

GOVERNOR GEORGE ROMNEY AND THE MICHIGAN
PRESS: A STUDY OF RELATIONSHIPS, 1961-1966

Thesis for the Degree of M. A.
MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY

Michael K. Morrison

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ABSTRACT

GOVERNOR GEORGE ROMNEY AND THE MICHIGAN PRESS: A STUDY OF RELATIONSHIPS, 1961-1966

by Michael K. Morrison

This study is a descriptive analysis of the relationships between Governor George Romney of Michigan and the daily press of that state. It describes how Governor Romney's views have been received by editors and editorial writers, and analyzes his relations with reporters who regularly cover him in Lansing.

The biographical and political background of Governor Romney is explored, with special attention focused on his experience in dealing with reporters before entering political life. The political and journalistic environment in Michigan generally, and the state Capitol in particular, is outlined, and the existence of a Republican-oriented press in the state is documented.

Extensive use of newspaper clippings, personal interviews, and questionnaires was made in researching

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the study. The writer also called upon his own experience as a reporter for a short time for the Capitol bureau of Booth Newspapers, Incorporated.

Major conclusions reached as a result of the study were:

1. Governor Romney has the editorial support of the Michigan press on most issues, partly, at least, because of the Republican sympathies of Michigan newspapers.

2. The easy access they have to the Governor facilitates the work of Capitol reporters, but this advantage often is countered by factors such as Romney's complex language, inconsistency on issues, and sensitivity to criticism.

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By

Michael K. Morrison

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PREFACE

This is a study of the working relationship between Governor George Romney of Michigan and the daily press of that state. Specifically, it examines the attitudes of editors toward Governor Romney and describes the Governor's techniques and style in working with the Capitol reporters in Lansing.

The study is limited primarily to Governor Romney's relations with reporters and editors of daily newspapers in Michigan, with only incidental references to radio and television newsmen and to newspaper reporters in other states.

The study documents a predisposition on the part of Michigan editors toward the Republican party generally and Governor Romney specifically. This condition is the most important factor involved in Governor Romney's relations with the Michigan daily press and serves as the frame for this study.

The primary aim of this effort is to describe the political public relations style of a man who, at this writing, is being widely mentioned as the possible Republican nominee for President of the United States in 1968. Obviously the frame outlined above will not

apply perfectly should Governor Romney move totally from Michigan to national politics, but it is hoped the conclusions reached concerning his methods, techniques, and personal mannerisms will shed some light on how he is likely to relate to the national press.

This paper was researched between January and December, 1966. The author had the opportunity to observe Governor Romney's press relations while working as a reporter for the Capitol bureau of Booth Newspapers, Incorporated from May through August, 1966. He also worked part-time for Booth from January through April. Many of the observations in this study stem from notes taken while working for Booth.

A complete list of acknowledgments would be prohibitively long, but recognition must be extended to those whose assistance was vital. Newsmen who contributed the bulk of the information contained in this study were William Kulsea, Marion S. (Bud) Vestal, and Robert Longstaff, Booth Newspapers, Incorporated; Carl Rudow and Robert Pops, Detroit News; Roger Lane, and Tom Shawver, Detroit Free Press; Robert Voges and Al Sandner, Associated Press; and Willard Baird, Federated Publications, Incorporated. Charles Harmon, Governor Romney's press secretary, and former newsmen Don Hoenshell and James Robinson, also provided assistance.

A special word of gratitude goes to John Murray, assistant professor in the School of Journalism and my thesis adviser, who put nearly as much work into it as I did; and to Dr. W. Cameron Meyers, my academic adviser, teacher and confessor for almost five years.

The educational opportunities symbolized by this thesis would not have been possible without the inspiration and generosity of my family. My brother, Ed Morrison, gave me an example of accomplishment to follow. Pauline, my "widow" during the writing of this thesis, sacrificed to make graduate school possible. Angus and Mary Morrison, my parents, deserve a greater tribute than words here can pay.

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INTRODUCTION

The critical importance of an informed citizenry in a democracy and the role of the press in keeping the people informed have been demonstrated ad infinitum. Only aphorisms rendered by someone with the eloquence to make them timely and the stature to be heard have merit. Douglas Cater recognized this, and to set the tone for chapter x of his book, The Fourth Branch of Government, he called on Sir Winston Churchill:

A modern dictator with the resources of science at his disposal can easily lead the public on from day to day, destroying all persistency of thought and aim, so that memory is blurred by the multiplicity of daily news and judgement baffled by its perversion.¹

Fortunately, a free press stands between a potential dictator and the American people. Its independence as its birthright, this free and unfettered institution has an obligation to perform the essential function for which, with all its shortcomings, it is allowed to exist. The theory behind this social responsibility of the press is outlined by Theodore Peterson in Four Theories of the Press:

¹Winston Churchill, The Second World War, quoted in Douglass Cater, The Fourth Branch of Government (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1959), p. 170.

Freedom carries concomitant obligations; and the press, which enjoys a privileged position under our government, is obliged to be responsible to society for carrying out certain essential functions of mass communication in contemporary society. To the extent that the press recognizes its responsibilities and makes them the basis of operational policies, the libertarian system will satisfy the needs of society. To the extent that the press does not assume its responsibilities, some other agency must see that the essential functions of mass communications are carried out.²

In reality, a free press is geared not only to serve the information needs of the electorate, but also the communication needs of those within the political power structure. The press is the main instrument by which political leaders communicate with their constituents. The importance of the press in this respect is twofold; it enables them to do their jobs better by informing the electorate of issues and problems, and it affords them a tool of political self-preservation by transmitting their positions and ideas to the people.

Newspapers and other communication media have become vital instruments of political power, and any gladiator in the political arena who fails to recognize their importance is likely to leave the field on his shield.³ The growing importance of political public

²Fred S. Siebert, Theodore Peterson, and Wilbur Schramm, Four Theories of the Press (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1956), p. 74.

³Herbert Jacob and Kenneth M. Vines (eds.), Politics in the American States (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1965), p. 9.

relations has added a new facet to American politics, as explained by Neil Staebler, former Michigan Democratic State Central Committee Chairman, testifying before a 1952 Congressional committee investigating campaign costs:

I suggest to the committee that our major problem comes from the modern development of the mass media of communication. These media are expensive and grow more so all the time . . . They are not merely expensive but for them have been developed new advertising techniques requiring professional skills that are also expensive . . . If the present tendencies continue, our Federal elections will increasingly become contests not between candidates but between great advertising firms.⁴

In this study major emphasis is placed on the perspective of newspaper reporters and editors in describing how they see their working relationship with Governor Romney. A secondary emphasis is given to the perspective from which the Governor and his staff view their responsibilities to the press.

Method

The major tools used in researching this paper were: (1) interviews, (2) questionnaires, (3) newspaper clippings, (4) review of the literature, (5) personal observation.

⁴U. S., Congress, House, Special Committee on Campaign Expenditures, Hearings, Investigation of Campaign Expenditures, 82nd Cong., 2d Sess., 1952, p.12.

Most of the material comes from open-ended interviews conducted during informal press room discussions between May and September, 1966. One took place in a downtown Lansing restaurant and another at the Detroit Press Club. Charles Harmon, Governor Romney's press secretary, submitted to two formal interviews to outline the Governor's routine procedures in dealing with the press. Other members of the Governor's staff were interviewed informally. Although the interviews were generally informal, they were systematic. Answers to specific questions were sought. In all but a few cases the sources understood they would not be quoted by name. Those quoted directly were done so on non-controversial points. Off the record responses, especially by members of the governor's staff, were discouraged for fear that some might involve matters of record that the author had obtained from other sources and intended to use.

Questionnaires were used to elicit responses from members of the Capitol press corps to questions not touched upon in personal interviews, and to allow a cross section of editors and editorial writers to comment on select aspects of Governor Romney's press relations.⁵

⁵See Appendixes B and C.

Ten Capitol reporters filled out questionnaires. Not all members of the press corps were asked to fill out the questionnaires, only those who had reported on Romney for three or more years. Eight of the ten had written about Romney since 1961 when the Governor came to Lansing as a delegate to the Constitutional Convention. All but one of the respondents were Capitol reporters during previous administrations, giving them a perspective from which to comment on Governor Romney's press relations. One reporter had previously written of Governor Romney's actions as president of American Motors Corporation.

Different questionnaires were sent to the fifty-one general circulation daily newspapers in Michigan, to be filled out and returned by the editor or an editorial writer from each newspaper. These questionnaires served to determine editorial reaction toward Governor Romney and to illustrate to some degree the Republican sympathies of the Michigan press. Specific information related to the content and purpose of these questionnaires is outlined in chapter iii.

The author made extensive use of newspaper clipping books kept by the Capitol bureaus of the Detroit News⁶ and Booth Newspapers, Incorporated⁷ (listed on page 34). In both cases clippings date back three decades or more so all stories printed about Governor Romney in the Detroit News and the nine Booth papers were available. In addition, both bureaus keep separate clipping books for stories about Governor Romney. (All other clippings are filed chronologically without regard to subject.)

A review of the literature turned up little that contributed substantively to this study except as background material. Books and magazine articles

⁶In the interest of internal consistency, all newspapers cited in this thesis are referred to by city of publication and given designation, both underlined; e.g., the Detroit News. The preceding article "the" is not underlined. This is the style recommended by Elmer White, executive secretary of the Michigan Press Association. The necessity for establishing a uniform method stems from a lack of consistency among directories listing Michigan papers. In some cases there are inconsistencies between designations used by newspapers in their nameplates and those used in their mastheads. In at least one instance the form is not technically correct; the Lansing State Journal does not use the city as part of its designation.

⁷Hereinafter referred to as "the Booth bureau," or "the Booth newspapers."

served as sources for biographical information on Governor Romney and data on the political and press environment in Michigan.

Personal observations made while the author worked as a reporter for the Booth bureau were recalled in describing press conferences, routine procedures regarding press releases and announcements, and Governor Romney's techniques for answering reporters' questions.

The only research sources not mentioned above are three short telephone interviews with editors. The editors were questioned about their editorial endorsements during Governor Romney's three gubernatorial campaigns.

With few exceptions, no quotes are attributed by name to their source. However, the sources are coded by designations "a" through "k" to enable the reader to correlate responses throughout the thesis. No comments were solicited on Romney's merits as a politician, except in the case of editors and editorial writers for the specific purpose of determining how the Governor is portrayed in the editorial pages of Michigan newspapers.

Objectivity Limitations

Every person used as a source in this thesis is in some way an interested party. Some, Governor Romney's staff members and former associates, are openly partial toward the Governor. Others are his political opponents. The experiences related by Capitol reporters are, for the most part, expressed subjectively and often contain references to frustrations encountered in reporting on Governor Romney. Some questions asked necessarily involved opinion rather than documented fact. For these reasons there is a problem of complete objectivity in this thesis.

The nature of the topic defies quantitative analysis. In only a few areas is it attempted. Since this thesis is submitted as part of the requirements for a Master's degree in journalism, standards of objectivity relative to that field apply. Curtis D. MacDougall, professor in the Medill School of Journalism of Northwestern University, sums up the problem of objectivity thus:

In the first place news always will be written by human beings viewing occurrences with human eyes or hearing of them second hand with human ears. Try as hard as he may, no reporter or writer ever will be able to achieve complete objectivity and if he did, as often as not the result would not give a true picture of the happening of which he

attempted to spread intelligence.⁸

The statement describes the problem succinctly but offers no concrete guide to its solution. Bud Vestal, political writer for the Booth bureau, offered a practical yardstick in an informal discussion of journalistic ethics with the author when he remarked: "Objectivity is something we should always strive for, but honesty is more important and more easily achieved."⁹

Vestal's comment was used as guide in selecting and weighing the material incorporated into this thesis.

⁸ Curtis D. MacDougall, Interpretative Reporting (New York: Macmillan Company, 1938), p. 13.

⁹ Interview with Marion S. (Bud) Vestal, political reporter, Booth Newspapers, Inc., June 28, 1966.

CHAPTER I

GOVERNOR GEORGE ROMNEY: BIOGRAPHICAL AND POLITICAL BACKGROUND

Heritage and Early Years

George Wilcken Romney, the forty-fourth governor of Michigan,¹ was born July 8, 1907, at Colonia Dublan, a Mormon colony in the Mexican state of Chihuahua. Mormon families traditionally make an extensive study of their genealogies to arrange for baptism by proxy of their ancestors who died before the church was founded.² Romney's family traces itself back to St. George, slayer of dragons and patron saint of England. Its ranks include a sixteenth century lord mayor of London, an English carpenter alleged to have

¹State of Michigan, Office of the Secretary of State, Michigan Manual, 1963-64, p. 83. He may also be listed as the forty-first, forty-second or forty-third. The confusion is caused by the fact that two men served non-consecutive terms and another served as acting governor so much the Michigan Manual lists him as a governor.

²William J. Whalen, The Latter Day Saints in the Modern Day World (New York: John Day Co., 1964), p. 21.

invented the spoke, and George Romney, noted portrait painter and contemporary of Sir Joshua Reynolds and Thomas Gainsborough.³

Although Governor Romney's connection with the patron saint of England lacks documentation, this Mormon tradition is not taken lightly. The church recently built a \$1,704,000 storage tunnel in the side of a mountain near Salt Lake City, Utah, specifically for the protection of genealogical documents.⁴

The Michigan governor's great-grandfather, Miles Romney, came to the United States from England in 1841. A convert to the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints, he first settled in Nauvoo, Illinois, then joined the Mormon migration west in 1846. Miles and his family finally settled near St. George, Utah, where he worked as a carpenter. His third son, Miles Park Romney, took up the same trade before marrying Hannah Hood Hill in 1862. Five years later Miles Park embraced polygamy. When Congress outlawed the practice in 1885, he took his four wives and thirty children to

³Tom Mahoney, The Story of George Romney (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1960), p. 48. This is an "authorized" biography.

⁴Whalen, p. 21.

Mexico. One of the sons accompanying him was Gaskill Romney, father of the future Michigan governor.

Altogether ten Mormon colonies were founded in the late 1880's and early 1890's in northern Mexico, largely because of the influence Mormon missionaries had with Mexico's president, Porfirio Diaz. In 1895 Gaskill married Anna Amelia Pratt, the daughter of a prominent missionary. The couple settled in Colonia Dublan where George Romney, the fourth of five sons, was born. Two other children, a son and a daughter, were born later in the United States.

In 1910 a series of revolutions and counter-revolutions introduced more than a decade of violence in Mexico. No anti-Mormonism was involved, but much of the fighting occurred near Mormon colonies in the states of Chihuahua and Sonora, and various rebel bands often commandeered livestock, firearms and other supplies from the Mormons. Several thousand settlers caught up in the fighting between 1912 and 1914 returned to the United States, no longer fearful of federal prosecution for polygamy because the sect itself banned the practice in 1875.

The circumstances surrounding the return of the Romney family to the United States have been colored in some accounts. In 1912, fighting between the forces of

President Francisco I. Madero and rebel leader Jose Inez Salazar centered in Chihuahua. In July, when rebel activity near Colonia Dublan presented a direct threat to the colonists and Salazar demanded they turn over all guns and ammunition, Gaskill Romney and most other men sent their families to El Paso, Texas, by train. He remained behind for several days, sold his property to his brother-in-law, then joined his family.⁵

The Romneys were not forced to flee Mexico at gunpoint by the legendary Pancho Villa, as a number of thumbnail biographies of the Michigan governor report.⁶ Actually, the famous bandit was 600 miles away in a Mexico City prison under a death sentence. He did not have even a remote connection with the incident. In

⁵Thomas C. Romney, The Mormon Colonies in Mexico (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1938), pp. 182-200. This book, written by Governor Romney's uncle, deals in part with the exodus of Gaskill Romney and his family. It is out of print, but can be obtained on inter-library loan from the Salt Lake City Public Library.

⁶See Bill Muller, Detroit News, Jan. 14, 1962, or D. Duane Angel, "The Campaign Speaking of George Romney" (unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, Department of Speech, Purdue University, 1965), p. 18.

fact, Salazar, the rebel leader who posed the threat to the colonists, was an enemy of Villa's.⁷

The Romney family moved often in the next ten years, living in El Paso; Los Angeles; Oakley, Idaho; Salt Lake City; Rexford, Idaho; and finally, in 1921, settling permanently in Salt Lake City. Gaskill farmed in Idaho, but for most of those years and after settling in Salt Lake City, he was in the construction business. His four oldest sons were helpers in the business. George and an older brother, Miles, worked as lathers, and the Michigan governor later boasted of his talent at spitting nails.⁸

Romney attended Roosevelt Junior High School and the Latter Day Saints University High School and Junior College in Salt Lake City. The Romneys were prominent in Utah athletic circles. George played football, basketball, and baseball in high school, though with no glowing success. But among his five brothers and 237 first cousins⁹—his maternal grand-

⁷William D. Lansford, Pancho Villa (Los Angeles: Sherbourne Press, 1965), p. 276.

