

## **Mortification and Apodiorizo: Re-framing Apologia**

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### **Abstract**

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*Image restoration strategies and apologia have been used for years to explain how speakers engage in verbal self-defense. Kategoria has expanded our understanding of apologia when rhetors counter with an accusation to explain or justify their behavior. In recent years, however, a new tactic has emerged in apologia in which speakers admit to the transgression but then accuse the media of invading their privacy by stalking their families. Following the accusation, these speakers draw a boundary with the media and the audience regarding what the media can and cannot do. This strategy is unique because the rhetor does not attempt to create a scapegoat. The rhetor takes full responsibility for the transgression, sometimes even taunting the media to “come after me,” but then demands the media leave their family alone. This strategy of bringing a charge and drawing a boundary is absent in current image restoration literature. This essay will identify this new rhetorical posture as apodiorizo.*

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**Key Words:** Image restoration strategies, apologia, boundaries, sex scandals, apodiorizo

### **1. Introduction**

On February 19, 2010, acclaimed golfer Tiger Woods stepped to the podium at a press conference in Ponte Verde Beach, Florida, and provided the media (and thus the world) with an apology for his infidelity (Woods 2010). Throughout the course of the address, Woods engaged in many of the usual tactics of an apology: he took responsibility for his actions, apologized to his wife, apologized to everyone he had let down, and provided an explanation of his plans to address the damage created by his behavior (Ware & Linkugel 1973).

However, in the text of his statement, Woods employed a rhetorical act that transcended conventional boundaries of apologia and image restoration rhetoric. After taking full responsibility for his behavior and emphasizing that he was the guilty party, he chastised the media for following and hounding his wife and children and told reporters to leave his family alone. Most accounts of image restoration involve denial, excuses, or justification for the alleged offense (Ware & Linkugel 1973, Benoit 1995, and Ryan 1982). Woods' speech, however, engages a different strategy and he is not alone. Other notables who were accused or involved in various scandals include David Vitter, Mark Sanford, Kwayme Kilpatrick and Janay Palmer. While there are numerous other instances of public figures being involved in scandals, these five (including Woods) all defied conventional expectations of apologies.

In conventional image restoration rhetoric, the rhetor commonly accepts responsibility for his or her behavior (as Woods does in his speech).

However, these individuals take the unprecedented strategy of “turning of the tables” on the media. When rhetors attempt to restore their image by identifying a scapegoat or playing the victim, the newly accused target is then blamed in some way. For example, Woods made no attempt to deflect responsibility or to blame someone else. He admitted to having multiple affairs and to being wrong. However, by reprimanding the media, he created a different type of scapegoat. The media, while not responsible for Woods’ indiscretions, also acted unethically by speculating that his wife attacked or hurt him. Woods explained

Some people have speculated that Elin somehow hurt or attacked me on Thanksgiving night. It angers me that people would fabricate a story like that. She never hit me that night or any other night. There has never been an episode of domestic violence in our marriage ever (Woods 2010).

“They” (meaning perhaps the media and the public) violated the family’s privacy by fabricating a story, and by pointing out the press’s transgressions, Woods deflected his guilt to the media. Woods’s apologetic strategy is present in Vitter’s, Kilpatrick’s and Sanford’s as well.

Benoit (1995), drawing from Goffman (1967), identifies a situation like Woods’ in terms of “face,” or a person’s reputation. Benoit explains that maintaining a favorable reputation is a key goal of communication in image restoration rhetoric (p. 67). When a celebrity’s reputation, or face, has been threatened, “face-work” (restoring the reputation or face) must be done (Goffman, 1967, p. 27). Tiger Woods’s reputation as a global golfing role model and his reputation as a husband and father were damaged by his infidelities. Consequently, Woods had to engage rhetorical strategies that restored his tainted reputation. As Benoit (1995) explains, “Restoring or protecting one’s reputation. . . while not the only goal . . . it is one of the central goals in communication” (p. 71). The four rhetors mentioned previously utilized strategies in their apologies that differed from traditional apologia because they did not deny their infidelity; in contrast, they admitted their transgression and made no excuse for their behavior.

