Entertainment Bias:
A Case Study of the *Tonight Show* and the California Gubernatorial Recall Election in 2003

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Abstract

This thesis looks at entertainment bias, specifically bias on the *Tonight Show with Jay Leno* towards Arnold Schwarzenegger during the time leading up to the California recall election in 2003. Entertainment media possess a unique ability to communicate messages to an unguarded audience, which gives them the potential to have more of a political impact than traditional news media. The basic theory is that Jay Leno showed political bias in his monologues towards his friend and gubernatorial candidate, Arnold Schwarzenegger. This theory was tested through a highly descriptive analysis of monologue jokes and summary data for the time period March 31, 2003 to October 6, 2003. In total there were 388 jokes from monologues of the *Tonight Show* analyzed. These jokes were broken down into categories based on their content and the subject. They were then compared to jokes delivered on the Late *Show with David Letterman* about the California recall election.

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Chapter One: Introduction

Introduction

Popular critics of media frequently allege bias towards a given party. It is not uncommon for one party to allege that the news coverage is biased towards their opposition (Niven 2001, 31-46). However, until recently entertainment media have garnered little popular or academic attention. With films like *Fahrenheit 911*, produced by Michael Moore, bursting into the spotlight it becomes increasingly important to investigate the role that the entertainment industry plays in shaping political perceptions. While this film is not the first of this nature it is bringing a new light to the political influence of the entertainment industry. Frank Capra was one of the first directors to introduce Hollywood to the political arena with *Mr. Smith Goes to Washington* (1939) and *Meet John Doe* (1941). In these films Capra depicts, as the antagonist, individuals attempting to spread corrupt political power (Gianos 1999, 39).

The modern use of soft media[1] by candidates may have begun with Ross Perot in 1992. It was on *Larry King Live* that he first announced that he was considering running for president. This presidential election saw candidates appearing on talk shows and other entertainment programming, including MTV. It was Bill Clinton's appearance on the *Arsenio Hall Show* that made the public identify with him as a "real cool guy," after he came out wearing sunglasses and playing the saxophone (Wayne 2004, 235-7). This appearance led to Clinton's increase in popularity and support among young voters (Saal 1993, 9-13). From this we can conclude that a single non-traditional appearance can have the ability to shape viewer's attitudes.

In addition to politicians turning to soft media for publicity, we are also seeing this type of media becoming more actively involved in politics. Nightly we see individuals outside of the traditional press commenting on political activities. Late night show hosts such as David Letterman, Jay Leno, Conan O'Brian, and Jon Stewart use the news and political headlines to create humor.

> Today, President Bush filed to run for president again in 2004. Well, I believe his exact words were, "the fix is in." I believe that's what he said. Actually, this morning, with 0% of the vote, Florida's Secretary of State has made Bush the winner already (*Tonight Show* Monologue, May 16, 2003).

This joke illustrates how Jay Leno used the President's decision to run for re-election and the problem's that Florida faced in the 2000 election as a source of humor. Very little popular or academic attention has been given to the question of whether or not these shows possess and promote political agendas through political bias.

It is reasonable to expect that late night comedy talk shows could potentially show bias towards political figures. It is speculated that when viewing a television program strictly for enjoyment, individuals are much less guarded than when they are watching programs such as a political debates or convention coverage. As a result I hope to illustrate that during this time, when the public has their guard down, viewer's opinions are more susceptible to political bias. These points will be addressed through previous research.

This thesis examines the role of the *Tonight Show with Jay Leno* in Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger's successful campaign for the governorship during the California

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[1] The term soft media refers to entertainment media, as opposed to the hard media which delivers strictly news information.

recall election. As stated by Leno himself during an interview with Arnold

Schwarzenegger, on June 26, 2003, Leno has been friends with Schwarzenegger for a

long time. The 2003 California recall election presents a unique possibility for the

presence of biased partisan messages within a relaxed program. It is expected that Jay

Leno's humor promoted Schwarzenegger's candidacy by portraying the actor as a

legitimate candidate, whereas other candidates were not promoted in such a manner.

Thus illustrating that late night humor could have political bias within its content.

The primary research question to be examined is whether or not Jay Leno's jokes

regarding Arnold Schwarzenegger were as negative as his humor regarding other

candidates in the recall election. A second research question is did Jay Leno mentioned

Arnold Schwarzenegger as a candidate more than other candidates? The third research

questions investigates if Leno primed his audience to recall Governor Gray Davis. The

next is that Leno initially treated Arnold Schwarzenegger as a viable, legitimate

candidate. Along those same lines I explore whether or not Leno treated candidates with

similar backgrounds (from the entertainment industry, no political experience, etc.) as

viable candidates. The final research question looks at whether or not Leno handled

Schwarzenegger's sexual misconduct allegations in a way which diminished their

credibility.