⁸Mahoney, p. 68.

⁹Speech by Governor George Romney before the National Press Club, Washington, D. C., March 9, 1963.

father also had four wives and thirty children -- were boxing champions and several All-American football and basketball players.

Romney's mother died in 1926 when he was preparing to go on a mission to England for his church. Mormon young men traditionally give two years to the service of the church, a custom honored by Romney's brothers, father, grandfather and great-grandfather before him.

Romney was sent to Great Britain for the next two years, spending most of the time in Glasgow. The Scots, known for their Presbyterian, whiskey-drinking ways, were not highly receptive to the dogmas of a sect that taught abstention from all stimulants. Romney's duties consisted primarily of door to door "tracting," the distribution of literature, and of speaking to groups in Glasgow and London.

The missionary years gave him an indoctrination to public speaking under trying conditions. Heckling is an inevitable part of British public oratory, and colleagues with whom he worked during the two years abroad describe him as one of the best among them in facing a hostile audience. At this time he developed the forceful, evangelistic style that characterized his speaking when he entered politics almost thirty-five

years later.¹⁰

While in England and Scotland, Romney corresponded regularly with Lenore LaFount, a Salt Lake City girl he first met in high school. She had moved with her family to Washington, D. C., in 1927 when her father was appointed by President Calvin Coolidge to the Federal Radio Commission. Romney visited the LaFounts at Christmas in 1928 on his way home to Salt Lake City to enroll at the University of Utah.

He stayed in Utah less than a year, however. He left the University of Utah after one semester and enrolled in a speedwriting course at Latter Day Saints Business College in Salt Lake City. In the autumn of 1929, Romney and his brother, Miles, moved to Washington, D. C. There George attended night classes at George Washington University and worked days as a secretary to Senator David I. Walsh, a Massachusetts Democrat. For most of the nine months he worked for Senator Walsh, a member of the Senate Finance Committee, Romney itemized aspects of the pending Hawley-Smooth tariff bill.¹¹ Lenore, meanwhile, graduated from George Washington and pursued a dramatics career, first

¹⁰Angel, p. 60.

¹¹Mahoney, p. 93.

in New York, then in Hollywood.

Romney left Senator Walsh's employ in June, 1930, and became a sales representative for the Aluminum Company of America. His first assignment was in Los Angeles, where he was reunited with Lenore. They were married July 2, 1931, in Salt Lake City. Shortly afterward, Romney was transferred to Washington where he spent the next nine years.

Business Career

Romney represented the Aluminum Wares Association as well as Alcoa in the Capital. His job did not require his testifying before congressional committees, but under present legislation he would have had to register as a lobbyist.¹² During this time he had his first extended experience with newspaper reporters. Some of his duties involved public relations chores. At this time Alcoa was under investigation by the Federal Trade Commission as a monopoly. One of Romney's public relations functions was providing information to newspapermen on the company's position. He was a member of the National Press Club, whose membership in-

¹²Ibid., p. 100.

cludes newsmen, businessmen and public relations men.¹³

After being passed over for promotion to head of the Washington office, Romney left Alcoa in 1939 and joined the Automobile Manufacturers Association (AMA), a trade association representing every leading automobile manufacturer with the exception of the Ford Motor Company. Hitler's troops were invading Poland when Romney went to work in the association's Detroit office, and the industry began to foresee a possible changeover to war production. As the war in Europe deepened, contracts for aircraft engines and other armaments began to pour into the automobile industry. The AMA became the coordinating body for these requests.¹⁴

The AMA organized the Automotive Council for War Production within a few days of Pearl Harbor. The Council was charged with coordinating the defense efforts of the entire automotive industry. Romney was named managing director of the unit in January, 1942, and general manager of the AMA the following month.

Romney's position made him a key man in coordinating the production of war materials ranging from

¹³Ibid., p. 103.

¹⁴Ibid., p. 112.

munitions to aircraft engines. Labor-management agreements were reached and negotiations with aircraft companies worked out to stipulate that the automobile industry would not continue aircraft production after the war. The war also brought such problems as car pools, baby sitters for children of working mothers, housing shortages, and regulation of retail store hours, all of which, for one reason or another, often came within the purview of the Automotive Council for War Production. By 1945, Romney had made a name for himself as an executive in the automobile industry.¹⁵

The end of the war brought equally compelling problems of reconversion, and again Romney and the Council were instrumental in producing a smooth transition. Romney remained with the AMA until 1948 when he accepted a \$30,000 a year position with Nash-Kelvinator Corporation.¹⁶ Given the title "assistant to the president," Romney was being groomed as George W. Mason's successor. His first year with the company was spent becoming familiar with its automobile and appliance operations.

¹⁵Ibid., p. 132.

¹⁶Richard C. Fuller, George Romney and Michigan (New York: Vantage Press, 1966), p. 17.

Nason was a small-car enthusiast whose original ideas for producing a compact, economical car had been interrupted by the war. Those ideas materialized in the Rambler, a small car of European design introduced in 1950. (The company had, however, produced a car by that name between 1902 and 1904.) During the next six years the model underwent major styling changes, but continued emphasis was put on producing a low-cost car with better gas mileage than other American cars.

The Rambler was not immediately successful, however, and the firm's appliance division was steadily falling behind its competition. The Kelvinator division was particularly plagued with labor problems and low employee morale, and faced the closing of its plant on Plymouth Road near Detroit unless the facility became dramatically more efficient and competitive than it had been.¹⁷

Romney, then an executive vice-president, was the company's trouble shooter at the Plymouth Road plant. He appealed directly to the employees, telling them if the plant did not begin to show a profit they would be out of jobs. Labor leaders labeled his efforts

¹⁷Newsweek, Feb. 19, 1962, p. 25.

"Romneyism," and called him "Romeo Romney" and "Lochinvar Romney."¹⁸ For more than a year the plant went through a series of strikes. In the end, the foremen agreed to leave the union and give first loyalty to the company. Labor problems subsided and productivity began to rise, but not enough to make the plant competitive in the appliance industry. Eventually it was closed and the Kelvinator operation moved to Milwaukee, Wisconsin.

Unsuccessful in taking a significant part of the automobile market away from the industry leaders, and with its appliance division far behind the leaders in that field, Nash-Kelvinator, in January, 1954, merged with another sick member of the automobile industry, the Hudson Motor Car Company. George Romney was the heir-apparent to the corporate presidency when the two firms merged to become the American Motors Corporation. The following October George W. Mason died, and Romney was elected chairman of the board of directors and named president and general manager of AMC.¹⁹

¹⁸Mahoney, p. 165.

¹⁹Ibid., p. 184.

Backed by only limited resources and faced with the necessity of putting the new corporation on its feet in a short time or seeing it go under, Romney decided to concentrate nearly all the firm's promotional efforts on the Rambler. He personally carried the company's sales pitch--economy--to the customer, appearing himself in newspaper and magazine advertisements for the car. His theme was a constant campaign against Detroit's "gas-guzzling dinosaurs."²⁰

In 1957 and 1958 a national economic recession accompanied a slump in new car sales. Unemployment rose and incomes fell. With this recession Romney's campaign against the more expensive products of his competitors caught fire. American Motors Corporation showed a profit in 1958 for the first time in its history, and Rambler replaced Pontiac for sixth place in new car sales. AMC was the only automobile company that year to achieve a sales increase over 1957.²¹ The success of the Rambler brought Romney not only state-wide but also national recognition.

²⁰Ibid., p. 25.

²¹"Will Success Spoil American Motors?" Fortune, LIX (January, 1959), pp. 97-98.

Political Career

Late in 1956, at the height of AMC's growing pains, the Detroit Board of Education asked George Romney to head a citizens advisory committee to help develop a ten-year master plan for Detroit Public Schools. At the time he not only had his AMC duties to attend to, but he also served as president (bishop) of the Detroit Stake (diocese) of the Mormon Church. He accepted the position, however, and the committee functioned for nearly two years before submitting to the board a report listing 182 recommendations.

The biggest hurdle faced by the board was passing bond issues for school expansion programs. Shortly after the committee had begun its study, Detroit voters rejected a \$33 million proposal.²² But shortly after the report had been submitted and publicized, and with 13.9 per cent of the city's labor force unemployed, the Board of Education asked the voters for \$90 million for school buildings and received it.²³

Romney entered the state political picture in 1959 as serious fiscal problems plagued state government. Earmarking provisions of a fifty-year-old state con-

²²Detroit Free Press, April 2, 1957.

²³Detroit Free Press, April 7, 1959.

stitution, and a deadlock between Governor G. Mennen Williams and a malapportioned legislature controlled by conservative Republicans, kept the state from using funds in its treasury to pay its bills. As a result some state employees faced "payless paydays" and the restive legislature remained in session nearly the entire year. Unfavorable national publicity alarmed citizens and businessmen.²⁴

In May, Romney and fifteen others met and formed "Citizens for Michigan" (CFM), a non-partisan group bent on solving the state's problems through direct citizen participation.²⁵ The organization is generally considered the beginning of Romney's political career. Among those early participants in Citizens for Michigan were Dr. Samuel M. Brownell, Detroit superintendent of schools; Edward L. Cushman, American Motors Corporation vice-president; Dr. Charles Killingsworth, professor of economics at Michigan State University; William E. Stirton, vice-president of the University of Michigan; and Howard Stoddard, president of the Michigan

²⁴Detroit News, Sept. 13, 1959. A panel discussion involving members of the Michigan Municipal League and the Municipal Finance Commission outlined the adverse national publicity and the effect it was having on sale and interest rates of bonds.

²⁵Mahoney, p. 241.

National Bank.²⁶

Blaming the state's problems on a deterioration of public responsibility among its leaders, Romney decried excessive partnership^{isan} on the part of both major political parties. He repeatedly attacked what he called the source of political turmoil in Michigan--big government, big business and big labor.²⁷ Together with the League of Women Voters and the Michigan Junior Chamber of Commerce, Romney and CPM pushed for a revision of the state constitution as the first step in streamlining state government. The issue was put on the ballot in April, 1961, and the state's voters approved the calling of a Constitutional Convention to re-write a basic law that had not been revised since 1908.²⁸

During his association with Citizens for Michigan, Romney steadfastly refused to claim allegiance to either political party. But he wanted to sit in the Constitutional Convention. Delegates were to be elected on a partisan basis from every Senate and House

²⁶Detroit News, June 11, 1959.

²⁷Detroit News, Dec. 10, 1959.

²⁸Michigan Manual, 1965-66, p. 81.

district in the state. Romney had to choose one party or the other, and it surprised nobody that the auto executive chose the GOP. However, he called himself only an "Oakland County Republican."²⁹ He won election from his home Senate district to become one of ninety-nine Republicans to serve in the 144-seat convention.³⁰

The Constitutional Convention convened on October 3, 1961, in the Lansing Civic Center. Almost immediately the delegates split into three factions--rural conservative Republicans, moderate Republicans, and Democrats. As a leader of the moderates, Romney made a bid for the presidency of the convention but lost to a compromise candidate acceptable to both Republican factions. He was, however, elected as one of the vice-presidents along with conservative Edward Hutchinson, a former state senator, and Democrat Tom Downs, a Detroit attorney whose firm often represented the AFL-CIO.³¹

Romney was the star attraction of the convention. Judging by the twelve-volume set of clipping

²⁹Grand Rapids Press, April 16, 1961.

³⁰Michigan Manual, 1965-66, p. 81.

³¹Muskegon Chronicle, Oct. 3, 1961.

books kept by the South Bureau (comprising articles from all of the nine papers), no other candidate with the exception of President Stephen S. Bisset received one-fifth the publicity Romney received.

Because they had more in common at the outset, most observers expected the moderate Republicans and the Democrats to form a ruling coalition when the most important issues before the convention came to the fore. But on February 10, 1962, Romney announced he would seek the governorship in the fall.³² This announcement alienated the Democrats. The moderates saw the possibility of a strange bedfellow alliance between Democrats and conservative Republicans on some issues. But on March 16 the Detroit Free Press alleged that a "deal" had been made by Romney, representing the moderates, with conservative leader D. Hale Drake.³³ Whether the word "deal" applies or not, a coalition was formed and became the decision-making force on a number of key provisions of the new constitution involving the

³²Flint Journal, Feb. 10, 1962.

³³Detroit Free Press, March 16, 1962.

executive branch, legislative apportionment and finance.³⁴

The gubernatorial campaign began in earnest after the Constitutional Convention adjourned on May 11. As he began his campaign, Romney trailed incumbent Democrat John B. Swainson in a Detroit News public opinion poll,³⁵ but by September Republican Romney was out in front.³⁶ In November Romney outpolled Swainson by 81,573 votes³⁷ to become the first Republican to be elected governor of Michigan since 1946. He won re-election in 1964 as Michigan voters split their tickets to give Romney a plurality of 382,913³⁸ while giving Democratic President Lyndon B. Johnson a margin of more than one million votes. Romney won election to a third term in 1966 by 627,164 votes.³⁹

³⁴Albert L. Sturm, Constitution-Making In Michigan, 1961-62 (Ann Arbor: Institute of Public Administration, The University of Michigan, 1963), pp. 117-119.

³⁵Detroit News, May 14, 1962.

³⁶Ibid., Sept. 9, 1962.

³⁷Michigan Manual, 1963-64, p. 416.

³⁸Ibid., 1965-66, p. 73.

³⁹State of Michigan, Office of the Secretary of State, unofficial 1966 plurality as of Dec. 15, 1966. The figures were provided while the election results in two house districts were being contested.

CHAPTER II

ENVIRONMENT

Governor Romney's press relations exist within a framework of political and journalistic factors that determine to some degree the amount and type of coverage his actions receive in the state's daily newspapers. Among these factors are the recent political history of the state, the present relative strengths of the two major political parties, the number and circulation of daily newspapers in the state, the number of papers maintaining bureaus in Lansing, and the routine practices employed by Governor Romney in dealing with Capitol reporters. These are broad factors. The narrower, more specific factors involved in Governor Romney's relationship with the Michigan press are reserved for the next two chapters.

Political Environment

Michigan is a state in political flux. Between the Civil War and 1948, Republicans won thirty-four gubernatorial elections, while the Democrats won

six. A Fusionist was elected in 1882.¹ Republican control of the legislature was even stronger during this period, with the legislative branch in Democratic hands only from 1933 to 1939.² Michigan began a transition toward the status of a two-party state in 1948 with the election of Democrat G. Mennen Williams to the governorship.

Williams remained in the statehouse for twelve years, winning six consecutive two-year terms. When he retired in 1960 to join the Kennedy administration as undersecretary of state for African affairs, another Democrat, John D. Swainson, took his place. The real emergence of the Democratic party during the Williams years can be seen by comparing the number of Democrats who held office in the state in 1948, the year he was elected, and the number who held office in 1960, the year he retired. When Williams entered the statehouse, both U. S. senators from Michigan were Republicans as were fourteen of seventeen congressmen.³ When he left, both senators and seven congressmen were Democrats.⁴

¹Michigan Manual, 1963-64, pp. 429-432.

²Ibid., pp. 96-97.

³Michigan Manual, 1947, pp. 656-663.

⁴Michigan Manual, 1959-60, pp. 161-167.

Four Democratic senators and eight representatives sat in the state legislature when Williams entered office.⁵ In 1960 twelve senators and fifty-five representatives served in the legislature.⁶ No Democrats served on elected boards of higher education⁷ or the state administrative board in 1948.⁸ Democrats controlled every board of higher education in 1960⁹ and filled every administrative board position.¹⁰

Despite their success in statewide elections during the Williams administration, Democrats never won control of the legislature, the apportionment of which greatly favored Republican rural areas.¹¹ The mal-apportionment resulted from considerable social and economic changes that took place within the state

⁵Michigan Manual, 1947, pp. 555-557.

⁶Michigan Manual, 1959-60, pp. 179-191.

⁷Michigan Manual, 1947, pp. 695-701.

⁸Ibid., pp. 651-653.

⁹Michigan Manual, 1959-60, pp. 171-178.

¹⁰Ibid., p. 156.