The unique aspect of their image restoration strategy is that they labeled the media’s behavior to be just as reprehensible as their own actions. The media had engaged in a heinous act by hounding and stalking innocent women and children. Woods accused the media of fabricating stories about his wife Elin. These accusations allowed these apologists to “save face” by bolstering their reputations as family men--as fathers who protected their wives and children. By shifting the attention from their infidelities to the transgressions of the media, these four apologists worked to restore their reputation, and that restoration influenced the process of gaining public forgiveness. Benoit (1995) explains that the rhetor’s “image or reputation is important because of its role in the influence process” (p. 69). By drawing a boundary for the media, these rhetors could appear to still be stand-up guys who protected and defended their families. The boundary might allow the public to lessen their disdain for Woods and shift that disdain to the already distrusted media. Although these rhetors were adulterers, as apologists, they could potentially restore their reputations and be influential in this process.

As noted earlier, Woods’ speech is not an isolated incident. While public figures who are accused of offensive behavior is nothing new<sup>1</sup>, image restoration strategies of rebuking the media to stay away from their families is a development that has not been examined. This apologetic strategy challenges conventional apologia and image restoration rhetoric and, thus, warrants the reframing of rhetorical tools for apologies.

The purpose of this essay, therefore, is to examine apologetic situations in which accused individuals reprimand the media for invasion of privacy. The four individuals repurposed previously identified apologetic strategies in hopes of giving the illusion of a heartfelt apology while shifting focus of the spotlight from themselves to the media. In order to advance this argument, we will begin by examining previous literature on *apologia*.

## 2. Literature Review

### 2.1 Image Restoration Strategies

Various rhetorical strategies have been identified as means of restoring a person’s image after a damaging transgression has been committed and/or alleged.

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<sup>1</sup> In politics, the list is endless and includes the likes of Bill Clinton, Larry Craig, John Edwards, Barney Frank, Jim Bates, Mark Foley and Mark Sanford. Religion has its fair share of apologies including the Catholic Church, Jimmy Swaggart, Jim Baker, and Ted Haggard. Even celebrities, notorious for their sexual indiscretions, have asked forgiveness. Marv Albert, Hugh Grant, David Letterman, and Jack Welch are just a few examples.

The type of apology best suited for a particular situation is thus determined by the alleged act. Harrell, Ware, and Linkugel (1975) explain that the, “apology is a genre distinguished by the exigence that calls it forth” (p. 246). To date, rhetors have selected an appropriate apology for the specific exigence from a variety of choices.

However, this leaves the question as to how an accused person chooses to face the accusers and speak in defense of his or her actions. Ware and Linkugel (1973), drawing from the psychologist Robert P. Abelson, identified four modes of resolution: denial, bolstering, differentiation, and transcendence (p. 275). Through these four apologetic strategies, accused individuals can potentially defend their public images and absolve themselves of guilt associated with the offensive act they are accused of committing. This may include absolution, vindication, explanation, and/or justification (p. 282).

Benoit (1995) expanded Ware and Linkugel’s list by identifying ten more apologetic strategies that accused individuals may utilize to save or repair their public images and reduce the offensiveness of their behavior. This supports Kenneth Burke’s (1970) explanation of the rhetoric of rebirth and the associated social value we have attached to it. Burke believed that accused individuals utilize discourse in an effort to affect their redemption and subsequent rebirth in society. They accomplish this in two ways: victimage and mortification. In victimage, an apologist is compelled to transfer his/her guilt to an entity that is not attached to them. If successful this transference of guilt to the new victim absolves the guilt of the apologist, purifying the apologist’s reputation and public image. In mortification, the apologists atone for their alleged crimes through a heartfelt confession and requests forgiveness in an attempt to expel the guilt and restore his/her public image. Through this process of atonement, the accused enter attempts to enter a symbolic state of redemption and or rebirth.

As a form of criticism, apologia applies to a wide variety of topics and areas such as the role of the content and form of apologia<sup>2</sup>, crisis management<sup>3</sup>, history<sup>4</sup>, international affairs<sup>5</sup>, law<sup>6</sup>, media<sup>7</sup>, organizations<sup>8</sup>, politics<sup>9</sup>, religion<sup>10</sup>, sports<sup>11</sup>, feminism<sup>12</sup>, entertainment<sup>13</sup>, and pop culture<sup>14</sup>.

