

HOW FIVE MICHIGAN  
DAILY NEWSPAPERS REPORTED  
THE 1966 SENATORIAL CAMPAIGN

Thesis for the Degree of M. A.  
MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY  
CAROL CHAPPELL NORRIS  
1968



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## ABSTRACT

### HOW FIVE MICHIGAN DAILY NEWSPAPERS REPORTED THE 1966 SENATORIAL CAMPAIGN

by Carol Chappell Norris

This study is an investigation of how five Michigan daily newspapers, the Detroit Free Press, the Detroit News, the Lansing State Journal, the Grand Rapids Press, and the Flint Journal, reported the 1966 senatorial campaign.

Microfilm copies of the final city edition of each newspaper from August 3 through November 8 were read, page by page. When a story about either or both candidates was found, the date of publication, story length, exact headline, story position, and page on which the story appeared were noted. A brief resumé of each story's content was also included. Photographs of the candidates, and of their wives, and their size and play in the newspaper were also taken into account. Finally, the editorial preference of each newspaper was analyzed in order to present a complete picture of each paper's total campaign coverage.

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Although story length is relied upon most heavily in analyzing the performance of each newspaper, the total number of stories allotted each candidate, the headlines assigned each story, the wire service or reporter by whom a story was written, and story content are also considered.

It was found that each of the five newspapers included in the study editorially supported Robert P. Griffin in the 1966 senatorial campaign. Three of these newspapers, the Detroit Free Press, the Grand Rapids Press, and the Flint Journal did not, however, allow editorial support for Griffin to influence their news coverage. The Lansing State Journal and the Detroit News, on the other hand, seemed to be guilty of bias throughout the campaign. Not only did the State Journal allow the Republican candidate the biggest advantage of all the newspapers studied in terms of column inches (Griffin, by the end of the campaign, had acquired 168-3/4 column inches more than had Williams), but much more important, the State Journal virtually ignored the Democratic candidate throughout the last week of the campaign.

Although the Detroit News allowed Griffin only one more column inch than Williams, the headlines and content of

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the campaign stories left little doubt as to the preference of the newspaper.

It was found that the Detroit News used no wire service stories in reporting the campaign and the Detroit Free Press used very few. The two Booth newspapers, the Grand Rapids Press and the Flint Journal used more wire service stories than did the Free Press, but they relied primarily on Booth reporters and their own local staffs, especially during the latter half of the campaign. The Lansing State Journal, on the other hand, relied almost exclusively on wire service stories.

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By

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A THESIS

Submitted to  
Michigan State University  
in partial fulfillment of the requirements  
for the degree of

MASTER OF ARTS

School of Journalism

1968

2 81767

Accepted by the faculty of the School of Journalism,  
College of Communication Arts, Michigan State University, in  
partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Master of  
Arts degree.

W. Cameron Mayers  
Director of Thesis

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Were it not for the Library of the State of Michigan and its many thoughtful and knowledgeable librarians, this study could never have been completed. My thanks go also to Dr. W. Cameron Meyers, whose kind and ever patient guidance succeeded in driving me forward time and time again. And finally, thanks to my husband, who has consistently helped me in so many important ways toward the completion of this thesis.



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HOW FIVE MICHIGAN DAILY NEWSPAPERS REPORTED  
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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

But the only security of all, is in a free press. The force of public opinion cannot be resisted, when permitted freely to be expressed. The agitation it produces must be submitted to. It is necessary, to keep the waters pure.

--Thomas Jefferson<sup>1</sup>

Some of the episodes that led to the establishment of the principles of American liberty occurred in the United States. Some happened in England and on the European continent. Some occurred before there was a United States. All immigrants of whatever time brought with them memories of prior experiences and accepted rules of life. What American forefathers thought of liberty was determined both by their

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<sup>1</sup>Thomas Jefferson to the Marquis de Lafayette, Nov. 4, 1823, quoted in Frank Luther Mott, Jefferson and the Press (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1943), pp. 62-63.

interests in time of controversy, and by their remembrance of what seemed reasonable and just.

The event that had most to do with the acceptance of the principle of freedom of the press occurred in England when the English-speaking colonies were just being settled. Like so many other events of far-reaching significance, it grew out of what seemed at first a personal and private quarrel between John Milton, the poet, and the opinionated Presbyterian ministers who at the moment seemed to be the government of England. If the preachers in Parliament had been a little less contemptuous of the rights of British subjects to state their own opinions, and if John Milton had been a little more inclined to accept without defiance the imperious commands of the Scottish preachers, the recognition of the rights of Englishmen to uncensored publication of their thoughts might have had to await some other suitable occasion. As it happened, the haughty attitude of the ministers and the obstinate resourcefulness of the poet resulted in his writing of his argument of a free press, projected in the Areopagitica, a speech of Mr. John Milton for the Liberty of Unlicensed Printing, to the Parliament of England, published November 25, 1644. In his argument to

the Parliament, "Milton represents the ideal community in which controversial proceeding freely among all who wish to speak was counted upon to facilitate a reasonable consensus. This model community, free to discuss and to decide, was secure in the faith that truth wins out over error in public debate."<sup>2</sup>

During the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries in western Europe, "rulers of the time used the press to inform the people of what the rulers thought they should know and the policies the rulers thought they should support."<sup>3</sup> The press belonged to the king, or to an office of the king, and accordingly, publishing was a kind of arrangement between the Crown and the publisher, "in which the former granted a monopoly right and the latter gave support."<sup>4</sup> The office of the ruler retained the right to determine policy, to license publisher and printer, and to censor, if it so desired.

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<sup>2</sup>J. Edward Gerald, The Social Responsibility of the Press (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1963), p. 11.

<sup>3</sup>Fred S. Siebert, Theodore Peterson, and Wilbur Schramm, Four Theories of the Press (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1963), p. 2.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid.

Milton's argument, perhaps one of the most searching arguments ever composed in defense of a press free from restraints of government, was not acted upon favorably by the English Parliament; nor were his words widely disseminated at the time; but his ideas inspired men all over the world nearly a hundred years later, notably in the American colonies, which struggled to win greater freedom than they enjoyed already.<sup>5</sup>

By the late seventeenth century in Great Britain and in the American colonies truth no longer was regarded as the property of power. The right to search for truth indeed became one of the inalienable natural rights of man. The press, no longer an instrument of government, became a partner in the search for truth; it served as a guardian for the people to check on government, and on the people's servants in government. Accordingly, it was an imperative that the press be free from government control and influence.<sup>6</sup>

Minorities as well as majorities, the weak as well as the strong, must have access to the press. This is the theory of the press which

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<sup>5</sup> Edwin Emery, The Press and American (2d edition, revised; Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1963), p. 15.

<sup>6</sup> Siebert, Peterson, and Schramm, Four Theories of the Press, p. 34.

was written into our Bill of Rights. For two hundred years the United States and Great Britain have maintained this kind of press, almost wholly free of government influence and encouraged to serve as a "Fourth Estate" in the governing process.

In America, the framers of the Constitution saw fit to establish freedom of the press in the First Amendment, declaring that

Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; or abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press; or of the people peaceably to assemble, and to petition the government for a redress of grievances.

In the United States, the function of the press--the newspress specifically--is to inform the citizenry, and to entertain. The basic purpose, however, is to help to discover truth, to "assist in the process of solving political and social problems by presenting all manner of evidence and opinion as the basis for decisions."<sup>8</sup> Essential to the process is freedom from government control or regulation. The press is charged with the duty of being the supercustodian--over the President, the Congress, the Courts; it is to provide that check on government that no other institution can provide. The public is subjected to a barrage of information

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<sup>7</sup>Ibid., p. 51.

<sup>8</sup>Ibid.

and opinion, "some of it possibly true, some of it possibly false, and some of it containing elements of both."<sup>9</sup> Ultimately the citizenry, given full information about public affairs, can be trusted to consider the whole, discarding that not in the interest of the people and acting wisely upon that which serves the needs of the individual and society. This is the "self-righting" process.<sup>10</sup>

The press as a medium for disseminating information has a right as well as a duty to inform the public of what business is transacted by the people's servants in all branches of government. The right to freedom of the press, as delineated in the Bill of Rights, of necessity is vague in language and subject to degrees of interpretation. Determining proper limitations to freedom of expression in the mass media in a democratic society is a persistent problem, dependent upon cultural differences and upon the times. Protection of the reputations of individuals generally is a recognized obligation of the state in a democratic society. "Some states perform this duty more assiduously than others, but all recognize the need to restrict the mass media from

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<sup>9</sup> Ibid.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid.

injuring members of society by defamation."<sup>11</sup> The status of the press in a society based upon libertarian principles becomes a problem "of adjustment to democratic political institutions and to the democratic way of life."<sup>12</sup> Accordingly, freedom of expression becomes not absolute but limited. "The only guide is the historical acceptance of specific limitations without the assistance of a unifying concept."<sup>13</sup>

In the American experiment of self-government, what are the principal controls operating on the mass media? In a free enterprise system anyone with the economic means can enter the field of mass communications. His survival will depend on his ability to make a profit. To make a profit he must satisfy the needs and wants of his consumers, whose interest also may be sought by competitors who wish to attract the same market. In the American experiment of self-government, an "informal type of control through the self-righting process and through the free competition in the market place of information, opinions, and entertainment"<sup>14</sup> replaces supervision by the state. What is published must

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<sup>11</sup>Ibid., p. 54

<sup>12</sup>Ibid., p. 50

<sup>13</sup>Ibid., p. 54.

<sup>14</sup>Ibid., pp. 50-71, passim.



not be obscene, it must not libel a private citizen, nor offend a jurist in court. Obscenity is subject to the censorship of the Post Office and the Treasury Departments, and what is obscene depends very much on time and place. Libel is controlled by state and federal law, but the initiative remains with the person injured or threatened with injury. Contempt of court depends on the sensitivity of jurists; and ordinarily it does not involve censorship. In two world wars the American press has voluntarily censored itself for the welfare of the democratic state. Popular government in a free state requires that some responsibility for his behavior be left to the individual citizen.<sup>15</sup> Despite its legal controls and whatever its shortcomings, the American press is an informing press and perhaps the freest in the world. "Freedom of the press is an American shibboleth," Alan Barth, author and distinguished newspaper man, commented in a Nieman Chair Lecture at Marquette University in Milwaukee, Wisconsin.

And although not everyone who uses it [freedom of the press] knows precisely what it means, most Americans would fight for it, and perhaps, even die for it.