¹¹Herbert Garfinkel and L. J. Fein, Fair Representation: A Citizen's Guide to Legislative Apportionment in Michigan (East Lansing: Bureau of Social and Political Research, Michigan State University, 1960), p.1.

between 1900 and 1964, when a new apportionment scheme was worked out. From a predominantly agricultural state with 60 per cent of its population living in rural areas, Michigan developed into a highly industrialized state with fewer than 30 per cent of its residents living in rural areas.¹² The legislature was reapportioned during this period--the last time in 1952--but it was done so in a fashion that meant greater representation for the rural areas relative to their population. During the Williams administration the Senate was particularly apportioned in favor of out-state areas. For example, one senatorial district, the twelfth, Oakland County, had eight times the population of the thirty-second, encompassing four sparsely populated Upper Peninsula counties.¹³

In the early 1960's a reversal took place. In 1962, George Romney became the first Republican in fourteen years to win the governorship. That same year the U. S. Supreme Court handed down the first of several apportionment decisions that, in Michigan, re-

¹²Ibid., p. 6.

¹³Ibid., p. 7.

sulted in Democratic control of the legislature in 1964.¹⁴ The Democrats lost that control in the 1966 elections, however, and saw a Republican elected to the U. S. Senate.

Further evidence that Michigan has become a two-party state can be seen in the voting pattern of its residents in presidential election years. Michigan voters show a marked inclination to split their ballots. G. Mennen Williams was elected governor in three presidential years, 1948, 1952 and 1956. All three times the state's voters gave Michigan's electoral votes to the Republican presidential nominee.¹⁵ The pattern broke in 1960 when John F. Kennedy carried the state and Swainson was elected governor, but reappeared in 1964 when Romney won with a plurality of 382,913 votes and President Lyndon B. Johnson carried the state by more than one million votes.¹⁶

¹⁴Baker vs. Carr, 369 U. S. 186 (1962).

¹⁵Harold Faber (ed.), The New York Times Election Handbook, 1964 (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company, 1964), p. 149.

¹⁶Michigan Manual, 1965-66, p. 416.

The Michigan Press

Fifty-three English language daily newspapers with a total circulation of 2,351,091 copies are published in Michigan.¹⁷ The state's largest papers are the evening Detroit News, with a daily circulation of 632,374 copies, and the morning Detroit Free Press, with a circulation of 509,410.¹⁸

Although the papers are all serviced by one or both of the major newsgathering agencies, the Associated Press and United Press International, only thirteen papers maintain news bureaus or full-time reporters in Lansing to cover state government. The Detroit News maintains a two-man staff supplemented by one or two additional reporters when the legislature is in session and at other peak times of governmental activity. The Detroit Free Press has two full-time reporters in Lansing. Booth Newspapers, Incorporated, publishers of the Grand Rapids Press, Flint Journal, Lansing News, Kalamazoo Gazette, Jackson Citizen-Patriot, Ann Arbor News, Bay City Times, Muskegon Chronicle and Excellenti Press, maintain a four-man

¹⁷W. H. Ayer & Son's Directory of Newspapers and Periodicals, 1966 (Philadelphia: W. H. Ayer & Son, Inc., 1966), p. 1270.

¹⁸Ibid., p. 1269.

bureau. Two reporters service Federated Publications, Incorporated, which publishes the Lansing State Journal and the Little Creek Enquirer and News. The Associated Press has a four-man bureau, and United Press International maintains three reporters at the Capitol.

The state provides press facilities in the Capitol for the press corps, including telephones and typewriters. A press room manager, paid by the legislature, coordinates the distribution of press releases and messages that are sent to the press room.

The tenure of the reporters varies with the agency, but the wire services show the greatest turnover. At this writing only one wire service reporter has been stationed in Lansing for the four years Governor Romney has been in office. Eight of the ten non-wire service reporters, on the other hand, have a total of more than 105 years of experience on the Capitol beat. The chiefs of the Booth and Detroit News bureaus have a combined total of fifty-six years in Lansing. All reporters cover other beats besides the executive office.

Michigan radio and television reporters generally do not cover the Capitol as a beat. Some attend Governor Romney's press conferences and pick up press

releases each day, but they rely on the wire services for the bulk of their reportage of news of state government.

Governor Romney's Press Routine

Although Governor Romney did not become active in politics until he was 53, he had previous experience in dealing with the press. This experience came first as a Washington representative of the Aluminum Company of America, then as managing director of the Automotive Council for War Production, and finally as president and chairman of the board of American Motors Corporation. In addition, his marketing of the Rambler gave him a reputation in advertising and public relations circles as an able salesman of his ideas.¹⁹

The transition from business to politics, however, brought Romney into close contact with political reporters. According to one reporter who has observed Romney since he arrived in Lansing as a delegate to the Constitutional Convention, the Governor adjusted quickly to his new environment:

a) Romney has learned quickly how to get along with (political reporters). At first he was puzzled by us, and, perhaps because he was so freshly out of the executive office at American Motors, a little irked by our refusal to be in awe of him. He's now

¹⁹"Will Success Spoil American Motors?" Fortune, LIX (January, 1959), pp. 97-98.

grown used to it and seems to enjoy himself with us, something that was not always true.²⁰

Charles E. Harmon, Governor Romney's press secretary, agrees that contact with the Capitol press corps is a part of Romney's job he enjoys.²¹ Consequently, informality characterizes the Governor's contact with reporters collectively and individually.

Harmon, a former Capitol reporter for the Booth newspapers, became Romney's chief press aide in November, 1964. The job previously was held by Richard Milliman, who left to become editor of the Mt. Pleasant Times-News. According to Harmon, no rigid rules bind the Governor's dealings with the press, although a number of practices have developed that are generally adhered to.

Press Conferences

Press conferences form the most regular association between Governor Romney and members of the Capitol press corps. When he is in Lansing, Romney usually holds a daily press conference at 9:30 A.M. in

²⁰This is the first of the coded responses included in this thesis. The designation to the left of the quote is the source code. It will remain the same for this source throughout the rest of the thesis, but is dropped if the source is quoted by name.

²¹Interview with Charles E. Harmon, press secretary to Governor Romney, Aug. 17, 1966.

his office. During legislative sessions and at other peak times of governmental activity, these press conferences are seldom canceled. Even when the Governor has no announcements or statements to make to the press, he still generally holds the press conference. If his schedule is busy and there appears to be no reason for a press conference, Romney sometimes cancels the meeting, but not until Harmon has checked with the press room to see if the reporters request a press conference. Often only one or two reporters have questions for the Governor. They are accommodated individually if the press corps collectively does not request a press conference.²²

During the administration of Governor G. Mennen Williams, two press conferences daily, one in the morning and one in the afternoon, were usually held.²³ Since Williams was governor for twelve years, this procedure became routine. Governor John B. Swainson also met twice a day with reporters. Governor Romney retained the two-a-day tradition with regard to press conferences during his first year in office, then dropped

²²Ibid..

²³Lawrence S. Hobart, Governor's Press Secretary: A Profile of Paul Weber (Ann Arbor: Institute of Public Administration, No. 25, University of Michigan, 1958), p. 10.

it in favor of the morning meeting only. The Governor's staff and the press corps mutually agree the second press conference was unnecessary since most news stemming from the executive office was covered in the morning meeting.²⁴ The afternoon press conference is revived occasionally when important news breaks later in the day.

No set rule determines whether or not the Governor makes an opening statement at a press conference. When he makes a formal announcement, he reads it at the beginning of the session and copies are distributed to the reporters present. If he has no opening statement to make he begins the conference with "I've got nothing in particular in mind. Do you fellows?" or words to that effect.

The press conferences are informal. The Governor greets each reporter as he enters, usually by name. He replies to questions by addressing the reporter by name. When an announcement is made or when the press conference takes place at a time when most news of state government involves a single issue, the entire session might be concerned with one topic. At other times reporters' questions might cover six to

²⁴Ibid.

eight issues. Harmon alerts the Governor to questions he expects to come up during a press conference.²⁵ He and other members of the Governor's staff supply documents that might be needed in answering questions and attend the press conferences to assist the Governor.

The informality of the press conferences allows the press corps to bring up any subject. If a question is asked that Governor Romney does not wish to answer, he shows no reticence in declining to comment. At times the informality evolves into a friendly chat between reporters and the Governor.²⁶

The length of each press conference varies with the issues involved, but most conferences last between fifteen and twenty minutes. Each press conference is recorded on magnetic tape. The tape serves a double purpose, protecting the Governor against possible misquotation and providing Harmon with a verbatim record of Romney's statements on certain issues. Transcriptions are not distributed to reporters, but any newsman

²⁵Ibid.

²⁶At one press conference the writer attended, the discussion turned to the Governor's recently decorated outer office, and a reporter commented on an electric ash tray on one of the new tables. Romney had not seen it, and asked an aide to bring it in. The Governor and several reporters spent two or three minutes playing with the gadget.

wishing to check on a direct quote can gain access to the tapes through Harmon.

Romney makes it a point to know the newsmen on the Capitol beat and tries to anticipate what a reporter is looking for during a press conference or an interview. He watches the Michigan press closely, daily reading both Detroit papers, the Grand Rapids Press, Pontiac Press, and Lansing State Journal. He also reads the New York Times, Christian Science Monitor, and several weekly news magazines.²⁷

Private Interviews

Governor Romney's practice of holding daily press conferences reduces the number of requests from the press corps for private interviews. Often, however, individual reporters have questions they do not wish to ask at press conferences for fear of tipping off other reporters on exclusive stories. In such cases, private interviews with the Governor are requested.

Most private questioning of the Governor takes place immediately after a press conference. A reporter can merely "stay after school" when the other reporters have left. Such interviews are generally short and involve one or two questions.

²⁷Ibid.

At other times a reporter wishing to ask the Governor a question must go through Harmon or Romney's personal secretary, Mrs. Margaret (Peg) Little. Often Harmon or Mrs. Little get an answer from the Governor for the reporter. At other times a brief interview or telephone conversation may be arranged.

Several times a year the Governor submits to group interviews by members of a single bureau. Generally these interviews take place at the end of the year, during an election campaign, or at a time when a single important issue such as the budget dominates the news.

Press Releases

Press releases, called "handouts" by reporters, daily cram the press room pigeonholes assigned by name to each reporter. They come from the nineteen major departments of state government, legislators, lobbyists, the state central committees of the two major political parties, public service organizations, professional associations, universities, and a number of other organizations. Many handouts are useful to reporters; others are discarded.²⁸

²⁸Gerald James Keir, "Government Public Relations and the Press: The Michigan Executive Branch" (unpublished master's thesis, School of Journalism, Michigan State University, 1966), pp. 67-68.

The executive office does not issue as many handouts as some agencies of state government known for the productivity of their mimeograph machines. Harmon, who was on the receiving end of the handouts for several years, generally sees to it that only legitimate news rather than propaganda is contained in the executive release.²⁹

A few subtleties indicate the importance of the executive handout. Most handouts reach the press room via secretaries or messengers. This is not so with Harmon's releases. Often, he passes them out to individual reporters as they enter a press conference. When he issues a release later in the day his secretary calls the press room to alert reporters that a handout is coming. When the releases are ready, the press room manager personally picks them up from Harmon's office.

Most executive releases involve news "made" by the Governor--announcements, appointments, position statements. These are timed by Harmon to secure the best play from the Governor's point of view. Important stories or stories that portray the Governor in a favorable light are timed to appear in the afternoon papers, so they are released early in the morning. Less important news or news that is less favorable to-

²⁹Interview with Harmon, Aug. 17, 1966.

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ward the Governor might be released just before noon when reporters for afternoon papers are facing a deadline and are already involved in other breaking news. To compensate, the Detroit Free Press, the state's only general circulation morning paper, sometimes is given a break by timing the release of an appointment or announcement to accommodate its later deadline.³⁰

Governor Romney as a Newsmaker

Primarily because of the job he holds, Governor Romney is undoubtedly the state's most important newsmaker. Nearly every action by the Governor, official and unofficial, is of interest to the press. His official actions are numerous and can be broken down into executive functions (administrative supervision, execution of laws, appointments, budget preparation, military commander-in-chief, and ceremonial head of state), legislative functions (veto power, calling of special sessions of the legislature, preparation and presentation of legislative programs, and messages to the legislature), and judicial functions (pardons, reprieves, commutations, and the power to ask for opinions from the attorney general).³¹

³⁰Ibid.

³¹Michigan, Constitution, Art. 5, sec. 1-19.

The constitutional position of the governor of Michigan makes him more powerful than most other governors in the United States. Joseph A. Schlesinger, professor of political science at Michigan State University, indexed the governors of all fifty states according to the constitutional powers vested in them as an indication of their political power. Only sixteen governors ranked higher than Michigan's.³² The data used to compile the Michigan index, however, was based on the 1908 constitution. The state's new constitution provides for even more executive power and would rank Michigan higher on the index.³³

Factors other than his position contribute to Governor Romney's potential as a newsmaker. Almost from the beginning of his political career, Romney has been prominently mentioned as a potential Republican presidential candidate.³⁴ This adds to the news value

³²Joseph A. Schlesinger, "The Politics of the Executive," Politics in the American States, ed. Herbert Jacob and Kenneth S. Vines (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1965), p. 229.

³³Interview with Joseph A. Schlesinger, professor of political science, Michigan State University, Dec. 23, 1966.

³⁴David A. Jones, "This Republican for 1968," New York Times Magazine, Feb. 23, 1965, p. 20.

of his statements on national and international subjects, and, assuming he does have higher political aspirations, may account for his willingness to comment on such subjects. He is also the head of his state party organization, and as such is in the middle of the GOP's political wars and intramural conflicts. From 1964 to 1966 Romney and his lieutenant governor, William G. Milliken,³⁵ formed the sole Republican power base in Michigan since all other elected members of the State Administrative Board were Democrats, the legislature was controlled by Democrats, and a majority of the Supreme Court justices were Democrats.³⁶

Romney's family and his activities away from the statehouse also make news. His deep religious convictions, his total abstention from all stimulants including tea and coffee, his practice of fasting before

³⁵Michigan, Constitution (1963), Art. 5, sec. 21. Provides that governor and lieutenant governor be elected together.

³⁶Supreme Court justices are elected on a non-partisan basis in Michigan, but are, in fact, affiliated with the two major political parties. Article 6, section 2 of the Michigan Constitution provides that incumbent justices may become candidates for re-election by affidavit. No provision is made for the nomination of non-incumbents except that it "be in the manner prescribed by law." This leaves the nomination of non-incumbents to the party conventions.

making major decision,³⁷ and his habit of playing a dozen quick holes of golf at dawn and using three or four balls at once,³⁸ all have been featured in newspaper and magazine articles nationally as well as in Michigan. Feature stories also have been written about his wife, whose personal appearance schedule sometimes rivals his own;³⁹ and his sons, Mitt and Scott, both of whom served abroad as Mormon missionaries during part of Romney's incumbency.⁴⁰ Romney was, of course, no stranger to the state's front pages even before he entered politics. As president of American Motors Corporation he was a prime newsmaker in a state whose economy turns heavily on the automobile industry.

³⁷Ann Arbor News, Dec. 9, 1962.

³⁸Huskegon Chronicle, Oct. 30, 1962.

³⁹Flint Journal, Oct. 17, 1962.

⁴⁰Ann Arbor News, June 11, 1966.

CHAPTER III

THE MICHIGAN DAILY PRESS: ATTITUDES TOWARD GOVERNOR ROMNEY AND SELF-EVALUATION

The influence of newspaper editors and editorial writers can be an important asset or a burdensome liability to any politician. The managers of the press can open an important line of communication between the candidate and the voters and between the public official and his constituents. They can give the politician's ideas public endorsement or public ridicule.¹ Transformed into the typographical makeup of front pages, this influence can determine which side in an election or a political controversy receives more public exposure. In short, this influence is a factor in the political process.²

This chapter explores the attitudes of editors

¹James E. Gregg, "Newspaper Editorial Endorsements and California Elections, 1948-62," Journalism Quarterly, XXXXII (Autumn, 1965), p. 534.

²George L. Bird and Frederic E. Merwin (eds.), The Press and Society (New York: Prentice-Hall, 1951) pp. 330-331.

and editorial writers of Michigan daily newspapers toward Governor George Romney. It also contains an evaluation of the Republican sympathies of the Michigan press and data relative to the public image of Governor Romney in the state. The purpose of the chapter is to demonstrate that Governor Romney enjoys the editorial support of the Michigan press, but even more important, to demonstrate the degree to which the state's press supports him.

Most of the data in this chapter stems from questionnaires returned by editors and/or editorial writers representing twenty-one daily newspapers of general circulation in Michigan.³ Although the sample numbers less than half of the fifty-one daily papers in the state, it represents every geographical area in Michigan with the exception of the eastern Upper Peninsula. The two largest papers in the state are included as well as some of the smallest dailies. Table 1 correlates the total circulation of the papers in the sample with the total weekday and Sunday circulation of all daily papers in Michigan.