Importance

When looking at the effects of late night humor on political agendas we discover

individuals watching a program strictly for entertainment do not expect biased political

messages. Consequently, viewers are less guarded than when they are watching a

political debate or even network news coverage of the candidate (Zillmann 2000, 41).

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The entertainment media possess a unique ability to communicate messages to an unguarded audience that causes the potential for them to have more of a political impact than traditional news media.

Very little research has been done on the content of late night talk shows. The Center for Media and Public Affairs has determined that the highest three number of jokes between 1989- April 2002 were based on political figures, Bill Clinton, George W. Bush, and Al Gore. The only person in the Top Ten, during the same period, who was not a political figure or somehow politically affiliated was O.J. Simpson (CMPA 2002, 2). This shows that late night talk shows have entered the political arena, what is left to be determined is if they show bias within this arena.

In 2000 the Pew Research Center found that a large portion of youth gets its political information from late night talk shows. While only about 9% of Americans say that they regularly gather campaign information from late night talk shows, 47% of Americans under the age of 30 claim that they at least occasionally gather political information in this manner (Pew Research Center 2000a). While younger voters more readily admit getting political information from these programs, the survey may understate the broader impact of this information. It is a possibility those older generations were unaware or unwilling to admit that they were gather political knowledge from this type of programming. The Pew Center's research also determined that 28% of the respondents sometimes or regularly learned something about campaigns or candidates from late night television shows such as David Letterman and Jay Leno-- a three percent increase from 1996 (Pew Research Center 2000b).

The growing inclination for the public to gather political information from late night talk shows illustrates the importance of determining if there is a political agenda present and being promoted on these programs.

Background

The structure of the *Tonight Show with Jay Leno* and the recall election in California led to the potential presence of political bias. The *Tonight Show's* monologue has evolved to the point where it leads well to social commentary. Also the recall election was the type of election which led well to mockery. By knowing the history of the *Tonight Show* and the mechanics of the recall election it will become clear how the two of these set the stage for potential political bias.

Late Night Talk Shows

When NBC introduced the *Tonight Show* with Steve Allen in 1954 they introduced the beginning of a new wave of programming. The introduction of late night talk shows brought comedy, music, and celebrities to television during a time when little American's were actually staying up late to watch television (Carter 1994, 13). In 1957, only three years later, Allen was replaced with Jack Paar. This move was made in an effort to revive the ratings that the *Tonight Show* had lost when CBS introduced the *Ed Sullivan Show* (Carter 1994, 14). Johnny Carson took the position in 1962 when Paar decided that we wanted to leave the show (Carter 1994, 15).

During Carson's thirty year stay with the *Tonight Show* he managed to transform late night talk shows. With this transformation Carson used the monologues, which at

one time were used as a sounding board for slightly risqué jokes, as an arena for commentary on current news topics (Carter 1994, 16). By introducing social commentary on current events Carson was also setting the stage for political commentary. Once Leno took over the *Tonight Show*, in 1992, he too used the monologue to address politics.

California's Recall Election

Public efforts to recall Governor Gray Davis probably began with the suggestion of talk radio host Melanie Morgan on December 30, 2002, a little over a month after his reelection (Gerston and Christensen 2004, 50). One month after this suggestion was made on air a website was formed to recall the governor. While this website may have only been established to harass the governor, it did work to bring the idea of recalling Gray Davis into the spotlight (Gerston and Christensen 2004, 50). By February the California Republican Party was also working towards a recall. Leaders of the recall accused Davis of "gross mismanagement." (Jones February 14, 2003, B8).

California's extensive system of direct democracy allows for a recall. While California was not the first state to institute a direct democracy, South Dakota was, the use of direct democracy has certainly epitomized in this state (Gerston and Christensen 2004, 5). The recall process was allowed to happen as a result of this direct democracy. Historically the recall process was primarily used for local office holders (Gerston and Christensen 2004, 6). One of the reasons that the recall is considerably easier in California is that it is not necessary to provide specific grounds for the recall (Gerston and Christensen 2004, 7).

