

Creating “Camelot”: An Analysis of John F. Kennedy’s Public Relations Campaign

by  
Erin Gardner

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Creating “Camelot”: An Analysis of John F. Kennedy’s Public Relations Campaign

Erin L. Gardner

APPROVED:

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Dr. Tricia Farwell  
School of Journalism

---

Dr. Greg Pitts  
School of Journalism

---

Dr. Roger Heinrich  
Electronic Media Communication

---

Dr. Philip Phillips  
University Honors College Associate Dean

## Table of Contents

List of Figures .....	3
Introduction .....	7
Literature Review .....	8
Creative Project Context .....	24
Creative Project Description .....	25
Creative Project .....	26
Conclusion .....	91
References .....	95

## List of Figures

1. Jackie Kennedy Instagram Post: May 10, 1960 / 33
2. Michelle Obama Facebook Post: July 4, 2007 / 33
3. John F. Kennedy Facebook Post: May 10, 1960 / 34
4. John F. Kennedy Facebook Post: July 15, 1960 / 35
5. Jackie Kennedy Facebook Post: July 15, 1960 / 36
6. Jackie Kennedy Tweet: August 13, 1960 / 37
7. John F. Kennedy Facebook Post: August 13, 1960 / 38
8. 1960 Electoral Map / 38
9. Jackie Kennedy Instagram Post: September 12, 1960 / 39
10. Michelle Obama Facebook Post: October 3, 2012 / 39
11. John F. Kennedy Tweet: September 12, 1960 / 40
12. Barack Obama Facebook Post: October 3, 2016 / 40
13. Jackie Kennedy Facebook Post: September 26, 1960 / 41
14. Michelle Obama Facebook Post: October 16, 2012 / 41
15. John F. Kennedy Tweet: September 26, 1960 / 42
16. Jackie Kennedy Instagram Post: September 27, 1960 / 43
17. Hillary Clinton Facebook Post: July 25, 2015 / 43
18. Hillary Clinton Tweets: September 27, 2016 / 45
19. Donald Trump Tweets: September 26, 2016 / 45
20. John F. Kennedy Tweet: September 27, 1960 / 45
21. Jackie Kennedy Facebook Post: October 5, 1960 / 46

22. Michelle Obama Facebook Post: June 30, 2012 / 46
23. John F. Kennedy Facebook Event: October 5, 1960 / 47
24. Donald Trump Facebook Event: October 5, 2016 / 47
25. John F. Kennedy Facebook Post: October 9, 1960 / 48
26. Hillary Clinton Facebook Post: September 26, 2016 / 48
28. John F. Kennedy Tweet: October 9, 1960 / 49
29. Donald Trump Instagram Post: October 5, 2016 / 49
30. Jackie Kennedy Instagram Post: October 10, 1960 / 50
31. John F. Kennedy Facebook Offer: October 10, 1960 / 51
32. Hillary Clinton Instagram Post: September 20, 2016 / 51
33. Jackie Kennedy Tweet: November 7, 1960 / 52
34. Michelle Obama Tweet: November 4, 2012 / 52
35. John F. Kennedy Facebook Post: November 7, 1960 / 53
36. Barack Obama Facebook Post: November 6, 2012 / 53
37. Jackie Kennedy Instagram Post: November 8, 1960 / 54
38. Michelle Obama Tweet: November 20, 2012 / 54
39. John F. Kennedy Facebook Post: November 8, 1960 / 55
40. Bernie Sanders Facebook PostL December 28, 2015 / 55
41. Jackie Kennedy Facebook Post: February 9, 1962 / 57
42. Michelle Obama Facebook Post: January 17, 2013 / 57
43. John F. Kennedy Facebook Post: February 9, 1962 / 58
44. Barack Obama Facebook Post: February 21, 2015 / 58

45. Jackie Kennedy Instagram Post: February 10, 1962 / 59
46. John F. Kennedy Tweet: February 10, 1962 / 60
47. Jackie Kennedy Tweet: February 11, 1962 / 61
48. Michelle Obama Facebook Post: February 9, 2011 / 61
49. John F. Kennedy Facebook Post: February 11, 1962 / 62
50. Barack Obama Facebook Post: April 12, 2013 / 62
51. Jackie Kennedy Tweet: February 12, 1962 / 63
52. Michelle Obama Tweet: September 29, 2016 / 63
53. John F. Kennedy Tweet: February 12, 1962 / 64
54. Jackie Kennedy Facebook Post: February 13, 1962 / 65
55. Michelle Obama Facebook Post: September 4, 2012 / 65
56. John F. Kennedy Tweet: February 13, 1962 / 67
57. Barack Obama Facebook Post: September 9, 2010 / 67
58. Jackie Kennedy Instagram Post: February 14, 1962 / 68
59. Michelle Obama Facebook Post: November 30, 2011 / 69
60. John F. Kennedy Facebook Post: February 14, 1962 / 70
61. Jackie Kennedy Facebook Post: February 16, 1962 / 71
62. John F. Kennedy Tweet: February 16, 1962 / 72
63. Jackie Kennedy Instagram Post: May 11, 1962 / 73
64. Michelle Obama Facebook Post: February 9, 2011 / 73
65. John F. Kennedy Facebook Post: May 11, 1962 / 75
66. Barack Obama Facebook Post: January 28, 2011 / 73

67. Jackie Kennedy Facebook Post: May 12, 1962 / 76
68. Michelle Obama Tweet: May 7, 2014 / 76
69. Michelle Obama Meme / 77
70. John F. Kennedy Facebook Post: May 12, 1962 / 78
71. Barack Obama Facebook Post: December 11, 2011 / 78
72. Jackie Kennedy Tweet: May 13, 1962 / 79
73. Barack Obama Facebook Post: October 1, 2011 / 79
74. John F. Kennedy Facebook Post: May 13, 1962 / 80
75. Barack Obama Facebook Post: October 1, 2011 / 80
76. Jackie Kennedy Instagram Post: May 14, 1962 / 81
77. Michelle Obama Tweet: September 6, 2016 / 82
78. John F. Kennedy Tweet: May 14, 1962 / 83
79. Barack Obama Facebook Post: September 28, 2016 / 83
80. Jackie Kennedy Facebook Post: May 16, 1962 / 84
81. John F. Kennedy Tweet: May 16, 1962 / 86
82. Barack Obama Facebook Post: January 7, 2016 / 86
83. Jackie Kennedy Tweet: May 16, 1962 / 87
84. Barack Obama Facebook Post: September 3, 2016 / 87
85. John F. Kennedy Facebook Post: May 16, 1962 / 88
86. Jackie Kennedy Tweet: May 18, 1962 / 89
87. Michelle Obama Tweet: February 6, 2014 / 89
88. John F. Kennedy Facebook Post: May 18, 1962 / 90

## Introduction

In 1960, John Fitzgerald Kennedy ran what would later be called the “most successful public relations campaign in political history” (Sheppard). This success, which has led to Kennedy’s legacy today, can be attributed to his charisma, the work of Pierre Salinger, his press secretary and former campaign manager, and his wife Jacqueline, who worked tirelessly to maintain the image of “Camelot.” The reputation of a politician has been vital to their success throughout the years, and good communication is the first step to success in the public sphere.

A good public relations campaign can help build a positive reputation and generate media coverage that connects a politician to the public. In the words of Abraham Lincoln, "Public sentiment is everything. With public sentiment nothing can fail; without it nothing can succeed" ("Public Relations"). A politician’s reputation is essential to his or her success, and public relations specialists can work with the media to help create and maintain that image. For Kennedy, the task of maintaining a positive relationship with the media was in the hands of Salinger, whom Kennedy called “the voice of the White House” (Sullivan).

## Literature Review

### **Introduction**

How public relations specialists reach their publics depends largely on where the public receives their news. Depending on whether the general public is leaning towards print or television, for instance, changes the focus of the campaign and the strategies that must be used. When reaching out to the press, public relations professionals often use press releases and media advisories to attract the attention of the press and persuade them to cover a certain topic or event. When television is the main way the public receives their news, clients will often have a speech prepared by their public relations specialist, and may need to make a televised appearance to attract attention to a certain cause or product. What began as a practice almost exclusive to the mediums of newspapers and magazines later spread to radio, television, and, now, social media. This change in focus has come about because of the ever-changing media landscape, and has changed the way people choose to receive news.

During the Kennedy campaign and administration, the prominent media was television. With the highest overall approval ratings of any president to date, Kennedy's use of public relations to connect with the public paid off ("Presidential Approval Ratings"). Public relations is the relationship between an organization and its publics. In politics, these public relations specialists, usually called press secretaries, perform tasks such as arranging media appearances, drafting content for various media, writing speeches and more. This section will review the history of political communications and

the adaptation of public relations specialists to different mediums as technology advances.

### **Print**

Public relations in American politics dates back to the early 19th century — even before the Publicity Bureau was founded in 1900, recognizing public relations as a formal occupation — with President Andrew Jackson and his adviser, Amos Kendall (Cutlip). Kendall, a former newspaper editor, used article reprints, speechwriting and polls to help Jackson communicate with the public (Cole). The use of journalists as public relations practitioners was not uncommon. President Grover Cleveland also enlisted the help of a journalist, George F. Parker, to “manage his public image and help him craft his message,” yielding increased media coverage and approval ratings (Mulvihill). At the time, newspapers were the primary form of mass media, so audiences turned to them for information more than they do today.

The connection between journalism and public relations is so strong that writers often spend time working in both. This overlap can make the relationship between journalists and public relations practitioners complicated, but each helps the other’s existence. Public relations practitioners need journalists to cover the stories they need spread for their clients. Journalists also need public relations practitioners, who provide them with content, making this a mutually beneficial relationship. Because of the strong connection between public relations and journalism, many professionals transition from one field into the other, or even work as both a free-lance journalist and a public relations practitioner. The writing is very similar in the two fields. In fact, public relations

materials are written in the same inverted pyramid style as journalistic writing so that journalists can put the press releases directly into newspapers.

## **Radio**

Eventually, print publications had to make way for new technology. 1924 was the year radio and broadcasting first made an appearance at political conventions (Shedden). By the next election, both parties had embraced radio as a major campaign tool (Sloan). Americans were excited to tune in for political broadcasts with this new technology. In 1925, on the day of his inauguration, President Calvin Coolidge reached 23 million Americans through one of the first presidential radio broadcasts ("New Deal, New Media"). ("New Deal, New Media"). Three years later, with the establishment of Columbia Broadcasting System (CBS) and the National Broadcasting System (NBC) ("News Deal, New Media"), political talk shows began to air during presidential campaigns. These developments led to an increase in radio usage by public relations practitioners and politicians in the years to come. By the 1930s, Franklin D. Roosevelt, Father Charles Coughlin, and Huey Long used radio to rally the American people, shifting the use of political radio from news and entertainment to include persuading the American people to join their causes, thus showing the impact that radio had on political activism, as well as the new direction of the public's relationship with the media toward action rather than one-way news, a shift that eventually led to the advent of social media ("New Deal, New Media").

In order to draw in audiences and keep public favor, politicians had to change the way they spoke for radio. As *The Saturday Evening Post* explained, "a good personality, a

musical voice, a power of dramatic gesture have served to cover up baldness of thought and limping phraseology” (Archer). In person, politicians could gesticulate and use their charm and vibrant personalities to captivate audiences. On the radio, however, it was the message that mattered. While a ranting speech may have gone over well in person, such antics were unintelligible on the radio, and short, powerful speeches quickly became the standard (Moore). This meant that public relations practitioners had the responsibility of writing short, powerful speeches for their politicians to deliver on radio, which quickly became the standard for all public relations messaging. FDR had a voice that comforted and instilled confidence in listeners, which is why his radio broadcasts became known as the “fireside chats” (“The Fireside Chats”). This program was a shift from the impersonal public relations of the past toward more a personal and interactive style that engages the audience, as well as the added responsibility of media coaching to ensure their clients speak well on the radio. With this also came a change in style for messaging, both written and verbal, to make messages clear, concise and personal.

As with all other forms of media, Kennedy excelled at speaking for radio. In light of the popularity of radio at the time — although television was also becoming increasingly popular — Salinger arranged a radio appearance for Kennedy on the radio talk show *Open Hearing* during his presidential campaign (“Publicity: Radio”). Kennedy also used radio to address the nation on the topics of civil rights, a controversial issue at the time, and the Cuban Missile Crisis, which tested his ability to remain composed in the midst of a very public crisis. The branch of public relations that deals with situations such as this is known as crisis communications. The ability to handle a crisis in such a way

that there is not a significant negative impact to the company or candidate in question is something that is particularly relevant in the field of politics, where there is no shortage of scandals, national disasters and attacks from opponents, all of which must be responded to in an appropriate and timely manner.

