

Seducing the Nation: Claudia Jean C.J. Cregg as White House Press Secretary on *The West Wing*

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ABSTRACT:

Women have long faced professional discrimination in traditionally male fields, and the White House press secretary is no exception. As the role of women evolves in American society, it is important to examine the strides females are making in various areas. One crucial area of study is the image in popular culture of public relations practitioners, specifically the White House press secretary because of the enormous power and voice that accompanies the position. The portrayal of fictitious women in these roles has implications in shaping society's views of those professional women in real life. Studying the causes and effects of discrimination may lead to potential solutions for greater societal problems. In researching for this paper, the original series DVDs were analyzed in order to develop and understand a qualitative analysis of Aaron Sorkin's projected image of C.J. Cregg. Supplemental texts analyzing the series *The West Wing* were also consulted for further analysis. Other images of the press secretary or PR practitioner were gained through watching different series. Then the image was contrasted to personal and professional accounts of Dee Dee Myers and other former White House press secretaries. The implications of this research were expanded to broader social themes professional women face, such as family vs. careerism and deep-rooted sexism in society.

Introduction

Public relations will continue to command an important role in both the domestic and global economies, with the Bureau of Labor Statistics anticipating 24 percent job growth in that sector between 2008 and 2018.¹ However, the expanding field and increasing corporate demand for these practitioners does not necessarily mean that they are held in favorable regard by the public. In reality, the American public has expressed widely varied opinions of professionals in the public relations and advertising sectors.² Approximately 36 percent of respondents had a negative opinion of the advertising and public relations industries, according to a 2010 Gallup Poll.³

Most public relations firms are employed as mechanism for developing and disseminating a message or image that an entity seeks to portray.⁴ “Public relations helps an organization and its publics adapt mutually to each other,” according to the Public Relations Society of America.⁵ But even this PRSA definition leaves wide interpretation for exactly what “help” professionals in that field provide. Success in the task is often measured in the amount of sales generated as a result of a campaign, brand affinity research, etc.

The methods by which PR professionals attain these results have historically gone largely unscrutinized; however, with the advent of the Internet, and then blogging and social networking, the magnifying glass has become too threatening for many companies to risk engaging in what could be construed as underhanded behavior.

Depictions of issues in pop culture play an integral role in how society develops impressions of these issues.

As everyone now recognizes, television is today the most influential single force in American popular culture. The images one sees in one's living room night after night directly influence one's general image of reality, and even influence the apperceiving powers of the imagination itself. Since the tendency of TV image making is to project generally superficial one-dimensional characters, one's overall grasp of human character runs the risk of being reduced to cartoon shapes.⁶

Youth's ideas may be more malleable than adults', but even adults will interpret the portrayals using their own established history and perception of the issue to develop an altered perspective.⁷

Under this belief that an increasingly large percentage of the American public no longer clearly distinguishes between entertainment and public affairs programming, Williams and Delli Carpini (2002) argued that, "the political relevance of a cartoon character like Lisa Simpson is as important as the professional norms of Dan Rather, Tom Brokaw, or Peter Jennings."⁸ Empirical studies have demonstrated that watching various prime-time entertainment television programs can impact individual's faith in government. That situation explains why the study of shows that attempt to blur that distinction may have a profound impact on the public's view of the roles those characters play.⁹

Historically, public relations has been brushed off as a "cushy" industry by some silver screen journalists.¹⁰ Perhaps this is because their work often deals with topics that may be construed as superficial. Claudia Jean Cregg felt this way about traditional public relations work, even during the time she was employed at a firm, because she was assigned to the entertainment industry. Her boss at the firm Triton

Day in Beverly Hills confronted her saying, “This is never what you’ve wanted to be doing C.J., you’ve always felt it was beneath you.” To which she replied that it was beneath her.¹¹

Or, perhaps this is because journalists and public relations practitioners must work together but their purposes often also are working at odds with one another. In the Frank Capra film *Mr. Deeds Goes to Town* (1936) University of Southern California journalism professor Joe Saltzman describes the public relations professional Cornelius Cobb as a “former reporter, now jaded public relations man who is hired to keep reporters away” from his new client.¹²

The journalist seeks to uncover the truth and communicate it to the public, but the public relations practitioner seeks to present, redeem or maintain a favorable image of his or her client, meaning that he or she may sometimes obfuscate or minimize damaging information or inflate positive news about the client.¹³

The White House press secretary most closely wavers on the fence between the two professions – journalism and public relations.

To most Americans the White House staff and its work are nearly unknown—largely because it is usually in the president’s interest to have staffers stay behind the scenes. A few senior staff members are in the public eye, but the vast majority of White House staffers do their indispensable work completely out of sight.¹⁴

In the book *The White House Staff: Inside the West Wing and Beyond* there is an entire chapter entitled, “Equidistant in an Adversarial Relationship: The Press Secretary.”¹⁵

“I think my job is public and yet it’s not,”¹⁶ says C.J. on *The West Wing* in describing the dilemma of a press secretary. “Conventional wisdom says you can’t serve two masters. I do [president and public]. Or at least I tell myself I do.”¹⁷

The White House press secretary is arguably one of the most important roles in the spectrum of jobs under the PR umbrella.

White House press secretaries connect Americans to the news of their government.

The modern-day White House press secretary’s primary responsibility is to be the official spokesperson for the president of the United States and his or her administration. Additionally, the press secretary’s responsibilities include meeting with the president and other senior administration officials, conducting press briefings, helping the president prepare for press conferences and handling press... Presidential Press Secretaries arrangements for presidential trips, fulfilling interview and information requests, writing and disseminating press releases, meeting with the press secretaries of various departments, and gathering information about the administration. Historically, some White House press secretaries have also acted as policy advisers and speechwriters, have helped make personnel decisions, and have been a voice of reason in times of crisis. Depending on their relationship with the president, some press secretaries were even able to speak in a frank and direct manner with the president.¹⁸

Not only do they have the most public face after the president, as former staff members have said, press secretaries have one of the most challenging jobs in the White House as well. Despite the close-working press-White House relationship, the show’s creator, Aaron Sorkin, sets the stage for a contentious rapport between the two parties from the outset. In the opening moment of the pilot episode, Sam Seaborne sits at a hotel bar speaking to a reporter with disdain, rejecting a reporter’s attempt to bait him into a quote.¹⁹ However, Sam could be more curt and

direct with the reporter because he does not need to maintain a friendly professional relationship in the same way as C.J. or any press secretary would.

Keeping the White House's reputation safe is a challenging task when questions are hurled from every direction at the press secretary in hopes of provoking a less censored or prepared response. In reflecting on the experience carrying out the various tasks that are undertaken in this role, former press secretaries have likened their working state to that of a combat officer.

Sometimes I look in upon the midday meeting and it all comes back. My heart begins to race; my stomach churns. Then I mix myself a martini and I thank God it isn't me...We've got this flak jacket that goes from one press secretary to the next. We put notes in it; words of wisdom for the next guy who has the job.²⁰

On *The West Wing*, White House Communications Director Tobias Ziegler realizes how difficult the job of press secretary is when he attempts to brief for the first time after C.J. had been promoted out of the position. Media consultant Annabeth Schott educates Toby on a successful strategy for dealing with the press. She asks: "How do you get women?...Briefing the press is a seduction. You've got a hot ex. How'd you get her?...Smart and funny. That's how guys who, no offense, don't look like Jude Law or Denzel Washington get babes." Toby argues back, "Briefing the press isn't a seduction. It's war...." To which Annabeth replies, "What C.J. did for seven years wasn't combat. It was charm and disarm...Smart and funny. Seduce them. Worked on your wife." She also emphasizes that the correct body language is important because it provides to the audience a subtle cue that the speaker has both comfort and command.²¹

Personal characteristics like these, as well as credentials and likability of the secretary, plays a great role in how news from the White House is received. People take into account the source to establish how much credibility they give to the content. But as in many industries, sexism prevents women from excelling at the same level as men in public relations, as shown by the substantial disparity between the proportion of women working in the field and those leading it.²²

Women fill 70 percent of PR positions. In a 2002 study, Aldoory & Toth found that women only hold 20 percent of the top leadership spots in major firms.²³

Slowly, women are breaking the barriers down and proving to be as capable (or perhaps more adept at certain jobs) as men. As women step into upper-level political roles in greater frequency, both in reality and in popular fiction roles, it is important to consider our current perceptions and how the female PR stereotypes are changing.

During the last fifteen years, women have increased their prominence in the sphere of U.S. politics, achieving greater visibility in powerful positions and in elective office. Throughout their history, Americans have held an ambivalent attitude toward women in politics that often corresponds to discomfort with changing gender roles and ideologies. Despite many gains in political representation, American culture retains its uneasy relationship with strong, powerful women. Often, women in public office are perceived as manipulative, power-hungry, or masculine, and as a result, not portrayed with much depth. Even so, women in public roles receive more airtime and attention than a few decades prior and take leading roles as the subjects of films and television shows. Since media of all kinds—the mainstream press as well as a television drama—contribute to the American interpretation of women in politics, it is important to explore how these women's roles are portrayed through the popular culture lens of television and how they compare to real-life examples. Screenwriter Aaron Sorkin's scripts for the television drama *The West Wing*...offer fertile ground to examine the main female characters, with a range of admirable traits and in professional positions of power.²⁴

When the press secretary is female, the job becomes even more daunting and difficult. White House culture, even under the control of a liberal administration, has been found to have what former White House Press Secretary Dee Dee Myers referred to as “lingering sexist tendencies” at the highest levels of power.²⁵ Stereotypes of females in politics also work against women in high-ranking offices or positions in government.

THE WHITE HOUSE PRESS SECRETARY AND *THE WEST WING*

The television drama *The West Wing* offers a glimpse into the intimate inner workings and public presentation of the entire senior staff of the White House, including the press secretary. President Josiah “Jed” Bartlet, a Democrat, and his White House senior staff work to run the nation and navigate international issues, giving the audience unshielded insight into conflicts and challenges that these people come up against. The show chronicles the personal triumphs and struggles for each character, from the prominent figures mentioned above to lower level assistant staff. Throughout the various plot developments the audience can gain insight into tactical political strategy surrounding relationships between congress, special interest groups, international governments, military fiascos and the government.²⁶

Although a fictional account, this show provides something to the American public that it cannot get from any other source... News is constrained from communicating a depiction of this kind because, in the real world, there is a constant battle to keep the media at a certain distance from elected officials.²⁷

That the show was a four-time Emmy winner for best drama and was one of the highest rated on television until the series ended are testaments to the popularity and influence the program had with the audience.

Viewing *The West Wing* seems to prime more positive images of the U.S. presidency that subsequently influence individual-level perceptions of those individuals most directly associated with this office.²⁸

These individuals in *The West Wing* have many common traits. They share a ubiquitous sense of higher purpose, commitment to morals, serving the people's best interests, self-sacrifice of personal lives, and deep loyalty to one another. They are all smart, articulate and open to debating multiple points of view. They truly believe in the goodness of the government they work for.²⁹

Leo McGarry, a seasoned veteran of D.C. politics and the reason that Jed Bartlet runs for office, is the chief of staff and the president's best friend. Joshua Lyman, the hot-tempered smart-aleck deputy chief of staff, is poached by McGarry from a presidential campaign for John Hoynes. Although he loses the Democratic nomination, Hoynes becomes Bartlet's first vice president. However, his playboy arrogance creates a source of tension in the White House. Once on board with the campaign, Lyman taps Sam Seaborn, an ethical lawyer and former colleague, as deputy speechwriter. Communications Director Toby Zeigler, the Brooklyn-born, stubborn idealist who could not win a campaign until President Bartlet's, recruits C.J. as press secretary. C.J., who had just been fired from her public relations job in Los Angeles, had worked with Zeigler in a smaller campaign and he was impressed by her work with a group called "Emily's List."³⁰ President Bartlet is the father figure to the staff, possessing strong Catholic values and a brilliant mind.

C.J., who serves as White House Press Secretary for seven years, becomes the most notable media figure in *The West Wing*. “With C.J., Sorkin succeeds in creating a multi-faceted, compelling female character, and she stands out as the best developed female character on the staff.”³¹ She, therefore, makes an excellent candidate to study to better understand the image of the female White House press secretary even though she eventually steps out of that role and into the shoes of former chief of staff Leo MacGarry. Because of her competence as press secretary and likely because of her unwavering commitment to her morals, Leo names her as his successor after having a heart attack during the last year of President Bartlet’s two terms.

As we meet each character at the start of the series, we learn immediately that the lines between private and personal lives have been blurred if not broken. While staffers show some familiarity and comfort in their positions, they are still very much learning how to execute their roles to best serve the president. When we meet C.J., she is on a treadmill at 5:30 in the morning. Six feet tall and athletic, she wears a T-shirt tucked into sweat pants and little to no make-up and hairstyling, which gives her an air of practicality.

You can have a normal life, you’d be amazed at how normal I can be. See it’s all about budgeting your time. This time, this hour, this is my time. 5a.m. – 6a.m. I can work out as you see; I can think about personal matters. I can meet an interesting man. The trick is...³²

She’s trying so desperately to talk to the man next to her that she barely notices her beeper has been going off. This hour—an hour when most people wouldn’t even think of flirting—appears to be the only time she has to squeeze in a personal life, and even that is interrupted. She falls down on the treadmill because she is so

consumed with the message that came through the beeper. That she does not appear hurt by the fall indicates that she is tough and accustomed to the rushed pace of her job. The night crew is still cleaning the floors at the White House as C.J. and the other staff come to work and the day is off and running.³³ “You begin every day juggling a very precise schedule which completely, completely falls apart mid morning, guaranteed.”³⁴

The hectic speed of the White House, visually demonstrated by creator Aaron Sorkin through a constant flutter of movement in the hallways and quick conversation segues, is exacerbated by the public’s growing demand for a 24-hour news cycle. “The accelerated release of information is a concern for everyone in today’s White House. They all have to consider how the message will play.”³⁵ If there is time to discuss an issue, the message agreed upon by White House staff, solidified through Toby Zeigler, it ultimately is communicated by C.J..

SUCCESS WITH THE PRESS: THE MANY FACETS OF C.J.

So what makes C.J. so successful at seducing the press? C.J. embodies a paradox of many opposite qualities—comedic but serious, tough but loving. But what is unwavering is her commitment to the ethical execution of her office.