It has long been a settled matter in American life that newspapers are entitled to cuss the

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<sup>15</sup>Ibid.

government out as lustily and as unreasonably as they please; but few officials of the government have the hardihood to cuss out the newspapers, and none of them dares to suggest that newspapers be called to account in any way for their supposed misconduct.<sup>16</sup>

Freedom implies responsibility. No freedom is absolute; it must be tempered with fairness and reason to be workable. The role and function of the American newspaper is linked closely to the fate of freedom of the press. The primary role of the newspaper in the United States is to inform the people, and it could not do so without freedom to publish news without fear of reprisal from government. The news must be published with integrity.

This study is an investigation of how five Michigan newspapers of general circulation made use of freedom of the press as they reported a state-wide political campaign. The campaign, for a seat in the United States Senate, took place from August to November, 1966. The five newspapers studied were the Detroit Free Press, the Detroit News, the Flint Journal, the Lansing State Journal, and the Grand Rapids Press.

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<sup>16</sup> Alan Barth, Social Responsibility of the Newspress (Milwaukee: Marquette University Press, 1962), p. 7.

The Detroit Free Press is the only morning paper of the five studied. It has a weekday circulation of 510,221, and a Sunday circulation of 566,120.<sup>17</sup> The Free Press is a regional paper circulating throughout Michigan. In metropolitan Detroit, its daily circulation is 372,070.<sup>18</sup> Its major outstate markets include Ann Arbor, Battle Creek, Flint, Grand Rapids, Kalamazoo, Lansing, Muskegon, and Saginaw.<sup>19</sup> The Free Press is owned by Knight Newspapers, Incorporated, and is a member of the Associated Press, a cooperative, world-wide news gathering agency. It is a client of United Press International, and subscribes to the Chicago Daily News, the New York Times, and the Chicago Tribune-New York News news services. Politically, it calls itself independent.<sup>20</sup>

The Detroit News, an evening paper, has a circulation of 693,972 weekdays, and 942,977 on Sunday.<sup>21</sup> The Detroit

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<sup>17</sup> Editor & Publisher Market Guide (New York: Editor & Publisher Co., Inc., 1967), p. 236. Figures from the Audit Bureau of Circulation, as of March 31, 1966.

<sup>18</sup> The Detroit News Metro Zones (Detroit: Evening News Association, 1967), p. 4.

<sup>19</sup> Facts and Figures on Greater Lansing Trading Area (Lansing: Federated Publications, Inc., 1967), p. 26.

<sup>20</sup> Editor & Publisher International Yearbook (New York: Editor & Publisher Co., Inc., 1966), p. 134.

<sup>21</sup> Editor & Publisher Market Guide, p. 236. Figures

News bought the Detroit Times on November 7, 1960, and the paper is now owned by the Evening News Association. The News is politically independent, and circulates primarily in the Detroit metropolitan area. The News is a member of the Associated Press, and at the time of the campaign the newspaper subscribed to the news services of Dow Jones, North American Newspaper Alliance, New York Herald Tribune, Reuters News Agency, United Press International, Newspaper Enterprise Association, World News Service, World Wide Press, Los Angeles Times-Washington Post News Service, and the London Observer.<sup>22</sup>

The Flint Journal, owned by Booth Newspapers, Incorporated, is an evening newspaper with a weekday circulation of 111,487. On Sunday, the circulation is 111,062.<sup>23</sup> The Journal is politically independent and circulates in the Flint metropolitan area. The Journal is a member of the

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are from the Audit Bureau of Circulation, as of March 31, 1966.

<sup>22</sup> Editor & Publisher International Yearbook, p. 134.

<sup>23</sup> Editor & Publisher Market Guide, p. 238. Figures are from the Audit Bureau of Circulation, as of March 31, 1966.

Associated Press and is also a client of United Press International.<sup>24</sup>

The Lansing State Journal, published in the state capital, is an evening daily with a weekday circulation of 76,112. Its Sunday circulation is 76,434.<sup>25</sup> The State Journal is owned by Federated Publications, Incorporated, and circulates in the Lansing metropolitan area.

Politically, the State Journal is independent-Republican. It is a client of United Press International and is also a member of the Associated Press.

The Grand Rapids Press, politically independent, is an evening paper with a circulation of 130,197 during the week, and 116,508 on Sunday.<sup>26</sup> The Press is owned by Booth Newspapers, Incorporated, and circulates in the Grand Rapids metropolitan area. It is a client of United Press International, and is a member of the Associated Press.<sup>27</sup>

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<sup>24</sup> Editor & Publisher International Yearbook, p. 134.

<sup>25</sup> Editor & Publisher Market Guide, p. 241. Figures are from the Audit Bureau of Circulation, as of March 31, 1966.

<sup>26</sup> Ibid., p. 238. Figures are from the Audit Bureau of Circulation, as of March 31, 1966.

<sup>27</sup> Editor & Publisher International Yearbook, p. 136.

These five newspapers with a combined weekday circulation of 1,521,989, and a combined Sunday circulation of 1,813,001, circulate in areas in which 3,641,523 of the 8,311,400 persons in Michigan live.<sup>28</sup> This figure represents 43.8 per cent of the total population of Michigan.

Microfilm copies of the newspapers were obtained from the State Library of Michigan. When two or more editions of the same newspaper were available, the final city edition was chosen. Each paper was checked, page by page, and when a story about either or both candidates was found, the date of publication, story length, exact headline, story position, and page on which the story appeared were noted. A brief resumé of each story's content was also included. When it seemed significant, various passages were copied exactly for future reference. Pictures of the candidates, and of their wives, were also included in the study. The size and play of each photograph was always taken into account.

A microfilm copy is seldom equal in size to the original object. Thus, the number of column inches assigned to each candidate after reading microfilms of the newspapers in

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<sup>28</sup>Top Outstate Michigan Markets at a Glance (Lansing: Federated Publications, Inc., 1967), p. 1.

this study will vary slightly from the figures that would have been arrived at had the papers themselves been examined. At the same time, however, all of the figures for each newspaper are in relative proportion to one another. Since these figures were used only in relation to the performance of the individual newspaper, and not as a standard of comparison among all five papers, it was not deemed necessary to transpose the figures to their original proportions.

The editorial preference of each newspaper is included in this study not because the author believed that support for either candidate on the editorial page indicated that bias of any kind would automatically appear in the news columns, but only in order to present to the reader a clear and complete understanding of each newspaper's total campaign coverage. Editorials were not, therefore, included in the number of column inches attributed to each candidate. They were instead interpreted as a separate force within themselves.

Although it is clearly not the most significant, nor at times even the most practical measure of bias, the author relied heavily on story length in analyzing the performance of each newspaper in the study. The number of column inches allotted to each candidate is a factor clearly observable to

all. Thus, until another, more accurate standard of measure is found, story length will, of necessity, remain the basis of any study of this nature.

This study is not, however, a mere listing of statistics. Statistics alone have little meaning in themselves; only when they are placed within the framework of events do they assume a degree of importance and validity. Thus, the fact that candidate A received 75-1/2 column inches more than did candidate B does not, in itself, indicate that the newspaper in question was guilty of bias of any kind. The total number of stories allotted each candidate, the headline assigned each story, the wire service or reporter by whom a story was written, and many other factors must also be considered if valid and significant conclusions are to be drawn. Most important, and paradoxically, the area most open to dispute, story content, must be taken into account. Because content analysis is a significant, yet clearly subjective, factor, the author has tried to support any content judgments with one or more direct quotations taken from the story in question. In this way, the reader will not be forced to rely solely on the judgment of the author, but can determine for himself the value of certain conclusions.



In November of 1966, Michigan citizens were involved in the election of a United States Senator. The race was between G. Mennen Williams, a Democrat, and Robert P. Griffin, a Republican.

Griffin, the incumbent, had been appointed to his Senate seat by Republican Governor George W. Romney on May 11, 1966. The seat had been vacant for ten days, since Democratic Senator Patrick V. McNamara had died.<sup>29</sup> McNamara had sat in the Senate since 1954, when he had taken the seat from the incumbent, Homer Ferguson, a Republican. Since that time, the only major state-wide office the Republicans had won was that of the governorship.<sup>30</sup>

At the time of his appointment to the Senate, Griffin was a United States Representative from Michigan's Ninth Congressional District. He was first elected to Congress in 1957. In filling out the unexpired term of Senator McNamara, Griffin had served on the Labor and Public Welfare Committee and the Public Works Committee of the Senate.<sup>31</sup>

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<sup>29</sup>New York Times, May 12, 1966, p. 26.

<sup>30</sup>Flint Journal, Aug. 28, 1966, p. 25.

<sup>31</sup>Detroit Free Press, Oct. 30, 1966, p. 2F.

A graduate of Central Michigan University in 1947, Griffin earned a law degree from the University of Michigan in 1950. The forty-three-year old candidate was a veteran of World War II, having served three years in the Army.<sup>32</sup> Griffin was married in 1947, and had four children ranging in age from five to sixteen.<sup>33</sup>

Williams, the governor of Michigan from 1949 through 1960, held the distinction of serving the greatest number of consecutive terms won by any state governor in American history. He left public office in 1961 to accept President John F. Kennedy's appointment as Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs. He served in this position until March 23, 1966, when he resigned to devote full time to his campaign for the senatorial nomination.<sup>34</sup> He had begun his public career thirty years earlier, when he had served as an attorney for the Social Security Board in Washington, D. C. He had been graduated as a member of Phi Beta Kappa, oldest national scholarship society, by Princeton University in 1933; and he had been graduated with honors, from the

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<sup>32</sup>Grand Rapids Press, Oct. 30, 1966, p. 2F.

<sup>33</sup>Lansing State Journal, Sept. 25, 1966, p. 1D.

<sup>34</sup>New York Times, March 8, 1966, p. 20.

University of Michigan Law School in 1936.<sup>35</sup> Williams was married in 1937, and was the father of three children.<sup>36</sup>

On August 2, 1966, the New York Times heralded the beginning of the battle between Williams and Griffin with this sentence: "DETROIT, Aug. 2--Former Gov. G. Mennen Williams, a long-time Democratic power in Michigan politics, won his party's nomination for the Senate today."

In the Democratic primary election, Williams had been opposed by the youthful mayor of Detroit, Jerome P. Cavanagh. Williams received 60 per cent of the votes cast in the August 2 primary, winning five of every seven votes cast by Democrats in Detroit. Even more astounding was the pro-Williams vote in Detroit's Negro precincts. Final tallies showed Williams' advantage reaching ten to one in some precincts, and as high as fifteen to one in others. In addition, he lost only nine of Michigan's eighty-three counties to Cavanagh.<sup>37</sup>

The victory celebration was held that night at Williams' headquarters in Detroit's Tuller Hotel. Two hours

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<sup>35</sup>Grand Rapids Press, Oct. 30, 1966, p. 33.

<sup>36</sup>Lansing State Journal, Sept. 25, 1966, p. 1D.