Kennedy was natural when it came to crisis communication, which was essential given many of the events that took place during his time in office. His image was one of composure, strength and hope. He was a new face who was so magnetic that the American public took to him immediately, and still admires him as one of the best presidents even today. During disasters such as the Cuban Missile Crisis, Kennedy maintained this image, and that of the United States, using radio as part of his strategy to do so. In an address to the nation on October 22, 1962, Kennedy began by telling the American people that the government felt “obliged” to report the situation to them “in fullest detail” (“John F. Kennedy - Cuban Missile Crisis Address to the Nation”). He took the opportunity to explain the situation to the public before they found out through other media outlets, which was ensured, with the help of Salinger, by appealing to the media to keep the news quiet to protect national security interests (Sullivan). This direct and honest approach was a public relations strategy which kept the trust of American intact, and encouraged the press to go along with his request.

“Our policy has been one of patience and restraint, as befits a peaceful and powerful nation, which leads a worldwide alliance,” Kennedy said, adding that his method of handling the situation was to save not only the United States, but the entire Western Hemisphere, from nuclear destruction (“John F. Kennedy - Cuban Missile Crisis

Address to the Nation”). He gained the trust of the people by laying out a specific plan for handling the situation in his, calm, smooth manner and spoke strongly but kindly to the people of Cuba, protecting his reputation abroad as well. This is one area of communications that can be difficult in politics. Different regions of the world have inherently different values, so what may register well with the United States will probably not register well with Russia, for instance. Because of this, public relations practitioners must be careful to craft messages sensitive to the needs of all publics involved.

Kennedy closed his address strong, invoking feelings of patriotism and assurance that the actions of the United States were in the best interest of world peace, saying, “Our goal is not the victory of might, but the vindication of right — not peace at the expense of freedom, but both peace and freedom, here in this hemisphere, and, we hope, around the world. God willing, that goal will be achieved” (“John F. Kennedy - Cuban Missile Crisis Address to the Nation”). This address was aired passive voice on both radio and television, which worked in Kennedy’s favor, as his television presence was strong, and the medium, which had gained vast popularity in recent years, was able to reach millions of Americans (“Report on Soviet Arms”). However, even radio was soon to be topped by new technology as television began to enter households.

### **Television**

By 1963, over 90 percent of households owned at least one television — a 45 percent increase from just ten years earlier — which made television appearances an essential part of Kennedy’s public relations strategy, since that is where the public would now

begin to receive their news (Iyengar). In fact, he was “the first president to effectively use the new medium of television to speak directly to the American people” (“John F. Kennedy and the Press”). His smooth voice and elegant Boston accent came through on television, just as it had radio, which appealed to male and female voters alike (“John F. Kennedy and the Press”). What gave Kennedy an extra edge on television was his physical appearance. Studies show that voters — particularly those in less healthy regions — tend to vote for the more physically attractive candidate (White and Kenrick). The phenomenon, which scientists had previously considered to be simply the result of the tendency to attribute various positive characteristics to people considered “attractive,” is now being viewed in a different light. According to Arizona State University’s Department of Psychology, the preference for good-looking candidates could have a connection to “ancient adaptations for avoiding disease” (White and Kenrick). This particular study also indicated that people’s preference for good-looking politicians increased and decreased in direct response to their concerns about germs. Scientists believe that this is because many characteristics commonly considered to be “attractive” are also indicators of good health, such as good skin, facial symmetry and shiny hair (White and Kenrick). British research also supported this claim; according to a study conducted by the University of Exeter and the University of Iowa, this phenomenon, dubbed the “halo effect,” was most prominent in highly contested constituencies (Alleyne).

Whether it was because of his air of confidence or simply because voters found him attractive, the first televised presidential debate of 1960 sealed Kennedy’s reputation

as the “television president.” In other words, Kennedy set the standard for how television was to be used in politics. This debate is often viewed as a turning point in the election; the performance by the nervous, sweating Nixon was in stark contrast to Kennedy’s smooth, telegenic performance. Survey results show the majority of those listening to the debate on the radio believed Nixon won the debate, but those watching on television felt Kennedy came out on top, which indicates that the results of the aforementioned studies may not be far off (Liebovich). The way that a public relations practitioner could take advantage of this would be to recognize the strengths and weaknesses of their client, and schedule media appearances accordingly. If it is a situation that cannot be avoided, taking extra time coaching the client for media could be another tactic used.

Sixty-five million people viewed Kennedy’s first press conference, held less than a week after his inauguration, and in a 1961 poll, 90 percent of those who responded had watched at least one of Kennedy’s first three press conferences (“John F. Kennedy and the Press”). From the standpoint of Kennedy’s press team, this was great news — their message was being widely received, and through the medium Kennedy excelled at the most. The ability to have a client speak to reporters from numerous news organizations at once makes press conferences an effective and time-efficient public relations tool. The difficult element about press conferences is that a client is speaking not only to the audience that is watching them in person and on television, but also the audience that will read what the reporters say about them the next day in the papers. This means that it is ineffective to employ only strategies used for one medium, because it will be spread across many. It is also important to be aware of what audiences will be receiving the

message. Knowing the differences between what is important to those in the southern part of the country versus the northern region, for example, would help determine the message and its packaging. If a candidate is speaking in West Virginia, for instance, speaking about the importance of coal, or creating new jobs if alternative forms of energy are being pursued by the administration, would be more effective than speaking strictly about environmental causes, which may register better in places such as California.

Each medium has different strengths and weaknesses, which should be assessed in regard to the approach that will be taken for the specific candidate in question. To cover all media, a public relations practitioner would invite local and national newspapers, radio and television networks to cover the conference. The amount of time spent working with each industry may vary, however. For example, Kennedy's press secretary would be more likely to spend extra time working with television networks, since his physical appearance is one of his strong points, while Nixon's press secretary may spend more time crafting messages for radio, since it was still a relevant form of media, but didn't accentuate his weaker points.

While television is still a widely used medium for advertising and influencing public opinion, public relations practitioners are faced with an even newer challenge, as technology has brought a medium that enables not only communication with a large group of people, but also a communication platform that enables real-time two way feedback: social media.

## **Social Media**

Social media became popular in 2003 with the founding of MySpace. A year later, Mark Zuckerberg created Facebook, and in 2006, text messaging inspired the launch of Twitter ("The History of Social Media"). These social networking sites held the top spots at the beginning of Obama's time in office, and were all used as promotion tools by the campaign (Kazeniac). These three outlets were really just the beginning and not many could have predicted the incredible impact social media would have on political campaigns.

In 2008, America saw its first "social media election," with 1.8 million tweets on election day (Dugan). Barack Obama was running against Arizona Senator John McCain. Obama dominated on the social media front — on YouTube, Obama's page received 11 times more views than McCain's — gaining a large amount of fans and followers who created and shared his content, spreading his message even further (Wormald). Just four years later, there were 1.8 million tweets every six minutes (Dugan). This time, the incumbent Obama was running against former Massachusetts Governor Mitt Romney, and once again came out on top in terms of social media. The benefits of social media to a politician (and public relations practitioner) include not only being in direct contact with masses of voters, but also easier fundraising, the ability to give and receive immediate feedback and even customization of a message to fit the demographics of their followers. Former presidential candidate Mitt Romney used social media to target his ads to be displayed when users searched terms such as "Democrat" and "Obama," yielding him Facebook likes at twice the rate the incumbent Obama (Li). Targeted ads can help

politicians immensely, because they reach the exact publics they are speaking to; the message should be consistent, but again, different regions and demographics of Americans care about different issues, so it is highly effective to reach them based on these factors.

The use of sites such as Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, Pinterest, and Snapchat is what drives public relations today; according to a study conducted by Simon Fraser University, 53 percent of public relations specialists say social media is so important that it is one of the tasks for which they are solely responsible (SFU Public Relations Program). Social media is also the primary way in which politicians communicate with the public. Communicating on social media is free, which gives it an advantage over paid advertising, and reaches more people than any other medium today. According to a poll taken by the PEW Research Center, 61 percent of millennials report getting political news on Facebook in a typical week, and about a quarter say at least half the posts they see on the site are political (Gottfried).

Because of its increasing popularity, it has become vital for politicians to have a social media presence. Ninety percent of legislators use Twitter to connect with their constituents during campaigning and during their time in office, and in Senate races, the candidate with more Facebook likes wins 81 percent of the time ("Snapshot: The Day After Election Day"). As the first "social media president," Obama helped Americans register to vote from their phones with the Obama for America app (Tau). In fact, use of social media in the Obama campaign may have been a deciding factor in his victory; in fact, four out of ten people use social media to help them make a decision on election

day, and about the same amount use social media to discuss politics (Dugan). Obama sold his message, largely through the use of social networking sites, to enough of the American public to win the White House not once, but twice, despite a largely polarized electorate (Iyengar 127).

The increasing presence of social media in the world of politics has attracted the attention of the media and political analysts alike. Books such as *Presidential Campaigning and Social Media: An Analysis of the 2012 Campaign* and *Media Politics: A Citizen's Guide* have analyzed the growing impact of social media platforms on campaigning and elections. These analyses suggest social media may be creating a more polarized and less informed electorate. Data from Facebook shows that Fox News and the *Huffington Post*, both with distinct partisan slants, are the two news organizations with the highest circulation rates on the site (Iyengar 135). Because of the presence of such polarized sources, citizens may choose to only view stories from sources that will re-enforce their current views, making it difficult for middle-of-the-road and third party candidates to get significant coverage. The view that social media has a negative overall effect on politics is held also by many outspoken critics of social media's role in politics, many of whom believe that the platforms could cheapen the presidency, replacing serious policymaking with "hashtag activism" (Eilperin).

There are downsides to social media when managing one's public image, all of which can be minimized with a good social media strategy. Social media can exacerbate the negative consequences of scandal on a politician's reputation, and can also be a platform through which miscommunication takes place if messages are not crafted well.

The most recent politician to feel the effects of careless conduct on social media is Virginia congressional candidate Mike Webb, who posted a screenshot to his Facebook page, only to realize that he had left tabs with the names of pornographic websites open in his browser (Koh). His response to the situation was to leave the post up for several hours, go into a rambling explanation of why he had pornographic videos open in his browser, then proceed to take down both the original screenshot and the explanation. Webb failed to secure the Republican nomination and later decided to run as an Independent (Koh). A different way to handle a social media crisis would be to delete the post. Kitchenmaid used this strategy when an employee accidentally posted an offensive tweet to the company's Twitter account instead of her own. The tweet was quickly deleted, but had been seen (and screenshot) by many before it was taken down. Within fifteen minutes, the head of the brand explained to the public what had happened, apologized for any harm that had been done and let the public know that the person who sent out the tweet would no longer be managing their social media. The result of this fast and honest response was a good reception by the public and limited damage to the brand as a whole (Thompson).

Public relations practitioners recommend adopting a social media strategy before beginning a campaign in a today's world, where people tweet things as they are happening and fast responses are essential to maintaining public image. Once a strategy is created, it is easier for public relations practitioners to quickly review their practices and craft a response that is consistent with the overall image of their client and "fill in the blanks," so to speak, when responding to a specific crisis. Because of Kennedy's history

of extramarital affairs even before running for president, the exposure of such infidelities should be planned for, and response procedures planned in advance. While we know today that there were affairs taking place during the administration, they were not covered by the press at the time. No amount of planning can completely erase a situation after it has been picked up by social media, however, so Kennedy's affairs would give his opponent an edge on the social media front. Even worse for Kennedy is the fact that these scandals would have only been exacerbated by today's technology, and public opinion could have easily been swayed against him by reporters and "citizen journalists" alike, all of whom would have had the added anonymity of spreading the sordid details of Kennedy's affairs behind a computer screen. This kind of information being released to the public could have tarnished the image of the White House that Kennedy and his wife Jackie worked so hard to build.

### **Jacqueline's "Camelot"**

Kennedy's biggest supporter and, quite possibly, biggest asset, was his wife, Jacqueline. She was not only admired by the public for her elegance and kind demeanor, but she also made an active effort to amplify the positive image of the Kennedy White House, which came to be known by many as "Camelot" (Pierson).

In an exclusive interview with *Life* magazine journalist Theodore White shortly after her husband's death, Jacqueline Kennedy said her husband enjoyed listening to the soundtrack of the Broadway musical *Camelot*, and that he particularly enjoyed the line, "Don't ever let it be forgot, that once there was a spot, for one brief shining moment that was Camelot." Jacqueline took this line to heart in the days after his death, and associated

the Arthurian legend with the Kennedy White House to ensure that the public memory of her husband was just as legendary. Before his death, Jackie tried to stay out of the public eye, though she was greatly admired by the public, both in the United States and abroad. The death of her husband put the spotlight on her, and she used that opportunity to help shape the way her husband would be remembered by future generations. “There will be great presidents again, but there will never be another Camelot,” she told White (Pierson). A successful public image must be carefully crafted. Creating and maintaining this image or reputation is a large part of public relations. Every public appearance — such as Jackie’s interviews after her husband’s death — defines a candidate to the public. Kennedy had a strong public relations team, with his own charisma and ability to appeal to the public, Salinger’s ability to get his message heard, and Jackie’s pristine image, which in turn reflected on his own, and that of “Camelot.”