A handful of studies have explored the rhetoric of rebirth in terms of apologies and image restoration. Spoel, Harris, & Henwood (2012) explored the link between healthy living and rhetorical rebirth. Hoban (1980) looked at the subjective and objective nature of rhetorical rituals. Cavin (1994) studied the use of rebirth strategies in the language of peace and in strategies to replace the scapegoat.

Ryan (1982) explained that accused individuals might utilize the apologetic situation to accuse others in an effort to vindicate or absolve themselves of some of the guilt. He identified this strategy as *kategoria* and argued for its inclusion in *apologia* as a speech set (p. 258) because it designates the accusation against the policy or the character of the individual.

*Kategoria* has been applied to a variety of areas, with politics or government as the predominate focus<sup>15</sup>. Additionally, *kategoria* has been used to examine literature<sup>16</sup>, advertising<sup>17</sup>, crisis communication<sup>18</sup>, media<sup>19</sup>, and corporations<sup>20</sup>.

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<sup>2</sup> Downey, 1993; Liska & Cronkhite, 1977; McClearey, 1983; Puri, 2009; Ryan, 1982; Villadsen, 2008; Villadsen, 2012; Walsh, 2010.

<sup>3</sup> Courtright & Hearit, 2002; Frandsen & Johansen, 2009; Jones, 2013; Marsh, 2006; Veden, 2008.

<sup>4</sup> Moran, 2003

<sup>5</sup> Edwards, 2005; Mueller, 2004; Suzuki, 2004; Voruoreanu, 2007.

<sup>6</sup> Carcasson & Aune, 2003; Dunlap, 2011; Shipley, 1995.

<sup>7</sup> Armstrong, Hallmark, & Williamson, 2005; Arrington, 2002; Borden, 2012; Cooper, 2008; Eaves, 2007; Mazer, 2013; Quinn, 2007.

<sup>8</sup> Coombs, Frandsen, Holladay, and Johansen, 2010; Duff, 2011; Hoff-Clausen, 2013; Huxman & Bruce, 1995; Janssen, 2012; Jerome, 2007; Jerome & Rowland, 2009; Muwanguzi, 2007; Ulmer, Seeger, & Sellnow, 2007.

<sup>9</sup> Gold, 1978; Grassmick, 1993; Hatch, 2006; Harrell, Ware, & Linkugel, 1975; Kramer & Olson, 2002; LaVally, 2006; Shepard, 2009; Simons, 2000; Stein, 2008; Theye, 2007; Theye, 2008; Todgewell, 2007; Wilson, 1976; Roberson & Connaughton, 2010; Neville-Shepard, 2011; Wakefield, 2007; Burgess, 2013; Sarapin, 2009.

<sup>10</sup> Wollslager, 2008; Sprunger, 2012; Cuthbertson, 2012; Sarapin, 2009.

<sup>11</sup> Jerome, 2008; Kruse, 1981; Meyer, 2007; Meyer, 2008; Paine, 2008; Smith, 2007; Fink, Borland, & Fields, 2011.

<sup>12</sup> Watt, 2012.

<sup>13</sup> Towner, 2010.

<sup>14</sup> Thomas, 2012.

<sup>15</sup> Boyer, 2011; Stein, 2007; Kelley-Romana & Westgate, 2007; Todgewell, 2007; Kramer & Olson, 2002.

Image restoration rhetorical strategies have been explored in a wide variety of categories as well. The most predominate area of application is found in examining how corporations navigate crisis management<sup>21</sup>. Additional areas of application include media<sup>22</sup>, international affairs<sup>23</sup>, religion<sup>24</sup>, content and form<sup>25</sup>, and the legal field<sup>26</sup>. Sports drew the attention of image restoration scholars when exploring the Tonya Harding controversy<sup>27</sup> and the Duke University lacrosse team scandal<sup>28</sup>. Meng and Pan (2013) examine image restoration strategies used by Kobe Bryant, Ben Roethlisberger, and Tiger Woods. Their analysis compares and contrasts the strategies the three men used, noting that Bryant and Roethlisberger had to address legal charges of sexual assault, whereas Woods did not face any legal charges. Meng and Pan, while looking at Woods address, do not address his boundary drawing with the media.