<sup>37</sup>Detroit Free Press, Aug. 4, 1966, p. 1.

after the polls had closed, Williams, tall, tanned, and wearing the inevitable green polka-dot bow tie, drove up to the Tuller in a 1966 green Chrysler New Yorker. As he walked into the hotel's Arabian Room, Fred Doyle and his band played the tune "Hello, Dolly!" The words, to no one's surprise, were changed, however, to "Hello, Soapy!"<sup>38</sup> That night victory in November appeared certain to those celebrating victory at the Tuller Hotel.

The Republican candidate had determined, however, to get his campaign off to a quick beginning. As a first step, the California firm of Whittaker-Baxter, which specialized in managing political campaigns, was hired to handle Griffin's.<sup>39</sup> Early on the morning of August 3, at his first press conference as a senatorial candidate, Griffin sounded the keynote of his campaign when he called for ". . . all of Mayor Cavanagh's supporters to join with us in continuing representation for Michigan in the Senate that is above partisanship and beyond the reach of boss control."<sup>40</sup>

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<sup>38</sup>Ibid., Aug. 3, 1966, p. 3. Williams earned the nickname "Soapy" because of his family's ownership of the Mennen Company, producer of men's toiletries.

<sup>39</sup>Ibid., Nov. 5, 1966, p. 15.

<sup>40</sup>Ibid., Aug. 4, 1966, p. 3.

Griffin's major handicap, in the beginning, was his lack of public recognition. "The five-term Representative," the New York Times reported, "has never conducted a state-wide campaign and is said to be better known in Washington than in important wards in Detroit."<sup>41</sup> To combat this handicap and, at the same time, to stress what he termed his "youth and ability" in contrast to "the steamroller tactics of a political machine" headed by Williams, Griffin began a series of radio and television advertisements on the Thursday and Friday following the primary election.<sup>42</sup> In mid-September, Griffin expanded this theme by releasing his campaign song, recorded by Doug Brown and the Omens. Its title was, fittingly enough, "Youth and Experience."<sup>43</sup>

In addition, Griffin relied heavily throughout the campaign on the support of Republican Governor George W. Romney, seeking reelection. It was considered by some political observers as important to the Governor that he prove to fellow Republicans his power was strong enough to pull candidates to victory along with him. Thus, ". . . for the first time

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<sup>41</sup>New York Times, May 12, 1966, p. 2.

<sup>42</sup>Detroit Free Press, Aug. 5, 1966, p. 4B.

<sup>43</sup>Flint Journal, Sept. 18, 1966, p. 64.

in his political career, Romney . . . [had] laid his reputation and enormous vote-getting powers on the line for another candidate."<sup>44</sup> To Republicans, then, the basic question of the campaign seemed to be whether Governor Romney could demonstrate that he was sufficiently attractive and powerful to prove beneficial to candidates who shared a party ticket with him.<sup>45</sup>

The Republican candidate, however, faced a second problem. It seemed that ". . . [his] main distinction--considered a dubious one in the state's Democratic-Labor strongholds--was his sponsorship of the Landrum-Griffin labor legislation."<sup>46</sup> The Landrum-Griffin Act was indeed as partisan an issue as could have been found. Strongly supported by Griffin backers as the "workingman's bill of rights," the federal act was denounced almost unanimously by labor leaders as pro-management. These same labor leaders described Griffin himself

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<sup>44</sup>"Faceless Favorite," Time, Sept. 30, 1966, p. 25.

<sup>45</sup>New York Times, Oct. 23, 1966, p. 3.

<sup>46</sup>Ibid., Oct. 14, 1966, p. 21. The Labor-Management Reporting and Disclosure Act of 1959, better known as the Landrum-Griffin Act, contains provisions for safeguarding and limiting the use of union funds and properties, and prescribes rules for governing union elections and for protecting the rights of union members.

as ". . . a new kind of Republican, loyal to the old Republican values and management aligned, but too supple to be dismissed as a moss back."<sup>47</sup> Thus, it looked at first as if Griffin's sponsorship of the Landrum-Griffin Act alone would be almost enough to assure Williams a victory in November.

Griffin did possess, however, certain advantages that Williams could not claim. As the incumbent, for example, Griffin's Washington press conferences would be covered by the wire services, thus allowing him widespread publicity. In addition, he was also entitled to state-wide mailings at the taxpayer's expense. Probably most important psychologically, was the fact of his incumbency. Williams may have been an ex-governor, but the Republican candidate was Senator Robert Griffin.<sup>48</sup>

Williams, who earned the title, "Boy Wonder," when, at thirty-seven, he beat incumbent Governor Kim Sigler in his first political race,<sup>49</sup> was a controversial figure in Michigan

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<sup>47</sup>Detroit Free Press, Nov. 6, 1966, p. 17.

<sup>48</sup>Ibid., Oct. 15, 1966, p. 11.

<sup>49</sup>"Return of the Boy Wonder," Time, Aug. 12, 1966, p. 12.

politics. The state had encountered fiscal problems during part of his governorship, and this had not been forgotten by Michigan voters. But Williams was well liked by many of the state's citizens. He had revitalized the Democratic party in Michigan, and when he left for Washington in 1961, to become Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs, many of his followers did not forget him.<sup>50</sup>

The New York Times reported:

Mr. Williams is perhaps even more of a symbol than his Republican opponent. His six terms as governor made him a fixture in Michigan politics. He has been alternately reviled as an unthinking tool of organized labor and lauded as the essence of Democratic liberalism for so long that any discernible change in his position seems unlikely.<sup>51</sup>

The Times reporter was discerning. Although it was the first time since 1948 that Williams had run against an incumbent,<sup>52</sup> his campaign style remained much as it had been

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<sup>50</sup> New York Times, Aug. 3, 1966, p. 22. Late in the 1950's and early in the 1960's, a nationwide recession had caused a slump in automobile sales. Automobile production dropped. First Detroit, and then the entire state found itself in serious financial difficulty. By 1958, 13 per cent of Michigan's labor force was unemployed. In 1958, the state treasury had a deficit of more than \$95,000,000.

<sup>51</sup> Ibid., Oct. 23, 1966, p. 3.

<sup>52</sup> Detroit Free Press, Oct. 15, 1966, p. 11.



throughout his political career, ". . . pounding the pavements, touring industrial plants, and shaking hands with ethnic groups, meanwhile making a few speeches."<sup>53</sup>

As August became September and the campaign began to take shape, the major issues appeared to be the war in Vietnam, the related problem of inflation, and Griffin's sponsorship of the Landrum-Griffin Act.

Although the Vietnam war did not evoke much debate between the two candidates, Griffin seized upon the problem of inflation early in the campaign. On September 10, Griffin announced the launching of a state-wide program he called "Operation Price Tag." To get this program under way, Griffin supporters distributed 1,500 questionnaires to housewives at supermarkets across the state. The housewives were asked to fill out and then return the questionnaires, thereby indicating how their family budgets had been affected by inflation. They were also asked to offer suggestions as to how inflation could be controlled.<sup>54</sup>

On October 17, Griffin announced that 64 per cent of the housewives who replied to his survey had said that rising

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<sup>53</sup> Grand Rapids Press, Oct. 10, 1966, p. 25.

<sup>54</sup> Ibid., Sept. 10, 1966, p. 12.

food prices had been most detrimental to their budgets.<sup>55</sup> Griffin and his wife, Marge, who spoke in support of her husband throughout the campaign, then used the results of this survey as evidence that a serious economic problem did indeed exist, for the citizenry, and that Robert P. Griffin was the man to solve that problem.

It had looked at first as if his sponsorship of the Landrum-Griffin Act would be to the total disadvantage of Griffin. Williams opened his campaign by denouncing the act,<sup>56</sup> thus forcing Griffin to its defense. By mid-October, however, in a debate between the candidates at the Economic Club of Detroit, Williams said that he would have voted for the bill had he been a member of the Senate at the time of its passage.<sup>57</sup> This statement was quickly seized upon by Griffin as evidence of an "about face" in Williams' position on the bill. Williams explained that he had meant to say that while still opposed to the original bill, as passed by the U.S. House of Representatives in 1959,<sup>58</sup> he would have

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<sup>55</sup>Ibid., Oct. 17, 1966, p. 29.

<sup>56</sup>Flint Journal, Nov. 6, 1966, p. 73.

<sup>57</sup>Lansing State Journal, Oct. 18, 1966, p. 4.

<sup>58</sup>The version written by Griffin.

voted for the compromise version that had subsequently been signed into law.<sup>59</sup>

Although it is the general agreement of expert observers that the Landrum-Griffin Act, as first proposed, was more pro-management than was the bill after being modified by the House-Senate Conference Committee,<sup>60</sup> Williams' clarification did not have the impact that his original statement had, and most observers agreed that his image seemed to have been hurt in the process.

The main theme of Williams' campaign was an attack on Griffin's congressional voting record. In speech after speech, Williams called Griffin "Senator No," and denounced what he termed Griffin's "negative political philosophy."<sup>61</sup> Griffin was, Williams said, simply an "election year liberal."<sup>62</sup>

The Williams campaign was from the beginning beset with bad luck. Soon after his August 2 primary election

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<sup>59</sup>Grand Rapids Press, Oct. 9, 1966, p. 19.

<sup>60</sup>Detroit Free Press, Nov. 3, 1966, p. 19C.

<sup>61</sup>Ibid., Oct. 5, 1966, p. 3.

<sup>62</sup>Grand Rapids Press, Oct. 26, 1966, p. 32.

victory, Williams entered Jennings Hospital in Detroit for the removal of six calcium growths.<sup>63</sup> Five weeks of campaigning were thus lost during late August and early September as Williams recuperated from his operation.<sup>64</sup> And on November 2, for the first time since his 1948 campaign against Republican Governor Kim Sigler, Williams' voice gave out and he was forced to discontinue his campaign for three important days.<sup>65</sup> Although Williams overcame his laryngitis before election day, the damage done to his campaign was irreparable.

Throughout the state, voters went to the polls on November 8, 1966, under dark and gloomy skies. As they made their way through the fog, rain, and drizzle,<sup>66</sup> who could have known what part the press had played in determining which lever they were about to pull?

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<sup>63</sup>Detroit Free Press, Aug. 20, 1966, p. 1.

<sup>64</sup>Flint Journal, Nov. 3, 1966, p. 54.

<sup>65</sup>Ibid., Nov. 4, 1966, p. 3.

<sup>66</sup>Lansing State Journal, Nov. 8, 1966, p. 1.