There had been thirty-one attempts made to recall California governors, but this was the first successful effort (Gerston and Christensen 2004, 49). The reason these recall attempts were unsuccessful was due to the fact that the campaigns failed to collect the appropriate number of signatures, 12% of voters from the previous gubernatorial election, for the election to take place (Gerston and Christensen 2004, 7). In the past only one governor has successfully been recalled, North Dakota's Governor Lynn Frazier in 1921 (Gerston and Christensen 2004, 7). The broad question pertinent to this thesis is was their political bias present through the entertainment industry that could have had an impact on this recall election being successful?

The recall petition was certified for circulation on March 25, 2003. The recall proponents had 160 days, until September 2, 2003, to circulate and gather the 897,158 valid signatures needed for the recall. Local election officials were then responsible for filing and ensuring validity of signature on the petitions (California Secretary of State 2005). In order to run for the position candidates needed to file at least 59 days prior to the election. Candidates also needed to gather 65 signatures, pay $3,500 (or an additional 10,000 signatures), and file nomination papers (California Secretary of State 2005 and Gerston and Christensen 2004, 65). The process to become a candidate in a recall election was easy enough that many candidates were able to run. By August 9, 2003, the last day for filing, there were 135 valid candidate filings (Gerston and Christensen 2004, 65).

The recall ended up with a large number of candidates, 135, from all walks of life. There were politicians, actors, comedians, pornographers, and candidates from many other professions. The success of the election relied heavily on media support. This

thesis examines whether the *Tonight Show* monologues were biased towards the recall and certain candidates within the recall's success.

Chapter Summary

The chapters of this thesis progress to provide a clear understanding of how late night humor has the potential to influence and advance political agendas through political bias towards candidates. In this study I will be focusing on Arnold Schwarzenegger's portrayal. It is reasonable to expect there to be bias from Jay Leno towards his friend Arnold Schwarzenegger. The introduction will clearly identify the importance of this research as well as give a research plan, which will be elaborated on in the following chapters. The issue will be positioned within the current literature during chapter 2. Due to the uniqueness of this research it will be necessary to merge research from political science, communication, and psychology. This chapter will also contain the history of the *Tonight Show* and a comparison of how it is structured relative to similar broadcasts (i.e. length of monologues). Once the topic is clearly defined and placed within the literature the methodology will be discussed. In chapter 3 the methods used in this project are discussed. This chapter outlines the descriptive analysis that will be done both qualitatively and quantitatively.

The following chapters will focus on the implementation of the research. Chapter 4 will look to see if Leno primed his audience to recall Davis and then look at the ways in which he promoted other candidates. The focus of this chapter will be to compare the ways in which Jay Leno characterized Arnold Schwarzenegger as opposed to other candidates. Chapter 5, is a comparison of national late night comedy talk shows. This

chapter will explore the coverage of Schwarzenegger on the *Tonight Show* to see how it compares to Schwarzenegger's portrayal on the *Late Show with David Letterman*. Some of the questions to be addressed in this section are whether Leno focuses more on California issues, given his audience. Also, do the *Tonight Show's* jokes about the recall differ from the *Late Show's* jokes.

The conclusion, chapter 6, will deal largely with the findings and their implications. This chapter assesses if there was bias in the *Tonight Show* and tries to determine if this could lead to an effect in voting. Also, it looks at the widespread implications of this bias and how it could impact of elections. The analysis should provide a clear understanding of if and how humor can be used to portray political campaigns in a more favorable light, and possibly contribute to a candidate's success.

Chapter Two: Literature Review

Introduction

To more fully appreciate the potential importance of media bias it is important to not only look within the field of political science, but also to look in the fields of communication and psychology. Examining the existing research from these three fields yields a better understanding of the psychological effects of mass communications in the political arena.

Media as a Political Tool

Is the late night talk show circuit the next logical step for political consultants to turn? Many of the same benefits that come from traditional news media can also be found in entertainment media. The effects of traditional news media can be compared to the effects of late night humor. After examining this idea the possibilities for influencing public opinion through humor become more evident. There are also obvious benefits to using humor as a persuasive device to affect popular perception (Niven, Lichter, Amundson 2003, 120). Late night talk shows have the ability to capitalize on these persuasive abilities, so it is worthwhile to look at the California recall election and Arnold Schwarzenegger's candidacy to see what roles late night humor could have played.