Some argue that “Camelot” was merely a myth circulated by Jacqueline following her husband’s death. According to an article by *The Daily Beast*, the editors that were about to publish the interview between Jacqueline and White initially rejected the story because they felt the Camelot references were “sentimental and inappropriate for the occasion.” (Pierson) After seeing Jacqueline was “relentless,” the editors agreed to publish the story with the references, but White later wrote that he regretted the role he played in “transmitting the Camelot myth to the public” (Pierson). The image of Camelot began far before Kennedy’s death, however. With every public appearance, every carefully crafted speech and every image of his picture-perfect family that was ingrained

into the mind of the public, Kennedy's legendary image was in the making even before he took the Oath of Office.

### **Conclusion**

A public relations practitioner may take away a lot from reviewing the public relations strategies that built the famous "Camelot." The structure of Kennedy's public relations team, the administration's response to crises and Kennedy's inspiring rhetoric are just a few facets of the overall strategy which built the image of the Kennedy Administration, not only while it was active, but even now, over 50 years later.

### Creative Project Context

This creative project uses fictional social media accounts and postings to show how the use of social media would have affected the Kennedy campaign and the image of “Camelot.” Additionally, the fictional social media postings show how social media has impacted political communications overall. This project also shows how public relations social media tactics could have been used. Through creating social media posts, the researcher highlight Kennedy’s public relations strategies and Jacqueline’s role in the creation and maintaining of the image of the Kennedy White House. The project uses strategies of past and current political communication to show how social media would have impacted the image of Camelot.

Based on previous research and public relations tactics, the creative project is guided by the following questions:

**RQ:** How could John Fitzgerald Kennedy have used social media to impact his success in running for president, and his approval ratings after taking office?

**Sub Q1:** How could social media’s ability to spread information quickly and expose ‘hidden’ information have impacted the image of “Camelot”?

**Sub Q 2:** Could social media have made it more difficult for Kennedy and his public relations team to cover scandals such as his extramarital affairs and suspected mafia connections?

**Sub Q 3:** How could Jacqueline use of social media to enhanced and embrace the image of “Camelot”?

### Creative Project Description

The creative portion of this project includes a series of screenshots of social media posts created as Jacqueline Kennedy. The social media used includes Facebook, Twitter and Instagram, the content of which was developed by analyzing current trends of politicians and first ladies on social media and their results on public image. These social networking sites held the top spots at the beginning of Obama's time in office, and were all used as promotion tools by the campaign (Kazeniak). The significance and expected impact of each post on the campaign are explained in the analysis that follows each post to determine the public relations strategies used by first ladies on social media. The project ends with suggested best practices for social media use during presidential campaigns.

## Campaign Social Media

The following pages include social media posts that a PR practitioner or campaign manager, who frequently fills the PR role before a candidate is elected, may have created for President Kennedy and the first lady if social media had existed during his time. Below each post is an explanation of its significance based on the goals of the campaign, proven by screenshots taken from the social media accounts of 2016 presidential nominees, Democratic candidate Hillary Clinton, Republican candidate Donald Trump and Democratic Socialist candidate Bernie Sanders, with some references to the 2012 campaign of President Barack Obama — the first presidential candidate ever to use social media in his campaign — as well.

During the campaign season, there are big events every day, and candidates, or their social media staff, typically post very frequently. For this reason, this research does not cover two consecutive weeks during Kennedy's campaign, but, rather, focuses on the highlights of his campaign — such as his platform and promises — as well as how he confronted issues that he was facing in the sphere of public opinion and how he reached out to demographics that were not previously leaning in his favor.

The social media of a politician once he or she is elected into office, however, is more the maintaining of public image. One of the challenges with this type of public relations work is holding the interest of the public during times that people are not as politically engaged as they are during election season. For this reason, the post-campaign social media, in the final section of this creative project section, centers around only two weeks, to demonstrate how a politician may craft his message during those less

captivating moments, rather than choosing the most exciting moments from all of his time in office.

All posts were created based on the following considerations:

- What audience(s) is the candidate trying to reach?
- What is the message the candidate wants to be received/how does this post play into the goals of the campaign as a whole?
- Which platform is the most effective for the message?

Below are the accounts that are referenced in this analysis:

### **Reference Accounts**

#### Twitter

Michelle: @FLOTUS, @MichelleObama

Barack: @POTUS

Hillary Clinton: @HillaryClinton

Donald Trump: @RealDonaldTrump

Bernie Sanders: @BernieSanders, @SenSanders

#### Facebook

Michelle: <https://www.facebook.com/michelleobama/>

Barack: <https://www.facebook.com/barackobama>

Hillary Clinton: <https://www.facebook.com/hillaryclinton>

Donald Trump: <https://www.facebook.com/DonaldTrump>

Bernie Sanders: <https://www.facebook.com/berniesanders>

#### Instagram

Michelle: @MichelleObama

Barack: @BarackObama

Hillary Clinton: @HillaryClinton

Donald Trump: @RealDonaldTrump

Bernie Sanders: @BernieSanders

### Press Release

The following page contains a press release that Kennedy's public relations practitioner may have sent out to alert the press of the new social media accounts. All accounts are set to "private" and include a disclaimer that they were part of a thesis project so that they may not be found and mistakenly affiliated with the Kennedy family.



# From the desk of: Senator John F. Kennedy

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

05/10/1960

**CONTACT:** Erin Gardner

(865) 363-3005 (cell)

[ErinGardnerPR@gmail.com](mailto:ErinGardnerPR@gmail.com)

## **John F. Kennedy expands campaign to social media**

(WASHINGTON, D.C.), May 10, 1960 — Presidential candidate John F. Kennedy is allowing citizens an exclusive look into his presidential campaign.

Kennedy created Facebook and Twitter accounts today for citizens to access pictures and announcements relating to the campaign.

Information which may be made available through both Facebook and Twitter will include announcements regarding campaign stops, pictures from various events, personal family photos and updates on current issues.

“My campaign is about transparency,” said Kennedy “I want the people of this country to know what I stand for, and there is no better way to do that than to be readily available on social media.”

Kennedy’s wife, Jacqueline Kennedy, has also created accounts on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram to share never-before-seen photos and stories.

—more—

“Jackie” Bouvier Kennedy is a champion equestrian from Southampton, New York, and is a graduate of George Washington University. Jackie’s followers will have access to exclusive behind-the-scenes material straight from the campaign trail.

“Jack and I want the public to feel like they really know us,” Jacqueline said, “because as much as we’d love to personally meet all of our supporters, that isn’t possible. It’s comforting to know that people will be able to reach out to us easier now.”

Below is a list of the Kennedy family’s accounts:

**Twitter**

Jackie: @JackieBKennedy

John: @JFKOfficial1960

**Facebook**

Jackie: <https://www.facebook.com/TheJacquelineKennedy>

John: <https://www.facebook.com/John-F-Kennedy-for-President-881708368623657/>

**Instagram**

Jackie: @TheJacquelineKennedy

*Sen. John F. Kennedy (D-MA) is a candidate in the 1960 presidential election.*

*Kennedy has served in both the U.S. House and Senate. Kennedy is a graduate of Harvard University and has served in the U.S. Navy and is a recipient of the Purple Heart. He is also the author of Profiles in Courage, which earned him a Pulitzer Prize in 1957. Kennedy currently lives in Brookline, Massachusetts with his wife, Jacqueline and their daughter Caroline.*

###

## May 10, 1960 — Kennedy campaigns in West Virginia



*Fig. 1*



*Fig. 2*

**Explanation:** During early campaigning especially, it is important to get voters excited by showing them that you will be available for “meet and greets” regularly on the campaign trail. Jackie, primarily, handles the public image in terms of family and social situations, so a campaign manager may advise her to share a photo with a caption that makes the Kennedies appear down to earth, and shows that they care about families. The picture in this post speaks volumes more than the caption, so it would be placed on Instagram, a platform made specifically for sharing photos. Michelle Obama excited voters in 2007 by appearing on the campaign trail with Obama, connecting with families in a way that his opponent, John McCain, was unable to do.



*Fig. 3*

**Explanation:** The middle class currently makes up 51 percent of the U.S. population (Fry). For this reason, topics such as lowering taxes on the middle class are often key topics in presidential elections. Kennedy would need to gain the trust of the middle class in order to be successful in the election; this is why sharing pictures with the “Average Joe” working man is so important, especially for a young Northern man who comes from wealth, and already has trouble gaining the trust of much of the middle class. Since Kennedy was in West Virginia, it would help him to capitalize on issues that are important to that region, such as coal mining. Announcing his support for miners could help increase the chances that people from that region — many of whom may have been worried about the economy and their job security — would vote for him. Facebook would be the platform to use for this post because it is longer than the character limit on Twitter allows. It is also more common for Facebook posts to have longer descriptions, while tweets tend to be concise phrases without much detail.

**July 15, 1960** — Kennedy formally accepts the Democratic Party’s nomination for President of the United States.



*Fig. 4*

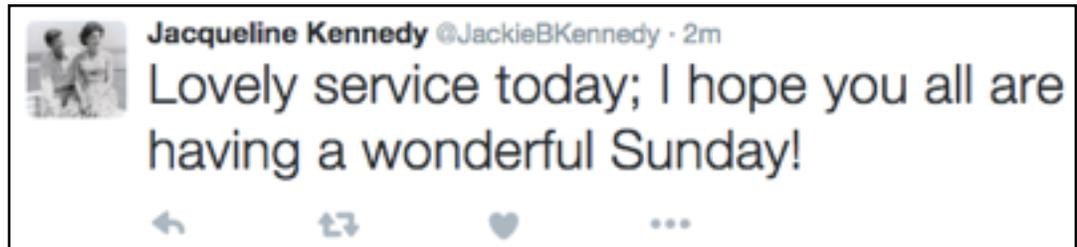
**Explanation:** There is no direct comparison to be made between Kennedy accepting his nomination and when someone in the social media age accepted theirs because Obama did not have a social media presence in 2008. It is, however, important for candidates to show their appreciation for those who vote for them, which is why this post is so important. This was an exciting time in American history, so this photo would also help Americans become excited for the general election, and could encourage them to follow the Kennedy campaign more closely. Facebook is the most popular social media platform, based on estimated unique monthly visitors (“Top 15”). Because this post marks the beginning of Kennedy’s post-primary campaign, it would be wise for Kennedy to choose Facebook, with the largest audience out there, for this post.



*Fig. 5*

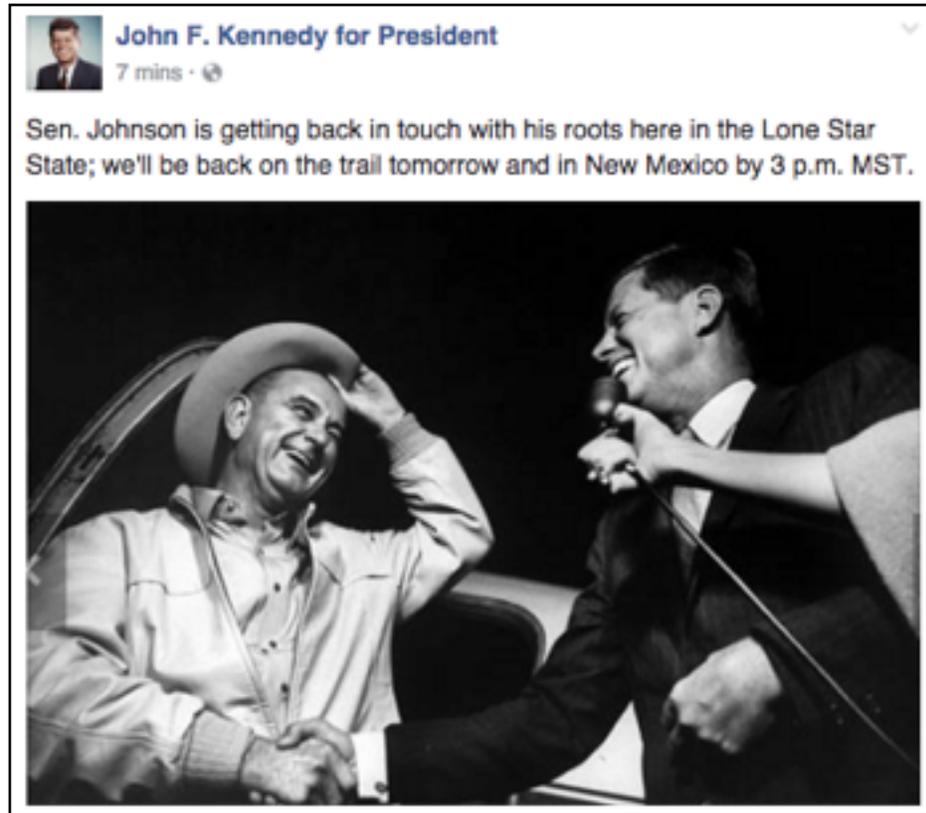
**Explanation:** A campaign manager may advise Jackie to post videos of herself speaking for multiple reasons. For one, Facebook engagement is steadily declining for posts that do not include video (Ingram). Another reason these videos could help the Kennedy campaign is because it helps the audience feel more like they know the first family, and could help them become more invested in his possible presidency. The Kennedy campaign could also use family as a recurring theme, starting with the discussion about the baby, and continuing with pictures of the kids, interest in children's issues and more that will be seen later in this portfolio.