ETHICS 101

“I’m here to articulate the president’s message and to honestly inform the press and through them the public about what is happening on any given day.”³⁶ In an interview, C.J. poses this question to the audience, “If you choose not to advertise your vulnerabilities is that a cover up?”³⁷ And therein lies the gray area of “spin”

that has so negatively impacted the image of public relations people in the past. C.J. says, however, that while she would withhold information for legitimate reasons, she would not lie to the press. "You run the risk of damaging your credibility with a bunch of really smart people, and if they stop trusting you, the system's broken."³⁸

Inevitably, certain situations tug at the heartstrings. There are cases where C.J. struggles to do what is in the best interest of the White House because it goes against her sense of right and wrong. In season one, a hate crime murder of a gay teenager in the Lydell family raised doubts in C.J. based on the father's reaction. She was told by Mandy Hampton, a media consultant who had met with the family earlier, that the father seemed anti-gay. C.J. could not believe that a father could hate his son. Hampton did not want the family to be present at a White House event they had been invited to for fear they would publicly embarrass the White House. The father tells them he has been cold not because he is embarrassed that his son was gay, but because his president was embarrassed of it because Bartlet was too weak on gay rights. C.J. is relieved, but the realization stuns her so much so that she almost lets the family attend the event knowing they would speak out. C.J.'s uneasiness about the parents being denied the opportunity to voice their opinion about White House inaction compels her to approach her favorite White House reporter and ongoing love interest, Danny Concannon, played by Timothy Busfield, with the story. Danny refuses to listen to the tip, saying she would realize that she was a professional shortly after and hate him for having taken the story. He tells her that reporters would find a story if there was one to be found, to which she replies

that they would not because, “We’ve gotten very good at this.” Her implication is that she would ensure the story was buried.³⁹

Many times she and the remainder of senior staff declare that they only serve at the pleasure of the president. They also always refer to him by his title “the president” or “President Bartlet,” indicating a sincere respect for the office and their role in governmental hierarchy. Even if C.J. makes a mistake, she infallibly acts in what she perceives to be the best interest of the American people.

SEXUALITY: GOING BOTH WAYS

The White House is still a boy’s club. “Women have had difficulty breaking into traditionally male-dominated positions in the White House⁴⁰...Since the perception of these positions remains anchored in traditionally male jobs, opinions about women who assume these positions, whether in real life or fiction, are significant.”⁴¹

In President Bartlet’s White House remnants of sexism pops up repeatedly despite the administration’s heavy liberal leanings.⁴² C.J.’s gender and sexuality are often more of a liability than an asset.

Modern women in the White House have needed to prove themselves even more than their male counterparts.⁴³ This can be seen many times throughout the series when Josh, Sam, and Toby “check out” around the holidays or play practical jokes during the workday. That “women have made greater strides in elective office than they have in high-level appointed positions,”⁴⁴ distinguishes C.J. from senators, for example, because she was chosen for the position by her male colleagues.

Most other women working in the White House are in lower level roles such as secretary or assistant, often mentioned only by first name and receiving little character development.⁴⁵

This anonymity reflects the gender hierarchy apparent in White House circles, which illustrates how entrenched this power dynamic is. However, it is not the casting of women in subordinate roles that makes them inferior, but it is the way in which Sorkin employs these characters to act as foils or create sexual tension that limits their depth and progress as women figures.⁴⁶

The appearance of a woman in politics may also determine the type of sexist treatment the woman receives.

Sexual innuendo has been routinely demonstrated in depicting the personal lives of traditional PR professionals, such as Samantha Jones in *Sex and the City*. Sexuality plays an integral and definitive role in the image of the PR professional. Perhaps the link of sex and business is intrinsic because both areas are inextricably connection to what it means to be human. Samantha is so promiscuous that it shocks even her best friends at times. She uses sexual terms in traditionally inappropriate places, such as in front of children or at the breakfast table as if it were nothing out of the ordinary. Like C.J., she is afraid to get her heart broken. She seldom allows herself to get attached to the men and “pulled her heart off the table” when the few relationships she had made her insecure.

Unlike Samantha, although C.J. has sex during the Bartlet administration, for the sake of her career, she does not flaunt her sexuality. Although she makes remarks that show she is concerned about appearing feminine and attractive, C.J. has witnessed discrimination against attractive women. For example, White House attorney Lionel Tribbey played by John Larroquette, barges into the president’s

office to complain about Ainsley Hayes, played by Emily Proctor. He does not want Ainsley, a well-qualified lawyer and an attractive woman who wears suits with hems above the knee, to work for him and he yells that the president should not be hiring, “blonde and leggy fascists, whose knowledge does not include the proper ordering of the alphabet, for positions of the White House.” C.J. is upset by the way Ainsley is received by staffers, having been smacked by the White House for being a woman several times herself.

C.J. Have you noticed that I’m one of the few people around here whose nose isn’t bent out of shape over Ainsley Hayes?
 TOBY. Yeah, listen.
 C.J. I’m serious.
 TOBY. You heard the news and you slammed the door so hard it broke. Ok, you heard the news and you broke the White House.
 C.J. Yeah, but I’m over it now, I’m saying other people aren’t and they should get over it.
 TOBY. I’ll see what I can do... In the meantime.
 C.J. I’m going to tell you something, Toby. I don’t think it’s that she’s a Republican, I think it’s that she’s a Republican woman and she’s good-looking.
 TOBY. Well, those are three things, when in combination, usually spell ‘careerism.’
 C.J. Well I think it’s sexist in a bad way and I’m coming down on her side.
 TOBY. Good for you, look.
 C.J. Toby, I’m serious about this...
They dive straight into work conversation, but before he leaves TOBY says,
 TOBY. By the way, you are a beautiful woman. And no one in the White House has ever assumed you were either ambitious or stupid.
 C.J. Toby, it took two years.

Comments about Ainsley’s attractiveness are also made later with intentions of being endearing. An unattractive temp chides Sam for making one such remark, but Ainsley tells him privately that she likes the comment because it makes her feel like a friend.

In contrast to Ainsley, C.J. projects an image of professionalism with her clothing,⁴⁷ donning modest suits unless there is an event that allows her to show off her figure in an evening gown. For example, she wears a sexy, long black gown with a plunging white V-neck neckline and an open back to an event. She asks about whether she has a weirdly large neck.

Sometimes, being a woman works to her advantage. When C.J. approaches Sam for help in understanding the census, she uses flattery to win his favor, complimenting his writing and appearance. She could get away with it because men and women are more susceptible to flattery from the other sex. She admits that she was faking so that he would know she needed his help. However, by conceding that she did not understand something that other members of the male-dominated staff did grasp, she runs the risk of being considered unintelligent. In order to prevent this, she uses humor and carefully phrased statements.⁴⁸

C.J. You're gonna go slowly right? Pretend for the purposes of this conversation that I'm dumb.

SAM. Let me try and conjure an image of you as a stupid person.

C.J. You're cracking wise; I'm coming to you exposed and vulnerable?

SAM. This is your office I'm coming to you.

C.J. I meant symbolically.

SAM. Ah.

C.J. I'm a person saying there's something I do not know. Will you teach me? It's hard to admit you don't know something. That makes me submissive.

SAM. What is it exactly you're asking me to do?

C.J. I'm admitting to you that there are things I do not know.

SAM. And I'm trying to tell you that I don't think anybody would have any trouble imagining that there are things that you don't know.

C.J. Explain it to me.⁴⁹

But, even when her feminine assets seemed to give her an advantage, they mostly ended up hurting her. There are many incidents, surrounding matters that range from lighthearted to serious, when it is apparent that C.J. suffers both

professionally and socially because she was a woman. For example, she is often invited to social gatherings last by her male colleagues.

C.J. It's about time you asked me. I have been sitting here for two weeks trying to get out of all kinds of very, frankly, glamorous invitations from people I like a lot more than you. You can't ask a girl at the last minute...

TOBY. If you can't come, you can't...

C.J. No I can come! I can come!" Should I bring anything?

TOBY. Yeah, do you know how to, you know, cook food?⁵⁰

Or, she may just have to invite herself along.

JOSH. Sam, I'm taking Charlie for a beer tonight Zoey and Malorie are coming.

SAM. OK.

C.J. I like beer, *she has to insert her position to get the invite.*

JOSH. If you'd like to come I guess that would be OK.

C.J. Why Josh, you've swept me off my feet.

Sarcasm. SAM laughs and JOSH says,

JOSH. Whatever, I'll...I'll see you later.⁵¹

In one episode, Leo tells the president that his staff assumed the polling numbers on his presidency would drop by a few points even though they climbed.

C.J. confronts Leo because earlier she had predicted the correct outcome. Leo rejects her concerns, saying that she should not read too much into the dismissal of her projected numbers, but he also compares her to the East German judge. The reference likens her to the 1988 Olympic gymnastics judge who was believed to have biased the score in favor of East Germany and against the United States through a "little-used rule"⁵²

A more serious moral entanglement and career threat arises between C.J. and Washington Post White House reporter Danny with whom she has an ongoing flirtation. This bond gives them a closer-than-normal relationship and affords her

courtesies, such as holding off on publishing stories or asking embarrassing or tricky questions privately instead of in the briefing room, that a press secretary may not normally receive. Their relationship does, however, provide a conflict of interest. In one scene, C.J. is being questioned alone by Danny and he mixes it with flirtation. She does her job, refusing to give Danny any information until the rest of the press is briefed soon. However, the conflict impacts her behavior, as she is snappy toward Danny because she does not know whether he is flirting because he likes her or because he wants information. Her doubts are assuaged when he assures her that he likes her.⁵³

The relationship starts off benefiting her, but eventually causes her colleagues to call her professionalism into question. This series of amorous interactions builds up from professional advice and encouragement to dinner invitations, the gift of a goldfish and a series of hallway and office kisses that eventually are noticed by the senior staff, threatening her reputation.⁵⁴ She rejects many of his advances but finally gives in to her wish to date and she asks him out. She argues with Danny that she was just “accepting one of his” invitations perhaps to appear more feminine or because she was afraid of rejection. But the mingling of personal and professional boundaries takes its toll on C.J. and Danny. For example, C.J. prefaces a conversation saying, “You’ve got to know I don’t like exploiting our friendship in any way, and I certainly don’t like taking advantage of any feelings beyond friendship you might have for me.” Danny retorts that she has feelings for him too, and then discloses he has the memo written by a White House staffer that is extremely detrimental to the administration and that will become the story she is

freaking out about. When she tries to convince him that it is not news, C.J. fights with Danny.⁵⁵ She later punishes him by giving an exclusive interview to his subordinate at *The Washington Post*⁵⁶ and chooses Danny to ask a question that would prove embarrassing to him.⁵⁷

Toby Zeigler feels compelled to tell her about the danger of dating Danny, as her peers worry that her relationship with Danny could compromise her ability to do her job. The president asks if the punishment C.J. has been doling out to Danny for his paper's recent negative editorials is "personal," meaning because their relationship didn't work out. He says that as long as they were both good at their jobs, it would never work out between them. She denies that it's personal. When she talks to Danny a moment later, she says that she heard a job Danny was offered as an editor so that he would no longer be a White House reporter. He tells her that's who he is and that he wouldn't want to not be the White House reporter. He says that he doesn't have a problem with the press secretary dating a member of the press. C.J. says that she does have a problem with it. They both say, OK, and that's that.⁵⁸

Her male coworkers prevent C.J. from having all the information on certain military operations, afraid that she would not be able to withhold sensitive information from the press properly, and sending her in to brief blindly. In an interview, Josh said, "There have been times where in order for her to do her job and for her to remain an honest source for reporters. If she were to have information, she would be ethically bound to share it and I don't want to put her in that situation."⁵⁹

One such incident significantly undermines her credibility with the press and her trust and confidence among senior staff. C.J. is not briefed on a developing situation of troop movements even after asking whether there was anything else. In the briefing room, she denies a tip regarding this from the reporter, and even tells him to get a new source. Earlier that morning, she suspects that something serious is being discussed while she is in the Oval Office, but Leo and Toby choose not to tell her about the situation after the briefing because they do not trust her to be able to plausibly deny it.⁶⁰ McGarry's lack of forethought or care regarding her concerns over the situation is apparent when she confronts him.

C.J. This happened last night?

LEO. Yeah.

C.J. That's what you were all talking about when I walked into the Oval Office?

LEO. I'm sorry C.J., we...

C.J. You told me the lid was on?

LEO. You're going to have to expect that sometimes.

C.J. I got the question Leo. A guy had a pentagon source. I denied it, I called it ridiculous.

LEO. We know.

C.J. Is it three hundred thousand troops?

LEO. Yeah.

C.J. A couple of destroyers.

LEO. And 4 CBEs.

C.J. The guy hit it right on the button. I made fun of him.

LEO. You'll tell the room you spoke without knowing the facts.

C.J. I guess that's what I'll do.

LEO. C.J.

C.J. Don't worry about it.

LEO. As soon as you tell them India's the story this is forgotten.

C.J. I'm fine.⁶¹

However, C.J. is clearly upset about being distrusted by senior staff and having her credibility undermined with the press, who seemed more informed than she. She maintains her professional demeanor throughout the day despite the major

personal setback, but her colleagues feel guilty about betraying her. Toby thinks he should say something to console C.J. but Sam advises him against it because C.J. is a professional and it would be patronizing. Toby approaches her anyway as she was working to diffuse the media problem so that the president would appear to have a firm grip on the situation.

C.J. I was just starting to get credible. I was just starting to get their respect. You know how long it's going to take me to get it back?

TOBY. There is some concern...

C.J. Don't ask C.J., she doesn't know anything.

TOBY. There is a concern that you are too friendly with the press.

C.J. Really?

TOBY. We know it's important that you have a friendly relationship with the press...

C.J. It's important for all of us.

TOBY. I don't disagree.

C.J. Does this have to do with Danny Concannon?

TOBY. People see you with Danny.

C.J. This is outrageous.

TOBY. It was this one time, and if we erred it was on the side of trying...

C.J. You sent me in there uninformed so that I'd lie to the press.

TOBY. We sent you in there uninformed because we thought there was a chance you couldn't.

C.J. OK I have all this work to do.⁶² *Sits down at her desk and will not look up until he leaves the room.*

It is unclear whether such action would have been taken had the press secretary been male and the reporter female. C.J. forgives Toby after he apologizes, but she remembers the incident and worries that information will be kept from her again.⁶³

C.J. Whose idea was it?

TOBY. Mine.

C.J. You were the one who said India's invaded Pakistan let's not tell

C.J.?

TOBY. I didn't say it like that.

C.J. How'd you say it?

TOBY. I said it nicer.⁶⁴

However, forbidden romantic interactions would prove problematic for C.J. multiple times. She had had a one-night stand with a married John Hoynes years before he was to join the Bartlet campaign for president. When it is revealed, she tells Toby that it was one of her worst mistakes. She chooses not to hire a candidate with whom she shared a romantic history for a job with the White House. C.J. had promoted from within, but the man believes his not getting the job is linked to a resentment C.J. feels about the resolution of their dating life.⁶⁵ She also falls for her secret service agent, who is prohibited from dating her as it conflicts with the interest of her safety.

When interrupted in conversation at a gathering in the residence, President Bartlett and Leo sum up how they see each of the female guests in the room, all members of his staff.

BARTLET. We were talking about these women.

LEO. We can't get over these women.

BARTLET. I mean C.J. she's like a 50s movie star. So capable; So loving and energetic.

LEO. Look at Mandy over there, going punch for punch with Toby in a world that tells women to sit down and shut up. Mandy's already won her battle with the President, the game's over. But she's not done. She wants Toby.

BARTLET. Mrs. Landingham. Did you guys know she lost two sons in Vietnam? What would make her want to serve her country is beyond me but in 14 yrs, she's not missed a day's work, not one. There's Cathy, Donna and Margaret...⁶⁶

They talk affectionately about the women but list stereotypically feminine or mediocre attributes, persistence, having a loving quality and attendance, as reasons for being enamored with them. Cathy, Donna, and Margaret don't even get attributes to describe them; they are just noted for being there. Perhaps it is because C.J. uses humor to put people at ease or because she lacks the bombastic qualities that male

staffers like Josh portray. Regardless, C.J.'s intelligence seems underestimated by fellow members of the senior staff.