While this scholarship provides greater insight into the understanding of *apologia* and the subsequent strategies it has produced, it fails to explain accused individuals' attempts to address their accusations by admitting guilt while simultaneously creating a buffer or boundary between the public and the accused individuals. Simply identifying and categorizing these instances will not help us judge the effectiveness of this particular strategy; however, it will allow us additional insights into the apologists' mindsets and their reasons for attempting to create boundaries against the public. This analysis argues that the individuals who utilized their apology to establish boundaries did so under the guise of their apology and could only do so because of their unique scandal. They could only accomplish their goals through combining restoration strategies and utilizing them in a different manner than originally conceived. Through this new strategy, these individuals attempted to apologize for their behavior yet attack the media and the public.

### 3. Methodology

#### 3.1 Manipulating the Apologetic Situation

Apologies are not an easy form of discourse to manipulate. Apologists must be cautious when attempting to manipulate the apologetic situation in order to obtain the results they desire. To understand how the rhetors manipulated their apologetic situations, we will combine two previously identified strategies from Benoit (1995): mortification and attacking the accuser. We will illustrate how these apologists manipulated these two strategies in their respective situations in an effort to apologize publicly for their behavior while simultaneously attempting to establish boundaries and redirect the spotlight to others, whom they accuse of invading their privacy.

This new strategy is called *apodiorizo*, which means "to separate by intervening boundaries, to divide, separate, cause a division" (Thayer 1995 p. 592). This term provides a much clearer definition or explanation for what each rhetor is doing in the cases examined in this essay. By drawing the boundary, the transgressor/rhetor attempts to structure the situation in his favor. The boundary of privacy accomplishes several things. First, it raises the stasis of jurisdiction— "my sin is a private matter and does not belong in the public court." Second, the rhetor tells the public that he has a right to divide his public life from his private life. Although celebrities and politicians pay a significant price in the form of lost privacy, their status does not void them from all privacy. The stated boundary reminds the public of this.

Finally, the boundary communicates to the public that, while the rhetor is human and commits errors like any human being, he has a right to redemption and grace.

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<sup>16</sup> Ryan, 1984.

<sup>17</sup> Delbert & Benoit, 2009.

<sup>18</sup> Marsh, 2006.

<sup>19</sup> Hearit & Hearit, 2011.

<sup>20</sup> Hearit, 1996.

<sup>21</sup> Coombs & Schmidt, 2000; Cowden & Sellnow, 2002; Dardis & Haigh, 2009; Dewberry & Fox, 2012; Haigh & Brubaker, 2010; King, 2006; Sellnow, Ulmer, & Snyder, 1998.

<sup>22</sup> Bentley, 2012.

<sup>23</sup> O'Leary, 2002; Zhang & Benoit, 2004.

<sup>24</sup> Garcia, 2010; Kauffman, 2008.

<sup>25</sup> Burns & Bruner, 2000.

<sup>26</sup> Benoit & Nill, 1998.

<sup>27</sup> Benoit & Hanczor, 1994.

<sup>28</sup> Fortunato, 2008.

Previous apologia studies identified the strategy of attacking the accuser in which the apologist attempts to strategically move the spotlight from him/herself to some other party. Such attempts are often futile as the public perceives the apologist as desperate or guilty when attacking the accuser is utilized. Utilizing mortification within these accusations, however, reframes the way in the accusation is perceived. By reminding the public that he will deal with his damaged marriage privately, he simultaneously communicates that this restoration process is private and none of the public's business. He does not owe curious onlookers any insight into what reparations will take place. Additionally, by calling attention to these media intrusion, the rhetor is able to bring the issue of journalistic/media standards to the forefront of the discussion. This forces members of the media and public to acknowledge these situations of intrusion as truth and consequently, helps shift part of the guilt from the apologist to the media.

The rhetor further structures the situation by engaging in apodiorizo with the media. Besides conveying to the media that his transgression is private, the rhetor reframes himself as a strong family man. Because the media is now following and hounding his family because of his personal sins, the rhetor steps in and acts like a man who places his family first. He protects them and shields them. Again, the stasis of jurisdiction comes into play: "Do not expose my family in the public court. They do not belong there, I do."

By enacting the type of behaviors expected from a strong family man, the rhetor uses apodiorizo not only to separate the media from his family, but also to separate himself from the image of a cheating husband and father. By standing up to the media, which is commonly distrusted, the rhetor bolsters his image in the eyes of the public.