## CHAPTER II

### DETROIT FREE PRESS

The Detroit Free Press, the only morning paper in the study, allotted a total of 1,696 column inches to stories about the Williams-Griffin senatorial campaign.<sup>1</sup> In previous years, the Free Press had carried its campaign stories wherever space could be found. For the 1966 elections, however, the Free Press inaugurated a feature it called "Campaign '66." "Campaign '66" was carried daily on page three of section one, usually in the first three columns. It was made up of a single headline under which stories concerning the various candidates seeking state or federal office could be found. City Editor Neal Shine said that "Campaign '66" was planned by the newspaper to give readers the distinct impression that the Free Press was making every effort to cover all of the candidates fairly and equally.<sup>2</sup> In another effort

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<sup>1</sup>Detroit Free Press, Aug. 3-Nov. 8, 1966.

<sup>2</sup>Interview with Neal Shine, City Editor, Detroit Free Press, May 5, 1967.

toward unbiased coverage, the Free Press alternated the reporters assigned to cover the candidates. Wire service stories were seldom used. The majority of its coverage was provided for the Free Press by six men: William Serrin and Van Sauter, staff writers; James Mudge, chief of the city-county bureau; Patrick J. Owens, labor writer; Tom Shawrer, politics writer; and Roger Lane, of the capitol bureau of Lansing.

In addition to its "Campaign '66" feature, which first appeared on October 3, the Free Press also published a special campaign supplement on October 30. The supplement was a twelve-page tabloid. In it, Griffin and Williams were each allocated a biographical sketch measuring 3 inches in depth, and an accompanying picture one column wide and 1 and 1/2 inches deep.

Of the total 1,696 column inches published about the Williams-Griffin campaign, 766-3/4 inches were news stories about Williams. Eight hundred fifty-seven inches were devoted to Griffin. Stories concerning both candidates totaled 71-1/2 inches. Although it is impossible to measure exactly, the slight margin in favor of Griffin disappears when Free Press coverage of the Republican "blitz" is taken into account.



The "blitz" was the GOP finalé to the campaign. It began October 31 when the Republican "action team," headed by Governor George W. Romney, and made up of all state-wide Republican candidates, chartered two helicopters and a twin-engine DC-3 airplane, and made a three-day tour of forty Michigan cities.<sup>3</sup> A helicopter tour of thirty-five key suburbs in the Detroit area followed on November 4.<sup>4</sup> Altogether, this portion of the blitz covered more than 2,000 miles.<sup>5</sup> In addition to these state-wide personal appearances, Griffin appeared with Governor Romney on three hour-long telethons originating in Jackson, Kalamazoo, and Detroit,<sup>6</sup> on a thirty-minute program broadcast on election eve, and on two-hundred spot television advertisements.<sup>7</sup> To cover the blitz, a political phenomenon in itself, as well as the candidates, the Free Press often published round-up stories instead of reporting the activities of each candidate in individual accounts.

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<sup>3</sup>Detroit News, Oct. 15, 1966, p. 7.

<sup>4</sup>Lansing State Journal, Oct. 15, 1966, p. 2.

<sup>5</sup>Ibid., Nov. 2, 1966, p. 11C.

<sup>6</sup>Ibid., Oct. 15, 1966, p. 2.

<sup>7</sup>Detroit News, Oct. 15, 1966, p. 7.



Thus, some of the space assigned Griffin actually was used to cover other Republican candidates and events. Because of the nature of the Democratic campaign, in which the candidates seldom toured an area or district together, most of the space allotted to Williams was used only to cover him. When the effect of the blitz on Free Press campaign coverage is taken into account, the number of column inches of news space attained by each candidate becomes almost equal.

Coverage of the campaign by the Free Press can be divided into two parts. In the first part, beginning August 3, the day after the Democratic primary election, and ending October 3, when the Free Press began what an editor called its "in-depth" coverage of the campaign,<sup>8</sup> Williams received by far most of the coverage. Three hundred forty-nine and one-fourth column inches were used for stories about Williams; only 160 column inches, on the other hand, were allotted to Griffin.<sup>9</sup> Obviously, therefore, Griffin received more coverage during the latter half of the campaign. Griffin managed to accumulate 696 inches during this period, while Williams attained only 417-1/2 inches.<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>8</sup> Interview with Shine.

<sup>9</sup> Detroit Free Press, Aug. 3-Oct. 3, 1966, passim.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid., Oct. 4-Nov. 8, 1966, passim.

The preponderance of stories devoted to Williams during the first part of the campaign could have several explanations. The Democratic primary election race between Jerome P. Cavanagh, mayor of Detroit, and Williams aroused much interest, especially in Detroit. Williams, as the primary winner, was thus given widespread coverage by the Detroit newspapers. In addition, on August 16, what was at first reported to be a "mild kidney infection" sent Williams to Jennings Hospital in Detroit.<sup>11</sup> On August 19, Dr. Albert L. Steinbach, Williams' personal physician, performed a two-hour operation on the Democratic candidate,<sup>12</sup> in which a cluster of six calcium growths (uretercalculi), similar to kidney stones, were removed.<sup>13</sup> The Free Press provided 48 column inches solely to report Williams' operation and recuperation.<sup>14</sup> Meanwhile, aside from Griffin's appearance at several Labor Day rallies, most of his time until October was spent on senatorial business in Washington, D.C.

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<sup>11</sup>Ibid., Aug. 16, 1966, p. 1.

<sup>12</sup>Flint Journal, Aug. 19, 1966, p. 1.

<sup>13</sup>Lansing State Journal, Aug. 19, 1966, p. 1.

<sup>14</sup>Detroit Free Press, Aug. 16-Sept. 6, 1966, passim.

After the Free Press began its in-depth coverage on October 3, there were only twelve days<sup>15</sup> on which Williams did not receive coverage of some kind. An attack of laryngitis on November 2<sup>16</sup> could account, however, for the absence of stories relating to Williams on November 3, 5, and 7. Griffin accumulated a total of seven days<sup>17</sup> without a story. Although Griffin received more space as counted in column inches, Williams' name was kept before the public almost as much as was the Republican candidate's.

The Free Press published twenty-five photographs of Williams, with a total length of 73-1/2 column inches, and a total width of forty-six columns.<sup>18</sup> Only seventeen pictures of Griffin, totaling 46-1/4 column inches in length, and thirty columns in width were published.<sup>19</sup> Although Griffin held a slight advantage in the number of column inches of

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<sup>15</sup>Ibid., Oct. 4, 7, 11, 16, 17, 18, 23, 24, 31, Nov. 3, 5, 7, 1966, passim.

<sup>16</sup>Ibid., Nov. 2, 1966, p. 3.

<sup>17</sup>Ibid., Oct. 5, 10, 17, 24, 26, 31, Nov. 7, 1966, passim.

<sup>18</sup>Ibid., Aug. 3-Nov. 8, 1966, passim.

<sup>19</sup>Ibid.

news printed about his campaign, Williams surpassed Griffin in the number and the size of the photographs published.

Editorially, the Free Press came out firmly in support of Griffin. In a series of seven editorials beginning on August 4 and ending November 7,<sup>20</sup> Free Press editors tried to persuade their readers that Williams was an unsophisticated, old-fashioned campaigner who did nothing more than shake hands and kiss babies during the primary campaign.<sup>21</sup> In addition, the editors said, Williams showed himself to be nothing but a has-been, with the same old answers to new and vital questions during the senatorial campaign.<sup>22</sup> Griffin, on the other hand, was seen as "hard-working, dedicated, independent, and intelligent,"<sup>23</sup> a man who "knows what he's talking about."<sup>24</sup> The campaign itself, however, according to the Free Press, did not create enough excitement "to rouse a light sleeper,"<sup>25</sup> mainly because

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<sup>20</sup>Ibid., Aug. 4, Sept. 7, Oct. 8, 19, 26, Nov. 2, 7, 1966, passim.

<sup>21</sup>Ibid., Aug. 4, 1966, p. 13.

<sup>22</sup>Ibid., Oct. 26, 1966, p. 16

<sup>23</sup>Ibid.

<sup>24</sup>Ibid., Nov. 2, 1966, p. 12.

<sup>25</sup>Ibid., Oct. 8, 1966, p. 16.

Williams " . . . seems to have lost much of his zest for politicking, and Robert Griffin, though hard-working and sincere, does not have the instinct for the jugular that makes a lively campaign."<sup>6</sup>

Without question, it would be possible for a candidate to have attained the vast majority of coverage as counted in column inches, and still complain honestly that he had received a "bad press." Story content is obviously much more important than mere story length. Judging the "goodness" or "badness" of story content is, however, risky at best. What to one observer is a "fair" or even "favorable" story is to another a narrow-minded, partisan account. As far as the author can determine, however, the Free Press succeeded in treating both candidates equally throughout the campaign. Not only was the number of column inches devoted to each candidate by the Free Press fairly close, but story content seemed almost always to have been written without any attempt on the part of the reporter to sway the reader in any manner. Thus, it would seem that the Free Press succeeded in limiting its obvious preference for the Republican candidate to its rightful place on the editorial page.

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<sup>26</sup>Ibid., Nov. 7, 1966, p. 12.

### CHAPTER III

#### GRAND RAPIDS PRESS

The Grand Rapids Press did not reserve a special page for campaign news as did the Free Press; instead, stories about the senatorial candidates seemed to be placed wherever they would fit. Often they were printed on what the Press called its local page--a page that moved its position in the total newspaper from day to day. The Press printed a total of 888-1/2 column inches about the Williams-Griffin campaign.<sup>1</sup> Four hundred five of these inches were devoted to Williams, 378-3/4 inches to Griffin, and 104-3/4 inches to stories mentioning both candidates.

The Press published a special eight-page, eight-column, standard size "Campaign '66" section in its October 30 edition. On the first page of the section, a 2-1/2 inch by one column photograph of both Williams and Griffin was published, and a biographical account, about 2-1/2 inches in length, for each candidate was printed.

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<sup>1</sup>Grand Rapids Press, Aug. 3-Nov. 8, 1966, passim.