SERIOUS[LY] SMART AND FUNNY

The treadmill fall in the opening scenes of the pilot episode sets a tone for C.J.'s comedic side, which proves a great asset to her in her personal/private life. Smart and funny go hand in hand. Studies have proved that, "humor is a particular manifestation and an indicator of both intelligence and creativity."⁶⁷

C.J. was smart on paper. She was a National Merit scholar and attended the University of California at Berkeley where she earned a Master of Arts degree in political science.⁶⁸ She was professional successful at Triton Day agency in Beverly Hills and went from earning over half a million dollars a year to just over \$30,000 in order to join the Bartlet presidential campaign.

C.J. is also smart with people. Interpersonal and intrapersonal intelligence is an entirely different skill set with which many at different intelligence levels struggle.⁶⁹ When to use or refrain from humor and what type of humor to engage in is a gut- and personality-driven choice, based on situational tone and audience.

White House Aide Donna Moss said:

"I think that she has such great instincts. I think that she is so agile and that her wit and her charm and I think that the press really respect her so that she can keep a very strong but friendly relationship with the press."⁷⁰

C.J. was constantly a source of humor for the staff and press, and that sensibility endears her to them.

"Some recent research suggests that while men and women both say they like a 'good sense of humor,' they mean different things by that:

men prefer women who appreciate their humor, while women prefer men who make them laugh.”⁷¹
Perhaps C.J. is comfortable with the mostly male staff’s sense of humor because she grew up with brothers.

Her instincts defined successful and failed moments throughout her career, as they were most needed during times where reaction came from her in the briefing room, away from other staff, and when tricky situations confrontations among staff needed quick, amicable resolution.

The White House senior staff are a bunch of pranksters, probably because the tension runs so high on work topics that require a serious tone that staffers need an outlet. Usually, when there is a chance to embarrass a co-worker by letting him or her know that they know his or her secret or rubbing in an uncomfortable situation, the staff will use it as joke material throughout the day.

For example, C.J. ducks her head in an office interrupting a serious conversation between Toby and Sam about whether Toby could go to jail for stock market tampering related to a purchase. “Excuse me, Toby, I was just heading out for lunch and I’m a little short. You wouldn’t happen to have \$125,000 I could borrow would you? Hahaha.” When she enters the pressroom she is serious when she needs to be, but uses laughter as a tool and tells the press to “have fun with,” the information to diminishes the seriousness of things/gifts that would make the administration look bad. Josh going to check on press briefings and talks about votes with Josh. She always seems aware of all the moving parts.

On the flipside, she knows when to be serious and ensure that she has the full command of a room. After President Bartlet and Josh Lyman had been shot, C.J.

paused one barrage of questions to broaden the conversation to other victims of violence in the same day and give perspective to a larger issue.⁷²

"This is our fifth press briefing since midnight and obviously there is one story that's going to be dominating the news around the world for the next few days and it would be easy to think that President Bartlett, Joshua Lyman and Stephanie Abbott were the only people who were victims of a gun crime last night. They weren't. Mark Davis and Sheila Evans of Philadelphia were killed by a gun last night. He was a biology teacher and she was a nursing student. Tina Bishop and Belinda Larkin were killed with a gun last night. They were twelve. There were 36 homicides last night, 480 sexual assaults, 3,411 robberies, 3,685 aggravated assaults, all at gunpoint. If anyone thinks those crimes could have been prevented if the victims themselves had been carrying guns I'd only remind you that the President of the United States was shot last night while surrounded by the best-trained armed guards in the history of the world. Back to the briefing."⁷³

She was able to underline the dangers of guns, strengthening public support of the Democratic stance on gun control, while providing an odd sense of comfort by reminding the public that crime is a common concern, distracting from the fact that the presidential attack would threaten the nation. She also diminished any sense that the White House could be looking for pity from the nation. Danny commented to Leo, "She's good." Leo replied, "Yes she is," indicating that she had earned mutual respect from both the press and her colleagues.

She is the only one who goes immediately to work after the shooting takes place and she is able to maintain her competence even as other staffers are experiencing mental health side effects.⁷⁴ She is also one of few staff members "who evolves and grows with her position because of her reflective nature."⁷⁵

By downplaying stereotypically "girly" interests, she avoids any stereotyping of being frivolous despite her at-times-goofy humor. For example, she told colleagues that she did not like that her secret service code name was Flamingo,

because it was a “ridiculous looking bird.” C.J.’s temperament is not serious; she jokes a lot throughout the day. However, she loathes press questions pertaining to fluffy topics in the briefing room because it distracts what she sees as real news and hinders their ability to govern. Yet, it is part of the job, so she briefs the press about an outfit the first lady is wearing and makes fun of *Instyle* and other female-oriented fashion magazines. She looks down at entertainment reporters, completely embarrassing one in front of the entire briefing room by outing the reporter’s dearth of governmental knowledge.

She was also angry about the fashion questions because she studied up on all the other issues of the day. A good press secretary must have a firm grasp on and be able to handle many situations with moving parts simultaneously. This is why there are meetings to anticipate questions and brief on issues so no one is caught off guard or misspeaks in the briefing room. This is also why a large part of why C.J.’s carefully planned schedules completely fall apart mid morning.⁷⁶ For example, right before her briefing staffers are speaking a steady stream of info about events that are likely to be covered at her briefing. A hurricane picked up speed and power and is heading for Georgia, a Truckers strike gearing up, the government planning a siege on a group of about 40 people and the president is hosting a state dinner in honor of an Indonesian presidential dignitary. Yet, to her chagrin, she knew that most of the questions she was asked that day would be focused on the first lady’s outfit for the dinner.⁷⁷

MOM: CARETAKER AND TOUGH-LOVE DISCIPLINARIAN

Press secretaries, as with all public relations professionals, seek to be prepared for everything so that they can control the situation. It is not until Josh Lymon⁷⁸ and Toby Zeigler each step behind the podium to brief the press and completely fumble their control of their room that they appreciate the wit and composure it takes answer the questions without putting a foot in the mouth. For C.J., the careful finessing of the truth in order to make your case as controlled and presentable as possible, referred to as “spin,” does not give the press secretary license to stray from the truth. “Do I ever have to lie to the press. Sometimes, lots of times, I withhold information for valid reasons, because I can’t lie. You run the risk of damaging your credibility with a bunch of really smart people, and if they stop trusting you, the system’s broken,”⁷⁹ C.J. said of her job in a documentary-style episode featuring her as a subject for examining the larger role of the White House press secretary.

Many of C.J.’s personality traits in her role at the White House can be linked to her upbringing. C.J. was born in Dayton, Ohio the daughter of Talmidge. Her father serves as a source of strife throughout her time in the White House, as he has entered into his declining years of old age, with Alzheimer’s Disease slowly withering away his cognitive abilities. After her mother died, her father remarried another teacher at the high school where he was the head of the math department. Her resentment at his lack of upward mobility is seen clearly in a discussion about affirmative action. She is very close to her father and it has pained her to know that she is not able to take care of him due to her professional responsibilities. Her

coworkers are aware of her tradeoff and Josh Lyman commented about it in an interview

“I know that her dad is struggling and think that’s a perfect example [of the personal cost of the job]. I mean in any other profession she would have the time...she is knowingly not doing what she knows she needs to do—to be with her father who is elderly and struggling—because she has this particular opportunity and position...I think she understands the choice she’s making and I think its also the choice her father would want her to make, but I also think it’s very difficult.”⁸⁰ She demonstrates guilt at having the opportunities she does because she has to make a conscious decision to not take good care of him.⁸¹

Yet, she has a very motherly quality; instead of directing toward her family, C.J. appears as a caretaker to the senior staff of the White House. She was an ardent defender of the causes and people that she loved, always looking out for them. The White House became her surrogate home and the people her family; She spent holidays with them because the position was so all encompassing that there was no time or energy spared to go home, and because the staff was united by a common bond. Real and fictional senior staff have said that there are few people outside the White House who can relate to the experiences they share.

Like a mother, C.J. wants to take care of those who are unable to defend themselves or who are dear to her. She was notably sympathetic to a flawed plan for a wolves-only highway that would cost a ridiculous amount of money because she wanted the main character in the special interest group’s presentation, Pluie the Wolf, to have a better chance at survival. She refuses to let the less photogenic turkey that the president did not pardon for the Thanksgiving holiday be killed and eaten, so she begs President Bartlet to pardon the turkey.⁸² She has a goldfish she

loves and remembers to feed even on the busiest days. She joins Donna Moss' efforts to try to get a bird to stop tapping the glass with its beak before hurting itself.

While these incidents may seem light-hearted, she is fierce in guarding her White House family against any harms, whether self-inflicted or external. For an ailing president, she subtly put her foot down for him to take care of himself and rest. Leo suggests that the President go back to bed, but C.J. actually makes a declarative statement that she was going to have someone take him back to bed. Even though President Bartlett refuses the help initially, it shows consistency of the caretaking qualities of C.J..

Toward the end of the episode, "The Crackpots and These Women," the concentration changes from professional to personal time. As a hard day wound down, C.J. took care to console Josh with motherly advice and encouraging him to come out to have a good time with the "family" of the White House executive staff. "come have chili, the president's asking for you." Then she tells him, "You really are sweet sometimes." Then it turns out she was mending fences for a worried Toby because he and the President had been fighting. President Bartlett says: "you are not the kid in the class with his hand up and, whatever it was you said to C.J.. You are a wise and brilliant man, Toby." Shows she felt it was important to pull the president aside and fix the problem. Keeps everything running smoothly. The wolf she wants to conserve.

C.J. has to deal with the aftermath when the major democratic supporter's son is arrested at a party where Zoey Bartlet, the president's daughter, was in attendance. Though not a terribly harmful story for the White House, C.J. rehearsed

downplaying the story and obfuscating the answer about Zoey's involvement at the part in the halls with her assistant. Then, after finding out that Zoey lied to a reporter who asked her a question on campus even though he was not allowed to be there. C.J. has to investigate whether or not she was lying.⁸³ This puts her in an uncomfortable position because the president has made it known that his children are off limits to the press. When C.J. tells the president, he does become outraged and demands to speak to the press, but C.J. tells forbids him several times and explains why:

Bartlet: C.J. put the press in the briefing room and tell them I'm coming right over."

C.J.: "No."

Bartlet: "C.J.."

C.J.: "No sir."

C.J.: "You can't talk to the press."

Bartlet: "Watch me."

C.J.: "This isn't about your daughter, it's about the first daughter and that's my job and you're not going down there. You, me, Charlie and Zoe are the only four people who know she was lying and there's no reason it doesn't need to stay that way. It's a non-story. You go down there and it's a big story."

Bartlet: "SO I just sit in my office and fume."

C.J.: "Yes, and if anybody asks you, you haven't heard anything about it."

Bartlet: "Fine."

C.J.: "Mr. President, did you know he jumped out at Zoe, Gina Tescano put him into a wall."

Bartlet: "Excellent."

C.J.: "Sir."

Bartlet: "I haven't heard anything about it."

C.J. is perpetually cleaning up other people's messes and because they are largely discovered last minute. For example, this happens when the new the new press liaison for the majority leader, Ann Stark, refuses to compromise about specifics of the post-leadership breakfast press conference. Toby has an older relationship with Ann and wants to put more serious issues on the table at the

breakfast, but Ann resists unless the conference changes to Capitol Hill. Toby says something offensive about how the White House has the votes for the Patient's Bill of Rights and agrees to the change in the conference in order to get the 15 minutes of issues discussion he's looking for. Ann Stark gives the quote to a reporter, and they ambush the White House. Toby clearly made several mistakes and created this PR blunder, and C.J. is left to clean up the mess. She never says any "I told you so" comments to the staff.⁸⁴

C.J. is also left to clean up the mess for Sam and Josh. Sam proposes moving the press briefing room across the street and, when C.J. says no and to never speak of the idea to anyone, he tells Josh to attach a question about it on the night's poll from the White House. A reporter asks C.J. whether they are considering it when another reporter tells him that he was called on it. C.J. says she will get into it, confronts Sam, who admits to attaching the question, about it and makes the press aware that it was Sam in order to teach him a lesson.⁸⁵

Josh: "You had a lot of opportunities to say I told you so and score some points with Leo today and you didn't. You're a class act. "

C.J.: "Why were you holding women's underwear before?"

Josh: "Never really needed a reason."

The character of C.J. stands as the most powerful woman in the ensemble cast in *The West Wing*, and she was the only consistent female cast member since the beginning of the show.⁸⁶

C.J. CONTRASTED TO REAL PRESS SECRETARY:

There are both physical and character discrepancies between the real West Wing atmosphere and the television program. For example, on the show the set is

smaller and people walk faster in the hallways to convey a sense of action in a largely intellectual arena. However, many of these deviations have been made for stylistic purposes and to better communicate non-visual concepts like a sense of pressure on the staffers.

Sorkin based the character of C.J. on the real life press secretary for the Clinton Administration Dee Dee Myers.

“The depth of C.J.’s character reflects not only Sorkin’s good writing, but also Myer’s keen understanding about gender dynamics and the unique struggles facing women within the White House.”⁸⁷
Sorkin collaborated with many other people in government when creating the show to ensure that the characters and events realistically depicted staffers, situations, intricacies of relationships, and other political elements of the actual White House.

One such instance is the problem of becoming too close to the president, as Robert Gibbs said upon his resignation as Barack Obama’s press secretary. The two had become too close and the professional and personal lines began to blur for Gibbs.⁸⁸ This situation was demonstrated in the *The West Wing* by other staffers, however not by C.J.. She always manages to maintain and assert her own point of view, even if it is in opposition to the president’s. Since the press secretary is almost always at the White House, past secretaries have stated that this leaves a very lonely place for him or her.

The press secretary is further isolated because he or she is the only one who really has to face the press and defend policies and decisions that the rest of the staff is responsible for. We see this on the show and in interviews with press secretaries.⁸⁹

Additionally, women in politics walk a fine line between appearing weak or too aggressive, either of which will cost them votes or approval with the public.⁹⁰ “In recent years, Myers has been outspoken about the obstacles she confronted within the White House, explaining that sexism still exists at the highest levels of power even within a liberal administration.”⁹¹ Despite Myers’ own struggles and setbacks, she conveys optimism about the increasing opportunities women have in politics. She utilized the lessons she learned as press secretary to enhance the scripts of *The West Wing* in her capacity as script advisor.⁹²

“Whether in fiction or real-life political drama, women in these roles struggle in different ways than their male counterparts.⁹³ Women in politics are often judged on a superficial level in the news.”⁹⁴ “Physical appearance is another obstacle with which political women must contend. While male political figures are also subject to media criticisms, few concentrate repeatedly on issues of appearance.”⁹⁵ “One only need look at the coverage of Hillary Clinton’s hair, clothing, and make-up during the 1992 presidential campaign and all throughout Bill Clinton’s presidency in order to witness this obsession with women’s appearance.”⁹⁶ This is similar to the White House world that Sorkin creates where women are demonized for her “radical” stances on women’s issues.⁹⁷ Despite these stereotypes, Dee Dee Myers is hopeful for women in politics because of the certain “style” women bring to communicating their ideas.⁹⁸

SOCIAL THEMES:

Careerism v. Family:

The White House, thanks to its demands on staff, was an equal opportunity destroyer of familial relationships. Leo spent so much time at the office that he completely neglected his wife, forgetting anniversaries and leaving special events for work. Toby also divorced. The president and the first lady fought over agendas and personal politics, threatening their relationship as well. Sam never married his former fiancé because he was determined to come to Washington. Josh did not have time or his political agendas conflicted with the women he dated. He would also attempt to sabotage any dates his assistant Donna would plan. C.J. just kept falling for the wrong man.