**August 13, 1960** — Kennedy and VP choice Lyndon B. Johnson campaign in Texas.



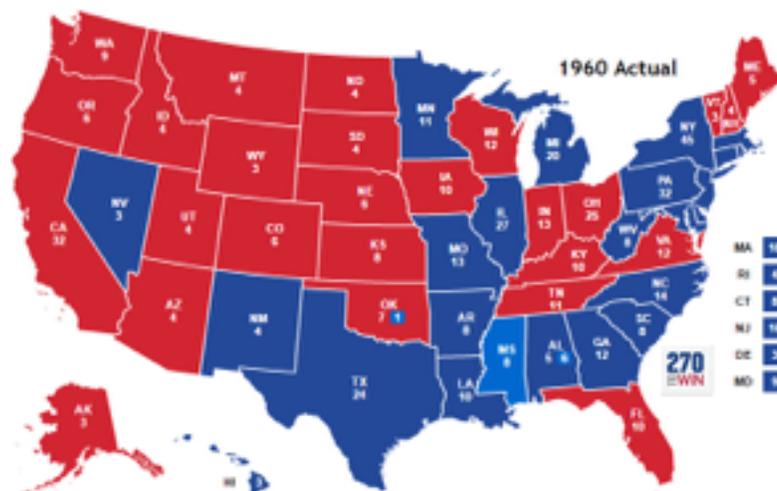
*Fig. 6*

**Explanation:** This post would help to reinforce the message that the Kennedys are good, Christian people, and could help combat the criticism they received for their Catholic faith. This tweet would be sent while Kennedy is campaigning in Texas in order to appeal to the Bible Belt protestants that take the most issue with his faith. Jackie would post this on Twitter because it is a very short, simple message that may easily get lost on Facebook with its the mostly picture and video format. The message does, however, fit the format of Twitter perfectly; it is a short, to-the-point message that could easily be retweeted. This post would perform better coming from Jackie, who deals more with the personal, spiritual and family aspects of the campaign, while John handles the business and policy side for the most part — although there is some overlap.



*Fig. 7*

**Explanation:** One of the reasons Kennedy selected Sen. Lyndon B. Johnson as his running mate — and an influential endorsement — was to appeal to the South, a region that was problematic for him because of his Northern heritage, Catholic faith and views on civil rights. Sen. Johnson was from Texas, which gave Kennedy more credibility in the South, as can be seen in the 1960 election results map below:



September 12, 1960 — Jackie and John’s 7-year wedding anniversary.



**Explanation:** The Kennedies were well

loved not only as a family, but also as a

couple. Michelle Obama’s anniversary post received over 268,000 likes. Her post, however, is not signed “mo,” as the statuses and tweets written by her, personally, are, which means that this post was written by someone on her staff. Since the Kennedy campaign would likely have the goal of relating directly to the public and engaging them in conversation, it would be wise for all of Jackie’s posts to be personal, and come straight from her. A sweet post about Jack accomplishes this, while at the same time, making him more of an appealing person to women, as her post “humanizes” him as well, and helps people to view him not only in the context of politics, but also in the context of a loving husband and father. Since Instagram is picture-focused, and the substance of this post is a picture, that would be the most effective platform for this post.

**Explanation:** Just as it was important for Jackie to post about their anniversary, it is important for John to do the same for her. This helps reinforce the image of the happy couple, and even more



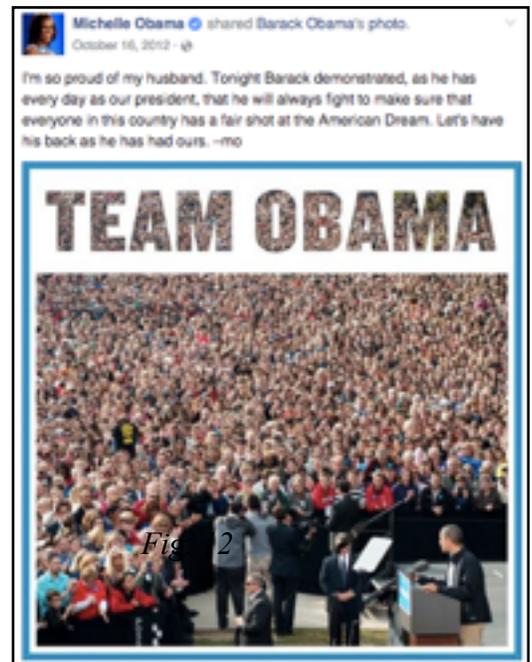
*Fig. 10*

so, in this photo, the happy family, which is reinforced by Kennedy's referring to Jackie as "mother of my children." Because of the relationship journalists have with Twitter, they often look there for news, and could turn this photo into a story that would likely generate positive press for the Kennedys. President Obama and Michelle are an admired couple today, just as John and Jackie were in 1960; Obama's most recent anniversary post generated 1.3 million likes, which far exceeds the amount he normally acquires, which tends to stay in the hundred-thousands.

September 26, 1960 — The first presidential debate, between Republican nominee

Richard Nixon and Democratic nominee

John F. Kennedy, airs on national television.



*Fig. 14*

**Explanation:** A campaign manager must remember that the candidate's family is being watched just as much as the candidate. Jackie should show support for her husband throughout his campaign, holding together the image of the "ideal family" that was the foundation of what later became known as "American Camelot." Michelle Obama frequently shares how proud she is of Barack, and frequently attends events to represent him when he is unable to. The support of the wife gives the public a sense of comfort, knowing that those closest to the candidate support his efforts and feel that he is ready to take on the responsibility of the office for which he is running. Facebook would be the best platform for this post because the audience Jackie's message would be most

appealing to — family-focused women — tends to spend most of their social media time on Facebook.

*Fig. 13*



Fig. 15

**Explanation:** A campaign manager would likely advise Kennedy to post about the debate on Twitter hours before it airs, because Twitter is now referred to as the “new spin room” (Pfeiffer). Twitter is also a platform on which people often use debate hashtags to have their Tweets featured by the network while it airs. Fact checking has also become very popular during debates, and is done by numerous news sources and other websites (*First Presidential Debate 2016*). Democratic nominee Hillary Clinton used this to her advantage during the first presidential debate of 2016, referencing her own website as a tool for viewers to go to for fact checking (*First Presidential Debate 2016*). This both draws viewers to her website and gives her more credibility, as it makes it look as though she is not afraid to have her assertions analyzed for accuracy up against her opponent’s, Republican nominee Donald Trump.

September 27, 1960 — The day after the first presidential debate.



Fig. 16

quickly see any post including that tag to monitor what is being said about Kennedy's performance — although since this particular effort is picture-focused, it naturally lends itself to being most effective on Instagram. This also encourages users to watch future debates, and even to have friends over to watch it, which would benefit Kennedy since he performed so well in the first debate. The

**Explanation:** A campaign manager may advise Jackie to help her husband maintain the momentum from the debate in the days following. One way to do that is to get followers actively involved with the campaign by engaging them on social media. This is one of the many uses of a hashtag. If followers were to use the hashtag #JFKDebates, the Kennedy campaign could easily search the hashtag on Facebook, Twitter or Instagram to



Fig. 17

post also serves as a reminder of the upcoming debate, and encourages followers to tune in for that as well. Many candidates use this tactic, and some, such as Hillary Clinton, often offer prizes. Clinton, for instance, often offers “dinners with Hillary” for contest winners, and encourages followers to tag their friends in the comments, which gets her more publicity and helps her content have more reach, as the more people like a post, the more will see it as a result of Facebook’s algorithm (Oremus).



Fig. 18



Fig. 19

**Explanation:** Most of what can be found following the first presidential debate of the 2016 general election is negative, which has been a major issue in the current election. There were not a lot of positive posts promoting the good each candidate does, respectively, but, rather, posts degrading the opponent. This is contrary to the type of campaign Kennedy ran, and should not be a strategy used in his campaign. Directing people to his website, however, helps connect people to his stances on issues as he wants them portrayed. Since his social media and his website are both under his control, they are the safest place — in terms of his own political success — for his audience to get information. Twitter is the most effective platform to use to mobilize a group of people around a cause, making this the best platform on which Kennedy could use a call to action, such as directing people to his website (Kassim). The Arab Spring revolution was the result of organized social media efforts, with mobilization tactics focused on Twitter (Kassim).



Fig. 20

October 5, 1960 — Kennedy campaigns in Lake County, Indiana.



*Fig. 21*



*Fig. 22*

**Explanation:** Part of the role of the first lady (or future first lady) is to help her husband raise funds for his campaign, as well as to attend campaign events. A campaign manager may advise Jackie to provide her followers with a link to Kennedy’s fundraising site to encourage them to donate. Many emails from politicians mention deadlines and poll numbers to increase the sense of urgency to donate to the campaign. This would be posted on Facebook, which is often used to draw in donations, in the month prior to the campaign, because it is close enough that the sense of urgency would likely be felt, but far enough away that there is still time to keep raising money, but would be continued throughout the rest of the campaign. Michelle Obama often requested donations in mass emails and Facebook posts, reaching thousands of potential donors with every post.



Fig. 23



Fig. 24

**Explanation:** This post is a Facebook feature called an “event,” which allows any Facebook user to create a page with details about an event, invite their friends, family, or even the public as a whole, to attend and keep track of who is attending, who is interested and who is not. These events are useful to candidates because Facebook will automatically send those who select “going” or “interested” with reminders that they have an event coming up. These events may be used for fundraisers, rallies, protests, debates and more. These events may also be shared on anyone’s social media pages, and can help increase awareness of and attendance at events.

October 9, 1960 — Kennedy campaigns in Kentucky (“SWPC-JFK-090-004”).



*Fig. 25*



*Fig. 26*

**Explanation:** This post targets the largely female — often, also mothers — audience of Facebook with a theme that will be a prominent point throughout the campaign: family (“US Mothers”). This post helps craft Kennedy’s image into that of a loving father who cares for his children and the future he will leave behind for children everywhere. Kennedy’s assertion that “together, we can build a better future for our children” would have been particularly powerful at the time, when the American public was struggling with the fear of nuclear war. Hillary Clinton often uses the idea of a building a better future for our children as well, which is relevant today because of the fear most Americans have in the wake of attacks from terror groups such as ISIS.



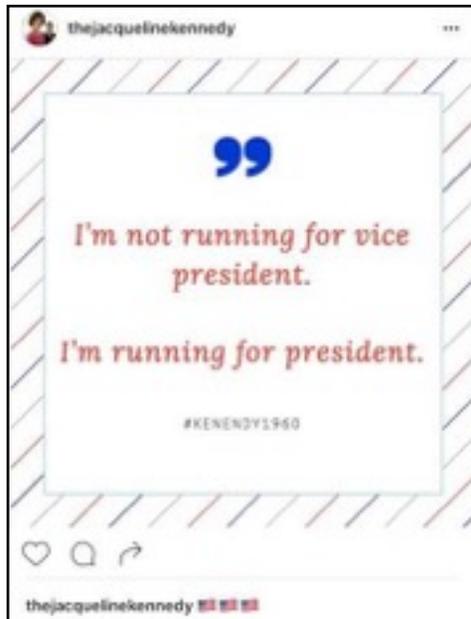
Fig. 27



Fig. 28

**Explanation:** Polls may be used by candidates to show that they have a chance at winning — a concept known as viability — which is an essential factor in getting votes. People often will refrain from voting if they feel their candidate of choice has no chance at winning. Kennedy’s October poll numbers showed that he had a chance to beat Nixon, but that it was close enough that he still needed his supporters to vote (Cohen). Donald Trump frequently shares his poll numbers, thanking voters for their support and showing where he is leading. Polls may be shared on any platform, so Kennedy could post it on the one he is on less, in order to help balance it out; in this case, that would be Twitter.

**October 10, 1960** — Kennedy campaigns in Lake County, Indiana.



*Fig. 29*



*Fig. 30*

**Explanation:** When he received criticism from notable Democratic elites such as Harry Truman, Kennedy said, “I’m not running for vice president, I’m running for president” to let the public know that he was, in fact, serious about the job (“The Election of 1960”). Quotes are a good way to increase social media engagement, as they are easy to share and require few — if any — additional words (Ayres). While Hillary had quite a long caption with her quote, it is often not a good idea to make posts that long, as people may lose interest and skip the post altogether. In fact, studies show that, on average, shorter posts receive 86 percent more engagement than longer ones (“6 Social Media Best Practices”). That is why Jackie’s post has no additional words in the caption. A quote should only be shared if it is strong enough to stand on its own.