When looking at the effects of media on political choices it is key to look at how political consultants and politicians have used media as a tool. It is also important to look at the tone of the messages being relayed to viewers on network news. It has been observed that the tone of most network news is negative, especially towards Republican

presidential candidates (Farnsworth and Lichter 2003, 164). Despite this fact there are many ways in which the media can be used and influenced to best suit the needs of campaigns. As stated by Robert Garay, the only circumstance in which airtime is unfiltered is when it is purchased (Garay 1999, 77). He also notes that all other political messages must first make it through "gatekeepers," which include reporters, editors, and producers. In order to protect messages from these "gatekeepers" it is becoming increasingly important to purchase airtime from television stations. For this reason a large portion of campaign money goes towards television advertisements (Garay 1999, 77).

One could say that another string of gatekeepers is popping up in late night comedy. Writers and hosts of late night talk shows are beginning to gain influence based on their portrayal of candidates and issues. This creates a new type of free media in which consultants must be aware of how to work. This new medium, for political communication, gives candidates long, unfiltered periods to address the audience. When George W. Bush appeared on the *Late Show*, October 19, 2000, he was on air for a total of thirteen minutes, this was longer than the combined time that he was discussed on ABC, CBS, and NBC new shows during the month of October (CMPA 2002, 4).

It is also interesting to look at how candidates can be helped and hindered within late night talk shows. When looking at the type of humor that is used in late night monologues there are two main theories that should be referenced; the disparagement theory and the superiority theory. The disparagement theory suggests that what is truly funny is the disparagement of others. In order to keep the humor, favorable comments can not be made (Zillman 2000, 37). This theory then goes on to suggest that the more

disparaging the remarks made the greater their humor will be, and vice versa (Zillman 2000, 38). If Jay Leno was indeed attempting to promote Arnold Schwarzenegger the disparagement theory may explain why there are so many jokes that are targeted at the candidates running against Arnold Schwarzenegger in the recall election. Jokes that could have best promoted Arnold Schwarzenegger would then be categorized by the superiority theory. The superiority theory can best be explained as jokes that allow others to place themselves above the subject of the joke (Zillman 2000, 43).

By telling more disparaging jokes about the candidates running against Schwarzenegger talk show hosts have the ability to place Schwarzenegger with the audience in a superior position to the other candidates.

Late night comedy has the potential to work within the same capabilities as regular advertising. When working on advertising campaigns the most important objective is to gain the audiences' attention (Giles 2003, 110). When an individual is watching a late night talk show their attention is presumably already gained, so the next steps are the most important. In advertising it is believed that brief interjections of persuasive text can quickly be stored within a viewer's memory (Giles 2003, 111). This could show that a monologue joke has the ability to leave a lasting impression on viewers. Another advertising aspect that can be applied to late night talk shows is that a message is most persuasive when the viewer feels involved in the message (Giles 2003, 114).

This could mean that voters in California would be most influenced by jokes regarding the recall election because they would have a feeling of involvement with the message. For this reason, jokes about the recall election have the ability to leave a lasting impression and be more persuasive to California voters.

Targeted audiences also have the ability to be reached through late night talk shows; this can be an obvious benefit during a campaign. Targeting allows campaigns to tailor their message based upon the individuals they should be focusing on. This allows campaigns to use media markets differently (Hutchens 1999, 123). The costs associated with advertising in particular areas changes from one media market to the next. The programs with the highest reach are those with the highest ratings. These programs typically have the most diverse audience (Hutchens 1999, 124). The reach of late night talk shows is also increasing in diversity and the frequency of viewing making this arena important to study.

Along with viewership frequency, campaigns must also be knowledgeable about the frequency to which their candidate and the issues are mentioned. Hutchens suggests that the frequency of exposure to campaign material also has a large impact on how well the information is retained. Political advertisers suggest that audiences be exposed to campaign advertisements six to seven times a week in order to retain the message (Hutchens 1999, 125).

The importance of how frequently a candidate is mentioned suggests that if Leno discussed Schwarzenegger often his audience would retain more knowledge about him. For this reason, how often Jay Leno mentions Arnold Schwarzenegger's candidacy should be studied. The act of mentioning Schwarzenegger during his monologue can be very helpful, especially considering that many campaigns are beginning to rely solely on television (Hutchens 1999, 130).

Media has the potential to strengthen the public's perception of whether or not a candidacy is viable. When assessing the viability of a candidate, newscasters often look

at concrete facts such as how much money and voter support that a candidate has received. So, while their assessments are largely fact based they are still susceptible to "spin" (Lichter and Noyes 1996, 19).

Late night talk show hosts may spin a candidate's viability and the viability of competitors. Since Arnold Schwarzenegger and Jay Leno are friends Leno may be inclined to spin the facts to make Schwarzenegger look like the only viable candidate. By doing this Leno would be showing political bias towards Schwarzenegger.

