

SAVING PAR: AN ANALYSIS OF TIGER WOODS' IMAGE RESTORATION EFFORTS IN  
RESPONSE TO ALLEGATIONS OF MARITAL INFIDELITIES

A Thesis by

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The following faculty members have examined the final copy of this thesis for form and content, and recommend that it be accepted in partial fulfillment of the requirement for the degree of Master of Arts, with a major in Communication.

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## DEDICATION

To my parents

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## ABSTRACT

This research describes and analyzes the rhetorical choices made by Tiger Woods in response to the allegations of marital infidelity. This thesis uses qualitative methodology to analyze the image restoration efforts used by Woods to combat this crisis situation. Benoit's (1995a) image restoration theory is used to examine the statements of self-defense provided by Woods during the time period of November 29, 2009 to March 21, 2010. Each strategy used by Woods is identified, followed by an analysis based on the intended audience. Finally, an analysis of how these strategies work in conjunction with another is conducted.

There are three findings from this case study. First, those who find themselves faced with a crisis situation who lack feasible deniability should take responsibility as quickly as possible. Second, strategies primarily intended for one target audience can have significant impact on other target audiences if the initial target audience reacts favorably to those strategies. Third, the strategies of mortification and corrective action complement one another, as an apology becomes much more powerful if the public sees the accused party is taking steps to make sure the crisis does not reoccur.

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# CHAPTER ONE

## INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 Historical Context – Career

The man we now know as Tiger was born Eldrick Woods on December 30, 1975 in California (Hasday, 2009), and he was born to golf. He began playing before the age of 2, and managed to complete 9 holes in 48 strokes at the age of 3 (“Tiger Woods,” 2011). Tiger was able to beat his father, a former collegiate baseball player at Kansas State University, on the golf course for the first time when he was only 11 years of age, and never lost to his father again after that (Mitchell, 2006).

Woods began showcasing his talents in amateur ranks at an early age, and quickly became one of the best junior amateurs in the history of the sport. He set a record by winning the Junior World Golf Championships six times (Leonard, 2011). He set a similar record by winning the U.S. Junior Amateur Championships three times (“Jordan Spieth wins,” 2011).

Tiger continued to enjoy success as he transitioned to the professional game. As a freshman at Stanford University, he won the 1994 William H. Tucker Intercollegiate tournament, his first tournament at the collegiate level (“56th annual William,” 2010). Because of his amateur success, Woods was one of the few amateurs invited to play in the 1995 Masters tournament (Smith, 2007). Back on the collegiate circuit, Tiger won an individual national championship as a sophomore at the 1996 NCAA Division I Men’s Golf Championships (Johnson, 2011). He also continued the trend he set in the junior ranks, as he capped his amateur career by setting yet another record when he won an “unprecedented third consecutive U.S. Amateur title” (“It’s official: Tiger,” 1996).

Tiger entered the professional ranks at the age of 20, having already accomplished many feats and broken many amateur records (“Woods to turn,” 1996). His reputation preceded him, as he signed an endorsement deal with Nike worth \$40 million before teeing off at his first tournament as a professional (Weyler, 1996). He supplemented that deal with a \$20 million endorsement deal from Titleist (Smith, 1996). He validated the expectations placed on him by winning two tournaments in his rookie year (“Tiger watch,” 2011). The Professional Golfers’ Association named him their 1996 Rookie of the Year (PGATOUR.COM Staff, 2009).

Tiger proved his success in his rookie year was no fluke by winning his first major championship at the 1997 Masters tournament, breaking all-time Masters records for lowest score at 18 under par and youngest player to win at the age of 21 (Soltau, 2010). He finished his sophomore season by becoming the youngest player ever to reach the top position in the world rankings at 21 years and 24 weeks; this was only 42 weeks into his professional career (“Official World Golf,” 2005).

The year 2000 was a historic one for Woods. First, he wowed the golf world by winning the US Open by 15 strokes, in what “*Sports Illustrated* called ‘the greatest performance in golf history’” (Kim, 2010). Next, he won the British Open, completing a career grand slam by owning at least one win in each of the four major tournaments; he was only the fifth player in history to accomplish this feat (Markus, 2000). He continued his success in major tournaments in the year 2000 by winning the PGA Championship, joining “Ben Hogan as the only players to win three major titles in one year” (Bonk, 2000). He also had a successful year in terms of sponsorship money, as he received the biggest endorsement ever offered to an active athlete when Nike signed him “to a five-year endorsement contract worth an estimated \$100 million” (Bamberger, 2000). Woods then distanced himself from Ben Hogan when he won the 2001

Masters title. With this win, Tiger became the first golfer in history to hold “the titles to all four major championships at the same time” (Kensler, 2001), known now as the Tiger Slam.

Woods continued to find new ways to impress golf fans and the general public alike. At the 2008 US Open, Tiger defeated Rocco Mediate on the first playoff hole to win his 14th major; this is all the more impressive because he was playing on a double stress fracture and a torn ACL in his knee, which caused him to take the rest of 2008 off (ESPN.com news services, 2008).

Television broadcasts of golf tournaments suffered due to Tiger’s time off. McCarthy (2010) found that when “Woods was out with a knee injury, ratings for the third and fourth rounds of events he normally played in dropped 47%, according to Nielsen.” Those statistics show that Tiger’s importance to the sport of golf is unmatched.

By 2009, Tiger’s list of endorsements had grown from Nike and Titleist. He now endorsed a wide range of companies including General Mills, Accenture, Tag Heuer, EA Sports, Gillette, and Gatorade (Telegraph staff, 2009). These endorsements contributed to *Forbes* declaring that Tiger Woods had become “the first athlete to earn \$1 billion” (Badenhausen, 2009).

Woods earned his 71st PGA Tour victory at the BMW Championship in September of 2009 (Greenstein). His performance at the BMW Championship would mark his last victory on the PGA tour before his personal life forced him to put his career on hold. Up to that point in Tiger’s 14 year professional career, he had averaged an impressive 5 tournament wins a year. He capped the season by winning the PGA Tour Player of the Year award for “the 10th time in his 13 years on the tour” (“Tiger Woods: 2009,” 2009).

## 1.2 Historical Context – Personal Life

Tiger Woods grew up with parents, Earl and Kultida, as well as three half siblings from Earl's previous marriage (Litsky, 2006). Tiger was very close with his father, referring to him as a great role model and his best friend (Rush & Schapiro, 2009). However, his father was not without fault, as he was unfaithful to his wife Kutilda, causing significant emotional trauma to Tiger during his adolescence (Park, 2009). Tiger said he was raised Buddhist by his mother, which he credited in helping him show restraint in the face of temptation ("Tiger Woods and," 2010).

Woods met Elin Nordegren in 2001 through fellow professional golfer Jesper Parnevik while she was working as a nanny to his children ("Woods marries his," 2004). They married on October of 2004 at a resort in Barbados ("Tiger Woods weds," 2004). In 2007, their family grew when Elin gave birth to a baby girl named Sam Alexis Woods ("Tiger's wife gives," 2007). An *ESPN* article from February 2009 reported that the couple had their second child, a baby boy named Charlie Axel Woods ("Tiger becomes dad"). The media's portrayal of Woods' family life gave the public the image that he was a man who placed a lot of value on his family.

Tiger Woods was on top of the golf world in 2009. He was dominating the PGA Tour, while making the type of money that was unmatched by any other athlete from his endorsement deals. His personal life was also going well, as he was raising two children with his loving wife. However, a car accident in November of 2009 turned Woods' personal and professional life upside down. The situation was so severe that he took a break from golf in order to attempt to restore some sense of order to his personal life, as well as restore his image with the public.

### **1.3 Timeline of the Event**

On November 27, 2009, Susan James, from ABC News, reported that Tiger Woods was involved in a car wreck outside his house at 2:25 a.m., when he hit a fire hydrant and a tree. According to the same report, his wife Elin used a golf club to smash out the back window so she could help him escape from the car. James reported Tiger was falling in and out of consciousness when the authorities arrived, who promptly took him to the hospital. He was said to be in serious condition, although a spokesperson from the highway patrol clarified that every time a car accident results in a hospital visit, the person's condition is given as serious.

A conflicting report emerged a day later that said that Woods sustained facial laceration injuries before the car accident took place, when his wife attacked him in the midst of an argument about Tiger not being faithful. In addition, the report stated that she was hitting the SUV with a golf club before the wreck, causing Tiger to lose focus and wreck his car (TMZ Staff, 2009).

These conflicting reports of what actually happened on that day fueled many rumors, which were only strengthened as Tiger canceled two separate meetings with the Florida Highway Patrol. However, during this time period, Woods released a statement on his website that lauded his wife for her courageous actions and dismissed any information to the contrary ("Tiger Woods cancels," 2009). This continued as he declined to talk to the police the day after his second cancellation. In addition, he withdrew from the Chevron World Challenge, a tournament he annually hosted in an effort to raise money for the Tiger Woods Foundation, citing injury from the car accident (Berger & Dorman, 2009). Ultimately, the police concluded that there was no foul play involved with the accident, and issued Tiger a \$164 ticket for careless driving (DiMeglio, 2009).

However, the rumors of marital infidelity became more credible on December 1, when Jaimee Grubbs, a cocktail waitress from Los Angeles came forward and announced to the press that she had 20 sexual encounters with Tiger during their long-term relationship (Friedman, 2009). The next day, Jesper Parnevik, who facilitated the first meeting between Tiger and Elin, became the first player on the PGA Tour to openly criticize Woods, saying he thought Tiger was a better person than he had shown. Parnevik suggested that he owed Elin an apology because he introduced them to one another (Martin, 2009). On December 3, it was reported that Elin and Tiger had begun engaging in intense marriage counseling in an attempt to save their marriage (McNeil, 2009).

On December 8, Gatorade discontinued their sports drink that bore Tiger's name. However, Gatorade released a statement that said the move had nothing to do with Tiger's recent difficulties, but rather was a decision made previously to make room for new products; they maintained that they would continue their partnership with Woods (Wilson, 2009). It was also reported on the same day that Elin purchased a \$2 million mansion that could only be reached by boat from Stockholm, Sweden, raising the possibility that the marriage was over (Dillon & Siemaszko, 2009). To make matters worse, *Playgirl* made a statement the next day claiming to have naked photographs of Tiger that they were planning on publishing if they could find the right deal that would make it worth their while to do so (Lysiak & Siemaszko, 2009). Fortunately for Woods, he was able to win an injunction that banned the naked photographs from being published (Hirsch, 2009).

On December 12, Tiger announced that he was taking an indefinite hiatus from the game of golf while he tried to repair the damage he had caused to his family and return to some sense

of normalcy. This was also the first time he used language that was an admission of wrongdoing on his part (Reason, 2009).

Because of this break from the sport and the heavy damage Tiger's reputation was taking, many of his sponsors released a statement regarding their partnership with him. Both AT&T and Gillette decided that limiting Tiger's role in their advertising was the appropriate move until they could make a definitive decision on what role he would serve for their companies in the future (McShane, 2009). On December 14, Accenture announced an end to their partnership with Woods, saying he was no longer who they would have representing their company ("Accenture ends Tiger," 2009). However, Matthew Weaver (2009) reported on the same day that both Nike and Tag Heuer had decided to stick with Tiger as a representative for their companies.

Woods received mixed messages from his sponsors as 2009 ended and 2010 began. He received bad news on December 31 from AT&T, who chose to end their partnership with Woods (Goldman, 2009). EA Sports, on the other hand, stated that their relationship with Tiger Woods was solely based on his prowess as an athlete, and his personal mistakes were no reason to discontinue their partnership with him (Robertson, 2010).

On January 19, Jose Martinez (2010) of the *New York Daily News* broke the news that Tiger was at a Mississippi sex rehabilitation clinic. He reported that Woods was receiving treatment for sex addiction that was fairly intensive in nature, making all patients sign a celibacy contract that banned all forms of sexual contact, including masturbation.

Tiger announced his return to professional golf on March 16. He said he picked the Masters tournament to make his long-awaited return because he had a great deal of respect for that tournament, and because that was where he won his first major championship (Brinson, 2010). He followed through on this plan as he hit his first tee shot at the Masters on the evening

of April 8 (Macaskill, 2010). This was an attempt by Woods to move past the crisis and reestablish a sense of normalcy and familiarity in his life.

#### **1.4 Description of the Selected Apologia**

For this project, six rhetorical artifacts from November 29, 2009, to April 8, 2010, were selected for analysis. These include four messages posted on Tiger Woods' personal website, a press conference conducted by Tiger, and an interview Woods did with *ESPN's* Tom Rinaldi. These six texts comprise the entirety of Woods' public comments on the situation prior to his return to golf. The press conference Woods held before the Masters was omitted, as no new image restoration strategies were used; all statements of apologia were reiterations of previously made statements.

Tiger Woods (2009a) first posted a statement on his website on November 29, two days after he wrecked his car in front of his residence, which communicated that what happened was an embarrassing situation to himself and his family, and that he would like to keep this matter private. The statement also made a point of saying that his wife was not at fault in any way for the incident; rather, she showed courage by being the first person to help him after the crash. The post was intentionally vague, as he needed to give some sort of explanation as to what happened to dispel the rumors that had surfaced about the incident, but wanted to take some time to decide what the best strategy would be in fully addressing the situation. Additionally, all the details about the situation had not yet been reported, so Woods only commented on the issues the media had made readily available to the public.

Woods (2009b) released another statement on his website on December 2 that gave more detail about what had happened with him and his family. It stated that he had let his family down, and he intended to make himself a better person, husband, and father. He apologized to all



of those who had shown him support throughout his career, and once again requested that he and his family be allowed some space to sort this situation out away from the constant demands of the media.

Woods (2009c) finally acknowledged his marital infidelity by name in a statement released on his website on December 11. He apologized to his family and the public for his behavior, and asked that the public and media respect his wishes of privacy so he and his family could have time to deal with the situation internally. He also announced that he was taking an indefinite break from professional golf to help this process.

Tiger addressed the media in person for the first time on February 9, 2010, at the TPC Sawgrass clubhouse. As opposed to the statements released on his website, this statement was lengthy and very detailed. He began by apologizing to his family, his fans, his sponsors, and anyone else who may have been affected by his actions. However, he acknowledged that the real apology could not be delivered in the form of words; rather, his actions would be the determining factor that showed that he was truly apologetic for what he had done. He addressed rumors that his wife had attacked him before the wreck by saying that no such thing happened, and she deserved praise for her actions related to this incident, not blame. Next, he demonized his own actions, and said that he had no right to deviate from the rules that other people are expected to follow. He partially blamed this on him getting away from the core values that he had tried to live by throughout his life. He announced that he had undergone therapy to help him through this situation, and again asked that he and his family be allowed to deal with the situation internally without the constant presence of the media in their lives. Finally, he said that he was going to continue to try to become a better man through reliance on the help of those around him, and he would only return to golf when he felt his personal life was in order (Woods, 2010).

In a March 16 statement released on Tiger's personal website, it was announced that Woods would make his return to professional golf in April at the Masters. He noted that although he was returning to competitive golf, he still had a lot of work to do in his personal life and would continue to receive treatment to aid him in that process ("Tiger to return," 2010).

Finally, Woods' first interview occurred with *ESPN's* Tom Rinaldi on March 21, 2010. He said he was extremely disappointed in himself for hurting his wife and those closest to him. He continued to try to keep as much about the issue private as he could in order to protect his family, but did make clear that he was still trying to become a better person by seeking treatment and was really making an effort to get back to his core values and rediscover who he was as a person ("Tiger Woods interview").

### **1.5 Justification for the Project**

This project analyzes Tiger Woods' statements surrounding the situation involving his marital infidelities, which tarnished his public image. Analyzing Tiger's responses to this situation warrants focused research for three reasons.

First, the vast majority of persuasive speech acts in existence have not been subjected to scholarly analysis. This is important because analysis of such persuasive acts can be used to further the rhetorical field, and ultimately help humanity's understanding of how to more effectively communicate their ideas to target audiences. In this case, Tiger Woods is one of the most recognizable athletes on the planet. He is also a pioneer as one of the few successful African American golfers on the professional circuit. Finally, he was seen as a role model before the media informed the public about his marital infidelities, because he had always conducted himself respectfully (France, 2009). Because of his celebrity status and his reputation as a role model, his rhetoric is worthy of scrutiny.