A rhetor employs apodiorizo when he, first, admits to the transgression, takes full responsibility for the action, and/or accepts all blame. Second, he makes no attempt to evade responsibility. He confesses to the act and may even admit to seeking and/or asking forgiveness from his spouse and/or family. Next, he identifies the transgression of the intended audience (in these cases, the media). Fourth, the rhetor draws a clear boundary with the intended audience (again, the media) and may even challenge this audience to attack him and not his family. The intended audience may not always be the media as the examples in this essay illustrate. Therefore, for sake of theory development, we suggest the boundary be drawn with an intended audience and not just the media. Consequently, future scholarship may apply the criteria to a variety of audiences.

In summary, this strategy originated from the strategies of mortification and attacking the accuser. The individuals in this study include Woods, Vitter, Kilpatrick, and Sanford, who all utilized apodiorizo, which is defined as an accused individual's attempt to make a public apology while simultaneously requesting or charging members of the public to stay away from his family. This gives the appearance of both sincerity and hostility. Through apodiorizo, apologists can manipulate the apologetic situation in order to provide the appearance of a humble and broken individual while simultaneously being aggressive against the public as the apologist sees fit.

### **3.2 Aggressive Apologies**

Woods, Vitter, Kilpatrick and Sanford are not unique. They all share the public exposure of infidelity. However, their similar actions and apologetic strategies deserve scholarly attention. Previous scholarship does not examine why, when an apologist attempts to delivery his or her apology, they also simultaneously choose to take an aggressive/defensive stance against the media and the public in the name of their family or personal privacy.

In his press conference, on February 19, 2010, Woods provided the media (and thus the world) with an apology for his infidelity. Throughout his address, Woods engaged in many of the usual tactics of an apology. He first apologized for his behavior, "I want to say to each of you simply and directly, I am deeply sorry for my irresponsible and selfish behavior I engaged in" (Woods 2010). He then apologized to the people he had hurt by his behavior – those in the room, family, his wife, friends, business partners, and his foundation.

After his apologies, in which he took full responsibility and emphasized that he was the wrongdoer, he spent the majority of his press conference chastising the media for fabricating stories about domestic violence and for not leaving his family alone. Woods thus engaged a rhetorical act that transcended conventional boundaries of apologia and image restoration rhetoric. Examples are prevalent throughout his speech. The first occurs when Woods made several references to his transgressions as being a conversation between him and his then-wife, Elin. "We have a lot to discuss...what we say to each other will remain between the two of us," he said, reiterating this when addressing questions of his unfaithfulness, "...as far as I'm concerned, every one of these questions and answers is a matter between Elin and me. These are issues between a husband and a wife." Woods then attacked the media for several infractions: fabrication, speculation, and harassment.

He charged them with speculating about Elin's behaviors and fabricating stories about domestic violence on her part. He then provided evidence that they had harassed his family and invaded his privacy, causing the threat of harm to his family.

I have always tried to maintain a private space to my wife and children. They have been kept separate from my sponsors, my commercial endorsements. When my children were born, we only released photographs so that the paparazzi could not chase them. However, my behavior doesn't make it right for the media to follow my two-and-a-half-year-old daughter to school and repost the school's location. They stalked out my wife and they pursued my mom. Whatever my wrongdoings, for the sake of my family, please leave my wife and kids alone (Woods, 2010).

The apologetic strategy of mortification requires apologists to be sincere and humble in the deliverance of their apology, while simultaneously expressing remorse for the wrongdoing they have caused. However, while it appears Woods' apology fits these requirements, the majority of his apology seemed unapologetic as he repeatedly lashed out against members of the media and the public. His attempt to create boundaries left those who were witness to his attack with potential feelings of defensiveness from the perceived hostility.

Mark Sanford's apology follows the same distinct pattern as Woods's. On June 24, 2009, Sanford held a press conference to address allegations that he was participating in an extramarital affair. Originally, Sanford tried to explain his absence from office with a tale of hiking the Appalachian Trail followed by claims of a secret trip to Argentina. In a rambling, non-scripted statement, Sanford admitted to having an affair and took full responsibility for his actions. He began with an apology to his family, "...let me first of all apologize to my wife Jenny and our four great boys...I've let them down in a profound way." His staff was next, "...I let them down by creating a fiction with regard to where I was going." Finally, he addressed his friends and his constituents, "I want to apologize to anybody who lives in South Carolina for the way that I let them down..." Following his apology, he began to request a boundary to be placed between his family and the rest of the world.