Late Night vs. Traditional News Media

It is also necessary to compare late night programming to traditional news media to determine what characteristics the two may have in common or different. The effect that news coverage has on campaigns may also apply for late night talk shows. As suggested by Ansolabehere and Iyengar (1995) an ad's message can be reinforced and considered more significant if it is picked up by the news media (Gwiasda 2001, 461-2). This idea of having campaign messages reinforced by traditional news media should also hold true in regards to late night humor. By having a message reiterated on numerous occasions, regardless of location, the point becomes more salient.

This idea is taken another step further in that even if the content of the news coverage is not favorable the message will still be reinforced by the sole act of covering it (Gwiasda 2001, 463). This would suggest that even if the candidate's portrayal on a late night talk show is not favorable the sole mention of the candidate may be beneficial. In regards to unfavorable mention we can assume that a joke made about a candidate still has the ability to advance said candidate. Even Schwarzenegger's opponents could

benefit from being mentioned by gaining name recognition. It is also important to note that candidates' coverage on late night talk shows are not restricted to the eight second sound bites as they are on the nightly news (Farnsworth and Lichter 2003, 172).

For example, the 1992 presidential campaign is noted for its use of nontraditional news media to promote candidates and their agendas. Both Ross Perot and Bill Clinton chose these venues to reach a larger range of potential voters than could be reached by using the campaign press corps solely (Farnsworth and Lichter 2003, 169). It was also determined that when candidates appeared on talk shows they were better able to cover their issues than on through journalist centered news media (Farnsworth and Lichter 2003, 170). The major presidential candidates began to see how important the use of this venue was in the 2000 election, after the Pew Research findings were released, and began to utilize it by appearing on the *Tonight Show with Jay Leno* and the *Late Show with David Letterman* (Farnsworth and Lichter 2003, 171).

Late night talk shows can work as a tool to promote candidates in much the same manner as traditional news media. The role of these non-traditional news media is increasing. With a large portion of citizens viewing late night talk shows there is a need for political consultants to focus their attention not only on the evening news and political advertisements but also towards soft media. The use of political humor in late night talk shows is even beginning to be covered in traditional news media such as newspapers. Newspaper writers have even taken notice that late night hosts such as David Letterman are beginning to take the place of news anchors such as Walter Cronkite, in their ability to deliver information to citizens (Niven, Lichter, Amundson 2003, 119).

The guidance that viewers receive from late night hosts can prove to be beneficial to political campaigners as well. Observations made through humor have the ability to effect how voters perceive candidates. These observations can also work illustrate to campaign consultants how voters are feeling (Niven, Lichter, Amundson 2003, 119).

This suggests that late night talk show hosts have a large impact on campaigns in two main ways. They can influence the way that voter's perceive candidates. They also can work as a tool to campaign consultants to gauge how much support a candidate has. The Director of Communications for the John McCain for President campaign said that "Jay Leno is a lot cheaper than polling," meaning that late night talk shows often reflect the views of voters (Niven, Lichter, Amundson 2003, 119).

History of Late Night Talk Shows

Since the 1960s comedy has been the largest genre in television viewing. It has even been suggested that comedic programming has the ability to help viewers change from their bad moods (Zillmann 2000, 49-51).

The ability for Late Night talk shows to bring attention to events that could have gone unnoticed deserves some attention. When most news organizations chose to ignore the fact that Bill Clinton had to have a paternity test to determine if an Arkansas prostitute's son was really his the topic was brought to the attention of many Americans through Jay Leno's monologue on the *Tonight Show* (Sabato, Stencel, and Lichter 2000, xii).

Structure of Late Night Programs

Other late night comedy acts can have a large impact on the public's opinion of candidates. *Saturday Night Live* may have helped in shaping the public's opinion of George W. Bush and Al Gore after their first presidential debate in 2000 by locking in perceptions (Smith and Voth 2002, 114). While Al Gore's repeated reference to lock boxes and George W. Bush's mispronunciations did not go unnoticed those images were later solidified within the public's mind during *Saturday Night Live's* rendition of the debate. Leno also has the power to reinforce perceptions through humor. This can be seen when he picks up on similar mistakes and uses them in his monologues. It is important to look at a candidate's response when looking at how humor can affect a campaign. The response to implied imperfections can affect the public's perception. When George W. Bush made light of his own mispronunciation through humor this could have reduced the possible negative effects (Smith and Voth 2002, 118).