Second, most scholarly investigations of apologia focus on corporate and political communication. Very little scholarly attention has focused on apologia within sports and by athletes. Sports are an important part of American culture and media attention to sports has grown. This project will expand our understanding of apologia within sports. The nature of a crisis for a professional athlete is likely going to be quite different from one given by a CEO or a politician, meaning the statements of self-defense will also likely be quite different. Because of this, the type of rhetoric used or the way it is deployed is likely to differ significantly. This provides a unique opportunity to further rhetorical communication research by examining such speech acts and possibility finding new strategies of self-defense, or new ways of deploying previously established strategies of self-defense.

Finally, this case is unique, as the extramarital affairs committed by Woods were done in his personal life, yet his statements of self-defense were made in an attempt to repair his image for his professional life. While a certain component of those statements may have been a public show of remorse specifically for his wife, the statements were undoubtedly made with the general public in mind. In addition to trying to repair his image with golf fans, some of his statements of self-defense were likely aimed towards appeasing the companies that sponsored him. Companies gauge the commercial effectiveness of those they are sponsoring by the way the public perceives that person. This means that in order to accomplish the goal of satisfying his sponsors, Woods had to convince both those who identify as golf fans and those who do not; this significantly expanded the range of publics that Woods had to direct his statements of self-defense towards.

The primary goal of this study is to be able to understand the rhetorical choices Tiger Woods made in response to this crisis. Analyzing the effectiveness of these choices in

comparison to other communication strategies is a secondary concern. Communication theory provides the adequate tools to analyze rhetoric in ways that will allow the strategies Woods used to be identified, categorized into groups with similar strategies, and analyzed based on how effective they were, as opposed to other potential strategies that were not used.

An analysis of the rhetoric Woods used will not be limited to what he said, but also the way he delivered it. Additionally, since the nonverbal elements of his speech acts were available, they will be analyzed as well.

## **1.6 An Overview of Crisis Theory**

Usually statements of self-defense follow some sort of crisis situation. Therefore, the nature of crises in general should be discussed to more clearly understand why Tiger had such a pressing need to make statements of self-defense related to his situation. Crisis is a very flexible term, encompassing many possible occurrences, victims, and consequences. Barton (1993) defines crisis as “a major, unpredictable event that has potentially negative results” (p. 2). Fearn-Banks (2011) adds “the term crisis denotes something more serious than a ‘problem’” (p. 2). It is critical to delineate the context in which the definitions are used. Many definitions use the term “organization” to refer to the accused party. Fearn-Banks (2011) clarifies that when referring to the accused party in a crisis, “the size of the organization is irrelevant. It can be a multinational corporation, a one-person business, or even an individual” (p. 2).

Huxman (2004) expands on these definitions by suggesting that crisis is “both an act (an empirical event) and a construct (perceptual and symbolic)” (p. 287). Crisis as an act is defined by Barton (1993) as “a situation faced by an individual, group or organisation which they are unable to cope with by the use of normal routine procedures and in which stress is created by sudden change” (p. 86). Heath and Millar (2004) expand upon the definition of crisis as a

construct by stating that it “can harm the organization’s efforts to create understanding and maintain mutually beneficial relationships with interested parties whose support and good will the organization needs” (p. 3). Crisis as an act focuses on the literal event, while crisis as a construct is primarily concerned with how a crisis affects the perception of the organization.

For example, Sammy Sosa was involved in a crisis in 2003 that functioned on both the act and construct levels. The act component of this crisis involved Sosa being ejected in the first inning of a 2003 game when his bat shattered and it became clear that he was using a corked bat (Rosenstein, 2003). Stark (2003) highlights the construct component of this crisis when he said that a suspension would not be Sosa’s biggest problem stemming from this incident, but rather that “people will ask if he has cheated his way to those 505 home runs.” The construct component of the crisis was the change in people’s perception of Sosa’s career.

Crises are something organizations hope to avoid, but the prospect of their existence is not a question of “if”, but “when”. Ulmer, Sellnow, and Seeger (2011) describe crises as “inherent and inevitable elements of the organizational experience” (p. 22). Fearn-Banks (2011) adds that, “An organization has no choice in accepting a crisis. A crisis is forced on it, and the organization must cope with it” (p. 9). Hearit and Courtright (2004) attribute this to the fact that a crisis generally threatens the reputation of an organization.

While a crisis is considered to be quite serious, the characteristics of it can be altered in the minds of the public if responded to appropriately. Heath and Millar (2004) argue “the responsibility for the crisis, its magnitude, and its duration are contestable” (p. 5). The ways an organization can respond to a crisis will be discussed more in-depth later in this paper.

One of the more unique challenges organizations face during a crisis is the diversity of the different publics that were affected by it. Sellnow and Ulmer (2004) argue “organizations can

face diverse audiences during a crisis—the needs of which may be contradictory” (p. 252). It should be noted that the different publics in a crisis may be affected directly or indirectly, depending on what form the public takes in each situation.

Another complexity of crises is that they differ in longevity from case to case. Heath (2004) finds that “a crisis exists until some resolution has brought control to the circumstances and events that aroused concern on the part of key publics” (p. 180). It is in the best interest of organizations to alleviate the concern of these key publics in a timely manner, as the goal of an organization in such a situation is “to leave the crisis behind and restore normalcy as soon as possible” (Fearn-Banks, 2011, p. 8).

The outcome of each crisis and the effect on those involved is likely to differ from case to case. This is dependent on the specifics of the crisis itself, as well as how the organization reacts to it. Fearn-Banks (2011) outlines the range of how much or how little damage can come as a result of a crisis:

There are three possible results of a crisis: (a) The organization is put out of business, ruined, possibly sued, and key executives are possibly charged with crimes; (b) the organization continues to exist, but it has lost some image and respect in its publics’ eyes, and perhaps a great deal of financial position; (c) the organization, in a hard-fought battle, has won a war of public opinion and is seen as favorably as before or perhaps more favorably. (p. 34)

Borda and Mackey-Kallis (2004) add that a crisis can produce both short-term and long-term problems. In order to recover from a crisis with minimal damage, it is necessary for an organization to anticipate what kind of effects could come from it, as well as if there is the potential for both short-term and long-term effects.

For example, in April of 2010, a woman accused Ben Roethlisberger of sexual assaulting her in a Georgia bar. This was the second time Roethlisberger had been accused of sexual assault (Goldman, 2010). The criminal charges were quickly dropped, but the negative perception of Roethlisberger held by the general public persisted. Netter (2010) interviewed a Pittsburgh sports novelty store owner who said Roethlisberger had lost the support of the city, as very few people defended him or his actions and some even called for him to be punished. Roethlisberger was successful in dealing with the short-term aspect of the case, as the criminal charges were dropped; however, the long-term aspect of the case remained, as the general public has not completely forgiven him despite the dismissal of the criminal charges.

The previous example shows that merely proving one's innocence in the court of law is not the only relevant concern in a crisis. Fearn-Banks (2011) finds that the accused in a crisis is responsible for proving to all relevant publics "that the prevailing negative opinion is not factual. In contrast to a U.S. court of law where a person is innocent until proven guilty, in the court of public opinion, a person or organization is guilty until proven innocent" (p. 9).

The media plays an important role in how a crisis is perceived by the relevant publics involved in a crisis. Fearn-Banks (2011) lists the four stages of the media covering a crisis as, (1) breaking news, (2) concrete details become available, (3) crisis analysis (questions of what is being done to solve the problems created by the situations are asked in this stage), and (4) crisis evaluation. Because the public receives the information about a crisis from the media, it is possible for an organization to change the framing of a crisis through the media; doing so effectively has the potential to minimize the public's negative perception of them.

In order to take advantage of the opportunity to reframe the crisis in the eyes of the public, an organization must be willing to cooperate with the media, and give them information

they will find useful and relevant in a timely manner. Barton (2001) says that reporters are dependent on the sources who will speak to them, and if an organization stays silent or responds with “no comment,” the media will find alternative sources to give them the information they desire. If an organization does not give the media the information they are seeking, their side of the story may not be heard, and thus, the possibility arises that the media will only report information detrimental to the organization. Fearn-Banks (2011) observes that a relationship exists between an organization during a crisis and the media, as the organization relies on the media to get their message out, while the media relies on the organization to give them the information necessary to make a story their audience will find interesting. Generally, if an organization embraces their relationship with the media during a crisis, it will be a mutually beneficial one, but if they ignore it, there is a possibility that the media could make the crisis worse than it previously was.

It should also be noted that in this era of constant technological advancements, the Internet is becoming an increasingly powerful option for organizations to distribute information to the relevant publics in a crises. A 2011 research poll conducted by the Pew Research Center for the People and the Press found that 43% of Americans cited the Internet as a main source of their national and international news. With such a significant amount of people turning to the Internet to catch up with the news, using it to explain their side of a crisis is a must for organizations who find themselves in this situation. Finally, the Internet is an extremely useful tool of information distribution; it is one of the only existing ways for someone to publish a message without concern that it will be filtered or changed without their consent.



## 1.7 Methodology – Rhetorical Criticism

Rhetorical criticism will be used to analyze Tiger Woods' statements regarding the controversy. Rhetorical criticism can serve as a useful tool in analyzing individual aspects of communication. Specifically, apologia will be used as a lens to analyze Woods' comments. This is appropriate because Tiger was using rhetoric for the specific purpose of explaining his actions, as well as repairing and restoring his image in the eyes of the public.

Rhetoric was initially defined by Aristotle (1954) as the “faculty of observing in a given case the available means of persuasion” (p. 6). This definition is primarily concerned with intentional rhetoric. As time passed, the commonly accepted definitions of rhetoric broadened in scope. Rhetoric is now regarded as a category of communication that encompasses “all the ways humans use symbols to affect those around them and to construct the worlds in which they live” (Littlejohn & Foss, 2011, p. 61). Campbell and Huxman (2003) propose that “The broadest view of rhetoric is expressed in the statement, ‘you can never not communicate,’ meaning that whatever you do or say (or don’t do or say) can be observed and interpreted” (p. 7).

While rhetoric merely groups all forms of communication together that helps people understand and create the world around them, rhetorical criticism goes beyond merely taking such forms of communication at face value. Rhetorical criticism is “a process of thinking about symbols, discovering how they work, and trying to figure out why they affect us” (Foss, 2009, p. 1). Kuypers (2009) generalizes the goals of a rhetorical critic as enhancing understanding and appreciation of rhetoric. He argues “the critic can offer new and potentially exciting ways for others to see the world. Through understanding we also produce knowledge about human communication; in theory this should help us better govern our interactions with others” (p. 13).

Foss (2009) finds that rhetorical criticism “is a qualitative research method that is designed for the systematic investigation and explanation of symbolic acts and artifacts for the purpose of understanding rhetorical processes” (p. 6). As much of apologia and crisis theory requires some amount of subjective analysis, a qualitative research method seems to be more appropriate to use in such studies, rather than a quantitative method.

Rhetorical criticism is meant to both help those in society better understand the rhetoric that is used in their daily lives and further understanding of rhetoric itself on a theoretical level. Frey and Cissna (2009) argue “when a critic pronounces a rhetorical act effective, he or she attempts to influence others to see that rhetorical act as successful” (p. 111). Additionally, Foss (2009) states that rhetorical critics try to find “what an artifact teaches us about the nature of rhetoric—in other words, critics engage in rhetorical criticism to make a contribution to rhetorical theory” (p. 7).

It has been previously noted that the field of rhetoric has strong ties to persuasion, and a unique aspect of a crisis situation is the likelihood that multiple publics must be addressed, potentially with contradicting expectations regarding the situation. Benoit (2004) contends “an important part of persuasion is tailoring one’s message(s) to the audience” (p. 274). Elwood (1995) observes that rhetorical criticism accounts for this, as it “analyzes discourse, explains how specific groups responded to this discourse, and illuminates the process by which such discourse influenced the targeted publics” (p. 8). By showing further parallels between crisis communication and rhetorical criticism, Benoit and Elwood provide additional support for the notion that rhetorical criticism is an appropriate method of analysis to use for this study.

Generic criticism is a subset of rhetorical criticism that involves classifying speech acts by their genre. Jamieson (1973) argues that the rhetorical critic “who ignores genre risks

clouding rather than clarifying the rhetoric he is attempting to explain” (p. 169). Benoit (2009) says the advantage of using genre criticism as a methodology is that it allows theorists to “learn something about some rhetorical artifacts by examining other similar rhetorical artifacts” (p. 78). Andrews (1990) notes that another “advantage of generic criticism is that it permits the creation of intrinsic standards for rhetorical discourse without losing sight of the audience” (p. 351).

Apologia is a specific type of genre-based rhetorical criticism. Ware and Linkugel (1973), who are credited as those responsible for the modernization of apologia theory, simply describe apologia as “the speech of self-defense” (p. 273). Huxman and Bruce (1995) expand on this by asserting “the genre’s overarching goal is one of image repair or policy restoration. Specifically, apologists ask for revised judgments of their past actions” (p. 59).

In order to achieve this goal, specific strategies of apologia are employed singularly or in conjunction with one another. Benoit (1995b) wrote “a persuasive attack consists of two components: a charge or responsibility of the accused for an act and a statement regarding the offensiveness of that act. Image repair strategies are organized accordingly” (p. 89). In a crisis, the accused could choose to contest his or her responsibility in the crisis or the magnitude of the damage caused by the crisis. Regardless of whether the degree of responsibility or egregiousness of the situation is decreased in the public’s mind, the damage caused to the reputation of the accused will be limited.

However, the options of how to repair one’s image through apologetic discourse are not limited to contesting responsibility or magnitude. Other strategies include absolute denial of the crisis’ existence, strategies to improve the public’s perception of the accused that are unrelated to the crisis, helping those who sustained damage through the crisis as a show of goodwill, prevention of future occurrences of similar situations, and appealing to the public to show the

damage the accused has sustained from the crisis itself as a reason why they should receive no further punishment. The individual strategies of apologia will be covered more in-depth in Chapter Two.

Ware and Linkugel (1973) identify denial, bolstering, differentiation, and transcendence as the four recurring factors of apologetic discourse. Denial consists of distancing oneself from the crisis by asserting that there is no link between some facet of the accusation or crisis itself and the accused party. The strategy of bolstering is used when the accused tries to associate his or herself with something positive, whether it is a previous action or an entity external to the crisis. Differentiation refers to the intent of making the audience view the crisis in a different context to give them a different perspective on it. Finally, the strategy of transcendence attempts to change the context the audience views the crisis in by having them focus on the overall situation, rather than focusing on the specific details of the crisis. It should be noted that the theories of apologia found in the work of Ware and Linkugel have since been expanded upon; many other potential strategies of self-defense now exist in communication theory.

Apologia is an appropriate methodology for this project because it allows communication scholars to test the effectiveness of certain strategies. This information can then be practically applied to future crisis situations, increasing the effectiveness of how people use apologetic discourse. By observing apologetic strategies and which crises they are used in response to, relationships between certain strategies and certain types of crises emerge; this information can be used to determine which strategies are most effectively used for which type of crisis; this information can be applied by those accused in future situations. Coombs and Holladay (2004) agree, as they argue “by knowing which crisis response strategies fit with which crisis situations, a manager can assess the potential utility of his or her communication options” (p. 95).

## **1.8 Preview of Remaining Chapters**

The remainder of this thesis will be divided into three additional chapters. Chapter Two will give an overview of image restoration theory. Chapter Three will apply image restoration theory to Tiger Woods' case and the six artifacts previously selected for analysis. Chapter Four will conclude the thesis by drawing conclusions and discussing implications from the project.

Chapter Two will begin with a literature review of what currently exists regarding sports apologetics, as well as a list of the types of crises that are somewhat common to those in the sports industry. In addition, a literature review of Benoit's (1995a) apologetics strategies will be conducted.