Fig. 31



Fig. 32

**Explanation:** It is important for Kennedy to advertise his merchandise on his social media accounts, because that merchandise helps give more publicity to his campaign, as many will buy shirts, bumper stickers, mugs and more, giving him even more publicity. An apparel giveaway, for instance, could increase interest in the campaign. The tool used to create this post is called a Facebook “offer,” which links the advertisement to any website; in this case, it would link to the Kennedy campaign’s online store. Nearly all candidates have these promotions on Facebook, and many also “boost” the post, which is paying for Facebook to promote the post, thus showing it to more people. These people can be narrowed down by gender, age, race and other demographic and regional qualities, helping the candidate reach their target market.

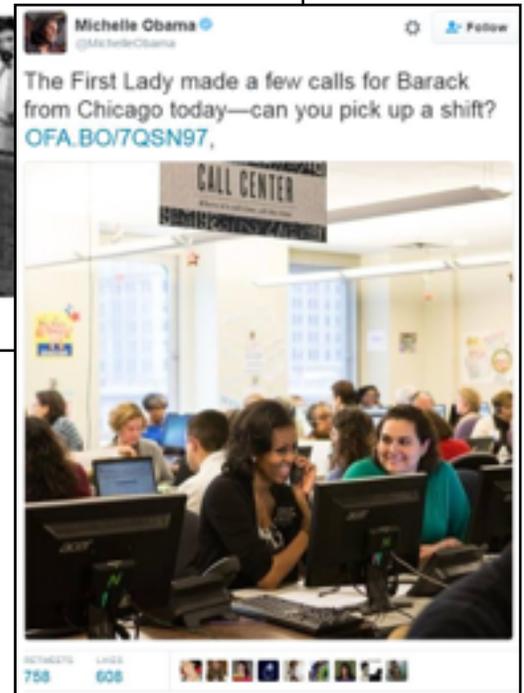
**November 7, 1960** — One day before the 1960 presidential election.

**Explanation:** Twitter would be the platform to use in this scenario, just as it was when Kennedy was directing people to his website following the debate, because this is a call to



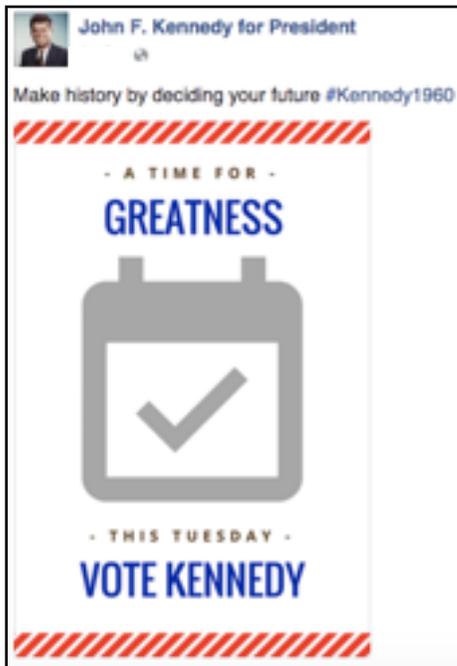
*Fig. 33*

action. It is also important to keep in mind that television and print advertising should also be increased in the days and weeks leading up to the election, and that it would be important to maintain consistent messages across those platforms, in coordination with the social media plan.



*Fig. 34*

The careful coordination of messaging across all of these platforms helps to make campaigns appear more organized, and may help with the mobilization efforts, as people will be more aware of the campaign and its goals. This coordination between platforms can also help reinforce the message a candidate is trying to relay. Michelle Obama posted more during the campaign season than she did when she became first lady, likely because she knew the importance of social media and the effects it can have on the outcomes of campaigns. Her active role campaigning shows voters that the mission of the Obama campaign is genuine, and that they are working hard to get the vote out themselves, which may encourage them to participate as well.



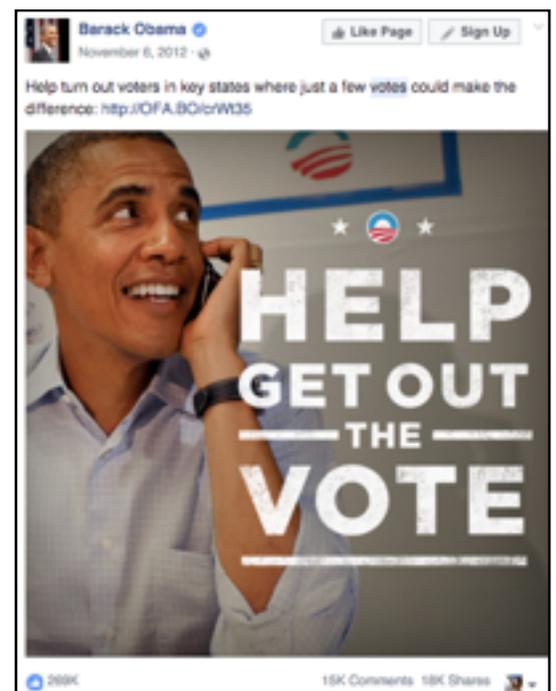
*Fig. 35*

percentage of the population feels voting doesn't matter. This percentage is so high, in fact, that in the last presidential election, only 53 percent of Americans voted (Alnatour).

In 2012, Barack Obama reminded people to vote, while at the same time requesting their help phone banking — a method of obtaining votes that involves calling undecided voters and trying to convince them to vote for a certain candidate. This is one strategy to use,

and seemed to work well for him. Another, however — the one that will be used in this campaign scenario — is to create two separate posts, shared on different days; one to remind people to vote, and the other to request help phone banking. This serves as an extra reminder, without seeming pushy or repetitive, and may increase voter turnout.

**Explanation:** A campaign manager would create graphics similar to these throughout the entire campaign. Images catch the attention of followers, send a message that may be interpreted in seconds and are easily shareable. A reminder to vote is important, as is encouragement to vote. Reminding followers that voting decides the future and makes them a significant part of history may help increase voter turnout, especially when such a high



*Fig. 36*

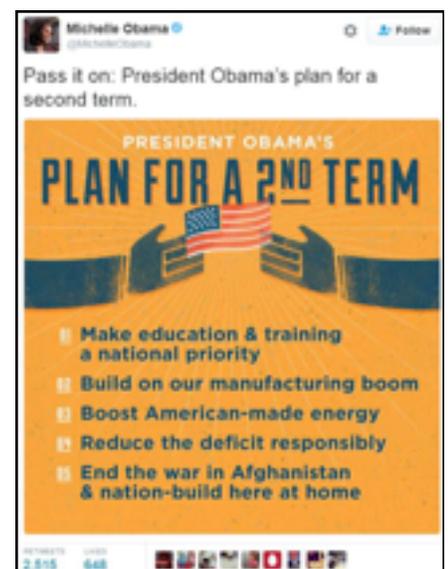
**November 8, 1960** — The day of the 1960 presidential election.



*Fig. 37*

**Explanation:** Since John reminded people to vote on his Facebook page the day before the election, a campaign manager may advise Jackie to remind people the day of, with another graphic. This post could be shared on Instagram, since the last reminder was directed toward the Facebook audience, and would be carefully crafted to make an impact in the minds of voters. One of the most

important issues was foreign policy — namely, the Cuban “missile gap,” which Kennedy campaigned on — and the economy. The words “peace” and “strength” relate to foreign policy in such a way that it could appeal to both ideologies — those who want aggressive foreign policy would be drawn to strength, and those who do not would be more attracted to peace — without contradicting each other. Prosperity relates directly to the economy, and “greatness” is a play on his campaign slogan, “A Time for Greatness.” Finally, the last line of the graphic reminds followers that a vote for Kennedy is a vote for those things. Michelle Obama’s post was not a day-of-election reminder to vote, but was, rather, a quick, digestible review of Obama’s plans, should he be elected. Jackie’s is less specific, but a more specific post, similar to Michelle’s, should be created and distributed in print and on social media earlier in the campaign to familiarize the public with Kennedy.



*Fig. 38*



Fig. 39



Fig. 40

**Explanation:** John's efforts to mobilize citizens to volunteer for phone banking should also be placed on Facebook, where there is more space for him to explain the importance of phone banking than there would be on Twitter. One candidate that was able to mobilize voters by calling them to action on various social media platforms was Democratic Socialist candidate Bernie Sanders, who led one of the best social media campaigns in modern history. Although he did not receive the Democratic nomination, he had more engagement on social media — despite a lower number of followers than Clinton or Trump — than any other candidate (Chaykowski).

**Post-Election Social Media**

The following pages include social media posts that a PR practitioner may have created for President Kennedy and the first lady after the campaign is over and Kennedy is in office. The weeks in this section were selected based on the events that were taking place at a time, which provide a variety of topics that a PR practitioner would have to address in such a way to keep up Kennedy's favorability ratings with the public, as a second-term campaign run was a possibility at the time. Below each post is an explanation of its significance based on the goals of the campaign, proven by screenshots taken from the social media accounts of President Barack Obama and First Lady Michelle.

**February 9, 1962** - “Following the President’s call for a national fallout shelter program, Defense Secretary Robert McNamara submits legislation that would spend \$450 million and build shelters for 20 million people within a year” (Golway 115).



*Fig. 41*



*Fig. 42*

**Explanation:** One of the goals of Jackie’s social media is to create a very caring, relatable and personal image of the Kennedy White House. Jackie letting the people know that she has talked directly with people in their own communities about the impact this legislation could have on them portrays her — and by proxy, President Kennedy — as caring and down-to-earth. Facebook is the most important social media platform to use to reach audiences of all ages (Hoeppepner), and, as can be seen in Michelle’s sharing of President Obamas post, sharing posts on Facebook increases the reach of this posts exponentially, giving more people a chance to see this more personal, approachable side of the President and First Lady.



Fig. 43



Fig. 44

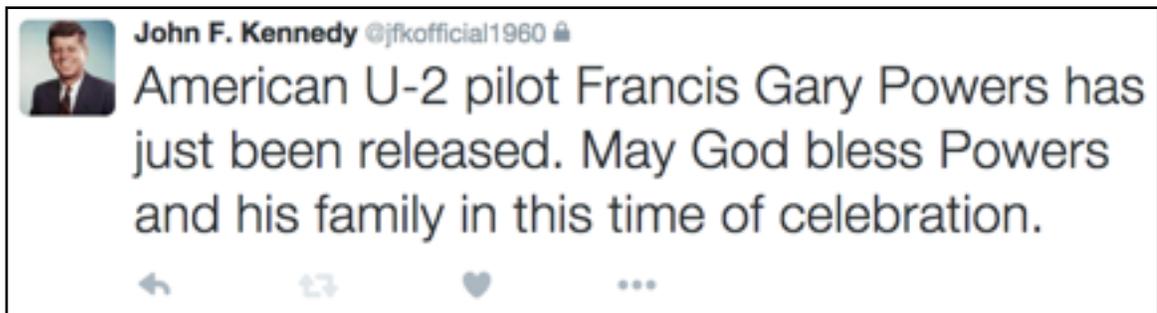
**Explanation:** This post would come from President Kennedy himself, because he is the face of policy in the Kennedy White House, and it would be important for the public to know that he personally cares about what happens in their lives. People tend to view legislation as impersonal, even though it has the potential to dramatically impact the lives of the people it affects. This post would help Kennedy appeal to Americans because it shows that he cares about them and their families. This tactic may be seen in President Obama's Facebook post about legislation that would impact the American middle class was viewed over 630,000 times, meaning that many people are now aware of how this legislation may impact them personally, and showing them that the administration is working for *them*, not just bureaucrats in Washington.

**February 10, 1962** - Russia frees American U-2 pilot Francis Gary Powers in Berlin in exchange for Rudolf Abel, a spy convicted for running a complex Soviet spy operation from a photography studio in New York (Golway 115).



*Fig. 45*

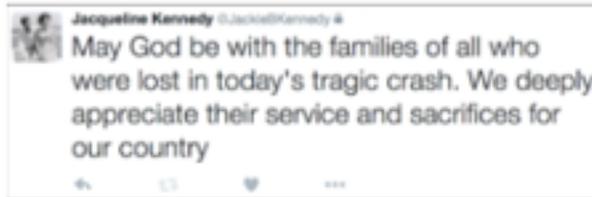
**Explanation:** Family was a very important value in American society in the sixties, so a PR practitioner should encourage the first lady to make that the focal point of any social media posts relating to tragedies such as these. The fact that there was an exchange for a convicted spy involved could lead some to disagree with the administration's decision, so that is a fact that should be left out of any commentary on the matter, unless it is a direct question from the media. Instagram would be a good choice for this post because it is nothing that inherently warrants discussion, and Jackie's Instagram would be used less than her Facebook. President Kennedy would break the news on Twitter, making that platform unnecessary for the first lady to use. Michelle Obama has not posted any similar messages regarding the safe return of U.S. citizens, but it could be a smart PR move for her if she were advised to do so.