Humor's Role in Shaping Perceptions

In order for any bias in Leno's monologues to possibly influence Schwarzenegger's campaign it must first be established that jokes have persuasive qualities. It is suggested that messages that are portrayed through humor will have a different effect than messages that are otherwise conveyed. As suggested by Berg and Lippmann (2001) messages that are conveyed with humor are more easily remembered. Another advantage to humor, as stated by Lyttle (2001), is that through irony messages can become more persuasive and attention can be taken away from counterarguments (Niven, Lichter, Amundson 2003, 120).

Through the irony of his jokes, Jay Leno has the ability to positively affect Schwarzenegger's campaign. So instead of presenting a counter argument when information is reported that could hurt Schwarzenegger's campaign, Leno could simply use irony in his jokes to discredit the allegations.

Another reason why humor may be a more persuasive venue is that when individuals are in a comic frame of mind they are generally less guarded. According to E. Olsen when and audience is preparing for a comedic presentation they become more lighthearted and less inclined to take something seriously (Zillmann 2000, 41). In Freud's writings he went as far as to say that through comedy, situations that are not typically humorous, such as hostility or sexual happenings, may be found amusing (Zillmann 2000, 42).

A 19th century philosopher by the name of Spencer theorized that laughter left individuals with a sense of relief and reduced apprehension. Laughter has continued over time to be an explanation for the release of anxiety (Zillman 2000, 46). From this information we can infer that if Leno were to make jokes about Schwarzenegger's sexual misconduct it could have caused the audience to take the allegations less seriously despite their nature. Anger that voters felt towards Schwarzenegger after the allegations became public could have been released as a result of humor.

When looking at how media has a psychological affect on viewers it is important to look at how a para-social relationship evolves between the two. The para-social relationship forms when viewers respond to media figures in a manner similar to a typical social relationship. This relationship is best formed when media figures "joke around" with one another (Giles 2003, 189). This relationship can be formed when late night talk

show hosts joke around with others on the program, be it regulars to the program, such as band members, or guests. Talk shows give the viewer the opportunity to relate to the hosts through audience participation as well (Giles 2003, 247).

California's Recall Election

In the early twentieth century California adopted some very progressive reforms. These reforms created a type of direct democracy through the implementation of referendums, initiatives, and recalls.

The effort to recall Governor Gray Davis began to gain attention in February 2003 with the help of California Republicans' State Party Chair, Shawn Steel, who was working to get Republican party members to support the effort. Separately, Howard Kaloogian created a website, recallgraydavis.com, also hoping to have Davis recalled. This type of effort was not surprising because all recent governors (The Browns, Ronald Reagan, George Deukmejian, and Pete Wilson) faced some kind of recall effort, but none of these made it to the ballot (Morrison February 10, 2003, B2).

As a response to this, Davis formally dismissed the recall as "partisan mischief" by "a handful of right wing partisans." Davis characterized these groups being "sore losers" that are trying to overturn the results of the election that was held just three months prior, in November 2002. The announcement was formally filed with Secretary of State Kevin Shelley (Jones February 14, 2003, B8).

A third campaign to recall Gray Davis began on May 6, 2003 when Rep. Darrell Issa, a multimillionaire Republican, made a six figure contribution of seed money for a recall effort known as "Rescue California." This funding was expected to be adequate to

pay signature gatherers to qualify the recall for the ballot according to Dave Gilliard, a Sacramento consultant, who managed this effort (Morain and Jones May 6, 2003, A1 & A18).

Shortly after this campaign was launched Davis sent Capitol lobbyists and supporters invitations to a $5,000 a ticket golf tournament in an effort to raise money. Davis claimed that the contributions were not intended to fight the recall (Morain and Jones May 6, 2003, A1 & A18).

In what seemed like an effort to avoid the recall, Governor Gray Davis released a revised budget on May 14, 2003, that restored funding to education and healthcare, which had been cut in the January budget. This new budget had the potential to increase Davis's support and decrease the gridlock the legislature was at that time facing over the budget. Davis's advisors denied that the new budget was a result of the recall threat, but California Republicans challenged this interpretation (Finnegan May 15, 2003, A25).

This recall effort may have been more effective than previous ones due to the state's energy crisis, the budget deficit, and decreases in Davis's popularity. The budget deficit left many citizens feeling betrayed and ready to work to recall Davis, when it was discovered after the November 2002 election. A *Los Angeles Times* poll, conducted in March 2003, puts Davis's approval ratings at 27%, 30% lower than its level two years before, prior to California's the energy crisis (Skelton March 13, 2003, B8, Morain and Jones May 6, 2003, A18).