Prior to October 3, the Press relied primarily on wire service stories about the campaign. After that date, Bud Vestal, Robert Longstaff, and William Kulsea, all of the Lansing bureau, maintained by Booth Newspapers, and Wallace DeMaagd, Jack Bloom, and Maurice De Jonge, political reporters for the Press, covered most of the campaign. The same reporter, Maurice De Jonge, was assigned to cover the local appearances of both Williams and Griffin.<sup>2</sup>

As was the case with the Free Press, Williams received more coverage during the early stages of the campaign, while Griffin was more heavily covered during the latter half. During the period from August 3 through October 3, 186 column inches of news were given to Williams, as compared to 139-1/4 column inches assigned to Griffin. In the final period, Griffin received 239-1/2 inches, while Williams was given 219 inches. The difference between these figures becomes more significant when certain facts are taken into account. During the first phase of the campaign, Williams received more column inches in campaign stories than did Griffin. Griffin, however, was making news, not only as a campaigner, but also

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<sup>2</sup>Letter from Edgar M. Woods, News Editor, Grand Rapids Press, Feb. 13, 1967.

as a senator; news which kept his name before the public, but which is not included in this study. During the latter half of the campaign, however, when both men were campaigning full time, Griffin not only merited more column inches of reportage per se, but also a total of more stories. During the last important two weeks of the campaign, the Press failed to print a story mentioning Griffin only on November 5. On the other hand, a story headlined "Griffin Now Haunts Williams with Labor Legislation 'Millstone,'" which contained an analysis of the Williams-Griffin dispute over the Landrum-Griffin Act unfavorable to the Democratic candidate, was printed on October 23. In addition, Williams was not mentioned in either the October 25, or the October 28 issues of the paper. Finally, on October 30, a 52-1/2 inch analysis of the campaign by the Booth reporters who had covered it for the Press, appeared on page one. The story, headlined "Senate Race Goes Down To The Wire," was begun in the upper left hand corner of the page, and was continued on page three. The campaign itself was described as one in which, ". . . issues were never established clearly, much less debated; the personalities and 'images' of the candidates overshadowed them." In a later discussion of the candidates, the reporters said,



"His [Williams'] campaign never got off the ground and Griffin scored campaign points when Williams surprised his own party by agreeing with Griffin on two big issues; the Landrum-Griffin act and inflation."

Although a newspaper has, without question, the right and the obligation to analyze and assess important issues, it would seem that this type of comment belongs not on page one, but on the editorial page where opinion can be clearly differentiated from a straight news story.

Neither candidate seemed to hold an advantage in story placement, although the Press did not seem to make any effort to place each candidate's story side-by-side, or even on the same page. News about Williams appeared on page one three times--on August 3, the day after he defeated Detroit Mayor Jerome P. Cavanagh for the Democratic senatorial nomination; on August 19, when he underwent surgery at Jennings Hospital in Detroit for removal of six calcium growths; and on October 30, when Robert F. Kennedy, Democratic Senator from New York, visited Michigan to stump for Williams. A four inch by three column picture of Williams accompanied the story of Williams' primary victory, and a five inch by four column picture of Robert Kennedy, Williams, Michigan

Attorney General Frank J. Kelley, and Democratic gubernatorial candidate Zolton Ferency was published alongside the October 30 story.

Griffin made page one news twice--once on August 28, when the Press published a four inch by three column photograph picturing all of the state-wide Republican candidates, and once on October 30. The October 30 story was a 1-1/4 inch Associated Press release explaining that the latest Detroit News poll<sup>3</sup> showed Griffin leading his Democratic opponent 51 per cent to 46 per cent, with 3 per cent of the voters undecided.

The Press used few pictures of the candidates during the campaign. Aside from the 2-1/2 inch by one column head shot of each candidate published in the Press's special

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<sup>3</sup>The Detroit News hired Richard W. Oundersluys, President of the Market-Opinion Research Co., to conduct a series of polls throughout the state to determine how well each of the candidates for state-wide office was running. The polls concerning the Williams-Griffin campaign were published by the News on Sept. 19, Oct. 10, and Nov. 7. The Sept. 19 poll showed Griffin with 51 per cent of the vote, and Williams with 48 per cent. By Oct. 10, the News claimed that Griffin had retained 51 per cent, while Williams had dropped to 46 per cent. The final poll, published the day before the election, gave Griffin 53 per cent of the vote compared to 44 percent for Williams.

campaign section,<sup>4</sup> a total of four pictures were published of Williams. The first was taken when he won the Democratic primary,<sup>5</sup> the second when he visited Grand Rapids,<sup>6</sup> the third when Vice-President Hubert H. Humphrey visited Michigan,<sup>7</sup> and the fourth when New York Democratic Senator Robert F. Kennedy stumped through the state in his behalf.<sup>8</sup> Altogether, these photographs occupied 16-1/2 inches by fourteen columns.

Griffin's picture was published by the Press five times: when he posed with all of the state-wide GOP candidates,<sup>9</sup> when he twisted his ankle at the Michigan State Fair,<sup>10</sup> when former Republican President Dwight D. Eisenhower endorsed him for the senate seat,<sup>11</sup> when he and Governor George Romney climbed a fence to gain admittance to an

<sup>4</sup>Grand Rapids Press, Oct. 30, 1966, pp. 33-40, passim.

<sup>5</sup>Ibid., Aug. 3, 1966, p. 1.

<sup>6</sup>Ibid., Oct. 7, 1966, p. 51.

<sup>7</sup>Ibid.

<sup>8</sup>Ibid., Oct. 31, 1966, p. 13.

<sup>9</sup>Ibid., Aug. 28, 1966, p. 1.

<sup>10</sup>Ibid., Aug. 30, 1966, p. 12.

<sup>11</sup>Ibid., Aug. 31, 1966, p. 22.

American Federation of Labor-Congress of Industrial Organizations-sponsored Labor Day rally,<sup>12</sup> and when New York Republican Senator Jacob Javits attended a dinner held in behalf of Griffin.<sup>13</sup> Griffin's wife, Marge, was photographed twice while campaigning in support of her husband.<sup>14</sup> In the aggregate, pictures of Griffin filled 25-1/4 inches by seventeen columns.

Editorially, the Press came out in favor of Griffin. On August 4, in an editorial headlined "Now for November," the Press lamented the fact that the contest between Jerome P. Cavanagh and Williams had been a "dull affair." It went on to predict, however, that ". . . Griffin can be expected to make a real fight of it in the runoff with Williams. . . . He is a tough campaigner and may well attract some votes that went to Cavanagh in the primary." In their next editorial concerning the Williams-Griffin campaign, "Setting the Record Straight,"<sup>15</sup> the Press advised union members that ". . . [they] owe Griffin their gratitude for the Landrum-Griffin

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<sup>12</sup>Ibid., Sept. 6, 1966, p. 45.

<sup>13</sup>Ibid., Oct. 27, 1966, p. 42.

<sup>14</sup>Ibid., Oct. 28, 1966, p. 45.

<sup>15</sup>Ibid., Sept. 13, 1966, p. 12.

Labor Act which . . . has been an important force for keeping union leadership honest. . . ." Finally, on November 2, the Press formally endorsed Griffin for the senatorial post. According to the editorial, Williams had created the impression that he would " . . . go down the line for Gus Scholle<sup>16</sup> and Lyndon Johnson . . . ," while Griffin had shown that he had the " . . . courage to be his own man . . . ," and was a man who " . . . acted for the benefit of all, rather than for some special group."

Taken as a whole, The Press's coverage of the campaign appeared to be fair to both candidates. The total number of column inches allotted to each candidate was practically equal--Williams enjoyed a slight 26-1/4 inch advantage. Williams also made the front page more often than did Griffin --three times to Griffin's two--but Griffin had five pictures of himself and two of his wife published, compared to only four of Williams. It seems, therefore, that aside from the omission of stories relating to Williams during the last week of October, and the publication of the Press's assessment of the campaign on page one of the October 30 edition of the

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<sup>16</sup>August Scholle, president of the Michigan AFL-CIO.

paper, the Press's editorial preference for Griffin did not seep into the news columns.

## CHAPTER IV

### FLINT JOURNAL

The Flint Journal is owned by Booth Newspapers, Incorporated--the same organization that owns the Grand Rapids Press. It is not surprising, therefore, that many of the stories concerning the Williams-Griffin campaign printed in the Journal were identical to those published by the Press. Booth reporters on the staffs of the Washington and Lansing bureaus covered the candidates for the Flint Journal, except when either Williams or Griffin were in the Flint area. When they appeared locally, the candidates were covered by Journal staff political writers Lawrence R. Gustin and Allen R. Wilhelm.<sup>1</sup>

The Journal allotted a total of 1,405-1/2 column inches to campaign stories; 606-1/4 inches were used to report stories about Williams, and 628 inches were used to report stories about Griffin. One hundred seventy-one and

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<sup>1</sup>Letter from Roland L. Martin, Managing Editor, Flint Journal, Feb. 16, 1967.

one-quarter inches were used for copy relating to both candidates.<sup>2</sup>

Campaign stories printed in the Journal prior to October 3 were primarily either dispatches from the Associated Press or United Press International. After that date, only three published stories concerning Williams,<sup>3</sup> and six published stories about Griffin,<sup>4</sup> were taken from the wire services.

From August until October, Williams received 255-1/4 column inches of news space, compared to Griffin's 175 column inches. During the latter part of the campaign, coverage of Williams' activities accounted for 351 column inches, and Griffin's activities accounted for 453 column inches.

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<sup>2</sup> Flint Journal, Aug. 3-Nov. 8, 1967, passim.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid., Oct. 16, when Williams called for a cut in the space budget; Oct. 18, when Williams and Griffin debated before the Economic Club of Detroit; and Nov. 6, when the Associated Press released a feature on what bad weather could mean for Williams' election.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid., Oct. 17, when Griffin released the results of his "inflation poll;" Oct. 19, when Griffin's wife, Marge, made several speeches in behalf of her husband; Oct. 23, when one of Griffin's campaign headquarters in Detroit caught fire; Oct. 28, when the Republican blitz began; Nov. 4, when the blitz was grounded because of bad weather; and Nov. 5, when the Studebaker Company denied a Griffin statement that its pension fund had "gone broke."



Although the difference in the number of column inches allotted the two candidates at various stages of the campaign is pronounced, the difference between the total number of stories published concerning each candidate is not. From August 3 until October 3, even though Griffin trailed Williams by 80-1/4 column inches, three stories more were printed about him by the Journal than were printed about Williams. Furthermore, during the period from October 3 through election day, November 8, though stories concerning Griffin were longer, on only two days<sup>5</sup> did stories appear about Griffin without a companion story about Williams. The dates differ,<sup>6</sup> but this same figure holds true for Williams. Since frequency of story appearance would seem to be just as important, if not more so, than mere story length, it would seem that neither candidate could legitimately complain of bias in this aspect of the Journal's coverage.

The Journal did not have a particular page or segment of a page reserved for campaign coverage. Though no attempt apparently was made to place the candidates' stories near

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<sup>5</sup>Ibid., Oct. 15, 1966, p. 18, Nov. 1, 1966, p. 4.