*Fig. 46*

**Explanation:** The release of Francis Gary Powers was big news, which is why Twitter would be the best platform to use when sharing this information. Again, President Kennedy would normally break major news like this, as it is expected more to come from him than from the first lady, and these issues fall more under his responsibilities. This is one example of the division people expect to see in campaigns; his social media is more business-related, while Jackie's are more family-related. President Obama has also avoided commenting on such situations on social media, which could cause backlash from the public because it can come across as uncaring or cold. President Kennedy would likely gain support from his following for sharing this information, as it portrays him as a sensitive and caring President.

**February 11, 1962** - “Six U.S. Air Force and two South Vietnamese crew members are killed when their C-47 crashes during a psychological warfare mission. It is only the second U.S. aircraft to be lost in the conflict” (Golway 115).



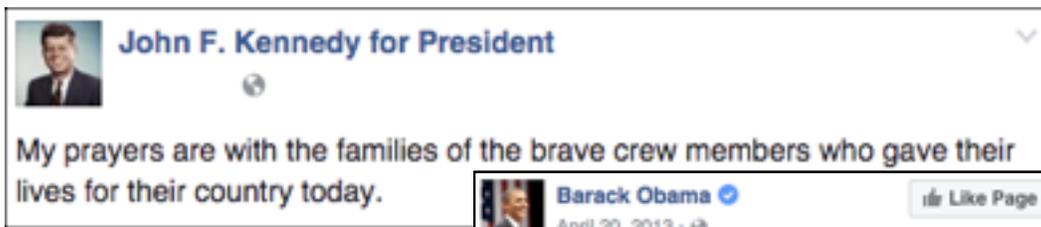
*Fig. 47*

**Explanation:** Because there is not a picture of Jackie or President Kennedy with the families of the crew members killed in the crash, there is not a picture attached to this post; in real life, however,

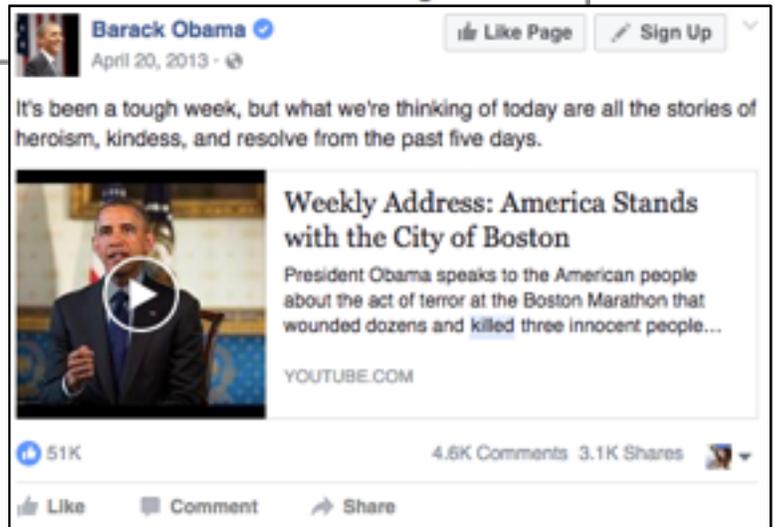


*Fig. 48*

it would be a good PR move for the President and the first lady to attend a vigil, invite the families to the White House or make some other gesture of empathy. The reason this type of post would be helpful for the Kennedys' public image is because it could create positive press, puts an emphasis on their concern for families and makes the President and the first lady appear more genuine. This post would be sent out very quickly, and could be breaking news, making Twitter the most appropriate platform to use since it is the preferred platform of most journalists (Klein). Both the President and the first lady should comment on such events, as it shows that the administration is fully engaged and cares about the wellbeing of the citizens it serves.



*Fig. 49*



*Fig. 50*

**Explanation:** Video is an

important medium that can add

life and personality to a

politician's social media, especially for a candidate such as JFK, who was known as the

"television president," and was one of the most charismatic and likable public figures

America has ever seen. Just as Kennedy captured the hearts — and votes — of his

audience in the first presidential debate, he could gain favorability with voters throughout

his presidency by reaching out to a grieving public during hard times to show genuine

emotion. Obama's weekly addresses are a good move for him, as he also has strong

charisma, and is able to appeal to viewers through video. It would be important for

Kennedy to have authentic, low-budget videos on his social media pages — a new

version of FDR's fireside chats, in a sense — in addition to holding his televised press

conferences, in order to come across as genuine to the American public. Facebook would

be the best option for this post because of its video compatibility capabilities.

**February 12 , 1962-** President Kennedy reduces the death sentence of Jimmie Henderson, a Navy seaman convicted of murder, to life in prison (Golway 115).



*Fig. 51*

**Explanation:** This is the first promotion post coming from either of the Kennedies; since the tour is big news, Twitter is the platform to use to tease the event before moving on to other, more picture-intensive platforms as the time for the tour draws nearer. Jackie would also be the first one to post this news, since she is the one conducting the tour, as well as the one who did



*Fig. 52*

the renovations. Asking followers questions is one of the best ways to increase engagement on social media, as it gives the public an easy way for them to express an opinion (Ayres). The hashtag “#WH62” expresses that the White House is changing in the year 1962, and is meant to build excitement and anticipation for the big reveal. This hashtag could also get people talking, as anyone who searches for the hashtag will be connected to other users who have added it to their posts. Acknowledging the big news of the day, that President Kennedy has reduced Jimmie Henderson’s death sentence to life in prison, is unnecessary and could cause unwanted backlash from the public, as it is a controversial situation, which would be best to deflect.



*Fig. 53*

**Explanation:** President Obama does not typically promote Michelle's initiatives with her hashtags; #LetsMove and #LetGirlsLearn are the two hashtags that she has most commonly used, but neither has been used by the President on his own accounts. It could, however, give those movements some positive publicity, which is one of the reasons it would be good for President Kennedy to join the first lady in promoting the White House tour by retweeting her announcement of the tour, in addition to the fact that it simply makes sense for him to express appreciation for his wife's caring for the people's house. It could also help the president's reputation with women to show that he supports his wife's endeavors, which could be very important should the news of his adultery get out.

**February 13, 1962** - JFK holds talks with King Saud on Middle Eastern issues

(Golway 115).



*Fig. 54*

**Explanation:** This is the second promotion post from Jackie; since the majority of her viewers probably spend most of their social media time on Facebook, this is where Jackie could remind people (the day before) that the tour will be televised the following day.

Although cultural affairs often fall under the responsibility of the first lady, President

Kennedy's meeting with King Saud is more policy-related than a State Dinner, for

instance, which is a social event that is more focused on public image. Michelle Obama's staff posted a reminder on her page, but since adding a personal, relatable feel to the administration would be one of Jackie's priorities, Jackie would post the reminder of the tour herself on her social media pages. Over 130,000 people liked Michelle's post, which was a



*Fig. 55*

day-of reminder of her speaking engagement at the DNC, which likely gained many viewers for the program. This was the only alert from the first lady's page about the fact that she would be speaking; it could have proven helpful, however, if she had posted a reminder in advance, as well, to reach more followers.



*Fig. 56*



*Fig. 60*

*Fig. 57*

**Explanation:** It is important for the reputation of the President both in the U.S. and abroad to show a concern for what is happening not only in his own country, but abroad as well. Because U.S. relations with Saudi Arabia are such big news, this announcement would work best on Twitter. A PR practitioner should advise President Kennedy to focus his message on addressing the futures of the two countries and their relationship in order not to draw questions about the “true intentions” of the President in the meeting, as spectators often do when U.S. leaders hold meetings with their Middle Eastern counterparts.

**February 14, 1962** - Jackie leads millions on a televised tour of the White House, aired by CBS and NBC, after she finished her renovations of the residence (Golway 115).



*Fig. 58*

**Explanation:** This is the final promotion post, shared the day of, including the hashtag that has been used throughout the tour's promotion. Jackie would post a teaser on Instagram to build even more excitement, as this is the first television event of its kind, and is the first time the public has gotten such an intimate view of the White House. There is no real comparison to be made between Jackie's tour

and anything done by first ladies since; there are Christmas specials that show various White House traditions throughout the years, but Jackie's coverage of the White House was in such detail, and was her own work, which is something that had not been done, and has not been replicated (continued).



*Fig. 59*

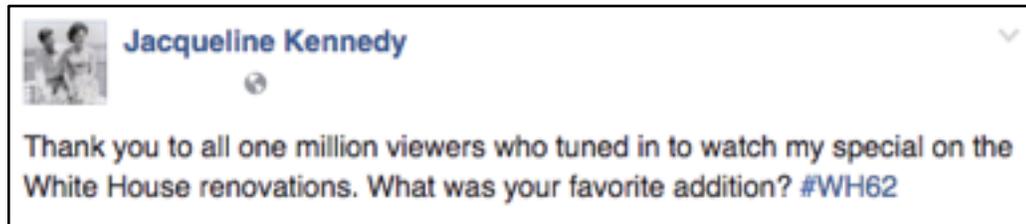
Michelle Obama has, however, shared a few images from tours, usually around Christmas and involving groups of children, which makes the Obama Administration that much more relatable, as the public is able to make connections between those holiday traditions and their own. Jackie's manner is also different than Michelle's; Jackie stands aloof and perfectly poised, as she was always sure to be in order to maintain that carefully crafted image. Michelle, on the other hand, takes the more down-to-earth, less scripted approach, walking in casual conversation with the children behind her. Jackie's manner may not have been an asset, however, and in her own words, made some think she was a "snob from Newport who had bouffant hair and had French clothes and hated politics" ("Recordings of Jacqueline Kennedy").



*Fig. 60*

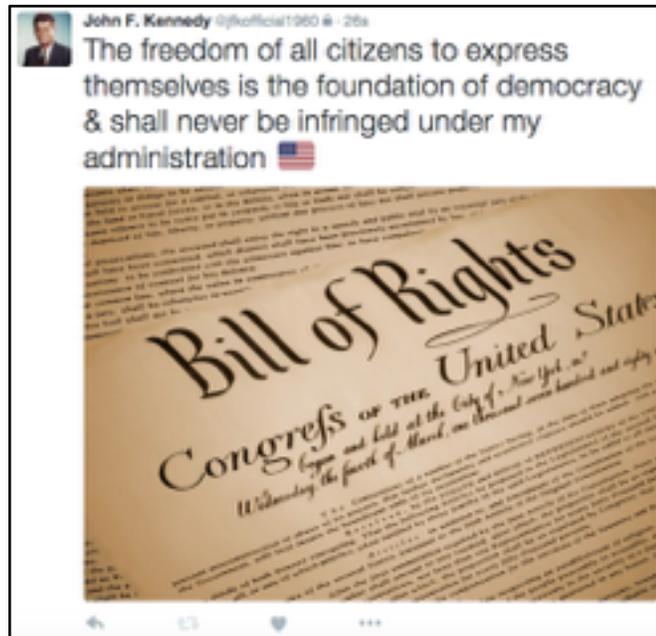
**Explanation:** Since there has not been a similar move by any other first ladies, there is not a post from President Obama to which President Kennedy's may be compared. It is likely, however, that a public relations practitioner would have the President, with his large following, share the video online so that those who were unable to view it live may still participate. A public relations practitioner should also advise the President to appeal to women voters by showing his pride in what Jackie has done. This would also help present the image of the idealistic happy family. President Kennedy should also use the hashtag that Jackie has been using, "#WH62," to gain the post popularity, as it is likely that the hashtag would be trending on most social media platforms.

**February 16, 1962** - President Kennedy sends coffee and hot chocolate to the citizens on the White House lawn as they protest nuclear weapons testing (Golway 115).



*Fig. 61*

**Explanation:** The question Jackie asks to promote engagement after the program airs should be related to the question she asked beforehand. Since she asked what viewers were most looking forward to seeing, a good follow-up to that could be asking what they enjoyed seeing the most after getting the chance to view all the renovations. The hashtag is very important still, as the program should maintain its momentum even days after it has aired. People should still be discussing the program and commenting on what they liked or didn't like about the White House's new look, and a question such as this would promote discussion. While polls on Facebook are an option, they are more useful when it comes to collecting data, and questions in the form of status updates are more useful for encouraging conversation, adding the element of two-way communication, part of what makes social media so popular. Facebook is more of a discussion platform than Instagram, which is centered around photos, and Twitter, with its 140 character limit, making Facebook the ideal platform to use. This also makes Facebook ideal for building relationships and increasing engagement with Jackie's followers. It is not necessary for Jackie to address the fact that there are protestors on the White House lawn, as it was handled well by President Kennedy, who can share his feelings on the matter on social media without drawing unnecessary attention to the matter.



