

AN ABSTRACT OF THE THESIS OF

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Abstract approved:

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The purpose of this study is to examine how autobiography functions as image restoration for a political candidate through the analysis of Sarah Palin's memoir, *Going Rogue: An American Life*. In particular, the study will identify and evaluate specific restoration strategies implemented by Palin in order to repair her image in the public and political limelight.

When first introduced to the public, Palin received promising support with her nomination speech at the National Republican Convention. Her popularity remained high until mid-September when her credibility began to deteriorate with revelations of her inexperience in public office and amateurish responses during televised interviews. After the 2008 presidential defeat, Palin's reputation continued to be scrutinized. In an effort to salvage her political reputation, Palin published a memoir and became a speaker at numerous conservative Republican events. With the November 2009 release of her autobiographical best seller, *Going Rogue: An American Life*, Palin addressed accusations made against her and explained the reasoning behind each claim. In order to examine autobiography as self-defense, this study incorporates William Benoit's theory of Image Restoration to identify and evaluate techniques used by Palin in her memoir as an attempt to restore her image.

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Autobiography as Image Repair: An Analysis of Sarah Palin's Restoration Strategies

by

Elizabeth H. Canja

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I understand that my thesis will become part of the permanent collection of Oregon State University libraries. My signature below authorizes release of my thesis to any reader upon request.

Elizabeth H. Canja, Author

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Autobiography as Image Repair: An Analysis of Sarah Palin's Restoration Strategies

Chapter One

Introduction

Elizabeth Drew wrote in her book, *Portrait of an Election: The 1980 Presidential Campaign* that “a presidential election is not the frozen past but the historical hinge between what has gone before and what follows” (Drew). Consequently, the 2008 presidential election served as a “historical hinge” marking the end of a homogenous era when the white male stereotype prevailed. This time a diversity of candidates not witnessed before prominently appeared in the political arena. Most notably, the 2008 election provided the American electorate with the first African-American to be nominated as a major party candidate. Furthermore, it afforded only the second time a woman had been selected as a vice presidential running mate, and the first time for the Republican party. Lastly, the election campaign was set in the backdrop of a deeply divided country, polarized by the policies of the outgoing administration and a looming finance crisis which would test the leadership acumen of the next president. While these reasons alone make the 2008 election notable, the nomination of Sarah Palin as McCain's running mate received considerable attention and serves as the focus on this study.

The announcement of her addition to the Republican ticket generated mixed reactions. According to conservatives, Palin could have been the ticket to the White House with her strong religious, social, and economic stance representing the values of the Republican party. The McCain campaign hoped that her nomination would attract not only conservatives but also women as well, who, because of social issues, tend to associate themselves more with the Democratic party. Opponents, however, questioned Palin because of her unknown status on a national level and limited tenure in public service. Rahm Emanuel, who at the time served as congressional representative of Illinois but currently holds the position as White House Chief of Staff to President Obama, responded to Palin's lack of experience stating, “Is this really who the Republican Party wants to be one heartbeat away from the Presidency? Given Sarah

Palin's lack of experience on every front and on nearly every issue, this Vice Presidential pick doesn't show judgment: it shows political panic" ("Sarah Palin").

Because of the novelty of Palin's appearance in the presidential race, the media became a prominent tool for relaying information to the public about her life, both public and private. Therefore, as the campaign unfolded, Palin was exposed to the voters and scrutinized through a blitz of television interviews with such news media celebrities as Katie Couric and Charles Gibson. A majority of these sessions appeared unscripted and unrehearsed and painted the novice Palin in a less than flattering light. As evident in a series of media and public reviews, almost immediately, she became the object of criticism from the opposition and her own party, which evolved into accusations that Palin became the primary reason McCain lost the election (Rhee). Although her impact on the Republican ticket is still debatable, Palin's prominence on the national scene has been revived with the recent release of her best-selling memoir, *Going Rogue: An American Life* and speculation that she may enter the political arena again in a bid for the presidential nomination in 2012.¹

Purpose Statement

The purpose of this study is to examine how autobiography functions as image restoration for a political candidate through the analysis of Sarah Palin's autobiography, *Going Rogue: An American Life*. In particular, the study will identify specific restoration strategies implemented by Palin in order to repair her image in the public and political limelight.

When first introduced to the public, Palin received promising support with her nomination speech at the National Republican Convention. Her popularity remained high until mid-September when her credibility began to deteriorate with revelations of her inexperience in public office and amateurish responses during televised interviews. After the 2008 presidential defeat, Palin's reputation continued to be scrutinized. In an effort to salvage her political reputation, Palin published a memoir and became a speaker at numerous conservative Republican events. With the November 2009 release of her autobiographical best seller, *Going Rogue: An American Life*, Palin addressed accusations made against her and explained the reasoning behind each claim. In order to examine autobiography as self-defense, this study incorporates William Benoit's theory

of Image Restoration to identify techniques used by Palin in her memoir as an attempt to restore her image.

Limitations of the Study

The study is restricted in its scope and depth for the following reasons. For one, the time factor is a limitation to the study. The focus of the study included Palin's attempts to restore her image through autobiography and considering the recent release of her book in November 2009, the ability to observe the effectiveness or ineffectiveness of her restoration efforts using autobiography is limited. Second, since the study of autobiography as image restoration remains novel to the world of academia, the study lacked the ability to review past scholarly research for support and/or evaluations of my findings and conclusions.

Significance of the Study

The novelty of the study of autobiography as a tool for image restoration is both interesting and informative. Most commonly, image restoration occurs in defense discourse presented to an audience through speech or public announcements. Autobiography as image restoration serves as a unique approach for self-defense and remains limited in the area of academic research. Furthermore, although a highly recognized political figure, studies and research about Palin and her actions during the 2008 presidential campaign remain limited. However, as she increased her exposure on the national scene with the publication of her bestselling book, television commentaries, and speaking engagements, she reinstated her stature as a public figure. As a result, she established a renewed interest in her role as John McCain's vice presidential candidate and her role in his campaign loss as well as her future in the political arena. With further exploration of Sarah Palin's memoir, this study may bring a better understanding of the effectiveness of image restoration as a vehicle to restore reputation through autobiography. Furthermore, it is intended that the findings from this study will be beneficial for political candidates who chose autobiography as image restoration as well as for scholars studying the novelty of Sarah Palin and her entrance into the world of national politics.

Literature Review on Sarah Palin

Although popular as governor of Alaska, Sarah Palin remained largely unknown to the national public when first introduced as McCain's Vice Presidential running mate. Because of her novelty status, this part of the literature review is intended to inform the reader of her personal background as well as her political experience prior to the 2008 presidential election. As a result, the reader is able to better understand the accusations made against Palin and the manner in which she responded to these charges. Furthermore, much of what the public learned about Palin came from the mainstream media. Consequently, material related to Palin during and after the election is generated from journalistic sources and the national press.

Information about Palin prior to the 2008 presidential campaign can be found in several biographical sources. As noted by Kaylene Johnson's, *Sarah: How a Hockey Mom Turned Alaska's Political Establishment Upside Down*, Sarah Palin was born in Sandpoint, Idaho on February 11th, 1964 to parents Chuck and Sally Heath (Johnson 15). At two months old, her parents moved the family to Wasilla, Alaska where her father pursued a career as an educator while her mother worked periodically as a school secretary. According to Johnson, Palin inherited several traits from her parents that shaped her adult life. For one, Palin's strong religious principals came from her mother's spiritual guidance and commitment to the church, which reflect such political decisions as her strong pro-abortion stance and opposition against same-sex marriage. Secondly, the persistence of her father to play sports enabled Palin to understand the importance of "hard work, discipline, and teamwork;" qualities she values and applies to her everyday life (Johnson 24). In addition to her involvement in both sports and religion, Johnson also noted that Palin spent a majority of her childhood reading, writing, and hunting in her free time.

As noted in *Trailblazer: An Intimate Biography of Sarah Palin* by Lorenzo Benet, after graduating high school, Palin attended five different colleges in five years, the first being University of Hawaii in Hilo (Benet 46). According to Benet, Palin transferred to Hawaii Pacific on the island of Oahu because it offered a much dryer climate. After several months, she decided to move back to Idaho where she attended Northern Idaho College, a community college, for a few terms before transferring to Matanuska-Susitna

Community College in Palmer, Alaska for one term and eventually landed at the University of Idaho to pursue a degree in journalism and political science (Benet 47). While visiting her family in Wasilla, beauty pageant coordinators approached Palin proposing she compete in the Miss Wasilla contest. Benet explained that, at first, Palin hesitated to be a participant claiming “it wasn’t her thing” but after considering the opportunity to win scholarship money, she agreed (Benet 47). Although it was Palin’s first beauty pageant, she won the title of Miss Wasilla and went on to compete in the 1984 Miss Alaska pageant where she was named Miss Congeniality (Benet 49).

In 1987, Palin graduated from the University of Idaho and returned home to Anchorage where she landed a position working for a local news station, KTUU-TV, as a sportscaster (Johnson 38). Several years later, Palin went on to marry her high school sweetheart, Todd Palin, an American oil field operator and avid dog sled racer, and became the mother of five children (Johnson 41).

As noted by Johnson, at age 28 Palin began her political career when she ran for public office on a whim and was elected into the public council seat (45). After serving on the council for several terms, she ran for mayor of Wasilla, campaigning on a Republican platform to “reduce property taxes and eliminate unnecessary government” defeating nine year veteran John Stein. Later she ran for lieutenant governor under Alaskan Governor Frank Murkowski, but lost to Loren Leman (Johnson 45). As a consolation prize, Murkowski appointed her chairman to the Alaska Oil and Gas Conservation Commission (AOGCC) that dealt with the state’s energy industries (Johnson 47). Johnson said that within a month of serving as the Ethic’s Supervisor to the agency, Palin resigned in response to what she claimed was an “unethical” manner in which the AOGCC members were conducting business.² The author noted that “[Palin] knew she had gambled her political future but she trusted everything would work for the best as long as she stood up for the truth” (Johnson 81).

After serving as mayor of Wasilla for six years, Palin ran for Governor and beat incumbent Murkowski in the election at age forty two to become the youngest and first female governor in Alaska’s history (Johnson 107). Johnson reported that Palin built her agenda on the concerns and interests of the Alaskan constituents. Furthermore, he discussed Palin’s love for her state as she declared in her Inauguration address after being

elected Governor, “I will unambiguously, steadfastly, and doggedly guard the interests of this great state as a mother naturally guards her own, like a nanook defending her cub” (Johnson 129). With this promise, Palin established her goals for Alaska which focused on natural resources and energy planning. According to Johnson, one of Palin’s most notable efforts as Governor was her promotion of drilling for oil in the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge (ANWR), which became a prominent issue in her vice presidential agenda.

As noted by Benet, Palin accepted the offer from Senator John McCain on August 27, 2008 to serve as his running mate in the Presidential election responding, “I’ll do whatever I can to help our country” (196). As McCain and Palin made their first appearance together at a rally in Dayton, Ohio, Benet noted that reactions from the public were mixed. He explained that while some people commended her prior political efforts, others felt “McCain had taken a huge risk” by nominating an inexperienced and unknown figure to the political world (Benet 199). Nevertheless, Benet said that her speech at the Republican National Convention was captivating and offered a new perspective on McCain’s choice of Palin (205).

After the democratic victory in November of 2008, Palin returned to Alaska and continued serving as Governor. In July of 2009, an article in the *New York Times* reported that Palin had announced her resignation in the best interest of Alaska and her family (Nagourney and Rutenberg). According to authors Adam Nagourney and Jim Rutenberg, there was speculation that her resignation had to do with a possible run for the 2012 presidential nomination but, at the time of this study, Palin has not indicated her intentions. Nonetheless, Palin remained involved in politics since her resignation, serving as a keynote speaker at numerous political events and supporting Republican candidates throughout their campaigns. Currently, an article in a February 8, 2010 article in the *Huffington Post* reported Palin appearing on the Fox News network as a guest commentator as well as leading the Tea Party movement in an effort to campaign against President Obama’s healthcare agenda and economic policy (D’Oro).

Literature Review on Image Restoration

The theory of Image Restoration draws on the classical rhetorical genre called *apologia* derived from the Greek meaning “explanation” (“Literature”). While frequently

confused with the English definition of “apology,” which means “making excuses for or explaining one’s actions”, the term *apologia* originates from Plato’s seminal work *Apology*, which was an account of the speech Socrates gave in response to accusations and claims made while on trial for corruption of the Greek youth and skepticism of the Helician deities (Jowett). During his trial, Socrates used the rhetorical technique of *apologia* as a means of self-defense to refute the accusations against him by prosecutors (Jowett).

As it evolved, the term *apologia* became commonly used in rhetoric and, in most instances, applied to scholarly research in an effort to explore self-defense techniques used in speeches. As noted in, “They Spoke in Defense of Themselves: On the Generic Criticism of *Apologia*” B.L. Ware and Wil A. Linkugel defined *apologia* as a response to “an attack of a person’s character, upon his worth as a human being” (274). In their article, they addressed the question of whether or not *apologia* constitutes its own genre or whether its placement belongs in other genres of argument. The authors asserted that *apologia* belongs to a family of discourse relating to rhetorical genres but because of its power, it constitutes its own form of genre.

To understand the components of *apologia*, Ware and Linkugel analyzed speeches of self-defense and identified the factors and subgenres (or “combinations of factors”) that constitute the apologetic discourse. The authors referenced theorist Robert P. Abelson and his “modes of resolution” (also called factors) found in speeches of self-defense: denial, bolstering, differentiation, and transcendence (Ware and Linkugel 275). They defined denial as “the simple disavowal by the speaker of any participation in, relationship to, or positive sentiment toward whatever it is that repels the audience” (Ware and Linkugel 276). As noted in the article, denial is a useful technique, however, the authors provided several caveats for its use. For one, the accused must be careful to refrain from distorting the truth and making it obvious that he/she is lying. For another, the accused must rely on denial of intent to remain acceptable in the eyes the audience (Ware and Linkugel 276). That is, according to Ware and Linkugel, the apologist should use “denial of intent” as a means of escaping the spotlight and downplaying his/her action.

The second factor is bolstering. Bolstering refers to “a speakers attempt to identify him or herself with something viewed favorably by the audience” (Ware and Linkugel 278). The authors used former Senator Edward Kennedy’s speech in response to the Chappaquiddick incident to illustrate the effectiveness of bolstering. For example, Ware and Linkugel described how Kennedy structured his defense in a strategic manner to elicit a feeling of unity between the audience and the incident. By including both his family and the audience and at times, speaking as though they are “one”, he managed to bolster the situation into a “family matter” (obtaining a feeling of connectedness with the audience) rather than as a solitary victim (Ware and Linkugel 278). According to Ware and Linkugel, both denial and bolstering are considered reformatory in that the apologist or accused does not attempt to “change the audience’s meaning or affect” (275) of the accusation or “totally reinvent the identification” of themselves (277). In other words, the accused is not trying to get the audience to believe that a tiger can change its stripes or that a toad can change into a prince. Rather, that a tiger can have different stripes or that a toad can become more elevated.

Ware and Linkugel continued their discussion of apologia by explaining the factor of differentiation. Differentiation involves an attempt to alter the audience’s perspective by giving it a new meaning. Using the same example of Kennedy’s “Chappaquiddick” speech, the authors explained Kennedy’s use of differentiation when he introduced new facts into his explanation of the incident that reflected not only his intoxication but “confusion,” and “shock” and the fact that he may have suffered from a “concussion” (Ware and Linkugel 279). They referred to this strategy as palliation in that it makes this offense appear less serious by reframing it in a different context embellished with “noble” facts (Ware and Linkugel 279).

The final factor in apologia is transcendence which occurs when apologists “psychologically move the audience away from the particulars of the charge at hand in a direction toward some more abstract, general view of the character” (Ware and Linkugel 280). Simply stated, the accused attempts to restructure the act in a different context while focusing on other aspects, ultimately lessening the significance of the act. That is, there is an attempt to have the audience see the “big picture,” the real, overriding reason for the accused actions. According to Ware and Linkugel, the strategy of transcendence is

useful to the extent that the “manipulated attribute(s) prove to be congruent with the new context in the minds of the audience” (Ware and Linkugel 280). In other words, if the new variables are not accustomed to the new context, the plausibility of the accused is in question.

In contrast to the reformative strategy that consist of both denial and bolstering, differentiation and transcendence are transformative strategies which imply that the accused is attempting to change the meaning of the act and/or move the audience’s attention away from the wrongful act committed. As noted by Ware and Linkugel, “the total import of these factors of apologetic discourse, however, become apparent only after we consider the ways in which speakers usually combine them to produce that human behavior we term the speech of self-defense” (282).

Altogether, Ware and Linkugel created four rhetorical postures which are often used by apologists containing one reformative and one transformative technique. The *absolute* posture contains both denial and differentiation strategies in which the accused “seeks acquittal” by denying any wrongdoing and focuses on “clearing one’s name” by dissociating oneself with the act (Ware and Linkugel 283). The *Vindication* posture combines the strategies of denial and transcendence and aims to alter the situation into one that is more appealing and favorable to the audience. The *explanative* posture relies on bolstering and differentiation in an effort to persuade the audience of one’s intention behind the wrongful act. Lastly, the *justification* posture is the grouping of bolstering and transcendence strategies to use as a way to obtain approval for one’s actions (Ware and Linkugel 283).

In addition to Ware and Linkugel, other contemporary scholars have studied apologia to analyze attempts to repair one’s image. In “The Rhetorical Functions of H. Ross Perot’s Political Apologia”, Roger C. Aden examined Ross Perot’s use of apologia during an appearance on *Larry King Live* in which he defended his initial decision to withdraw from the 1992 presidential campaign. Aden argued that Perot utilized the explanative posture discussed in Ware and Linkugel’s article. This posture is a combination of the bolstering and differentiation techniques. If used “the speaker assumes that if the audience understands his motives, actions, beliefs, or what-ever, they will be unable to condemn him” (137).

Aden argued that Perot was successful in employing the bolstering strategy by associating his actions with that of the audience. For instance, as noted in the article, Perot refrained from presenting his actions as merely his own and instead included the audience as part of the act. As Aden explained, using phrases such as “the people” takes attention away from the individual and directs it to the audience which assists in “distancing oneself from the negatively viewed action or trait” (140). Furthermore, Aden said that Perot’s constant reference to the audience enhanced his image as a leader enabling him to appear as the “voice for the people” (140).

Through analysis of Perot’s bolstering attempts, Aden suggested that Perot’s approach was reformative in that he did not attempt to change or alter the meaning of his actions (i.e., the withdrawal from the presidential election). Instead, he insisted on concentrating on his campaign to better serve the American people (Aden 139). At this point in Perot’s defense, Aden noted that the use of transformative techniques would be difficult since the action was evidently committed, thus Perot was unable to deny the occurrence of the wrongful act, which was his withdrawal from the presidential race.

Aden demonstrated Perot’s use of differentiation by separating his campaign into several different contexts: the professional politician and grass-roots politics. Through disassociating himself from the stigma of “dirty politics,” Perot was able to appear nobler by creating an outsider image of himself and his campaign. Additionally, Aden explained that Perot was successful at differentiation through his ability to create a new “context” or reality of his decision to then re-enter the campaign (141). As noted in the article, Perot reiterated his commitment to “the people” and continued to reference the audience throughout his discourse. By creating a new reasoning for his re-entry into the election, Perot differentiated his initial decision to quit into a decision to come back and campaign “for the people” (Aden 142).

Using apologia as a foundation for his study, William L. Benoit created his own theory for defending one’s self referred to as Image Restoration. In *Accounts, Excuses, and Apologies: A Theory of Image Restoration Strategies*, Benoit addressed the issue of image restoration and the idea that “Human beings frequently must attempt to restore their reputations after alleged or suspected wrong-doing” (5). He argued that our “face, image or reputation not only contributes to a healthy self-image, but it also can create

favorable impressions on others” (Benoit 2). For Benoit, the need to study image restoration is crucial because “threats to image are pervasive, reputation is important, and discourse has the power to restore face” (2).