For the span of Bartlet's campaign and White House administration, the senior staff adopted one another as family. They spent holidays together instead of with their direct families. C.J.'s mannerisms and speech showed that she looked up to the President and Leo as father figures, whereas her banter with the Josh and Toby and Sam showed that she thought of them more as brothers.

It was not until she left the White House that C.J. and Danny could finally be together and start a family. But C.J. was lucky to have a child. Born in 1965, she would have been 41 years old, an age where fertility and child health becomes riskier, when the show went off of the air in 2006.

However, many careers are not as gender blind. Balancing professional success and a healthy family life has been a challenge for women since they entered the workforce. The absence of progressive legislative protection for maternity leave burdens women with the choice of one or the other, especially if having kids young permanently derails the individual's trajectory.

The journal article *The Juxtaposition of Career and Family: A Dilemma for Professional Women* explored how this problem has progressed as more women have entered the workforce and filled a greater diversity of positions.

“The major segment of the workforce-women, comprising 52%-are struggling to balance these two most important forces in their lives.”⁹⁹ The struggle is greater when third-parties, employers or others, scrutinize personal choices women make in order to find that balance. The nomination of the first female Attorney General highlighted the problem women in the public eye face. “Regardless of personal beliefs about respect for the rules, integrity, or credibility, the fact remains: Had a male nominee ever been asked about his child care arrangements? The answer is no.”¹⁰⁰

As President Bartlet said, “The things we do to women,” when referring to her resigning her medical license in order to save his political reputation.

SEXISM ROOTED IN OUR SOCIETY,

The 1990s kicked off an ongoing gender-related discussion and debate over “equitable representation of women’s views and issues” in America.¹⁰¹ “As some political scientists speculated, there was an expectation that this would serve as a turning point for women’s rights and gender equality in the United States; however, it has been far from successful. The media’s eagerness to seize upon ‘The Year of the Woman’ moniker helped contain women’s gains into just one election cycle of progress, instead of analyzing the patriarchal power structure of politics or how miniscule even ten percent of elected office-holders was.”¹⁰²

In reality, women in politics share a similar burden to the fictional ones represented in *The West Wing* scripts. They battle subtle and overt sexism, are treated professionally at times and demeaning at others and face additional professional challenges to men.”¹⁰³

The series highlights a larger problem of sexism rooted in our society, especially from organizations traditionally deemed to be “boy’s club” institutions. Since many who end up in high levels of government—including many American presidents—have attended Ivy League educational institutions, studying these schools offers great insight into the similar discrimination from individuals, some of whom are likely to go into politics and rise through the ranks, at a younger age. Perhaps because of this immaturity or a sense of upper class entitlement or a need to conform and prove oneself to classmates or because disciplinary action is at the discretion of individual private institutions rather than public service workplace codes of behavior, overt expressions of sexism have been seen on college campuses.

This was especially true in 1969 and the early 1970s as women began entering these Ivy universities as full-time undergraduates. Female classmates from the early years talked at a recent Yale University reunion of protests by male students and professors refusing to teach classes containing women. They spoke of a fear of sexual crimes against them and pointed toward the gate at Vanderbilt, a dormitory hall on the Freshman Campus, and recounted how it used to be locked at all times to men at the college.

But even today, sexism persists at Yale in both obvious and masked expressions. A lawsuit brought against the University for failing to comply with Title

IX regulations. If the university is found guilty of failing to provide an environment free from harassment and cannot bring the students into compliance, it stands to lose over \$500 million dollars in federal funding.¹⁰⁴ Yale has been publicly accused of refraining from disciplining students by delaying committee hearings and decisions until after students have graduated in order to preserve the school's reputation and those of the offending students. The school has also been accused of underreporting sexual crimes like rape.

The problem of a deep seeded sexism in our cultural leaves many looking toward causes and potential solutions in order to correct attitudes that society would deem misguided based on what the average individual would view as acceptable behavior. Some believe the solution lies with the products of Hollywood, with shows like *The West Wing*. "While it may not be the show's ultimate responsibility to convey a perfect, gender-neutral world of politics, Hollywood must recognize its power over the general public on female identity. Press coverage of women in public life feeds off of and reinforces the stereotypes of women that Hollywood presents, making the jobs of women even more difficult. As a result, shows like *The West Wing* have a great responsibility to the public, and to women in particular, to stretch beyond stereotypes for women." Laura Garrett, who wrote that statement in her piece analyzing gender stereotypes, said Hollywood is not doing enough for women. She felt that although he was helping to move the debate and increase societal acceptance of higher-level employment possibilities for women, Sorkin could have pushed the boundaries further. Because youth schemas have been found more malleable to popular culture images, film and television may prove an

important tool in forwarding social progress toward equality and mutual respect between men and women.

APPENDIX:

Season 1, Episode 1, "*Pilot*" (September 22, 1999)

The West Wing staffers are introduced as each learns via phone or pager that the President was in a cycling accident. Josh faces the possible loss of his job after an on-air insult of a political opponent, which Toby tries to prevent by having Josh make a personal apology. Sam's fling the previous night with Laurie, who unbeknownst to Sam is a call girl, puts him in hot water, which he compounds when ineptly lecturing a class of 4th-graders about the White House and then asking their teacher which child is Leo's daughter. Leo must deal with the fallout from Josh's blunder, as well as 137 Cuban refugees who escaped on rafts and are seeking asylum. The president walks in during Josh's apology, recites the First Commandment, and lambastes three Christian pols for not denouncing a fringe group.

Season 1, Episode 2, "*Post Hoc, Ergo Propter Hoc*" (September 29, 1999)

Josh trumps a potential Democratic challenger in a masterful political move and then hires the challenger's chief of staff and ex-girlfriend Mandy Hampton. Toby tries to warn Sam away from his friendship with the call girl, but to Toby's horror, Sam seems intent on reforming her. C.J. tries to spin the latest clash between President Bartlet and Vice President Hoynes. After an American plane is shot down carrying Bartlet's physician, Bartlet's response leaves Leo worried about the President's response.

Season 1, Episode 3, "*A Proportional Response*" (October 6, 1999)

After being offered "a proportional response" to the Syrian military's downing of a U.S. military plane on a medical mission (and carrying his newly named personal physician), the president demands an option that will have greater impact. Leo gradually must talk him down, while Bartlet snipes at everyone, including Abby. The president ultimately agrees to the initial option, but is not happy about it. Charlie Young is introduced as an applicant for a messenger job whom Josh decides to hire as Bartlet's personal aide (note: he mentions being sent to Josh by Mrs. De La Guardia, who is later introduced in season four as Debbie Fiderer, who becomes Mrs. Landingham's replacement).

Season 1, Episode 4, "*Five Votes Down*" (October 13, 1999)

When an admittedly weak gun-control bill the White House has been backing turns out to be five votes short of House passage, Josh makes deals and threats to several Democratic reps, while Leo appeals to Hoynes for help. Elsewhere, while working the bill, Leo misses his anniversary, which he tries in vain to atone for, but eventually his wife Jenny decides to leave him.

Season 1, Episode 5, "*The Crackpots and These Women*" (October 20, 1999)

On the series' first "Big Block of Cheese" Day (nicknamed "Total Crackpot Day" by Josh), staffers meet with reps of various organizations causes, e.g., C.J. hosts a group that wants \$900 million for a "wolves only" highway. The president has everyone to the residence for a homemade chili party, we learn about Mrs. Landingham's past,

and Zoey is introduced to the group, including Charlie, for whom the intro soon becomes fateful (recurring romantic relationship throughout the series).

Season 1, Episode 6, "*Mr. Willis of Ohio*" (November 3, 1999)

In the first of several episodes throughout the series' run that portrays ordinary Americans and how they interact with and ultimately affect the W.H., an Ohio middle school social studies teacher, a widow who has recently filled the brief remaining term of his late wife in the House, joins two other reps to meet with Toby and Mandy about changes to unfair rules in the U.S. Census written into the latest federal budget. The other two, career politicians, are completely resistant to the changes, but Mr. Willis is swayed by a potent argument Toby makes regarding "strict constructionism" (generally conservative and libertarian belief that the U.S. Constitution is not a living document, and must be followed as written, unless officially amended through standard 38-state ratification) and the 14th Amendment. Toby is impressed with the man and his open-mindedness. Elsewhere, Sam tutors C.J. on the finer points of the census. Late in the episode, the staff meets for a late-night poker party.

Season 1, Episode 7, "*The State Dinner*" (November 10, 1999)

While preparing for (and enduring) a state dinner for the newly-elected president of Indonesia, staff deal with a multitude of other problems: Josh and Mandy argue over the best way to handle an FBI standoff with militants in Idaho; Leo (and eventually Bartlet) intervenes in a negotiations between the Teamsters Union and national reps for the trucking industry; Toby tries to convince an Indonesian cabinet member to release a friend of his, an activist or incites anti-government protests, from prison; Sam witnesses Laurie at work as a call girl, serving as the state dinner date for a big fund raiser; and a pre-season hurricane initially threatens the Atlantic Coast, and then moves out to sea, where it puts an entire naval fleet in peril.

Season 1, Episode 8, "*Enemies*" (November 17, 1999)

A crucial banking bill is at risk when political rivals of environmentally sensitive President Bartlet attach a land-use rider to it that would allow strip-mining some of the Montana wilderness. C.J. tries to stamp out rumors that the Chief Executive chastised the Vice President during a cabinet meeting. An overworked Leo isn't too keen on his independent daughter Mallory dating the handsome Sam. C.J. continues to fend-off the romantic charms of a perceptive reporter with a knack for sniffing out juicy stories. Former lovers Mandy and Josh clash over the administration's attempt to jettison the land-use rider that might also ruin passage of the more important banking bill.

Season 1, Episode 9, "*The Short List*" (November 24, 1999)

When a Supreme Court justice retires, President Bartlet has a golden opportunity to impact the court's composition by nominating a favorite judge but when further study reveals the candidate's conflicting ideology, the President might change his mind and opt for another judge. In addition, a headline seeking congressman on the

House Government Oversight Committee accuses the White House staff of substance abuse -- a dicey issue for one important member.

Season 1, Episode 10, "*In Excelsis Deo*" (December 15, 1999)

When a homeless veteran dies on the National Mall and his body remains uncollected for hours, Toby becomes fixated on getting him a proper burial.

Season 1, Episode 11, "*Lord John Marbury*" (January 5, 2000)

When India sends troops across the border into Kashmir, President Bartlett calls for a British former ambassador to India to help out - over Leo's strong objections.

Season 1, Episode 12, "*He Shall, from Time to Time...*" (January 12, 2000)

When the President collapses on the eve of his State of the Union, it's diagnosed as the flu. But when the First Lady cancels a trip and rushes home to look after him, Leo suspects the first family is hiding something about Bartlett's medical condition.

Season 1, Episode 13, "*Take Out the Trash Day*" (January 26, 2000)

In preparation for the Friday night briefing for the Saturday papers and news broadcasts -- nicknamed "take out the trash day" because it disposes of all the stories the White House doesn't want heavy coverage on, and because Saturday is the least read paper of the week -- the staff take on a variety of chores: C.J. prepares to meet with the family of a Matthew Shepard-type victim of murder just because he was gay, and discovers something unexpected about the young man's reticent father; Josh and Sam contend with an angry Republican house committee leader who wants to make a deal to avoid public hearings on Leo's alcoholism; the president must read and wince through a graphic report on sex education in public schools; Danny pesters C.J. about an aide to the v.p. living on high off of taxpayer dollars.

Season 1, Episode 14, "*Take This Sabbath Day*" (February 9, 2000)

A drug dealer's appeal of the federal death penalty is rejected by the Supreme Court, which upholds the death sentence with execution scheduled for the following Monday. One of the defense lawyers on the case is Sam's old high school bully, and he appeals directly to Sam to involve the president. During a weekend in which he was supposed to be in a yacht race, Sam opts to stay at the W.H. and try to convince his fellow staffers and ultimately Bartlett that the president should commute the sentence. Meanwhile Josh, after a night of heavy drinking at a bachelor party, meets congressional campaign manager Joey Lucas while is hung over. She assails him for having the DNC cut off funding for her candidate, but the decision was deliberate, as the W.H. likes the conservative nutjob currently holding the Calif. seat. Opinions on the death penalty are exchanged throughout the weekend, including those of Quaker Joey Lucas and Toby's rabbi, and Bartlett winds up calling both the Pope and his old parish priest from N.H. for counsel.

Season 1, Episode 15, "*Celestial Navigation*" (February 16, 2000)

In a lecture at Georgetown, Josh recalls the previous week at the White House,

during which he replaced a dentally impaired C.J. in the press room and gave a memorably disastrous briefing, responding to a reporter's question (sarcastically, although taken quite seriously) that the White House had a secret plan to fight inflation. Meanwhile, he's intermittently on the phone with Toby and Sam, who have flown to Connecticut and are now lost in a rental car on the Connecticut Turnpike. They've gone on critical business: the president's nominee for the Supreme Court, Roberto Mendoza, was pulled over by the local police for "driving while Hispanic" and refused to take a drunk test, so he was incarcerated. Toby has to talk the judge down from making a big public issue of his arrest by fighting the charges in court.

Season 1, Episode 16, "20 Hours in L.A." (February 23, 2000)

The President meets Zoey's new bodyguard on a 20-hour trip to California; Josh tries to keep a fund raiser from being canceled; Leo needs the VP to break a 50-50 tie in the Senate.

Season 1, Episode 17, "*The White House Pro-Am*" (March 22, 2000)

When the Federal Reserve Chairman dies, Bartlet must quickly choose a successor in order to avoid a financial chaos. However, he is reluctant to pick the obvious choice for Fed Chair, who used to be Abby's boyfriend. The matter is worsened when Danny Concanon receives a quote from the first lady saying she supports her ex-boyfriend, leaving Bartlett more irate. Meanwhile, Josh and Toby are courting congressman in order to get more votes for a bill they already won. However, a congresswoman, who felt 'betrayed' by Abby, poses a threat to the bill.

Season 1, Episode 18, "*Six Meetings Before Lunch*" (April 5, 2000)

The morning after Mendoza's confirmation, various staff members are brought back to earth by difficult meetings.

Season 1, Episode 19, "*Let Bartlet Be Bartlet*" (April 26, 2000)

The West Wing staff are feeling malaise as it seems they never get anything accomplished. Meanwhile, a leaked memo is a land mine that could embarrass the administration.

Season 1, Episode 20, "*Mandatory Minimums*" (May 3, 2000)

A newly energized administration prepares to take on soft money, increase addiction treatment, and remove mandatory minimum sentencing.

Season 1, Episode 21, "*Lies, Damn Lies and Statistics*" (May 10, 2000)

The staff waits for a poll to tell them if their new, activist policies are moving them in the right direction. C.J. feels like her opinions are being discounted.