Chapter Three will begin by using the crisis theory discussed in Chapter One to identify the use of these apologetics strategies in Woods' six artifacts. This process will analyze why each strategy was or was not used.

Chapter Four will concentrate on discussing what was learned from this study, including the effectiveness of the image restoration strategies used by Woods, as well as how they were delivered. Next, this study will be used as a starting point to organize Benoit's image restoration strategies into combinations that can be used effectively. Finally, this chapter will conclude with identifying the limitations of this study and suggestions for future research.

## CHAPTER TWO

### AN OVERVIEW OF IMAGE RESTORATION THEORY

#### 2.1 Overview of Sports Apologia

It is not difficult to realize that celebrities are treated differently from everyone else in society. Fearn-Banks (2011) notes:

When a public official or celebrity is caught with his/her hand in the proverbial cookie jar, the public makes a judgment. Sometimes the individual's skills, talent, history, and contributions are so great that the individual is easily forgiven, and reputation is diminished only slightly. Often, a public individual can merely wait until the crisis ebbs—when talk subsides—and he or she can rise to the top again in the eyes of their publics. At other times, actions must be taken to correct new found negative images. (p. 294)

The public may make the determination that the act of the crisis is detrimental to the accused party's ability to do his or her job, and thus think less of the individual for committing the act. However, it is not always of the utmost importance to the public whether or not the act of the crisis is related to the accused party's ability to carry out the duties of their job. Sometimes, the public will determine that the act of the crisis is too heinous to be ignored, regardless of the circumstances. On the other hand, sometimes the public is too enamored with certain celebrities that they are willing to let many things slide without significantly decreasing their opinion of the individual in the center of the crisis situation.

However, it would be foolish to assume that all individuals who have achieved celebrity status can be lumped together in one category. Those who are in politics or hold leadership roles in large corporations are certainly distinct in the way the public treats them compared to those in

the entertainment industry; those who are in the public eye because they possess talents that are used to entertain the general public are often able to get away with more than the average person without significant damage to their public image. Fearn-Banks (2011) argues that those in public office usually generally must respond to accusations of crisis, but “it is not so clear with entertainers and sports figures. True, they depend upon public support, but the public is usually fickle about their entertainers” (p. 297). Those in corporate roles would be more appropriately grouped into the same category as those in public office, rather than those who entertain the general public.

Another unique quality about crises in the realm of sports is the individual nature of how those accused must face their crisis. In the corporate world, most organizations act as a unified front in combating a crisis if one arises. This unity is less frequently seen when a crisis affects an athlete. This changes the nature of what crisis responses should be utilized for those in the sports industry as compared to those in the corporate world.

Curiously enough, even though individuals in the sports industry (and entertainers in general) are treated differently by the public, most apologia theory is better suited to corporations or politicians. Kruse (1981) notes that while rhetorical critics have made many advances in the understanding of apologia, little work has been done in regards to apologia in the context of sports. She continues by saying “rhetorical critics can profit from the recognition that sport constitutes a significant area of study” (p. 283).

Because of this, I believe that apologia theory should be more thoroughly extended to sports, as “it is a phenomenon of cultural import” (Kruse, 1981, p. 270). This can be easily observed by how much importance the general public puts on sports, even in comparison

political actions taken by the government. As Edwards (1973) points out, “sports are now more popular than politics in America, increasingly so since the spread of television” (p. 260).

Fortunately, we have the tools available to analyze sports crisis cases. Kruse (1981) finds that “sports figures use the same strategies other apologists employ” (p. 283). Kruse is correct on a surface level, but there are situations when sports figures have the opportunity to use strategies of self-defense that are not useful in traditional forms of crisis that most previous scholarly research has been dedicated to. If apologia theory is rigorously applied to sports cases, new strategies of self-defense will emerge, as well as new ways to deploy strategies that already exist in previously established apologia theory. By subjecting the statements of apologia used to respond to crises cases in the sports industry to extensive analysis and testing, current research and theory could be expanded. This could enhance understanding of persuasion and how to effectively use rhetoric as a defense of public image.

## **2.2 Potential Types of Crises in Sports**

In order to truly understand how apologia is the realm of sports functions, it is necessary to have a basic understand of what kinds of crises individuals in the field may face. The possible accusations a well-known athlete could face have been divided into the following five categories: violent criminal, nonviolent criminal, civil, personal, and sports specific. Each type of crisis likely would require a different response for maximum effectiveness to be achieved in prevention of reputation damage or restoration of image. It is important to note that some of these categories will have a significant amount of overlap; each type of offense that could fall into more than one category was placed into the group that it seemed to be better suited to.

Violent crimes are considered some of the most egregious offenses that an athlete can be accused of. Society has a tendency to give less leeway to those who perform actions if they



directly cause physical damage to other people than those who do something that is looked down upon by the general public, but is nonviolent in nature. A preview of sports headlines provides insight into the most common types of violent crimes that those in the sports industry find themselves being linked to are assault/battery, domestic violence, weapons charges, vehicular manslaughter, sexual assault, and murder.

Assault is the threat of physical harm, while battery is the actual act of intentionally causing physical harm to another person. These two terms often accompany one another in criminal cases, as the threat of physical harm usually precedes the actual act of violence. A fairly famous case of assault/battery took place in 2004 when three Indiana Pacers players, Ron Artest, Jermaine O'Neal, and Stephen Jackson, all threw punches at fans in the stands as a response to objects being thrown at them from the bleachers (ESPN.com news services, 2004).

Domestic violence is a subcategory of assault/battery that involves someone causing physical harm to their partner in a romantic relationship. Phoenix Suns star Jason Kidd found himself involved in such a situation in January of 2001. He "was charged with domestic violence assault after [his wife] told Phoenix police officers that he had hit her during an argument" (Burke, 2007).

Weapons charges are another common issue famous athletes find themselves faced with. While those in the media spotlight might find it more necessary to have weapons available to them as a way to protect themselves and their families, it is still an issue that can carry criminal charges and loss of reputation from the general public. In 2009, Cleveland Cavaliers player Delonte West was found to be carrying two handguns and a shotgun after being pulled over for speeding (Windhorst).

Driving under the influence of alcohol is an issue that I categorize in the nonviolent crimes. However, there are instances when it can become a violent crime. Cleveland.com contributor Bill Lubinger (2009) reported that Cleveland Browns wide receiver Donte' Stallworth was sentenced to 30 days in jail for causing the death of a man while driving drunk.

Sexual assault refers to any forced act of sex on an unwilling party; rape is included in what sexual assault encompasses. *CNN* wrote a piece in 2003 documenting Los Angeles Lakers superstar Kobe Bryant being charged with sexual assault as a result of an encounter with a 19-year-old woman in the hotel where she worked. He admitted to being unfaithful to his wife, but swore the sexual acts that took place were consensual ("Kobe Bryant charged").

Murder is considered by many to be the worst crime a human can commit. Unfortunately, when athletes put themselves in a position to be charged for murder, their reputation can take a serious hit, regardless of whether they are found guilty of it or not. *Sports Illustrated's* John Donovan wrote in 2000 that Baltimore Ravens linebacker Ray Lewis was involved in an incident that saw two young adult men stabbed to death. The incident took place during the hours of the early morning on the day after the Super Bowl. Lewis and his two of his associates were charged with murder.

Nonviolent crimes generally carry less of a possibility of damage to one's personal image than violent crimes. However, the general public usually is suspicious of someone who is in trouble with the law for any reason. Some possible issues an athlete could find his or herself accused of are, driving under the influence, drug possession, solicitation of prostitution, and match fixing.

Operating a motor vehicle while under the influence of drugs and alcohol is considered by most to be an irresponsible action. Since athletes are regarded as role models in some regards,

the public will usually backlash against those who exhibit irresponsible behavior, such as driving under the influence. The *Denver Post*'s Lindsay Jones wrote a 2012 article documenting an example of an athlete driving under the influence. Denver Broncos running back Knowshon Moreno was arrested for driving while intoxicated after he failed both "a breath test and a field-sobriety test."

An allegation somewhat similar in nature to driving under the influence is possession of illicit substances. Both involve the inappropriate use of mind-altering substances that could potentially bring harm to the user or those around him or her. Pittsburgh Steelers wide receiver Santonio Holmes was faced with such a predicament when he "was cited for marijuana possession in 2008" (Cimini, 2010).

Paying for sex is an odd activity for a successful, wealthy, married man to engage in, but it is an action that some athletes take part in. For instance, Los Angeles Lakers all-star James Worthy was arrested on charges of solicitation of prostitution ("Sports people: Pro," 1990).

The last nonviolent crime is fairly common among athletes, and is actually unique to those in the sports industry. The fixing of games or matches receives a very negative reaction from nearly everyone, as it destroys the competitive element of such activities that draw people to sports in the first place. Thamel (2010) reported that two former University of San Diego basketball players were involved in a conspiracy to ensure a predetermined outcome in their games. Although the practice of fixing games could fall in nonviolent crimes or sports specific issues, it was included it here, as the motive is personal monetary gain, rather than gaining a competitive edge in the sport being played.

Even those athletes who manage to keep their criminal records clean may find themselves in a courtroom to deal with civil issues. These are common in comparison to other situations

athletes may find themselves facing for two reasons. First, criminal charges can be accompanied by civil action. If a criminal charge has caused some sort of damage (physical, emotional, etc.) to the victim, they may seek to be compensated for their suffering in civil court. The infamous O.J. Simpson murder case saw the defendant win the criminal trial, but lose the civil trial, in which he was ordered to pay \$33.5 million to the family of the deceased victims (Dolan, 2001). Second, it is not unheard of for a person to fabricate allegations against an athlete in the interest of receiving financial compensation. For these people, there is no gain in sending these athletes to jail; only a victory in a civil suit would directly benefit them. For example, the story of Katelyn Faber, the woman who accused Kobe Bryant of raping her, lost its consistency as time went on; eventually she asked that the criminal case be dropped, although she continued to pursue a civil case against him (“625 pages related,” 2004). Patrick O’Driscoll reported in 2005 that Bryant settled with Faber out of court as a way to be able to move beyond this situation and regain some element of normalcy in his life. The most common types of civil issues athletes find themselves dealing with are owing back taxes, having unpaid child support, being accused of defamation, and violating their contract.

Owing back taxes seems to be a common affliction professional athletes find themselves faced with. While they are able to make extravagant amounts of money with their talent, a lot of them are unable to manage their finances in a way that protects them for the future. Vester (2011) reported that former heavyweight boxing champion Roy Jones Jr. owed the IRS \$3.5 million.

Just as some athletes struggle to protect their finances in how they pay their taxes, others struggle to be able to pay child support. This could be because they find themselves in debt, or because they are unable to afford paying child support to so many different mothers. A

combination of the two reasons mentioned above is why fellow former heavyweight champion Evander Holyfield found himself in civil court with one of the mothers of his children. Stewart (2010) reported that Holyfield's second wife, Dr. Janice Itson, was "seeking to collect \$280,000 in past-due child support and interest."

A well-known part of competitive athletics is the tendency for participants to verbally attack one another as a way to gain a competitive edge or raise interest for an upcoming event. Sometimes an athlete takes it too far and accuses a fellow competitor of something untrue that could potentially defame their reputation. When a boxing match between the consensus best two currently active boxers in the world was proposed, Floyd Mayweather Jr. accused Manny Pacquiao of using steroids to fuel his recent success. In response to this, Pacquiao filed a defamation suit against Mayweather Jr. ("Pacquiao files defamation," 2009).

Finally, in most team-based sports, athletes are generally required to sign contracts. If the agreed upon contract is violated, the team has grounds for a civil case against the athlete, in which they may be able to receive financial compensation. CBSSports.com wire highlighted such a situation in 2009, when the Detroit Lions went "to federal court to recover \$6.1 million from former receiver Charles Rogers, whose NFL career was sidelined by substance abuse problems."

Certain personal issues have the potential to cause significant damage to one's reputation, even though they are unlikely to result in a civil or criminal court case. A common issue that falls within this category is adultery. Many athletes have been caught being unfaithful to their spouse, including the subject of this project, Tiger Woods. The other common personal issues that can cause trouble for athletes involve inappropriate communication captured by the media.

The first example of inappropriate communication with the media involves social media. At times, athletes sound off about issues in their lives, and upset or offend those who read their message. NASCAR driver Kasey Kahne did just this when posted a message on his Twitter expressing his disgust about a woman breastfeeding her child at the grocery store. When a woman responded to this tweet in disagreement, he called her a vulgar name. Ultimately, he apologized to those offended by his tweet (ESPN.com news services, 2011).

Another personal issue that can affect the public's perception of an athlete occurs when they make outrageous statements during an interview. Former Atlanta Braves pitcher John Rocker, in an interview with Jeff Pearlman (1999) described what kind of people you might see on the New York subway as "some kid with purple hair next to some queer with AIDS right next to some dude who just got out of jail for the fourth time right next to some 20-year-old mom with four kids." Expectedly, Rocker's comments offended many activist groups, as well as New Yorkers and the general public around the United States.

Finally, even when an athlete takes care to be on his or her best behavior in interviews with the media, they may still be caught using language the public finds to be offensive. A TNT camera caught Chicago Bulls center Joakim Noah using a homophobic slur toward a fan in response to the fan saying something disrespectful toward him during a playoff game in Miami. He was fined \$50,000 for the use of the slur. This incident happened merely one month after Kobe Bryant was fined \$100,000 for using the same homophobic slur toward a referee during a game (Zillgett, 2011). Both athletes were forced to confront accusations of being closed-minded and bigoted towards homosexuals.

An athlete is usually adored by the public due to the ability to create excitement by performing at a high level in his or her sport. If a team's success or the individual's level of

performance suffers due to an action taken by the athlete, the reputation of this person may suffer. Some more common issues that are unique to those in the sports industry involve being a distraction to the team, having a poor mindset, engaging in activities that affect performance, or breaking the agreed upon rules of the sport.

One of the signs of a truly great player in a team sport is the ability to make the people around you play better. However, the opposite effect can also be had if a player provides major distractions to his or her team. Terrell Owens was considered by many to be one of the most talented wide receivers of the 2000s; he was also considered to be a liability to the teams who had him under contract. Although Owens had stellar statistics throughout his career, no NFL scouts attended his highly publicized workout that was meant to showcase his abilities after recovering from an ACL injury (Weir, 2011). Rainer Sabin, writing for *Dallas News* in 2012, reported that although an injury is partially to blame for this, his notoriety as a “disruptive force in the locker room did him no favors.”

New England Patriots star tight end Rob Gronkowski was widely criticized by former NFL players and sports journalists alike for the videos that surfaced showing him partying at a club mere days after his team lost the Super Bowl (“Rodney Harrison: Rob,” 2012). The main criticism against Gronkowski had to do with his mindset. Those who criticized him believed that someone who had just taken part in a losing effort in the Super Bowl should not have been partying so soon after the game. Questions arose regarding whether his mental disposition was appropriate for the Super Bowl if he was able to move past it so quickly.

One of the biggest challenges for professional athletes is to stay hungry and continue to dedicate themselves to the sport after they receive lucrative contracts. One of the more common ways professional athletes stray away from being totally dedicated to the sport is by excessively

partying. This can lead to diminished performance and opens the possibility of run-ins with the law. The Oakland Raiders surprised many people by picking kicker Sebastian Janikowski with their first round pick in the 2000 NFL draft. This was a testament to his immense level of talent, but there were some who were concerned about his reputation for partying excessively; one such instance led Janikowski to be charged with attempting to bribe a police officer (Miller, 2000).

Sports fans expect a high level of performance from players. Unfortunately, players are human, and make mistakes just like anyone else. While nearly all of the issues previously discussed include some sort of intentional action that is considered negative, poor performance is virtually never intentional by an athlete. However, this does not deter the public from downgrading their opinion of an athlete that has a bad game. One of the uglier sports moments in recent memory involved San Francisco 49ers wide receiver Kyle Williams receiving death threats because he made two major mistakes that cost his team the NFC Championship Game and a spot in the Super Bowl (Padilla, 2012). This example is comparatively extreme to most situations when a player underperforms in a game, but it shows how much a player's reputation can be damaged if he or she does not perform to the expectations of the public.