<sup>6</sup>Ibid., Oct. 13, 1966, p. 12, Oct. 14, 1966, p. 24.

each other, neither candidate habitually found himself either in the front, or in the back section of the paper. Williams' activities made page one news seven times: twice when he won the Democratic primary election,<sup>7</sup> once when his stay at Jennings Hospital was announced,<sup>8</sup> once when he underwent surgery for six calcium growths,<sup>9</sup> once when Detroit Mayor Jerome P. Cavanagh offered Williams his support,<sup>10</sup> once when teamsters' president James Hoffa endorsed him for the senate seat,<sup>11</sup> and once when Massachusetts Democratic Senator Edward M. Kennedy visited Flint in support of Williams.<sup>12</sup> Griffin found himself on the front page five times: once when he twisted his ankle while campaigning at the Michigan State Fair,<sup>13</sup> once when he tried to attend, uninvited, a United Auto Workers' Committee on Political Education meeting,<sup>14</sup> once when a private

<sup>7</sup>Ibid., Aug. 3, 1966, p. 1.

<sup>8</sup>Ibid., Aug. 16, 1966, p. 1.

<sup>9</sup>Ibid., Aug. 19, 1966, p. 1.

<sup>10</sup>Ibid., Aug. 21, 1966, p. 1.

<sup>11</sup>Ibid., Sept. 26, 1966, p. 1.

<sup>12</sup>Ibid., Oct. 14, 1966, p. 1.

<sup>13</sup>Ibid., Aug. 29, 1966, p. 1.

<sup>14</sup>Ibid., Sept. 28, 1966, p. 1.

poll showed Griffin leading his Democratic opponent,<sup>15</sup> and once when the Republican blitz was grounded because of bad weather.<sup>16</sup>

The Journal did not publish photographs of either candidate extensively: a total of six pictures of Griffin<sup>17</sup> and seven of Williams<sup>18</sup> appeared during the entire campaign. A photograph of each candidate was given page one position--Williams when he won the Democratic primary election on August 3, and Griffin when he twisted his ankle on August 29.

The Journal printed a twelve-page, tabloid-size supplement headlined "Know Your Candidates" on November 5. On page three of the supplement, Williams and Griffin each received a three inch by one column head shot, and 11-1/4 column inches of news copy.

The next day, November 6, the Journal printed the same "assessment" of the campaign that had appeared on

<sup>15</sup>Ibid., Oct. 25, 1966, p. 1.

<sup>16</sup>Ibid., Nov. 4, 1966, p. 1.

<sup>17</sup>Ibid., Aug. 3, 1966, p. 3; Aug. 28, 1966, p. 73; Aug. 29, 1966, p. 1; Aug. 31, 1966, p. 47; Oct. 26, 1966, p. 23; Oct. 27, 1966, p. 38.

<sup>18</sup>Ibid., Aug. 3, 1966, p. 1; Sept. 11, 1966, p. 23; Sept. 19, 1966, p. 12; Oct. 7, 1966, p. 18; Oct. 14, 1966, p. 13; Oct. 16, 1966, p. 65.

October 30 in the Grand Rapids Press. Although the Journal placed the story on page seventy-three instead of on page one as had the Press, the editorial nature of the story was not altered in the slightest. It was clearly unfavorable to Williams. Furthermore, even though it was placed in the back section of the newspaper, publishing it just two days before the election may have done more damage to the Democratic candidate's cause than publishing it on page one, eight days before the election.

The Flint Journal published only two editorials concerning the Williams-Griffin race--both strongly in support of Griffin. The first was published on October 5 beneath the caption, "Landrum-Griffin Doesn't Make Griffin Anti-Labor." It contained an analysis of why the editors believed that Griffin was actually labor's friend. The second, published November 6, contained an official endorsement of Griffin for the Senate seat.

Aside from the "campaign assessment" published November 6 by the Journal, the author could find little evidence of bias in the Journal's news coverage of the Williams-Griffin campaign. Total column inches allotted each candidate were almost equal,<sup>19</sup> though the Journal managing editor, Roland L.

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<sup>19</sup>Williams held an advantage of 26-1/4 column inches.

Martin, insisted that "There can be no attempt to balance coverage in terms of space because news made by individual candidates must be judged on its merit."<sup>20</sup> Williams rated one more picture than did Griffin, but both men found their photographs on page one only once. Williams did hold an advantage in page one news--he made the front page seven times, compared to Griffin's five appearances. Neither candidate could claim, however, that his stories were consistently placed in unfavorable positions, although no specially designated page or segment of a page was reserved for campaign news. It seems, therefore, that the editors of the Flint Journal did a remarkable job in keeping its pro-Griffin bias confined to the editorial page.

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<sup>20</sup>Letter from Roland L. Martin, Feb. 16, 1967.

## CHAPTER V

### LANSING STATE JOURNAL

The most striking aspect of the coverage of the Williams-Griffin campaign by the Lansing State Journal is that the only newspaper located in Michigan's capital city did little to cover the campaign with its own staff of reporters. Only 214-1/4 inches of the 1,136 column inches of campaign news reported by the State Journal were written by staff reporters. The remaining 921-3/4 column inches came from either the Associated Press or United Press International dispatches. Of the 214-1/4 column inches written by staff reporters, 63 column inches was news about Williams, 105-1/2 column inches was news concerning Griffin, and 43-3/4 column inches was reportage relating to both candidates. These figures become all the more disparate when it is noted that only three stories, one a 29-1/4 inch feature in the women's section on his wife, Nancy,<sup>1</sup> made up the total

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<sup>1</sup>Lansing State Journal, Sept. 25, 1966, p. 1D. The other two stories written by State Journal reporters appeared on Aug. 5, 1966, p. 3, and on Aug. 21, 1966, p. 3.

amount of news written locally about Williams, while Griffin was the subject of eight locally written stories.<sup>2</sup>

The only State Journal staff writers to cover the campaign were Robert Stuart, Willard Baird, of the State Journal capitol bureau, and Virginia Redfern, who wrote the two features published on September 25 on the candidates' wives. John Ward, news editor of the State Journal, explained that the only out-state activity of the campaign covered by a State Journal reporter was the debate between Williams and Griffin before the Economic Club of Detroit.<sup>3,4</sup>

Of the 1,136 column inches of news used by the State Journal in reporting the campaign, 420-1/4 inches were stories about Williams. Accounts of Griffin's activities were allotted 589 column inches, and 126-3/4 inches were stories covering the activities of both men.<sup>5</sup> This difference of 168-3/4

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<sup>2</sup> Ibid., Sept. 6, 1966, p. 14; Sept. 12, 1966, p. 9; Sept. 19, 1966, p. 4D; Sept. 25, 1966, p. 1D; Oct. 4, 1966, p. 5; Oct. 6, 1966, p. 12F; Oct. 30, 1966, p. 1. The Sept. 25 story was a 28-3/4 inch feature on Griffin's wife, Marge.

<sup>3</sup> The debate before the Economic Club of Detroit was held Oct. 17, 1966, and was reported by Willard Baird.

<sup>4</sup> Letter from John D. Ward, News Editor, Lansing State Journal, Feb. 13, 1967.

<sup>5</sup> Lansing State Journal, Aug. 3-Nov. 8, 1966.

inches in favor of Griffin, the largest found in any of the five newspapers studied, becomes all the more important when the total number of stories published about each candidate is taken into account. The State Journal printed forty-three stories that were clearly about Williams, his family, and his activities during the campaign. For Griffin, the figure jumps to sixty. This is not to say that Williams was covered on only forty-three of the ninety-six days included in this study, however, because throughout the campaign the State Journal often published accounts of both candidates in one story. On three days the headlines for these composite accounts were given to Williams--on September 18, October 11, and October 28.<sup>6</sup> In contrast, Griffin received the headline seven times--on October 4, October 16, October 17, October 22, October 23, October 25, and October 27.<sup>7</sup> Furthermore, and probably most

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<sup>6</sup>"Williams 'Hits Trail' Saturday," Lansing State Journal, Sept. 18, 1966, p. 6; "Williams Sets Out on UP Tour," ibid., Oct. 11, 1966, p. 16; "Soapy Claims Poll Shows He's Ahead," ibid., Oct. 28, 1966, p. 6.

<sup>7</sup>"Jaycee Bid Accepted By Griffin," ibid., Oct. 4, 1966, p. 14D; "Griffin Hits 'One-Party' Government," ibid., Oct. 16, 1966; "Survey Shows Food Prices Hit Hardest," ibid., Oct. 17, 1966, p. 10; (Although this headline does not mention Griffin directly, his state-wide "inflation survey" was in the news at this time); "Griffin Backed By Dem," ibid., Oct. 22, 1966, p. 2; "Romney, Sen. Griffin Get 'Hot, Cold'



important, the only favorable news published about Williams from November 1 through November 8, election day, and placed in a position equal to a Griffin story, was a 4-1/2 inch profile story played along side a similar profile account of Griffin on November 6.

On November 1, there was no mention of Williams in the State Journal. Griffin, on the other hand, received a 19-3/4 inch story headlined, "Griffin Cheers GOP." Written by William B. Mead of United Press International, the story, printed in the upper left-hand corner of page three, section D, explained that Griffin's chances of victory looked "very good." On November 2, Al Sandner of the Associated Press, reported, "Williams Hoarse, Talks Himself Out of Campaign Day." Williams was indeed hoarse, just as Sandner reported. State Journal editors saw fit, however, to place this story in columns one and two, of the left-hand, bottom half of page eleven, section C, thus reserving space for the banner headline, "GOP State Blitz Seen Political '68 Blueprint." A 20-inch story by Gene Schroeder of the Associated Press ran

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Tests," ibid., Oct. 23, 1966, p. 2; "Top GOP Trio Arriving To Aid Romney, Griffin," ibid., Oct. 25, 1966, p. 7D; "Javits Helps Griffin Race," ibid., Oct. 27, 1966, p. 16.

almost the complete length of column four, explaining how successfully Romney and Griffin had used their airborne blitz. On November 3, a Williams story ran beneath the headline, "Gives Soapy Big Worries." Michael J. Conlin of United Press International told in 12-3/4 inches how "Michigan Democrats' most popular vote getter of the century has been driven to the wall by a surprisingly scrappy Republican named Robert P. Griffin." State Journal editors did not, however, allot Griffin an individual story that day. On November 4, activity by Griffin did not receive a headline, but was covered in two separate stories--one giving an account of the Republican blitz of the day before, and the other reporting a speech Griffin had made before a Michigan Education Association convention. This story about the Griffin speech before the MEA noted that Williams did not deliver a speech at the convention because of his laryngitis. In addition, the State Journal carried a 5-1/2 inch Associated Press release headlined, "Wan Soapy Still Kept on Sideline." On November 6, the previously mentioned profiles of the candidates were published. On November 7, not only did the State Journal carry a United Press International account of the results of the Detroit News poll on page one, beneath the

headline, "Sen. Griffin Strengthens Poll Lead," but it also printed, in a separate story, a prediction by Republican State Chairman Elly M. Peterson that the GOP would "sweep" the state elections. Williams was mentioned in a 16-inch Associated Press story headlined, "Top GOP Candidates Take Sabbath Rest." This same story was published in the Flint Journal under the headline, "GOP Ticket Leaders Take Sunday Off; Williams, Ferency Seek Detroit Votes."