Season 1, Episode 22, "*What Kind of Day Has It Been?*" (May 17, 2000)

A stealth fighter is shot down over Iraq, leading to Bartlet ordering a military rescue as Toby worries about his brother trapped on a space shuttle orbiting the Earth. C.J. deals with the ramifications of misleading the press about the rescue as the staff

prepares for a town hall meeting that night. The town hall meeting goes well until the President leaves...and shots ring out.

Season 2, Episode 1, *"In the Shadow of Two Gunmen: Part 1"* (October 4, 2000)
The President is rushed to hospital following a shooting; staffers field questions on protection measures and executive authority. Flashbacks show how key staff members joined the Bartlet campaign.

Season 2, Episode 2, *"In the Shadow of Two Gunmen: Part 2"* (October 4, 2000)
A suspect in the presidential shooting is caught; staffers anxious await news on Bartlet and Josh's injuries; flashbacks show how C.J. and Donna joined Bartlet's campaign.

Season 2, Episode 3, *"The Midterms"* (October 18, 2000)
With the midterm elections coming up, Toby looks for a way to stop hate groups; Charlie and Zoey decide whether to continue their relationship; President Bartlet discovers the egg cream and is concerned about an ultra-right-wing candidate running for school board in his old district in New Hampshire; and Sam is asked to put White House help behind an old friend running for Congress. This episode includes the President's confrontation with a right-wing radio talk show host using a famous list of modern applications of Biblical laws. Oh, yes, and psychics at Cal Tech and the Fermi National Accelerator Lab ...

Season 2, Episode 4, *"In This White House"* (October 25, 2000)
After a Republican commentator trounces Sam on television, President Bartlett decides to hire her over the objections of the staff. Josh and Toby mediate a conference between U.S. drug companies and an African President whose country is dying of AIDS

Season 2, Episode 5, *"And It's Surely to Their Credit"* (November 1, 2000)
Sam helps Josh battle his health insurance company; Ainsley Hayes encounters her firebrand boss and hostile colleagues; Abby gives the President some good news about his health; C.J. discovers a retiring General intends to publicly criticize the president.

Season 2, Episode 6, *"The Lame Duck Congress"* (November 8, 2000)
The administration considers recalling Congress to pass a nuclear test ban treaty; a Ukrainian politician arrives unannounced at the White House; Sam reluctantly asks Ainsley to summarize a position paper; C.J.'s personal and professional relationship with Danny becomes more complex.

Season 2, Episode 7, *"The Portland Trip"* (November 15, 2000)
C.J. joins the President on a flight to Portland after a wisecrack about Notre Dame; Josh seeks to defeat an anti-gay marriage bill; Sam wants to rewrite an education speech; an oil tanker appears to be violating UN sanctions; Josh teases Donna over her dating record.

Season 2, Episode 8, "*Shibboleth*" (November 22, 2000)

Dozens of Chinese stowaways are discovered in a container ship in California; Toby looks to pick a fight over school prayer with a recess appointment; Thanksgiving at the White House sees C.J. in charge of turkeys and Charlie looking for the ultimate carving knife.

Season 2, Episode 9, "*Galileo*" (November 29, 2000)

The President and NASA plan a TV event for a probe's landing on Mars; satellite photographs show a suspicious-looking fire in Russia; Leo asks Toby and Josh to decide on the next postage stamp; Sam and C.J. have personal reasons for not wanting to accompany the President to a concert.

Season 2, Episode 10, "*Noël*" (December 20, 2000)

Josh speaks to a psychiatrist about the events of the last three weeks: Toby hired musicians for the foyer, an Air Force pilot disobeyed orders, Yo-Yo Ma performed at the White House, and Josh managed to cut his hand quite badly.

Season 2, Episode 11, "*The Leadership Breakfast*" (January 10, 2001)

Toby wants to use a bipartisan breakfast to discuss real issues instead of making it a staged event; Sam floats the idea of moving the press room across the street; Leo wants Josh to apologize to a columnist on his behalf; Leo and Toby realize they need to start thinking about reelection.

Season 2, Episode 12, "*The Drop In*" (January 24, 2001)

Sam meticulously prepares a speech for the President to give to the environmental lobby, but Toby wants to sneak in some criticism of their failure to condemn environmental terrorism. Leo tries to convince the President to support his pet project - a missile defense shield - despite its continued failure to produce results, and the fact that it likely contravenes an anti-ballistic missile treaty. Several countries including Great Britain have sent new ambassadors to Washington to be recognized by the White House. C.J. travels to New York on a delicate mission to ask for a political favor from a comedian.

Season 2, Episode 13, "*Bartlett's Third State of the Union*" (February 7, 2001)

While a live TV show is broadcast from the West Wing following the State of the Union, the staff must covertly deal with a hostage situation in Columbia. C.J. learns that a special guest at the state of the union has a black mark on his record that could taint the administration. Ainsley Hayes is afraid to meet the President in person.

Season 2, Episode 14, "*The War at Home*" (February 14, 2001)

President Bartlett is fighting a war on two fronts as he tries to rescue hostages in Colombia and deal with explaining to his wife why he's breaking his word to her by running for a 2nd term.

Season 2, Episode 15, "*Ellie*" (February 21, 2001)

The surgeon general makes some controversial comments about marijuana, leading to an attack by family values groups and an unsolicited comment by Bartlet's middle daughter, Ellie, to Danny Concannon that her father wouldn't fire the s.g. The president summons Ellie from med school in Baltimore to the W.H., and we learn that she, unlike her parents and sisters, is shy and reticent, and has always felt like the family outcast in Jed's eyes. Elsewhere, Sam gives a visiting movie producer a verbal lynching for publicly calling the president a coward after Charlie turns down a W.H. screening of his salacious new film.

Season 2, Episode 16, "Somebody's Going to Emergency, Somebody's Going to Jail" (February 28, 2001)

On this year's "Big Block of Cheese Day", a college friend of Donna's asks Sam to help her get her late grandfather, accused of bring a Communist spy inside the U.S. government, a presidential pardon; dealing with the recent revelation that his father had been having an affair for the past 27 years, Sam faces off with an F.B.I. agent, and later with Nancy McNally, over the pardon. Elsewhere, a group of cartographers completely re-educates C.J. on her perception of the globe, and one-time protester Toby, with the help of a straight-talking female security guard, speaks for the w.h. at a rally to protest against U.S. participation in the WTO and various free trade agreements.

Season 2, Episode 17, "*The Stackhouse Filibuster*" (March 14, 2001)

Josh finalizes a six billion-dollar health care that has strong support from both parties in both houses and appears to be a slam dunk for passage, but 78-year-old Senator Howard Stackhouse pulls a last-minute surprise: he wants money added for autism research or he'll filibuster. Thinking it's just a bluff, Josh blows off the senator, who then filibusters for more than eight hours while the w.w. staff waits desperately to begin their weekend, with the episode unfolding as staffers write e-mails to family members describing the evening's action. Elsewhere, Sam tries to eliminate various costly government documents, for which he's taken to task by a very young intern.

Season 2, Episode 18, "*17 People*" (April 4, 2001)

Following the Vice-President's remarks to him, Toby realizes the truth behind the President's illness: multiple sclerosis. Toby, Leo, and Bartlet discuss the possible political implications of this if it goes public including possible jail time for the 17 people who now know about the illness. Meanwhile Sam, Josh, Donna and the rest of the staff, unaware of the illness, struggle with a speech the President is to give at the White House Correspondents Dinner.

Season 2, Episode 19, "*Bad Moon Rising*" (April 25, 2001)

President Bartlett talks to the White House Counsel about the concealment of his MS. An enraged Toby has C.J. grill the West Wing staff to find a leaker. Josh and Donna spar over a financial bailout of Mexico.

Season 2, Episode 20, *"The Fall's Gonna Kill You"* (May 2, 2001)

White House Counsel Oliver Babbish interviews C.J. once she learns of the President's condition. The First Lady learns she may be legally vulnerable. Donna frets over news of a falling satellite.

Season 2, Episode 21, *"18th and Potomac"* (May 9, 2001)

With hypothetical polling numbers showing them its political suicide, staffers prepare to announce the President's condition. As they do, a military crisis flares up in Haiti and Josh faces off against two senators who are against the Government's tobacco-industry suit. But as bad as the day seems to be going, a tragedy will come from a car wreck at 18th and Potomac that will effect everything.

Season 2, Episode 22, *"Two Cathedrals"* (May 16, 2001)

As the Haitian army continues their seizure of the American embassy there, Bartlet and the staff prepare for the announcement that Bartlet has M.S. and most decide whether or not Bartlet will seek re-election. As the funeral for Mrs. Landingham takes place and the announcement draws nearer, Bartlet thinks back to his past in search of the answer to the question everyone is asking: Will he seek re-election?

Season 3

Season 3, Episode 1, *"Isaac and Ishmael"* (October 3, 2001)

The West Wing goes under lock down as a suspected terrorist is found to be working at the White House. Stuck with a group of high school students who were visiting the White House, the staffers, President Bartlet, and the First Lady all debate the issues regarding terrorism. Meanwhile, Leo sits in on the questioning of the terrorist suspect and learns a lesson about our perceptions of terrorists.

Season 3, Episode 2, *"Manchester: Part 1"* (October 10, 2001)

The staff is hunkered down in the Bartlets' hometown of Manchester, N.H., where they work with political consultants Bruno, Doug and Connie on the president's official announcement that he'll be seeking a second term; meanwhile, they all lament various W.H. events of the previous four weeks, including a huge strategic mistake by Josh, a pivotal FDA announcement scheduled for the same day as the president's speech, an ongoing battle between then president and first lady, and a major press room gaffe by C.J.

Season 3, Episode 3, *"Manchester: Part 2"* (October 17, 2001)

With the staff all bickering with one another in Manchester, especially adversarial speech writers Toby and Doug, who angrily disagree about whether Bartlet should make a public apology for lying about his MS, and with the president sniping at everyone, the second-term announcement speech is locked. Abby ultimately forgives the president for deciding to run again without discussing it with her, and

he ultimately apologizes to the staff in private for keeping his condition from them, which they expect will soon lead to a whole slew of grand jury subpoenas.

Season 3, Episode 4, "*Ways and Means*" (October 24, 2001)

Special prosecutor Clem Rollins announces the grand jury subpoenas in the case of president's failure to disclose his MS to the public, and the list includes pretty much every West Wing staffer and Bartlet family member; Sam and Connie meet with an important Latino activist from Calif. who is considering supporting a primary challenger to Bartlet; C.J. convinces everyone that the special prosecutor is too reasonable, and that the W.H. needs a "better enemy" in the investigation, prompting the staff to provoke a Congressional inquiry.

Season 3, Episode 5, "*On the Day Before*" (October 31, 2001)

While the w.h. is hosting a gala dinner for Nobel Prize winners, Leo and the president learn of a suicide bomb in an Israeli cafe that took the lives of two American students in Tel Aviv for a soccer match, and the staff attempts to manage the president's first veto, of a House bill eliminating the estate tax, and the threat of an override the same night. Sam and Toby first try to sway a contentious Dem. From Tennessee who wants a whole list of farming and ranching concessions in exchange for his vote and three proxies; after a pep talk from Leo, they devise a substitute plan that may prove even more effective, if it works. Josh takes the governor of Indiana into a private meeting to determine if the man plans to challenge Bartlet in Democratic primary. C.J. takes heat from a smarmy Dallas entertainment reporter who is in town for the Nobel dinner but winds up having to cover the veto and override vote, but after the reporter embarrasses her during a live stand-up, C.J. one ups the woman in front of the press corps. Later, Sam, Toby and Josh try to help the president decide what to say to the parents of the two murdered students.

Season 3, Episode 6, "*War Crimes*" (November 7, 2001)

After a fatal shooting in Texas, the president asks Hoynes to go down there and speak out for gun control, in spite of his history opposing it. Donna makes a gaffe in front of the Congressional committee. Leo argues with an old friend about the creation of an international war crimes tribunal.

Season 3, Episode 7, "*Gone Quiet*" (November 14, 2001)

When the military loses contact with a submarine in hostile waters, the President must choose between risking the lives of the crew and provoking North Korea. C.J. relishes the Majority Leader's flubbing of an interview. Babbish informs Abby that she is the weak link in the President's legal defense.

Season 3, Episode 8, "*The Indians in the Lobby*" (November 21, 2001)

On the day before Thanksgiving, C.J. has to deal with two Stockbridge-Munsee Indians who won't leave the lobby until they get an answer on an application their tribe submitted 15 years ago. Josh tries to arrange the extradition of an underage boy who's parents sent him to Italy after he killed his teacher. The President learns

why Abby wants to have Thanksgiving at Camp David this year, and places and anonymous call to the Butterball Hotline.

Season 3, Episode 9, "*The Women of Qumar*" (November 28, 2001)

C.J. cannot control her outrage when the US agrees to an arms sale to Qumar, a country that brutally abuses women. Josh meets with Amy Gardner, a leading women's group lobbyist. The content of a Smithsonian exhibit draws protest from a veteran's group. Leo and the President discuss options when the possibility of a Mad Cow infection strikes the US beef industry.

Season 3, Episode 10, "*Bartlet for America*" (December 12, 2001)

In an episode dotted with flashbacks, Leo and his attorney Jordon Kendall (Joanna Gleason) face a Congressional inquiry into whether the president lied to the American people regarding his MS, but this particular day of hearings concerns itself more with Abby and her secretly medicating Jed, and later with Leo's having fallen off the wagon during the campaign (a politically motivated Republican rep on the committee witnessed Leo drunk in his room three days before the nomination); we see the meeting in which Leo talked N.H. Governor Bartlet into running for president, introducing his idea, "Bartlet for America", on a cocktail napkin, which the president later frames and returns to Leo as a gift in thanks for all he's done for the president over the years; Cliff Calley, Donna's boyfriend and special counsel to the judicial oversight committee, asks the committee chair to halt the inquiry before the rep can compel Leo to admit his personal transgression; Leo asks Jordon to Xmas Eve dinner.

Season 3, Episode 11, "*H. Con-172*" (January 9, 2002)

In a private, late-night, Cliff Calley informs Leo and Jordon he has negotiated a settlement in the Congressional witch hunt over Bartlet's MS: Bartlet can accept a joint congressional censure (House Concurrent Resolution 172, or H.Con. 172); Leo initially refuses to bring it to the president, insisting it will devastate the president and affect him for the rest of his life, but he does mull it over, and consults with Josh and repeatedly with Jordon about it; Josh begins his romantic pursuit of women's issues advocate Amy Gardner, but flubs it a couple of times while she continues dating other men.

¹ Bureau of Labor Statistics, U.S. Department of Labor, *Occupational Outlook Handbook, 2010-11 Edition*, Public Relations Specialists, on the Internet at <http://www.bls.gov/oco/ocos086.htm> (visited March 19, 2011).

² "In a Gallup poll this month that asked adults whether their overall view of various sectors is negative or positive, the "advertising and public relations industry" fared better than those other businesses. One-third of respondents voiced a positive view of the advertising/pr industry (6 percent "very," 27 percent "somewhat"). Twenty-seven percent were "neutral." Twenty-five percent expressed a "somewhat negative view," while 11 percent were "very negative." (The rest didn't venture an opinion.) The numbers aren't significantly different from those yielded by last summer's edition of this annual survey." See Dolliver, Mark. "What People Think of the Ad/PR Biz. About 36% of respondents voiced a negative view." Aug 25, 2010. Accessed March 19, 2011.

http://www.adweek.com/aw/content_display/news/agency/e3iaea240932b26c23376b99d9aca84a925

³ "What People Think of the Ad/PR Biz. About 36% of respondents voiced a negative view."