Thus, approximately 70 per cent of the total daily circulation and 80 per cent of the total Sunday

³See Appendix B.

TABLE 1.--Correlation between total circulation of Michigan daily newspapers and newspapers represented in the sample^a

	Total State Circulation	Total Sample Circulation	Percentage of Total State Circulation
Weekday	2,351,091	1,606,856	69.5
Sunday	2,039,664	1,680,569	82.0

^aAll circulation figures from N.W. Ayer & Son's Directory of Newspapers and Periodicals, 1966 (Philadelphia: N.W. Ayer & Son, Inc., 1966), p. 1270.

circulation in the state are represented in the sample. Circulation figures are provided in the graphic illustrations of the responses to add relative weight to the answers. Table 2 lists the 21 papers comprising the sample and their weekday circulations.

This chapter involves almost entirely endorsements and criticisms appearing about Governor Romney in editorial rather than in news columns. It concerns editorial opinions rendered by Michigan editors. No attempt was made at a content analysis of news columns. Some material appearing in straight news columns is involved, however, Democratic charges of a "Romney"

TABLE 2.--Name and circulation of newspapers comprising the sample

Newspaper	Circulation
<u>Alpena News</u>	9,825
<u>Ann Arbor News</u>	33,162
<u>Battle Creek Enquirer and News</u>	39,679
<u>Bay City Times</u>	38,984
<u>Cadillac Evening News</u>	6,067
<u>Coldwater Daily Reporter</u>	6,703
<u>Detroit Free Press</u>	509,410
<u>Detroit News</u>	682,834
<u>Escanaba Press</u>	10,229
<u>Hillsdale Daily News</u>	8,517
<u>Jackson-Citizen-Patriot</u>	38,645
<u>Kalamazoo Gazette</u>	55,091
<u>Ludington News</u>	6,175
<u>Marquette Mining Journal</u>	16,360
<u>Midland Daily News</u>	13,531
<u>Monroe Evening News</u>	22,041
<u>Muskegon Chronicle</u>	47,923
<u>Port Huron Times-Herald</u>	35,140
<u>St. Joseph Herald-Press</u>	6,369
<u>Sturgis Journal</u>	8,238
<u>Ypsilanti Press</u>	11,933

press refer often to news stories. Likewise, it must be assumed that certain facts appearing about Governor Romney in news stories contribute to his public image in the state and therefore help determine the public image factors mentioned in this chapter.

A "Romney" Press

No stranger to Michigan readers as president of American Motors and head of Citizens for Michigan, George Romney received his first extensive exposure as a politician during the Constitutional Convention of 1961-62. The convention received a maximum of news

coverage, and Romney, a vice-president, leader of the moderate Republican faction, and candidate for governor, was the chief beneficiary. One reporter who covered the convention recalls:

a) I came to realize quickly while covering Con-Con that any story I wrote that mentioned Romney high in the lead or ensuing paragraphs was a likely candidate for page one. One story was frankly embarrassing. On a Tuesday, Romney called in reporters to tell them that on Thursday he would submit a proposal for redistricting the state legislature and Congressional districts. The next day my story was not only on page one, it carried a double eight-column banner. The substance of the story was nothing more than this: George Romney has a plan, but nobody knows yet what it is and Romney won't tell until tomorrow.

Romney was a newsmaker not only as a delegate to the Constitutional Convention, but also after February 10, 1962, as an announced GOP candidate for governor.⁴ During the first six months of 1962 Romney's name also appeared in editorials and opinion columns. A number of papers editorially praised Romney for his part in the compromise between moderate and conservative Republicans during the convention that had a major effect on the final product.⁵ Will Muller, Detroit

⁴Flint Journal, Feb. 10, 1962.

⁵Detroit News, March 18, 1962; Detroit Free Press, March 17, 1962; Saginaw News, March 17, 1962; Ann Arbor News, March 19, 1962; Jackson Citizen-Patriot, March 19, 1962.

News columnist, looked ahead in a piece on January 14, 1962, centered around Romney's birth in Mexico and his eligibility for the presidency of the United States.⁶ Nationally syndicated columnists noticed him. William S. White compared him to Wendell Willkie, the 1940 GOP darkhorse,⁷ and Marquis Childs saw a potentially bright political future for Romney.⁸

Some Michigan Democrats credited the press with Romney's quick rise to political prominence. One of the first to notice with some dismay the amount of exposure Romney was receiving was Jerome P. Cavanagh, the 33-year-old Detroit mayor and somewhat of a rising star in Michigan politics himself. Cavanagh said, in a speech in Detroit, that the news media were attempting to "foist" Romney on the public:

It has probably occurred to you that it is indeed remarkable that the popular vehicles of communication have suddenly together discovered a personality whose activities in politics have been so limited that his party identification has been until recently in doubt. Suddenly you have been made aware of the virtues of this personality and his probable availability for the highest offices

⁶Muller was one of those who perpetuated the story of Pancho Villa chasing the Romneys into Texas.

⁷Detroit News, Jan. 25, 1962.

⁸Ibid., July 6, 1962.

in the state and nation. Without a long cultivation of public opinion by this individual, or those in whom he confides, he is thrust onto the front pages of most of the newspapers in the nation and the airways treated to long descriptions of his formidable position in the political party to which he, himself, only recently took care to limit himself to county identification.

The analogy must be striking to you who are doing your best to keep yourselves well informed on issues and candidates. Ask yourself in all fairness how it is that the near-total press of the country has so suddenly arrived at the same conclusion--that a great and outstanding figure is emerging from relative oblivion to the center stage both in your state and in your nation.⁹

Cavanagh asked rhetorically if it were not dangerous that "a strange alliance on the part of the proprietors of the press should feed this to the public as news rather than propaganda." He told those present to work within the political parties to "eliminate the danger of dictatorship and political monopoly from those who control the vehicles of communication."¹⁰

The Detroit mayor concluded his speech with an implied accusation of a deal between Romney and the lords of the press:

⁹Detroit News, Jan. 18, 1962. At the time speculation was running strong that Romney was going to announce his candidacy for governor soon. He had entered the Constitutional Convention vowing not to be controlled by any partisan interests and calling himself only an "Oakland County Republican."

¹⁰Ibid.

It is hardly conceivable that the man now being treated to this colossal effort to solidify public opinion in his behalf, is not aware of the enormous job being done by the commercial press. . . . How did all these powerful interests come to the same conclusion all at the same time? Is this possibly a miracle? Could this mass circulation miracle have been achieved by a citizen of outstanding skills, even after years of training and devotion to a political cause, without understandings and deals concealed from the public.¹¹

After the Constitutional Convention recessed in May, Romney began his gubernatorial campaign in earnest and remained in the public eye throughout the summer and autumn. Democratic charges of a press buildup continued. John J. (Joe) Collins, chairman of the Democratic State Central Committee, charged that the Detroit News tried "to censor the people's right to know" by deleting part of a Marquis Childs column that referred to Romney's "deal" with conservatives during the Constitutional Convention.¹² Detroit News editor Martin S. Hayden replied in a statement that "the paragraph was eliminated by our editor in trimming the article to editor-

¹¹Ibid. Cavanagh's audience was made up almost entirely of teenage recipients of civics awards. Ironically, he never mentioned Romney by name and a reporter covering the speech found only two of those present who knew whom the mayor was referring to.

¹²Detroit News, Aug. 10, 1962.

ial page space available."¹³ Collins also said the press as a whole was attempting to give Romney an unsullied image and that even his wife, Lenore, was receiving more press attention than Governor Swainson's wife, Alice.¹⁴

After Romney won the governorship in November, the press was only a few steps away to report his every move and word; he has been the state's top newsmaker since then. Democrats still decry the amount of news coverage he receives. Zolton Ferency, chairman of the Democratic State Central Committee and Romney's 1966 gubernatorial opponent, told a group at the Detroit Press Club during the campaign that Romney was "more of a publicist and propagandist than a political leader."¹⁵

Editorial Endorsements

Democratic complaints of a "Romney" press are understandable and justified, at least in considering editorial endorsements during the Governor's three gubernatorial campaigns.

¹³Ibid.

¹⁴Ibid., Aug. 12, 1962.

¹⁵Detroit Free Press, Sept. 8, 1966.

The respondents in the sample survey were asked who their papers supported for governor in 1962 and 1964. Since the questionnaires were returned in July, 1966, several months before papers generally make political endorsements, the respondents were asked who their papers intended to support in 1966. Eight responded that they had not yet gone on record, but three of those included remarks to the effect that "the suspense is not too thick."

Table 3 illustrates the sample responses correlated with the total circulation of the papers falling into each category.

None of the twenty-one respondents supported a Democrat for governor in 1962 or 1964; eighteen supported Romney both years, one supported him in 1964, and eleven respondents said they again would support Romney in 1966. In addition, those papers supporting Romney most consistently are the high circulation papers in the sample.

According to the Michigan Press Association and the Republican State Central Committee, no record of all editorial endorsements for Romney has been compiled. The sample is only indicative, since thirty daily papers are not represented. The sample does, however, represent 70 per cent of the weekday circulation in the state.

TABLE 3.--Gubernatorial endorsements of the sample correlated with total circulation

Item	Total of Sample	Total Circulation
Endorsed Romney in 1962 and 1964	18	1,581,811
Endorsed nobody in 1962, Romney in 1964	1	9,825
Paper does not endorse statewide candidates	2	15,220
Intend to endorse Romney in 1966	11	1,398,265
Not yet on record in 1966	8	193,471

As a supplement to the above index, editorial endorsements were correlated with population. The sixteen most populous counties in Michigan each have a population exceeding 100,000. These counties are Wayne, Oakland, Macomb, Kent, Genesee, Bay, Berrien, Calhoun, Ingham, Jackson, Kalamazoo, Monroe, Muskegon, Saginaw, St. Clair, and Washtenaw. The total population of these counties is 6,130,056, or 78.2 per cent

of Michigan's total population of 7,823,194 in 1960.¹⁶ Twenty-two daily papers of general circulation are printed in these counties, fourteen of which are included in the sample. The editor, managing editor, or Capitol bureau chief of each of the remaining eight newspapers was interviewed by telephone to determine who the paper supported for governor in the 1962, 1964 and 1966 elections. The results paralleled the previous index: Nineteen of the twenty-two papers supported Romney in all three elections; one supported him in 1964 and 1966 but no candidate in 1962; and two papers do not formally endorse statewide candidates. None of the papers supported the Democratic candidate in any of the three elections.

Editorial Reaction to Romney as Governor

The sample survey indicates editorial reaction has been generally favorable toward the issues and policies associated with Romney as governor. However, the pattern is not as consistently pro-Romney as that created by the number of editorial endorsements the Governor received during his three campaigns. On some issues the sample split almost evenly between those who

¹⁶U.S. Bureau of the Census. U.S. Census of Population: 1960. General Population Characteristics. Michigan. U.S. Government Printing Office, Washington, D.C., 1961.

had editorialized in support of Romney and those who had opposed his position.

Before being questioned on specific issues, the respondents were asked, "What has been the over-all editorial reaction of your paper toward Governor Romney--positive or negative?" The responses demonstrated a positive over-all reaction. Sixteen replied positive, three "generally favorable," and two neutral. None of the papers in the sample reported a negative reaction toward Governor Romney. The sixteen respondents who replied positive represented a total circulation of 1,563,692 or 97.5 per cent of the total circulation of the sample and 65.2 per cent of the total circulation in the state. Table 4 illustrates the responses correlated with total circulation.

Editorial Reaction on Specific Issues:

Structured Responses

A number of specific actions of Governor Romney have provided material for editorial comment in the Michigan press. The respondents were asked to state the editorial reaction of their papers--positive or negative--to each of six issues closely associated with Governor Romney. In some cases the papers had not commented editorially on one or more of the issues. Their responses are recorded in the graphs below as "no

comment."

TABLE 4.-- Over-all editorial reaction to Governor Romney correlated with circulation

Reaction	Total of Sample	Total Circulation
Positive	16	1,563,692
Negative	0	
Generally positive	3	28,751
Neutral	2	14,413

Legislative Record

Governor Romney did not have a legislature of his own exact political coloration during his first two terms in office. Although Republicans controlled both houses in 1963-64, the Senate was malapportioned and was ruled by rural conservative Republicans who sometimes opposed Romney. The Senate was reapportioned in 1964, a year that saw Democrats win control of both houses. The respondents were asked the editorial reaction of their papers toward Romney's legislative record. Table 5 illustrates their responses.

TABLE 5.--Editorial reaction toward Romney's legislative record correlated with circulation

Reaction	Total of Sample	Total Circulation
Positive	20	1,594,923
Negative	0	
No Comment	1	11,933

On the basis of the sample, support for Romney's legislative record is solid. All twenty papers who had commented editorially on Romney's legislative record reported a positive reaction (although three indicated parenthetically they had taken issue with some of the Governor's specific legislative proposals and programs). The twenty papers represent 99.4 per cent of the total circulation of the sample and 67.5 per cent of the total state daily circulation.

Tax Reform

One of the most controversial issues in Michigan for more than a decade has been tax reform. While still associated with Citizens For Michigan, Romney advocated tax reforms that included a state income tax. During his first term in office Romney suffered a

political defeat when he called the legislature into special session to consider his tax reform program and the lawmakers rejected it. The issue has divided politicians in the state, but not along party lines. It has also divided the press, as table 6 indicates.

TABLE 6.--Editorial reaction toward Romney's tax reform program correlated with circulation

Reaction	Total of Sample	Total Circulation
Positive	11	1,004,012
Negative	8	588,260
No Comment	2	14,584

Editorial support for Governor Romney's tax reform program among the papers in the sample has been cool, but still a majority reported a positive reaction. The two metropolitan papers, the Detroit News and the Detroit Free Press, split on the issue, the former reporting a positive reaction and the latter a negative reaction. John Millhone, a Free Press editorial writer who consented to being quoted directly, indicated on the questionnaire that the negative reaction referred to Governor Romney's handling of his tax reform program rather than its substance. Since

the Free Press accounts for the bulk of the circulation (509,410) of the eight papers reporting a negative reaction, the graph points up the fact that the remaining seven are small circulation dailies. All seven are, in fact, less than 20,000 in circulation, and all but one are printed in small out-state communities where conservative Republican opposition to tax reform is strongest.¹⁷

Goldwater

Governor Romney's opposition to Senator Barry Goldwater as the Republican candidate for President was a matter of record even before the 1964 Republican National Convention.¹⁸ Romney did not support the top of the GOP ticket during the campaign. Goldwater questioned his party loyalty in a letter after the election, asking the Michigan governor "Where were you, George."

¹⁷Because some questions on the questionnaire solicited material involving opinions of the respondents and involved some areas not necessarily public record, the writer agreed not to identify respondents unless they indicated they had no objection. In the case of the Detroit News, however, circulation figures identify the respondent; and in this particular case the editorial reaction is a matter of record. But to keep from possibly compromising the writer's agreement, the same liberty is not taken with other papers.

¹⁸Detroit News, June 10, 1964.

when the chips were down and the going was rough?"¹⁹ When the votes were tallied, Goldwater lost Michigan's twenty-one electoral votes by more than a million popular votes and Romney won a second two-year term in the statehouse by the fourth largest plurality in the state's history.²⁰ The press again divided over Romney's disavowal of Goldwater, but again a majority of the sample supported the Governor.

TABLE 7.--Editorial reaction to Romney's disavowal of Goldwater correlated with circulation

Reaction	Total of Sample	Total Circulation
Positive	11	1,445,439
Negative	7	92,881
No Comment	3	68,536

Table 7 shows the sample responses. The big circulation papers supported Romney, while seven small circulation dailies criticized the Governor.

¹⁹Ann Arbor News, Dec. 1, 1966.

²⁰Michigan Manual, 1963-64, pp. 429-432.

Vietnam

During the spring and early summer of 1966, Romney, who visited Vietnam the previous fall, made a number of statements on the conduct of the war there. His remarks elicited a large editorial response from the daily press. It was not so much what Romney said that prompted this editorial response as it was what he did not say. A writer for the Detroit News concluded that Romney vacillated, clarified himself, and seemingly changed his position to the point nobody knew where he stood.²¹ Romney's wavering between "hawk" and "dove" proved to be frequent fodder for editorial cartoonists.²² Table 8 illustrates the sample editorial reaction toward Governor Romney's Vietnam statements.