Benoit identified five strategies for image restoration: denial, evasion of responsibility, reduce offensiveness, corrective action, and mortification. As he explained, in many cases, different strategies will include additional techniques (or tactics) used in self-defense discourse. The first strategy of image restoration theory is denial. *Denial* refers to the accused denying the act even occurred or shifts the blame, placing the attention of the wrongful act on another person or object (Benoit 73). The second strategy involves the *evasion of responsibility* which is the accused’s attempt to “evade or reduce responsibility for the undesirable act” (Benoit 73). As Benoit explained, in some instances, challenges prevent the accused from being able to deny the act altogether therefore, the accused attempts to lessen the severity of the act by refuting the claim with four possible tactics; *provocation*, meaning the accused was provoked and not entirely to blame; *defeasibility*, or the idea that there was not enough information prior to the action; *accident*, which is simply the accused arguing that the action occurred accidentally; and lastly, *good intentions*, in that the accused insists that the act was done with meaningful intent although produced unfavorable results.

The third image restoration strategy is *reduced offensiveness* which is the attempt to “reduce the degree of ill feeling experienced by the audience” (Benoit 77). This strategy consists of six tactics used in image repair, some reflecting factors used in apologia; bolstering, minimization, differentiation, transcendence, attack accuser, and compensation. *Bolstering* attempts to replace prior negative feelings about the undesirable act with positive opinions toward the accused. In other words, the accused tries to focus on favorable attributes they possess in order to avert the audience’s attention from the act and instead, concentrate on the positive features of the rhetorician. *Minimization* allows the accused to reduce the direness of the act by persuading the audience of its trivial importance. When it comes to *differentiation*, the accused is likely to identify and compare similar acts to that of their own, although the comparison includes one that places the accused in a favorable light. *Transcendence* is the idea that the accused seeks to “suggest a different frame of reference” for the act in hopes of

rationalizing the significance of the wrongdoing and instead, directing attention towards a logical and legitimate reasoning behind the wrongdoing (Benoit 78). *Attack accuser* is another technique used to refer the attention of the accused by attacking or placing blame on the accuser. Lastly, *compensation* is the effort to reduce the negativity of the action by rewarding the victim of the act with some sort of valuable incentive (Benoit 78). The fourth strategy of image restoration is *corrective action* used by the accused in attempts to mend the negative effects of the action by giving assurance that the undesirable act will never be repeated and/or “restoring the situation to the state of affairs before the objectionable action” (Benoit 78). The fifth and final strategy of *mortification* is simply the accused admitting to the wrongful action and asking for forgiveness (Benoit 78).

Benoit also addressed the importance of audience perceptions of the accused when examining image restoration attempts. He noted “the rhetor’s perceptions of the audience’s reaction to attacks are all the rhetor has available to prompt and guide image restoration efforts” (Benoit 82). As Benoit explained, if the accused perceives that the audience believes he/she has committed and is responsible for a wrongful act, image restoration discourse is likely employed (71). For the critic assessing the effectiveness of the restoration strategies, Benoit maintained that it is important to acknowledge the audience’s opinion of the accused “before and after the image restoration attempt, if possible” (82). In this way, the critic is able to determine the point at which the accused felt the need to restore her image and determine the success of the strategies used.

Benoit also discussed the nature of image restoration discourse in the combination or pairing of strategies. According to Benoit, “use of multiple strategies may be beneficial in that they reinforce one another” (157). He explained how utilizing a single strategy is too limiting and multiple strategies should be incorporated which strengthen the reparation of an image. With this advice, Benoit suggested that a critic identify the most prevalent and/or repetitive strategies used throughout the discourse for analysis.

To illustrate the use of image restoration strategies, Benoit conducted a variety of studies in which a wrongful act occurred. He both evaluated and analyzed attempts to repair image after a reputation has been damaged and/or tarnished. In “The Tonya Harding Controversy: An Analysis of Image Restoration Strategies”, authors Benoit and Hanczor studied Olympian figure skater, Tonya Harding, and her response to the attack

inflicted upon teammate Nancy Kerrigan during the 1994 Olympic games. The authors examined Harding's interview with Connie Chung in which she presented her side of the story about how and why the attack against Kerrigan occurred. Through analysis of Harding's defense dialogue, the authors identified the image restoration strategies recurrent during the interview. After recognizing the principal strategies employed by Harding, the authors then determined the effectiveness, or ineffectiveness, of each strategy. They explained that each of the strategies Harding chose to use in defense of her actions were appropriate in attempting to restore her image; however, according to the article, Harding failed to repair her image because "the development of her defense was generally weak" (Benoit and Hanczor 425). For Benoit and Hanczor, Harding's inability to utilize the strategies correctly prevented her from repairing her damaged reputation. For instance, Harding attempted to bolster her image from "attacker" to "victim" by relating "sob stories" about her childhood which implied relevance to her ability to commit such an act. However, the authors noted that Harding's television persona did not correlate to that of a "victim". That is, her demeanor was that of a "tough girl" and not "hapless maiden".

Similar to Benoit's previous discussion of audience perceptions, the article discussed the important role the audience plays in image restoration. Without the audience's acceptance of the attempt to repair his/her image, the effort to redeem oneself will be unsuccessful. In the case of Tonya Harding, the authors illustrated her failure to both, convince the audience of truth and boost her image from "attacker" to "victim" (Benoit and Hanczor 426).

In "President Bush's Image Repair Effort on Meet the Press: The Complexities of Defeasibility", Benoit examined the image restoration strategies employed by President George W. Bush. During a February 8th, 2004 appearance on *Meet the Press*, former President Bush responded to attacks from Democratic presidential nomination candidates criticizing Bush's policies towards the war in Iraq and the economy. As evidenced in Benoit's evaluation of Tonya Harding's restoration attempt, he first analyzed the rhetorical discourse of President Bush, then evaluated the strategies used most frequently throughout his dialogue. Benoit found that both denial and defeasibility were prominent techniques used by Bush, although erroneously applied (283). For Benoit, it is crucial

that the evidence is strong when defending or denying a wrongful act. Although Bush insisted he contributed to job creation, statistics showed that there was in fact an increase in unemployment rates in the United States. As Benoit described, if the accused cannot verify that the act was not committed, the strategy of denial will be unsuccessful. Similarly, Bush's use of defeasibility proved ineffective in that he did not think about the circumstances of claiming "a lack of information" for such pertinent issues as economic problems and the war (Benoit 289). Benoit explained that because President Bush chose to employ the image restoration strategy of defeasibility, he risked being seen as "powerless." When using defeasibility, according to Benoit, one must be careful to avoid appearing incompetent or unintelligent. Benoit concluded, certainly this is the case of a U.S. president trying to employ this strategy (301).

In addition to actual case studies, "Appropriateness and Effectiveness of Image Repair Strategies" Benoit and Drew investigated audience's perceptions of strategies most efficient in image-threatening situations. In order to evaluate the strategies, the authors presented several hypothetical scenarios in which a defense strategy was used in response to committing a wrongful act. Each participant of the study then assessed the appropriateness of the various strategies (i.e., whether the audience was offended or not) and effectiveness (i.e., whether the audience was persuaded by the strategy) (Benoit and Drew 157). Benoit and Drew concluded the audience viewed both mortification and corrective action as both appropriate strategies when attempting to repair one's image (158). Denial, provocation, minimization, bolstering, and attack accuser, on the other hand, were the least appropriate. Other strategies (differentiation, transcendence, shifting the blame, good intentions, accident, compensation, and defeasibility) received mixed reactions although they appeared more appropriate than the previous strategies (Benoit and Drew 159).

With respect to the effectiveness of strategies, mortification and corrective action received favorable results in that they were both viewed as the most successful strategies for image repair. Similar to previous ratings, denial, provocation, minimization, bolstering, attack accuser, and differentiation were viewed as least effective while the remaining strategies fell somewhere in the middle (Benoit and Drew 159).

From the findings, Benoit and Drew concluded that the audience favored both mortification and corrective action as techniques used when attempting to repair one's image. The authors reported that mortification received positive ratings in that "apologies are likely to be effective in dealing with problematic situations" (Benoit and Drew 159). For Benoit and Drew, an apology is expected when a wrongful act is committed and, if given in a sincere tone, the audience is more likely to forgive the accused. As for corrective action, the authors insisted that additional studies are needed to support their analyses, but the attempt to rectify the problem and/or promise to avoid future occurrences could be a successful technique for image repair considering the positive reactions of the study (Benoit and Drew 159).

Benoit and Drew discussed their findings with respect to the strategies that rated the least appropriate and the least effective. Although the strategies (denial, provocation, minimization, bolstering, and differentiation) received unfavorable reactions, the authors note that previous studies revealed the strategies to be both effective and appropriate (Benoit and Drew 159). Benoit and Drew explained that different strategies are appropriate and effective in different situations. According to the authors, it is important to consider the type of situations or events in which the act occurred that can then affect which strategies to use and/or omit when repairing one's image (Benoit and Drew 159).

The study conducted by Benoit and Drew is applicable to the analysis of Sarah Palin's image repair strategies. By analyzing the appropriateness and effectiveness of the self-defense strategies used by Palin, the study can determine whether or not her attempts could have been successful.

Although much development of Image Restoration has been credited to William Benoit, he invited further research of the theory. With this notion, authors Judith Burns and Michael Bruner addressed concerns and criticisms of Benoit's theory, particularly as it applied to corporate contexts, in the article "Revisiting the Theory of Image Restoration Strategies." According to the authors, there are several aspects of the theory that "invite misinterpretation" specifically, the words "image", "restoration", and "strategies" (Burns and Bruner 28). As noted by Burns and Bruner, the concerns regarding "image" are twofold. First, they argued that a "corporation's image is neither unitary nor homogeneous" (Burns and Bruner 29). Instead, there can be an assortment of different

images for one corporation (or person) that constantly shift and move from one image to another. Second, the authors claimed that “a reader might assume that image restoration must be approached from the point of view of the corporation” (Burns and Bruner 29). However, Burns and Bruner noted that the audience’s perspective of the corporation should be considered and not simply the image in which the corporation exudes. Furthermore, the authors noted the importance of understanding personal and social factors of individuals in that both can contribute to how an audience views corporations.

Burns and Bruner were also concerned with the way Benoit used the word “restoration.” The authors’ main argument was that the term “restoration” implied “that some discrete, situation has returned to its original state” when in fact, this is unlikely to occur (Burns and Bruner 29). Instead, Burns and Bruner said that the word “recreating” should be in place of “restoration” thus preventing any misperception during the image “recreating” process.

The word “strategy” also concerned Burns and Bruner. As noted in the article, the authors quoted Benoit’s definition of strategy as “...the discursive intersection between goals sought by the rhetor and effects that may occur in an audience” (Burns and Bruner 30). However, Burns and Bruner noted that the commonly used definition of strategy is “the art of employing resources to achieve a goal” (30). With this notion, the authors argued that confusion can occur between the two definitions in that “a restoration strategy might be assumed to be the art and not the goal” (Burns and Bruner 30). Furthermore, Burns and Bruner said that Benoit’s use of the term “method” as another name for “strategy” creates confusion in that the word could imply “a method for restoring image” not “an intersection of goals and effects” (30). To eliminate further misunderstanding, Burns and Bruner suggested the theory use “discourse” in place of “strategies” in an effort to illustrate the complexity of the rhetorical transaction (31).

Burns and Bruner concluded with several suggestions for future development of Image Restoration useful for the analysis of Palin and her attempts to restore her image. First, they recommended broadening (or “expanding”) the frame of the wrongful act to include previous actions thus allowing for a better understanding of the overall image restoration process (Burns and Bruner 33). Consequently, as the authors noted, it is important to obtain a comprehensive view of Palin’s gaffes as opposed to one singular

event which would lead to better identification of attempts to repair her reputation and image. Next, the authors suggested the need to “flesh out fragments, themes, and issues from the perspective of the significant audience(s)” (Burns and Bruner 34). As maintained throughout this analysis, the perception of the audience is critical to the effectiveness of image restoration. Understanding the audience’s reactions and responses to Palin’s “wrongful acts” would enable the critic to examine the motivations behind Palin’s efforts at image restoration. Lastly, Burns and Bruner discussed their concern with the theory’s tendency to “oversimplify the assessment of effectiveness” through inadequate documentation and measurement of effects and recommend stronger analytical constraints (34). As noted in the article, there are challenges to both methods of evaluating effectiveness; however, Burns and Bruner suggested “a complete understanding of multiple audiences may focus the assessment of effectiveness” as well as obtain more “diverse and precise measures of effectiveness” such as focus group interviews, surveys, public opinion polls and ethnography (35).

In the article “Another Visit to the Theory of Image Restoration Strategies”, Benoit responded to the concerns and criticisms raised by Burns and Bruner. For one, Benoit recognized the possible misunderstanding of the word “restoration”. He acknowledged that the meaning of “restoration” may imply that the image would return back to its original state and with this, Benoit claimed to prefer the word “repair” in place of “restoration” (40). Benoit also addressed Burns and Bruner’s concern regarding the theory’s need to incorporate a more “audience(s)-oriented point of view” rather than focus on the “discrete source” (40). Although Benoit asserted that the theory does concentrate on the “source,” he understood the importance of an audience, especially audience perspectives and the consideration of multiple audiences. In particular, Benoit reiterated his definition of image being “the perception of a person (or group, or organization) held by the audience, shaped by words and actions of that person, as well as by the discourse and behavior of other relevant actors” demonstrating his attention to the audience (Benoit 40).

Benoit also addressed the concern raised by Burns and Bruner regarding the “assessment of effectiveness” and the difficulty of identifying the overall success of the image repair strategy. He argued that initially, a critic must assess the effectiveness by

determining whether the defense discourse was “well-developed or appropriate” (Benoit 42). From this perspective, Benoit suggested examining outside evidence to support the critics’ evaluation. He stated that both evidence and a critic’s judgment are equally important in determining the effectiveness; not just one or the other (42).

Benoit concluded by agreeing with Burns and Bruner on several concerns: the understanding that a “corporation’s image is not unitary or homogenous”, the importance of the role of an audience, and the need to examine additional factors and context in image repair. Relating to the study of Palin’s use of autobiography as image restoration, Benoit, Burns, and Bruner’s emphasize that the role of an audience is particularly important. Therefore, the examination of public opinion and reactions towards Palin’s gaffes are crucial in identifying the reasoning behind her image restoration and her subsequent strategies.

Statement of Method

This study will examine how Palin used image restoration in her autobiography *Going Rogue: An American Life*, in an attempt to repair her reputation after the 2008 presidential election. Specifically, the basis for the study involves Benoit’s theory of Image Restoration and the idea that “human beings frequently must attempt to restore their reputations after alleged or suspected wrong-doing” (1).

Chapter Two will describe the context of Palin’s image restoration beginning with her entrance on the national stage. Then, I will include a description of the rhetorical events that occurred throughout the campaign that appeared to be the foundation of her tarnished image. Furthermore, I will examine public and media reactions to each occurrence in an effort to understand audience perceptions of the wrongful act.

Chapters Three will present my analysis and examination of Palin’s restoration strategies used in her autobiography. In this chapter, I will describe how Palin responded to each of the events and ascertain the accusations Palin addressed in her book *Going Rogue: An American Life*. Next, I will identify the specific defense strategies such as evasion of responsibility and reduced offensiveness Palin implements in an effort to redeem herself and her image.

In Chapter Four, I will conclude with a summary of Palin’s image restoration strategies used throughout her autobiography. Specifically, I will discuss how

autobiography as image restoration could be both a strength and limitation in an effort to repair one's image. Finally, I will discuss the significance of these findings and implications for further research.

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End Notes

¹Palin remains involved in the Republican party primarily as the leading spokeswoman for the Tea Party rally's all over the United States. Furthermore, she has campaigned for several Republican candidates seeking higher office in Congress and recently announced her endorsement for John McCain's senatorial campaign for the November 2010 elections.

²Palin resigned in January 2004 as head of the Alaska Oil and Gas Conservation Commission after complaining to the office of Governor Frank Murkowski and to state Attorney General Gregg Renkes about ethical violations by another commissioner, Randy Ruedrich, who was also Republican state chairman. According to Palin, Alaska state law barred Palin from speaking out publicly about ethical violations and corruption. But she was vindicated later in 2004 when Ruedrich agreed to pay a \$12,000 fine for breaking state ethics laws.

Context of Image Restoration

Sarah Palin received national attention when Presidential candidate, John McCain, announced her as his running mate on August 29, 2008, while on the campaign trail in Dayton, Ohio. Prior to this announcement, Palin's name recognition remained largely reserved to her home state of Alaska and McCain, omitting more well-recognized candidates such as Governor Mitt Romney of Massachusetts, a wealthy businessman, and Governor Tom Ridge of Pennsylvania, a fellow Vietnam veteran. Her novelty on a national level produced a flurry of media and public attention. According to *Washington Post* writer Dan Balz, "McCain's selection of the nationally untested Palin was the most unlikely choice of a running mate since George H.W. Bush tapped then-Sen. Dan Quayle in 1988, a move as risky as it was bold" (Balz).

The purpose of this chapter is to describe the rhetorical events which, arguably, contributed to Palin's tarnished reputation throughout the campaign. In addition to these events, a discussion of the McCain campaign as a whole and its alleged involvement in Palin's damaged image will be examined in Chapter Three of my analysis. Furthermore, as noted in Chapter One, Benoit claimed "the rhetor's perceptions of the audience's reaction to attacks are all the rhetor has available to prompt and guide image restoration efforts" (82). Based on this notion, the chapter will include media and public reactions to the events in order to examine why Palin felt it was necessary to defend herself in her memoir *Going Rogue: An American Life*.

Prior To Blunders

Irrespective of Palin's limited national exposure, she remained well-known in Alaska where she had an active political career. For example, in 1992, she served on Wasilla's city council and later, in 1996 she served as the town's mayor. In 2006 she gained notoriety by being elected Alaska's first female as well as youngest governor.

Much of Palin's success had been attributed to her "hard-hitting and straight-talking" method of approach when dealing with politics (Martin). In fact, according to an article in *Time*, she inherited the nickname "Sarah Barracuda" by Alaskan constituents who attributed her ability to take on "entrenched bureaucrats" to her basketball competitiveness in high school (Grunwald). To illustrate, while working as chairwomen of the Alaska Oil and Gas Conservation Commission, Palin identified and filed ethics

charges against Randy Ruedrich, Chairman of the State Republican party for his abuse of state employment guidelines and favoritism of certain regulated companies. As reported in the *New York Times*, when Palin brought her concerns to Governor Murkowski, he did not order an investigation into her accusations thereby, she quit her position in protest to signal her disassociation from government corruption (Becker, Goodman and Powell). As noted in *The Weekly Standard*, Palin became a hero in the eyes of the public and the press as a result of her action to uncover and convict well-established officials of the Republican party (Barnes). Later in her position as Governor, Palin signed an ethics reform package into law in an effort to prevent further ethical violations. According to an article in the *Anchorage Daily News*, Palin said the law would help re-establish trust between the public and elected officials (Halpin). Her effort of ethics reform and battle against Big Oil companies such as ConocoPhillips and BP, increased voter support and raised her approval rating to 89 percent while serving as governor (“Alaska’s Governor”). In fact, according to Anchorage pollster Mar Hellenthal, the people of Alaska viewed Palin “...as the symbol of purity in an atmosphere of corruption” (Carlton).