⁴ O*Net info. Summary Report for: 27-3031.00 - Public Relations Specialists. Accessed March 19, 2011. <http://www.onetonline.org/link/summary/27-3031.00>

⁵ "Public Relations Defined. PRSA's Widely Accepted Definition" ©2010-11 The Public Relations Society of America, 33 Maiden Lane, 11th Fl., New York, NY 10038-5150. <http://www.prsa.org/AboutPRSA/PublicRelationsDefined/>

⁶ Hixson, Walter L. *The American Experience in World War II*. University of Akron, Ohio. Routledge, Taylor & Francis Books, Inc. New York, 2003. 292.

⁷ D.E. Alvermann, M.C. Hagood, & K.B. Williams (2001, June). Image, language, and sound: Making meaning with popular culture texts. *Reading Online*, 4(11). Available: http://www.readingonline.org/newliteracies/lit_index.asp?HREF=/newliteracies/action/alvermann/index.html

⁸ *The West Wing Priming The West Wing as Endorsement of the U.S. Presidency: Expanding the Bounds of Priming in Political Communication*
By R. Lance Holbert, Owen Pillion, David A. Tschida, Greg G. Armfield, Kelly Kinder, Kristin L. Cherry, and Amy R. Daulton

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¹⁰ Saltzman, Joe. *Frank Capra and the Image of the Journalist in American Film*. 9.

¹¹ *The West Wing*, Season 2. Episode 1.

¹² Saltzman, Joe. *Frank Capra and the Image of the Journalist in American Film*.

¹³ Sorkin, Aaron. *The West Wing*. Access.

¹⁴ Patterson, Bradley H. *To Serve the President, Continuity and Innovation in the White House Staff*. Brookings Institution Press. Washington DC. 2008.

¹⁵ Patterson, Bradley H. *The White House Staff: Inside the West Wing and Beyond*. Brookings Institution Press. Washington DC. 2000.

¹⁶ *The West Wing*, Season Episode Access.

¹⁷ *The West Wing*, Season Episode Access.

¹⁸ Presidential Press Secretaries. Adam E. Horn.

Encyclopedia of Public Relations. Ed. Robert L. Heath. Vol. 2. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Reference, 2005. p637-638. Word Count: 586.

“Twenty-six individuals, 25 men and 1 woman, have served the president of the United States in the press secretary capacity. It is widely accepted that George Ackerson was the first person whose sole responsibility was to handle press relations on behalf of the president.

Although Ackerson did not hold the official title of press secretary, President Herbert Hoover employed Ackerson in that capacity from 1929 to 1931. The title given to Ackerson and the nine men who followed him in that position was secretary to the president. James Hagerty, who handled press relations for Dwight D. Eisenhower, was the last person to hold this title; in 1956, it was dropped by legislation. As a result, Hagerty was the first person to officially hold the title of press secretary.

In the early years, the press secretary and his or her assistant primarily dealt with Washington-based print reporters and radio. But as communication technologies have evolved, the press corps covering the president has grown. Subsequently, these changes in technology have forced the Press Office staff to grow as well. Now, the White House Press Office employs several people who handle issues that deal with specific areas of the administration and whose responsibility it is to convey the “official administration position” to the press.

The White House Press Office currently falls under the jurisdiction of the White House Office of Communications, which was established by Richard M. Nixon in 1969. Stephen Early, who ran Franklin D. Roosevelt’s press office, was the first press secretary to successfully handle the press, and his success helped define the role of the press secretary for years to come. Charlie Ross, who was one of Harry Truman’s press secretaries, shared a unique relationship with Truman. They were boyhood friends growing up in Independence, Missouri; thus Ross was a true administration “insider.” Perhaps the most successful press secretary was Hagerty. He is credited with expanding the role of the press secretary and adding the element of frankness to the post. The following is a list of those individuals who have acted in the capacity of press secretary or have held that official title: George Ackerson (1929–1931),

Theodore Joslin (1931–1933), Stephen T. Early (1933–1945), Jonathan Daniels (1945), J. Leonard Reinsch (1945), Charlie G. Ross (1945–1950), Stephen T. Early (1950), Joseph H. Short (1950–1952), Roger Tubby (1952–1953), Irving Perlmeter (1952), James C. Hagerty (1953–1961), Pierre Salinger (1961–1964), George E. Reedy (1964–1965), William D. Moyers (1965–1967), George E. Christian (1967–1969), Ronald L. Ziegler (1969–1974), Jerald F. terHorst (1974), Ronald H. Nessen (1974–1977), Joseph L. Powell (1977–1981), James Brady (1981), Larry Speakes (1981–1987), Marlin Fitzwater (1987–1993), Dee Dee Myers (1993–1994), Mike McCurry (1994–1998), Joe Lockhart (1998–2001), Ari Fleischer (2001–2003), and Scott McClellan (2003–).”

¹⁹ Sorkin, Aaron. *The West Wing*. Season 1. Episode 1.

²⁰ *The West Wing*, Season Episode *Access*. Aired

Interview with former White House press secretary

²¹ Sorkin, Aaron. *The West Wing*. Season 6. Episode 5. *The Hubbert Peak*. Aired 11/17/04.

²² Janus, J.. *Gender roles, leadership and public relations*. M.A. diss., University of Missouri - Columbia, In *Dissertations & Theses: Full Text* [database on-line]; available from <http://www.proquest.com> (publication number AAT 1471427; accessed March 17, 2011).

“Women dominate public relations, making up 70 percent of its work force; however, women only fill 20 percent of the top leadership roles in major agencies. Findings show that the many factors of the employee’s overall social location (class, race, etc) trumps gender when it comes to leadership styles, mentoring relationships, gender disparity, work-life balance and hiring/promoting. Thus, according to the feminist theory of intersectionality, gender is just part of the domination matrix that contributes to a lack of women in public relations leadership.”

²³ Janus, J.. *Gender roles, leadership and public relations*. M.A. diss., University of Missouri - Columbia, In *Dissertations & Theses: Full Text* [database on-line]; available from <http://www.proquest.com> (publication number AAT 1471427; accessed March 17, 2011).

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²⁴ Fahy, Thomas Richard. *Considering Aaron Sorkin: Essays on the politics, poetics and sleight of hand in the films and television series*. North Carolina: McFarland & Company, 2005. Page 179.

p182. "Hillary Clinton: Does She Help or Hurt?" The article begins by characterizing Hillary in this way: "For some, she's an inspiring mother-attorney. Others see in her the overbearing yuppie wife from hell—a sentiment that led GOP media guru Roger Ailes to quip that 'Hillary Clinton in an apron is like Michael Dukakis in a tank.'" The media created and capitalized on an image of Hillary Clinton that stirred up much controversy in the press and one that would follow her throughout her time as first lady. In many ways, this construction of Hillary's image parallels the role Aaron Sorkin would subsequently create for the first lady of *The West Wing*.

²⁵ Fahy, Thomas Richard. *Considering Aaron Sorkin: Essays on the politics, poetics and sleight of hand in the films and television series*. North Carolina: McFarland & Company, 2005. P. 186.

"During a public speech, Myers pointed out, 'I had a smaller office, lower rank and less salary than my predecessors.' During her tenure as press secretary, she said that the power structure in the communications office prevented her from doing her job in the way subsequent press secretary, Mike McCurry, had."

²⁶ Internet Movie Database. *The West Wing*. Summary. Accessed March 7, 2011.

²⁷ *The West Wing and Depictions of the American Presidency: Expanding the Domains of Framing in Political Communication*
R. Lance Holbert; David A. Tschida; Maria Dixon; Kristin Cherry; Keli Steuber; David Airne *Communication Quarterly*, 1746-4102, Volume 53, Issue 4, 2005, Pages 505 – 522

²⁸ *The West Wing and Depictions of the American Presidency: Expanding the Domains of Framing in Political Communication*
R. Lance Holbert; David A. Tschida; Maria Dixon; Kristin Cherry; Keli Steuber; David Airne *Communication Quarterly*, 1746-4102, Volume 53, Issue 4, 2005, Pages 505 – 522

²⁹ *The West Wing*. Season 2. Episode 2.

The president and Josh have both been shot; Josh was almost killed. Yet, they have a conversation about the legal protection for the people who planned and orchestrated it.

Josh: "We sit here, we drink this beer in violation of about 47 city ordinances. Well Toby it's election night. What do you say about a government that goes out of its way to protect even the citizens that try to destroy it?"

Toby: "God bless America."

C.J.: "God bless America."

Sam: "God bless America."

³⁰ The West Wing. Season 2. Episode 1.

³¹ Fahy, Thomas Richard. *Considering Aaron Sorkin: Essays on the politics, poetics and sleight of hand in the films and television series*. North Carolina: McFarland & Company, 2005. P. 188.

Dialogue interchanged between C.J. and Leo:

C.J.: I was in with the president this morning. He mentioned that you told him that when you asked for predictions, everyone said we'd hold steady at 42.

Leo: Yeah?

C.J.: But, I didn't say that. I said we'd go up five points.

Leo: I meant in general, on average.

C.J.: Yeah.

Leo: C.J. like lopping of the score from the East German judge.

C.J.: Leo it wasn't woman's intuition. I think it's strange...

Leo: Don't read too much into it.

C.J.: I'm saying it's strange my take wasn't...

Leo: I'm saying don't read too much into it. All right?

³² Sorkin, Aaron. *The West Wing, Season 1, Episode 1*.

³³ Sorkin, Aaron. *The West Wing, Season 1, Episode 1*.

³⁴ *The West Wing, Season Episode Access*.

³⁵ *The West Wing, Season Episode Access*.

³⁶ *The West Wing, Season Episode Access*.

³⁷ *The West Wing, Season Episode Access*.

³⁸ *The West Wing, Season Episode Access*.

³⁹ *The West Wing, Season 1. Episode 13*.

⁴⁰ Fahy, Thomas Richard. *Considering Aaron Sorkin: Essays on the politics, poetics and sleight of hand in the films and television series*. North Carolina: McFarland & Company, 2005. P. 185.

"Someone who has confronted sexism in the press and in the White House firsthand is Dee Dee Myers, the youngest and also the first woman press secretary. She served in this capacity during Bill Clinton's presidential campaign and on the White House staff from 1993 to 1994. Having helped run many campaigns in the past for people such as Dianne Feinstein, Walter Mondale, and Michael Dukakis, she came to this position with substantial experience dealing with the press. However, in her official capacity in the White House, that experience would not be enough to bypass the male hierarchy within the administration."

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"During the Great Depression, Franklin Delano Roosevelt appointed the first woman to the cabinet in Frances Perkins as secretary of labor. Since then, very few women have served as cabinet members or close advisors until the last fifteen years in the Clinton and Bush administrations. Women such as Press Secretary Dee Dee Myers, Secretary of State Madeline Albright, and Attorney General Janet Reno took prominent roles in the Clinton administration, as National Security Advisor Condoleeza Rice, Secretary of the Interior Gail Norton, and Communications Director Karen Hughes in the Bush White House."

⁴⁵ Fahy, Thomas Richard. *Considering Aaron Sorkin: Essays on the politics, poetics and sleight of hand in the films and television series*. North Carolina: McFarland & Company, 2005. P. 189.

"Donna Moss (Janel Moloney) emerges as the most prominent assistant staff member, but others like Mrs. Landingham (Kathryn Joosten) and Debbie Fiderer (Lily Tomlin) as the president's secretaries all play supporting positions no less important to the happenings of the White House."

⁴⁶ Fahy, Thomas Richard. *Considering Aaron Sorkin: Essays on the politics, poetics and sleight of hand in the films and television series*. North Carolina: McFarland & Company, 2005. P. 189.

"For example, assistant Donna Moss and the First Lady's Chief of Staff Amy Gardner both play roles that cast them in sexual competition for another staff member, Josh

Lyman (Bradley Whitford). Donna also serves as a contrast for Josh and a source for witty banter when he mulls over political problems. The short-lived cast member of 'the blond and leggy fascist' Ainsley Hayes offered a unique window into potential sexual harassment issues in the White House. In the episode 'And It's Surely to Their Credit,' Ainsley experiences harassment by two of her male co-workers who dislike her aggressive demeanor. As a result, they send her a bouquet of dead flowers with a card that reads 'BITCH.' Sam Seaborn (Rob Lowe) comes to her defense by firing the two staffers while making reference to the potential for a sexual harassment suit. Sorkin displays a lifelike scene in Washington where a woman may be demonized because of certain 'unsuitable' traits for women. One of the persistent issues women face is 'the narrative, which continues to be structured around boys taking action, girls waiting for boys, and girls rescued by the boys.' Since Sam rescues her in this case, Sorkin removes any agency Ainsley's character has in dealing with this situation and avoids the larger question about sexist treatment or the language of other staff members."

⁴⁷ Fahy, Thomas Richard. *Considering Aaron Sorkin: Essays on the politics, poetics and sleight of hand in the films and television series*. North Carolina: McFarland & Company, 2005. P. 188.

Dialogue interchanged between C.J. and Leo:

C.J.: I was in with the president this morning. He mentioned that you told him that when you asked for predictions, everyone said we'd hold steady at 42.

Leo: Yeah?

C.J.: But, I didn't say that. I said we'd go up five points.

Leo: I meant in general, on average.

C.J.: Yeah.

Leo: C.J. like lopping of the score from the East German judge.

C.J.: Leo it wasn't woman's intuition. I think it's strange...

Leo: Don't read too much into it.

C.J.: I'm saying it's strange my take wasn't...

Leo: I'm saying don't read too much into it. All right?

⁴⁸ *The West Wing*, Season 1. Episode 6.

⁴⁹ *The West Wing*, Season 1. Episode 6.

⁵⁰ *The West Wing*, Season 3. Episode 8.

⁵¹ *The West Wing*. Season 1. Episode 6.

⁵² Jafonsky, Michael. THE SEOUL OLYMPICS: Gymnastics; Karolyi Cries Foul as U.S. Slips Into 4th. *The New York Times*, September 20, 1988. Accessed March 7, 2011. <http://www.nytimes.com/1988/09/20/sports/the-seoul-olympics-gymnastics-karolyi-cries-foul-as-us-slips-into-4th.html>.

"The women's team compulsory round of the Olympic gymnastics tournament ended tonight with angry accusations by Bela Karolyi, one of the American coaches,

that politics had cost the United States team half a point in the team score. Karolyi charged that the half-point deduction was made only after a judge from East Germany challenged the Americans for violating a little-used rule that forbids anyone but the performing athlete from being on the competition podium during a routine. At the time the infraction was said to have occurred, the American team was in third place, behind the Soviet Union and Rumania and just ahead of East Germany. By the end of the session, the Soviet and Rumanian teams were still leading, with 197.325 points and 196.425 points respectively. The Americans had slipped to fourth with 194.950 points, behind East Germany, which had 195.425. The deduction significantly strengthened the likelihood that East Germany would win the bronze medal when the team competition ends Wednesday.”

⁵³ The West Wing, Season 1, Episode 7.

⁵⁴ The West Wing, Multiple episodes. Goldfish was given in Season 1, Episode 9.