Vietnam was the only issue on which a majority of the sample reported a negative editorial position toward Governor Romney. The twelve papers criticizing Romney's Vietnam statements represent 85.6 per cent of the total sample circulation and 58.3 per cent of the total weekday circulation in the state. Not all criticized Romney for the same reason. One said the

²¹Ernest B. Van Dusen, Detroit News, Dec. 16, 1966.

²²See Appendix D.

Governor didn't know enough about the situation to comment on it, and three said he was "too indefinite." One respondent regarded Romney's statements as "campaign talk for 1968." Neither of the two papers reporting a positive editorial reaction gave a reason for its position.

TABLE 8.--Editorial reaction to Romney's Vietnam statements correlated with circulation

Reaction	Total of Sample	Total Circulation
Positive	2	53,990
Negative	12	1,375,109
No Comment	7	177,757

Special Interests

Governor Romney's first political exposure was as a non-partisan. Citizens for Michigan was organized on a non-partisan basis. Romney blamed the state's financial crisis in 1959 on excessive partisanship, big business, big labor and big government, and called for the end of the influence of minority pressure groups in state government.²³ The sample respondents were asked

²³Detroit News, June 27, 1959.

what their papers had said editorially on whether or not Romney lived up to his ideals of independence in office. Table 9 shows the responses.

TABLE 9.--Editorial reaction toward Romney's claimed independence of special interests correlated with circulation

Reaction	Total of Sample	Total Circulation
Positive	16	1,522,824
Negative	0	
Partially Independent	3	36,531
No Comment	2	47,501

To this graph another item under "reaction" was added because three of the respondents indicated their editorial positions reflected only a partial independence on the part of Governor Romney. The majority, however, had commended Romney for political independence. Those papers represent 95 per cent of the total sample circulation and 64.7 of the total state weekday circulation.

The respondents were asked the editorial reaction of their papers to a sixth issue--the possi-

bility that Governor Romney might leave the statehouse in the middle of a four-year term to run for President in 1968. Only two of the twenty-one papers had commented editorially on the subject. Several indicated they would approve of such a move should it develop, but said they would not go on record until that time. Ironically, the two papers that had editorialized on the subject both criticized Romney for being too politically ambitious. Since nineteen papers had not commented on the issue, it was not used for analysis in this study.

Editorial Reaction on Specific Issues:

Non-Structured Responses

A more open-ended approach than that used above was utilized to determine which issues associated with Governor Romney had been most criticized by the sample papers and which had been most applauded. The respondents were asked, "What policies or actions of the Governor have been criticized in your editorial columns most severely? Which have been supported most ardently?" Respondents were asked to give one or two examples of each. Following is a complete list of the issues criticized by the papers in the sample, presented in no particular order:

1. His tactless treatment of other Republicans in the early stages of his career, the timing of his tax proposals, and his espousal of lowering the voting age to 18

2. Failure to take advantage of present laws to get a better administration of driver's licenses

3. Veto of a bill to abolish the office of county coroner in Michigan, and statements on Vietnam

4. Federal-state relations in the social welfare field

5. Fiscal reform

6. Veto of a bill to abolish the office of county coroner

7. His "namby pamby" Republicanism and his lack of support for other Republicans, especially Goldwater

8. Fiscal reform and personal interference in local elections

9. His double talk and his "preaching"

10. Vietnam statements

11. His eye on the presidency in 1968 while asking Michigan voters for a third term as governor in 1966

12. His vagueness on Vietnam and his failure at times to realize his obligations as a party leader

13. His habit of sounding off on international problems without a real clear pattern to suggest

14. His failure to propose a specific tax reform proposal, his tardiness in naming a state mental health director, his compliance with new programs of state aid to church related schools, and his inconsistencies on Vietnam

15. His espousal of a state income tax

16. Tax reform

Five of the twenty-one papers had not editorially criticized Romney on any issue. Eliminate Vietnam and tax reform, and Romney has not been criticized by a significant number of the sample papers on any other issue. Some papers criticized the Governor only on minor, often provincial issues, such as driver's license administration, and for vetoing a bill to abolish the office of county coroner in Michigan. Three papers listed Romney's failure as a partisan as one of their prime criticisms.

Following is a complete list of the issues supported most ardently by the papers in the sample:

1. Removing tolls on the Mackinac Bridge, which Romney has advocated
2. His general views on traffic safety
3. Realistic approach to state problems
4. Fiscal judgment
5. His anti-socialistic views
6. Fiscal attitudes and traffic proposals
7. His strength as an administrator
8. Administrative reform
9. Tax reform
10. Tax reform
11. Tax and governmental agency reform
12. Tax program, appointments and legislative programs

13. Legislative programs and role at the 1964 Republican convention

14. Tax program and reduction of Mackinac Bridge tolls

15. Basic thesis on federalism

Six respondents listed no specific issue on which they had strongly praised Romney editorially, and again provincialism entered the picture as two papers had most ardently supported the Governor in his attempts to lower the tolls on the Mackinac Bridge.

Evaluation of Editorial Reaction on Specific Issues

On the basis of the sample survey, Governor Romney enjoys the over-all editorial support of the state's daily newspapers. He enjoys this support on the most controversial issues facing the state, including tax reform. The issue on which he has been criticized most severely has been his statements about the conduct of the war in Vietnam, an issue of direct national rather than state importance.

No single issue appears to have rallied editors behind the Governor, and no single state issue appears to have alienated them from him. Only tax reform significantly divided the press. It is the only issue appearing on the respondents' list of "most severely criticized" as well as "most ardently supported"

issues. Still, a majority of the papers in the sample supported the Governor on fiscal reform.

Although nineteen of the twenty-one papers reported either "positive" or "generally positive" over-all editorial reaction toward Romney, the questionnaires indicate no single issue is responsible for this support. It is even difficult from the responses to discern a combination of issues that have won the Governor this over-all support. This pattern, or lack of a pattern, of editorial reaction to specific issues suggests the possibility that such individual issues are of less importance than the traditional Republican sympathies of the Michigan press in accounting for Governor Romney's favorable position in the state's editorial columns. Thus, the following attempt was made to determine the degree to which the Michigan press favors the GOP.

The Michigan Press: A Self-Evaluation

The pulse of the Michigan press suggests a definite Republican heart. The degree of Republican sympathy is probably immeasurable, although the twenty-one editors and editorial writers returning the questionnaires provide some indication. They were asked to classify the Michigan press as a whole into one of four categories ranging from "solidly Republican" to

'non-partisan." Their responses are illustrated in table 10.

TABLE 10.--Respondents classifications of the political sympathies of the Michigan press

	Total of Sample	Total Circulation
Solidly Republican	0	
Generally Pro-Republican	13	1,438,568
Objective, with only a slight tendency to favor the Republican party	6	142,824
Non-Partisan	2	25,464

Although none of the twenty-one respondents classified the Michigan press as "solidly Republican," nineteen gave the press a GOP direction. Thirteen, a majority, classified the press in Michigan as "generally pro-Republican," and six said there was at least some tendency to favor the GOP. Only two respondents said the Michigan press is non-partisan. The weight of the majority responses is enhanced by circulation figures. The thirteen papers calling the Michigan press "generally pro-Republican" represent 89.4 per cent of the total sample circulation, and 60.8 per cent of the

total state weekday circulation. More than 90 per cent of the respondents representing 98.7 per cent of the total sample circulation said the Michigan press was at least slightly pro-Republican.

As was done with editorial reaction to specific issues, the respondents were given the opportunity for a less structured, more open ended expression of their observations in this area. In this case, the respondents were asked to compare Romney's treatment by the Michigan press with the treatment given his two predecessors, Governors C. Mennen Williams and John B. Swainson, both Democrats. The respondents were asked "Would you say Romney enjoys a better press than Williams or Swainson? Why or why not?"²⁴

Fifteen respondents indicated Romney has a better press than did his two predecessors. Two said Romney's treatment in the state's press is the same as that given Williams and Swainson (the same two respondents, incidentally, who labeled the Michigan press "non-partisan"). Two said Romney's press is about the same as Williams' but better than Swainson's. One respondent said Williams had a better press than Romney.

²⁴No graphic illustration was attempted because the responses were unstructured and some necessitated interpretation. Not all fell neatly into the categories in which they were placed.

One did not answer the question.

More significant than the raw total of respondents allowing Romney the better press are the reasons they gave. Eight of the fifteen said it is due at least in part to the Republican nature of the Michigan press. Six of the remaining seven commented to the effect that "Romney has done a better job," indicating a personal if not a political preference for the Governor.

The Romney Image

A discussion of the public image maintained by Governor Romney in Michigan is appropriate here for two reasons. First, the press, as the prime vehicle by which information about the Governor is communicated to the people, must bear a large share of the responsibility for this image. Second, editors must have some knowledge or at least opinions on Romney's image among their readers to meet their job demands.

The questionnaire respondents were asked "What aspects of the Governor's administration or personal life do you think contribute most significantly to a favorable public image? What aspects have hurt his image?" By comparing positive and negative aspects it is possible to construct an indication of his public image, if not a truly scientific profile.

Following is a complete list of the positive factors given by the editors:

1. The integration of his personal philosophy with his administrative actions; his concern with human, moral values
2. Good morals
3. Integrity, fiscal responsibility
4. Honesty and his charming wife
5. Personal energy and political stability
6. His "morality" stance. His positive approach, reflecting neither doctrinaire liberalism nor conservatism to most state problems
7. His integrity
8. His evidence of a sense of conviction and dedication; his willingness to grasp unpleasant problems
9. His business success, his record as governor, and his upright personal life
10. Personality, sincerity and willingness to work
11. His consistency on tax reform; his disavowal of John Birch support; his obviously clean personal life
12. The man's personal energy and sometimes blunt manner of speaking
13. His obvious sincerity and personal integrity
14. Image of strength, morality and drive
15. His administration's freedom from any hint of scandal; his image of non-smoking, non-drinking, athletic Christian good behavior

16. Romney has been blessed with a very favorable economic climate. His personal life benefits from his ability to project an image of honesty and wholesomeness

17. Church association; non-smoking and non-drinking

18. He has a captivating personality, convincing and pleasing in television appearances, frankly religious, devoted to family life, and is aided by a talented and charming wife

19. Willingness to listen to public views but seldom changes his own

20. His over-all career

21. His intellectual honesty

According to the above observers, the positive factors in Governor Romney's image add up to a clean living dynamo possessed of high intellectual and moral qualities and a keen sense of dedication. The negative aspects reported form the following list:

1. Foreign policy statements

2. His failure to run the first time for governor in support of other GOP candidates

3. His image hasn't been hurt

4. Uninformed remarks on certain subjects

5. None

6. Tends to hip-shoot, particularly when in the national spotlight; he is learning politics rapidly, but at times is still too arbitrary

7. None

8. Changing his mind on some policy matters and his low boiling point

9. Overambition for the presidency and his doubtful Republicanism

10. His religion among Negroes

11. Efforts to ride two horses--state and national--at the same time

12. His tendency to shake up the "hosebacks" in his party

13. His sensitivity to criticism

14. Various pronouncements on topics outside his real area

15. Early in office, some political naivete; the feeling he was running the administration like an auto company; more recently an occasional recalcitrance

16. His insistence on moralizing, injecting religious convictions into his speeches

17. None

18. No damage to his image

19. Signing of the 1965 Employment Compensation Bill

20. None particularly

21. His political ambitions are a bit strong

On the negative side, Romney's tendency to comment freely on areas outside his concern as governor, his "preaching" and his sensitivity to criticism have been noticed. Significantly, however, six respondents said no aspects of his administration or personal life have hurt his public image.

CHAPTER IV

THE GOVERNOR AND THE CAPITOL PRESS CORPS; COVERING GEORGE ROMNEY

Governor Romney's most frequent contact with the press comes through the Capitol press corps, a group whose competence was highly praised by one of Romney's predecessors. Shortly after he left the statehouse in 1961, G. Mennen Williams compiled for the University of Michigan's Institute of Public Administration a resume of his twelve years as Michigan's governor. In A Governor's Notes, Williams called the Capitol press corps "the best in the country," and said "I couldn't hold anything from them. I didn't try-- at least not often."¹

At this writing George Romney has been Michigan's chief executive for four years. His experiences with the Capitol press corps, however, have covered five years, dating back to the autumn of 1961 when he came to Lansing to help draft a new constitu-

¹G. Mennen Williams, A Governor's Notes, Institute of Public Administration, University of Michigan (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan, 1961), p. 49.

tion for the state. This chapter explores the working relationship between Governor Romney and the press corps with emphasis on such key aspects as accessibility, clarity, fluctuation of positions, and sensitivity to criticism.

The material is drawn from written questionnaires completed by reporters, personal interviews, and newspaper clippings. All demonstrate the unique problems and advantages newsmen encounter in reporting on Governor Romney. Seven of the nine Capitol reporters quoted in this chapter have covered Romney since his days as a Constitutional Convention delegate. With few exceptions, they are not quoted by name.

Unlike Governor Williams, Governor Romney's view of the Capitol press corps is not a matter of record. But his techniques and his personal mannerisms in working with reporters are. Although Romney's political experience prior to 1959 was limited to nine months as an assistant to Senator Walsh, he gained a wide knowledge of public relations during his thirty-year business career. According to one Capitol reporter, Romney applied this experience to politics with such success that by 1966

b) There is only one genius in political public relations in Michigan and two masters. Paul Weber (former press secretary to Governor Williams) is

the genius and the two masters are John Murray (former speech writer for Williams and Weber's successor) and George Romney.

Romney's experience and ability in the area of public relations help frame this chapter. So do four factors outlined by Charles Harmon as being what he considers most important for Romney's "good" press in Michigan. These factors are:

1. The Republican nature of the Michigan press, although Harmon said he did not believe this alone would account for favorable press comment on any state-wide GOP candidate or official.

2. Governor Romney's accessibility to reporters.

3. The personal relationships Governor Romney has developed with some newsmen that have helped him understand better the job of the political reporter.

4. The presidential aura surrounding Romney that contributes to his importance as a news source and to the amount of press exposure he receives.²

The four factors given by Harmon are not systematically discussed in this chapter. The first and the fourth factors have already been discussed in this thesis. The second factor, accessibility, has been

²Interview with Harmon, Aug. 17, 1966.

previously mentioned but receives greater treatment in his chapter. The third factor, personal relationships with reporters, is not singled out for comment, but becomes apparent in this chapter, particularly in relation to accessibility.

Accessibility

On no point were the reporters interviewed for this study more strongly in agreement than that each of them has as much access to Governor Romney as he needs for his reportorial assignments. This accessibility can be of critical importance to reporters because a short telephone conversation or interview with Romney can make the difference between a routine story and a major one.³ Harmon listed the Governor's accessibility second only to the Republican nature of the Michigan press in accounting for Romney's good press in Michigan.

Romney's policy of holding daily press conferences and his availability for interviews when requested by reporters are prime factors in this accessibility. The ease with which reporters can get to Michigan's chief executive is not a Romney innovation. During his twelve years in office, Governor Williams set an example of accessibility by holding two press

³Supra, p. 83.

conferences a day and maintaining constant communication with the press corps through his press secretary, Paul Weber.⁴ Romney continued the tradition of accessibility, though not reluctantly. According to Harmon, meeting with reporters, at least in Michigan, is a part of Romney's job he enjoys.

No data on the relative accessibility of state governors was turned up in the review of the literature for this study, but William C. Kulsea, Capitol bureau chief for Booth Newspapers and a veteran of 27 years covering state government, believes no other governor in the country is more accessible than Michigan's:

Talking with state political reporters at governors' conferences and conventions throughout the country, I've come to realize nobody has more access to their governor than we do. Most of the boys are amazed at how frequently our man holds press conferences and how easy it is to get to him with a question privately.⁵

Governor Romney's accessibility harks back to his initiation into Michigan politics at the Constitutional Convention. One reporter told of an incident illustrating how far Romney would go at that time to accommodate a reporter:

⁴Hobart, p. 10.

⁵Interview with William C. Kulsea, Booth Newspapers Capitol bureau chief, Aug. 10, 1966.

c) I had some questions about right to work laws and started the interview alone in a hallway. He was quite willing to discuss it and we soon ended up in his office. Before I was through, he was called to the floor for a vote. Newsmen were not allowed on the floor so we completed the interview by a series of notes carried back and forth by pages.

Because of his position, a comment by Romney included in a news story can determine whether the story is displayed on page one or buried on the inside of the paper. A case in point occurred on July 21, 1966 when Romney held an unannounced meeting with Wayne County grand juror Judge Edward Piggins. A reporter who heard of the meeting recalled:

a) The meeting was in the Governor's office. I waited outside and interviewed the participants as they left. Then I phoned Romney for a comment. Peg Little (Romney's personal secretary) caught him going out the door, put him on the phone, and for five minutes I pumped out enough details to develop a story that ran under the main headline the next day. Without Romney's commentary it would have been a very routine piece. With it, it jumped up in importance.