As the 2008 presidential election neared, Senator Barack Obama and Senator John McCain became the leading contenders for the presidential seat. When the time came to announce their running mates, Obama chose Senator Joe Biden from Delaware while McCain picked Governor Sarah Palin. According to *MSNBC*, McCain praised Palin’s achievements while serving as governor and stated that “she is exactly who this country needs to help us fight the same old Washington politics of me first and country second” (Gress).

On August 27, 2008, Palin accepted John McCain’s invitation to be his running mate. When announced to the public, reactions about Palin’s selection were mixed. As reported in a September 4, 2008 article in *Time*, Palin’s introduction served as “one of the most unlikely and remarkable entrances into the national stage memory” (Thornburg). The article described the public’s response to Palin as being conflicted, with defenders commenting on her prior political efforts in Alaska and detractors concerned that the senator was taking a “huge risk” by nominating an inexperienced and unknown figure to the political world (Thornburg). As noted by columnist Sam Harris of *Newsweek*, “the point to be lamented is that she [Palin] came to the public seeking the second most

important job in the world, without any intellectual training relevant to the challenges and responsibilities that await her” (1). Harris went on to say that “there is nothing to suggest that she even sees a role for careful analysis or a deep understanding of world events when it comes to deciding the fate of a nation” (1). On the other hand, columnists Michale Grunwald and Jay Newton-Small of *Time*, conjectured on the motives behind Palin’s selection by stating that McCain needed to convince conservatives of his strong support of social issues, and close the gender gap (1). Writer Dan Balz of the *Washington Post* explained that McCain’s conservative base had, at best, been lukewarm towards his candidacy (1). Balz stated that Palin helped to consolidate the conservative party with her strong conservative credentials and “brought an outpouring of enthusiasm from the right flank of the GOP” (1). Furthermore, Palin, according to Grunwald and Newton-Small, reinforced McCain’s narrative as a “maverick conservative crusader” (1). Not only had she been successful as the governor of Alaska in battling corruption of her own state’s Republican establishment, she also remained a strong Christian, pro-life advocate, and mother (Grunwald and Newton-Small).

Because of Palin’s novelty status on the national level, the media became a vital source for relaying information about her life, both public and private. As soon as McCain announced her as his running mate, the media filled the void of unfamiliarity with information and data about Palin. Although much of the information served as the basis upon which the public began to form opinions of her, people still knew very little about Palin’s candidacy from which to draw conclusions about her ability to serve as vice president. According to a *Gallup* poll conducted August 30, 2008, one day after McCain’s announcement, a majority of Americans had never heard of Palin and because of her anonymity at the national level, they did not know enough to have an opinion about her (Newport). Because of Palin’s unknown reputation, the media filled this void with information that quickly took on an unsavory taint and put her candidacy in an unfavorable light. For example, within days of her announcement, the media reported that her 17-year-old, unmarried daughter was pregnant. Furthermore, it was reported in *Time* that Palin involved herself in an ethics scandal of her own making dubbed “Troopergate” (Thornburg). Her inexperience also earned national attention with her limited tenure as governor and questionable foreign policy expertise.

Because much of the information presented about Palin placed her in a less than flattering light, her acceptance speech at the Republican National Convention marked a pivotal moment for establishing her overall image in the minds of the voters. As noted by *Washington Post* columnist Michael Shear, Palin relied heavily on her own biography as a way to connect with the audience by describing herself as a “mom-turned-politician” with the ‘same challenges and the same joys’ as other families” (See Appendix A). For example, by referring to her daughter’s pregnancy as an event that could happen to anyone’s family, she deflected the disdain of her critics and ingratiated herself with the public (Shear).

Following her speech on September 3, 2008, the media reacted to Palin’s political oration in a multiplicity of reviews. An article in *U.S. News and World Report* stated that the media “universally lavished praise on Sarah Palin’s convention speech” (“Palin’s Speech”). The article went on to report several responses by media officials commending Palin’s speech, such as *NBC*’s Tom Brokaw at the conclusion of the public address stating, “Tonight makes a very auspicious debut as the vice presidential candidate before this hall and a national television audience. She could not have been more winning or engaging” (“Palin’s Speech”). For example, Palin explained to the audience her intent while serving as vice president: “Here’s a little newsflash for those reporters and commentators: I’m not going to Washington to seek their good opinion. I’m going to Washington to serve the people of this great country” (see Appendix A). Additionally, Bob Schieffer of *CBS* observed after the speech, “I think she passed the first test. The people in this hall absolutely loved this speech. ... Now we’ll see how it plays with the rest of the country” (“Palin’s Speech”). For example, when Palin discussed her son’s deployment to Iraq, she elicited shouting of “USA, USA, USA” by the audience to show their appreciation for her families service to the country (see Appendix A). Also, *ABC*’s, George Stephanopoulos concluded that, “There were a lot of beautiful and effective lines in this speech,” adding that “She definitely gets an A. ... It was appealing and funny and warn at times” (“Palin’s Speech”). For instance, Palin added humor to her speech when she joked about government spending. She stated:

I came to office promising major ethics reform to end the culture of self-dealing. And today, that ethics reform is a law. While I was

at it, I got rid of a few things in the governor's office that I didn't believe our citizens should have to pay for. That luxury jet was over-the-top. I put it on eBay. I love to drive myself to work. And I thought we could muddle through without the governor's personal chef, although I got to admit that sometimes my kids sure miss her. (see Appendix A)

Furthermore, her speech at the Republican National Convention received positive reactions from the public, especially conservative Republicans. Conservative radio host, Rush Limbaugh responded to Palin's speech by saying "I did not want that to end last night ... I didn't want the night to end... This lady has turned it all around ... from now on, on this program John McCain will be known as John McBrilliant" ("Holy Limbaugh"). This reaction mirrored most Republican views in that, according to a *USA/Gallup* poll, 60% of Republicans were more enthusiastic about voting in the election after the Republican convention than 42% prior to the convention (Newport). The poll also revealed that McCain had a four point advantage over opponent Obama following Palin's speech at the convention; McCain's largest lead in polls since May 2007 (Newport). The public's general consensus, according to a September 5, 2008 *Rasmussen Report*, maintained that Palin had made a "tremendous first impression" after the convention ("Palin Power"). 58% of voters believed that Palin's speech helped McCain's chances of becoming president while only 10% believed it hurt those prospects. Numbers showed that Palin had made a positive first impression during the Republican National Convention ("Palin Power").

Post Blunders

After the initial burst of enthusiasm over Palin's speech at the Republican National Convention, a series of rhetorical events occurred throughout the campaign that appeared to be the foundation of her tarnished image. Specifically, her performance during several television interviews with *ABC's* Charles Gibson and *NBC's* Katie Couric and subsequent media reports about Palin's deportment appeared to damage her reputation.

The Charlie Gibson Interview

On September 11, 2008, Palin met with *ABC's* Charles Gibson in her home town of Wasilla, Alaska for the first of three television interviews with the news correspondent since the announcement of her addition to the McCain ticket. Following her introduction to the public on August 29, 2008 she had essentially remained out of the political limelight (Allen). With the exception of her speech at the Republican National Convention, the McCain campaign maintained tight media access to Palin and only relented when her absence in the political arena came into question. According to Paul Bedard in *US News & World Report*, much of her nonappearance came from McCain staffers and their claim that the media focused too much on Palin's personal life (Bedard). McCain staffers were not willing to grant media access to Palin until "they treated her with more respect" (Bedard). However, as uncertainty about Palin's vice presidential ability rose, McCain's campaign relented and agreed to allow for "selective" interviews beginning with noted broadcast television anchor, Charles Gibson in an effort to "increase Americans' comfort with her [Palin] as a leader" (Allen). As reported in the *New York Times*, the McCain campaign had selected Gibson to conduct the first interview, since the journalist was known for "having a mild manner" and it was presumed he would be easy on their candidate (Rutenburg).

The interviews between Palin and Gibson focused primarily on issues such as national security, climate change, and energy policy. Because Palin's inexperience served as one of the focal points noted by critics of her nomination, the interview intended to offer the public and media a view of her political savvy. An article in the *New York Times* reported that top aides from the McCain campaign devoted considerable time to prepare Palin for the Gibson interview, noting that staffers developed a set of presumed questions and answers for Palin to practice and staged a series of mock interviews for the interviews (Rutenburg).

When the interviews aired on national television, they received a considerable amount of public attention. According to *ABC News*, the first interview on "World News With Charles Gibson" received almost 10 million viewers while the second and third which were featured on *ABC's* "Nightline" exceeded ratings earned by *CBS's* "Letterman" and *NBC's* "Leno" in their popular nighttime shows (Parker).

Once the interviews had been conducted, the media responded immediately with a critique of Palin's performance. An article in the *New York Times* reported Palin appearing "at times visibly nervous, at others appearing to hew so closely to prepared answers that she used the exact same phrases repeatedly..."(Rutenburg). Another article by Michael Kranish and Farah Stockman of *The Boston Globe* noted that "Palin...presented a confident face in what was considered an important early test of her knowledge of foreign affairs. However, she answered most questions by repeating McCain's view of the world..." (1). Eve Fairbanks from *The New Republic* stated that Palin "looked tightly wound and sounded talking-point-programmed" (1). Fairbanks continued by explaining that "I have no doubt Palin is intelligent, but she sounded like someone who had simply never had to think about many of the things Gibson asked such as policy and foreign affairs and it appeared as though she had just crammed for a test" (1). Alessandra Stanley from the *New York Times* added that Palin "didn't look rattled or lose her cool but she skittered through with general answers, sticking to talking points that flowed out quickly and spiritedly, a little too much by rote... she sometimes looked like a student trying to bend prepared answers to fit unexpected questions" (Stanley).

In addition to Palin's overly rehearsed method of answering questions, the critics noted that she demonstrated a limited understanding of foreign affairs. In particular, one of her most difficult moments during the interview came when Gibson asked her stance on the "Bush Doctrine." Palin appeared to be confused with the term "Bush Doctrine" replying, "In what respect, Charlie?" He answered, "Well, what do you interpret it to be?" and Palin responded with a question, "His worldview?" (see Appendix B). After Gibson explained that the doctrine referred to pre-emptive wars, Palin said:

I believe that what President Bush has attempted to do is rid this world of Islamic extremism, terrorists who are hell bent on destroying our nation. There have been blunders along the way though. There have been mistakes made. With new leadership comes the opportunity to do things better. (see Appendix B)

Gibson pressed on with the question attempting to obtain an answer from Palin on whether she agreed or disagreed with the doctrine. Palin said, "Charlie, if there is a legitimate and enough intelligence that tells us that a strike is imminent against the American people, we have every right to defend our country. In fact, the president has the

obligation, the duty to defend” (see Appendix B). Gibson, as reported in the *New York Times*, had a trace of irritation on his voice when he replied: “I got lost in a blizzard of words there...is that a yes?” (Stanley). According to Bob Herbert, an Op-Ed columnist for the *New York Times*, when trying to answer the question, “Ms. Palin looked like an unprepared student who wanted nothing so much as to escape this encounter with the school principal” (1). This served as a turning point in the way people viewed Palin as a vice presidential candidate. She showed signs of insecurity about her knowledge of foreign affairs and revealed to the national public a sense of uncertainty about her experience in the political world.

In addition to Palin’s inability to answer the “Bush Doctrine” question, she attempted to justify her foreign policy credentials by noting the proximity of Russia to Alaska. When Gibson asked, “What insight into Russian actions, particularly in the last couple of weeks, does the proximity of the state give you?” Palin responded, “They’re our next-door neighbors. And you can actually see Russia from land here in Alaska. From an island in Alaska” (see Appendix B). In lieu of a substantive response, Palin’s implication that she understood Russia because it was a “neighboring country” produced a flurry of unfavorable reactions. An article in the *Anchorage Daily* reported that Palin had “not met with Russian leaders or delegations, negotiated any Russian issues or visited the country” (Mendoza). The *Boston Globe* noted that Palin received her first passport in 2006 and visited just four countries. Furthermore, she had little involvement in her state’s cross-border issues while serving as governor (Bender and Issenberg). Her lack of world travel and knowledge of international affairs raised questions about her assertion that Alaska’s proximity to Russia gave her unique experience on foreign relations (Bender and Issenberg). Republican Senator Chuck Hagel of Nebraska, one of the first Republican office holders to question McCain’s vice presidential pick, stated, “I think they [McCain campaign and Palin] ought to be just honest about it and stop the nonsense about, ‘I look out my window and I see Russia and so therefore I know something about Russia’...That kind of thing is insulting to the American people” (Linthicum).

Upon conclusion of the Gibson-Palin interviews, reviews from the public and media were more negative than positive. However, where people stood politically depended, for the most part, on whether or not they had a favorable or unfavorable

impression of Palin's performance. According to *ABC News*, Republicans considered Palin's interview to be "a reasonably good performance for her first interview" (Parker). Kathryn Lopez, a writer for the conservative magazine, *The National Review*, headlined her piece "Let Sarah Be Sarah" replying that "she did just fine" in the interview (Parker). Democrats, on the other hand, felt that Palin clearly demonstrated her lack of experience. For instance, Ilan Goldenberg from the liberal commentary outlet, *Huffington Post*, noted that Palin's unseasoned performance "reflected badly on her and her readiness. It reflects even worse on John McCain who thought that she was qualified" (1).

Following the Gibson interviews, Palin agreed to spend several days with *CBS News* anchor Katie Couric on the campaign trail to discuss social and domestic issues within the United States. This interview was advanced by McCain's staff to remedy some of the gaffs in the Gibson interview as well as further prepare her for an upcoming vice presidential debate with Joe Biden.

The Katie Couric Interview

On September 24, 2008 the first of the three interviews aired on national television. Similar to the Gibson interviews, a flurry of reactions filled the airwaves following the nationally televised event. However, contrary to the Gibson reviews, these were predominately critical of her performance. According to an article in the *Los Angeles Times*, the interview "found Palin rambling, marginally responsive and even more adrift than during her network debut with *ABC's* Charles Gibson" (Rainey). The first interview featured Couric and Palin casually walking and talking by the United Nations headquarters in New York city. The topic of conversation focused on the economy as Couric asked questions about Palin's stance on the government bailout, her thought on the possibility of another depression in the United States, and whether or not Palin supported a moratorium on foreclosures (see Appendix C). At one point of the interview, Couric asked Palin to give specific examples of McCain's successful attempts at repairing the operations of Wall Street. When Palin failed to provide specific examples of McCain's economic achievements, Couric repeated the question several times in an effort to obtain a solid answer saying "I'm just going to ask you one more time - not to belabor the point; specific examples in his 26 years of pushing for more regulation." Palin replied, "I'll try to find you some and I'll bring them to you" (see Appendix C). Her

weak response to a seemingly simple question demonstrated her political weakness as a viable candidate and continued as the focus of further delimitation in her vice presidential campaign.

On September 25th, during the second interview with Couric, this one centering on foreign policy, Couric revisited Palin's prior comment during the Gibson interview connecting her foreign policy experience to the proximity of Russia from Alaska, asking her to explain its relevance. When Palin insisted that propinquity was, in fact, a viable component of successful foreign relations, Couric asked her to describe any actual international experience such as negotiation with foreign entities (see Appendix C). Again, Palin returned to her statement that Alaska's shared border with Russia remained essential to good foreign relations and was, in fact, critical to the national security of the United States (see Appendix C). According to James Fallows, a national correspondent for *The Atlantic*, Palin's remarks about Russia seemed to have drawn more attention than any other part of the interview (1). Fallows explained that Palin's comments "well, they just sounded funny" and the irrational justification of her foreign policy experience proved ineffective (1).

In addition to her remarks about Russia, Palin appeared nervous and stumbled with answering questions throughout much of the interview. According to an article in the *New York Times*, "...Palin's answers were surprisingly wobbly: her words tumbled out fast and choppily, like an outboard motor loosened from the stern" (Stanley). Fareed Zakaria from *Newsweek* explained that Palin had been given a set of talking points by campaign advisers, simple ideological mantras that she repeats and repeats as long as she can. But if forced off those rehearsed lines, what she has to say is often, quite frankly, gibberish" (1).

The interviews concluded on September 30, 2008, with Couric questioning Palin's views on both social and environmental issues. At the beginning of the interview, Couric asked what newspapers and magazines Palin read. She responded, "I've read most of them, again with a great appreciation for the press, for the media." Couric asked, "What, specifically?" "Um, all of them, any of them that have been in front of me all these years" said Palin. Couric replied, "Can you name a few?" And Palin answered, "I have a vast variety of sources where we get our news." She continued, "Alaska isn't a

foreign country, where it's kind of suggested, 'wow, how could you keep in touch with what the rest of Washington, D.C., may be thinking when you live up there in Alaska?' Believe me, Alaska is like a microcosm of America" (see Appendix C). Although Couric repeatedly asked Palin the question, she failed to provide an answer about which resources she read as a source of information. Consequently, Palin's inability again to answer what seemed to be a simple question made her appear unprepared at best, and unformed at worst.

The aftermath of the Couric interview was devastating to Palin's public image. According to Alessandra Stanley of the *New York Times*, "it wasn't the first interview on national television, but in some ways it was the worst" (1). Palin's performance during the interview was described in *New York* magazine:

It was like watching one of those hopeless singers trying out for *American Idol*: First you laugh. Then you laugh some more. Maybe after that you laugh a little bit more. And as the talentless contestant soldiers on, despite the judges' derision, it hits you that this person, despite their best efforts, doesn't even realize that they don't have what it takes. And that makes you kind of sad. ("Sarah Palin's Latest Interview")

Contrary to the Gibson interview, where Palin still received considerable Republican support, she suffered serious damage from her own party after the Couric interviews were aired. For example, conservatives began to express their concern for Palin as the vice presidential nominee. *National Review* editor and previous Palin supporter, Kathleen Parker, described her reaction to the interview and her opinion of Palin:

As we've seen and heard more from John McCain's running mate, it is increasingly clear that Palin is a problem. Quick study or not, she doesn't know enough about economics and foreign policy to make Americans comfortable with a President Palin should conditions warrant her promotion. No one hates saying that more than I do. Like so many women, I've been pulling for Palin, wishing her the best, hoping she will perform brilliantly. I've also noticed that I watch her interviews with the held breath of an anxious parent, my finger poised over the mute button in case it gets too painful. Unfortunately, it often does. My cringe reflex is exhausted. (1)

The Couric-Palin interview turned out to be so critical in the course of the presidential campaign that Couric received the Walter Cronkite Award for Excellence in Television Political Journalism on the basis of declaring the interview a “defining moment in the 2008 presidential campaign” (Shea). Additionally, the interview became an instant success on the television scene with Saturday Night Live featuring a skit on September 27, 2008 mocking the dialogue between Couric and Palin. Comedians Tina Fey, as Sarah Palin, and Amy Poehler, as Katie Couric, made headlines for their hilarious spoof of the interview.

The “Troopergate” Scandal

In addition to the interviews with Gibson and Couric, media reports on Palin’s questionable ethics during her governorship as well as candidacy were highlighted, which affected her public image. The most notable example included the alleged scandal entitled “Troopergate” where Palin embroiled in a questionable firing of Alaskan Public Safety Commissioner, Fred Monegan. As reported in *Time* by columnist Thornburgh, the dismissal was originally sanctioned by the Alaskan legislature however, Monegan responded to his firing as a retaliatory action by the governor and, as such, that Palin abused power (1). Serge Kovalski reported in the October 9, 2008, the *New York Times*, that Palin explained her dismissal of Monegan as a response to his disobedience and unwillingness to comply with her fiscal reforms (1). According to Kovalski, Monegan contested his firing by stating that “he was ousted because he would not bow to pressure to dismiss Trooper Wooten” (1). An article in the *Huffington Post*, reported that Mike Wooten had been a State Trooper in Alaska and also the husband to Palin’s sister, Molly, during the time Palin served as Governor. The article revealed that Wooten had a history of violations and alcohol abuse and even tasered his stepson, Palin’s nephew Payton (Quinn). The September 9, 2008, *Newsweek* reported that, in response to Wooten’s behavior, Palin pressured the state police, including Monegan, to take action against Wooten (Hosenball). The dismissal of Monegan, which became known as *Troopergate*, led to an investigation to determine the reasoning behind the firing.