It thus seems apparent that the State Journal made no effort to balance the coverage of the senatorial candidates during this last, important week of the campaign. When Williams was mentioned at all, he was "wan," "driven to the wall," or buried on the bottom of the page. Griffin, on the other hand, was happy with the Republican blitz, a "surprisingly scrappy Republican," ahead in the Detroit News poll, and the object of a victory prediction by his party's state chairman. State Journal News Editor John D. Ward's statement that ". . . we attempted to play them [Williams and Griffin] equally--within the bounds of good news judgment,"<sup>8</sup> does not appear valid--at least for the first week of November.

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<sup>8</sup>Letter from Ward.

Though the State Journal editors made no apparent attempt to place the campaign stories in on a particular page, segment of a page, or a particular section of the newspaper, both men found themselves in section A of the newspaper a majority of the time. Stories about Williams were published on page one four times--on August 3, the day after he won the Democratic primary election; on August 16, when a 1-inch Associated Press bulletin reported that Williams had entered Jennings Hospital; on August 19, when he underwent surgery; and on October 30, when a 5-inch by three column picture of New York Democratic Senator Robert F. Kennedy, Williams, and Democratic gubernatorial candidate Zolton Ferency was published.

Stories about Griffin appeared on page one five times--on August 27, when he delivered the keynote speech at the Republican state convention in Grand Rapids; on August 28, when a 6-inch by four-column picture of the top Republican candidates was published; on September 29, when Griffin attended an American Federation of Labor-Congress of Industrial Organizations Committee on Political Education meeting; on October 30, when Griffin was reported as needing campaign funds; and on November 7, when the Detroit News

poll gave Griffin a 53 per cent to 44 per cent lead in the senatorial race. It should be noted that three of Williams' page one appearances were made in August, at the very beginning of the campaign. Only once after that (October 30) was news about Williams again placed on the front page. Griffin's page one appearances were more evenly spaced throughout the campaign--he made page one news twice in August, and once each in September, October, and November. It would seem that spacing of this kind would help to impress the name of Griffin more readily on the minds of readers of page one than would the play given to Williams.

The State Journal did not rely heavily on photographs of the candidates. Aside from the September 25 feature in the Family Living section of the State Journal, in which five photographs of each candidate and his wife were published, Williams received five photographs<sup>9</sup> totaling ten columns by 20 inches, and Griffin received seven,<sup>10</sup> totaling nineteen

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<sup>9</sup> Lansing State Journal, Aug. 3, 1966, p. 1; Aug. 11, 1966, p. 6D; Sept. 30, 1966, p. 14; Oct. 30, 1966, p. 1; Nov. 6, 1966, p. 1C.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid., Aug. 28, 1966, p. 1; Aug. 30, 1966, p. 2; Sept. 6, 1966, p. 14; Oct. 6, 1966, p. 12F; Oct. 27, 1966, p. 1; Nov. 6, 1966, p. 1C.

columns by 29-1/2 inches. Pictures of Williams appeared on page one twice,<sup>11</sup> and a photograph of Griffin appeared once.<sup>12</sup>

It may be worth noting that on October 5 the Republican party held a \$50 a plate dinner at the Civic Center in Lansing. Governor William Scranton of Pennsylvania, a Republican, attended the dinner and spoke in support of Griffin.<sup>13</sup> The following day, the State Journal published two photographs of the affair--one of Senator and Mrs. Griffin, and one of Governor Scranton, Governor Romney, and Senator Griffin. The same night that the Republicans held their dinner, the Democrats gave a \$50 a plate, fund-raising dinner at Cobo Hall in Detroit. At this dinner, Vice-President Hubert Humphrey spoke in support of Williams.<sup>14</sup> The State Journal, however, did not publish a picture of the vice-president or the Democratic senatorial candidate. Obviously, it would be easier to secure

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<sup>11</sup>Ibid., Aug. 3, 1966, when Williams won the Democratic primary election, and Oct. 30, 1966, when New York Democratic Senator Robert F. Kennedy came to Michigan in support of Williams.

<sup>12</sup>Ibid., Aug. 28, 1966, when the Republican candidates for office were selected at the state convention in Grand Rapids.

<sup>13</sup>Ibid., Oct. 6, 1966, p. 6.

<sup>14</sup>Flint Journal, Oct. 7, 1966, p. 18.

photographs of the dinner guests and speaker in Lansing than of the dinner guests and speaker in Detroit. The other two out-state newspapers, however, included in this study did manage to secure and to publish pictures of Williams with the vice-president.<sup>15</sup> Photographs of the Democratic dinner must have been provided press association clients and members; the State Journal editors, apparently, chose not to use them.

The State Journal published only two editorials relating to the campaign. One was printed on September 7, under the caption, "Politics No Excuse for Bad Manners." In it, the editors expressed the opinion that Griffin and Governor Romney should have been invited by Detroit labor leaders to the Labor Day rally held in honor of the late Senator Patrick McNamara, and attended by President Lyndon Johnson. The second, "Griffin Offers the State a Clear-Cut Choice," was published November 1. It explained that Griffin should be elected to the United States Senate because he was ". . . well qualified by experience, energy, and independence of judgment."

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<sup>15</sup>The Grand Rapids Press published a 3 inch by three column picture; the Flint Journal a 5-1/2 inch by four column picture.

The State Journal's editorial support for Griffin seems to have influenced its news policy concerning campaign coverage. Griffin received not only more column inches of reportage, but also more picture coverage, more headlines, and a greater total number of stories than did Williams.



## CHAPTER VI

### DETROIT NEWS

The Detroit News performed an almost incredible job of balancing the number of column inches allotted to each candidate throughout the 1966 campaign: a total of 1,697-3/4 inches could be classified as campaign news. Of this amount of reportage, stories relating to both candidates accounted for 235-1/4 inches. The remainder was divided almost evenly between the two candidates. Williams received 730-3/4 inches, and Griffin acquired 731-3/4 inches.<sup>1</sup> It would appear from these figures, then, that News Editor Martin S. Hayden's comment that "as always, we made every effort to balance coverage of the candidates,"<sup>2</sup> could not have been more true. To end a three month campaign with only a one inch difference in coverage of the candidates would seem to verge on the impossible. What Mr. Hayden does not mention, however, yet

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<sup>1</sup>Detroit News, Aug. 3-Nov. 8, 1966.

<sup>2</sup>Letter from Martin S. Hayden, Editor, Detroit News, Feb. 23, 1966.

what is much more important than equal space, is story and headline content. Although content analysis is clearly subjective, and its interpretation always open to debate, the author believes that there is ample evidence to show that at least, editorializing, and at the most, intentional bias, was clearly a part of many of the campaign stories published by the Detroit News.

The News reported the campaign from August until October in a manner that could cause little complaint from either candidate; the activities of both men seemed to be covered equally and fairly. It should be noted, however, that this period was marked by only three important developments--the Democratic primary election on August 2, Williams' operation on August 19, and the appearance of Republican candidates Romney and Griffin at various labor-sponsored Labor Day rallies on September 6. As October progressed, however, the campaign began to pick up momentum. Griffin returned to Michigan from Washington to begin campaigning throughout the state in earnest, and Williams, now recovered from his operation, returned to politicking full time. And, as the campaign became more heated, so did the

News accounts of it. As early as October 9, for example, the News labeled Williams an "outsider" in the headline for a 19-3/4 inch analysis of the campaign. J. F. TerHorst, chief of the Washington bureau for the News, told his readers that ". . . what looked last spring like a shoo-in victory for the six-term former Democratic governor, has now become a dogged contest for the seat of Republican Senator Robert P. Griffin." It cannot be debated that TerHorst's prediction accurately foretold the outcome of the campaign. It can be debated, however, whether a statement such as this belongs in the news columns at all. As part of a signed political News feature, or an editorial, the statement quoted would simply have been a shrewd assessment of a political event; as part of a supposedly unbiased news story, however, it seems to hint of subtle bias on the part of the reporter.

Three days later, on October 12, News staff writer James L. Kerwin reported on a tour Williams had made of Northern Michigan. Kerwin's 15-1/2-inch story was headlined, "Stormy Weather Puts Damper on Williams' Northern Foray." The story told readers that because of cold weather not many people had turned out to meet Williams during his tour. The

following day, Kerwin repeated his report of sparse crowds in a story headlined, "Crowd-Bereft Williams Waits for 'People's Ideal' Ted Kennedy." At first glance, these two stories appear to be straight, factual reporting. If few people turned out to meet a senatorial candidate, it is news; and it is the reporter's job to report that news. Yet, when an almost identical situation occurred in the first week of November with the Republican candidate on the hustings, the same reporter described the circumstances somewhat differently.

The Republican candidates had planned a blitz for the last week before election day to make a final tour of the state. Nature, however, did not cooperate, and the blitz was grounded twice by stormy weather. Kerwin, in a story headlined, "Weather Is Blow to Griffin," began his account of the weather's effect on the blitz with the lead, "The weather proved a more formidable foe than his political opposition for U.S. Sen. Robert P. Griffin in his last week of campaigning."<sup>3</sup>

Had readers of the News also read the Free Press account of this incident, they would have learned that ". . .

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<sup>3</sup> Detroit News, Nov. 6, 1966, p. 21.

it was snowy, cold, and more Democrats than Republicans turned out."<sup>4</sup> Thus, in both cases, a factor in determining what size crowd each candidate gathered was the weather. In the Williams story, however, the size of the crowd was emphasized, while in the Griffin account, only the weather was mentioned.

Kerwin apparently found it difficult to find another news peg for his stories. His accounts of Williams' tour of the Upper Peninsula had appeared on October 12 and October 13. On October 14, Senator Edward M. Kennedy of Massachusetts, a Democrat, came to Michigan to speak in support of Williams. Because crowds were found at every stop of the Kennedy-Williams tour, Kerwin could not report a lack of voter interest as he had in his two previous stories. He did, however, explain to his readers that the persons assembled at each stop were there not to see Williams, but to see Kennedy. The story was headlined, "Williams Forgotten As Crowds Shriek 'Love' for Ted Kennedy."<sup>5</sup>

The business of analyzing how many and for what reasons the voters turned out to meet the candidates was carried

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<sup>4</sup>Detroit Free Press, Nov. 6, 1966, p. 3.