In July 2003, when a Sacramento Court ordered that there should be a running count conducted of the valid signatures as they were collect by the county election officials, the process sped up. At that point more than 1.6 million signatures had been

collected, which was much more than the constitutionally required 897, 158 (Rabin and Guccione July 19, 2003, A1 & A22).

The recall qualified for the ballot on July 23, 2003, meaning that Davis would have to face a "popular vote of confidence" to remain in office (Finnegan July 24, 2003, A1 & A22). Once the proper number of signatures have been collected they are then certified by the Secretary of State and then the Lieutenant Governor sets the date of the election which is to be 60 to 80 days following, in this case the recall was scheduled for October 7, 2003 (Gerston and Christensen 2004, 65).

This vote, scheduled for October 7, 2003, would require two decisions from each voter, which may place the incumbent at a disadvantage. The election for a new governor and the recall of the current governor must appear on the same ballot. So, in order to recall Davis and elect a new governor one would have to vote in favor of the recall and then for the second candidate (Gerston and Christensen 2004, 67). This posed a problem for Davis because in order to remain the governor he would need to get a majority of the "no on recall" vote, but could not appear on the ballot with the replacement candidates running for office. Another disadvantage for Davis was that the other candidates only needed to receive a plurality to be elected (Bowler and Cain 2004, 8).

Hours before Secretary of State Kevin Shelley announced the certification, Davis's campaign asked the California Supreme Court to block the Shelley from certifying the recall (Finnegan July 24, 2003, A1 & A22). On August 4, 2003, Governor Gray Davis asked the California Supreme Court to intervene once more and delay the October 7th recall in order to revamp the ballot. Davis was concerned because he would

have to be removed from office with a majority of yes votes on the recall, but the candidate to replace him would only have to receive a plurality of votes. This means that Davis could receive more no votes (i.e., retain his office) than another candidate received votes and still be removed from office, even though he had the most support (Finnegan and Guccione August 7, 2003, A1 & A13). The Supreme Court cleared the way for the recall election to continue on August 7, 2003 (Reich, Dolan, and Rainey August 8, 2003, A1 & A22). Then on September 15, 2003, an appeals court ruled that the election was to be postponed because of the punch card ballots (Barabak September 26, 2003, A1). This decision was later overturned by the California Supreme Court.

Initially the Democratic Party had decided not to have other candidates run and to support only Gray Davis. In the beginning of June 2003, Cruz Bustamante, along with Treasurer Phil Angelides and Atty. General Bill Lockyer, had agreed to not run as a candidate on the recall ballot, thus keeping the Democratic Party unified. Bustamante stated that his only participation in the recall would be to urge voters to vote against it. His stated reason for this was that he was not interested in advancing his career at the expense of those he was elected to serve (Finnegan June 6, 2003, B8). By August 2003 many Democrats were worrying that if Davis was recalled they would need someone good on the ballot to replace him (Finnegan and Guccione August 7, 2003, A1 & A13).

Wednesday, August 6, 2003 marked the day that many potential candidates made their candidacy decisions. Arnold Schwarzenegger announced his intention to run on the *Tonight Show with Jay Leno*. The same night Lieutenant Governor Cruz Bustamante changed his mind and decided to run in the recall election. On the other hand, Senator Feinstein, a favorite among California Democrats, announced that she would not run in

the recall election, ending speculation that if she did run Davis would surely lose the recall (Finnegan and Jones August 7, 2003, A1 & A23). Still, some speculated that it would be more complicated for Davis to keep his job with both Schwarzenegger and Bustamante running for governor (Nicholas August 7, 2003, A1 & A26).

On October 7, 2003, the election was held, and the results showed only 55.4% of the voters had actually voted to recall Gray Davis, making him the third governor ever to be recalled (Bowler and Cain 2004, 7). This shows that the margin by which Davis was recalled was very slim and had the potential to be influenced by an outside source, even in the entertainment media.

Schwarzenegger as a Candidate

Schwarzenegger's dreams of fame and power go back to before he was a champion bodybuilder in 1970. Born in Austria, Schwarzenegger was the son of a police officer who began body building at the age of 15. Schwarzenegger's political life began in 1988, when he campaigned with George H. W. Bush. He was also a businessman, owning several restaurants and buildings on Santa Monica's Main Street. Three rumors have been circulated over the years that could hurt Schwarzenegger's campaign; his father was a Nazi, he used steroids, and he groped and was sexually abusive towards women. Schwarzenegger recognized that these and other character issues would likely emerge during his campaign (Mathews and Smith August 7, 2003, A24 & A25).