The Troopergate scandal became a highly politicized issue for Palin during her vice presidential candidacy. In an article from *The Nation*, John Nichols wrote that the Troopergate scandal “really had the McCain camp spooked” (1). With allegations

pointing to Palin's unethical means of dismissing Alaska's top police official, the controversy, according to Nichols, threatened Palin's "carefully manufactured image" (Nichols). He explained that the McCain campaign knew the situation was serious, as former McCain campaign manager, Terry Nelson, admitted "The fight is over how [Palin] is going to be defined in the eyes of the American public" (Nicols). He continued by saying that "All the information about her has not been introduced, and once that information comes to light people are going to draw conclusions about her, and the campaigns are fighting to shape the conclusions" (Nicols). An article in the *Los Angeles Times* reported that on November 3, 2009, a day before the presidential election, Palin was acquitted of ethics violations in the firing of Monegan ("Breaking"). The announcement prepared by the Alaska Personnel Board declared that there appeared to be "no probable cause to believe Palin or any other state official violated the Alaska Executive Ethics Act in connection with the firing" ("Breaking"). Nevertheless, what role Palin played in seeking her ex-brother-in-law's dismissal raised questions not only about her character in her willingness to use her office for a personal goal, but also about her administrative abilities in her ineptness in managing the dismissal (Demer).

Campaign Accessories

The appearance of questionable ethics was also raised concerning Palin's campaign attire. When first entering the political arena, Palin attempted to display an image of the "average folk" yet her wardrobe and accessories belied that image. As reported in the *New York Times*, Palin received \$150,000 from the Republican National Committee for campaign apparel. This disconnect between the "hockey mom" persona and the glamorization of her appearance, questioned Palin's legitimacy as a candidate both personally and professionally (Healy and Luo). As a result, the Federal Election Commission (FEC) asked to rule on the use of campaign funds for the personal use of candidates. The *Boston Globe* reported that election-law experts were split on whether the RNC's expenditure is allowable under federal laws, which prohibit the use of campaign funds for personal use ("Palin's Clothing"). The Federal Election Commission by Citizens for Responsibility and Ethics filed a complaint arguing the wardrobe bought to outfit Palin violated the Federal Election Campaign Act (The Associated Press). However, the article in the *Boston Globe* reported that the FEC acquitted claims made

against Palin and the Republican National Committee, ruling that political parties are allowed purchase personal items for candidates (“Palin’s Clothing”). Nevertheless, the *Politico* explained that “the business of primping and dressing on the campaign trail has become fraught with political risk in recent years as voters increasingly see an elite Washington out of touch with their values and lifestyles” (Cummings). As noted in the *Seattle Times*, the controversy centered on the hypocrisy of the situation. Palin portrayed herself in campaign appearances as an average working woman with small-town values, a hockey mom who shops at Wal-Mart and the wife of a union member who works with his hands yet she dressed in upscale designer outfits (Abcarian and Linthicum).

Ethics Violations

Since her introduction on a national level, Palin had been inundated with ethics complaints, most of which occurred after her selection as McCain’s running mate. The *Politico* reported that in addition to the Troopergate incident and Palin’s wardrobe, complaints ranged from “the governor’s use of state funds and staff to the workings of her political action committee and even to a jacket she wore to a snow machine race involving her husband” (Barr). Because Alaska did not monitor or keep track of the ethics complaints, the amount of complaints filed against Palin remained unknown. However, according to Judy Bockmon, the state ethics attorney at the Alaska Department of Law, the number of complaints filed against Palin seemed “unusual” (Carpenter). To illustrate, an article in the *Washington Times* reported that Palin had to spend more than \$500,000 to deal with the ethics complaints (Carpenter). According to the article, Palin was eventually exonerated of all charges but had to use her own money to defend herself (Carpenter). On July 3, 2009, midway into her governorship, Palin announced her resignation. There was speculation that her abrupt departure resulted from the numerous ethics charges made against her as well as the promise of a more lucrative career as a national political figure. Whatever the motivation, Palin’s ethical violations were also instrumental in tarnishing her public image.

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Chapter Three

Analysis of Image Restoration

Four months after Palin's resignation as governor of Alaska, her autobiography, *Going Rogue: An American Life*, hit bookstores in November 2009. The book gained considerable attention during the first week of release, selling over 700,000 copies and debuting on the *New York Times* best seller list (Itkoff). In her memoir, Palin discussed her early life growing up in Alaska and her initial entrance into state politics in addition to devoting a significant amount of time discussing her short run as the Republican party's vice presidential candidate in the 2008 presidential election. However, more than providing a glimpse into her life, the memoir primarily served as an opportunity for Palin to restore her public image by allowing her to vindicate her behavior through personal accounts of events during and after the campaign.

In the following analysis, I will recount the rhetorical events discussed in Chapter Two from Palin's own perspective as written in *Going Rogue: An American Life*. Using Benoit's theory of Image Restoration, I will examine Palin's implementation of strategies for the purpose of repairing her image after the 2008 presidential campaign and indicate which strategies she selected to use in her defense. My analysis will conclude in Chapter Four where I will examine the use of Palin's strategies and discuss the strengths and weaknesses of using autobiography for image restoration purposes.

The Charlie Gibson interview

In her response to the Gibson interview, Palin attempted to divert attention away from herself by shifting the blame to Gibson but at the same time, incorporated the bolstering tactic as a tool in her defense. Bolstering, according to Benoit, is used to alleviate negative feelings of the accused by "strengthening the audience's positive affect' for the accused" (Benoit 77).

Palin utilized these strategies by framing her defense in such a manner as to have the audience question Gibson's attitude and state of mind prior to the interview, ultimately alluding to the cause of her poor performance. For example, she began her explanation of the Gibson interview by describing its location next to the Trans-Alaska Pipeline. Palin explained that her decision to be interviewed at this locale was essentially

for the benefit of Gibson by providing an opportunity for him to observe the state's landscape and its resources firsthand. However, she noted that he did not appear very amused by the surroundings and observed, "he didn't seem as interested as I thought he would be" (Palin 270).

Palin continued her discussion of the Gibson interview by describing two incidents where Gibson was asked to take pictures of her and her local fan base: The first one was prior to their interview in front of the pipeline and the other in an old school Palin attended as a child. Palin mentioned that Gibson began to prepare himself for the picture as he "straightened his collar," but instead, was asked to be the photographer (Palin 271). Similarly, she noted that during the second request for a picture, her admirers did not recognize Gibson or "just figured, hey, he's a media guy, let him take the picture" (Palin 271). At this point in her defense, Palin executed the bolstering strategy by including situations that reinforced her celebrity-like status and likability compared to Gibson. That is, her insertion of these events served to focus on her favorable attributes, such as being well-recognized by the public which could, in turn, increase the audience's positive opinion of her. At the same time, by bolstering her fame, Palin attempted to place Gibson in an unappealing light so as to appear unpopular and/or unfamiliar to the American public.

Palin continued her defense by explaining that, although she had the spotlight, Gibson "was a good sport and appeared to take it in stride..." (Palin 271). However, following this statement, Palin professed that he "did seem a bit grumpy during the later segment filmed at my home in Wasilla, where he peered skeptically at me over his bifocals like a high school principal" (Palin 271). By offering a description of Gibson's overly-serious interviewing style, she implied that his "grumpiness" may have been in part because of his resentment for not being asked to have his picture taken. Her intent was to blame Gibson's attitude and manner of interviewing as the reason behind her performance. As a result, Palin attempted to shift the blame from her poor performance to Gibson's poor interviewing style.

Interestingly, Palin's discussion of her interview with Gibson was brief in description, although this interview was her first introduction to the American public. Revisiting Benoit's theory of Image Restoration, he explained the importance of audience

perception and the notion that if the accused perceives that the audience believes they have committed and is responsible for a wrongful act, image restoration discourse is likely employed (Benoit 71). After observing a multitude of reviews about Palin's performance from both the media and public in Chapter Two, Palin did not respond to any of her critics. In particular, she did not discuss her questionable knowledge of foreign affairs or her reason for not demonstrating an understanding of the Bush Doctrine. According to Benoit, the accused "may or may not respond to (some or all of) the attacks" for several reasons (Benoit 84). For one, it may be obvious to the accused that he/she cannot be successful in restoring their image therefore, the accused ignores the accusation. For another, the accused "may attempt to refocus attention on other issues entirely" (Benoit 84). If he/she is able to redirect the audience's attention to other aspects of the wrongful act, the accused could escape responding to some or all of the accusations. In Palin's case, she avoided responding to criticisms of her performance and instead, focused on different incidents other than the interview, such as photo-op's with the public. Although Benoit explained that avoiding response to an attack is not always successful, it may be successful if Palin is able to redirect the audience's attention from the wrongful act to other areas of focus.

As evident in her explanation of the Gibson interview, Palin attempted to bolster her image by appearing more infamous and well-known than Gibson but at the same time, attacked his credibility as a reporter by suggesting his "annoyance" of not being photographed could have affected his method of interviewing. Furthermore, as Benoit discussed in his book, *Account, Excuses, and Apologies: A Theory of Image Restoration*, Palin chose to avoid responding to accusations about her performance in that she may have acknowledged the degree to which she tarnished her image and understood her efforts to restore her reputation were unlikely to succeed.

The Katie Couric Interview

Similar to strategies employed in her defense of the Gibson interview, Palin attempted to reduce audience's ill feelings toward her after the Couric interview by attacking her accusers and bolstering her image. Furthermore, she introduced the tactic of defeasibility to claim "a lack of information about or control over important factors in the situation" in an effort to evade responsibility for her actions (Benoit 76).

Initially, it appeared as though Palin accepted responsibility for her actions by stating:

If all you know of me comes from that interview, then you don't know me....I had bad moments just like everyone else. I choked on a couple of responses, and in the harried pace of the campaign, I mistakenly let myself become annoyed and frustrated with many of her [Couric] repetitive, biased questions. (Palin 271)

Although it seemed as though Palin recognized her mistakes, she immediately shifted the attention to Couric by attacking her credibility as a reporter. For example, Palin charged Couric with editing out portions of the interview. She claimed hours of footage were condensed into only a portion of her interview with Couric. Furthermore, Palin argued that the segment featured on national television emphasized her “worst moments.” She recalled her reaction to the interview when it aired: “When I saw the final cut, it was clear that CBS had sought out the bad moments, and systematically sliced our material that would accurately convey my message.”¹ Palin directly accused Couric of removing information from the interview that, she claimed, would have been important for the campaign. With this strategy of attacking the accuser, Palin provided a new target for ill will while continuing to victimize herself as an innocent bystander of the “act” by explaining, “Though Katie edited out substantive answers, she dutifully kept in the moments where I wore my annoyance on my sleeve” (Palin 274). In other words, Palin charged Couric with doctoring the interview so that she [Palin] would appear in a poor light to the American public. Since this action on the part of Couric was obviously beyond Palin’s control, her strategy was to divert audience attention away from her poor performance and onto the manipulations of Couric.

In addition to attacking her accuser, Palin also attempted to bolster her image by explaining some of the more uncomfortable moments in the Couric interview. Most notably, Palin used the highly publicized example of her comment about Russia in relation to her knowledge of foreign affairs, which quickly ballooned into a public spectacle. As Palin explained, she intended to set up a context for her answer when asked about her experience in this arena by first discussing the geographical proximity of Alaska and Russia and then proceeding with her response. Palin stated, however, that

Couric's abrupt interview style and frequent interruptions prevented her from providing a clear response and thus she appeared ridiculous in her remark about Russia and Alaska as neighbors. For example, Palin explained when attempting to frame the geographical context of Alaska, "Katie interrupted and I did not complete my answer. I wish now I had stopped her and said, '*Here's the geographical context. Now may I answer your question?*'" (Palin 274). By providing a justification for this response in the way she did, Palin intended to bolster her image by appearing cautious in the manner she answered questions as opposed to simply responding off-the-cuff.

Similar to her excuse of the Russian remark, Palin addressed accusations of her inability to answer questions posed by Couric. In particular, when asked by Couric what resources she used as a source of news, Palin explained that "It wasn't that I didn't want to---or as some have ludicrously suggested, couldn't-----answer her question; it was that her condescension irritated me" (Palin 276). Since her objective was to justify her reasoning for not answering the question, Palin once again pointed the finger of blame at Couric. By doing so, she attempted to persuade the audience that her frustration brought on by Couric caused her avoidance in answering the question, not her feeble-mindedness. As a result, she attempted to rationalize her uninformed appearance as simply her decision to refuse to answer the question.

In addition to targeting the Couric interview as the nexus of her damaged reputation, Palin also attacked McCain campaign staffers for allowing her to participate in the interview in the first place. In fact, as she described the situation, she was compelled by the staffers to participate in the interview and therefore, should not be blamed for her performance. Palin explained: "I really didn't have a say in which press I was going to talk to, but for some reason Nicolle [the campaign staffer] seemed compelled to get me on the Katie bandwagon" (Palin 256). Initially, Palin claimed to have suggested interviewing with news networks such as *FOX News* and the *Wall Street Journal*, since she had already built a relationship with both organizations but stressed the staffers persistence to have her interview with Couric. In the following excerpt, Palin described the dialogue between herself and a senior campaign staff explaining that this conversation eventually led to her interview with Couric: Palin recalled the staffer commenting, "Katie really likes you. She's a working mom and admires you as a

working mom. She has teenage daughters like you. She just relates to you. Believe me, I know her very well. I've worked with her" (Palin 256). Palin explained that the staffer added, "She [Katie] has such low self-esteem...she just feels she can't trust anybody." (Palin 256). Palin recalled thinking, "hearing all of that, I almost started to feel sorry for her" (Palin 256). Palin remarked that any reluctance she voiced about the interview was diminished by the staff who assured her "We'll schedule a segment with her [Couric]. If it doesn't go well, if there's no chemistry, we won't do any others" (Palin 256). By way of relating this scenario to the Couric interview, Palin attempted to convince the audience that it was not her decision to interview with Couric therefore, attention should not be placed on her but instead focused on the McCain campaign and its staffers.

Palin continued to attack the staffers for providing inadequate preparation time for the interview. In doing so, she also evaded responsibility for her performance by using the tactic of defeasibility. By employing defeasibility, Palin attempted to persuade the audience that the lack of time available for her interview caused her disastrous performance by stating, "The prep was minimal. The team of people who usually hustled information before these types of things wasn't very involved in this one" (Palin 271). Following this accusation, Palin said, "I was told this was to be a pretty mellow interview, short and sweet, about balancing motherhood and my life as a governor. I was also led to believe this interview would be the only one, but if things went well, we could consider adding more" (Palin 271). As Palin's defense, this statement functioned again to shift the blame from herself to her accused, the McCain campaign staffers. She tried to reduce offensiveness for her actions by attacking the campaign and appearing as though she was deceived into participating in the Couric interview.

In an attempt to reduce her culpability and appear vulnerable to the audience, Palin did express concern for her performance and accepted responsibility for some of her actions after the conclusion of the first interview with Couric. She stated, "I readily admit I did what no politician should ever do---let her annoyance show. I was anxious to get this interview over with and you could tell, which was my mistake" (Palin 272). However, after this brief confession, Palin returned to her strategy of diverting the audience's attention away from herself and placing blame on Couric or the McCain campaign staffers. She attacked Couric's interview style by claiming her "repetitive and

biased questions” caused her such frustration and annoyance that her performance was a failure, and that was due to Couric. Again, if Palin is able to shift the blame from herself to Couric and convince the audience that Couric is the culprit of her actions, Palin could be successful at repairing her reputation.

Palin continued her defense by including her hesitation to proceed with the interviews by explaining, “Nicolle [campaign staffer] had said we wouldn’t spend more time with this crew if things weren’t going well, and I knew that moment had long passed” (Palin 277). By appearing aware of the unsuccessful interview, Palin attempted to bolster her image by convincing the audience that she knew of her own detrimental impact on the campaign yet staffers continued with the interviews. She recalled, “how was this [the Couric interviews] moving our campaign forward?” (Palin 277).

Overall, much of Palin’s defense of the Couric interviews centered on both Couric and McCain campaign staffers. Her principal strategies focused on reducing offensiveness for her actions by attacking her accuser and attempted to redirect the attention from herself to her accusers. By connecting her mistakes and poor performance to Couric and the campaign, her intent was to persuade the audience to question the motives of her accusers. Palin also tried to replace the audience’s negative feelings about her by bolstering positive attributes she possessed. She concluded her discussion of the interview by stating, “my biggest disappointment wasn’t the badgering, or even the selective editing. It was that the interviews ended up wasting time” (Palin 279).

The “Troopergate” Scandal

Similar to the Couric interview, Palin employed the strategies of attacking her accuser and bolstering her image in her defense of the “Troopergate” scandal. In addition, she also introduced the tactic of good intentions used when evading responsibility for her actions.

Palin began by explaining her professional relationship with Monegan and accused him of being difficult to work with throughout her governorship. For example, as a cabinet member of her administration, Monegan disapproved of her 2008 preliminary budget and as a result, held a press conference without the permission of his administrator to announce an increase in funding for the Department of Public Safety. This request for additional subsidies was in opposition to Palin’s agenda of fiscal

conservatism. Palin accused Monegan of using “an old political trick” to speak out in public to pressure his department into accepting the funding “wish list” (Palin 201). The financial demands also correlated with that of the union which represented some state employees. Palin noted that Monegan’s effort to modify her budget proposal received considerable influence from the union, which contributed to creating the Troopergate “story.”

Monegan, as reported by Palin, also did not share the same position on earmark reforms and ventured to Washington, D.C. to lobby for earmarks without her knowledge. Evidently, Palin had discussed her priorities for the Public Safety Department with Monegan and encouraged him to fill as many vacant state trooper positions as possible. However, Palin highlighted Monegan’s failure to improve the employment rates and explained that he insisted on attaining more money for the department. Palin employed the bolstering strategy to explain her efforts to reassign Monegan as opposed to firing him, once her administration became aware of Monegan’s second attempt to lobby in D.C. against Palin’s consent. She explained, “I offered to reassign Monegan to the Alcohol Beverage Control Board, where he could work on alcohol abuse problems throughout the state” (Palin 202). Palin presented her actions of transferring or reassigning Monegan in a favorable light and suggested it was done with positive intent. Palin claimed she never fired Monegan, instead, she attempted to move him into a more suitable position; however, he refused to accept his new position. Instead, Palin claimed that Monegan resigned by sending out a “nice farewell e-mail to his colleagues admitting his failure to communicate effectively and encouraging them not to make the same mistake” (Palin 202).

Soon after his resignation, Palin accused Democrat legislators and the union of creating a false story that Monegan had been fired for personal reasons. She explained that this accusation was “strange,” since Monegan had previously refuted his firing. Palin wrote that Monegan had told the *Anchorage Daily News* that “For the record, no one ever said fire [the Trooper]. Not the governor. Not Todd. Not any of the other staff” (Palin 203). Furthermore, Palin claimed that an old acquaintance, Andy Halcro, supposedly created the story of Troopergate on his blog. Because the blog was featured in national newspapers, she attacked the media for reporting information which she claimed lacked

credibility by using the blog as an authoritative source. Palin continued to accuse the media of being “too lazy to sift fact from fiction” and therefore, used false information to create the Troopergate story (Palin 203).