Another issue that is exclusive to amateur athletics, mainly at the collegiate level, is a player receiving improper benefits. One of the most noteworthy examples of a player receiving improper benefits involves 2005 Heisman Trophy winner Reggie Bush. Robinson and Cole (2006) of Yahoo Sports revealed that an eight-month investigation found that Bush and his family "accepted financial benefits worth more than \$100,000 from marketing agents while Bush was playing at the University of Southern California." Ultimately, Bush voluntarily forfeited his Heisman Trophy, and USC was heavily sanctioned by the NCAA largely due to the improper benefits given to him (ESPN.com news services, 2010).



Finally, the sports issue that is looked down upon more than any other is cheating. Cheating draws significant amounts of unwanted media attention for the team of the player who is accused of cheating, causing a distraction for the team. It also threatens the integrity of the game, ruining the aspect of pure competition that arouses the interest of so many fans. Barry Bonds' ordeal regarding his alleged use of steroids has been in the media for years. Bonds' defense is that he was unaware he was taking steroids, and was told by his trainer that he was merely using flaxseed oil and arthritic cream (Dolan, 2011). However, many people have questioned this explanation and sports fans all over have revised their perception of Bonds and his career due to this scandal.

Obviously the previous list of possible offenses is in no way exhaustive; it would be impossible to list every single possible issue a professional or amateur athlete could be accused of in their personal or professional lives. For instance, Michael Vick was involved in operating a dogfighting ring (ESPN.com news services, 2007). His involvement with such an activity does not clearly fall into one of the categories mentioned above. It is obvious that his involvement in these activities was criminal, but it is an interesting question to consider whether it should be categorized as a violent crime or not. People generally consider violent crimes towards humans different than crimes that cause physical harm to animals. In the interest of keeping the previous section brief, only situations that could be considered fairly common or particularly significant to athletes' lives as sportspeople were included.

### **2.3 Influence of the Type of Crisis on Potential Apologia Strategies**

Certain types of crises require an athlete to apologize to not only the general public and sports fan, but also to their team or organization. While almost any crisis can be viewed as a distraction to the team as a whole, and may require some sort of apology, there are some crises

that directly harm the organization, and do call for an apology to be made, whether it be to the player's team or the general public. Some of these situations happen when an individual places "egocentric needs above the good of the group and by demonstrating lack of commitment to the organization" (Kruse, 1981, p. 275). For instance, Kyle Williams' errors in the NFC Championship Game clearly required a direct apology to his teammates and others affiliated with the San Francisco 49ers. On the other hand, Joakim Noah directing a homophobic slur towards a fan is unlikely to require an apology to the Chicago Bulls, as the slur only had a minimal effect on the outcome of the game. At worst, Noah may have owed an apology to his team for causing a distraction, but that could be true with almost every incident involving an athlete in a team sport.

As previously discussed, two major components of any crisis are a question of responsibility and a question of the magnitude of the damage caused by the act. Not surprisingly, the two most common ways to combat a crisis accusation are by challenging either responsibility for or magnitude of the crisis. The type of crisis is an important consideration when determining which strategy to use, as different types of crises require different types of responses to maximize effectiveness. For instance, one is unlikely to be overly successful in attempting to convince the public that a violent crime's magnitude is "not as bad as they initially thought it was." In this case, it would generally be the better strategy to contest one's responsibility in the crisis. On the other hand, crises involving the use of inappropriate language (Kasey Kahne's Twitter post, John Rocker's *Sports Illustrated* interview, and Joakim Noah's use of offensive language towards a fan), the question of responsibility is usually not contestable, and an explanation about why the magnitude is not as severe as it originally seemed would be the more effective strategy.

## 2.4 Overview of Benoit's Apologia Strategies

In the book *Accounts, Excuses, and Apologies: A Theory of Image Restoration Strategies*, Benoit (1995a) establishes a comprehensive list of apologia strategies that can be rhetorically deployed. The word “rhetorically” was intentionally used, as Benoit (1995a) included a footnote explaining that it is possible to counteract damaging accusations with silence or by ignoring them, but he chose to omit it as a strategy of apologia, as he wanted to focus on “more proactive strategies” (p. 79).

Benoit (1995a) clarifies that an apologia strategy, at its most basic level, is “an abstract or general concept that represents a goal or an effect sought by discourse” (p. 80). This dictates that when an individual uses an apologia strategy, there is an intended goal in his or her mind that the strategy is meant to achieve. Whether this goal is achieved or not depends on the effectiveness of the selected strategy based on the circumstances of the accusation it is meant to combat, and how well it was deployed.

Benoit (1995a) divides possible rhetorical strategies of apologia into the following five categories: “denial, evasion of responsibility, reducing offensiveness, correction, and mortification” (p. 79). Some of these categories function as their own unique strategy, others include multiple separate strategies that are deployed differently, but all include the same general goal. Each of these categories will be given a brief overview, followed by a discussion of the different strategies included in it.

The category of denial is fairly self-explanatory, as the intent of using the strategies included in it is to disassociate the accused individual with the action he or she is accused of. However, there are slight variations between the ways a denial could be used. Goffman (1971) explains the varying methods of deploying a denial strategy:

First, the offender can introduce a “traverse” or “joinder,” arguing that the act he is accused of committing did not in fact occur. Or he can grant the occurrence of the offensive act but argue that he himself had nothing to do with its happening, that, indeed, the wrong person has been accused. (p. 159)

Other scholars (Schlenker, 1980; Tedeschi & Reiss, 1981) affirm Goffman’s framing of denial, and group the two strategies into defenses of innocence.

Benoit (1995a) chose to combine the two types of denial into a single strategy of simple denial. He explains the effectiveness of the simple denial strategy by stating that regardless of “whether the accused denies that the offensive act actually occurred or denies that he or she performed it, either option, if accepted, should absolve the actor of culpability” (p. 75).

If one successfully denies the existence of the offensive act that he or she is accused of, his or her reputation will no longer be under attack from the public. Schonbach (1980) attempted to expand upon previous theory regarding denial by claiming that an individual could merely argue that the offensive act in question (which he refers to as a failure event) simply did not happen.

The Duke University lacrosse rape scandal was a crisis in which the accused individuals used denial of the occurrence. David Evans, one of the three members of the team who were indicted on charges of kidnapping and sexual assault, proclaimed his innocence at a press conference when he said, “every member of the Duke University lacrosse team is innocent. You have all been told some fantastic lies and I look forward to seeing them unravel in the weeks to come” (Tallman, 2006).

If the offensive act clearly happened, but the accused individual can convince the public that he or she is not responsible for it, his or her reputation will not suffer as a result. Ware and

Linkugel (1973) argue that “denial consists of the simple disavowal by the speaker of any participation in, relation to, or positive sentiment toward whatever it is that repels the audience” (p. 276). Semin and Manstead (1983) suggest that a case of mistaken identity could also be used to deny responsibility for the act.

The recent controversy surrounding the New Orleans Saints’ bounty program to injure players from opposing teams provides an example of denial of responsibility. The media and public alike have posed questions of who was involved with, and who knew of the existence of the program. Recently, the Saints’ quarterback, Drew Brees, declared that he had no involvement in the program, nor was he privy to any knowledge of its real existence (Davis, 2012).

The other strategy in the category of denial is shifting the blame. Schonbach (1980) lists attributing guilt to other people as a strategy of self-defense. Burke (1970) supports this, as he states that one may seek redemption from guilt through the usage of victimage. Benoit (1995a) explains that “this strategy can be considered a variant of denial because the accused cannot have committed the repugnant act if someone else actually did it” (p. 75). He also argues that shifting the blame may be a more effective strategy than simply denying responsibility because:

First, it provides a target for any ill will the audience may feel, and this ill feeling may be shifted away from the accused. Second, it answers the question that may make the audience hesitate to accept a simple denial: “Who did it?” (p. 75-76)

Shifting the blame merely adds another facet to the simple denial strategy by incorporating denial of responsibility. However, this addition can increase the effectiveness of the denial, as it provides a more comprehensive account of how the negative act came to be and leaves fewer questions for the public to answer.

Individuals in the sports world usually do not have the opportunity to use the strategy of shifting the blame; the amount of media attention given to sports figures increases the likelihood that proof of responsibility for the offensive act in question is readily available. However, Kelvin Sampson, who was coaching basketball at Indiana University at the time, was able to shift the blame of responsibility for violating rules regarding recruitment to his assistant, Rob Senderoff. The act in question was the use of three-way phone calls for recruitment purposes, which Sampson says Senderoff initiated without Sampson's knowledge (Katz, 2007).

Any strategy in the denial category is extremely effective if the public can be convinced that it is true. However, these strategies ask the public a question that can only be answered with "yes" or "no." Due to this lack of gray area, very little benefit will be realized from this strategy if the public is unconvinced of the validity of the denial.

Evasion of responsibility is the second category in Benoit's list of apologia strategies. This category is similar to denial, as the general goal is to distance one's character from responsibility for an egregious act. Benoit (1995a) finds that "Those who are unable to deny performing the act in question may be able to evade or reduce their apparent responsibility for it. Four variants of this strategy can be identified" (p. 76). These four variants that can be used to evade responsibility will be referred to as, provocation, defeasibility, accident, and good intentions.

The first strategy in this category is provocation, a term that can be used interchangeably with what others call "scapegoating." Scott and Lyman (1968) describe scapegoating as the excuse one would use to convince others that his or her "questioned behavior is a response to the behavior or attitudes of another" (p. 50). Semin and Manstead (1983) also refer to this strategy as "scapegoating." Schonbach (1980) refers to this strategy as "provocation." Benoit (1995a)

explains that if the public can be convinced “that the actor was justifiably provoked, the provocateur may be held responsible instead of the actor” (p. 76). While this strategy is unlikely to absolve the accused individual of all blame for the offensive act, it could reduce the responsibility he or she is charged with. This, coupled with the effective use of other strategies, could significantly reduce the damage that is done to the reputation of the accused individual.

One of the uglier incidents in boxing that has occurred in recent years provided an example of provocation being used as a strategy of self-defense. Rafael (2006) reported that a brawl broke out in the ring after Zab Judah hit Floyd Mayweather Jr. with a blatant low blow, followed by an illegal punch to the back of the head when Mayweather was doubled over. As a response, Roger Mayweather, Floyd’s uncle and trainer, stormed into the ring and walked in Zab’s direction, which prompted Yoel Judah, Zab’s father and trainer, to enter the ring and throw a punch at Roger Mayweather. Zab Judah was heavily criticized for getting involved with the brawl. When he explained his actions in a later interview, he said, “that’s my father, and I’m not going to stand and let nothing happen to him” (Bernstein, 2007). In effect, Judah made the argument that he would not have gotten involved with the brawl for any reason other than to protect his father, and thus, it was Roger Mayweather’s fault for endangering him.

Defeasibility is another strategy that can be used to evade responsibility for an action. Scott and Lyman (1968) argue that because all actions include a mental component consisting of knowledge and will, “One defense against an accusation is that a person was not fully informed or this his ‘will’ was not completely ‘free’ (p. 48). Schonbach (1980) divides the strategy of defeasibility into the two separate strategies of “appeal to insufficient knowledge or skill” and “appeal to will impairment” (p. 196). Tedeschi & Reiss (1981) attempted to list the specific strategies that could fall under defeasibility; some examples are, lack of “sufficient information,”

“mistaken representation of events by others,” or “drugs and alcohol” (p. 282-284). Semin and Manstead (1983) also mention lack of information as a potential strategy. Benoit (1995a) gives his definition of defeasibility as:

Rather than denying that the act occurred, the actor attempts to suggest that lack of information, volition, or ability means that he or she should not be held fully responsible for the act. This strategy, if effective, should reduce the perceived responsibility of the accused for the failure event. (p. 76)

Defeasibility can be an effective strategy if the audience believes that a lack of information or will was a significant reason that the negative act occurred. This strategy overlaps with the strategy of shifting the blame in some ways, as the person who initially shared the inaccurate information could be held at least partially responsible for the negative act.

An example of defeasibility can be seen in the case of professional boxer Shane Mosley. In an article by ESPN’s Dan Rafael (2007), Mosley claimed that he was unaware that the supplements he took in 2003 contained steroids in them. He said he paid Victor Conte, the owner of the Bay Area Laboratory Co-Operative, for a supplement program that included two types of undetectable steroids. Mosley said he had no knowledge of what was included in the supplements, and that he should have done his own research to find out what was included in the program before injecting it into his body.

The third strategy that can be used to evade responsibility is claiming that an accident is responsible for the situation at hand. Scott and Lyman (1968) state that citing an “accident as the source of conduct or its consequences mitigate (if not relieve) responsibility by pointing to the generally recognized hazards in the environment, the understandable inefficiency of the body, and the human incapacity to control all motor responses” (p. 47). Tedeschi and Reiss (1981)



explain that “since accidents are unintentional and therefore motiveless, explaining that some behavior was an accident reduces the predicament” (p. 281). Semin and Manstead (1983) also mention accidents as a potential strategy that can be used to combat an accusation. Benoit (1995a) explains the effectiveness of this strategy in the following: “We tend to hold others responsible only for factors they can reasonably be expected to control” (p. 76). In short, if the audience can be convinced that a situation currently exists due to accidental circumstances, the amount of blame they place on the accused will decrease.

The previously mentioned case of Sammy Sosa using a corked bat provides an example of a sports player claiming that a negative situation was caused by accidental circumstances. Rosenstein (2003) reported that Sosa “acknowledged ownership of the bat, explaining that he occasionally used it for batting practice and for home run exhibitions to entertain his fans. He said it had been inadvertently mixed in with his regular bats.” By contesting the question of his intent in the situation, he may have convinced some people that he did not mean to cheat, and thus, may have limited the damage his reputation took from this situation.

The final strategy in this category is to claim that the action in question was performed with good intentions. Ware and Linkugel (1973) discuss intent as a part of their denial strategy, which they say can be an effective strategy if it is not feasible to convince the audience that the action itself does not exist. Benoit (1995a) explains that this strategy is utilized when the accused acknowledges the negative act, but makes a plea to the relevant publics to not “hold the actor fully responsible because it was done with good, rather than evil intentions. People who do bad while trying to do good are usually not blamed as much as those who intend to do bad” (p. 77).

In 2003, Rick Majerus, who was then coaching at the University of Utah, was cited by the NCAA for lack of compliance with rules regarding gifts and benefits for occasionally buying

meals for his players at restaurants. Majerus claimed that these instances took place for the sake of compassion. He pointed to a specific instance of when the mother of one of his players called him and told him that her husband (the player's father) had died of a heart attack, and asked if Majerus could break the news to her son in person. Majerus took this player out to a restaurant, and told him over a meal he paid for (Weiss, 2003). While Majerus clearly broke the letter of the law in this case, he is unlikely to be thought of in the same way as other coaches who have broken the same rules, due to the circumstances surrounding his violation, and the good intentions behind his actions.

The use of the previously discussed strategies is designed to decrease the amount of blame that is placed on the accused individual. While these strategies are unlikely to absolve the accused of all guilt in the eyes of the public, they can be coupled with strategies from other categories in order to rescue the reputation of the accused individual as much as possible.

The next category of apologia strategies focuses on reducing the offensiveness of the act or situation in question. Benoit (1995a) explains "a person accused of misbehavior may attempt to reduce the degree of ill feeling experienced by the audience. This approach to image repair has six variants: bolstering, minimization, differentiation, transcendence, attacking the accuser, and compensation" (p. 77).

The first strategy of reducing offensiveness, bolstering, is explained by Ware and Linkugel (1973) as when "a speaker attempts to identify himself with something viewed favorable by the audience" (p. 277). Benoit (1995a) expands upon this simple:

Here those accused of wrong-doing might relate positive attributes they possess or positive actions they have performed in the past. While the amount of guilt or negative affect from the accusation remains the same, increasing positive feeling toward the actor

may help offset the negative feelings towards the act, yielding a relative improvement in the actor's reputation. This strategy might be more effective if the positive traits or actions appear relevant to the accusations or suspicions. (p. 77)

This strategy is unique because it does not engage the accusations directly; rather it calls upon external factors to counterbalance the resentment that came from the initial accusation.