I would ask for – I guess I'm not deserving of indulgence, but indulgence not for me, but for Jenny [wife] and the boys. You know, there are a team of cameras and crews and all those sorts of things camped out down on Sullivan's Island [their home]. And I would just ask for a zone of privacy, if not for me, for her and the boys. As I go through this process of working through this, there are going to be some hard decisions to be made, to be dealt with. And those are probably not best dealt with through the prism of television cameras and media headlines (Sanford, 2009).

Again, we see Sanford utilize the apologetic strategy of mortification. However, he modified the apology to fit in this personal request for media boundaries. While his request was less aggressive than Woods', it still does not occur when the mortification strategy is utilized.

On January 30, 2008, Detroit Mayor Kwame Kilpatrick released a videotaped statement addressing allegations of marital infidelity, charges of corruption, and misappropriation of funds. Kilpatrick immediately began apologizing, "I want to start tonight by saying to the citizens of this great city, I'm sorry...to all, I'm sorry," and "I truly apologize to each of you individually...and to the city as a whole." He also apologized to his family, saying, "Most of all tonight, I want to make a public apology to my entire family..." Kilpatrick's apology differed from the others in this study because his wife, Clarita, not only made a statement but she also attempted to draw the first boundary, "Our family has had a very painful and intrusive week...this private matter is between me, my husband, and God. Please allow our family the space and privacy that is essential to anyone when they work through their very personal issues (Kilpatrick, 2008)." Following his wife's remarks, Kilpatrick reinforced the request for privacy and for boundaries between his family and the media,

This has been a very difficult time for my wife and my family. I would ask that from this point forward that if you have to attack someone, attack me. I would ask that you don't follow my wife. Don't film my kids going to school. I ask you not to have helicopters flying around our home. I ask that you leave them alone. I am the Mayor. I made the mistake. I am accountable (Kilpatrick, 2008).

Kilpatrick no longer attempted to alter his image but focused on protecting his family. He drew a boundary between his family and the audience – both the media and the public. In short, Kilpatrick rhetorically established a boundary or division between the media and his family. In so doing, Kilpatrick's "face" of father figure and defender of his family is maintained, despite his transgressions.

In 2007, reporters discovered a prostitution ring led by the “D.C. Madam” -- along with a ledger of current and past clients. Among them was Louisiana’s Republican Senator, David Vitter. On July 10, 2007, Vitter addressed these charges in an exclusive interview with the Associated Press. During this interview, Vitter expressed remorse and humility and apologized for his behavior, which is consistent with the strategy of mortification. He said, “This is a very serious sin in my past for which I am, of course, completely responsible.” However, Vitter then followed by indicating that his sin was between him and his family and that any further discussion of the topic would be kept only between them and not with the media. Vitter declared, “Several years ago, I asked for and received forgiveness from God and my wife in confession and marriage counseling. Out of respect for my family, I will keep my discussion of the matter there – with God and with them” (Vitter, D., 2007).

Seven days later, after stories began appearing in the media that Vitter had connections to a brothel in New Orleans, Vitter stepped to the podium again to address these new and continued allegations. This time his wife, Wendy, was by his side. Vitter noted that stories about him visiting a brothel in New Orleans were not true and criticized the media for reporting falsehoods. Vitter again apologized for his past discretions that disappointed many people before letting his wife speak. Wendy Vitter stepped to the podium and asked the media to leave her family alone. In her statement, Wendy admitted the transgression and that it was a private matter she and her husband were working on together.

You know, in almost any other marriage, this would have been a private issue between a husband and a wife — very private. Obviously, it is not here. And now I'm going to speak to you as a mother and I hope you will understand. It's been terribly hard to have the media parked on our front lawn and following us every day. And yesterday, the media was camped at our church — at our home, and at our church every day. As David returns to work in Washington, we're going to return to our life here. I would ask you very respectfully to let us continue our summer and our lives as we had planned (Vitter, W., 2007).

While David Vitter’s interview originally provided evidence of mortification, the majority of the apology, like Woods’, attempted to “save face.” First, he argued that his wife, as well as God, had accepted his apology, which apparently resolved the transgression. Then, Vitter addressed the exigence with the media, who pressed him for extended details; Vitter declared additional personal information off limits. Although he admitted to infidelity, Vitter now stepped in to protect his wife and family. He refused to discuss the matter with the press, relegating it instead to the private realm. By refusing to drag innocent family members into his public indiscretion, Vitter reclaimed his role of protective husband and father. He established a clear division with the media over what may or may not take place.