When later asked about the incident from McCain staffers reviewing Palin as a possible vice presidential nominee, she simply denied the accusation and stated that “replacing a cabinet member was legal, normal, and necessary, and had nothing to do with her former brother-in-law” (Palin 215). Although speculation about Monegan’s alleged firing remained questionable, the *Anchorage Daily News* reported that Palin had been exonerated of all charges against her in the case of the Troopergate scandal on November 3rd, 2008 (Demer).

Much of Palin’s defense of the Troopergate allegations revolved around her attacking the media and Monegan for creating the story which she claimed was misconstrued. Palin then attempted to bolster her image to appear concerned for Monegan’s well-being and future employment. Therefore, Palin suggested her decision to reassign Monegan was out of good intentions and she should not be held responsible for unethical charges against Monegan’s alleged firing.

Campaign Accessories

When discussing the excessive expenditures during the election, Palin executed similar strategies of reduced offensiveness and evasion of responsibility, but also introduced the strategy of corrective action as a means of self-defense.

Palin attempted to reduce offensiveness for accusations about her wardrobe by bolstering herself to replace prior negative feelings about costly campaign accessories with favorable attributes she possessed. She noted that campaign staffers had supplied clothing and a team of New York stylists to assist Palin in her appearance. Palin described her initial reaction to the clothes by stating, “the price tags almost knocked my eyes out. I remember seeing one rather plain-looking blazer and thinking, *That cost more than a semester at the University of Alaska*” (Palin 230). Furthermore, Palin noted the campaign had purchased real pearl earrings and necklaces for her daughters the night of her introduction speech. Palin bolstered herself by insisting the girls give the pearls back after the Republican National Convention because her family “didn’t need fancy jewelry” (Palin 230). She continued by stating, “Not long after Todd and I married, we bought a

\$35 wedding band from a street vendor in Hawaii, and it still works!” (Palin 230). At one point in the evening, Willow, Palin’s youngest daughter, questioned a campaign staffer about the pearl jewelry asking, “who is paying for all is this?” Palin turned the audience’s attention to the staffer, who responded, “don’t know, but it’s taken care of,” in an attempt to suggest from the start, the campaign had paid for all of her accessories (Palin 231).

Similarly, Palin’s parents were also treated to expensive accessories from the upscale store, Nieman Marcus, when they arrived for the convention. Palin recalled thinking, “why was the Palin family being made over for the two days of the convention anyway....do we really look that bad?” (Palin 231). Palin noted that the McCain campaign assured her that all candidates traveled with stylists and hair and makeup artists. Nevertheless, Palin said she “felt the fuss over clothes was a colossal waste of time” and wondered who had strategized this part of the campaign (Palin 232). Furthermore, Palin stated that “never before had I been involved in a campaign that placed such an emphasis on packaging” (Palin 232). By deemphasizing her interest in clothing throughout the campaign, she bolstered herself to appear financially prudent. She explained “my family is frugal. We clip coupons. We shop at Costco. We buy diapers in bulk and generic peanut butter. We don’t have full time nannies or housekeepers or drivers” (Palin 315). Palin attempted to redeem herself by connecting with the audience and reiterating her image as an “average folk” instead of a “famous politician.”

When the story of the McCain campaign expenditures appeared throughout the nation, Palin minimized her participation in the act through denial stating that the “headline was highly misleading” in that she had “never asked stylists to purchase clothes, many of the items were never worn, many others were intended for the use of other people, and in the end the wardrobe items were all returned” (Palin 314). She continued her use of denial by refuting her involvement in the act when a *Los Angeles Times* fashion critic referred to her as a “pampered princess” and suggested that she had personally spent the money in a “one-women economic stimulus plan” (Palin 315). Palin stated, “it wasn’t true that I or my family had been on any kind of ‘big-time shopping trips’” (Palin 314). She continued to describe occasions where she wore her own

clothing that she had purchased-used at an Anchorage consignment store months before the campaign.²

Furthermore, Palin once again relied on the strategy of reducing offensiveness in particular, the tactic of attacking her accuser, to insinuate the clothing expenditure was in response to the campaign's offense. Palin explained what happened when the campaign staffer visited her home in Wasilla:

The fact was, I would have been happy to wear my own clothes for the whole campaign. But I had a humbling experience while we were back in Wasilla for the Charlie Gibson interview in September. While the crews turned my kitchen into a television studio, I took Nicolle into my bedroom and showed her what I thought I should pack for the trail. She flipped through my wardrobe with raised eyebrows. "No...no...no," she said as she slid each garment aside on its hanger. (Palin 316)

Her inclusion of this statement served as Palin's attempt to blame the campaign for her expensive appearance while also bolstering her image to appear as though she had no intent on changing her appearance. Palin continued to combine both tactics of attacking her accuser and bolstering her image when discussing accusations of her excessive campaign expenditures. The following excerpt was Palin's attempt to appear non-materialistic and down to earth but at the same time, point the finger of blame at the McCain campaign for making her accessorize:

I wondered who had strategized this part of the campaign. I knew it wasn't John. Never before had I been involved in a campaign that placed such an emphasis on packaging. When I ran for office in Alaska, I'd written my own script, usually traveled by myself, and, obviously, had worn my own clothes. I presented myself as I was and told people what I believed in. (Palin 232)

Palin's effort to appear uninvolved in the decision to wear expensive clothing throughout the campaign was her strategy of reducing her offensiveness in the accusations. By removing herself entirely from the charges and focusing instead on her positive attributes, such as frugality and her "average" appearance, she endeavored to persuade the audience that campaign staffers should be blamed, not herself.

Palin continued her defense informing her audience of her intent to “set the record straight” by addressing the wardrobe accusations while on stage during a rally in Tampa.

She explained:

Those clothes, they are not my property. Just like the lighting and staging and like everything else the RNC purchases. I’m not taking them with me. I’m wearing my own clothes from my favorite consignment shop in Anchorage, Alaska. There, simple, it was over, and it was truthful. (Palin 316)

By addressing accusations directly to the audience, Palin used the fourth strategy of image restoration called corrective action. This strategy is used by the accused in attempt to mend the negative effects of the action by giving assurance that the undesirable act will never be repeated and/or “restoring the situation to the state of affairs before the objectionable action” (Benoit 79). Therefore, Palin’s effort to “set the record straight” was an attempt to limit the audience from further accusations or skepticism towards Palin.

For Palin’s defense strategy of the expensive campaign accessories, she continued to attack campaign staffers as the culprit of the accusations made against her. Furthermore, Palin denied her agreement to the costly wardrobe and instead, bolstered her image to appear uninterested in her appearance as well as prudent with financial expenditures.

Ethics Violations

Similar to previous strategies employed throughout her defense, Palin utilized both tactics of attacking her accuser and bolstering in her response to the multitude of ethics charges filed against her after the 2008 presidential election.

At first, Palin blamed a significant portion of the complaints on just two people. One was Andree McLeod, a reporter with the *Associated Press* who, according to Palin, was a “disgruntled former state employee who made an art of filing frivolous ethics complaints and leaking them to the media in violation of state law” (Palin 353). She claimed the media contributed to McLeod’s success at filing ethics complaints in that the media reported the ethics complaints from McLeod as “legitimate” news, although, according to Palin, her opinions were biased toward Palin and her staff. Furthermore, she stated that the media allegedly “spun” the story. Palin explained that “instead of

reporting that an independent board of review found me not guilty of any wrongdoing and that all the ethics charges filed against me have been dismissed, the media made statements such as: Gov. Palin has been dogged by ethics complains, most of which have been dismissed” (Palin 367). Palin insisted that the truth of the matter was that all charges had been dismissed.

Palin’s second target of blame was pointed at the left-wing political operatives who she claimed “twisted the ethics reform process that I had championed into a weapon to use against me” (Palin 354). In response, Palin belittled her opponents and attacked their own ethical leanings by stating, “we [Palin and her staff] never imagined our critics would be so unscrupulous as to make a mockery of a serious issue like the ethics act” (Palin 356). Her strategy here was to divert the attention away from herself and highlight the dishonesty and unethical behavior to those who accused her of the ethics violations. Palin continued, “But now partisan operatives were using the reformed ethics to level charges against me that were as trivial as they were abused—charges that were eagerly reported by the press as though they were actual news” (Palin 356). Again, this statement was used as an attempt to persuade the audience that the “left-winged operatives” along with the media should be blamed for creating and reporting false stories about her ethics charges.

Palin also employed the bolstering strategy by associating her actions with that of the audience. For instance, she explained that “Financial hardship is painful but bearable. Loss of reputation I can take. But I could not and cannot tolerate watching Alaska suffer” (Palin 373). By referring to the people of Alaska, she took attention away from herself and directed it to the audience. In doing so, Palin attempted to distance herself from the negatively viewed ethics charges and instead, hoped to enhance her image as a concerned politician.

In light of the overwhelming violation charges against Palin, she explained her reasoning for resigning as governor. Palin stated that, “One by one, each ethics complaint against me was tossed out. But a new one quickly sprouted to take its place. I knew it wouldn’t stop and the ongoing cost to our system plagued me. My loyal staff who had accomplished so much with me in our years in office were besieged. At some point you have to say “Enough”” (Palin 373). Thus, Palin refrained from placing the attention

on herself and attempted to bolster her decision to resign for the betterment of her staff and her family and, ultimately, the state of Alaska.

Again, Palin's strategies used in her defense of the ethics violations consisted of attacking her accuser and bolstering her image to appear more unselfish and undeserving of such an offense. If Palin was able to convince the audience that the blame should be given to other key players of the accusation and not herself, she could be able to restore her image after the significant number of ethical charges filed against her.

The McCain campaign

In her book, Palin addressed the aforementioned events describing how each had damaged her reputation. However, she targeted the McCain campaign as a whole as the primary reason behind her tarnished image. In particular, she employed the tactics of defeasibility to evade responsibility for her actions as well as attack the campaign for a variety of offenses. Furthermore, Palin continued to bolster her image to stress positive attributes she possessed in order to strengthen her appearance and favorability towards to audience.

The main accusation Palin made against the McCain campaign staffers were the tight restrictions and regulations she had to abide by throughout the election. By doing so, Palin claimed a lack of control and used defeasibility or the idea that she did not have power over important factors in the campaign. She argued that the staffers resistance to allow her jurisdiction over her own candidacy eventually harmed her reputation. For example, Palin explained that the campaign would prohibit her from "speaking off script" when interacting with the public and the media. She recalled a specific incident when asked by a reporter her opinion of the campaign's decision to exclude Michigan while on the campaign trail:

No one had mentioned to me that the campaign was even considering pulling out of Michigan, much less that we already had. So when I was asked about it, I was caught a bit off guard, but I answered truthfully about having read about it in the newspaper. We moved on to the next question and wrapped up the interview. No big deal. (Palin 298)

By mentioning her effort to remain honest and straightforward in her answer, she attempted to bolster her image as a sincere candidate. Palin continued her defense by

claiming that the campaign was upset with her outspoken, off-script comment and as a result, later referred to her as “going rogue” (hence her book title) for speaking so candidly during the 2008 campaign. Palin also went on to claim that there was no script to begin with and complained the campaign often dismissed her suggestions about efficient campaigning. Again, Palin returned to the strategy of attacking her accuser by attempting to diminish the campaign’s reputation and convince the audience of the campaign’s controlling fashion when managing her candidacy. In addition to attacking campaign staffers for her actions, Palin added the bolstering strategy by making herself sound more genuine than the campaign. For example, she attempted to bolster her image by providing the audience with her opinion of what should have occurred if she had the authoritative power to influence decision making:

I suggested to the VP staff that the next time we had an official event near Michigan, we pass the hat for gas money and just do a quick trip across the border to snap one off-the-record photo at a café or gas station, maybe hold a quick grassroots rally. I thought we would send a positive message to the state that way, show the people that our campaign really did care about their votes. Headquarters said no. (Palin 299)

This statement served to bolster her image by depicting herself as a caring and considerate candidate who holds the American public as a priority above the success of her campaign. Palin continued her use of the bolstering and attacking the accuser tactics in an attempt to reduce her offensiveness for her actions throughout the campaign. She presented another example of her claim about campaign staffers controlling her candidacy and the limited amount of influence she had over her own campaign:

During debate prep, I had been given stacks of five-by-eight index cards, bound in rubber bands, and we lugged them around everywhere. Someone had gone to a lot of trouble to type them up, which I appreciated, but it was funny because on one side of each card, there was a question and on the other side there was a whole bunch of what most people would consider nonanswers. (Palin 281)

Palin continued by explaining that when told to refer to the cards for responses to debate questions, she noticed that the questions were political answers. She exclaimed, “I couldn’t force myself to play it safe and sound like a politician” (Palin 282) and recalled

thinking, “here’s an idea----I could give a real answer” (Palin 282). Interestingly, although Palin was considered a politician, she attempted to offset the audience’s displeasure in her by bolstering herself to appear concerned about her truthfulness in the eyes of the American people as opposed to a politician concerned with winning a debate.

Palin placed much of the blame on the campaign staffers after the August 29th announcement of her selection as a vice presidential candidate. She explained that the media’s desperate attempt to retrieve information about her caused a frenzy of false reporting. According to Palin, the media “weren’t too careful about vetting their sources” and as a result, printed material that was “wrong” about her (Palin 253). Instead of placing the entirety of blame on the media’s alleged “falsified” reporting, Palin turned the attention back to campaign staffers by noting their lack of providing press material about her explaining who she was and her political record prior to her public introduction. Because she remained unknown to most when first nominated, including the press, Palin claimed the media produced falsified stories as a means of desperate reporting, since there was no information available for the media to report. For example, she blamed the media for accusations about her alleged endeavor to ban certain books from the library. Palin explained that her gubernatorial rival John Stein created the story which was featured in *Time* magazine. According to Palin, Stein fabricated claims that she had injected her religious beliefs in her policy and wanted to ban books with inappropriate language content. Palin responded to the accusation by stating, “Suddenly I was the book-burning evangelical extremist sweeping down from the North on her broomstick. Reporters didn’t bother to find out the facts and print the truth” (Palin 237). By attacking campaign staffers for withholding information about her prior to her public introduction, Palin targeted staffers as the wrongdoers of the act and the cause of her questionable and highly publicized actions.

On election night of the 2008 presidential campaign, after results determined John McCain had lost to contender Barack Obama, Palin recalled receiving news that some senior campaign staffers conspired to talk to reporters about Palin and her detriment to the McCain loss. Palin explained that “anonymous McCain campaign staffers were feeding lies to *FOX News*’ Carl Cameron, who reported them without hearing our side of the story” (Palin 343). She continued her defense by explaining:

They [McCain campaign] were angry that anyone in my family or group of Alaska friends had tried to set the record straight in the media without consulting with the campaign first. And they were still furious with me for speaking candidly on the Michigan withdrawal and the clothes issue. (Palin 217)

This statement served as Palin's attempt to bolster her image to appear noble in her efforts to "set the record straight" and be truthful to the American public while targeting the campaign as the reasoning behind accusations made against her.

Palin's use of attacking her accuser was evident in her defense of the campaign's strategy of her candidacy. Furthermore, Palin followed this tactic with an attempt to bolster her image by referencing situations and examples in which she appeared more favorable than her accuser. If Palin was able to convince the audience that the campaign staffers should be held responsible for her actions, the likeliness of restoring her reputation could be strong.

At this point in my analysis, I have examined Palin's defense of her actions during the 2008 presidential election and identified principal strategies employed in her book, *Going Rogue: An American Life*. In Chapter Four, I will summarize my analysis and examine Palin's use of these strategies throughout her defense.

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EndNotes

¹Palin gave the example of the segment of the interview with Couric in Columbus, Ohio. She said that Couric started with an energy-related question. “Governor Palin, it will take about ten years for domestic drilling to have an impact on consumers,” the anchor said. “So, isn’t the notion of ‘drill, baby, drill’ a little misleading to people who think this will automatically lower their gas prices and quickly?” Palin said, “And it’s why we should have started ten years ago tapping into domestic supplies that America is so rich in. Alaska has billions of barrels of oil and hundreds of trillions of cubic feet of clean, green natural gas onshore and offshore. Should have started doing it ten years ago, but better late than never.” According to Palin, CBS left this part of the interview in but “edited out a discussion of the need to wean ourselves off hydrocarbons and a call for America to stop spending billions of dollars of foreign oil when we could be investing it at home” (273).

²Palin noted that on the day of the Tampa rally, she was wearing “a Dolce & Gabbana jacket that I had personally purchased-used-at an Anchorage consignment store months before the campaign. And earlier that day I was wearing a pair of my own Paige jeans, designed by the talented Paige Adams Geller, a Wasilla native who has made it big as a fashion designer in L.A. (316).

Chapter Four

Findings and Implications

The purpose of this chapter is to provide an interpretation of the findings derived from my analysis of Palin's image restoration strategies in Chapter Three. I will summarize my analysis from Chapter Three and identify the principal strategies employed by Palin. I will then evaluate Palin's use of restoration strategies as the key rhetorical feature in her autobiography and determine whether or not the strategies she selected were appropriate given her performance during the 2008 presidential election. Furthermore, I will discuss how Palin's use of autobiography as image restoration could be both a strength and limitation in an effort to repair her image. Finally, I will discuss the significance of these findings and implications for further research.

Summary of Analysis

Much of Palin's actions and blunders were highly publicized and recorded by the media. As a result, the coverage of the events prevented Palin from being able to completely deny the acts occurred. Instead, I found that Palin employed several principal defense strategies in her use of image restoration. These strategies consisted of evading responsibility and reducing offensiveness. When attempting to evade responsibility for her actions, Palin tried to "lessen the severity of the act" with the tactic of defeasibility to claim that she possessed a lack of information or control of her candidacy during the 2008 campaign. In the case of the Couric interview, Palin suggested that her lack of preparation time permitted by the campaign staffers resulted in her poor performance. Furthermore, she claimed defeasibility again when she discussed the campaign by accusing staffers of controlling her candidacy. Palin provided examples of instances in which the campaign restricted her from speaking to the press and claimed her absence from the media contributed to her tarnished reputation. As a result, she attempted to convince the audience that she should not be held accountable for her actions, since she claimed the actions themselves were a result of campaign instructions.

In addition to evading responsibility for her actions, Palin focused primarily on reducing the audience's animosity toward her and her blunders by employing the tactics of bolstering and attacking the accuser. The bolstering tactic is adopted by the accused to

assuage any negative feelings the audience may have of them, and at the same time, stress positive attributes to counter the negative. Attacking the accuser, on the other hand, is the attempt to target the credibility of the accuser and in turn, divert the audience's attention away from the accused's wrongful act(s). By using this tactic, the accused intends to remove himself/herself from the negative aspects of the act and place them on the accuser, which would in turn, diminish the image of the accuser and strengthen the image of the accused. When it came to Palin's use of both tactics in her defense, she combined them strategically in a manner that allowed each tactic to reinforce one another. According to Benoit, this mixing of strategies is a common approach in image restoration and many image restoration attempts frequently contain more than one defensive strategy (Benoit 157). Benoit explained how utilizing a single strategy is too limiting, whereas multiple strategies can strengthen the reparation of an image.

Palin structured her defense by mixing strategies and tactics to appear as a victim of the offensive acts. For example, Palin often attacked her accuser by first questioning the credibility of the accuser's actions or motives, while also blaming the accuser for being the culprit behind her actions. Following this tactic of attacking her accuser, she bolstered her image by suggesting ways that her mistakes could have been prevented should she have had more control and less restriction during the campaign. By doing so, she managed to deflect the negative attention from herself to the accuser, which allowed her to be seen as a victim of the act(s). An example of this blending of tactics was evident in her response to the Couric interview. Palin attacked Couric and her credibility by suggesting that she edited out information that would have contributed positively to Palin's performance. She then proceeded to bolster her approach to Couric's question by explaining her method of answering the question. Palin stated that she initially wanted to set up her answer to include a geographical picture of where Alaska was in comparison to Russia. She explained:

When she [Couric] asked me how living in Alaska informed my foreign experience, I began by trying to frame the geographical context. Lower 48ers grow up seeing our state tucked with Hawaii in a little square off the coast of Mexico on the nightly news weather map. So I began by trying to squeeze a geographical primer into a ten-second sound bite, explaining that only a narrow maritime border separates Alaska from Russia, that we're very

near the Pacific Rim countries, and that we're bordered by Canada.
(Palin 274)

By offering her original intent for answering the question, Palin bolstered herself to appear interested in informing viewers of the geographical location to get a better understanding of her response.