*Fig. 62*

**Explanation:** In this instance, a PR practitioner should advise JFK to address the issue of protests with support based on constitutional rights because the vast majority of Americans favor the freedom of speech, making this a statement that would neither ignore the situation nor alienate citizens on either side of the issue of nuclear weapons testing (Reineke). Twitter would be the best platform to use for this message because it is a short message that does not require discussion to achieve its goal. Facebook would also work for this type of post, but the more serious issues, in this case, the nuclear weapons protests, usually come from President Kennedy's Twitter, so people would likely look to Twitter for a response to the protests.

**May 11, 1962** - Kennedy family hosts dinner for the French Minister of State for Cultural Affairs, Andre Malraux; also attended by violinist Isaac Stern (“Malraux Dinner”).



*Fig. 63*



*Fig. 64*

**Explanation:** As First Lady, Jackie is largely in charge of the cultural image of the Kennedy family, which is why this post comes from her. As such, she is instrumental in U.S. relations with other countries, and plays a hosts dinners to strengthen relationships with other countries. Sharing these encounters on social media may serve two purposes: gaining support for the administration globally, and appealing to U.S. citizens, showing the first lady’s diplomatic skills and an interest in foreign affairs. Michelle Obama has gained immense popularity for being personally involved in the work of the President. Instagram was the platform of choice for this post because it is focused around images, and the substance of this post is the photo. Jackie was also admired for her fashion, so putting the focus on an image that shows her outfit could also gain positive attention from

the press. *People* praised Michelle Obama's fashion at her last State Dinner as First Lady, and that was much of the discussion in the days following the event (Rayne).



*Fig. 65*



*Fig. 66*

**Explanation:** Because it is likely that many news sources — as well as the general public — would be talking about what Jackie wore to the State Dinner, people would be very likely to share a post showing off that outfit if it were posted on Facebook. Again, President Kennedy would likely have a very large following, so this post would reach a lot of people who may be interested in the first lady’s fashion choices, and many others who are more interested in the foreign affairs aspect of the dinner. As with all other posts, a PR practitioner should advise President Kennedy to tag all notable attendees in order to reach their audiences as well, creating a larger post reach. President Obama posts regularly about State Dinners, and many magazines with largely female audiences cover stories about the first lady’s attire, while larger news sources often cover other aspects of the event.

**May 12, 1962** - In the midst of increasing turmoil in Laos, Kennedy ordered 1,800 Marines and naval and air support to block Communist forces from crossing Thailand's border (Golway 137).



*Fig. 67*



*Fig. 68*

**Explanation:** This post comes from Jackie because, again, she is the primary public figure who dictates the world's view of the Kennedy White House in terms of cultural affairs. She would use a hashtag to help her message of "#PeaceInThailand" go viral, showing the world that the Kennedy administration cares about people from all regions of the world, and does not take going into war lightly. Within just 12 hours, Michelle's plea

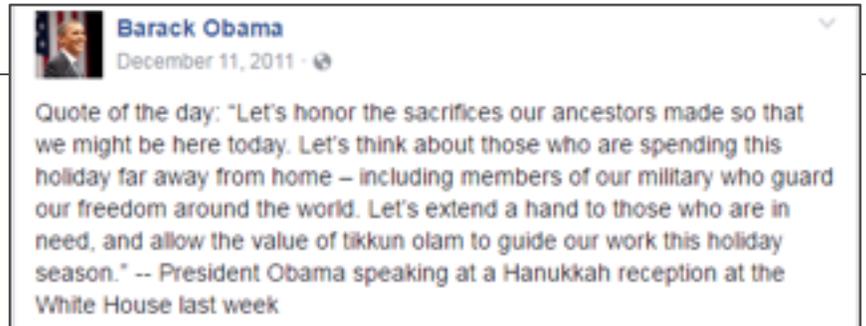
to #BringBackOurGirls got more than 37,000 retweets. The accompanying message was that her family's prayers were with the victims, which appeals to the predominantly Christian population of the U.S. Jackie's (continued) request that Americans pray for the people of Thailand could have been a helpful tool for her husband, who faced criticism for his Catholic faith throughout much of the campaign, especially in the "Bible Belt". Michelle's arguably over-posed facial expression was later turned into a meme — which is why it might have been wise for Jackie to have a text-only post, rather than attaching a picture — showing that photos, while often helpful, are not always necessary or useful in relaying certain messages to the public. This is also a good example of how social media can backfire, and could have potentially hurt the Kennedy campaign.



*Fig. 69*



*Fig. 70*



*Fig. 71*

**Explanation:** Twitter would be the most appropriate platform for this post because President Kennedy’s announcement of U.S. support of Thailand is big news, and as seen in Post-Election Social Media Week 1, Twitter is the preferred platform of most journalists (Klein). There is also not a relevant and appropriate picture to attach to this message, and promoting conversation about such a controversial topic could be unwise, making the format of Twitter — with short posts that less frequently lead to direct discussion that Facebook — the most appropriate for relaying this message. The concept of democracy and freedom, with the U.S. serving as the “world police,” is very popular among U.S. citizens. President Kennedy’s sent troops to Thailand to prevent the spread of Communism; President Obama shares the view that it is important to protect our interest by guarding freedom both here and abroad, as does the majority of the American public, making this potentially a very popular post. The controversy of sending troops into situations that do not, at the time, involve the U.S. may be countered by Kennedy’s assertion that doing so would block the “spread of Communism.”

**May 13, 1962** - Administration report calls for effort from federal agencies to “develop a more favorable environment for science within the government” (Golway 137).



*Fig. 72*

**Explanation:** The link goes to a PDF

explaining the Kennedy Administration’s work to promote the fields of science, technology, engineering and math, which is an effort that is still important to U.S. leaders today. Letting



*Fig. 73*

the American public know about these efforts reassures them that their leaders are working to improve education and the economy, as well as the U.S.’ position in the world, and the additional information that is attached adds credibility and gets citizens more invested in the work of the administration. President Obama’s post was shared more than 1,000 times and received over 13,000 likes, presumably due, in part, to the fact sheet attached in the post. This type of post shows that Jackie does have some real substance and is interested in matters of policy; because it is such a news-oriented post, it would perform best on Twitter. This type of content would normally not be something Jackie would share, but her audience could be interested in the possibility of pursuing — or, more likely at that time, their husbands or sons pursuing — the opportunities for which the President is recruiting workers.

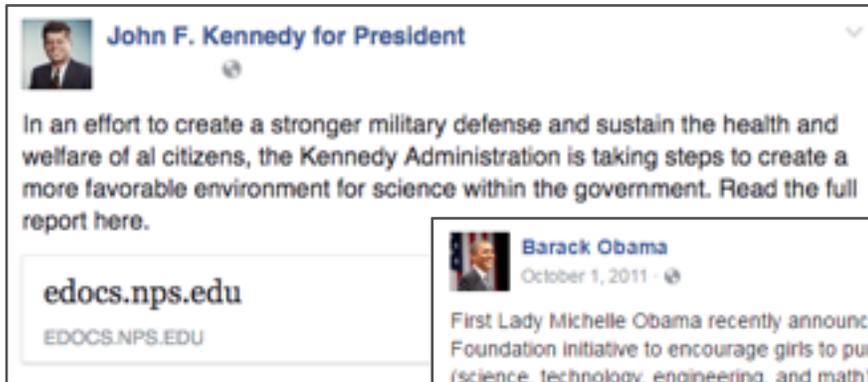


Fig. 74



Fig. 75

**Explanation:** The same post is the basis for John’s post because it involves both the President and the first lady. John would have a post similar to Jackie’s because it is an important post, and many people follow the President that do not follow the first lady. Today, just under 16 million people like Michelle’s Facebook page, while more than 50 million like President Obama’s page, so therefore, President Obama can reach more people with his posts than Michelle. Since this message was posted by Jackie on Twitter, it would be most effective for President Kennedy to present it to a different audience by using Facebook. Facebook would be more effective than Instagram because this message would not be improved by a photo. In fact, the reason that President Kennedy does not have an Instagram account in this portfolio is because most of his posts follow this trend; President Kennedy tells his story with words, as it is more policy-related, while Jackie tells hers, oftentimes, through photos, as her content is more frequently about topics which naturally lend themselves to photography, such as their family and Residence.

**May 14, 1962** - By executive order, President Kennedy creates the President's Council on Aging to study when and how government should respond to the needs of aged citizens (Golway 137).



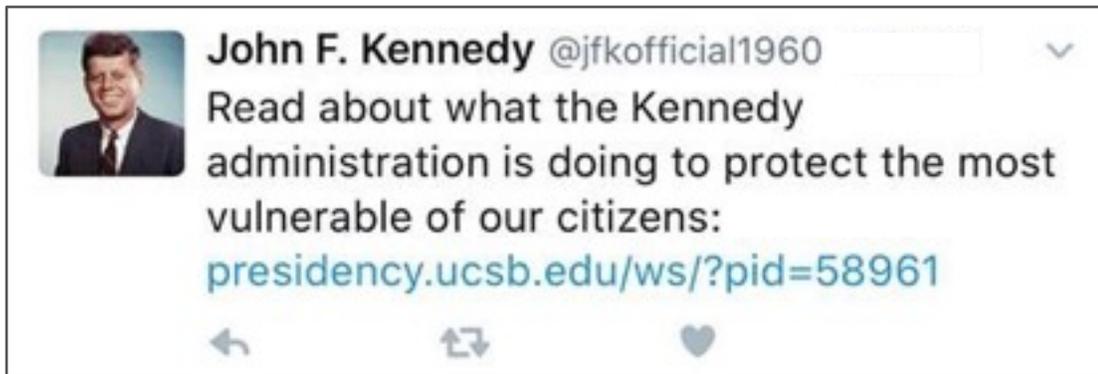
*Fig. 76*

**Explanation:** This post serves two purposes; it carries on one of the recurring themes in Jackie's social media — the importance of family — and also produces a tool to create conversation about the program amongst the public, thus letting them know about something the administration is doing for them. Creating and utilizing hashtags is one way to get noticed on social media. Twitter, Facebook and Instagram allow users to search for related content that the site's users organize by adding hashtags to their posts. By adding “#PCA” to her post, Jackie could start a trend that would get people talking about the President's Council on Aging (continued).



*Fig. 77*

Michelle Obama gave publicity to the missing Nigerian school girls with the hashtag “#BringBackOurGirls,” she helped to raise awareness for the 62 million girls across the world who are not in school with the hashtag “#LetGirlsLearn”. In a speech she gave to an Argentine high school, Michelle mentioned the success of the #62MillionGirls hashtag as well, which was number one in the U.S. and number three globally, mobilizing supporters and delivering an influx of donations to help provide an education to 62 million girls (“Remarks by the First Lady”). This post would do well on Instagram because it is such a personal, intimate photo and would endear Jackie even further to the public. It is also important to maintain a consistent presence on all social media, so a balance between which platforms are used is essential.



*Fig. 78*

**Explanation:** The link in the post goes to details of the president's executive order, which established the President's Council on Aging. This is another big piece of news, making Twitter the most appropriate platform to use. Since journalists look to Twitter for news, breaking news and hard news are appropriate for that platform. Journalists could also use the information provided in the link to write an article about the new program, which would be good publicity for the Kennedy Administration.



*Fig. 79*

**May 16, 1962** - Despite a conciliatory message from Kennedy to West German Chancellor Konrad Adenauer over recent public disagreements between Washington and Bonn, Adenauer says an alliance should not be a muzzle (Golway 137).



*Fig. 80*

**Explanation:** Twitter is a platform that would more frequently be used by John because, not only is it more news-driven, but the demographics reached by Facebook are more in line with the audience Jackie would try to reach, as it was 77 percent female in 2015, and females — especially wives and mothers — have the most in common with Jackie (Duggan). Facebook also has the highest percentage of adult users of all social media sites, making it the most important platform to use when trying to reach out to the public directly (Duggan). A post like this would help maintain the image of “Camelot” as a glimmer of hope in the dark times facing the nation, and would make Jackie seem more relatable, showing that she and the President, also have a stake in the war: their children.

This is another example of Jackie's use of pictures to relay her message; some messages can not be relayed effectively with the use of only text. Pictures are capable of showing more. This picture, for instance, shows the love Jackie has for her daughter, and could evoke an emotional response from followers, many of whom would relate the feelings expressed in this picture to their feelings for their own families.



Fig. 81

**Explanation:** In a real world situation, this post would be a caption to a post shared from the radio station's Twitter. Once again, this is a newsworthy post that would be best for Twitter. Journalists could pick up this story, creating a bigger audience for Kennedy's radio interview. President Obama's post gave a teaser to get people interested enough in the topic to want to know more.