Wendy Vitter did the same thing. She acknowledged the transgressions of her husband but argued they were working through the issues. She then turned on the media and drew a boundary – asking the media to leave her family alone. She, too, established a clear division with the media over what may and may not take place.

In September 2014, professional football player Ray Rice was banned from the National Football League after videotape emerged showing him physically beating his wife, Janay. The incident took place in February of 2014 when he and his wife were only engaged. They had since married. When the tape emerged and both Ray’s team and the NFL took disciplinary action, Ray and his wife appeared before the media confronting the situation. Ray admitted to the act but explained that it was private and that he and his wife had moved on. Later that day, Janay took to Instagram and posted the following

I woke up this morning feeling like I had a horrible nightmare, feeling like I'm mourning the death of my closest friend. But to have to accept the fact that it's reality is a nightmare in itself. No one knows the pain that the media & unwanted options from the public has caused my family. To make us relive a moment in our lives that we regret every day is a horrible thing. To take something away from the man I love that he has worked his ass off for all his life just to gain ratings is horrific. "THIS IS OUR LIFE! Why don't you all get. If your intentions were to hurt us, embarrass us, make us feel alone, take all happiness away, you've succeeded on so many levels. Just know we will continue to grow & show the world what real love is! Ravensnation we love you! (Douglas 2014).

In the Rice case, it is Janay who attacks the media and the public for the invasion of privacy and then she, like Wendy Vitter, draws a boundary telling everyone to “get.” Stephen Douglas writing in *USA Today* noted, “Janay Rice posted this statement to her (private) Instagram account this morning, the day after the Baltimore Ravens released Ray Rice. It seems as though Janay Rice is blaming the media and other outsiders for hurting and embarrassing her family just to ‘gain ratings’” (Douglas 2014). In the midst of admitting the transgression, Janay identified it as a private matter that they have and will continue to address privately but the media and public need to stay out of it. While this case differs from the previous cases in regards that there is no sexual infidelity, it still illustrates both apologia and apodiorzio in action.

In these situations where the wife is involved in the apologia and apodiorizo, is the husband seen as a stronger or weaker figure when the spouse is present or absent? That is hard to determine from these examples and future research is warranted.

Utilizing the strategy of apodiorizo places apologists in an interesting situation, as it creates the potential for a hostile environment. Although the apologists show signs of remorse and sorrow in their apologies, establishing or demanding boundaries between themselves and the public, potentially negates the apology altogether. Whether the intent of this command or request is made out of personal fear or respect for the sensitivity of the situation, the apologists ultimately attempts to cast themselves as potential victims who, therefore, need protection. This is strategic because it forces the audience and all involved in the situation to reevaluate the apologies as well as their future roles vis a vis the apologists.