Palin continued to mix both tactics of attacking her accuser while bolstering her image throughout much of her defense. She executed these tactics primarily when responding to the campaign's treatment of her candidacy. An example given in Chapter Three included Palin's reaction to the campaign's method of preparing her for the vice presidential debate. Palin explained that the campaign had given her index cards; one side included a question and the other side had what Palin referred to as "nonanswers" (Palin 281). In the following excerpt, Palin described her experience of practicing for the debate and the dialogue between herself and a McCain staffer:

Another card asked: What will it take to win the war in Afghanistan? Back of card: The world is better off for the fact that the Taliban no longer rules Afghanistan. I said to the prep people, "Okay, but what they're asking is, what will it take to win the war?" "Right," somebody said. "But you don't have to answer the question." "Why wouldn't I want to answer the question," I said. The bottom line was that these were political answers—and I couldn't force myself to play it safe and sound like a politician....Or here's an idea---I could give a real answer. (Palin 282)

Once again, Palin managed to shift the blame from herself to the accused. She offered a suggestion to deal with her preparation that appeared "better" than the campaign's method of training her for the debate. It was Palin's intent, by incorporating both tactics of bolstering and attacking her accuser, to alleviate the negativity of her actions by strengthening the audience's positive feelings for her, while convincing the audience that the direction of blame should be pointed at the campaign staffers.

For each of these examples and throughout her defense in *Going Rogue: An American Life*, Palin portrayed herself as the target of victimization instead of the target of blame. By doing so, she attempted to establish herself as an innocent bystander of her actions during the 2008 presidential campaign by blaming her accusers for her blunders

while suggesting the limited amount of influence over her own candidacy lead ultimately to the destruction of her reputation.

Conclusion of Analysis

With respect to Palin's use of restoration strategies, it was apparent that she relied extensively on image restoration throughout her autobiography. Her explanations of the events which, arguably, placed Palin in a negative light and contributed to her tarnished reputation, included an abundance of strategies suited for her particular goal of image restoration. In most instances, her objective was to shift the blame of the act(s) from herself to her accuser. By doing so, Palin employed such strategies as attacking her accuser, which targeted the accuser's credibility, as well as bolstering, which placed her in a favorable light compared to her accuser.

The frequency of strategies employed throughout Palin's rhetoric allowed for several conclusions about her image restoration. For one, it was evident through her reliance on restoration strategies that Palin felt the need to restore her image. As Benoit explained in his book *Account, Excuses, and Apologies: A Theory of Image Restoration Strategies*, "our face, image, or reputation is a valuable commodity" (vii). Palin acknowledged that her reputation had been threatened and through the intensity and profusion of restoration strategies, attempted to repair her image. For another, Palin's use of image restoration strategies revealed a great deal about her worldview with respect to dealing with conflict and controversial issues. For instance, Palin appeared to be very self-protective in her defense of the events surrounding the 2008 election. Her response to accusations and events included, for the most part, a detailed explanation of what happened from her perspective. In her discussion of the occurrences, Palin included strategies that repeatedly shifted the blame from herself to her accusers, but at the same time, placed her in a more positive light. Rarely did Palin admit to her blunders or accept responsibility for her actions; instead, she relied on restoration strategies that allowed her to be viewed more favorably than her accusers. From this analysis, Palin responded to conflicting situations by pointing the finger of blame to those who accused her of her actions instead of acknowledging her faults. Finally, through the myriad of restoration strategies Palin employed throughout her defense, I believe that Palin's primary concern for repairing her reputation was to improve her political future. As a political figure,

Palin needed to salvage her image in order to be a successful leader for the American public. Because reputation of a politician is highly valued with respect to a continued career in the public realm, Palin's response(s) to accusations was both predictable and expected. If Palin refused to address her accusers, it would have been difficult for her to redeem herself in the eyes of the public. Instead, Palin did what was typical and assumed of most politicians; she responded to accusations and attempted to restore her reputation through image restoration. Furthermore, based on Benoit's theory of Image Restoration, Palin's use of restoration strategies would be appropriate in that her reputation, according to media and public criticism, was damaged after the 2008 presidential election and in need of repair prior to her autobiography. Because Benoit argued that our "face, image or reputation not only contributes to a healthy self-image, but it also can create favorable impressions on others," Palin's employment of strategies was necessary for her to continue in the political limelight. Thus, the autobiography served as an important restoration text for Palin and her political career.

Effectiveness of Strategies

Although my study did not aim to evaluate the effectiveness or success of Palin's restoration strategies, I examined public opinion polls prior to and after the release of her memoir to suggest possible connections to the release of her autobiography and a rise in favorable opinions of Palin in public opinion polls.

In order to reflect on whether or not the strategies employed by Palin could be effective in restoring her image, it was important to revisit public opinion polls of Palin throughout her time in the political spotlight during the 2008 presidential campaign. After Palin's speech at the Republican National Convention, she earned a 53% favorable rating, according to an October 2009 *Gallup* poll (Jones). The same poll revealed a 42% favorable rating by the end of the 2008 presidential campaign. These numbers demonstrated a decline in positive opinions of Palin during the campaign. This means that at some point from the beginning of her entrance into the national scene to the conclusion of the presidential election, she managed to alter the public's perception of her in a negative way. I believe the events mentioned throughout this study are the cause behind the unfavorable opinions. Similarly, the same *Gallup* poll reported that Palin's ratings have not yet recovered from the 2008 campaign. In fact, the poll revealed a 40%

favorable rating in October 2009, which, according to *Gallup*, was the lowest for her since she became widely known after last year's Republican convention (Jones).

When examining polls conducted after the release of her autobiography *Going Rogue: An American Life*, a December 2009 *Gallup* poll showed that Palin remained more unfavorable than favorable by Americans (Jones). However, her favorable ratings improved slightly from 40% to 44%, and, because of the correlation between the date of her autobiography release and public opinion polls, it was possible to suggest this increase in numbers was perhaps from the exposure to her book. Furthermore, the poll determined that 79% of Republicans viewed Palin favorably whereas only 21% of Democrats had a favorable opinion of her (Jones). However, according to *Gallup*, the favorable ratings of Palin by both Republicans and Democrats have increased since October, prior to the release of her book. This public opinion poll revealed a modest increase of positive views of her although, not significant enough to determine whether or not her autobiography did, in fact, contribute to this boost of ratings. The poll did, however, demonstrate considerable support for Palin by the Republican party. A more recent *Gallup* poll in March 2010 revealed similar results, especially among Republicans. The poll asked recipients "Do you have a favorable or unfavorable impression of Sarah Palin?" Findings showed that 66% of Republicans had a positive opinion of Palin while 75% of Democrats said they had an unfavorable opinion (pollingreport.com.). These conclusions suggest that Palin's image restoration strategies used throughout her autobiography could have been effective, depending on political orientation or party affiliation. I will expand on this idea in the following analysis of the advantages or caveats of using autobiography as image restoration.

Autobiography as Image Restoration

Palin's use of autobiography in an effort to repair her reputation had both strengths and weaknesses. One strength was that Palin was able to defend herself without interruption or justification of wrongful acts, because she was able to tell her side of the story from her own perspective. For example, as opposed to traditional image restoration attempts through discourse or public speeches, defending oneself through autobiography allowed for a one-sided defense that eliminated interrogation by the audience. However, this strength is also a weakness in that the defense was limited to only a specific

audience. A traditional defense of public speaking allowed those accused to attempt to redeem themselves in front of a diverse and wide-spread audience, whereas with autobiographical strategy, the audience was more homogenous and limited. For example, an audience that purchased the book and engaged interest in the memoir would most likely be those individuals who already had a favorable opinion of Palin. This weakness also raised another strength. Palin was able to reinforce her efforts to redeem her public image by targeting a customized audience to gain approval for future prospects. Because of her efforts to repair her reputation, she could have been able to redeem herself in the eyes of the Republican party and conceivably continue her political career.

As revealed by public opinion polls, Palin remained favorable in the eyes of Republicans after the November release of her memoir. Considering the assumption that a portion of the audience who purchased *Going Rogue: An American Life* are Conservative and/or Republican, it was reasonable to suggest, based on the connection between public opinion polls and the release of her book, that Palin's image restoration strategies, and in particular, her ability to appear as a victim may have contributed to her success within the Republican party. Furthermore, Palin's current political involvements and appearances need to be taken into consideration when determining her use of autobiography as image restoration. After the release of her memoir, she once again became increasingly recognized in the political arena. Several of her new roles and positions, included serving as a correspondent for Fox News, providing commentary and insight into political topics on both Hannity and the O'Reilly factor as well as becoming the spokeswoman for Tea Party rally's across the United States, leading Americans in an effort to campaign against President Obama's healthcare agenda and economic policy. Furthermore, Palin used her political stardom to campaign for conservative candidates seeking higher office in Congress. More recently, the *New York Times* announced that she reunited with Senator John McCain to support his efforts for reelection in November 2010 ("Palin and McCain Reunite"). This announcement came as a surprise after her complaints of the McCain campaign during the 2008 presidential campaign that revealed Palin's detrimental impact on the presidential election. Palin's involvement in McCain's senatorial campaign revealed her significant role in the Republican party, regardless of her damaged reputation. Because of her recognition within the Republican party,

McCain knew the importance of Palin as an endorsement for his upcoming election in that she would help to reinforce conservative votes.

Although the events during the 2008 campaign placed Palin in an unflattering light, it is my belief that she will remain a prominent Republican because of her firm conservative beliefs and values. In fact, an April 11th public opinion poll by *pollingreport.com* revealed that Palin remained one of the top three prospects for the 2012 presidential campaign. With Mike Huckabee leading and Mitt Romney in second, Palin followed in third as a possible candidate for president of the United States. It is my opinion, based on the results of public opinion polls and Palin's current political success and steady involvement in the Republican party, that Palin's use of autobiography as image restoration may have contributed to the repairing of her image for the future of her political career. Palin remained in the minds of the voters and continued to be an important voice in the conservative movement.

Contrary to Palin's image restoration success within the Republican party, I suggest that Palin's blunders were detrimental to her image in the eyes of the nation as a whole and in particular, the Democratic party. As demonstrated through the examination of previous public opinion polls, Palin's approval rating continued to be mediocre at best and below average at worst. In fact, she became somewhat of a comical figure from the standpoint of Democrats. In addition to the unparallel alignment of her political ideas with that of the Democratic party, she continued to be mocked as a political figure. According to the *New York Daily News*, comedian Tina Fey reprised her impression of Sarah Palin in a recent April 2010 skit on Saturday Night Live. Fey poked fun at Palin's role as a Fox News correspondent and prospective reality show host on, "Sarah Palin's Alaska." Furthermore, her continued decrease of favorable ratings by the American public and Democratic party revealed a common distaste for Palin as a political official. It is my belief, based on consistent unfavorable opinions of Palin by the Democratic party and the nation as a whole, that her actions during the 2008 presidential campaign were inexcusable and unforgiving to the American public. For example, as Benoit explained, "the powers of persuasion and the theory of image restoration are limited" (Benoit 163). Given the amount of mistakes Palin made throughout the campaign and the frequency with which they occurred, it was difficult for Palin to convince a skeptical audience that

she should not be held responsible for her actions. As a result, I believe Palin managed to damage her image to the point of being unable to repair, with the exception of the Republican party. Palin's autobiography was unlikely to attract an audience who did not wish to learn more about her as a candidate. Consequently, she limited her image restoration to a specific audience and failed to redeem herself in the eyes of the nation.

Observations and Implications

When discussing my observations for the study and implications for future research, I will begin by explaining several challenges I encountered throughout my study that hindered my ability to thoroughly study Palin's use of image restoration strategies. Furthermore, based on my findings, I will suggest possible alternative strategies Palin could have used in her defense in order to effectively restore her image to a broader range of audience. Finally, I will conclude with the significance of my study for future research in the political arena.

Throughout my examination of Palin's image restoration strategies, I found it difficult to distinguish between each strategy and recognize the exact strategy and/or tactic employed by Palin. As noted by Benoit, "strategies can, of course, be operationalized in discourse in a multitude of ways, which can make it difficult to identify them" (81). Consequently, this weakness served as a challenge in identifying the exact strategies Palin employed without her explicitly stating what she wanted to do (i.e., "I blamed the campaign for..."). However, as I approached my analysis, it was important that I considered her "goals" or reasoning for writing an autobiography. Considering the use of autobiography to reflect on human experiences and crucial events that happened in the life of an individual, I understood Palin's intention for writing her autobiography as a way to defend her actions and detail what actually took place during the campaign. As a result, I first described the text (autobiography), then analyzed Palin's rhetoric based on Benoit's theory of Image Restoration and, according to my findings, was able to interpret her use of autobiography as image restoration.

In addition to the challenge of identifying the appropriate strategies for Palin's defense, my study of autobiography as image restoration remained novel to the world of academia. Although this challenge was initially a strength in that the study served as a unique approach for self-defense, my findings and observations could not be compared to

past research. Consequently, my study lacked support from scholarly research in an effort to reinforce my findings and conclusions.

With respect to observations and suggestions for my study, I found the strategies Palin employed through her use of autobiography were limited to a specific audience. As previously stated, her restoration attempts most likely succeeded within the Republican party or with those who favored Palin from her initial entrance into national politics. Therefore, her effort to restore her image in the eyes of the nation was limited and, according to Benoit, once your reputation has been dispersed, it is difficult to rectify it (34). However, I suggest that Palin's image restoration attempts through autobiography could be more effective if she incorporated the strategy of mortification, or the idea that the accused admit responsibility for the wrongful act and ask for forgiveness (Benoit 79). If she were to be remorseful and accept responsibility for her actions but at the same time, point out her flaws and admit to wrongdoing, I believe the audience would have been more willing to forgive Palin and thus, her reputation would be repaired. Furthermore, I believe a speech of mortification combined with her autobiography would possibly increase her chances of redeeming herself not only within a particular audience or group but a nation as a whole.

Although this recommendation for Palin could be used to increase her chances of restoring her reputation, I believe Palin's future in politics is limited in scope. The views of Palin within political parties, both Republican and Democrat, are extremely polarized and appear unwilling to change. While Republicans praise Palin for her strong conservative beliefs, Democrats continue to chastise her for appearing unintelligent and unprepared to run as a vice presidential candidate during the 2008 presidential election. Moreover, Palin lacks the political background and experience to be a viable candidate for President of the United States. Although she is rated as a top three contender for 2012 presidential nominee, her chances of becoming president are unlikely considering the support needed throughout the nation, not just within political parties. The best alternative for Palin's future in politics is to continue contributing time and effort to the Republican party and focus on galvanizing the conservative moment back to its basic principles.

With respect to the significance of this study, politicians should consider autobiography as image restoration, since I believe they are all susceptible to jeopardizing their image in the political limelight. Since politicians are on the national radar, their reputations are at risk of damage in that the situations they participate in may cast them in a negative or unfavorable light. For politicians who have been in or are in a vulnerable position of harming their reputation, it is important that they understand the significance of using autobiography as image restoration. There are several key elements politicians need to consider when using autobiography to restore their reputation. For one, politicians need to consider their audience and who they hope to target in repairing their reputation. For another, if they wish to reach a broad audience, using autobiography alone may not be effective. Therefore, the politician would need to consider utilizing other means of image restoration such as public addresses and speeches.

In conclusion, Sarah Palin remained largely unknown to the national public when first introduced as McCain's vice presidential running mate. However, within two years she became one of the most well-recognized political officials in the United States. Her blunders throughout the 2008 presidential campaign served as the foundation of her damaged reputation but in an effort to restore her image, she published a memoir entitled *Going Rogue: An American Life*. Through an analysis of Palin's restoration strategies, it became evident with the abundance of strategies used, that her autobiography served the essential purpose of image restoration. As a result, it is my opinion that Palin's restoration efforts contributed to her success within the Republican party in that she continues to involve herself in the political arena and has become a prominent figure in the conservative moment. However, the political future for Palin remains unknown. I believe that although Palin will continue to appear in the political spotlight, her rise to the presidency is improbable on a national level as a result of her actions during the 2008 presidential campaign which caused an irreparable impact to her image. Nevertheless, this study found that Palin's autobiography served the purpose of attempting to restore her tarnished image after the 2008 presidential election without her admitting to be the source of her damaged reputation.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A

PALIN: Mr. Chairman, delegates, and fellow citizens, I will be honored to accept your nomination for vice president of the United States.

I accept the call to help our nominee for president to serve and defend America. And I accept the challenge of a tough fight in this election against confident opponents at a crucial hour for our country.

And I accept the privilege of serving with a man who has come through much harder missions, and met far graver challenges, and knows how tough fights are won, the next president of the United States, John S. McCain.

It was just a year ago when all the experts in Washington counted out our nominee because he refused to hedge his commitment to the security of the country he loves.

With their usual certitude, they told us that all was lost, there was no hope for this candidate, who said that he would rather lose an election than see his country lose a war. But the pollsters...

The pollsters and the pundits, they overlooked just one thing when they wrote him off. They overlooked the caliber of the man himself, the determination, and resolve, and the sheer guts of Senator John McCain.

The voters knew better, and maybe that's because they realized there's a time for politics and a time for leadership, a time to campaign and a time to put our country first.

Our nominee for president is a true profile in courage, and people like that are hard to come by. He's a man who wore the uniform of his country for 22 years and refused to break faith with those troops in Iraq who now have brought victory within sight.

And as the mother of one of those troops, that is exactly the kind of man I want as commander-in-chief.

PALIN: I'm just one of many moms who will say an extra prayer each night for our sons and daughters going into harm's way. Our son, Track, is 19. And one week from tomorrow, September 11th, he'll deploy to Iraq with the Army infantry in the service of his country.

My nephew, Casey (ph), also enlisted and serves on a carrier in the Persian Gulf.

My family is so proud of both of them and of all the fine men and women serving the country in uniform.

AUDIENCE: USA! USA! USA! USA! USA!

PALIN: So Track is the eldest of our five children. In our family, it's two boys and three girls in between, my strong and kind-hearted daughters, Bristol, and Willow, and Piper.

And we were so blessed in April. Todd and I welcomed our littlest one into the world, a perfectly beautiful baby boy named Trig.

You know, from the inside, no family ever seems typical, and that's how it is with us. Our family has the same ups and downs as any other, the same challenges and the same joys.

Sometimes even the greatest joys bring challenge. And children with special needs inspire a very, very special love. To the families of special-needs...

(APPLAUSE)

To the families of special-needs children all across this country, I have a message for you: For years, you've sought to make America a more welcoming place for your sons and daughters. And I pledge to you that, if we're elected, you will have a friend and advocate in the White House.

And Todd is a story all by himself. He's a lifelong commercial fisherman and a production operator in the oil fields of Alaska's North Slope, and a proud member of the United Steelworkers union. And Todd is a world champion snow machine racer.

Throw in his Yup'ik Eskimo ancestry, and it all makes for quite a package. And we met in high school. And two decades and five children later, he's still my guy.

My mom and dad both worked at the elementary school in our small town. And among the many things I owe them is a simple lesson that I've learned, that this is America, and every woman can walk through every door of opportunity.

And my parents are here tonight.

PALIN: I am so proud to be the daughter of Chuck and Sally Heath (ph).