In the opinion of most reporters interviewed, Romney's accessibility is true across the board. He does not play favorites, though, as the following list of quotes points out, some reporters seem to have an advantage in covering the Governor. All the responses were to the question, "Does Romney have favorites, reporters to whom he is more accessible?"

c) Sure he has favorites, but it isn't a question of accessibility. He shows his favoritism in his degree of answering questions. For instance, to any given question, I think I could get a more complete answer than some other reporters and a few could get more out of him than I could. Some can ask the more ticklish question without rising his ire. I think this has developed from the treatment he has received from the individual reporter and from the paper or papers he represents. He has a long memory and some unkind cuts seem to stick in his craw. He will devote more time to his favorites--and with a man like Romney this is important.

a) I don't think Romney shows an excessive degree of partiality--at least not the kind that President Kennedy allegedly displayed toward his pets such as Charles Bartlett or Joe Alsop. He's undoubtedly friendlier to the reporters he knows best. I imagine that if some guy called up and said 'this is Joe Schmuck, I'm a reporter for radio station WJIL and I'd like to speak to the Governor,' he'd probably be turned down unless he could present a solid case for why he had to get in touch.

d) I don't believe the Governor has favorites unless they might be some of the Washington people who have been around the fringes helping with his national telecasts and Washington appearances. But those guys are simply keeping in touch to get on the bandwagon if lightning hits him in 1968. Here anybody on the beat short of a bum can get in to see him if it's necessary.

e) Yes, I think is the honest answer, but I only know one reporter this would apply to and he has tried unsuccessfully to avoid this position.

f) No, Romney doesn't seem to show favoritism, but his staff members seem at times to be more cooperative with some media (sic) than with others. It hasn't to my knowledge worked to anyone's great or consistent benefit.

g) Romney's accessibility appears to depend on the reporter's initiative without playing favorites. He is much better in that respect than Williams or Swainson.

Although accessibility is the rule, Romney has not adhered to it in all circumstances. His most noted deviation came during a meeting of Republican governors in June of 1964. The meeting, held in Cleveland, preceded the Republican National Convention by less than a month and the prime topic of concern was the impending nomination of Senator Barry Goldwater for the presidency. Governor William Scranton of Pennsylvania openly sought the nomination in an effort to block Goldwater, and Romney was being mentioned as a possible dark horse candidate. A reporter who covered the meeting said it was one of the few times he ever saw Romney dodge the press:

d) There was a lot of speculation that Romney would announce and try to head off Goldwater's nomination. Nixon had privately endorsed him and many other governors who were afraid of what Goldwater would mean in their states were urging him to run. Naturally, the reporters present wanted to get to Romney to find out what he planned to do. With all this suspense, Romney merely sent Dick Killiman (his press secretary at the time) unannounced into the press room to state informally that Romney would do all he could to block Goldwater short of running himself.

On other trips out of the state Romney's access to reporters has been more limited than it generally is in Lansing. At the National Governors' Conference meeting July 5-8, 1966, in Los Angeles, Romney was constantly sought after by reporters. According to

Harmon, requests for private interviews were too numerous to grant, and only nationally syndicated columnist Roscoe Drummond interviewed Romney privately. Romney held only one open press conference during his four days in Los Angeles, and two closed sessions limited to about six reporters each.⁶ Here, of course, limited accessibility is not necessarily contrived by Romney, but rather follows from his increasing national prominence and the accompanying demands of a larger number of reporters. At this writing it has not affected his accessibility to reporters in Lansing. During the 1966 gubernatorial campaign he did not grant interviews in Michigan to any except Michigan reporters because of the demands of a large number of national newsmen.⁷

In summary, Capitol reporters have little trouble getting to the Governor because of his frequent press conferences and his availability for private interviews. It is an aspect of his press relations much appreciated by reporters because it helps them do their jobs better. When he is out of the state, Romney's accessibility is more limited.

⁶Interview with Harmon, Aug. 17, 1966.

⁷Ibid.

Clarity

Physical accessibility does not assure a reporter of any easy time in covering Governor Romney. As this section demonstrates, Romney's speaking style and personal mannerisms, whether inherent or contrived, often make it difficult for a newsman to report the Governor's statements. This is particularly true of reporters with little experience in covering Romney. To help state the problem, the following column by James Breslin is excerpted from the New York World Journal Tribune of December 9, 1966, entitled "The Language of Politics."

He, (Romney) is a distinctive looking man. His hair, nearly white at the temples, turns to steel gray and is thick and brushed straight back. His eyebrows are protruding and bushy. His chin is square. His face was peeling from the sun in Puerto Rico. He was dressed in a light blue suit and a pastel striped tie.

When he was introduced, everybody in the crowded ballroom stood up. Many did this as a form of greeting. But many . . . also were standing up for a better look at where their money will be going in 1968.

Gov. Romney's speech took about 17 minutes. On the way in from the airport, he was enthusiastic about his speech. He said, 'This gives us a milestone. It presents a concrete position.'

He opened the speech with a joke. He said that New York had smog and 'now we know why Bobby Kennedy talks through his nose.' The people did not laugh, and many cringed. Gov. Romney smiled good naturedly.

Then he went into his prepared text. In the first sentence he said, '. . . dispels any doubts' and he ended it with 'radical change.' He continued from there. On the second page he said,

' . . . The third and better way is to accept the fact, the necessity and the desirability of change--to embrace change and to shape it by applying the proven principles of the past and innovating new methods to shape a better future.'

Mr. Romney went on. He said 'Aladdin's lamp.' We waited for him to say 'Alice in Wonderland' or 'Like Topsey. . . ' but he disappointed. He did come through with 'product of inertia' and then took the great one, the 'straw that broke the camel's back' and dressed it up to say: ' . . . a straw-by-straw move that will someday surely break the back of individual initiative.'

While Romney spoke, a political reporter who had covered the Romney speech in Charlotte, N.C., opened a notebook and produced a quote from the governor which read:

'Knowing as much as I do about VietNam, and I do know a great deal of it, I've concluded that I'm not going to make specific proposals until I've had the opportunity to satisfy myself on certain points that I don't know enough about.'

The notebook was closed and attention was returned to Romney. He thumps the lectern when he talks. And, living up to his billing as an evangelist, he said this country certainly does go with God: ' . . . the matchless problem-solving power embodied in the divinely-inspired Declaration of Independence. . . ' Yet his voice is ordinary, even when he makes it loud.

But what the man said is a question. You can follow George Romney when he talks if you pay real good attention. The problem is that when you are finished paying real good attention to one of George Romney's sentences, you are left with nothing except a man who is running for President and who seems to have not the slightest ability to use his own language.

.....
Listen to them for a while, these politicians who want to run us but don't know how to talk to us, and you begin to think that Marshall McLuhan may not be putting everybody on at all. He could be pointing out a fact. Words are going out of style.

Yesterday George Romney squawked about a credibility gap in government. Maybe there is. But maybe the real gap in this country is a communication gap caused by these high-class illiterates in

office. How can men lead successfully when they don't even know how to express themselves in the language of the land?

And now, George Romney, governor of Michigan, leading candidate for the Republican nomination for President, left everybody with this:

'You, as national and social leaders, are best qualified to innovate, initiate and organize the political, social and economic action necessary to strengthen the root sources of total problem-solving action in America and thus preserve America as the last best hope of earth.'

Breslin's column aptly describes the problem of trying to transform a speech by Romney into a news story. Although Romney speaks with much expression and constant gesticulation, his language is complex and his thoughts sometimes impossible to follow. His statements have a rambling quality reminiscent of President Eisenhower. He was compared to Eisenhower by nationally syndicated columnist Joseph Alsop:

At intervals the mode of utterance is almost too bad to be true--the abstract words too numerous and nearly meaningless, the syntax too close to President Eisenhower on a bad day, the sincerity too close to striking the note of an advertising man's 'sincere' necktie.⁸

It is the author's opinion after observing Romney during press conferences, hearing speeches and reading several hundred of his statements during the last five years, that the Governor is not careless in the use of language; rather he strains, often un-

⁸New York World Journal Tribune, Dec. 14, 1966.

necessarily, for the precisely correct word to express his point. He draws semantic differences that are often arbitrary and confusing. For example, a Michigan statute was revised in 1965 to allow public employees in the state to join unions. During the summer of 1966 several strikes by teachers and other public employees occurred and a number of contract negotiations were under way. In trying to illustrate the distinction between the public and private sectors, Romney said public employees have no right to "collective bargaining," the word normally used for labor-management negotiations in the private sector; rather they had only a right to "collective representation"⁹

Following are comments by Capitol reporters on Romney's clarity and the effect it has on the content of the news stories they turn out:

a) There has been trouble interpreting his words ever since he formed Citizens for Michigan in 1959. He likes to talk in concepts that can mean whatever is most convenient at the time. 'Citizen Participation' is an example. 'Strengthening the family as the basic social unit' is another. 'Return to the principles upon which this nation was founded' is a third. And he loves to describe himself as being 'as progressive as Teddy Roosevelt, as liberal as Lincoln, and as conservative as the (U.S.) Constitution.' What in hell does that mean? It merely allows him to identify with all three of those deities without having to

⁹Saginaw News, July 20, 1966.

go on record as being for or against anything. He also harps on the subject of 'breaking up excess concentrations of power, whether among business or labor.' That's a dandy ideal, but I, for one, prefer to hear about specifics, and with Romney those are usually lacking.

h) Occasionally Governor Romney has made himself incompletely understood and has had to clarify a position later. His position on Vietnam, I think, has never been better than fuzzy in details although I can understand the general tenor. Most of the time he is reasonably clear and frank. I've not found him evasive.

d) Romney likes to drag a veil of words around knotty subjects that come up in questions. If he wants to hide an answer, or to ward off more digging questions, his tendency is to launch into an exhaustive background on the question and delay direct answers. The man has a habit of the 'delayed answer,' apparently a thought process which forces him to snub a new question to answer the first. For example, he answers one question for a few minutes and seemingly runs out of steam, or extra points. The next question comes along, but instead of talking to it he picks up a new thought on the first, and so ad infinitum.

c) The biggest problem of clarity is the trait he sometimes displays of starting one thought, suddenly reversing the field, half-starting over, and finally completing another thought. The result is two incomplete statements in your notes, making it rather difficult to come up with direct quotes.

i) His answers are unresponsive, and too often thin or hackneyed. He suffers from limited intellectual resources and a lack of any feeling for the language.

e) One of the biggest changes in Romney over the last four years is that he now watches his semantic accuracy. He used to shoot from the hip when he talked to the press. He now thinks before he talks and weighs the impact of his words and the phraseology. He now hides more answers, or delays them with a 'no comment.'

g) You have to note precisely the words and phrases he uses to catch their exact meaning. He draws shades of difference in his selective word usage. A casual reading of what he says in speeches. . . or comments can produce a misunderstanding or a distorted interpretation of his views. He uses words carefully for the most part, even defensively and protectively. You can understand him, but you must pay careful attention to exactly what he says.

All of the reporters interviewed said Romney's selection of words sometimes leads to confusion, but vary in their opinions on the degree of difficulty in understanding what he says. Source "d", cited above, added, "You have to pay as much attention to how Romney says something as you do to what he says."

To further illustrate the problem of clarity involved in covering Governor Romney, and to set the tone for a later section dealing with the difficulty experienced by reporters in pinning Romney down to specific positions, the following transcription of a press conference that took place June 14, 1966, is presented. In some ways it was not a typical press conference. It ran longer than most press conferences, almost 45 minutes. The entire period was devoted to one subject--Vietnam. More than a usual amount of Romney's comments were read from a prepared text. But it illustrates his use of the language and his straining to make certain his points are clear.

The day before the press conference, Romney appeared on the Columbia Broadcasting System public affairs program "Face the Nation," where he made a number of statements about the conduct of the war in Vietnam. Romney was dissatisfied with the news stories emanating from the interview, some of which attributed a hawkish position to him.¹⁰ He used the press conference to "clarify" his position on Vietnam.

The complete transcript of the press conference ran more than 3,000 words, most of it devoted to Romney's statement and re-statement of one basic point--that the United States didn't have a clear cut policy in Vietnam and it needs one. Questions by reporters are interpolated because they were only partially audible on the tape. Pauses by Governor Romney are also interpolated. The designation "pause" means a halt of between five and ten seconds. "Long pause" designates a pause of ten to fifteen seconds.

Governor Romney: Let me read you this. (He reads from prepared notes) Lack of time on 'Face the Nation' television broadcast last Sunday prevented me from fully developing the discussion started on the conflict in South Vietnam. As a result some accounts have reported me as advocating an escalation of our Vietnamese military effort. This is not exactly accurate. In the time available I made these basic points:

¹⁰Detroit Free Press, June 14, 1966.

One--and these are all quotes here from the transcript. 'In keeping our commitments in South Vietnam, I think the President made a mistake when he involved us in actual military combat on land in South Vietnam.

'Two. The one legitimate basis of our being there is that the people and government of South Vietnam want us there. I don't believe we have a right to move into South Vietnam for the purposes of getting at China.

'Three. By going in there by land we have involved ourselves in a conflict over which control is in the hands of the Chinese and Russians and not in our control. I don't think you can bring the enemy to the conference table by fighting the type of limited conflict the Giap (sic) and the North Vietnamese have been advocating all the way along. They are the ones who indicate they are prepared to fight for ten to twenty years.

'Four. As far as I can see, we neither have an adequate policy in terms of military result nor an adequate policy in terms of negotiated settlement. We need to make up our minds which our objective is. I think this ambivalent position we are in weakens both efforts. If we sincerely seek a negotiated settlement, we should determine the basis on which our allies in the Far East and other parts of the world would support and participate in a negotiated settlement. We need to know what they will help us do in South Vietnam, just as we need to know with certainty whether the South Vietnamese people really want us there and whether they are willing to play their full part in winning the military struggle and an even greater struggle of building a nation after the military conflict is ended. The tremendous cost of this conflict to the United States includes not only the direct loss of men and heavy expenditures of the conflict itself, but also our position in most other parts of the world where the effectiveness of our alliances and relations generally are being greatly weakened. In addition, the war is preventing us from devoting the time, energy, and means needed to prevent South Vietnamese situations from exploding in other parts of the world.'

Question: (Governor, did you have the opportunity to make all these four points? Is this the transcript you're reading to us?)

Romney: Yes. After the program, we--(long pause)--we continued the discussion, particularly Martin Agronsky and I, and we spent a half an hour discussing these additional points that I made in my discussion with him, but there--but there was not time to get on the air, and I pointed out--(pause)--and I would have pointed out on the air, the things I have pointed out here, an elaboration--(long pause)--one of the most basic points that I was making. One of the most basic points that I was making was that our program was inadequate either from a military standpoint or from the standpoint of a negotiated settlement, and we don't really have a policy that is adequate in either field.

Question: (Governor, were you asking for an increase in the military--)

Romney: No, I did not. I did indicate--

Question: (--effort? Bombing of Hanoi and Haiphong?)

Romney: No sir, I did not. In the regular program I indicated in answers to questions about the inadequacy of the military efforts--that we were bombing individual--(long pause)--gasoline trucks--(long pause)--and that if we really wanted to be effective in shutting off supplies, we ought to deal with the basic source of supply and I referred to the--(pause)--the supplies in Haiphong, but I didn't indicate how to deal with them. (pause) But that was only in the discussion of the fact, the basic point that the present program is neither adequate from a military standpoint or from the standpoint of a negotiated peace. And that the inadequacy in both directions renders both ineffective. Now the questioning--the the time permitted questioning on the one point but didn't permit questioning on the other point. And the other point was dealt with--(pause)--after the program ended and we continued--

Question: (Then you weren't calling for an escalation of the fighting, the bombing?)

Romney: I didn't use the word escalation. I never did. I did indicate that (several words inaudible) and if after determining what I indicated we needed to know, (pause) we decided that our policy should be an adequate military policy, then we ought to make it adequate. I did indicate that. But I didn't indicate that that was necessarily what we ought to do. Again, let me read the four basic points I made in the program. (Here Romney repeated the four points in their entirety.)

.....
Question: (Is it accurate to say you would like to see a greater military effort?)