⁵⁵ The West Wing, Season 1, Episode 19.

⁵⁶ The West Wing, Season 1, Episode 20.

⁵⁷ The West Wing, Season 1, Episode 22.

“C.J. mislead Danny in order to mislead the Iraqi counterintelligence. Danny is mad because she called on him. She could have called on every member of the press. Danny resents it because he’s been a good supporter of it. He says he’s a seasoned journalist of 8 years in the White House for different prestigious papers. C.J. says that she is going to sleep fine having misled him, and that there are only 50 people in the world who can’t understand why she did what she did and they are all in the press briefing room.”

⁵⁸ The West Wing, Season 2. Episode 6.

⁵⁹ The West Wing, Season Episode *Access*.

⁶⁰ The West Wing. Season 1. Episode 15.

⁶¹ The West Wing. Season 1. Episode 15.

⁶² The West Wing. Season 1. Episode 15.

⁶³ The West Wing. Season 1. Episode 22.

C.J. is informed of the military situation of today. An F1-17 stealth fighter was shot down over foreign, restricted airspace and Leo briefs C.J. so that she is apprised of the situation and can appropriately brief the press. C.J. reminds Leo that she hadn’t had a problem lying to the press before, she had a problem with being lied to by him so that she looked like an idiot. He said he’s telling her now, as if to admit that he learned his lesson, that she can handle it, and that she’s a valued member of the team.

⁶⁴ The West Wing. Season 1. Episode 15.

⁶⁵ The West Wing. Season 3. Episode 8.

Tad: “It wasn’t because I’m a man.”

C.J.: “Well, no Simon Glazer is a man.”

Tad: “I suppose.”

C.J.: “Hey!”

Tad: “And it wasn’t because I stopped seeing you.”

C.J.: “Tad it honestly was a matter of Simon... No of course it didn’t have anything to do with.... that was 6 weeks 5 yrs ago.”

Tad: "Cause I thought you might want an explanation as to why I did."

C.J.: "Why you did what."

Tad: "Why I stopped calling you."

C.J.: "I don't need an explanation."

Tad: "Believe me, it wasn't because you were bad in bed or anything like that."

C.J.: "No I didn't think it was tad."

Tad: "I mention it because I know a lot of women who worry about that."

C.J.: "I don't."

Tad: "You're good in bed."

C.J.: "I'm great in bed. (how you doing?)"

Tad: "C.J...."

C.J.: "Tad you know I'm sorry you didn't get the job but..."

Tad: "You're really going to stand there and tell me this isn't personal."

C.J.: "I really am. "

Tad: "I think it is. I think it's personal and I think it's unprofessional and I think people are going to know about it and I think you've got a problem now."

C.J.: "I have a number of problems today and you're not close to being any of them."

⁶⁶ The West Wing, Season 1. Episode 5.

⁶⁷ Kaufman, Scott Barry, Aaron Kozbelt, Melanie Bromley, Geoffrey Miller. The Role of Creativity and Humor In Human Mate Selection. *Journal of Creative Behavior*, 41, 114-124. 2010.

⁶⁸ Internet Movie Database. The West Wing.

⁶⁹ Nairne, James S. *Psychology*. Cognitive Learning, Inc. 2009. P. 317

⁷⁰ The West Wing, Season Episode Access.

⁷¹ Kaufman, Scott Barry, Aaron Kozbelt, Melanie Bromley, Geoffrey Miller. The Role of Creativity and Humor In Human Mate Selection. *Journal of Creative Behavior*, 41, 114-124. 2010.

⁷² The West Wing, Season 2. Episode 1.

⁷³ The West Wing, Season 2. Episode 1.

⁷⁴ The West Wing. Season 2. Episode 2

⁷⁵ Fahy, Thomas Richard. Considering Aaron Sorkin: Essays on the politics, poetics and sleight of hand in the films and television series. North Carolina: McFarland & Company, 2005. P. 188.

Dialogue interchanged between C.J. and Leo:

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⁷⁶ The West Wing, Season Episode *Access*. Aired
 Interview with former White House press secretary

⁷⁷ The West Wing. Season 1. Episode 7.

⁷⁸ C.J. has oral surgery, an emergency root canal, and a cocky Joshua Lyman takes the podium of the press briefing room. He makes a mess of the briefing after he talks himself into a corner and says that the president has a secret plan to fight inflation, which C.J. must correct with the press, and he is banned from ever briefing the press again.

⁷⁹ The West Wing, Season Episode *Access*. Aired
 Interview with former White House press secretary

⁸⁰ The West Wing, Season Episode *Access*.

⁸¹ The West Wing, Season 3, Episode 10.

She says he has to watch her "bob around Air Force One," and wonders whether he would he be experiencing dementia/Alzheimer's right now if he had been able to have the life he wanted.

⁸² The West Wing, Season 3. Episode 8.

⁸³ The West Wing. Season 1. Episode 18.

⁸⁴ The West Wing. Season 2. Episode 11.

⁸⁵ The West Wing. Season 2. Episode 11.

⁸⁶ Fahy, Thomas Richard. *Considering Aaron Sorkin: Essays on the politics, poetics and sleight of hand in the films and television series*. North Carolina: McFarland & Company, 2005. P. 186.

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"As an example, Myers cites how Madeleine Albright, just out of a State Department meeting, would not hesitate to be blunt, and offer a comment like, 'That was the dumbest meeting.' Myers says that men will not offer such frank remarks, suggesting that this is a limitation on the part of men. Regardless of male or female 'style,' the playing field of politics remains a place of gender inequality but that offers some hope for improvement."

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Robert Gibbs clashed with reporters, ticked off liberals, and served as top TV pitchman for Obama. Howard Kurtz on how Gibbs' departure will change the White House—and why former press secretaries Mike McCurry and Ari Fleischer think he quit. Plus, watch video of Robert Gibbs' best moments.

Once he's liberated from the White House podium, don't expect to see a radically different style from Robert Gibbs.

"When you're making an argument to the American people who are watching television, being overly sensational or acting crazy doesn't necessarily help your argument," says Gibbs, who has compared cable news to professional wrestling. "I don't know that there's a ton I'll say or do differently." But, he says, "one of the things I can help do for the president is frame some of the policy arguments. I'll be more focused on the outside political game."

The press secretary, who announced Wednesday that he's stepping down in early February, pushed back against criticism that he was perhaps too close to Barack Obama, losing perspective in what Gibbs himself has described as a bubble.

"At times that made my job more difficult," Gibbs tells me. "Most of the time it was a huge benefit for people who covered this place. I gave those answers as someone who had extensive conversations with and understood the thinking of the president...The biggest rap you always have against the person who holds my job is that he's someone who doesn't know what's going on."

When Gibbs messed up, it was because he occasionally committed the sin of being candid—saying, for instance, that the Republicans had a real shot at taking the House, as everyone already knew.

Gibbs called the boss "a president I love and respect." But he also said he'd like to occasionally drive his young son to school.

White House spokesman Robert Gibbs announced his resignation during a press briefing in Washington, DC on January 5. (Jewel Samad, AFP / Getty Images) Press secretaries aren't supposed to do that. They're expected to bob and weave and spin—and Gibbs perfected the art of the non-answer—while not trampling the facts. But there was Gibbs last summer, unloading on the "professional left," people who wouldn't be satisfied until "we have Canadian health care and we've eliminated the Pentagon," who ought to be "drug tested" for comparing President Obama to George W. Bush. Liberals, professional and otherwise, were not amused.

The 39-year-old Alabama native, who used his slow-talking style as a defensive weapon, was a more constant presence on the tube than his predecessors. He was as much a newsmaker as a news deflector.

"Robert did the Sunday shows, the morning shows," says former Bush press secretary Ari Fleischer, who generally stayed off such programs. "You can only burn the candle at both ends for so long. There's a thrill and a rush to doing those shows," he says, but "to the degree you're out there talking on the North Lawn, you're not in meetings, you're not returning calls."

Gibbs' spottiness in returning calls and emails was a sore point with the reporters who covered him and expected to be able to reach the president's top

spokesman. But he is right that his seven-year relationship with Obama, as a Senate aide and campaign flack, greatly enhanced the value of his information—when you could reach him.

The White House had a rough time selling health care and weaving a narrative for Obama's domestic policies, and Gibbs' office bears part of the responsibility.

"I've never been to a meeting where we discussed a policy that wasn't working in the White House," Gibbs says. "We just had meetings where the policy wasn't being communicated properly. I say that somewhat tongue-in-cheek." But didn't that bug him? "You sort of get used to it," he says.

Anita Dunn, who worked with Gibbs as Obama's first communications director, agrees: "It's always easy to blame communications. Robert offered the press corps something they've never had before: someone who was in all the important meetings and had a window into the president's thinking. There's no one mold for a perfect press secretary. I recall grumbling about press secretaries who were seen as not in the loop."

Mike McCurry recalls hearing similar complaints when he was Bill Clinton's White House spokesman, occasionally prompting him to respond: "The problem is our policy. It's not working. It's not just how you sell it to the dogs if the dogs aren't eating the food." Until this week, the leading candidates for the spokesman's spot were thought to be Bill Burton, Gibbs's deputy, and Jay Carney, a veteran Time correspondent before becoming Vice President Biden's communications director. But the president's decision Thursday to tap William Daley as his new chief of staff scrambles the jets, and some close to the White House say the Chicagoan may want to fill that job with an outsider.

While clearly a presidential salesman, Gibbs sometimes functioned as the media's advocate. In November, when Indian security aides in New Delhi tried to limit the number of American reporters admitted to a session with Obama and Prime Minister Manmohan Singh, Gibbs lodged his foot in a closing door, stuck his finger in an official's face, and threatened to pull the president if access wasn't granted. And during the campaign, he privately argued one day against dispatching the press plane to Chicago, only to have reporters learn that the candidate was secretly meeting Hillary Clinton back in Washington. It was Gibbs who faced a barrage of angry questions for the campaign's deception.

Such clashes were not unusual in 2008. When Gibbs objected to Newsweek's coverage, including a cover portraying Obama as the elitist "arugula" candidate, the campaign suddenly stopped cooperating with the magazine's behind-the-scenes book project. Gibbs says he limited Newsweek's access, which was restored after reporter Evan Thomas flew to Detroit to assuage him, because the magazine was pushing what Gibbs saw as a false narrative that Obama couldn't connect with working-class voters.

As for occasional shouting matches with journalists, Gibbs later acknowledged that "there were a couple of times that I flew off the handle." He matured in office, made greater use of humor, and was more likely to carp about unfavorable stories with a sharply worded email, sometimes before dawn.

“Robert can be combative, but he is also very effective,” Dunn says. “He was candid with the press corps. When he couldn’t talk about something, he’d tell them that.”

He gradually became a new-media buff, sharing his thoughts on Twitter and even fielding questions from his 131,000 followers as @PressSec. He offered a video farewell Wednesday on the White House blog.

Gibbs was so close to Obama that campaign aides dubbed him “the Barack Whisperer.” And he made his affection clear at the briefing, calling the boss “a president I love and respect.” But he also said he’d like to occasionally drive his young son to school.

He’s hardly disappearing from the orbit; in fact, his new office is three blocks from the White House. Gibbs told me he’ll do “some informal stuff” for the nascent Obama reelection campaign “fairly immediately” and take on a formal role down the road.

Fleischer, who lasted 2 1/2 years, calls being press secretary “the ultimate burnout job.” McCurry offers a slightly different take on Gibbs’s exit:

“It’s an opportunity to put a new face at the White House podium and try some different things. He’d pretty well had it with the White House press corps, and the press corps had pretty well had it with him.” See Howard. “Robert Gibbs Resigns”

⁸⁹ Martin Sheffield quote:

Martin Sheffield (former white house press secretary): “It is a tough job, and it only gets tougher. We have a fraternity of former press secretaries and we get together as sort of a club. There are only 8 or so guys still kicking. But we all know what its like to stand out there, taking those bullets. The shrapnel is flying. While the rest of the president’s staff is back in the bunker, safe and sound, where they should be. You see there’s a loneliness in this job. A certain front line mentality that your colleagues in the rear echelon never completely understand. The West Wing. Season Episode Access.

“Even so, Hillary played into this concern over her appearance by hiring consultants to improve her image. She changed her wardrobe, lost the headbands, and experimented with a range of hairstyles, which the media often equated with the Clinton’s reliance on public opinion for their ideas. As Hillary Clinton wrote about becoming first lady, ‘I was no longer representing only myself. I was asking the American people to let me represent them in a role that has conveyed everything from glamour to motherly comfort.’”

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“Hillary Clinton was originally seen as shrewish, manipulative, and not motherly enough to be the country’s leading female role model. However, during the 1984 presidential race, the media and political opponents questioned if Geraldine Ferraro was not strong enough to make difficult military decisions precisely because she

was perceived as a maternal figure. Many first ladies have battled with gender stereotypes, as have women in other high-ranking positions at the White House.”

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“During a public speech, Myers pointed out, ‘I had a smaller office, lower rank and less salary than my predecessors.’ During her tenure as press secretary, she said that the power structure in the communications office prevented her from doing her job in the way subsequent press secretary, Mike McCurry, had.”

⁹² Fahy, Thomas Richard. *Considering Aaron Sorkin: Essays on the politics, poetics and sleight of hand in the films and television series*. North Carolina: McFarland & Company, 2005. P. 186.

“As an example, Myers cites how Madeleine Albright, just out of a State Department meeting, would not hesitate to be blunt, and offer a comment like, ‘That was the dumbest meeting.’ Myers says that men will not offer such frank remarks, suggesting that this is a limitation on the part of men. Regardless of male or female ‘style,’ the playing field of politics remains a place of gender inequality but that offers some hope for improvement.”

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“Other women within the Clinton White House grappled with a variety of internal and media-generated sexism. For example, Attorney General Janet Reno was often ridiculed for her physical appearance as being too manly or stern. *Saturday Night Live* even parodied this feature of her by casting one of their male actors to play her in a sequence of skits. The satire about Reno implied that the act of appointing women with perceived masculine traits meant that she would be domineering and somehow upset the regular hierarchical power structure within the White House.”

⁹⁹ Watkins, Regina M., Margie Herrin, & Lonnie R. McDonald. *The Juxtaposition of Career and Family: A Dilemma for Professional Women*. *Advancing Women in Leadership Journal*, Vol. 1, No 2, 1998

¹⁰⁰ Watkins, Regina M., Margie Herrin, & Lonnie R. McDonald. *The Juxtaposition of Career and Family: A Dilemma for Professional Women*. *Advancing Women in Leadership Journal*, Vol. 1, No 2, 1998

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“Percolating during the Anita Hill-Clarence Thomas Senate hearings, the country witnessed an all-male Senate Judiciary Committee grapple with the issue of sexual harassment. The stark gender disparity of no female representation on this panel galvanized women’s groups into action. Stemming from a tide of women running for elected office in 1992, the media dubbed that election cycle ‘The year of the Woman.’ From 1991 to 1993, the proportion of women in Congress increased from six to ten percent.”