Long ago, a young farmer and a haberdasher from Missouri, he followed an unlikely path -- he followed an unlikely path to the vice presidency. And a writer observed, "We grow good people in our small towns, with honesty and sincerity and dignity," and I know just the kind of people that writer had in mind when he praised Harry Truman.

I grew up with those people. They're the ones who do some of the hardest work in America, who grow our food, and run our factories, and fight our wars. They love their country in good times and bad, and they're always proud of America.

I had the privilege of living most of my life in a small town. I was just your average hockey mom and signed up for the PTA.

I love those hockey moms. You know, they say the difference between a hockey mom and a pit bull? Lipstick.

So I signed up for the PTA because I wanted to make my kids' public education even better. And when I ran for city council, I didn't need focus groups and voter profiles because I knew those voters, and I knew their families, too.

Before I became governor of the great state of Alaska...

... I was mayor of my hometown. And since our opponents in this presidential election seem to look down on that experience, let me explain to them what the job involved.

I guess -- I guess a small-town mayor is sort of like a community organizer, except that you have actual responsibilities.

I might add that, in small towns, we don't quite know what to make of a candidate who lavishes praise on working people when they're listening and then talks about how bitterly they cling to their religion and guns when those people aren't listening.

No, we tend to prefer candidates who don't talk about us one way in Scranton and another way in San Francisco.

As for my running mate, you can be certain that wherever he goes and whoever is listening John McCain is the same man.

Well, I'm not a member of the permanent political establishment. And...

... I've learned quickly these last few days that, if you're not a member in good standing of the Washington elite, then some in the media consider a candidate unqualified for that reason alone.

PALIN: But -- now, here's a little newsflash. Here's a little newsflash for those reporters and commentators: I'm not going to Washington to seek their good opinion. I'm going to Washington to serve the people of this great country.

Americans expect us to go to Washington for the right reason and not just to mingle with the right people. Politics isn't just a game of clashing parties and competing interests. The right reason is to challenge the status quo, to serve the common good, and to leave this nation better than we found it.

No one expects us all to agree on everything, but we are expected to govern with integrity, and goodwill, and clear convictions, and a servant's heart.

And I pledge to all Americans that I will carry myself in this spirit as vice president of the United States.

This was the spirit that brought me to the governor's office when I took on the old politics as usual in Juneau, when I stood up to the special interests, and the lobbyists, and the Big Oil companies, and the good-old boys.

Suddenly, I realized that sudden and relentless reform never sits well with entrenched interests and power-brokers. That's why true reform is so hard to achieve.

But with the support of the citizens of Alaska, we shook things up. And in short order, we put the government of our state back on the side of the people.

I came to office promising major ethics reform to end the culture of self-dealing. And today, that ethics reform is a law.

While I was at it, I got rid of a few things in the governor's office that I didn't believe our citizens should have to pay for. That luxury jet was over-the-top.

I put it on eBay.

I love to drive myself to work. And I thought we could muddle through without the governor's personal chef, although I got to admit that sometimes my kids sure miss her.

I came to office promising to control spending, by request if possible, but by veto, if necessary.

Senator McCain also -- he promises to use the power of veto in defense of the public interest. And as a chief executive, I can assure you it works.

Our state budget is under control. We have a surplus. And I have protected the taxpayers by vetoing wasteful spending, nearly \$500 million in vetoes.

PALIN: We suspended the state fuel tax and championed reform to end the abuses of earmark spending by Congress. I told the Congress, "Thanks, but no thanks," on that Bridge to Nowhere.

If our state wanted to build a bridge, we were going to build it ourselves.

When oil and gas prices went up dramatically and filled up the state treasury, I sent a large share of that revenue back where it belonged: directly to the people of Alaska.

And despite fierce opposition from oil company lobbyists, who kind of liked things the way that they were, we broke their monopoly on power and resources. As governor, I insisted on competition and basic fairness to end their control of our state and return it to the people.

I fought to bring about the largest private-sector infrastructure project in North American history. And when that deal was struck, we began a nearly \$40 billion natural gas pipeline to help lead America to energy independence.

That pipeline, when the last section is laid and its valves are open, will lead America one step farther away from dependence on dangerous foreign powers that do not have our interests at heart.

The stakes for our nation could not be higher. When a hurricane strikes in the Gulf of Mexico, this country should not be so dependent on imported oil that we're forced to draw from our Strategic Petroleum Reserve. And families cannot throw more and more of their paychecks on gas and heating oil.

With Russia wanting to control a vital pipeline in the Caucasus and to divide and intimidate our European allies by using energy as a weapon, we cannot leave ourselves at the mercy of foreign suppliers.

To confront the threat that Iran might seek to cut off nearly a fifth of the world's energy supplies, or that terrorists might strike again at the Abqaiq facility in Saudi Arabia, or that Venezuela might shut off its oil discoveries and its deliveries of that source, Americans, we need to produce more of our own oil and gas. And...

And take it from a gal who knows the North Slope of Alaska: We've got lots of both.

Our opponents say again and again that drilling will not solve all of America's energy problems, as if we didn't know that already.

But the fact that drilling, though, won't solve every problem is no excuse to do nothing at all.

Starting in January, in a McCain-Palin administration, we're going to lay more pipelines, and build more nuclear plants, and create jobs with clean coal, and move forward on solar, wind, geothermal, and other alternative sources. We need...

We need American sources of resources. We need American energy brought to you by American ingenuity and produced by American workers.

And now, I've noticed a pattern with our opponent, and maybe you have, too. We've all heard his dramatic speeches before devoted followers, and there is much to like and admire about our opponent.

But listening to him speak, it's easy to forget that this is a man who has authored two memoirs but not a single major law or even a reform, not even in the State Senate.

PALIN: This is a man who can give an entire speech about the wars America is fighting and never use the word "victory," except when he's talking about his own campaign.

But when the cloud of rhetoric has passed, when the roar of the crowd fades away, when the stadium lights go out, and those Styrofoam Greek columns are hauled back to some studio lot...

... when that happens, what exactly is our opponent's plan? What does he actually seek to accomplish after he's done turning back the waters and healing the planet?

The answer -- the answer is to make government bigger, and take more of your money, and give you more orders from Washington, and to reduce the strength of America in a dangerous world.

America needs more energy; our opponent is against producing it. Victory in Iraq is finally in sight, and he wants to forfeit. Terrorist states are seeking nuclear weapons without delay; he wants to meet them without preconditions.

Al Qaida terrorists still plot to inflict catastrophic harm on America, and he's worried that someone won't read them their rights.

Government is too big; he wants to grow it. Congress spends too much money; he promises more. Taxes are too high, and he wants to raise them. His tax increases are the fine print in his economic plan.

And let me be specific: The Democratic nominee for president supports plans to raise income taxes, and raise payroll taxes, and raise investment income taxes, and raise the death tax, and raise business taxes, and increase the tax burden on the American people by hundreds of billions of dollars.

My sister, Heather, and her husband, they just built a service station that's now open for business, like millions of others who run small businesses. How are they...

How are they going to be better off if taxes go up? Or maybe you are trying to keep your job at a plant in Michigan or in Ohio...

... or you're trying -- you're trying to create jobs from clean coal, from Pennsylvania or West Virginia.

You're trying to keep a small farm in the family right here in Minnesota.

How are you -- how are you going to be better off if our opponent adds a massive tax burden to the American economy?

Here's how I look at the choice Americans face in this election: In politics, there are some candidates who use change to promote their careers, and then there are those, like John McCain, who use their careers to promote change.

PALIN: They are the ones whose names appear on laws and landmark reforms, not just on buttons and banners or on self-designed presidential seals.

Among politicians, there is the idealism of high-flown speech-making, in which crowds are stirringly summoned to support great things, and then there is the idealism of those leaders, like John McCain, who actually do great things.

They're the ones who are good for more than talk, the ones that we've always been able to count on to serve and to defend America.

Senator McCain's record of actual achievements and reform helps explain why so many special interests, and lobbyists, and comfortable committee chairmen in Congress have fought the prospect of a McCain presidency from the primary election of 2000 to this very day.

Our nominee doesn't run with the Washington herd. He's a man who's there to serve his country and not just his party, a leader who's not looking for a fight, but sure isn't afraid of one, either.

Harry Reid, the majority of the current do-nothing Senate...

... he not long ago summed up his feelings about our nominee. He said, quote, "I can't stand John McCain."

Ladies and gentlemen, perhaps no accolade we hear this week is better proof that we've chosen the right man.

Clearly, what the majority leader was driving at is that he can't stand up to John McCain and that is only...

... that's only one more reason to take the maverick out of the Senate, put him in the White House.

My fellow citizens, the American presidency is not supposed to be a journey of personal discovery.

This world of threats and dangers, it's not just a community and it doesn't just need an organizer. And though both Senator Obama and Senator Biden have been going on lately about how they're always, quote, "fighting for you," let us face the matter squarely: There is only one man in this election who has ever really fought for you.

There is only one man in this election who has ever really fought for you in places where winning means survival and defeat means death. And that man is John McCain.

You know, in our day, politicians have readily shared much lesser tales of adversity than the nightmare world, the nightmare world in which this man and others equally brave served and suffered for their country.

And it's a long way from the fear, and pain, and squalor of a six-by-four cell in Hanoi to the Oval Office.

PALIN: But if Senator McCain is elected president, that is the journey he will have made. It's the journey of an upright and honorable man, the kind of fellow whose name you will find on war memorials in small towns across this great country, only he was among those who came home.

To the most powerful office on Earth, he would bring the compassion that comes from having once been powerless, the wisdom that comes even to the captives by the grace of God, the special confidence of those who have seen evil and have seen how evil is overcome. A fellow...

A fellow prisoner of war, a man named Tom Moe of Lancaster, Ohio...

... Tom Moe recalls looking through a pinhole in his cell door as Lieutenant Commander John McCain was led down the hallway by the guards, day after day.

And the story is told, when McCain shuffled back from torturous interrogations, he would turn towards Moe's door, and he'd flash a grin and a thumbs up, as if to say, "We're going to pull through this."

My fellow Americans, that is the kind of man America needs to see us through the next four years.

For a season, a gifted speaker can inspire with his words. But for a lifetime, John McCain has inspired with his deeds.

If character is the measure in this election, and hope the theme, and change the goal we share, then I ask you to join our cause. Join our cause and help America elect a great man as the next president of the United States.

Thank you, and God bless America. Thank you.

Appendix B

GIBSON: Governor, let me start by asking you a question that I asked John McCain about you, and it is really the central question. Can you look the country in the eye and say "I have the experience and I have the ability to be not just vice president, but perhaps president of the United States of America?"

PALIN: I do, Charlie, and on January 20, when John McCain and I are sworn in, if we are so privileged to be elected to serve this country, will be ready. I'm ready.

GIBSON: And you didn't say to yourself, "Am I experienced enough? Am I ready? Do I know enough about international affairs? Do I -- will I feel comfortable enough on the national stage to do this?"

PALIN: I didn't hesitate, no.

GIBSON: Didn't that take some hubris?

PALIN: I -- I answered him yes because I have the confidence in that readiness and knowing that you can't blink, you have to be wired in a way of being so committed to the mission, the mission that we're on, reform of this country and victory in the war, you can't blink.

So I didn't blink then even when asked to run as his running mate.

GIBSON: But this is not just reforming a government. This is also running a government on the huge international stage in a very dangerous world. When I asked John McCain about your national security credentials, he cited the fact that you have commanded the Alaskan National Guard and that Alaska is close to Russia. Are those sufficient credentials?

PALIN: But it is about reform of government and it's about putting government back on the side of the people, and that has much to do with foreign policy and national security issues. Let me speak specifically about a credential that I do bring to this table, Charlie, and that's with the energy independence that I've been working on for these years as the governor of this state that produces nearly 20 percent of the U.S. domestic supply of energy, that I worked on as chairman of the Alaska Oil and Gas Conservation Commission, overseeing the oil and gas development in our state to produce more for the United States.

GIBSON: I know. I'm just saying that national security is a whole lot more than energy.

PALIN: It is, but I want you to not lose sight of the fact that energy is a foundation of national security. It's that important. It's that significant.

GIBSON: Did you ever travel outside the country prior to your trip to Kuwait and Germany last year?

PALIN: Canada, Mexico, and then, yes, that trip, that was the trip of a lifetime to visit our troops in Kuwait and stop and visit our injured soldiers in Germany. That was the trip of a lifetime and it changed my life.

GIBSON: Have you ever met a foreign head of state?

PALIN: There in the state of Alaska, our international trade activities bring in many leaders of other countries.

GIBSON: And all governors deal with trade delegations.

PALIN: Right.

GIBSON: Who act at the behest of their governments.

PALIN: Right, right.

GIBSON: I'm talking about somebody who's a head of state, who can negotiate for that country. Ever met one?

PALIN: I have not and I think if you go back in history and if you ask that question of many vice presidents, they may have the same answer that I just gave you. But, Charlie, again, we've got to remember what the desire is in this nation at this time. It is for no more politics as usual and somebody's big, fat resume maybe that shows decades and decades in that Washington establishment, where, yes, they've had opportunities to meet heads of state ... these last couple of weeks ... it has been overwhelming to me that confirmation of the message that Americans are getting sick and tired of that self-dealing and kind of that closed door, good old boy network that has been the Washington elite.

Sarah Palin on God:

GIBSON: You said recently, in your old church, "Our national leaders are sending U.S. soldiers on a task that is from God." Are we fighting a holy war?

PALIN: You know, I don't know if that was my exact quote.

GIBSON: Exact words.

PALIN: But the reference there is a repeat of Abraham Lincoln's words when he said -- first, he suggested never presume to know what God's will is, and I would never presume to know God's will or to speak God's words.

But what Abraham Lincoln had said, and that's a repeat in my comments, was let us not pray that God is on our side in a war or any other time, but let us pray that we are on God's side.

That's what that comment was all about, Charlie. And I do believe, though, that this war against extreme Islamic terrorists is the right thing. It's an unfortunate thing, because war is hell and I hate war, and, Charlie, today is the day that I send my first born, my son, my teenage son overseas with his Stryker brigade, 4,000 other wonderful American men and women, to fight for our country, for democracy, for our freedoms.

Charlie, those are freedoms that too many of us just take for granted. I hate war and I want to see war ended. We end war when we see victory, and we do see victory in sight in Iraq.

GIBSON: I take your point about Lincoln's words, but you went on and said, "There is a plan and it is God's plan."

PALIN: I believe that there is a plan for this world and that plan for this world is for good. I believe that there is great hope and great potential for every country to be able to live and be protected with inalienable rights that I believe are God-given, Charlie, and I believe that those are the rights to life and liberty and the pursuit of happiness.

That, in my world view, is a grand -- the grand plan.

GIBSON: But then are you sending your son on a task that is from God?

PALIN: I don't know if the task is from God, Charlie. What I know is that my son has made a decision. I am so proud of his independent and strong decision he has made, what he decided to do and serving for the right reasons and serving something greater than himself and not choosing a real easy path where he could be more comfortable and certainly safer.

Sarah Palin on National Security:

GIBSON: Let me ask you about some specific national security situations.

PALIN: Sure.

GIBSON: Let's start, because we are near Russia, let's start with Russia and Georgia.

The administration has said we've got to maintain the territorial integrity of Georgia. Do you believe the United States should try to restore Georgian sovereignty over South Ossetia and Abkhazia?

PALIN: First off, we're going to continue good relations with Saakashvili there. I was able to speak with him the other day and giving him my commitment, as John McCain's running mate, that we will be committed to Georgia. And we've got to keep an eye on Russia. For Russia to have exerted such pressure in terms of invading a smaller democratic country, unprovoked, is unacceptable and we have to keep...

GIBSON: You believe unprovoked.

PALIN: I do believe unprovoked and we have got to keep our eyes on Russia, under the leadership there. I think it was unfortunate. That manifestation that we saw with that invasion of Georgia shows us some steps backwards that Russia has recently taken away from the race toward a more democratic nation with democratic ideals. That's why we have to keep an eye on Russia.

And, Charlie, you're in Alaska. We have that very narrow maritime border between the United States, and the 49th state, Alaska, and Russia. They are our next door neighbors. We need to have a good relationship with them. They're very, very important to us and they are our next door neighbor.

GIBSON: What insight into Russian actions, particularly in the last couple of weeks, does the proximity of the state give you?

PALIN: They're our next door neighbors and you can actually see Russia from land here in Alaska, from an island in Alaska.

GIBSON: What insight does that give you into what they're doing in Georgia?

PALIN: Well, I'm giving you that perspective of how small our world is and how important it is that we work with our allies to keep good relation with all of these countries, especially Russia. We will not repeat a Cold War. We must have good relationship with our allies, pressuring, also, helping us to remind Russia that it's in their benefit, also, a mutually beneficial relationship for us all to be getting along.

Sarah Palin on Russia:

PALIN: We cannot repeat the Cold War. We are thankful that, under Reagan, we won the Cold War, without a shot fired, also. We've learned lessons from that in our relationship with Russia, previously the Soviet Union.

We will not repeat a Cold War. We must have good relationship with our allies, pressuring, also, helping us to remind Russia that it's in their benefit, also, a mutually beneficial relationship for us all to be getting along.

GIBSON: Would you favor putting Georgia and Ukraine in NATO?

PALIN: Ukraine, definitely, yes. Yes, and Georgia.

GIBSON: Because Putin has said he would not tolerate NATO incursion into the Caucasus.

PALIN: Well, you know, the Rose Revolution, the Orange Revolution, those actions have showed us that those democratic nations, I believe, deserve to be in NATO.

Putin thinks otherwise. Obviously, he thinks otherwise, but...

GIBSON: And under the NATO treaty, wouldn't we then have to go to war if Russia went into Georgia?

PALIN: Perhaps so. I mean, that is the agreement when you are a NATO ally, is if another country is attacked, you're going to be expected to be called upon and help.

But NATO, I think, should include Ukraine, definitely, at this point and I think that we need to -- especially with new leadership coming in on January 20, being sworn on, on either ticket, we have got to make sure that we strengthen our allies, our ties with each one of those NATO members.

We have got to make sure that that is the group that can be counted upon to defend one another in a very dangerous world today.

GIBSON: And you think it would be worth it to the United States, Georgia is worth it to the United States to go to war if Russia were to invade.

PALIN: What I think is that smaller democratic countries that are invaded by a larger power is something for us to be vigilant against. We have got to be cognizant of what the consequences are if a larger power is able to take over smaller democratic countries.

And we have got to be vigilant. We have got to show the support, in this case, for Georgia. The support that we can show is economic sanctions perhaps against Russia, if this is what it leads to.

It doesn't have to lead to war and it doesn't have to lead, as I said, to a Cold War, but economic sanctions, diplomatic pressure, again, counting on our allies to help us do that in this mission of keeping our eye on Russia and Putin and some of his desire to control and to control much more than smaller democratic countries.

His mission, if it is to control energy supplies, also, coming from and through Russia, that's a dangerous position for our world to be in, if we were to allow that to happen.

Sarah Palin on Iran and Israel:

GIBSON: Let me turn to Iran. Do you consider a nuclear Iran to be an existential threat to Israel?

PALIN: I believe that under the leadership of Ahmadinejad, nuclear weapons in the hands of his government are extremely dangerous to everyone on this globe, yes.

GIBSON: So what should we do about a nuclear Iran? John McCain said the only thing worse than a war with Iran would be a nuclear Iran. John Abizaid said we may have to live with a nuclear Iran. Who's right?

PALIN: No, no. I agree with John McCain that nuclear weapons in the hands of those who would seek to destroy our allies, in this case, we're talking about Israel, we're talking about Ahmadinejad's comment about Israel being the "stinking corpse, should be wiped off the face of the earth," that's atrocious. That's unacceptable.

GIBSON: So what do you do about a nuclear Iran?