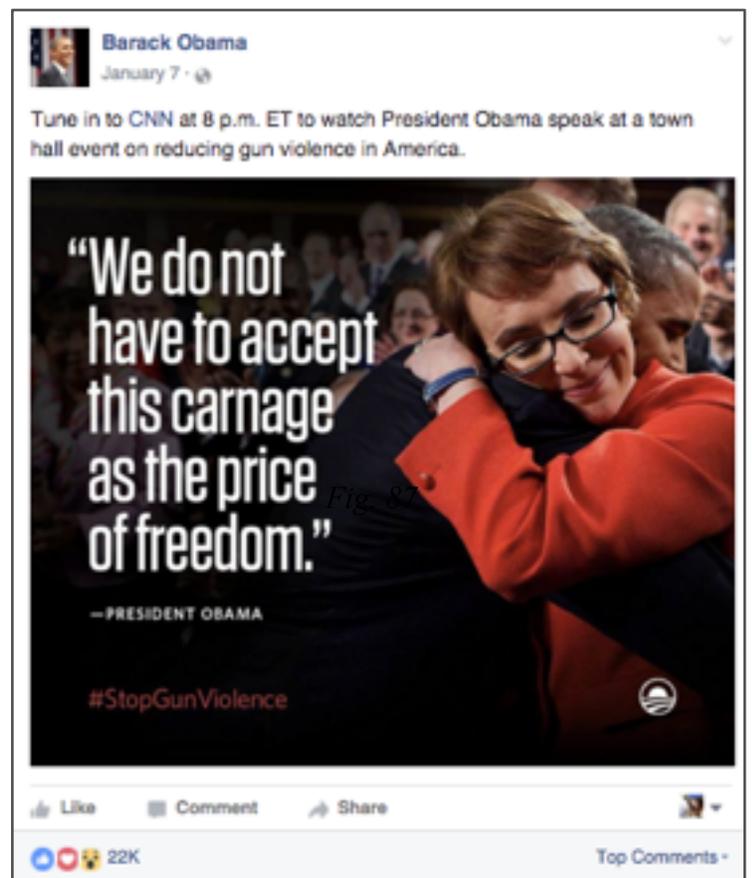
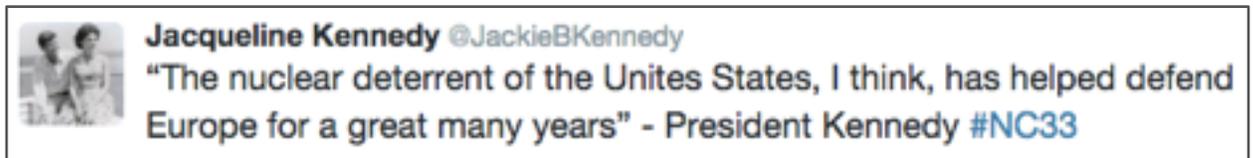


Fig. 82

**May 17, 1962** - During a news conference, JFK criticizes comments by French President Charles de Gaulle calling for an independent nuclear deterrent for Europe (Golway 137).



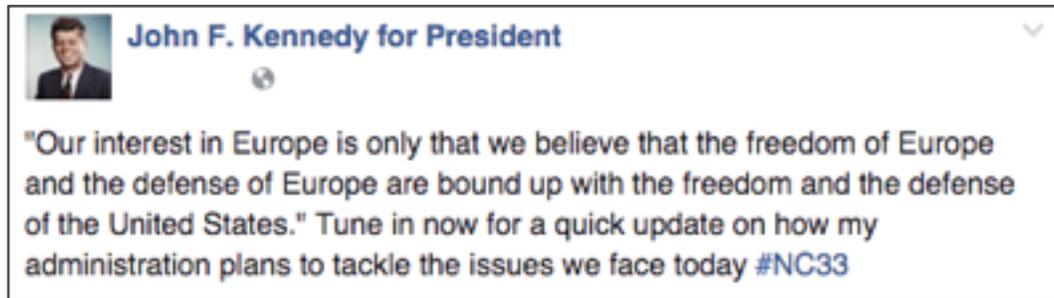
*Fig. 83*

**Explanation:** The quote in the Tweet is actually from the news conference, which Jackie could share to gain public interest and increase the number of listeners (Kennedy). Sharing strong quotes from news conferences can take what would otherwise be boring and complicated policy talk, and make it a



*Fig. 84*

powerful and digestible statement to engage public interest and encourage them to learn more. President Obama made his addresses a weekly occurrence, which can help build excitement because people may start becoming more interested in the affairs of the nation because of the direct, no middle-man approach of a Facebook video directly from the President's page, and tune in for the next address. One approach a PR practitioner could take to make the news conferences gain more publicity is a hashtag for each once, such as "#NC33." The first lady's promotion of President Kennedy's news conference could reach a different audience than President Kennedy's post, and should be shared on Twitter because it is a newsworthy post.



*Fig. 85*

**Explanation:** President Kennedy's 33rd news conference covered a wide range of foreign policy issues that were important to Americans during that time, such as the situation in Thailand and a nuclear deterrent for Europe (Kennedy). Sharing strong quotes from news conferences can take what would otherwise be boring and complicated policy talk, and make it a powerful and digestible statement to engage public interest and encourage them to learn more. Facebook would be a good platform to use since Jackie posted about the news conference on Twitter. The hashtag should be used in President Kennedy's posts as well, and should remain consistent across all White House social media accounts.

**May 18, 1962** - Soviet Premier Khrushchev compares the deployment of American forces in Thailand to the Korean War, predicts that U.S. troops will end up fighting in that region (Golway 137).

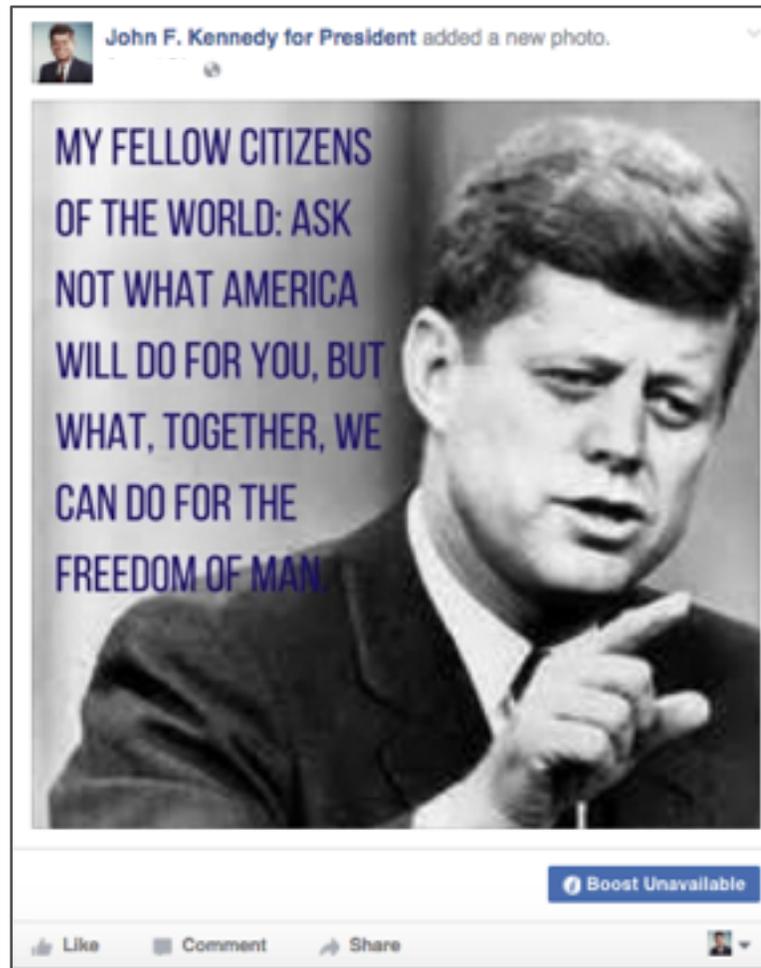


*Fig. 86*



*Fig. 87*

**Explanation:** Hashtags circulate rapidly, especially on Twitter; “Throwback Thursday” is a very common hashtag that a lot of people use, so this post would be seen by a lot of people. This post also shows Jackie’s maternal side — and again, the Kennedies’ emphasis on family in American society — and would help the public feel that they know her on a more personal level. This post would also help deflect some of the negative press that could come from Premier Khrushchev’s prediction that U.S. troops will be sent to Thailand, without making a counter-claim or prediction that may later be disproven and could cause a press catastrophe of its own.



*Fig. 88*

**Explanation:** Showing strength when the country is criticized is always good because, in most cases, the country rallies around its leader when it is criticized, especially during times of international conflict (“No Rally”). Facebook is a good platform for this message because it is not too controversial, and the image may be shared across all audiences. It is less *news* and more of a reminder of the Kennedy administration’s platform.

## Conclusion

Whether or not social media would have helped or hurt Kennedy's public image depends on a number of factors. For one, the relationship between the government and the press would have been different if social media had existed. For example, the press likely would have likely been more adversarial toward the government and may have reported on Kennedy's affairs during his presidency. Social media also encourages the phenomenon of "citizen reporting," meaning that *anyone* with a smart phone can be a journalist, so to speak, and may take photos, videos, and more. This means that any image, any word or any mistake may be shared on social media, available to billions of people, within seconds. Once that message has been sent to the public, however, it may not be taken back. This could have affected Kennedy not only in terms of his personal scandals, but also in terms of the overall image of "Camelot." When the public can see so much of a public figure's life through social media, not much is private, and a once-flawless image may be tarnished. Seeing Kennedy through social media may have made people become disenchanted with the Kennedy family, be it as a result of the Kennedy social media campaign, or others' responses to current events on social media. On the other hand, Kennedy's use of the new technology of his time – television – was exceptional, and he and Jackie were able to master it and capture the hearts of the American public in a way that is still seen and felt today. This means that Kennedy very well may have implemented the technology that is social media in such a way that he could have even increased his favorability ratings, despite the challenges he faced throughout his campaign, and later, his presidency.

Social media takes significant time, effort, and thought to manage, so time and money must be spent wisely. This means that a public relations professional, must stay constantly informed about technology, including which social media platforms are rising and falling in popularity, and what type of content is most effective on those platforms at a given point in time. The demographics of various platforms also change over time, so it is important to confirm that the chosen platforms still reach the target audience.

A public relations practitioner may learn a lot about social media and reputation management from this analysis. The first lesson to take away from this project is to manage social media in a way that is both genuine and intentional. To be an intentional social media manager, one must create every post with certain factors in mind, including audience demographics, issues the candidate is currently facing and the popularity of the current social media. Being genuine on social media may be accomplished, simply, by remembering to speak on those platforms as if it were a face-to-face conversation. As with other public relations efforts, messages must be carefully crafted based on who a candidate is trying to reach and what he wants the public to take away from each post. Content may also be seen by publics who are not the target audience, so the interests of all groups must be considered. Another simple way to be genuine on social media is to develop content based on the candidate's strengths and weaknesses. For Kennedy, his strengths were his charm and charisma, making video an effective option for him to use when connecting with his audience. Some of his weaknesses were his youth, his controversial religious beliefs and his extramarital affairs. Social media posts, therefore should be aimed to combat those issues, emphasizing his positive energy rather than lack

of experience when his youth is brought up, discussing his faith in God to appeal to the voters who took issue with his Catholic faith and crafting a crisis communication plan with pre-made responses to potential public scandals, such as if news of his affairs were to be publicized.

The second lesson is to be aware of the dangers of social media. Media training would have been an essential for both Jackie and John, as their every move would have been scrutinized by the media. A poorly executed social media plan – or lack of a plan altogether – can mean serious consequences for a political candidate’s public image, and may even cost him the election. If Kennedy had lived in the social media age, it is likely that news of his affairs would have gotten out during his presidency. That situation would have had to be handled very carefully, and would have included a social media strategy – based on the crisis communication plan that should have been created already – to combat the reputation damage that would undoubtedly result. All of this being said, a public relations practitioner must also look at the bigger picture, which includes the image of the entire Kennedy family – not just the president – and make sure all accounts practice consistent messaging.

The presence of social media, or lack thereof, however, would not have been the determining factor in whether or not Kennedy was successful in his 1960 presidential campaign or maintained the image of “Camelot” throughout his presidency. It would have been, rather the competence of his public relations staff and his own performance on social media. With today’s fast-paced news, negative press coverage may be forgotten

quickly in the midst of all the other stories being covered on social media, television, radio and newspapers. If Kennedy had not been smart about his relationship with the press, the advent of the television could have ruined his reputation. With the help of Pierre Salinger and Jackie, Kennedy was able to master the newest technology of his time to craft an image that defined an era. Thus, through the power of public relations and adaptation to innovative technologies, an image of the White House was created that will not be forgotten or repeated. In the words of Jacqueline Kennedy, the woman who played such a crucial role in the development of this image, “There will be great presidents again, but there will never be another Camelot” (Swanson).

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