John Rucker's response to the backlash of the public that came after reading his insensitive comments in a *Sports Illustrated* interview demonstrated the use of bolstering as a strategy. To refute the idea that he was a racist, Rucker attempted to bolster his character by revealing that his best friend is a first-generation man of Lebanese decent ("John Rucker apologizes," 2000). Although this is not a great use of the bolstering strategy, Rucker's intent to group himself with tolerance to diversity is clearly evident. If the public were to accept this line of reasoning as sufficient to dismiss the idea that he was a racist, that could be used to counterbalance the sentiment against him from his comments he made during the *Sports Illustrated* interview.

The second strategy, minimization, is used when one wants to alter the perception of the extent of damage caused by the act in question in the minds of the public. Sykes and Matza (1957) and Scott and Lyman (1968) discuss this strategy in the context of denying that injury occurred or claiming that the victim deserved what happened to him or her. They argue that if an act produces no harmful effects, or only to those who deserve harm, then loss of reputation is less likely to occur for the audience. Schonbach (1980) and Schlenker (1980) mention minimization as a potential justification for one's actions. Tedeschi and Reiss (1981) and Semin and Manstead (1983) discuss how one could either claim that no harm was done as a result of the act in question, or that the harm done was trivial. Benoit (1995a) explains that "if the rhetor can

convince the audience that the negative act isn't as bad as it might first appear, the amount of ill feeling associated with the act is reduced" (p. 77). This strategy is meant to contest the public's feelings of negativity towards the act in question or the effects that come from the act in question. The thought process is that if the public can be convinced that the act is not as bad as they initially thought, the amount of damage to the accused individual's reputation will also be reduced.

The previously discussed sexual assault case of Kobe Bryant demonstrates how minimization can be used. Silverman (2003) reported that Bryant spoke to the public at a press conference, in which he claimed that he was innocent in regards to the charges that he forced Katelyn Faber to have sex with him against her will, but took full responsibility for engaging in adulterous activities. This example demonstrates that while Kobe Bryant was bound to be judged by the public for being unfaithful to his wife, the severity of judgment paled in comparison to the judgment he would receive if the public was convinced of the initial charges of sexual assault.

Ware and Linkugel (1973) describe differentiation, the third strategy of reducing offensiveness, as attempting to separate "some fact, sentiment, object, or relationship from some larger context within which the audience presently views that attribute" (p. 278). Benoit (1995a) expands upon the work of Ware and Linkugel, as he explains that differentiation "attempts to distinguish the act performed from other similar but less desirable actions. In comparison, the act may appear less offensive. This may have the effect of lessening the audience's negative feelings toward the act and the actor" (p. 77). If someone who is accused of committing an offensive act can convince the audience that the act performed is merely similar, but less offensive than the act the audience believes was committed, rather than identical, the negative feelings towards the accused individual may lessen in degree.

A 1998 incident involving Mark McGwire provides an example of using differentiation. A *Sports Illustrated* article documented McGwire's use of a drug called Androstenedione, which is legal in Major League Baseball, but banned in the NFL, NCAA and the Olympics. However, McGwire claimed that everyone in professional baseball uses the same substances that he uses, and that everything he used was natural ("McGwire uses nutritional," 1998). The use of this strategy was meant for those who equated McGwire taking Androstenedione with cheating or taking unnatural steroids. If he could change their minds that taking a natural supplement that is considered legal in professional baseball is not as egregious as their original understanding of the situation, his reputation would be unlikely to suffer to the same degree that it would otherwise.

The fourth strategy that attempts to reduce the offensiveness of the act in the minds of the audience is transcendence. Ware and Linkugel (1973) describes transcendence as the attempt to "psychologically move the audience away from the particulars of the charge at hand in a direction toward some more abstract, general view" (p. 280). Sykes and Matza (1957), Scott and Lyman (1968) and Schonbach (1980) all mention an appeal to loyalties as a variation of transcendence. Schlenker (1980) argues that appeal to higher goals can be used as a justification for an action. Tedeschi and Reiss (1981) mention both appeals to loyalties and values in separate subcategories of justifications for actions. Semin and Manstead (1983) incorporate appeal to loyalties as a component of appeal to values. Benoit (1995a) asserts that transcendence "functions by placing the act in a different context" (p. 77). He also expands upon Ware and Linkugel's definition of placing the act in a more abstract, general context by stating that "it can also be useful to simply suggest a different frame of reference" (p. 77-78). Ultimately, the goal of this strategy is to get the audience to think of the act in a different context by considering

aspects of the act itself, or the situation surrounding it, so that it may be less offensive in their minds.

In 2006, Ozzie Guillen, the manager for the Chicago White Sox baseball team at the time, used the strategy of transcendence to try to justify his actions. Guillen referred to a sportswriter with a derogatory term used to describe homosexuals, which was met with criticism from the media. When one columnist asked him for an explanation about why he chose to use that word, Guillen responded that the word has a different meaning in his native country of Venezuela. He explained that it was a term used to question one's courage, rather than describing one's sexuality (ESPN.com news services, 2006). In this example, Guillen attempted to have the audience see the situation from his frame of reference.

A fifth strategy for reducing the offensiveness of an act is to attack the accuser. Rosenfield's (1968) early work on the subject of apologetic discourse finds attacking one's opponent as a possible strategy of self-defense. Sykes and Matza (1957), Scott and Lyman (1968), and Tedeschi and Reiss (1981) all mention condemning the condemners as a possible justification for one's actions. In their work, this strategy focused on criticizing the entire part of the audience who condemned the actions of the accused. Semin and Manstead (1983) identify a strategy of social comparison, which is very similar to the strategy of condemning the condemner, as discussed by the authors cited above. Schonbach (1980) suggests that identifying negative aspects about the accuser's character could be used as a justification for one's actions. Benoit's (1995a) explanation of attacking the accuser is the most similar to Schonbach's conception of the strategy, as he states that "if the credibility of the source of accusations can be reduced, the damage to one's image from those accusations may be diminished" (p. 78). He adds that "it is also possible that attacking one's accuser may divert the audience's attention away

from the original accusation, reducing damage to the rhetor's image" (p. 78). While early work on the subject focused on identifying similarities between the offensive act and the actions that those in the audience participate in on a regular basis, Benoit's version of this strategy focuses on damaging the credibility of the individual who brought forth the accusations against the accused party.

Mike Tyson provides an example of attacking the accuser as a method of verbal self-defense. Tyson was accused of raping Desiree Washington during the month of July in 1991 (Shipp, 1992). After serving some time in prison, Tyson's lawyers obtained information that Washington made a false rape accusation against one of her high school classmates ("Sports people: Boxing," 1994). By showing that Washington had previously accused someone of rape incorrectly, as well as the fact that her accusation was her second one in less than three years, Tyson and his team of lawyers were attempting to compromise the credibility of Washington. They were hoping the legal system and the general public alike would reconsider their thoughts about him and the situation as a result of this new information about Washington.

The final strategy aimed at reducing the offensiveness of the act is that of compensation. Schonbach (1980) mentions compensation as a possible concession to decrease negative feelings towards the image of the accused. Benoit (1995a) explains that when one uses the strategy of compensation "the person offers to remunerate the victim to help offset the negative feeling arising from the wrongful act. This redress may take the form of valued goods or services as well as monetary reimbursement" (p. 78). While the compensation directly benefits the victim, and thus may improve the image of the accused in the mind of the victim, it also may generate goodwill toward the accused, as compensating the victim shows a desire to do a good deed for

the one harmed. In effect, compensating the victim gives the audience the impression that the accused is making an effort to make things right for those harmed by his or her actions.

In 2011, three attorneys representing select University of Memphis basketball season ticket holders claimed that the vacating of wins from the 2007-2008 season, which saw Memphis lose in the national championship game, devalued the purchased tickets, and threatened to bring about a lawsuit against former Memphis coach John Calipari and former Memphis player Derrick Rose. In response, Calipari and Rose decided to settle out of court and pay \$100,000 to those represented by the attorneys (“John Calipari, Derrick,” 2011). This represented an act of compensation to make up for previous misdeeds.

Every strategy in the category of reducing offensiveness attempts to mitigate the potential harm a negative act can have on one’s reputation. Benoit (1995a) explains that none of these strategies attempt “to diminish the actor’s responsibility for that act. All attempt to reduce the unfavorable feelings toward the actor by increasing the audience’s esteem for the actor or by decreasing their negative feelings about the act” (p. 78). Using these strategies in conjunction with evasion of responsibility strategies can be effective, as the negative sentiment towards one who is only partially responsible for an act that is not considered to be overly egregious is likely to be insignificant.

The fourth category of potential image restoration strategies proposed by Benoit is corrective action. Goffman (1971) argues that corrective action is an element of a full apology. This category actually only includes one strategy, which is also named corrective action; there are two ways to accomplish performing corrective action. Benoit (1995a) explains:

In this strategy for image restoration, the accused vows to correct the problem. This may take two forms: restoring the situation to the state of affairs before the objectionable



actions and/or promising to “mend one’s ways” and make changes to prevent the recurrence of the undesirable act. If the problem is one that could recur, the actor’s position may be enhanced by provision of assurances that changes will prevent it from happening again. (p. 79)

The first method of using corrective action is meant to overturn the negative effects that have come from the act in question. If this can be done, there will be significantly less reason for the reputation of the accused to be under attack. The second method attempts to make an effort to prevent future possibilities of similar instances from occurring. Although the public is likely to be unhappy that the act committed by the accused caused negative effects, it is likely that efforts to prevent similar future situations would at least partially offset such negative feelings.

Former Notre Dame basketball player Doug Gottlieb provides an example of taking action to restore the things to the way they were before a negative action took place. Foster (1996) reported that in his freshman year at Notre Dame, Gottlieb stole the credit cards of three other students, and spent \$950. As an act of restitution, Gottlieb paid back the students for the amount of money he charged.

The previously mentioned case involving Michael Vick, and his participation in a dogfighting operation offers an example of corrective action meant to prevent future occurrences of similar situations. During his time in prison, Vick decided to campaign on behalf of the Humane Society of the United States, specifically with “programs aimed at preventing youths from getting involved in dogfighting, and also on programs aimed at assisting youths who have been involved” (“Vick to work,” 2009). Although no possibility existed to restore things to the way they were before Vick was involved with dogfighting, his actions were meant to limit the possibility of future similar occurrences. If the audience felt like the benefit that came from this

act was roughly equivalent to the damage caused by the negative act, the reputation of Vick could be restored in some capacity.

The final category of Benoit's (1995) image restoration strategies draws from Burke's (1970; 1973) theory of mortification. Burke (1970; 1973) explains mortification as an admission of guilt and a plea for forgiveness. Schonbach (1980) includes the separate strategies of acknowledgement of responsibility and expression of regret in his work. Goffman (1971) discusses apologies at length in his work. He explains:

In its fullest form, the apology has several elements: expression of embarrassment and chagrin; clarification that one knows what conduct had been expected and sympathizes with the application of negative sanction; verbal rejection, repudiation, and disavowal of the wrong way of behaving along with vilification of the self that so behaved; espousal of the right way and an avowal henceforth to pursue the course; performance of penance and the volunteering of restitution. (p. 113)

Benoit (1995a) defines mortification as including an admission of guilt and a plea for forgiveness, as Burke did. He explains its utility by stating, "if we believe the apology is sincere, we may choose to pardon the wrongful act" (p. 79). This strategy can be effective, assuming the audience is willing to accept an apology, which is not always a given. Hearit (2006) explains that "there are some acts that, from the perspective of humanity, really are unforgivable" (p. 38).

The previously mentioned case of Joakim Noah using a homophobic slur offers an example of the use of mortification in response to a negative act. Noah apologized after the game that the incident took place and expressed regret the following day (Abrams, 2011). As he was caught on camera saying what he said, there was no realistic way to contest his responsibility in

the action. Further, since most people agree that the use of such terminology is offensive, the use of mortification was likely the best strategy Noah could use in that situation.

This chapter was written with the intent of achieving a basic understanding of the different forms crises in sports take, as well as the different strategies of verbal self-defense found in Benoit's theory regarding image restoration. With this understanding, the next chapter will attempt to apply Benoit's theory to the statements of self-defense made by Tiger Woods.

## CHAPTER THREE

### APPLICATION OF IMAGE RESTORATION THEORY

#### 3.1 Analysis of the Crisis

There are several criteria that an event must meet in order to be called a crisis. First, Huxman (2004) identified a crisis as a multifaceted entity that is a literal act, as well as a symbolic construct. Barton (1993) found that a crisis is significant, unpredictable, has the potential to cause negative effects, and cannot be addressed with routine methods. Heath and Millar (2004) added that a crisis can damage relationships between the accused and certain groups of people that have been or could be beneficial for both; they also find that questions of responsibility, magnitude, and duration of a crisis can be contested. Finally, Sellnow and Ulmer (2004) stated that relevant audiences during a crisis may be diverse, and may have needs that are contradictory to one another.

The events that took place in Tiger Woods' life from November 2009 to April 2010 qualify as a crisis. First, the event was an act, as the acts of adultery and the car wreck were literal events that had a major negative impact on his life. It is also a construct, as the perceptions of Woods as a role model and a family man held by many were changed as a result of his marital infidelities. Additionally, this event was significant, as it put his golf career on hold. It was also unpredictable, as he probably did not expect this situation to be discovered or receive as much attention from the media as it did. The crisis brought about substantial negative results, as his marriage ended, and his aura of invincibility on the golf course has been lost since the crisis. It also called for unconventional methods to be used to address the situation, as Woods put his career on hold in an effort to focus on his marriage, and he occasionally interacted with the media to address the situation at hand. This situation damaged many beneficial relationships to

Tiger, as he lost many fans and sponsors, as well as had his marriage end. However, the duration of the crisis was contested, as Woods used the media to deal with the crisis and end it in a timely manner. The relevant audiences in this situation were diverse, as he had to respond directly to his wife, as well as the sports fans who were upset that he took a break from golf, golf fans who were upset that he violated their image of him as a role model and family man, and those companies who were potential endorsement clients for Woods.

### **3.2 Analysis of Apologia Responses**

In the following sections, the selected messages of apologia discussed in Chapter One will be analyzed with the apologia theory discussed in Chapter Two. First, the strategies that were used by Woods will be identified. Additionally, if Tiger delivered a statement in person, his delivery will be analyzed as well. The goal of this chapter is to provide an assessment of the rhetorical choices Woods made in his selection of apologia strategies.

However, before the artifacts can be analyzed, it is important to note the three primary audiences Tiger's statements were aimed toward. These three audiences were his wife, golf fans, and potential endorsement clients. Although these three audiences were connected in some ways, Tiger's goals for each audience differed from one another.

The first audience was Tiger's wife, Elin Woods. As this controversial situation caused problems in his personal life, there is no doubt that he hoped he would be able to fix the damage he caused to wife and family, with the end goal of keeping his marriage alive.

The second audience Woods hoped to reach was fans of golf, with emphasis toward those who identified as fans of Tiger as well. Television networks base their coverage of golf based on popularity. The more popularity a golfer has, the more airtime he or she will receive when a tournament is televised. In order to stay as relevant as he was before the controversy started, he

needed to maintain a high level of popularity, so he could receive a high level of exposure from the media.

The third and final audience Tiger hoped to reach was those companies that had the potential of offering him endorsement deals. A large portion of the revenue the most popular athletes in the world receive does not come from their salary or prize money; rather, it comes from the companies that pay these athletes to advertise for them. If Woods was able to satisfy such companies, his ability to make money from endorsement deals would increase greatly.

