry**
RQ3: If the idea of pertinacious image does exist, is the social transgression of developing character issues supported as a contributor?

RQ3a: If the social transgression of developing character issues is supported, in what recognizable ways is that articulated? | When you hear the term "character" what comes to mind?

Can demonstrating poor character have a negative effect on that person's image?

What do you consider demonstrating poor character?

Which character traits have a more negative impact on one's image than other character traits?

Which character traits have the biggest impact on one's image?

Would you consider character issues a social transgression? | What is character?

When does character occur?

Where does character occur?

Why does character occur?

How does character occur?

With what consequence[s] does character occur or is character understood [or are contradictions apparent]? |

Purposes	**Media questions**	**Categories of analytic entry**

RQ4: What role does the media play in setting the agenda for the possibility of a pertinacious image?	With regards to an athlete's image, what roles do the media play? To what extent do you believe media agenda-setting plays a role in shaping an athlete's image?	What role does media play in setting an agenda for image? When does the media play a role in setting an agenda for an image to occur? Where does the media play a role in setting an agenda for an image to occur? Why does the media play a role in setting an agenda for an image to occur? How does the media play a role in setting an agenda for an image to occur? With what consequence[s] does the media play a role in setting an agenda for an image to occur or is the media play a role in setting an agenda for an image understood [or are contradictions apparent]?

Purposes	Media questions	Categories of analytic entry
RQ5: In what ways is pertinacious image dependent on a salient audience's encounters with media messages?	To what extent do you believe individuals seek out the media's opinion about an athlete and subsequently what to think about the athlete? To what degree do the media shape an athlete's image?	What are media messages that an audience receives? When do media messages, received by the audience, occur? Where do media messages, received by the audience, occur? Why do media messages, received by the audience, occur? How do media messages, received by the audience,

		occur?
		With what consequence[s] do media messages, received by the audience, occur or are media messages, received by the audience, understood [or are contradictions apparent]?

Purposes	Media questions	Categories of analytic entry
RQ6: What assumptions do sports PR practitioners hold about the ability and need to manage an athlete's image?	With regards to interacting with the media, what role does the PR practitioner play in helping shape the athlete's image? Which types of media do you use most to help shape an athlete's image? Why? Explain. To what degree do personal relationships with media members play in helping shape an athlete's image? Can you describe an instance when you had an athlete who had a positive image and then they ended up with a negative image and you used your personal relationship with a media member to help shape the image the way you wanted to?	What are sports PR practitioner's assumptions about the ability and need to manage an athlete's image? When do sports PR practitioner's assumptions about the ability and need to manage an athlete's image occur? Where do sports PR practitioner's assumptions about the ability and need to manage an athlete's image occur? Why do sports PR practitioner's assumptions about the ability and need to manage an athlete's image occur? How do sports PR practitioner's assumptions about the ability and need to manage an athlete's image occur? With what consequence[s] do sports PR practitioner's assumptions about the ability and need to manage an athlete's image occur or are sports PR practitioner's assumptions about the ability

		and need to manage an athlete's image understood [or are contradictions apparent]?

Purposes	Image repair questions	Categories of analytic entry
RQ7: Is it possible, that the act of engaging a pertinacious image for profitable gain is really a strategy to repair the image at a meta-level to an image perceived as desirable because it is profitable?	As it pertains to an athlete, under what circumstances would you consider engaging in image repair on behalf of the athlete? How would you define an image repair process? What are the determining factors that warrant an image repair effort? For the most part, what do you image repair efforts consist of? Who determines if an image repair effort is warranted? You? Or the organization? The athlete? Why? Explain. What are the factors that determine whether you engage in an image repair effort on behalf of the athlete?	What is image repair? When does image repair occur? Where does image repair occur? Why does image repair occur? How does image repair occur? With what consequence[s] does image repair occur or is image repair understood [or are contradictions apparent]?

Purposes	Crisis response questions	Categories of analytic entry
RQ8: Is it possible, that the act of engaging a pertinacious image for profitable gain is really an act to match the appropriate crisis response strategy with the crisis type in an effort to repair the image at a meta-level to an image perceived as	Some scholars have developed a matrix that matches the type of crisis with the appropriate response strategy or strategies. Do you or your organization use a similar matrix when dealing with athletes? If so, how is it used or implemented? If not, why don't you use	What is a systematic image repair process? When does a systematic image repair process occur? Where does a systematic image repair process occur? Why does a systematic image repair process occur?

desirable because it is profitable?	one?	How does a systematic image repair process occur? With what consequence[s] does a systematic image repair process occur or is a systematic image repair process understood [or are contradictions apparent]?

Purposes	Stance questions	Categories of analytic entry
RQ9: Is it possible, that the act of engaging a pertinacious image for profitable gain is a series of posturing through selected stances to relate to a salient audience?	When an athlete commits some type of offensive act, who determines what stance or stances the organization takes on behalf of the athlete with regards to the public? What factors determine what stance or stances the organization takes? What publics are considered when determining the stance? To what degree is the audience taken into account when determining what stance to take?	What are stances in relation to relating to a salient audience? When do stances in relation to relating to a salient audience occur? Where do stances in relation to relating to a salient audience occur? Why do stances in relation to relating to a salient audience occur? How do stances in relation to relating to a salient audience occur? With what consequence[s] do stances in relation to relating to a salient audience occur or are stances in relation to relating to a salient audience understood [or are contradictions apparent]?

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