Romney: Inaccurate! That's not exactly accurate. Carl, (Rudow, Detroit News) the only basis of indicating that, and incidently that's been indicated in headlines more than anything else, in stories I've read. But the only basis of indicating that was that when they questioned me about why the military effort was not an adequate effort, I said in here (referring to transcript) that neither the military effort nor the negotiate--when they questioned me about that, I pointed out some examples of inadequacy don't even involve necessarily escalation. I dealt with the supply situation, I pointed out the fact that we're not even making a meaningful effort to cut off supplies at the present level of activity.

Question: (Did you offer an alternative to the present policy?)

Romney: No, the point I'm trying to make here --(long pause)--that as far as I can-- that number one, we made a mistake in getting there. Number two, the control of this conflict is no longer in our hands, as a result of being there, it's in the hands of China and Russia. And number four (sic), we're in--the military effort we are making is on the basis of the enemy strategy, not our strategy. And number four, that we don't have an adequate policy either in terms of military result nor a negotiated settlement. And that we need to make up our minds which way--which we are going to do. Because the inadequacy on both sides is an inadequate control.

Question: (The word escalation has no part of your whole program?)

Romney: It did not, no sir, it does not.

Question: Well Governor--

Romney: Until you make up your mind, Bill (Hulsea, Booth Newspapers). But my point is at this point we don't have an adequate policy either way.

Question: (Governor, is all this from the text or is what you have in your hands an expansion of your remarks after the show?)

Romney: No, the first part is from the tape, the basic points that I made in the course of the program. That's from the tape. Now, the last part expands the deficiency of the negotiated settlement in the way the military part got dealt with on the program itself. Because they focused the questions on the military aspect after I made the statement that it was neither--that we neither--we neither have an adequate policy in terms of military results nor an adequate policy in terms of negotiated settlement. That statement was made pretty early. In this part of the questioning--(long pause while Romney thumbs through the transcript) --'As far as I can see we neither have an adequate policy in terms of military results nor an adequate policy in terms of negotiated settlement.' Then after that the questioning focused pretty much on the adequacy of the military.

Question: (inaudible)

Romney: Of course not, that's all. Just a case of time running out and--

Question: (And your main criticism militarily is failure to stop the flow of gasoline and other supplies to South Vietnam?)

Romney: The gasoline part? Well, let me read it to you. Let me read you what I said--(long pause)--page 18--let me read the whole answer to his question. 'I don't think that we should have involved ourselves in a land war in South Vietnam for that purpose.' He asked me this:

'Now, you reject then the administration position enunciated repeatedly by President Johnson that it is in our national self-interest to be in South Vietnam and to resist Chinese Communist aggression at that place?'

(And I replied) I do think we--that our being there to be legitimate must be on the basis of the people of South Vietnam wanting us there to assist them in their resistance to such aggression. Now as far as the current program is concerned, I don't believe that our current program represents a clear-cut policy. As far as I can see, we neither have an adequate policy in terms of military results nor an adequate policy in terms of negotiated settlement. Our policy is somewhat in conflict in those respects and if we are--as long as we are in there from a military standpoint, unless the South Vietnamese people and government make it clear they don't want us there; and we really need to know that very badly. Recent developments, I think, have caused many people to be uncertain as to whether the people of South Vietnam really want us in there.

'(continuing from the transcript) Now if they really want us in there, then in my opinion we should do a more vigorous military job than we are doing now. But I mean this; I think it is ridiculous to be sending our bombers to bomb individual trucks carrying gasoline from North Vietnam down into South Vietnam when we ignore the fact that 65 per cent of the petroleum, oil and lubrication products used by the Viet Cong and the North Vietnamese military are located in a half-mile by a mile area in the port of Daiphong. And we are in the ridiculous position of trying to bomb gas tanks carrying fuel down when we ignore this big concentration.'

(not reading from the transcript) Now there are many ways of dealing with that concentration, other than bombing it. I didn't advocate--(long pause)--I just said we were ignoring it.

(returning to the transcript) 'The supply ships of North Vietnam and the Viet Cong are going into the Mekong River and up into Cambodia and the supplies are being shipped in there. If we really need to--we really need to make up our minds as to what our real objective is going to be here. And I don't think we have. I think we have an ambivalent policy at this time.' Now--

Question: (inaudible)

Romney: Well I--look--(long pause)--all I was pointing out was the inadequacy of the military policy, of our policy to--is going to be an inadequate military policy. But time prevented my pointing out the inadequacy of our negotiated peace approach which I said was just as inadequate. And that we need to make up our mind which road we are going to go. And we haven't made up our mind, as far as I'm concerned. The administration is neither going down one road or the other and the result is we have got an ineffective approach in both fields, in my opinion. And we need to make up our minds.

Question: (What other ways are there to deal with supply depots in North Vietnam besides bombing?)

Romney: Look, well, there's, there are many other ways. There's quarantines. There's shutting off ships coming in there with supplies. There are--(pause)--many other ways than bombing.

Question: (Which would you recommend?)

Romney: Look, Roger (Lane, Detroit Free Press),--(long pause)--my basic point is not--(pause)--a specific military tactics. My basic point is that we have--we haven't made up our minds as to how we are going to deal with this situation. We're trying to go in two directions at one time. And as a result of trying to go in two directions at one time, we're in an ineffective position. We made a mistake in getting in there. We're in a conflict that we can't control the magnitude of. We're following the strategy of the enemy, basically. And we don't have an adequate policy either for military results or a negotiated settlement. And we need to make up our minds. Now, in the process of making up our minds, we need to know two things that in my opinion we don't know clearly. Whether the South Vietnamese people really want us in there and whether they're really prepared to play their full part, and the effort after the military conflict; and the second thing that we need to know is on what basis would the nations of the--our allies in the Far East and other parts of the world, help us to bring about an honorable and satisfactory settlement of this conflict. We need to know those two things and we don't know them.

Question: (Do you think the South Vietnamese want us there?)

Romney: Well, I think there are many ways by which you can judge that. I'll just say this, that when they can't compose their differences in war time, there is good reason to wonder whether or not they can compose their differences in peace time. As a rule, when your very survival is involved you get together a lot easier than you can when it isn't involved. But they've got an election coming up and it seems to me--(pause)--that we should do all we can to enable the people of that country to express themselves effectively in the election and to elect a government that will reflect their viewpoints in respect to the--(pause)--whole situation.

Question: (Then you feel our presence there should be determined by the effort put forth by the people on their own behalf?)

Romney: Well, that's only one. I said there are two things that we need to know. I said we need to know what our allies in the Far East and our allies in other parts of the world would support and help us in doing. That's only one aspect of it.

Question: (Governor, how do we know if the South Vietnamese people support their government and whether or not they can compose their differences?)

Romney: Why, we certainly have many representatives in there and we have many people in there representing us. But I think the acid test comes down to the character of the effort being put forth by the nation itself and this effort is declining, it isn't increasing currently, it's been falling off and our role has been increasing greatly. But again, Roger, I'm not hinging this solely on what the people in South Vietnamese--Vietnam--think; equally important, it seems to me, is the question of what our allies in the Far East and our allies in other parts of the world would be willing--(pause)--to help us do.

Question: (Then, Governor, do you think we should start clearing up our present policy in some ways?)

Romney: We don't have a clear-cut policy. We don't have a clear-cut policy.

Question: Let me put it another way, Governor, (you're not talking about escalation, deescalation, or--)

Romney: Sure, and in my opinion we need to know two things in shaping that policy and we don't know those two things clearly. And there is good reason to be concerned about both of them and we got to determine--get the answer to those two things and we ought to establish a definite policy, then we ought to work to accomplish that policy. But we don't have a policy, except an ambivalent policy, that are in conflict to an extent. We can--

(At this point the questioning on Vietnam stopped and after several questions on state matters the reporters left the Governor's office.)

The problem faced by a reporter in condensing and reporting the above multitude of words is compounded by the fact that transcripts are not routinely supplied them, although formal statements by the Governor are usually available in press release form.

Frankness

The preceding section deals with Romney's use of the language and the problems of clarity it presents to reporters. A third aspect of Romney's daily dealings with the press corps--aside from clarity and accessibility--is his frankness. It is an aspect that goes to the heart of his value as a news source, because it determines the degree to which Romney allows himself to be put on record.

During a press conference he often calls on his personal secretary, Mrs. Margaret (Peg) Little, or one of his aides to supply figures, memos, or letters to help him answer completely a question by a reporter. When background material is requested he makes it available. Although he answers nearly all questions put to him, he shows no reluctance to decline comment on a subject for political or personal reasons. Generally, reporters do not ask questions they do not expect him to answer. When a "tricky" area does come up, however, his favorite gambit for fielding it is to remain silent for a moment, swivel his chair to one side and rock back while breaking into a slight grin that sometimes develops into a short loud laugh, then look the questioner in the eye with what one reporter calls "almost a death wish,"¹¹ and say, "I'm not going to answer that now," or merely "no comment."

The press corps gives Romney high marks on frankness, but does not rate him *cum laude*. Following are some comments and experiences in this area related by reporters.

a) Yes, he's evasive at times, but, I suspect a lot more frank than most of his predecessors. He's wily enough not to allow himself to be led down a path of questioning that could trap him. He used to parry questions by saying, "That's a very

¹¹Source e.

'iffy' question and I'm not going to get involved in such an 'iffy' area." Lately, that word has almost been discarded from his vocabulary, but for a long time it produced groans at press conferences.

d) Late in 1963 Romney learned enough to know that shooting off his mouth on all issues could be fatal, and that once a word left his mouth it was recorded diligently. So he became familiar with the "no comment," "we're working on it," "it won't jell until next week," etc. This helped him get off the spot. If he were asked a question about an accurate fact, like the appointment of somebody we knew was imminent, he would say "let's wait and see."

He often becomes evasive. He used to take offense at questions but has learned to curb his personal feelings, and either laughs off a personal or embarrassing question, or says "no comment."

Does he tell the truth? Well, that's hard to say, although I believe that on occasions he has bent the truth a little in answering a query. He uses words and phrases that come out wholesome but if you know what's what you decide he isn't telling the truth.

c) Early in his first term in office he was not as evasive as he is now--and he got himself into some corners. Now he is much more aware of the impact that whatever he says is going to have. He has become more cautious, taking time to think before talking. By and large, reporters expect governors and other high officials to be evasive, up to a point. . . . I don't believe in news management, but I can see some reason for holding back on information until the time is opportune. I believe Romney's answers are truthful, and I can't say that I felt that way all the time about some previous governors.

e) He is evasive except when it suits his purposes to be explicit. His answers are usually truthful, but as he sees the truth and in his own frame of reference.

g) He is usually forthright and communicative unless for obvious and understandable reasons (personal or political) he chooses not to answer. His answers are truthfully worded, if you pay careful attention to exactly what he says.

f) Although I'm not sure he's any different from any of his predecessors, he has a habit of playing coy, playing dumb, or ignoring or evading embarrassing questions.

j) Any evasions I have noticed have been understandable because of his position. So far as I have determined, his answers have been truthful.

One reporter, who calls Romney's truthfulness "above average for a politician," recounted the following incident in which he believed Romney deliberately deceived reporters--or at least tried to:

a) The occasion was in 1964 and a coalition of conservative Republicans and Democrats had just pushed a reapportionment bill through the Senate that was not in the best interests of what Romney wanted done. Romney went to the party's convention in Grand Rapids and gave a stirring, ringing speech in which he denounced these eleven or twelve Republican apostates as 'a band of quislings.' None of the so-called quislings was at the convention and it's a good thing because Romney had the delegates so stirred up they would have lynched any one that had been there. Later, all of the 'quislings' except Billy Joe (Senator John P.) Smekens repented and deserted the coalition. I asked a question one day long after the convention that dealt with the 'band of quislings.' Romney interrupted and insisted he never referred to a 'band' that he had talked of only one 'quisling' and hadn't named him. We were at loggerheads. I was sure he spoke of a 'band' and wouldn't back down. But he had the power and the influence of being governor behind him. He insisted I was wrong and made it stick that morning. Later, I dug out a copy of the speech. I had been right. But it was too late and so Romney--either through lapse or a bluff--had beaten me.

The consensus among the press corps members is that Romney is evasive, but less so than previous governors, and his answers are generally truthful.

They say he was less evasive earlier in his political career, but learned the danger of being cornered by an injudicious comment.

Sensitivity

Governor Romney's volatile reaction to criticism has been almost a trademark since he entered Michigan politics. It is to be expected from a man who defends his positions with religious tenacity. On a number of occasions this sensitivity to criticism has been reflected in his reaction to newspaper stories and editorials critical of him. Primarily because of incidents that took place early in his political career, Romney earned a reputation for being overly sensitive to press criticism and making his disapproval known.

In the course of researching this thesis through interviews, newspaper files and personal observations it became clear that this sensitivity has cooled. The reporters interviewed who had covered Governor Romney since the Constitutional Convention all agreed the hyper-sensitivity he sometimes exhibited as a political novice is not as evident today. As one reporter, source "d", put it, "It took Romney a while to understand what we are here for."

One incident forms the basis of Romney's reputation for a quick temper with the press. At this writing, almost five years later, the incident invariably comes up whenever Romney's sensitivity is discussed.

The occasion was the 1962 Constitutional Convention compromise between moderate and conservative Republicans that ended a factional stalemate and largely determined the convention's final product. As leader of the moderates, Romney was instrumental in this compromise.¹²

On March 17, a story appeared in the Detroit Free Press under a headline reading "Deal Throws Con-Con Into Political Uproar." The story, written by Free Press Capitol reporter James Robinson, said Romney admitted making a "package deal" with the rural conservative delegates in order to assure the achievement of 75 per cent of the goals he had hoped to see the convention accomplish. Romney was quoted as having defended the agreement as "the fine art of conciliation." Although an editorial in the March 17 edition praised the compromise, a story the following day, March 18, by the paper's politics writer, Ray

¹²Supra, p. 27,

Courage, painted a dismal picture of Romney's role in the compromise:

Despite what George Romney says to the contrary, the fact that he is an announced candidate for governor virtually has crippled his leadership in the Constitutional Convention. Romney, in justifying his 'compromise' deal with Republican conservatives on key convention issues, said he acted to insure the best possible document. What was left unsaid, however, is that since he has become a candidate he has been in no position to oppose the old guard elements within his own party.

It was no secret among reporters covering the convention that Romney, who was trying to maintain an image of being above partisanship in his campaign for governor, was angered by the stories.¹³ The climax, however, did not occur until several months later after the convention had adjourned and attention was focused on the election campaign. Romney was invited to the Free Press office in Detroit for a group interview by members of the paper's staff. According to one of the reporters present, Romney appeared hostile to Robinson and when the subject of the Constitutional Convention compromise came up "he really lost his temper, he just blew up." The reporter said the session ended in a "shouting match between Romney and Frank Angelo" (Free Press managing editor).

Thus, Romney came to the statehouse with a

¹³Detroit News, March 18, 1962.

reputation for protesting strongly what he felt were unfair or inaccurate stories. Although nothing comparable to the Free Press incident occurred again, Romney is known to have protested several stories and editorials since he became governor.¹⁴ He has written letters to the editor,¹⁵ and on one occasion called an editorial writer personally and for an hour discussed a piece he had written.¹⁶ In 1965 he protested to a wire service reporter his account of a verbal disagreement he had with state Democratic chairman, Zolton Ferency, his criticism being that he had not lost his temper as the reporter's story indicated.¹⁷

Romney is particularly sensitive to stories that indicate he is quick to anger. One reporter wrote a story that described Romney as "angry" during a meeting with Democratic legislative leaders. The next morning

¹⁴Source e.

¹⁵Source d.

¹⁶Source k.

¹⁷Source f.

a) I was called in, stood at attention, and given a near-tearful plea from the Governor to the effect that he doesn't get angry. 'I wasn't angry,' he insisted. 'That's part of Zolton Ferency's party line. He wants to create the impression that I get angry and blow my top. But I don't get angry, that's a darned lie.' By this time Romney was so angry with me he was pounding his desk with his fist--an incongruous situation. Our meeting finally ended and I was dismissed. Whether that chewing out influenced me in future stories, I'm not sure. I doubt it. I've described him as 'angry' on at least two other occasions, not because I'm trying to needle him, not because I'm buying the Zolton Ferency line (if there is such a thing), but purely because I believe he was angry.