As previously alluded to, these audiences were connected to one another in some ways. For example, companies with interest in offering a golfer an endorsement deal will likely look to golfers who are popular with golf fans and the general population alike. Therefore, if Tiger could restore his image with golf fans, the popularity he would garner from this audience would increase his media exposure, and make him better known to the general population. Additionally, many golf fans were initially upset with Woods because his actions were immoral, and they felt a level of empathy for his wife. If Tiger's wife was persuaded by his image restoration efforts and publically forgave him, it is likely that a significant number of golf fans and those in the general population alike would forgive him for his misdeeds.

### **3.2.1 November 29, 2009 Website Post**

The first statement Tiger Woods posted on his website was his first address to the public regarding the situation. At that point, the only information that had been confirmed was that Tiger was involved in a late-night car wreck near his house. The rumors circulating about the wreck were that Woods' wife Elin was chasing after him with a golf club, and some speculated that she caused the wreck to happen. Because of the limited amount of confirmed information

reported by the media, Tiger was vague in the post on his website. The only strategies of apologia that were utilized in this post were mortification and corrective action.

Woods (2009a) used the admission of guilt component of mortification in this statement when he said, “this situation is my fault, and it’s obviously embarrassing to my family and me” and “the only person responsible for this accident is me.” Tiger was not very clear what he was taking responsibility for, but that is likely because the full story of what had happened was not yet known. It should be noted that he did not explicitly express regret or make an apology, although it can be inferred from his two uses of mortification, as well as making a statement of corrective action, which implies regret.

The statement of corrective action was made when Woods (2009a) said, “I will certainly make sure this doesn’t happen again.” This use of corrective action is quite vague, as Woods could not go into significant detail about how he would not make it happen again, as the crisis was largely still undefined at that point.

The only specific part of this statement was Tiger’s admission that he was the only one responsible for the accident that took place outside his home, meaning that his wife was not at fault. This shows that this statement was mainly aimed toward his wife, although his vague admission of guilt and his vague promise of corrective action would be important in later statements for the other two primary audiences.

Overall, his first attempt to address the situation was average. His statement was very short and vague. As the media had only released a limited amount of information regarding the crisis, Tiger appeared to be waiting to see how much information would become public knowledge before really addressing the situation. He did say, “this is a private matter and I want to keep it that way” (Woods, 2009a), which could be interpreted as an attempt to protect his

family from additional public scrutiny. Be that as it may, the intentional use of vagueness has the potential to be either beneficial or harmful, depending on how the crisis plays out. If parts of the crisis do not become public knowledge, the accused party has avoided unnecessarily implicating his or herself. However, if more information becomes available, the public may decide that the accused party was trying to hide information from them, and judge his or her apology to be inadequate, as full responsibility for his or her actions was not taken.

### **3.2.2 December 2, 2009 Website Post**

Tiger Woods' next response came three days later with another post on his website. More details had emerged about the crisis since the first message was posted, including a woman coming forward who claimed to have been involved in an affair with Woods. As the details about the crisis were becoming more specific, so too did the messages posted on Tiger's website. Once again, Woods chose to concentrate on using the strategies of mortification and corrective action in this message.

Woods (2009b) first claimed responsibility for his role in the situation and expressed remorse in the following statement: "I have let my family down and I regret those transgressions with all of my heart." His second apology to his fans was made when he said, "For all of those who have supported me over the years, I offer my profound apology." Once again, Tiger does not explicitly mention what it is that he is apologizing for. Although the situation was becoming clearer to the public through increasingly detailed media reports, Woods did not seem to want to release any additional details regarding his infidelities; Tiger seemed content to wait for the media to report new information about the crisis and then address it, rather than attempting to use preemption to deal with the situation.



Woods (2009b) also used the strategy of corrective action, as he said “I will strive to be a better person and the husband and father that my family deserves.” He was still somewhat vague in exactly how he was planning to become a better person, husband, and father. This is likely due to the media not having released all details regarding the crisis up to that point. Additionally, his vagueness may have been due to him not having sufficient time to come up with a comprehensive strategy of how he was going to address the situation at hand.

This second address was aimed toward golf fans and potential endorsement clients more so than his wife. In the position his wife was in, she was likely going to be more effectively persuaded by concrete corrective actions than by admissions of guilt and a simple apology. Golf fans and potential endorsement clients, however, require an admission of guilt and an apology as a prerequisite to any sort of corrective action.

This second website post accomplished very little that was not accomplished by the first post. The only positive addition to this media address was the inclusion of a concrete apology. Tiger had still yet to outline how he intended to correct his actions. As specificity is among the most important qualities any claim of corrective action can have, the use of this strategy in this statement was likely to be largely ineffective with any audience.

### **3.2.3 December 11, 2009 Website Post**

The next statement was posted after reports had surfaced that Tiger and Elin had begun engaging in intense marriage counseling in an attempt to save their marriage, followed by Elin buying a mansion in Sweden, which fueled rumors that the end of their marriage was imminent. Additionally, *Playgirl* had come forward, claiming to have naked photographs of Woods, which were likely supplied to the company by one of Tiger’s mistresses. In this statement, Woods used

the same strategies of mortification and corrective action in this statement, but also added the strategy of compensation.

Just as with the previous statements, Woods (2009c) began by using the mortification strategy. He did so when he said, “I want to say again to everyone that I am profoundly sorry and that I ask forgiveness.”

Woods (2009c) stayed consistent with his other posts on his website by following up his apology with a statement showing his intentions to use corrective action. He stated: “It may not be possible to repair the damage I’ve done, but I want to do my best to try.” In this statement, he acknowledges that he may not be able to redeem himself in the eyes of his family or fans, but he still makes his intentions known that he is going to try to do so as best he can.

Finally, Woods (2009c) engaged in compensation to his wife (the victim of the crisis) by taking a hiatus from golf. He announced this plan when he said, “After much soul searching, I have decided to take an indefinite break from professional golf. I need to focus my attention on being a better husband, father, and person.” The strategies of corrective action and compensation work together in this instance. Woods compensated his wife by giving up playing the sport he loved so he could give her more of his time. This extra time Tiger opened up in his schedule would be used to prevent future occurrences of similar situations from happening.

This website post was made almost exclusively for the benefit of his wife, rather than the other two primary audiences. Taking a hiatus from the sport that made him popular and gave him the opportunity to sign lucrative endorsement deals had the potential to diminish both of these in the future. However, as mentioned previously, a statement of public forgiveness from Elin would go a long way in convincing golf fans and potential endorsement clients to forgive him as well.

Even a formidable effort to repair his marriage could help to persuade the public to forgive him, as it showed that he was serious about correcting his actions.

Tiger's decision to take a hiatus from golf was one of the most powerful strategies used in all his addresses, as it showed how serious he was about repairing his marriage. Making the decision to take a break from the sport he loves and stopping all opportunities to acquire income showed how important solving this crisis was to him.

### **3.2.4 February 19, 2010 Statement at TPC Sawgrass**

The first direct interaction Tiger had with the media was a fully prepared statement he delivered at a press conference. This was the first time Woods verbally spoke to the media; previous messages regarding this crisis were in the form of posts on his personal website. Since the start of the crisis, Accenture and AT&T had ended their partnerships with Tiger based on his hiatus from golf, as well as the severe damage his reputation had sustained from the crisis; Gillette chose to limit his role in their advertising campaign. Woods also checked himself into a rehabilitation clinic to seek help for his sex addiction. In this press conference, Tiger once again used the strategies of mortification and corrective action; he also added the strategy of bolstering for the first time.

Woods used the strategy of mortification many times in this statement. He made many blanket statements of mortification that were directed toward everyone who was hurt by his actions. Woods was first quoted as saying "Now every one of you has good reason to be critical of me. I want to say to each of you, simply and directly, I am deeply sorry for the irresponsible and selfish behavior I engaged in." Later in the statement, he said:

I know I have bitterly disappointed all of you. I have made you question who I am and how I could have done the things I did. I am embarrassed that I have put you in this position. For all that I have done, I am so sorry.

Tiger continued, as he once again engaged in mortification by saying, “The issue involved here was my repeated irresponsible behavior. I was unfaithful. I had affairs. I cheated. What I did is not acceptable, and I am the only person to blame” (Woods, 2010).

In addition to the blanket statements of mortification made by Woods, he also apologized to many specific groups, beyond his immediate family, for the first time. First, he apologized to the media, his fans, his family, and his business partners in the following statement:

I am also aware of the pain my behavior has caused to those of you in this room. I have let you down, and I have let down my fans. For many of you, especially my friends, my behavior has been a personal disappointment. To those of you who work for me, I have let you down personally and professionally. (Woods, 2010)

Tiger again took responsibility for his actions later in the statement, identifying that he hurt his family, his friends, his business partners, and children all over the world who admired him. This was done when he said, “I hurt my wife, my kids, my mother, my wife’s family, my friends, my foundation, and kids all around the world who admired me.” Finally, he apologized to the parents who regarded him as a role model to their children, as he said, “parents used to point to me as a role model for their kids. I owe all those families a special apology. I want to say to them that I am truly sorry” (Woods, 2010).

Woods also used the strategy of bolstering in the following statement: “From the Learning Center students in Southern California to the Earl Woods scholars in Washington, D.C., millions of kids have changed their lives, and I am dedicated to making sure that

continues” (Woods, 2010). This mention of the work he has done to help youths around the country does not directly address the crisis situation itself, but it does remind people that he has done positive things in the past; the likely intent in making this statement was to have people weigh this information against the negative feelings in the minds of the public they have come from this situation.

Tiger invested heavily in the strategy of corrective action in this statement. The concrete strategy of corrective action was finally revealed in this statement; it involved seeking help through inpatient therapy, taking a serious look at himself and his character, and rededicating himself to Buddhism. This was first mentioned when he said, “my failures have made me look at myself in a way I have never wanted to before. It’s now up to me to make amends, and that starts by never repeating the mistakes I’ve made” (Woods, 2010). He continued, mentioning his time in therapy for the first time in the following statement: “For 45 days from the end of December to early February, I was in inpatient therapy receiving guidance for the issues I’m facing. I have a long way to go. But I’ve taken my first steps in the right direction” (Woods, 2010). Next, he talked about Buddhism and how he would use it to become a better person in the future. This was done when he said, “I have a lot of work to do, and I intend to dedicate myself to doing it. Part of following this path for me is Buddhism, which my mother taught me at a young age” (Woods, 2010). He continued by saying, “Buddhism teaches that a craving for things outside ourselves causes an unhappy and pointless search for security. It teaches me to stop following every impulse and to learn restraint” (Woods, 2010). Woods made his intentions of continuing with therapy clear when he said the following: “As I move forward, I will continue to receive help because I’ve learned that’s how people really do change. Starting tomorrow, I will leave for

more treatment and more therapy” (Woods, 2010). Finally, he made one more statement of corrective action during this press conference when he said:

In therapy I’ve learned the importance of looking at my spiritual life and keeping in balance with my professional life. I need to regain my balance and be centered so I can save the things that are most important to me, my marriage and my children. (Woods, 2010)

The use of corrective action in this statement was plentiful, and introduced many facets of his overall plan to improve himself as a person. Instead of just focusing on one action to help him refrain from making similar mistakes in the future, Tiger outlined three different actions that he would use to become a better person. The use of therapy allowed him to take an honest look at himself, as well as rededicating himself to Buddhism in an effort to place less value in pleasures outside of the self.

The strategies of mortification and corrective action can be quite intertwined with one another. Woods’ use of these strategies together illustrates this point in the following:

I recognize I have brought this on myself, and I know above all I am the one who needs to change. I owe it to my family to become a better person. I owe it to those closest to me to become a better man. That’s where my focus will be. (Woods, 2010)

Benoit (1995a) acknowledges the connection between these two strategies as he says that it is sometimes wise to combine mortification “with plans to correct (or prevent recurrence of) the problem” (p. 79). After all, without some sort of promise to avoid engaging in the type of behavior that initially caused the crisis, an apology for it is somewhat hollow.

Tiger read this statement in person, which provided an opportunity to comment on his delivery. Woods appeared very serious and solemn throughout the entire speech. He spoke

slowly and made frequent uses of dramatic pauses for emotional effect. For a speech that was so intensely focused on expressing regret for his previous actions and making changes to his life to prevent similar instances from happening in the future, his method of delivery was appropriate, and added to the perception of sincerity of the messages.

Additionally, his mother was present for his reading of the speech, which has a certain amount of symbolism to it, especially considering she was also a victim of adultery herself. It also enhanced the section of his speech about Buddhism, as she was the one who raised him in that way.

This media address was equally directed toward all three primary audiences. As this statement was significantly longer than any of his other comments on the subject, he was able to deploy all the strategies he wanted to for each individual primary audience. In addition, his specific plans of corrective action were also the most important component of a successful apology for each audience in this case.

While the previous three statements on the controversy had been quite brief and vague, this statement was lengthy and outlined a very specific plan of action of corrective action. Tiger did a great job acknowledging that actions would speak louder than words in this situation. He also did a good job showing disappointment in his actions through his statements of mortification. The only part of this statement that was not well done was the one instance of bolstering. Pointing out that his previous work had helped numerous children was completely out of place, as it had no relevance or significance to the situation at hand. Overall, Woods did an excellent job in this statement to the public.

### **3.2.5 March 16, 2010 Website Post**

More than a month would pass before Woods would comment again on the situation, this time returning to posting a statement on his personal website. It announced his intention to return to professional golf at the Masters tournament in April. In this statement, he only used the strategy of corrective action; this was done when he said, “I have undergone almost two months of inpatient therapy, and I am continuing my treatment. Although I’m returning to competition, I still have a lot of work to do in my personal life” (“Tiger to return,” 2010). It is my belief that the omission of mortification was intentional in this post, as nothing changes with mortification as time goes on. However, as corrective action is a process, frequently updating the public about it can be useful in restoring one’s image.

This statement was made with both golf fans and potential endorsement clients in mind. Tiger’s wife clearly knew that Tiger had gone through two months of inpatient therapy, so this statement was made to keep this information fresh in the minds of fans and companies alike, as well as to remind them that he was not through trying to improve himself as a person.

Compared to Tiger’s previous statement in the TPC Sawgrass clubhouse, this message was very brief. It also did not employ the use of many image restoration strategies. Overall, this message fulfilled its purpose of reminding the relevant audiences that he was still working to correct the problem and had the intent to continue to better himself as a person, even in spite of his return to golf.

### **3.2.6 March 21, 2010 Interview with Tom Rinaldi**

The interview with Tom Rinaldi and Tiger Woods marked the first time Woods consented to an interview since the crisis began. The interview aired on March 21, 2010, on ESPN, and was about five minutes in length. It did not look like it was edited in any way, as



there was only one camera angle used throughout the whole interview, with no breaks in the video. In this interview, Tiger only used the image restoration strategies of corrective action and mortification; he also inadvertently discussed why he did not use other strategies.

When asked about the difference between the person he was at the Masters in 2009 and the one who would be making his return at the 2010 Masters, mortification was evidence in Woods' following response: "After treatment, going for inpatient treatment for 45 days and more outpatient treatment, I'm getting back to my old roots" ("Tiger Woods interview," 2010). He also answered a question about reconciling his past behavior with his view of marriage with the following statement: "That's living a life of amends and that's just working at it each and every day" ("Tiger Woods interview," 2010). Finally, he acknowledged that the road to recovery ahead of him was lengthy when he said, "I still have a lot more treatment to do, and just because I'm playing doesn't mean I'm gonna stop going to treatment" ("Tiger Woods interview," 2010).

Tiger also made many other statements of mortification in the interview. First, he apologized to his family, his friends, his business partners, the general public, and children who looked up to him in the following statement:

Well, I owe a lot of people an apology. I hurt a lot of people. Not just my wife. My friends, my colleagues, the public, kids who looked up to me. There were a lot of people that thought I was a different person and my actions were not according to that. That's why I had to apologize. I was so sorry for what I had done. ("Tiger Woods interview," 2010)

He followed this up with a blanket apology, as he said, "I was living a life of a lie. I really was. And I was doing a lot of things, like I said, that hurt a lot of people" ("Tiger Woods interview," 2010). He made a special apology to his wife and mother in the following: "I hurt them the most.

Those are the two people in my life who I'm closest to and to say the things that I've done, truthfully, to them, is ... honestly ... was ... very painful" ("Tiger Woods interview," 2010).