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"While life in movies and television rarely reflects reality, there is a point at which Washington politics intersects with Hollywood. Both actresses and female politicians have difficulty achieving strong leading roles. If they rise to a challenge, often the media portrays them as no more than a stereotype, lacking the complexity of their male counterparts. Sorkin has created roles where talented women can shine, but he could push them even further. With so many rich, real-life examples, it is unfortunate that Aaron Sorkin has not created more depth or clout for his female characters. With impressive actresses like Allison Janney, Stockard Channing and Mary-Louise Parker, he surely had the necessary range of talent to pull this off. To Sorkin's credit, these roles provide new avenues for actresses to play more prominent individuals with great challenges, especially C.J.'s character. More female characters that exhibit the depth of C.J. would enrich the image of women in television as well as women in politics."

¹⁰⁴ Gordon, Claire. *Title IX Complaint Against Yale Has a Case*. *HuffingtonCollege*. April 1, 2011. Accessed April 1, 2011.

On March 31, 2011, the Office of Civil Rights announced an investigation of Yale University for possible violation of Title IX. 16 Yale students submitted the complaint two weeks before, arguing that Yale is a sexually hostile environment, which prevents women from participating in campus life as fully as men. If the university is found to violate Title IX, and fails to come into compliance, its federal funding will be revoked. Last year, Yale's federal funding was \$510.4 million.

Under Title IX, no educational institution that receives federal money can discriminate on the basis of sex. This discrimination can take many forms, from unequal pay and athletic funding to sexual harassment.

I was able to read a draft of the current complaint against Yale, because I was asked to sign it, and declined. Three years ago, as a director of Yale's Women's Center, I was involved in a very public (and not very popular) response to one sexist incident on campus. I didn't want to go through it again. But I thought I could use this opportunity to explain what the complaint says, and why I think the students have a case.

The Last Seven Years

Most of the Title IX Complaint documents a series of high-profile events that have taken place at Yale over the last seven years. In reverse chronological order:

Last October, 45 members and pledges of Delta Kappa Epsilon fraternity, of which George W. Bush was once president, marched through Old Campus, where most Yale freshmen live. The 15 pledges chanted "No means yes, and yes means anal!" and "My name is Jack, I'm a necrophiliac, I fuck dead women and fill them with my semen!" The 30 older men shouted "Louder!"

No disciplinary action was taken.

In September 2009, an email ranking 53 freshmen women according to "how many beers it would take to have sex with them" circulated among fraternities and athletic teams, before going viral. The "Preseason Scouting Report" classified the women, who had arrived on campus only a few days before, under the headings "sobriety," "five beers," "ten beers" and "blackout," along with an overall grade of "HIT" or "miss," and some extra colorful commentary.

One of the students responsible, it seems, was quietly reprimanded by Yale's Executive Committee (the university's formal disciplinary body, better known as Excomm). But we can't be sure, because Excomm is strictly confidential.

In January 2008, over a dozen pledges for the Zeta Psi fraternity gathered in front of the Yale Women's Center shortly after midnight and shouted "Dick, dick, dick!" One Women's Center student employee was approaching the center at the time, but intimidated by the scene, she retreated and entered through a back door. The men then took a photo of themselves holding the sign "We Love Yale Sluts," uploaded the picture to Facebook and tagged themselves.

The Women's Center employee filed a complaint to Yale's Sexual Harassment Grievance Board, which was in fact created after another Title IX Complaint against Yale three decades ago. The case was then brought to the Excomm on the lesser charges of intimidation and harassment. The men were found not guilty, and the student wasn't allowed to appeal.

In May 2007, a group of over 150 medical students signed and submitted a letter requesting a review of the school's sexual harassment and assault policies. The Working Group that resulted found that students were unaware of the resources available to them, and also believed that if they were assaulted, their case might be dismissed, held against them, or their confidentiality breached.

According to the Title IX Complaint, no changes were made to Yale's sexual harassment and assault procedures.

In 2006, fraternity brothers surrounded the Yale Women's Center and shouted that favorite, familiar refrain: "No means yes, and yes means anal!"

No disciplinary action was taken.

Every year, the Yale Women's Center participates in Take Back the Night (TBTN), a nationwide rally against sexual violence. In the evening's solemn and stirring climax, students stand in a circle and share their experiences of sexual assault, often for the first time. As part of the event, rape survivors also decorate t-shirts and display them publicly on campus. The man who raped me is still at Yale; I hurt, but I am not silenced. They are a reminder to the Yale community that sexual violence happens, and happens here, and that its victims have a voice. In 2004, women were heckled by passerbys as they told their stories to the crowd. The next day, four t-shirts disappeared. In 2005, almost half of the 48 shirts were stolen.

No disciplinary action was taken.

Is It Sexual Harassment?

According to the Office of Civil Rights, a "hostile environment" exists when "there is a pattern or practice of harassment, or if the harassment is sustained and non-trivial," particularly "if the conduct has gone on for some time, or takes place throughout the school, or if the taunts are made by a number of students." The Title IX Complaint against Yale argues, in 27-pages passionate pages, that Yale is a hostile environment for women in exactly these terms.

Under Yale's regulations, conduct qualifies as sexual harassment that "has the purpose or effect of unreasonably interfering with an individual's work or academic performance or creating an intimidating or hostile academic or work environment."

Determining sexual harassment is murky business. But when a freshman woman, returning to her dorm, must pass by a group of fraternity pledges mocking, in unison, the very idea of female consent -- it seems, to me, like her academic environment is hostile. "Feeling preyed upon by the members of my community," one wrote one student in a petition, "makes me wonder if there is really anyone who takes my feelings seriously and thinks of me as a human being and not a piece of meat."

When a freshman woman, in her first week at college, has her photo, name, hometown address, residence hall, and an analysis of her sexual attractiveness distributed to hundreds of her new classmates -- it seems, to me, like her academic environment is hostile. "I have felt less secure around campus," wrote one "scouted" freshman in the YDN.

When a student is too scared to enter the Women's Center, a declared safe space for women on campus, because a mob of drunk men are chanting "No means yes, yes means anal!" outside its front door -- I'd say her academic environment is hostile. "I felt in danger," she wrote in the YDN, "as if approaching them would undoubtedly result in verbal, if not physical, harassment."

When a rape survivor, who lets her story hang in the open air of Yale campus, finds her hand-designed t-shirt stolen the next day -- her academic environment sounds hostile to me. "A culture of denying rape," wrote one of the TBTN organizers in the YDN, "is a culture of rape acceptance."

Yale's Response:

If any of these incidents had happened in an office -- men shouting "no means yes, yes means anal!" at a woman's desk, or debating over their work email how liquored up they'd need to be to sleep with various female colleagues -- those men would be fired. But at Yale, only one harasser in any of these cases has received so much as a reprimand.

According to Title IX guidelines, when there is an incident of possible sexual harassment a school should "take prompt and effective steps reasonably calculated to end any harassment, eliminate a hostile environment if one has been created, and prevent harassment from occurring again."

The students' Title IX Complaint details how Yale has failed again and again and again to respond to cases of sexual harassment effectively. Sexual harassment has, as a result, happened again and again and again.

After the T-shirts were stolen in 2004 and 2005, the university said and did nothing. They were equally stony in the wake of the DKE chants in 2006. After the "We Love Yale Sluts" incident of 2008, however, members of the Yale Women's Center board (myself included) drafted a report to the administration, which asked for several things, including disciplinary action against Zeta Psi, and the establishment of an official Yale relationship with fraternities.

Neither of these things we're done. But Yale did give us education and resources.

The sexual harassment/assault education that takes place during Freshman Orientation was revised a year later, replacing a spunky sketch show with a more sobering 40-minute student-made film, *Relationships: Untitled*. The new program was full of good intentions, but there was no information about recourse for victims at all. Not one rape kit. Only one girl even used the word rape.

The Women's Center did get a ceiling, however, and access to a bathroom.

"By law," the Women's Center wrote in its report, "the University must institute the changes necessary to ensure that this kind of behavior does not recur." This kind of behavior recurred.

When the Preseason Scouting Report came to light the next year, a forum was held about "Sex at Yale," and the investigation of the culprits came, at least publicly, to a "dead end," although one senior seems to have been reprimanded in hushed tones. Unless the administration responds seriously, wrote one student in the YDN, a "similar act is going to happen again."

After the DKE chant last October, a group of alumni launched an online petition urging President Levin to publicly denounce the fraternity's actions. Change.org launched another petition, asking the university to discipline the fraternity. They received 2,049 and 4,564 signatures, respectively. But DKE's actions were not denounced as sexual harassment and the fraternity wasn't disciplined. Instead, Yale held a forum on "Yale's Sexual Climate." DKE's national organization prohibited Yale's chapter from further pledge activities, but lifted the ban less than a month later. Yale can't control that, because the university has no official relationship with fraternities.

In the wake of the DKE incident, Mary Miller created a Task Force on Sexual Misconduct Education and Prevention, which sent a report to the Yale community on March 2nd this year. Its main recommendations: more sexual misconduct education, more educators, more education resources, and a committee to review the education.

This task force comes in a long line of committees and councils at Yale responsible for investigating, examining, reviewing, and recommending on the subject of sexual misconduct. It's a headache just trying to trace them all. The Women's Center created its report in February 2008, built upon by the Report on Sexual Harassment and Assault Prevention Education in May 2008, developed by

the Women Faculty Forum Council Report in October 2009, and revised by the Sexual Misconduct Committee Report in July 2010. The Sexual Misconduct Committee ultimately suggested the creation of a University-wide committee (UWC) by January 2011 to handle sexual misconduct complaints.

If this bureaucratic tangle isn't mind-numbing enough, I recommend reading the report from the Sexual Misconduct Committee in full. Actually, I don't. The description of the procedures of the UWC is incredibly long and confusing. The UWC also doesn't yet exist.

I'm a fan of resources, education, and dialogue. I'm really glad the Women's Center got access to a bathroom. But forums are quickly forgotten. More resources for peer hotlines and counseling services, although critical, are only useful after women have been harassed and assaulted; they don't prevent harassment and assault from happening. And they don't answer the question: why does it happen so much?

Sexual harassment is the product of a deeper culture of misogyny that is visible in other, more subtle, ways at Yale. When large groups of Yale men act this out publicly, Yale can act dismayed, and nominally condemn it, but without actually punishing the harassers, without calling it sexual harassment, without addressing the culture that has made so many men "lapse in judgment" so many times over so many years, the school has allowed this culture to persist.

The Underreporting of Sexual Misconduct

With this message from the administration, it's not surprising that so few women report their harassment or assault. If they do, it's usually quietly resolved, and almost never ends up at Excomm. If it does, it is incredibly rare for the assailant to receive more than a reprimand -- a verbal wrist slap -- and more often than not charges are "withdrawn." In other words, they get off.

According to Excomm's annual reports, between 2007 and 2010, there were 17 cases of harassment and/or intimidation; 13 were withdrawn and 4 received reprimands. There were four cases of sexual assault; 1 was withdrawn and 3 received reprimands; and 1 case of sexual assault and rape, which was withdrawn. In this same time, 24 students were suspended, and 36 were put on probation, for cheating.

Many women don't want to take their case to Excomm, because it's daunting; women fear retaliation, or that they won't be believed. The process can be confusing, drawn-out, and the very word "Excomm" strikes fear into the average Yale heart. But no doubt many women simply don't think it's worth it, if their assailant will be reprimanded, at most.

It should be the work of advisory bodies, like the Yale Sexual Harassment Grievance board, to support women through this process. But the Title IX Complaint describes how the Grievance Board has, in fact, done the opposite, and actively discouraged women from pursuing a formal complaint.

That kind of irresponsible guidance isn't part of Yale's policy, but I'm not surprised it happens. I served on Yale's Sexual Harassment Grievance Board for a

year, and didn't receive any training until my name and number had been published as a Grievance Board contact for over six months.

We don't know how much sexual harassment and assault actually happens on any college campus. There are no accurate statistics, and speculations are always contentious. According to the Department of Justice, as many as 1 in 4 women will experience rape, or attempted rape, in their college careers. The Clery Act is one attempt to collect more accurate numbers; colleges are required to poll a wide range of authorities to collect crime data, including women centers, counseling services, and deans, and then publish the statistics in an annual report.

In 2004, a complaint was made against Yale for grossly underreporting sexual offenses under the Clery Act. It's unclear whether the U.S. Department of Education has finished its investigation, but there are still some unsettling quirks in Yale's numbers. For example, zero sexual offenses have been reported off-campus, although that's where Yale's biggest parties, and all fraternity parties, take place. This may explain why the campus sexual assault hotline recorded 24 assaults in the 2007-8 school year, but the official report listed only eight sexual offenses in 2007.

Most Yale students aren't aware of these numbers. Most Yale students don't know what the Clery Act is, because Yale doesn't tell them. Most Yale students don't know their rights under Title IX, because Yale also doesn't tell them, even though it has to under Title IX.

Title IX also requires that all schools designate an employee to coordinate any Title IX complaints, and that all students and employees are given the name and contact details of this person. Click on the link for Yale's Title IX Coordinator, however, and the website tells you: TBA.

Sex Discrimination?

In order for a hostile environment to reach the level of a Title IX violation it must be "sufficiently serious to deny or limit a student's ability to participate in or benefit from [a school's] program."

The complaint catalogs a number of individual testimonials of women who have directly suffered as a consequence of Yale's sexual environment. For confidentiality reasons, I can't repeat any of the specifics of these cases, but they include persistent harassment, depression, anxiety, fear, and thoughts of transferring. But how could you give up a big name like Yale?

Yale didn't respond to offensive chanting in 2006, which emboldened members of the same fraternity to chant the exact same words four years later, and through the heart of campus. Nothing was done when 4 t-shirts were stolen from Take Back the Night in 2004, and 20 were stolen in 2005. Fraternity brothers proudly declared their love of "Yale Sluts" in 2008, and picked out individual "Yale sluts" to "love" in an email, photos included, in 2009.

In its own published statement, Yale advises victims of sexual harassment: "Don't Delay. Don't be led into believing that if you just wait a little while this will all blow over and go away. It probably won't. The longer you delay, the more difficult it may be to resolve the problem... Silence may be misinterpreted as consent."

"Report the complaint," it says.

And women have reported it. They brought men to Excomm, for the charges to be dropped. They've written reports, and then graduated before the committee created by a committee finally published any recommendations, which are waiting to be reviewed by a committee.

It is Yale that has waited believing that it "will all blow over and go away." Yale has delayed, making it all the "more difficult to resolve the problem." It is Yale's silence that can be misinterpreted as consent.

No doubt the complaint will cause a storm on campus. No doubt many women will speak out: Yale is not a hostile environment for them. It isn't, that is, until their image, with vicious, vulgar comments, ends up in hundreds of campus inboxes -- and the Yale administration does nothing; until they're scared to enter their dorm one day, because drunk fraternity pledges are chanting sexist slurs outside the door; until they are, god forbid, assaulted, and advised not to report it; until they take it to Excomm anyway, and the perpetrator gets a "reprimand" or nothing; until they publish their story on a T-shirt, and find it stolen the next day.

The question of whether Yale is a "hostile environment" for women is not asking whether every individual woman at Yale experiences hostility, but rather whether there are acts of hostility with disturbing regularity on campus, which the administration tacitly tells students to accept, and the targets of these acts are always women. On Yale's campus, it seems, this happens in a high-profile way on average once every school year, and in private and more devastating ways, much more.

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The West Wing as Endorsement of the U.S. Presidency: Expanding the Bounds of Priming in Political Communication

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