Other reporters interviewed said the Governor had been displeased by stories and editorials, though to their knowledge he had not gone over their heads to editors in protesting a story:

d) He has been angered by pieces written by our people, especially early in his administration when he couldn't understand why we did things the way we did. He didn't have much conception of the purpose or aim of a newspaper reporter's job, and had some idea that a piece didn't convey his exact thoughts on a story or a development. His staff people over the years have related to me that 'the governor didn't like that piece you had last week,' but it never went beyond that. None of my editors ever told me that the man had complained to them about a piece we had written, and there have been some rough ones over the years.

e) He has expressed discontent with a few stories, some by me and some by others who write for my paper, but I have never known him to complain to my editors. He has notoriously complained to the Free Press about coverage by former Capitol reporter James Robinson and others. He is quick to retort when he disagrees with a story. He is extremely sensitive to what he considers criticism. He takes umbrage quickly. In recent

years he tends to speak ambiguously. His egotism is a factor. I once asked him 'what have you learned about government in the Constitutional Convention that surprised you the most?' His reply: 'Well, I had considerable experience in government before this, you know.'

a) He takes stories quite personally and is inclined to adopt the attitude that whenever you present the other side of a story you are attempting to embarrass or undermine him. He doesn't like to be described as getting 'angry' even though he entered the job with a reputation as a notorious blowtop. That reputation has diminished considerably during his his four years in office, but he's still sensitive about it.

Thus Romney is sensitive to criticism, though not as openly as he was when he entered politics. And he is particularly sensitive about references to his sensitivity.

Fluctuating Positions

Members of the Capitol press corps consider themselves to have a "watchdog" function in state government.¹⁸ As recorders of history, they are concerned with facts--facts that can be transmitted with confidence to their readers. Governor Romney's positions on state and national issues are of critical importance to newspaper readers. But reporters face a

¹⁸Albert Kaufman, "The State Capitol Political Reporter: A Study in Attempts to Influence the Legislative Process" (unpublished Master's thesis, Department of Political Science, Michigan State University, 1964), p. 52.

problem in interpreting and reporting Romney's positions. As demonstrated in an earlier section of this chapter, much of the problem stems from the Governor's ambiguous language. Of equal importance, however, is his reputation for fluctuations in position statements. The following illustration, provided by a Capitol reporter, points up the problem and offers one opinion about why Romney so easily seems to change his pace:

a) One of the biggest troubles with George Romney is that he will say one thing in one place, reporters will report it, then he'll go somewhere else and insist that he was misquoted at the source of the story. Too often we in Lansing are stuck with the problem of not knowing what he said in the original instance. Therefore, we are used by him to send out the denials and we don't have the adequate background to ask the questions that might pin him down.

The reporter offered the following example which took place just prior to the 1964 Republican National Convention:

Romney went out to San Francisco to make a pitch before the platform committee. This was at a time when he was trying not to alienate the whole party by opposing Goldwater and what he stood for in the area of civil rights, but at the time he was also concerned with preserving his own image as a great civil libertarian. There were at least 100 reporters covering these sessions. They came from the country's top newspapers. Only good newspapers send reporters to such functions in the first place. There was Tony Lewis from the New York Times, for instance, and top names from other papers and wire services were there.

Romney's proposals were duly reported. Nationwide the word went out on what he stood for. The next day, Romney, obviously disturbed by the re-

ports, called a press conference in Lansing and tried to 'straighten out' what he was proposing in San Francisco the day before. None of the reporters in Lansing had been at the San Francisco meeting. They could only go sheeplike to their teletypes and telephones and send out the new Gospel according to Romney. Had Romney tried to make his denial in front of those hundred or more sharp reporters, they would have skewered him. And he would well have deserved it. Instead, he got away with his denial.

This appears to me to indicate an unawareness that the world is covered with an instantaneous news network. He seems to feel that words spoken in San Francisco will never get back to his home territory. Either that or he's cynically using reporters for his own advantage.

Vietnam is the issue most often associated with Romney's reputation for occasional inconsistency. It was to "clarify" statements he had made on Vietnam that Romney called the press conference transcribed in the earlier section on clarity.¹⁹ The Governor's statements on Vietnam comprised the only issue on which a majority of the sample in the previous chapter disagreed with him editorially.²⁰

On December 16, 1966, the Detroit News carried an article by editorial writer Bruce B. Van Dusen outlining Romney's inconsistencies on Vietnam. All of the following dates and quotes are taken from that article.

¹⁹Ibid. p.95.

²⁰Ibid. p.66.

On April 23, 1965, in Amsterdam, Holland, Romney was quoted as saying "Our major objective there is to keep South Vietnam from being overrun by those who would deprive it of its freedom." Romney also said "In broad principle, the action we are taking is the only one we can take." After returning from Vietnam the following December, Romney called the war "morally right and necessary," and said "Our intervention has saved South Vietnam from defeat and tyranny. . . . It probably has prevented a shift in the balance of power greater than if Hitler had conquered Europe." But on July 7, 1966, at the National Governors' Conference in Los Angeles, Romney said, "I think getting involved in a land war on the scale we're involved was a mistake and is a mistake."

Van Dusen said it was difficult to tell whether Romney was a "hawk" or a "dove" because on March 16, 1965 he said in New York the United States should be wary of a negotiated settlement, calling it "a very unfortunate thing to attempt," and adding he had "felt for a long time we should make a stranger stand." But only two weeks later in Holland the Governor was quoted as saying "We should be ready to talk and negotiate at any time."

On February 8, 1965, Romney saw "no alternative" to President Johnson's decision to bomb North Vietnam. But the following October he told the Illinois Chamber of Commerce that U.S. strategy was "inadequate" because "it is a military strategy for attaining military goals,. . . to protect the status quo rather than spread freedom which should be our real objective."

Van Dusen concluded, "In sum, it is unfair to say the Governor's views on Vietnam have been uncertain. They have been certain enough, but consistency is something else again."

Like Source "a", the reporter quoted below believes Romney's tendency to shift positions reflects a lack of awareness of the of the function of the newsmen who report his actions. He introduces a new element, however, a fear of newspapermen early in the Governor's political career.

d) Often he gets fuzzy about what he means, probably because he hasn't figured out what he wants, or means, to say. His views on Vietnam are in point. He seems to pick up new ideas and views as he goes along, often to confound his listeners and make them know what he is talking about. He is groping on Vietnam and has been for a long time.

Until a couple of years ago, he was consistently confusing to some of the better informed members of the press. He had been feeling his way along and he wasn't sure what would happen after the words came out. This can be attributed to his fear of newspapers and newspapermen and a lack of preparation. While he was with Citizens for Michigan and in the Constitutional Convention he

found he could handle this type of work lightly and without too much preparation, and, so to speak, live off his reputation as a rising star in state politics. He changed seemingly from week to week on positions, hoping the boys wouldn't notice the change. He dislikes to be reminded that a position, say this week, is different from the position he took on a similar issue a couple of months ago.

Whatever the reason for Romney's fluctuations, they have been perceived by the press and present problems to reporters charged with covering Romney over a long period of time. The reasons for Romney's changes of position are not within the scope of this thesis, but they would be of critical importance to any study of Romney the political man.

EPILOGUE

Newspaper clippings, press conference transcripts and written observations of reporters, cannot fully express the style of Governor Romney in dealing with the press. They say nothing of the man's charisma, an abstract quality not easily measured which, in the opinion of the author, plays a key role in the Governor's day to day relations with reporters. Although the data on the views of editors and editorial writers toward Romney firmly establishes a Republican press in Michigan, it does not warrant the objective conclusion that any Republican governor would have the support of the press. But such a conclusion can be made at least with subjective confidence. The study does not attempt to analyze the political motives of Governor Romney in dealing with the press. Yet to believe that he is not at times politically motivated would be naive.

The fact that an official uses the press to disseminate his own ideas to the public does not test the social responsibility theory of the press. Because of his position his ideas are of concern to the public, whether they are distributed for politically-motivated

reasons or not. Abuse results only when the press gives itself over to the establishment. Douglass Cater called this "the basic conflict of interest that exists between government and the press:"

Here I would simply point out that the official and the reporter are moved by fundamentally different compulsions. The official's first response to a newsworthy event is assimilative. He attempts to relate it to the broad body of record on which he precariously builds his policies. The reporter's first impulse is distributive. He seeks to communicate the newsworthy event as speedily and widely as possible.¹

In this particular study of the official and the reporter the following factors in the relationship are brought out:

1. Governor Romney's business career in Washington and Detroit gave him a background in public relations and experience in dealing with the press, but his dealings with political reporters dates only from 1961. His techniques and mannerisms changed during his years as governor, and Capitol reporters believe these changes were the result of acquired knowledge of working politics and the role of the press.

2. Romney meets almost daily with the press in an atmosphere of informality. His press conferences are not highly structured and no rigid rules bind the

¹Cater, p. 17.

length of the session or the issues discussed. This plus his availability for private interviews has given him a reputation for accessibility to the press.

3. The Michigan press is strongly oriented toward the Republican party generally and Governor Romney specifically. His opponents have charged that a "Romney" press exists in the state. Over-all editorial reaction toward Romney has been favorable though he has been widely criticized on issues such as fiscal reform and Vietnam.

4. Editors' opinions indicate the image Michigan readers have of Romney is positive. They see him as honest, efficient and dedicated, but perhaps lacking in personal warmth.

5. Because of his position as governor, the presidential aura surrounding him, and his own political public relations abilities, Capitol reporters regard Romney as an important newsmaker. His most appreciated quality, from their standpoint, is his accessibility.

6. Governor Romney presents some distinct problems to the reporters covering him. His language is often complex, awkward and confusing. He is sensitive to criticism, stories that describe him as angry, and accounts which he believes do not accurately depict

his positions. He has changed direction on some key issues, particularly Vietnam, and has a reputation for efforts at "clarifying" statements attributed to him in newspaper accounts.

These factors, added together and supplemented by the background material presented in this thesis, form a description of Governor Romney's relations with the Michigan press. They do not allow confident discussion of Romney's motivations or objectives. They do not comment on Romney the political man.

APPENDIX A

Mike Morrison
1623-H Spartan Village
Michigan State University
East Lansing, Michigan

Dear Sir:

Please excuse the informality of this correspondence as the result of a graduate student's poverty and the logistical problem involved in contacting more than 50 editorial writers in Michigan.

I'm in the middle of a master's thesis on Governor Romney's press relations and would appreciate about five minutes of your time in helping me determine how well he survives in the state's editorial columns.

Enclosed please find a short questionnaire. The answers to the questions can hopefully be answered in a word or two so as not to become an imposition on you. I would appreciate your prompt attention and if you want to expand on any of the questions, please feel free to do so.

I don't think any of the questions are particularly controversial, but I will not identify either you or your newspaper in my thesis unless you indicate in your reply that you have no objections to my doing so.

Thanks in advance for your help.

Sincerely,

MIKE MORRISON

APPENDIX B

1. What has been the over-all editorial reaction of your paper to Governor Romney--positive or negative?
2. Who did your paper support in 1962 and 1964 for Governor? Have you gone on record for a candidate yet this year?
3. What has been the editorial reaction of your paper--positive or negative -- to the following:
 - Romney's legislative record?
 - His tax reform proposals?
 - His disavowal of Barry Goldwater in 1964?
 - His statements on Vietnam?
 - His statements about not being dominated by party or special interests? Has he lived up to them?
 - The possibility that he might leave the statehouse in the middle of his next term to run for President?
4. What policies or actions of the Governor have been criticized in your editorial columns most severely? Which have been supported most ardently? (One or two examples of each is sufficient).
5. What aspects of the Governor's administration or personal life do you think contribute most significantly to a favorable public image?

6. What aspects have hurt his image?
7. Would you say Romney enjoys a better press than Williams or Swainson did? Why or why not?
8. How would you characterize the Michigan press:
 - Solidly Republican?
 - Generally pro-Republican?
 - Objective, with a slight tendency to favor the GOP?
 - Bi-partisan?
9. How does Romney rank with local, national and other statewide figures as a topic for editorial comment in your paper?
10. Would you classify Romney as liberal, conservative or middle-of-the-road?

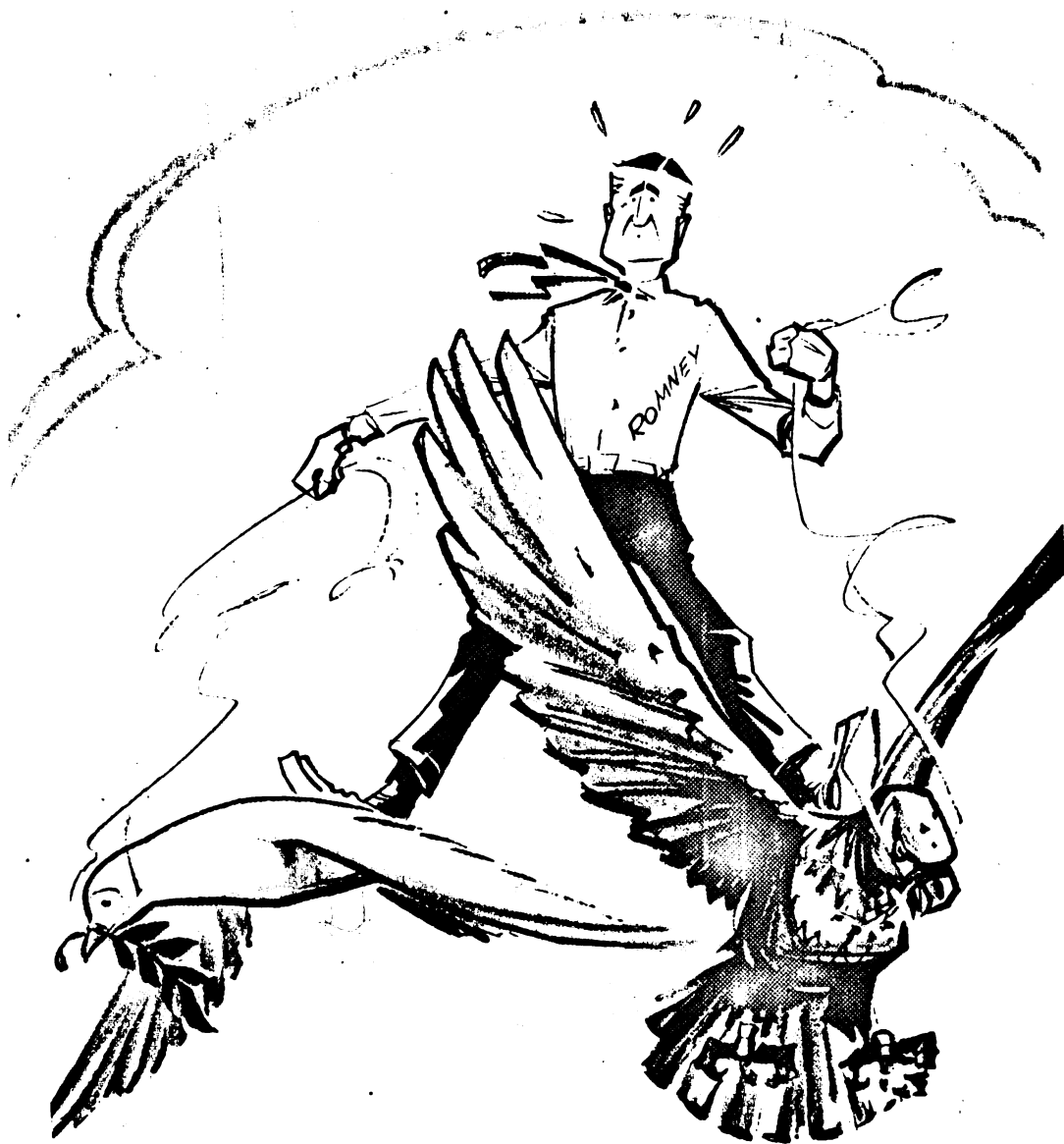
APPENDIX C

NEIBERON

1. How long on the Capitol beat and who with?
2. What problems peculiar to Romney himself have you encountered in writing about him? Any policies or practices of his make your job difficult?
3. How is he as a news source? Is he evasive, does he take offense at questions at times? How truthful are his answers?
4. How accessible is he. How many times have you interviewed him other than at formal press conferences? What were the occasions?
5. Has either he or members of his staff ever protested a story you wrote, or a story carried by your paper? Does he complain to editors about stories?
6. What contrasts or comparisons can you draw between Romney's methods in dealing with the press and those of Williams and Swainson? How does he compare in effectiveness?

7. What specific changes in Romney's dealings with the press since he first hit public life point up the fact that he has matured in this respect?

8. Does Romney have favorites--reporters who whom he's more accessible?



Dolan

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reporter, Detroit Free Press; Carl Hudow, Capitol bureau chief, Detroit News; Tom Shawver, reporter, Detroit Free Press; Al Sandner, reporter, Associated Press; Bud Vestal, reporter, Booth Newspapers, Inc.; Robert Voges, reporter, Associated Press.

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