Finally, he made the following two statements of mortification that were meant to express regret for his actions: "I'm as disappointed as everyone else in my own behavior because I can't believe I actually did that to the people I loved" and "I loved Elin with everything I have. And that's something that makes me feel even worse, that I did this to someone I loved that much" ("Tiger Woods interview," 2010).

Once again, Woods showed the connection between the strategies of mortification and corrective action in this interview, as he said, "I've hurt so many people, and so many people I have to make an amends to, and that's living a life of amends" ("Tiger Woods interview," 2010). As stated previously, the promise to correct one's behavior is a way to make an apology much more powerful in the eyes of the public.

Finally, Tiger inadvertently addressed why he did not use the strategies in the categories of denial, evasion of responsibility, and reducing offensiveness of the act, other than the singular usage of the strategies of compensation and bolstering. Tom Rinaldi asked Woods how he learned how far away he had gotten from his core values, to which Tiger responded with, "Stripping away denial, rationalization. You strip all that away and you find the truth" ("Tiger Woods interview," 2010). Later, Rinaldi asked how well the world now knows Tiger now. He responded that people knew him a lot better, and admitted that he was living a lie; he explained how this changed in the following statement: "stripping away denial and rationalization you start coming to the truth of who you really are and that can be very ugly" ("Tiger Woods interview," 2010). Basically, the argument he makes in these two statements is that relying on excuses or justifications to legitimize one's behavior blocks true admission of guilt and the ability to

improve one's character. In short, if a person is unwilling to admit full guilt, they are unable to truly be remorseful or change for the better.

Again, as these messages were delivered in person, it is important to analyze Tiger's delivery of his answers to Rinaldi's questions. This interview marked the first interaction Woods had with the media that was not completely scripted out for him previously. As with Tiger's statement that was delivered in February at the TPC Sawgrass clubhouse, Woods once again was solemn as he delivered his answers to the questions he was asked. His final statement about how much he loved Elin was very emotionally powerful. In contrast, when responding to questions about him returning to the golf course, he smiled a couple of times, and even gave a short laugh when delivering one answer. However, as these questions were not about the mistakes he made in the past, it was not inappropriate for him to show a less solemn side. Tiger's delivery was appropriate, and was ultimately helpful in adding to the perception of sincerity in his answers.

As Tiger's wife was able to see his return from treatment and could judge how much he had changed in person, she no longer could be viewed as one of the primary target audiences of his statements. The messages in this interview were aimed toward golf fans and potential endorsement clients for the most part. Woods wanted to give an in-depth account of the changes he had undergone since receiving treatment to those two audiences in an attempt to show that he had changed for the better.

This interview was effective in its goals, as Tiger gave an in-depth account of the processes he went through in treatment to better himself as a person. He was persuasive in his statements that talked about getting rid of any excuses that could have negatively influenced his growth as a person in treatment. Finally, he was very passionate in the way he talked about those he had hurt, which made his claims that he had changed for the better all the more persuasive.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS

#### 4.1 Evaluation of Woods' Apologia Strategy Choices

Over the course of the six rhetorical artifacts analyzed in this project, Tiger focused very heavily on mortification and corrective action. He also used the strategies of compensation and bolstering once, but those were not what his efforts to restore his image were primarily based on. The strategies that he did not use will be discussed first, followed by the strategies that he did use consistently in his interactions with the public.

The evidence reported by the media that Woods engaged in sexual acts with other women was pretty clear. Because the accusations against him were so clear, he did not attempt to deny them in any way. He took responsibility for his marital infidelities as soon as the media broke the story, although he did not do so until the media released details of his affairs. While he did not outright deny his involvement in any marital infidelity at any time, he was not entirely up front about what he had done. Additionally, he did not try to use any of the strategies in the evasion of responsibility category. It would be difficult to give a credible reason why someone could be provoked into being unfaithful to one's spouse that would alleviate any guilt in the eyes of the general public. The strategy of defeasibility would not make sense for accusations of marital infidelity; no one could have insufficient information that would alleviate any guilt in the minds of the public, and no one regards insufficient willpower as a legitimate excuse in this context. There is no way for such an act to be an accident, nor could it be done with good intentions. The strategies of minimization, differentiation, transcendence, and attacking the accuser were not employed either. As most people believe one marital infidelity is too many, it does not make sense to appeal to minimization by claiming that the number of infidelities is lower than the

media reported. Additionally, the use of differentiation does not make sense to use against an accusation of this kind. It is difficult to think of an alternative context to place this situation into that would justify Tiger's behavior. Finally, attacking the accuser would be difficult, as the accusations came from multiple sources. The fact that the evidence against Woods was so conclusive also makes attacking the accuser a difficult strategy to employ in this case.

The use of compensation was only deployed once by Tiger, but it was very substantial. As he had been golfing all of his life, and had made his fortune doing so, it was quite a significant act that he was willing to stop competitively playing golf so he could focus on working out the marital issues between himself and his wife. The one appeal to bolstering is unlikely to have done any harm to Woods, as the use of it did not seem like an attempt to divert the public's focus away from the real issue at hand. On the other hand, I do not think it helped his reputation in any noticeable way.

The continued usage of mortification and corrective action is what Tiger dedicated nearly all of his efforts of image restoration to. He began using the strategy of mortification by acknowledging his guilt in the situation, followed by the addition of expression of regret, as well as an explicit apology. In his later messages, he specifically apologized to each group of people that he had hurt with his actions. Throughout his messages, he almost always supplemented his statements of mortification with statements of corrective action. His early messages contained vague promises that nothing like this would ever happen again, and that he would seriously attempt to become a better husband and father, but no concrete statement regarding how he was going to achieve any of this was given. In his later messages he revealed that he had called upon others for help, which allowed him to stop lying to himself altogether, and really look at who he had become. In order to change the person he was, he also said he was going to begin using the

teachings of Buddhism that he had followed for most of his life. As he blamed his mindset while he was being unfaithful to his wife on the fact that he had stopped following the principles of Buddhism, this facet of his plan for corrective action directly addressed his reasons behind his actions.

In a nutshell, Woods' strategy for restoring his image contained the following four items: fully admitting his guilt in the situation, expressing remorse for his involvement in the situation, apologizing to everyone he had hurt with his actions, and using the help of others and the teachings of Buddhism to evaluate who he had really become with the intent of changing himself into the person he wanted to become. Woods (2009c) even acknowledged some form of corrective action had to exist on his behalf in order for his apology to be considered credible and sincere when he said, "As Elin pointed out to me, my real apology to her will not come in the form of words; it will come from my behavior over time."

Additionally, Woods acted as his own spokesperson during this crisis situation, which is rather unusual for one facing a crisis. Because he delivered two of his six messages in person, delivery played an important role in his image restoration efforts. As stated in the analysis of those two individual messages, his method of delivery was consistent with the content of his message. This likely strengthened the quality of his apologia.

However, in other crisis situations, when the accused party is not as adept at speaking in public, not using someone else as a spokesperson can hinder efforts at image restoration. The type of crisis at hand also needs to be considered when choosing whether to act as one's own spokesperson. In this case, Tiger Woods was not facing any criminal charges, and did not have to extensively consult legal experts on what he could feely say without fear of it being used against him in a court of law. Ultimately, Tiger acting as his own spokesperson was helpful in this case,

because he did a good job with his delivery, and it made his message seem more genuine, which increased the persuasive quality of it.

#### **4.2 Effectiveness of Woods' Apologia Strategy Choices**

Tiger Woods suffered greatly in his personal and professional life due to his actions of marital infidelity. As a result, his marriage to Elin Nordegren ended in divorce (Helling, 2010). He also lost his aura of invincibility on the golf course, as he went on a 26 tournament winless streak lasting more than two years (Ferguson, 2011). However, he was quite successful in his efforts to rescue his reputation from the initial public backlash due to the crisis of marital infidelity that he was involved in.

One measure of Tiger Woods' successful handling of the situation is his continued appeal as a sports superstar. After his return, although Tiger's ranking in terms of fan approval among athletes decreased from 1st to 25th, he still manages to draw large crowds of star-struck fans (Elling, 2010). Even when Woods is playing poorly, most tournaments are covered by Sportscenter to show clips of his notable shots on the course (both good and bad), concluding with a video of the winner of the tournament sinking his final putt.

So, if it is not his success on the golf course that draws fans in, why is he still so popular? Samuelson (2011) estimates that multiple factors contribute to his popularity in the post-scandal era. He argues that while race is a factor, the main two reasons for Tiger's popularity according to Samuelson are his previous exhibitions of talent on the golf course that had not been seen up to that point and the sheer curiosity he generated in the minds of the American public through his crisis of marital infidelity. He also adds that Americans love a story of redemption, and some continue to follow Tiger just to see if he will be able to recover from the setbacks that came with the crisis.

In addition to his public appeal, Tiger's financial situation has improved since the crisis. Badenhausen (2011) reported that Woods was "still the highest-paid athlete in the world—and it isn't even a close call. Woods earned \$75 million over the past 12 months, easily outdistancing second-ranked Kobe Bryant, who made \$53 million." As a side note, it is interesting that Bryant, another athlete who had previously found himself in the middle of a crisis, ranked second behind Woods in the list of highest-paid athletes.

In terms of endorsements, the only two sponsors who continued their business partnership with Woods during the crisis were Nike (although they decreased the amount of money he was paid to endorse their products) and EA Sports (Elling, 2011). However, he has received new endorsement opportunities since returning to golf. He signed his first (albeit minor) endorsement deal in the aftermath of his sex scandal with a Japanese pain-relief product named Kowa (Buteau, 2011). Tiger received his first major endorsement deal since the crisis when he announced that he had reached a deal with Rolex ("Tiger Woods has," 2011). Soon after, he also signed a major endorsement deal with Fuse Science that would be represented on his golf bag. Behind the Nike symbol on his hat, the Fuse Science logo on his golf bag was considered to be the second most significant endorsement that would be seen during his time on the golf course ("Tiger Woods finally," 2011).

Although the curiosity that came from the scandal of marital infidelity has helped to keep people interested in Tiger, there is no doubt that his use of apologia strategies was necessary to keep these people interested. While some are willing to continue following a celebrity after a crisis, others will lose interest if he or she does not do an adequate job in defending his or her actions through some combination of decreasing his or her perceived level of responsibility for the crisis, diminishing the magnitude of offensiveness of the crisis itself, taking a measure of



corrective action, or taking responsibility for his or her actions, expressing remorse, and offering a sincere apology.

In this case, the number of women that came forward alleging that Tiger had an affair with them served as evidence against him that he would not be able to overcome. Because of this, it was necessary for Woods to take responsibility for his actions, which ruled out the possibility of using any apologia strategies that contested the perceived level of responsibility for the crisis. Mitroff (2001) explains, “while telling the truth may be damaging and hurtful to one’s character and reputation, it is often one of the very few strategies open to someone in the heat of a major crisis” (p. 89). Benoit (1995b) agrees, as he states “an entity who is at fault should admit this immediately. Failure to accept responsibility for wrongdoing can lead to greater damage to one’s image” (p. 92).

Since Woods did take full responsibility for his actions, he was left with the strategy options of attempting to reduce the offensiveness of the crisis, partake in corrective action, and/or engage in mortification. As the American public is generally opposed to married men or women participating in extramarital sexual activities, it would have been difficult for Woods to successfully use any strategy in the reduction of offensiveness category as a primary strategy. While he did engage in bolstering and compensation, those played the role of secondary strategies at most; these strategies also function differently than the other four strategies in the reduction of offensiveness category, as they do not directly dispute the magnitude of the crisis itself or attack the person who initially made the accusation toward the person who was alleged to have been responsible for the crisis happening.

The two strategies Woods relied on to recover from this crisis were mortification and corrective action. As previously stated, Tiger took full responsibility for his actions; he

supplemented his admissions of responsibility with statements of remorse and apology to round out the criteria for the strategy of mortification.

Ultimately, Woods used the strategies that were available to him, given the circumstances surrounding the crisis, in perhaps the most effective way possible. Since he was clearly guilty of what he was being accused of, he took responsibility, showed remorse, apologized, promised to correct his actions, and backed those promises up through enrollment in therapy programs that the media informed the general public about. Benoit (1995b) likely would laud Tiger's usage of corrective action, as he argues that "it can be extremely important to publicize plans to correct and/or prevent recurrence of the problem" (p. 93). He continues, "if an entity at fault makes promises of corrective action but then neglects to fulfill those promises, its corrective action can fail, if not backfire" (p. 93). By making significant sacrifices in his life that were clearly perceived by the media and the general public, Woods was able to compliment his admission of guilt, remorse and apology with concrete action that functioned as a sign of good faith that his statements of mortification were most than words. Benoit (1995a) argued that it is wise to use the strategies of mortification and corrective action together. As such, it can be inferred that the public will be more likely to forgive someone after hearing an apology if real steps are being taken by the apologist to correct the actions of the crisis. Benoit (1995b) agrees, as he states "if we believe the apology is sincere, we may choose to pardon the wrongful act" (p. 92).

The only major part of Woods' life that he was unable to repair was his marriage to Elin. However, remembering the words of Hearit (2006), "there are some acts that, from the perspective of humanity, really are unforgivable" (p. 38). This can be applied on an individual level to Elin Nordegren, as she was unable to forgive Tiger for his acts of marital infidelity. In addition, it was always going to be unlikely that he would be able to save his marriage with a

cleverly written press release. His messages that were directed toward her as a primary audience had a dual purpose, as they were also meant to show golf fans and potential endorsement clients that he was making a serious effort to correct the damage he had caused with his actions; it was expected of him to make such gestures toward Elin.

### **4.3 Implications**

As previously discussed, Fearn-Banks (2011) argues that a crisis will result in an organization or individual (a) being ruined, (b) continuing to exist with diminished public image and financial opportunity, or (c) winning the public relations battle and emerging in a favorable position in the eyes of the public. Option (a) can be ruled out, because Tiger certainly was not ruined as a result of the media exposing his marital infidelities. In his case, it could be argued that his position in the aftermath of the crisis is either option (b) or (c). Woods continues to thrive as a golfer with considerable public support, and he still enjoys having significant financial opportunities through both tournament purses and endorsement deals. However, as Tiger has not emerged from this crisis situation in a more favorable position than he was previously, it is more likely that option (b) is the appropriate evaluation of his position.

Foss (2009) states that the goal of rhetorical criticism is to find what an artifact can teach people about rhetoric. The previously discussed overview of apologia strategies showed that the responsibility for or the magnitude of the crisis could be contested. However, this artifact has shown that sometimes the best way to rhetorically approach a crisis situation is to take full responsibility for the crisis, make a genuine apology, and outline a specific plan of corrective action.

Additionally, as athletes are treated in a different way from those in corporate or political circles, it is only natural to question whether the media and the general public would regard a

crisis surrounding an athlete in a different manner than they would for someone in political or corporate circles facing a similar situation. In this case, it is difficult to tell, as Tiger Woods conducted a thorough apologia without any glaring flaws. However, even before he laid out his concrete plan of corrective action in his February 19, 2010 statement, many people and companies (such as EA Sports) had made their position known that their interest in Woods was based on his abilities as a golfer, and issues in his personal life were of little or no concern to them. This further proves that those in entertainment are not held to the same social standard that those in the corporate or political world are held to by the general public.

#### **4.4 Limitations and Future Research**

Applying apologia to cases of sports crises is a productive line of inquiry. However, this project was limited to only applying such theory to one specific sports crisis case. While the conclusions shed important light on the case of Tiger Woods, care should be taken before generalizing these conclusions to other sports stars. Additional examples should be compiled before broader conclusions can be drawn. For instance, it could be the case that golf crises in particular are a good fit for apologia theory, while crises in other sports are not. It also could be that the nature of adultery charges are custom made for successful application of apologia theory, while other types of crises are not. Finally, it could be any number of factors that made this case a success that may not necessarily carry over to other cases of sports crises. Benoit (2004) asserts “there are differences in the repair efforts developed by individual and companies. For example, companies might favor different image repair options than individuals, or might employ strategies in different configurations” (p. 263). Although his statement was not specifically applied to the realm of sports, it is not a stretch to imagine that athletes in an individual sport (meaning they would represent themselves in a crisis situation) would have substantially

different responses from an entire sports organization that was combating a crisis as a cohesive unit.