PALIN: We have got to make sure that these weapons of mass destruction, that nuclear weapons are not given to those hands of Ahmadinejad, not that he would use them, but that he would allow terrorists to be able to use them. So we have got to put the pressure on Iran and we have got to count on our allies to help us, diplomatic pressure.

GIBSON: But, Governor, we've threatened greater sanctions against Iran for a long time. It hasn't done any good. It hasn't stemmed their nuclear program.

PALIN: We need to pursue those and we need to implement those. We cannot back off. We cannot just concede that, oh, gee, maybe they're going to have nuclear weapons, what can we do about it. No way, not Americans. We do not have to stand for that.

GIBSON: What if Israel decided it felt threatened and needed to take out the Iranian nuclear facilities?

PALIN: Well, first, we are friends with Israel and I don't think that we should second guess the measures that Israel has to take to defend themselves and for their security.

GIBSON: So if we wouldn't second guess it and they decided they needed to do it because Iran was an existential threat, we would cooperative or agree with that.

PALIN: I don't think we can second guess what Israel has to do to secure its nation.

GIBSON: So if it felt necessary, if it felt the need to defend itself by taking out Iranian nuclear facilities, that would be all right.

PALIN: We cannot second guess the steps that Israel has to take to defend itself

Sarah Palin on 'the Bush Doctrine':

GIBSON: We talk on the anniversary of 9/11. Why do you think those hijackers attacked? Why did they want to hurt us?

PALIN: You know, there is a very small percentage of Islamic believers who are extreme and they are violent and they do not believe in American ideals, and they attacked us and now we are at a point here seven years later, on the anniversary, in this post-9/11 world, where we're able to commit to never again. They see that the only option for them is to become a suicide bomber, to get caught up in this evil, in this terror. They need to be provided the hope that all Americans have instilled in us, because we're a democratic, we are a free, and we are a free-thinking society.

GIBSON: Do you agree with the Bush doctrine?

PALIN: In what respect, Charlie?

GIBSON: The Bush -- well, what do you -- what do you interpret it to be?

PALIN: His world view.

GIBSON: No, the Bush doctrine, enunciated September 2002, before the Iraq war.

PALIN: I believe that what President Bush has attempted to do is rid this world of Islamic extremism, terrorists who are hell bent on destroying our nation. There have been blunders along the way, though. There have been mistakes made. And with new leadership, and that's the beauty of American elections, of course, and democracy, is with new leadership comes opportunity to do things better.

GIBSON: The Bush doctrine, as I understand it, is that we have the right of anticipatory self-defense, that we have the right to a preemptive strike against any other country that we think is going to attack us. Do you agree with that?

PALIN: I agree that a president's job, when they swear in their oath to uphold our Constitution, their top priority is to defend the United States of America.

I know that John McCain will do that and I, as his vice president, families we are blessed with that vote of the American people and are elected to serve and are sworn in on January 20, that will be our top priority is to defend the American people.

GIBSON: Do we have a right to anticipatory self-defense? Do we have a right to make a preemptive strike against another country if we feel that country might strike us?

PALIN: Charlie, if there is legitimate and enough intelligence that tells us that a strike is imminent against American people, we have every right to defend our country. In fact, the president has the obligation, the duty to defend.

GIBSON: Do we have the right to be making cross-border attacks into Pakistan from Afghanistan, with or without the approval of the Pakistani government?

PALIN: Now, as for our right to invade, we're going to work with these countries, building new relationships, working with existing allies, but forging new, also, in order

to, Charlie, get to a point in this world where war is not going to be a first option. In fact, war has got to be, a military strike, a last option.

GIBSON: But, Governor, I'm asking you: We have the right, in your mind, to go across the border with or without the approval of the Pakistani government.

PALIN: In order to stop Islamic extremists, those terrorists who would seek to destroy America and our allies, we must do whatever it takes and we must not blink, Charlie, in making those tough decisions of where we go and even who we target.

GIBSON: And let me finish with this. I got lost in a blizzard of words there. Is that a yes? That you think we have the right to go across the border with or without the approval of the Pakistani government, to go after terrorists who are in the Waziristan area?

PALIN: I believe that America has to exercise all options in order to stop the terrorists who are hell bent on destroying America and our allies. We have got to have all options out there on the table.

Appendix C

Palin and Couric Interview: September 24, 2008

Part 1: Economy

PALIN: My understanding is that Rick Davis recused himself from the dealings of the firm. I don't know how long ago, a year or two ago that he's not benefiting from that. And you know, I was - I would hope that's not the case.

COURIC: But he still has a stake in the company so isn't that a conflict of interest?

PALIN: Again, my understanding is that he recused himself from the dealings with Freddie and Fannie, any lobbying efforts on his part there. And I would hope that's the case because, as John McCain has been saying, and as I've on a much more local level been also rallying against is the undue influence of lobbyists in public policy decisions being made.

PALIN: I'm ill about the position that America is in and that we have to look at a \$700 billion bailout. And as Sen. McCain has said unless this nearly trillion dollar bailout is what it may end up to be, unless there are amendments in Paulson's proposal, really I don't believe that Americans are going to support this and we will not support this. The interesting thing in the last couple of days that I have seen is that Americans are waiting to see what John McCain will do on this proposal. They're not waiting to see what Barack Obama is going to do. Is he going to do this and see what way the political wind's blowing? They're waiting to see if John McCain will be able to see these amendments implemented in Paulson's proposal.

COURIC: Why do you say that? Why are they waiting for John McCain and not Barack Obama?

PALIN: He's got the track record of the leadership qualities and the pragmatism that's needed at a crisis time like this.

COURIC: But polls have shown that Sen. Obama has actually gotten a boost as a result of this latest crisis, with more people feeling that he can handle the situation better than John McCain.

PALIN: I'm not looking at poll numbers. What I think Americans at the end of the day are going to be able to go back and look at track records and see who's more apt to be talking about solutions and wishing for and hoping for solutions for some opportunity to change, and who's actually done it?

COURIC: If this doesn't pass, do you think there's a risk of another Great Depression?

PALIN: Unfortunately, that is the road that America may find itself on. Not necessarily this, as it's been proposed, has to pass or we're going to find ourselves in another Great

Depression. But, there has got to be action - bipartisan effort - Congress not pointing fingers at one another but finding the solution to this, taking action, and being serious about the reforms on Wall Street that are needed.

COURIC: Would you support a moratorium on foreclosures to help average Americans keep their homes?

PALIN: That's something that John McCain and I have both been discussing - whether that ... is part of the solution or not. You know, it's going to be a multi-faceted solution that has to be found here.

COURIC: So you haven't decided whether you'll support it or not?

PALIN: I have not.

COURIC: What are the pros and cons of it do you think?

PALIN: Oh, well, some decisions that have been made poorly should not be rewarded, of course.

COURIC: By consumers, you're saying?

PALIN: Consumers - and those who were predator lenders also. That's, you know, that has to be considered also. But again, it's got to be a comprehensive, long-term solution found ... for this problem that America is facing today. As I say, we are getting into crisis mode here.

Palin and Couric Interview: September 26, 2008
Part 2: Policy

COURIC: As we stand before this august building and institution, what do you see as the role of the United States in the world?

PALIN: I see the United States as being a force for good in the world. And as Ronald Reagan used to talk about, America being the beacon of light and hope for those who are seeking democratic values and tolerance and freedom. I see our country being able to represent those things that can be looked to ... as that leadership, that light needed across the world.

COURIC: In preparing for this conversation, a lot of our viewers ... and Internet users wanted to know why you did not get a passport until last year. And they wondered if that indicated a lack of interest and curiosity in the world.

PALIN: I'm not one of those who maybe came from a background of, you know, kids

who perhaps graduate college and their parents give them a passport and give them a backpack and say go off and travel the world.

No, I've worked all my life. In fact, I usually had two jobs all my life until I had kids. I was not a part of, I guess, that culture. The way that I have understood the world is through education, through books, through mediums that have provided me a lot of perspective on the world.

COURIC: Gov. Palin, you've had a very busy week. And you're meeting with many world leaders. You met with President Karzai of Afghanistan. I know the McCain campaign has called for a surge in Afghanistan. But that country is, as you know, dramatically different than Iraq. Why do you believe additional troops, U.S. troops, will solve the problem there?

PALIN: Because we can't afford to lose in Afghanistan, as we cannot afford to lose in Iraq, either, these central fronts on the war on terror. And I asked President Karzai, "Is that what you are seeking, also? That strategy that has worked in Iraq that John McCain had pushed for, more troops? A counterinsurgency strategy?" And he said, "yes." And he also showed great appreciation for what America and American troops are providing in his country.

COURIC: The United States is deeply unpopular in Pakistan. Do you think the Pakistani government is protecting al Qaeda within its borders?

PALIN: I don't believe that new President Zardari has that mission at all. But no, the Pakistani people also, they want freedom. They want democratic values to be allowed in their country, also. They understand the dangers of terrorists having a stronghold in regions of their country, also. And I believe that they, too, want to rid not only their country, but the world, of violent Islamic terrorists.

COURIC: You've cited Alaska's proximity to Russia as part of your foreign policy experience. What did you mean by that?

PALIN: That Alaska has a very narrow maritime border between a foreign country, Russia, and, on our other side, the land-boundary that we have with Canada. It's funny that a comment like that was kinda made to ... I don't know, you know ... reporters.

COURIC: Mocked?

PALIN: Yeah, mocked, I guess that's the word, yeah.

COURIC: Well, explain to me why that enhances your foreign-policy credentials.

PALIN: Well, it certainly does, because our, our next-door neighbors are foreign countries, there in the state that I am the executive of. And there...

COURIC: Have you ever been involved in any negotiations, for example, with the Russians?

PALIN: We have trade missions back and forth, we do. It's very important when you consider even national security issues with Russia. As Putin rears his head and comes into the air space of the United States of America, where do they go? It's Alaska. It's just right over the border. It is from Alaska that we send those out to make sure that an eye is being kept on this very powerful nation, Russia, because they are right there, they are right next to our state.

COURIC: When President Bush ran for office, he opposed nation-building. But he has spent, as you know, much of his presidency promoting democracy around the world. What lessons have you learned from Iraq? And how specifically will you try to spread democracy throughout the world?

PALIN: Specifically, we will make every effort possible to help spread democracy for those who desire freedom, independence, tolerance, respect for equality. That is the whole goal here in fighting terrorism also. It's not just to keep the people safe, but to be able to usher in democratic values and ideals around this, around the world.

COURIC: You met yesterday with former Secretary of State Henry Kissinger, who is for direct diplomacy with both Iran and Syria. Do you believe the U.S. should negotiate with leaders like President Assad and Ahmadinejad?

PALIN: I think, with Ahmadinejad, personally, he is not one to negotiate with. You can't just sit down with him with no preconditions being met. Barack Obama is so off-base in his proclamation that he would meet with some of these leaders around our world who would seek to destroy America and that, and without preconditions being met. That's beyond naïve. And it's beyond bad judgment.

COURIC: Are you saying Henry Kissinger ...

PALIN: It's dangerous.

COURIC: ... is naïve for supporting that?

PALIN: I've never heard Henry Kissinger say, "Yeah, I'll meet with these leaders without preconditions being met." Diplomacy is about doing a lot of background work first and shoring up allies and positions and figuring out what sanctions perhaps could be implemented if things weren't gonna go right. That's part of diplomacy.

COURIC: You recently said three times that you would never, quote, "second guess" Israel if that country decided to attack Iran. Why not?

PALIN: We shouldn't second guess Israel's security efforts because we cannot ever afford to send a message that we would allow a second Holocaust, for one. Israel has got to have the opportunity and the ability to protect itself. They are our closest ally in the Mideast. We need them. They need us. And we shouldn't second guess their efforts.

COURIC: You don't think the United States is within its rights to express its position to Israel? And if that means second-guessing or discussing an option?

PALIN: No, abso ... we need to express our rights and our concerns and ...

COURIC: But you said never second guess them.

PALIN: We don't have to second-guess what their efforts would be if they believe ... that it is in their country and their allies, including us, all of our best interests to fight against a regime, especially Iran, who would seek to wipe them off the face of the earth. It is obvious to me who the good guys are in this one and who the bad guys are. The bad guys are the ones who say Israel is a stinking corpse and should be wiped off the face of the earth. That's not a good guy who is saying that. Now, one who would seek to protect the good guys in this, the leaders of Israel and her friends, her allies, including the United States, in my world, those are the good guys.

COURIC: You've said, quote, "John McCain will reform the way Wall Street does business." Other than supporting stricter regulations of Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac two years ago, can you give us any more example of his leading the charge for more oversight?

PALIN: I think that the example that you just cited, with his warnings two years ago about Fannie and Freddie - that, that's paramount. That's more than a heck of a lot of other senators and representatives did for us.

COURIC: But he's been in Congress for 26 years. He's been chairman of the powerful Commerce Committee. And he has almost always sided with less regulation, not more.

PALIN: He's also known as the maverick though, taking shots from his own party, and certainly taking shots from the other party. Trying to get people to understand what he's been talking about - the need to reform government.

COURIC: But can you give me any other concrete examples? Because I know you've said Barack Obama is a lot of talk and no action. Can you give me any other examples in his 26 years of John McCain truly taking a stand on this?

PALIN: I can give you examples of things that John McCain has done, that has shown his foresight, his pragmatism, and his leadership abilities. And that is what America needs today.

COURIC: I'm just going to ask you one more time - not to belabor the point. Specific examples in his 26 years of pushing for more regulation.

PALIN: I'll try to find you some and I'll bring them to you.

Palin and Couric Interview: September 30, 2008
Part 3: Behind the Scenes

COURIC: Do you consider yourself a feminist?

PALIN: "I do." I'm a feminist who, uh, believes in equal rights and I believe that women certainly today have every opportunity that a man has to succeed, and to try to do it all, anyway. And I'm very, very thankful that I've been brought up in a family where gender hasn't been an issue. You know, I've been expected to do everything growing up that the boys were doing. We were out chopping wood and you're out hunting and fishing and filling our freezer with good wild Alaskan game to feed our family. So it kinda started with that."

COURIC: Gov. Palin, almost every expert says it will take about 10 years for domestic drilling to have an impact on consumers. So isn't the notion of "drill, baby, drill" a little misleading to people who think this will automatically lower their gas prices, and quickly?

PALIN: And it's why we should have started 10 years ago tapping into domestic supplies that America is so rich in. Alaska has billions of barrels of oil and hundreds of trillions of cubic feet of clean, green natural gas onshore and off-shore. Should have started doing it 10 years ago, but better late than never. It's gotta be an all-of-the-above approach to energy independence.

COURIC: Gov. Palin, I know you'd like to see drilling take place in the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge. And Sen. McCain, you oppose this. You call it, quote: "one of the most pristine and beautiful parts of the world."

MCCAIN: Uh huh.

COURIC: Who's right?

MCCAIN: Did you expect two mavericks to agree on - (laughter) to agree on everything? Look, I ... we just have, we'll be talking more and more about this issue. We do agree on the off-shore drilling and other means of limiting our dependence on foreign oil. But for us to agree on everything would make us, I think, a little boring. You can ... say a lot about us, but we're anything but boring.

COURIC: You have a 72-year-old running mate - is that kind of a risky thing to say, insinuating that Joe Biden's been around a while?

PALIN: Oh no, it's nothing negative at all. He's got a lot of experience and just stating the fact there, that we've been hearing his speeches for all these years. So he's got a tremendous amount of experience and, you know, I'm the new energy, the new face, the new ideas and he's got the experience.

COURIC: And when it comes to establishing your worldview, I was curious, what newspapers and magazines did you regularly read before you were tapped for this to stay informed and to understand the world?

PALIN: I've read most of them, again with a great appreciation for the press, for the media.

COURIC: What, specifically?

PALIN: Um, all of them, any of them that have been in front of me all these years.

COURIC: Can you name a few?

PALIN: I have a vast variety of sources where we get our news, too. Alaska isn't a foreign country, where it's kind of suggested, "Wow, how could you keep in touch with what the rest of Washington, D.C., may be thinking when you live up there in Alaska?" Believe me, Alaska is like a microcosm of America.

COURIC: What's your position on global warming? Do you believe it's man-made or not?

PALIN: Well, we're the only Arctic state, of course, Alaska. So we feel the impacts more than any other state, up there with the changes in climates. And certainly, it is apparent. We have erosion issues. And we have melting sea ice, of course. So, what I've done up there is form a sub-cabinet to focus solely on climate change. Understanding that it is real. And ...

COURIC: Is it man-made, though in your view?

PALIN: You know there are - there are man's activities that can be contributed to the issues that we're dealing with now, these impacts. I'm not going to solely blame all of man's activities on changes in climate. Because the world's weather patterns are cyclical. And over history we have seen change there. But kind of doesn't matter at this point, as we debate what caused it. The point is: it's real; we need to do something about it.

COURIC: If a 15-year-old is raped by her father, do you believe it should be illegal for her to get an abortion, and why?

PALIN: I am pro-life. And I'm unapologetic in my position that I am pro-life. And I understand there are good people on both sides of the abortion debate. In fact, good people in my own family have differing views on abortion, and when it should be

allowed. Do I respect people's opinions on this. Now, I would counsel to choose life. I would also like to see a culture of life in this country. But I would also like to take it one step further. Not just saying I am pro-life and I want fewer and fewer abortions in this country, but I want them, those women who find themselves in circumstances that are absolutely less than ideal, for them to be supported, and adoptions made easier.

COURIC: But ideally, you think it should be illegal for a girl who was raped or the victim of incest to get an abortion?

PALIN: I'm saying that, personally, I would counsel the person to choose life, despite horrific, horrific circumstances that this person would find themselves in. And, um, if you're asking, though, kind of foundationally here, should anyone end up in jail for having an ... abortion, absolutely not. That's nothing I would ever support.

COURIC: Some people have credited the morning-after pill for decreasing the number of abortions. How do you feel about the morning-after pill?

PALIN: Well, I am all for contraception. And I am all for preventative measures that are legal and save, and should be taken, but Katie, again, I am one to believe that life starts at the moment of conception. And I would like to see ...

COURIC: And so you don't believe in the morning-after pill?

PALIN: ... I would like to see fewer and fewer abortions in this world. And again, I haven't spoken with anyone who disagrees with my position on that.

COURIC: I'm sorry, I just want to ask you again. Do you not support or do you condone or condemn the morning-after pill.

PALIN: Personally, and this isn't McCain-Palin policy ...

COURIC: No, that's OK, I'm just asking you.

PALIN: But personally, I would not choose to participate in that kind of contraception.

COURIC: Do you believe evolution should be taught as an accepted scientific principle or as one of several theories?

PALIN: Oh, I think it should be taught as an accepted principle. And, as you know, I say that also as the daughter of a school teacher, a science teacher, who has really instilled in me a respect for science. It should be taught in our schools. And I won't deny that I see the hand of God in this beautiful creation that is Earth. But that is not part of the state policy or a local curriculum in a school district. Science should be taught in science class.

PALIN: Well, it matters though, Katie, when the media gets it wrong. It frustrates Americans who are just trying to get the facts and ... be able to make up their mind on,

about a person's values. So it does matter. But what you're talking about, I think, value here, what my position is on homosexuality and you can pray it away, because I think that was the title that was listed on that bulletin. And you know, I don't know what prayers are worthy of being prayed. I don't know what's prayers are going to be asked and answered. But as for homosexuality, I am not going to judge Americans and the decisions that they make in their adult personal relationships. I have one of my absolute best friends for the last 30 years happens to be gay, and I love her dearly. And she is not my "gay friend," she is one of my best friends, who happens to have made a choice that isn't a choice that I have made. But I am not going to judge people. People may judge her after Thursday's debate, where she'll be unfiltered and unedited - something reporters complain the campaign has resisted.

PALIN: The campaign knows that I am an open book. My record is out there and my life is out there.