#### 4. Discussion

Audience’s reactions to these apologies illustrate a range of perceptions--and in many cases, criticism of the apologists. For example, *ABC’s* George Stephanopoulos claimed that Woods speech was, “...one of the most remarkable public apologies ever by a public figure,” (CBSNEWS, 2010). Rick Cerrone, a former New York Yankees public relations director thought the statement was the opposite of what an apology should look like, “What I saw was arrogance...it was basically an infomercial,” (CBSNEWS, 2010). This possibly stemmed from the fact that Woods read his statements rather than present them extemporaneously. Mark Sanford, however, delivered his apology without any notes. Yet reactions focused on his mental state and not on his actions, as Dana Milbrank of the *Washington Post* pointed out, “...it became obvious that even Mark Sanford doesn’t know where in the world Mark Sanford is” and “...Sanford had no focus as he stuttered his way through apologies” (Milbrank, 2009). In contrast, many audience members welcomed Kilpatrick’s apology. For example, Reverend Jim Holley of a Detroit congregation stated, “I’m not ready to kick him to the curb just yet,” and pointed out that Kilpatrick’s wife impressed him, “If she can say what she said tonight and live with him, I ought to be able to live with him,” (Tang, 2008). However, Detroit Councilman Kwame Kenyatta, while acknowledging that the speech was moving, believed that Kilpatrick failed to address larger issues, “He did not address the fact that he wasted money, that he lied on the stand or that he lied to the public. I still wholeheartedly believe he should resign,” (Tang, 2008). Responses to Vitter’s apology were the worst; his character was attacked because Vitter was known as a staunch social conservative. Ruth Marcus of the *Washington Post* pointed out, “...the sanctimonious family-values politician caught with his hypocrisy showing,” (Marcus, 2007). She also lambasted Vitter’s claim that his extramarital affair was a private matter and not a public one; “This isn’t just a moral transgression...it’s a fair inference that he committed a crime,” (Marcus, 2007). While Rice has chosen to stay mostly quiet on the situation and has faced criticism for it, his wife’s attack against the media received mixed reviews as well. Domestic violence experts mostly agree, that her statement is a cry for help, “This is a demonstration of power and control that an abuser has over someone...of course she’s going to apologize,” said Ruth Glen, the interim director at the National Coalition Against Domestic Violence (Kotz, 2014). Lauren Van Zandt who is the executive director of REACH agrees with Glen’s evaluation, “It’s about power and control over someone,” (Kotz, 2014). All five apologists received mixed reviews. We can infer that variety of reviews illustrate the confusion the general public had with the apologies and the subsequent request for boundaries between the apologist and the general public.

Following these apologetic situations, all four individuals had different outcomes in their lives. Woods eventually returned to professional golf; however, he lost major sponsors, and his wife eventually divorced him. The House Judiciary Committee eventually censured Sanford; however, he went on to campaign for and ultimately become Representative of South Carolina’s first congressional district. In 2013, Kwame was convicted of conspiracy, extortion, bribery and tax crimes.



He was sentenced to 28 years in prison. Vitter continued his career as a Representative and in 2014 he announced his intent to run for Governor of Louisiana. Ray is still with his wife Janay but has been banned from the NFL, and as of writing of this paper, his future is unknown at this time. This paper argues that, although each apologist was involved in scandals, the public's reaction to all five apologies illustrate the complex nature of attempting to apologize while aggressively requesting that social boundaries be constructed. While we cannot know for certain how the masses feel, three of the five apologists were able to move on, at least somewhat successfully, with their lives. Despite the aggressiveness of their apologies, the public seems to support Woods as he continues his professional career in golf while Sanford and Vitter were successful in keeping their positions and even won new political elections after the scandals were made known.

## 5. Conclusion

This essay identifies how conventional apologia strategies fall short of societal expectations when the apologist involved not only delivers an admission of guilt but also attempts to draw a boundary between the media and the apologists' privacy. When speakers draw a boundary and charge the media with boundary violations, they step outside the normal conventions of image restoration strategies. Apodiorizo explains this rhetorical event.

This study raises several questions warranting further study. Although the speaker uses apodiorizo to "save face," the only reason his family is being stalked by the media results from the speaker's transgressions. This fact is suppressed in these speeches. By re-directing attention away from his behaviors, the speaker creates the image of a person who still cares for his family and is still in a position to protect them. Yet, simultaneously, the rhetor does not negate nor deny his/her responsibility for the offending acts that had occurred. Thus still appearing apologetic and exercising mortification in an appropriate manner. Since the spouse is part of the family around whom the boundary is drawn, and the speaker's spouse is capable of speaking for herself, the question arises, what apodiorizo role does the spouse play? In just three of the cases, Kwame Kilpatrick, David Vitter, and Ray Rice did the spouse speak. The wives of Woods and Sanford were not present at their press conferences, and both marriages ended in divorce from the scandal. Vitter's spouse silently stood by him during his apology, and his marriage remains intact. Kilpatrick's situation is a little more complicated because his charges of infidelity uncovered illegal actions for which he was convicted and sent to prison. Finally, while Rice chose to remain mostly silent on the issue, his wife has been outspoken on how strong their marriage is and has criticized the NFL and media for such harsh punishment and judgments against Ray.

The focus of the inquisition is taken off the speaker and placed back upon the media. The speaker's errors are supposed to be the focus of the news conference, but the press is accused of unethical behaviors toward the family. This redirection allows the speaker to deflect some of the consequences of his behavior. Future research into this strategy is warranted to identify the specific intent of the drawing of boundaries to address rhetorical situations.

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