<sup>5</sup>Detroit News, Oct. 14, 1966, p. 10.

on two days later by Detroit News reporter Lawrence Gareau. Griffin had scheduled a speech at a meeting in a Detroit Negro neighborhood. Only twenty-five adults attended. The headline for this story did not, however, call Griffin "crowd-bereft," or "forgotten." Instead, the News chose to headline the story, "Failure To Get Negro Support Puzzles Rights Backer Griffin." Thus the reader is clearly told that candidate Griffin is a strong supporter of civil rights even though he did fail to attract a crowd at one of his meetings.

On October 23, Gareau was sent to cover a speech scheduled by Williams at a Negro Baptist Church in Lansing. Gareau again took note of the size of the crowd attending, but neither he, nor the News headline writers were as generous to Williams as they had been to Griffin only seven days earlier. Instead of implying that Williams was a strong civil rights backer despite what the size of the crowd would lead the readers to believe, the headline read simply, "Crowds Down, Backers See Tight Squeeze for Williams." Gareau reported that "only a handful of people were on hand when he [Williams] appeared at a Baptist Church in Lansing Friday night." A "veteran political observer" was then quoted as saying, "This

church would have been filled when he [Williams] was running for governor."

The following day, October 24, Gareau described Williams in a 13-1/4-inch story as being a " . . . party man first, last, and always." The headline for Gareau's story carried out this theme. It read, "Williams' Down-the-Line Party Bid Pleases Fellow Democrats." This unfavorable description is obviously a judgment rather than an observable fact and, just as obviously, it does not belong in a factual account of the news.

On October 31, another story by Gareau was published under the headline, "Free Punch, Food at Party Lure 1,000 to Meet Williams." It could possibly be said with truth that some members of the crowd attending the rally had indeed been "lured" to meet Williams solely because free food and punch had been offered. To state flatly that this was the case for everyone attending, however, smacks of a reporter's confusing an inference or a judgment with an observable fact. Gareau carried out the theme of the headline by telling his readers that, "In a political campaign marked by sparse crowds, some Pontiac businessmen have shown there are ways to get out the voters other than importing a Kennedy." He then went on to

explain that sponsors of the "meet your candidates night" managed to attract 1,000 by providing "free champagne punch, a free buffet supper, and free entertainment. . . . The goodies were advertised on the invitation."

From these examples, it seems apparent that Griffin was treated much more generously in the news columns of the Detroit News than was Williams. It should come as no surprise that the editorial support of the News was also firmly behind the Republican candidate.

Beginning on August 4, and ending on October 30, the News published a series of fourteen editorials--<sup>6</sup> all either in support of Griffin or against Williams. In its first editorial of the series, the News assessed the forthcoming campaign as " . . . a contest between a 1948 green bow-tie and a stoop to conquer handshake, on the one hand, and a record of accomplishment that promises progress for Michigan, now and tomorrow, on the other."<sup>7</sup> On September 21, the editors

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<sup>6</sup>Ibid., Aug. 4, 1966, p. 32; Aug. 14, 1966, p. 12; Aug. 16, 1966, p. 30; Sept. 7, 1966, p. 40; Sept. 20, 1966, p. 32; Sept. 21, 1966, p. 42; Sept. 27, 1966, p. 32; Sept. 28, 1966, p. 40; Oct. 2, 1966, p. 12; Oct. 6, 1966, p. 20; Oct. 7, 1966, p. 32; Oct. 16, 1966, p. 44; Oct. 19, 1966, p. 34; Oct. 30, 1966, p. 44.

<sup>7</sup>Ibid., Aug. 4, 1966, p. 32.



carried this thought a little further in the editorial, "Soapy Is Smart." In reference to the question of debates between the two candidates, the editorial said, "He [Williams] is too wise to meet the youthful senator on a public field where appearance, vigor, and swift decision count." It came as no surprise to readers when the News formally endorsed Griffin on October 30 in the editorial, "An Independent, Experienced Candidate, Griffin for US Senator!" In this editorial, Williams was described as ". . . that warmed-over warrior in the polka dot bow tie. . . ." Griffin, on the other hand, was pictured as ". . . a Republican independent in a state where the independent vote decides elections."

The News did not choose a specific page, or segment of a page, for campaign news, but neither candidate consistently received a more favorable position in the paper. Griffin found himself on page one eight times;<sup>8</sup> Williams made

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<sup>8</sup> Griffin made page one on Aug. 27, when a female "well-wisher" kissed him; on Aug. 29, when he sprained his ankle at the Michigan State Fair; on Aug. 31, when it was reported that he planned to ask President Lyndon Johnson for an invitation to the Detroit Labor Day rally; on Sept. 6, when Griffin "crashed" the Labor Day rally; on Sept. 15, when Griffin released his campaign song, "Youth and Experience;" on Sept. 28, when Griffin asked to debate labor

page one news an equal number of times.<sup>9</sup> Each man had his picture published on page one twice.<sup>10</sup> In the aggregate, twelve pictures totaling thirty-four columns by 44-1/2 inches were published of Griffin,<sup>11</sup> and nine pictures, totaling twenty-seven columns by 31-3/4 inches were published of Williams.<sup>12</sup>

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leader August Scholle; on Oct. 16, when the results of Griffin's "state-wide inflation survey" were made known; and on Nov. 4, when the Studebaker Corporation denied that its pension plan had "gone broke."

<sup>9</sup>Williams made page one on Aug. 3, when he won the Democratic primary election; on Aug. 13, when he went to Washington looking for campaign funds; on Aug. 19, when he was operated on at Jennings Hospital; on Aug. 20, when his son, Gery, reported that Williams was resting well; on Aug. 21, when Detroit Mayor Jerome P. Cavanagh agreed to speak in support of Williams at the Democratic state convention; and on Oct. 30, when New York Democratic Senator Robert F. Kennedy came to Michigan in support of Williams.

<sup>10</sup>Williams' picture appeared on page one on Aug. 3, when he won the Democratic primary election, and on Aug. 19, when he was operated on. Griffin's picture appeared on page one on Aug. 27, when a well-wisher kissed him, and on Aug. 29, when he twisted his ankle at the Michigan State Fair.

<sup>11</sup>Detroit News, Aug. 3, 1966, p. 5B; Aug. 24, 1966, p. 8C; Aug. 28, 1966, p. 8B; Aug. 29, 1966, p. 1; Sept. 6, 1966, p. 10D; Sept. 11, 1966, p. 3; Sept. 15, 1966, p. 9C; Oct. 6, 1966, p. 10C; Oct. 30, 1966, p. 1.

<sup>12</sup>Ibid., Aug. 3, 1966, p. 1; Aug. 13, 1966, p. 2; Aug. 19, 1966, p. 1; Aug. 25, 1966, p. 8C; Sept. 1, 1966, p. 14B; Sept. 6, 1966, p. 10D; Sept. 11, 1966, p. 3; Oct. 21, 1966, p. 10B; Oct. 30, 1966, p. 1.

On November 3, the News published what it called an "Election Preview" on page one of section F. In it, each candidate received a 2 inch by one column photograph, and a biographical sketch 2-1/4 inches in length.

Statistically, it would seem that the Detroit News managed to do an unprecedented job in covering both candidates without a hint of bias. The number of column inches devoted to each man was almost equal; only three more photographs of Griffin than of Williams were published, and stories of both candidates appeared an equal number of times on page one.

This analysis, however, has tried to show that bias was evident in this "equal" campaign coverage. Story after story published in the News was written in such a way as could easily have swayed reader judgment, while headline after headline implied subtle partisanship. The News was, therefore, apparently unsuccessful in the struggle to keep editorial preference and news content separate.

## CHAPTER VII

### CONCLUSION

The Press . . . is also the best instrument for enlightening the mind of man, and improving him as a rational, moral, and social being.

--Thomas Jefferson<sup>1</sup>

Each of the five newspapers included in this study editorially supported Robert P. Griffin in the 1966 senatorial campaign. Three of these newspapers did not, however, allow editorial support for Griffin to influence their coverage of the campaign in the news columns. Two did.

The Detroit Free Press, Grand Rapids Press, and Flint Journal all seemed to cover the campaign fairly and without partisanship. Though the Grand Rapids Press and the Flint Journal, both Booth newspapers, published, in the guise of a news story, an identical analysis of the campaign, considered by the author to have been unfavorable to the Democratic candidate, any hint of favoritism in other aspects of the coverage could not be found.

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<sup>1</sup>Thomas Jefferson to M. Coray, Nov. 4, 1823, Mott, p. 65.

The Lansing State Journal and the Detroit News, on the other hand, failed to uphold the responsibility that is inherent in the privilege of freedom of the press. Not only did the State Journal allow the Republican candidate the biggest advantage of all the newspapers studied in terms of column inches (Griffin, by the end of the campaign had acquired 168-3/4 column inches more than had Williams), but much more important, the State Journal had virtually ignored the Democratic candidate throughout the last week of the campaign.

Although the Detroit News could not be accused of devoting more space to one candidate than to another--Griffin received one column inch more than did Williams--it too was guilty of what would seem to be intentional bias. In chapter VI, coverage by the News of the two candidates is analyzed in detail. It seems apparent from this analysis that although the candidates faced almost identical circumstances in several instances, the same reporter covered these circumstances in very different ways. Headlines for these stories did little to mitigate the bias inherent in them.

The two Detroit newspapers relied primarily on their own reporters to cover the campaign--the News used no wire

service stories, and the Free Press used very little. The two Booth newspapers, the Grand Rapids Press and the Flint Journal, used more wire service stories than did the Detroit Free Press, but they relied heavily on Booth reporters and their own local staffs, especially during the latter half of the campaign. The Lansing State Journal, on the other hand, relied almost exclusively on wire service stories. The only out-state campaign activity covered by a State Journal reporter was the debate between Williams and Griffin before the Economic Club of Detroit on October 17.

The Detroit Free Press was the only newspaper in the study to reserve a particular page, or segment of a page, for news of the 1966 campaign. Page three of section A was selected as the page for the "Campaign '66" feature. Usually, two stories about opposing candidates were published under a single headline. Although none of the other newspapers relied on a similar practice, none could be accused of treating a candidate unfairly by habitually placing coverage of him in unfavorable positions.

The purpose of this study was to illustrate as clearly and completely as possible the manner in which five Michigan daily newspapers reported the 1966 campaign between

incumbent Republican Senator Robert P. Griffin and his Democratic opponent, G. Mennen Williams. The author has tried to establish that three of the newspapers studied upheld, without question, the responsibility implied in the theory of freedom of the press. For whatever reason, the two remaining newspapers did not. Instead, whether intentionally or not, they substituted responsibility for partisanship; fairness for bias. It can only be hoped that this practice is not repeated during the 1968 campaigns.

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