Because of this, future research that bridges the gap between sports crises and apologia theory is necessary. Altering any of the above factors when selecting a crisis case to analyze would help to provide a more comprehensive understanding of how apologia theory functions when applied to crisis cases in the sports realm, rather than just the corporate or political realm. The brief discussion above that identifies combinations of Benoit's strategies in other sports crisis cases could be used as a starting point for future research. Additionally, as some sports crises do have significant differences than other types of crises, future research could attempt to isolate previously undiscovered apologia strategies that are unique to such cases; this would serve to further research in the persuasive subcategory of rhetorical studies.

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## **APPENDICES**

## **APPENDIX A**

### **TEXT OF NOVEMBER 29, 2009 WEBSITE POST**

As you all know, I had a single-car accident earlier this week, and sustained some injuries. I have some cuts, bruising and right now I'm pretty sore. This situation is my fault, and it's obviously embarrassing to my family and me. I'm human and I'm not perfect. I will certainly make sure this doesn't happen again. This is a private matter and I want to keep it that way. Although I understand there is curiosity, the many false, unfounded and malicious rumors that are currently circulating about my family and me are irresponsible. The only person responsible for the accident is me. My wife, Elin, acted courageously when she saw I was hurt and in trouble. She was the first person to help me. Any other assertion is absolutely false. This incident has been stressful and very difficult for Elin, our family and me. I appreciate all the concern and well wishes that we have received. But, I would also ask for some understanding that my family and I deserve some privacy no matter how intrusive some people can be.

Retrieved on March 30, 2012, from  
<http://web.tigerwoods.com/news/article/200911297726222/news/>

## **APPENDIX B**

### **TEXT OF DECEMBER 2, 2009 WEBSITE POST**

I have let my family down and I regret those transgressions with all of my heart. I have not been true to my values and the behavior my family deserves. I am not without faults and I am far short of perfect. I am dealing with my behavior and personal failings behind closed doors with my family. Those feelings should be shared by us alone. Although I am a well-known person and have made my career as a professional athlete, I have been dismayed to realize the full extent of what tabloid scrutiny really means. For the last week, my family and I have been hounded to expose intimate details of our personal lives. The stories in particular that physical violence played any role in the car accident were utterly false and malicious. Elin has always done more to support our family and shown more grace than anyone could possibly expect. But no matter how intense curiosity about public figures can be, there is an important and deep principle at stake which is the right to some simple, human measure of privacy. I realize there are some who don't share my view on that. But for me, the virtue of privacy is one that must be protected in matters that are intimate and within one's own family. Personal sins should not require press releases and problems within a family shouldn't have to mean public confessions. Whatever regrets I have about letting my family down have been shared with and felt by us alone. I have given this a lot of reflection and thought and I believe that there is a point at which I must stick to that principle even though it's difficult. I will strive to be a better person and the husband and father that my family deserves. For all of those who have supported me over the years, I offer my profound apology.

Retrieved on March 30, 2012, from  
<http://www.tigerwoods.com/news/article/200912027740572/news>



## **APPENDIX C**

### **TEXT OF DECEMBER 11, 2009 WEBSITE POST**

I am deeply aware of the disappointment and hurt that my infidelity has caused to so many people, most of all my wife and children. I want to say again to everyone that I am profoundly sorry and that I ask forgiveness. It may not be possible to repair the damage I've done, but I want to do my best to try. I would like to ask everyone, including my fans, the good people at my foundation, business partners, the PGA Tour, and my fellow competitors, for their understanding. What's most important now is that my family has the time, privacy, and safe haven we will need for personal healing. After much soul searching, I have decided to take an indefinite break from professional golf. I need to focus my attention on being a better husband, father, and person. Again, I ask for privacy for my family and I am especially grateful for all those who have offered compassion and concern during this difficult period.

Retrieved on March 30, 2012, from  
<http://www.tigerwoods.com/news/article/200912117801012/news/>

## APPENDIX D

### TEXT OF FEBRUARY 19, 2010 STATEMENT AT TPC SAWGRASS

Good morning, and thank you for joining me. Many of you in this room are my friends. Many of you in this room know me. Many of you have cheered for me or you've worked with me or you've supported me. Now every one of you has good reason to be critical of me. I want to say to each of you, simply and directly, I am deeply sorry for my irresponsible and selfish behavior I engaged in. I know people want to find out how I could be so selfish and so foolish. People want to know how I could have done these things to my wife Elin and to my children. And while I have always tried to be a private person, there are some things I want to say. Elin and I have started the process of discussing the damage caused by my behavior. As Elin pointed out to me, my real apology to her will not come in the form of words; it will come from my behavior over time. We have a lot to discuss; however, what we say to each other will remain between the two of us. I am also aware of the pain my behavior has caused to those of you in this room. I have let you down, and I have let down my fans. For many of you, especially my friends, my behavior has been a personal disappointment. To those of you who work for me, I have let you down personally and professionally. My behavior has caused considerable worry to my business partners. To everyone involved in my foundation, including my staff, board of directors, sponsors, and most importantly, the young students we reach, our work is more important than ever. Thirteen years ago, my dad and I envisioned helping young people achieve their dreams through education. This work remains unchanged and will continue to grow. From the Learning Center students in Southern California to the Earl Woods scholars in Washington, D.C., millions of kids have changed their lives, and I am dedicated to making sure that continues. But still, I know I have bitterly disappointed all of you. I have made you question who I am and how I could have done the things I did. I am embarrassed that I have put you in this position. For all that I have done, I am so sorry. I have a lot to atone for, but there is one issue I really want to discuss. Some people have speculated that Elin somehow hurt or attacked me on Thanksgiving night. It angers me that people would fabricate a story like that. Elin never hit me that night or any other night. There has never been an episode of domestic violence in our marriage, ever. Elin has shown enormous grace and poise throughout this ordeal. Elin deserves praise, not blame. The issue involved here was my repeated irresponsible behavior. I was unfaithful. I had affairs. I cheated. What I did is not acceptable, and I am the only person to blame. I stopped living by the core values that I was taught to believe in. I knew my actions were wrong, but I convinced myself that normal rules didn't apply. I never thought about who I was hurting. Instead, I thought only about myself. I ran straight through the boundaries that a married couple should live by. I thought I could get away with whatever I wanted to. I felt that I had worked hard my entire life and deserved to enjoy all the temptations around me. I felt I was entitled. Thanks to money and fame, I didn't have to go far to find them. I was wrong. I was foolish. I don't get to play by different rules. The same boundaries that apply to everyone apply to me. I brought this shame on myself. I hurt my wife, my kids, my mother, my wife's family, my friends, my foundation, and kids all around the world who admired me. I've had a lot of time to think about what I've done. My failures have made me look at myself in a way I never wanted to before. It's now up to me to make amends, and that starts by never repeating the mistakes I've made. It's up to me to start

## APPENDIX D (continued)

living a life of integrity. I once heard, and I believe it's true, it's not what you achieve in life that matters; it's what you overcome. Achievements on the golf course are only part of setting an example. Character and decency are what really count. Parents used to point to me as a role model for their kids. I owe all those families a special apology. I want to say to them that I am truly sorry. It's hard to admit that I need help, but I do. For 45 days from the end of December to early February, I was in inpatient therapy receiving guidance for the issues I'm facing. I have a long way to go. But I've taken my first steps in the right direction. As I proceed, I understand people have questions. I understand the press wants to ask me for the details and the times I was unfaithful. I understand people want to know whether Elin and I will remain together. Please know that as far as I'm concerned, every one of these questions and answers is a matter between Elin and me. These are issues between a husband and a wife. Some people have made up things that never happened. They said I used performance-enhancing drugs. This is completely and utterly false. Some have written things about my family. Despite the damage I have done, I still believe it is right to shield my family from the public spotlight. They did not do these things; I did. I have always tried to maintain a private space for my wife and children. They have been kept separate from my sponsors, my commercial endorsements. When my children were born, we only released photographs so that the paparazzi could not chase them. However, my behavior doesn't make it right for the media to follow my two-and-a-half-year-old daughter to school and report the school's location. They staked out my wife and they pursued my mom. Whatever my wrongdoings, for the sake of my family, please leave my wife and kids alone. I recognize I have brought this on myself, and I know above all I am the one who needs to change. I owe it to my family to become a better person. I owe it to those closest to me to become a better man. That's where my focus will be. I have a lot of work to do, and I intend to dedicate myself to doing it. Part of following this path for me is Buddhism, which my mother taught me at a young age. People probably don't realize it, but I was raised a Buddhist, and I actively practiced my faith from childhood until I drifted away from it in recent years. Buddhism teaches that a craving for things outside ourselves causes an unhappy and pointless search for security. It teaches me to stop following every impulse and to learn restraint. Obviously I lost track of what I was taught. As I move forward, I will continue to receive help because I've learned that's how people really do change. Starting tomorrow, I will leave for more treatment and more therapy. I would like to thank my friends at Accenture and the players in the field this week for understanding why I'm making these remarks today. In therapy I've learned the importance of looking at my spiritual life and keeping in balance with my professional life. I need to regain my balance and be centered so I can save the things that are most important to me, my marriage and my children. That also means relying on others for help. I've learned to seek support from my peers in therapy, and I hope someday to return that support to others who are seeking help. I do plan to return to golf one day, I just don't know when that day will be. I don't rule out that it will be this year. When I do return, I need to make my behavior more respectful of the game. In recent weeks I have received many thousands of emails, letters and phone calls from people expressing good wishes. To everyone who has reached out to me and my family, thank you. Your encouragement means the world to Elin and me. I want to thank the PGA TOUR, Commissioner Finchem, and the players for their patience and understanding while I work on my private life. I look forward to seeing my fellow players on the course. Finally, there are many people in this room, and there

## **APPENDIX D (continued)**

are many people at home who believed in me. Today I want to ask for your help. I ask you to find room in your heart to one day believe in me again. Thank you.

Retrieved on March 30, 2012, from  
<http://www.pgatour.com/2010/r/02/19/tiger.transcript/index.html>

## APPENDIX E

### TEXT OF MARCH 16, 2010 WEBSITE POST

Tiger Woods announced Tuesday that he will begin his 2010 season at the Masters Tournament at Augusta National Golf Club in April. "The Masters is where I won my first major, and I view this tournament with great respect. After a long and necessary time away from the game, I feel like I'm ready to start my season at Augusta. "The major championships have always been a special focus in my career and, as a professional, I think Augusta is where I need to be, even though it's been awhile since I last played. "I have undergone almost two months of inpatient therapy, and I am continuing my treatment. Although I'm returning to competition, I still have a lot of work to do in my personal life. "When I finally got into a position to think about competitive golf again, it became apparent to me that the Masters would be the earliest I could play. I called both Joe Lewis and Arnold Palmer and expressed my regrets for not attending the Tavistock Cup and the Arnold Palmer Invitational. I again want to thank them both for their support and their understanding. Those are fantastic tournaments, and I look forward to competing in them again. "I would also like to thank the Augusta National members and staff for their support. I have deep appreciation for everything that they do to create a wonderful event for the benefit of the game."

Retrieved on March 30, 2012, from  
<http://www.tigerwoods.com/news/article/201003168805154/news/>

## APPENDIX F

### TEXT OF MARCH 21, 2010 INTERVIEW WITH TOM RINALDI

**Rinaldi:** What's the difference between the man who left Augusta national a year ago and the one who is about to return?

**Woods:** A lot has transpired in my life. A lot of ugly things have happened. Things that.....I've done some pretty bad things in my life. And uh, all came to a head. But now, after treatment, going for inpatient treatment for 45 days and more outpatient treatment, I'm getting back to my old roots.

**Rinaldi:** For a lot of people, the spark of those bad things is Nov. 27. Early that day, what happened?

**Woods:** Well, it's all in the police report. Beyond that, everything's between Elin and myself and that's private.

**Rinaldi:** Why did you lose control of the car?

**Woods:** As I said ... that's between Elin and myself.

**Rinaldi:** If it's a private matter, why issue a public apology?

**Woods:** Well, I owe a lot of people an apology. I hurt a lot of people. Not just my wife. My friends, my colleagues, the public, kids who looked up to me. There were a lot of people that thought I was a different person and my actions were not according to that. That's why I had to apologize. I was so sorry for what I had done.

**Rinaldi:** You've said you've made transgressions. How would you, in your own words, describe the depth of your infidelity?

**Woods:** Well, just one is, is enough. And obviously that wasn't the case, and I've made my mistakes. And as I've said, I've hurt so many people, and so many people I have to make an amends to, and that's living a life of amends.

**Rinaldi:** You said you were in treatment. The simple question is, for what?

**Woods:** That's a private matter as well. But I can tell you what, it was tough, it was really tough to look at yourself in a light that you never want to look at yourself, that's pretty brutal.

**Rinaldi:** What'd you see?

**Woods:** I saw a person that I never thought I would ever become.

**Rinaldi:** Who was that?

**Woods:** Well, I had gotten away from my core values as I said earlier. I'd gotten away from my Buddhism. And I quit meditating. I quit doing all the things that my mom and dad had taught me. And as I said earlier in my statement, I felt entitled, and that is not how I was raised.

**Rinaldi:** Why not seek treatment before all of this came out?

**Woods:** Well, I didn't know I was that bad. I didn't know that I was that bad.

**Rinaldi:** How did you learn that? How did you learn it?

**Woods:** Stripping away denial, rationalization. You strip all that away and you find the truth.

**Rinaldi:** How do you reconcile your behavior with your view of marriage?

**Woods:** That's living a life of amends and that's just working at it each and every day.

**Rinaldi:** Given all that's happened, what's your measure of success at Augusta?

**Woods:** Well, playing is one thing. I'm excited to get back and play. I'm excited to get to see the guys again. I really miss a lot of my friends out there. I miss competing. But still, I still have a lot

## APPENDIX F (continued)

more treatment to do, and just because I'm playing, doesn't mean I'm gonna stop going to treatment.

**Rinaldi:** What reception are you expecting from fans?

**Woods:** I don't know. I don't know. I'm a little nervous about that to be honest with you.

**Rinaldi:** How much do you care?

**Woods:** It would be nice to hear a couple claps here and there. But also hope they clap for birdies, too.

**Rinaldi:** Eleven months ago, here at Isleworth, I asked you, 'How well does the world know you?' What's your answer to that now?

**Woods:** A lot better now. I was living a life of a lie. I really was. And I was doing a lot of things, like I said, that hurt a lot of people. And stripping away denial and rationalization you start coming to the truth of who you really are and that can be very ugly. But then again, when you face it and you start conquering it and you start living up to it. The strength that I feel now, I've never felt that type of strength.

**Rinaldi:** In the last four months, Tiger, what's been the low point?

**Woods:** I've had a lot of low points. Just when I didn't think it could get any lower, it got lower.

**Rinaldi:** An example?

**Woods:** When I was in treatment, out of treatment, before I went in, there were so many different low points. People I had to talk and face like my wife, like my mom.

**Rinaldi:** What was that moment like, either one?

**Woods:** They both have been brutal. They've both been very tough. Because I hurt them the most. Those are the two people in my life who I'm closest to and to say the things that I've done, truthfully to them, is ... honestly ... was ... very painful.

**Rinaldi:** What was your wife's reaction when you sat down and had that first conversation?

**Woods:** She was hurt, she was hurt. Very hurt. Shocked. Angry. And, you know, she had every right to be and I'm as disappointed as everyone else in my own behavior because I can't believe I actually did that to the people I loved.

**Rinaldi:** I ask this question respectfully, but of course at a distance from your family life. When you look at it now, why did you get married?

**Woods:** Why? Because I loved her. I loved Elin with everything I have. And that's something that makes me feel even worse, that I did this to someone I loved that much.

**Rinaldi:** How do you reconcile what you've done with that love?

**Woods:** We work at it.

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