Arnold Schwarzenegger had no political experience and no stance on major issues, this makes it interesting to investigate why he won the governorship instead of the other 135 candidates (Blitz and Krasniewicz 2004, 16-9). There were many quite negative

issues raised during his candidacy that by one way or another were disregarded. Three issues which may have been most negative were his past drug use, his father having once been a Nazi, and his sexual misconduct charges that were brought up towards the end of the campaign. While these issues were found to hold no relevance somehow it will be interesting to see how and if they were addressed on the *Tonight Show with Jay Leno* (Blitz and Krasniewicz 2004, 23-4).

The first issue that could have been negative to Schwarzenegger was he past drug use. Schwarzenegger admitted to having used marijuana in a 1999 interview with Talk Magazine. With this fact being previously addressed Schwarzenegger did not receive as much attention as Bill Clinton did in the 1992 election. Schwarzenegger also admitted to using steroids in the early 1970s when he was a bodybuilder. He stated that he would use steroids in the months leading up to contests, but that he quit using them when he learned about their harmful effects (Smith August 12, 2003, A18).

Following accusations that his father was a Nazi in 1990, Schwarzenegger realized that he knew very little of his father's past and went to the Simon Wiesenthal Center to find answers. After investigating for two months it was determined that Gustav Schwarzenegger was a member of the Nazi Party. While it was determined that he was involved with a very violent sect of the Nazi Party, he was not charged with any war crimes. Schwarzenegger had a very troubled relationship with his father growing up and when this information was given to him he was ashamed and embarrassed about his father's past. Schwarzenegger was noted as a long time supporter of Jews and Jewish causes, making contributions and helping in fundraising efforts (Wilkinson and Lait August 14, 2003, A22).

The final controversy surrounding Schwarzenegger's candidacy involved his alleged sexual misconduct towards women. On October 2, 2003, five days before the recall election, the Los Angeles reported on interviews that they had had with six women who claimed they had been mistreated sexually by Schwarzenegger with incidents happening within a time period ranging from 1970-2000. The incidents ranged from groping to sexually explicit comments (Cohn October 2, 2003, A1). As of two days prior to the recall election the *Los Angeles Times* had reported that in all 15 women had come forward making allegations of sexual misconduct towards Arnold Schwarzenegger (Cohn October 5, 2003, A1). What is also interesting to notice is that the sexual misconduct allegations only played a role in the decisions that were made within one week of the election (Bedolla and Uhlaner 2004, 15). This could suggest that the effects that the allegations had on candidate choice were in somehow limited or discredited.

After Arnold Schwarzenegger made his appearance on the *Tonight Show with Jay Leno*, August 6, 2003, his support as the Republican Party candidate took off (Bowler and Cain 2004, 8). If just the announcing of his candidacy on broadcast television had the ability to move him to the forefront of the campaign overnight, then the constant reiteration of his candidacy by Leno should have the ability to help his campaign in some fashion.

It is crucial for this research to find how all of these characteristics could have come together within the *Tonight Show with Jay Leno* creating a beneficial stage for Schwarzenegger's campaign. It can be assumed that when all of these factors are present there is indeed an ideal situation created for any candidate.

Conclusion

Through examination of literature a better understanding of how Leno could have had an impact on Schwarzenegger winning the recall election is gained. Late show hosts first have the ability to filter the messages that they deliver. They have the ability to omit or address whichever messages they like, serving as gatekeepers. Hosts also have the ability to decide the ways in which they deliver their jokes. Through the use of irony and audience involvement hosts have the ability to affect the ways in which audiences gather and retain knowledge. Entertainment media differs greatly from traditional media in its use of humor. They also differ in the ways that candidates have been able to use them to promote their campaigns and agendas, with entertainment media providing more than just sound bites.

The examination of the history of late night talk shows and the California recall election provides a clearer understanding of how this medium could work within this campaign. The structure of late night talk shows allows them to shape audience's perceptions through humor. This ability to shape perceptions could impact the way that audiences view certain candidates and events in the election. After viewing this literature it is now necessary to examine late night talk shows to see if they could have used their humor to show bias towards a given candidate, and spin certain information.

Chapter Three: Methodology

Introduction

The main conclusions of this study will be drawn from a descriptive analysis, using both qualitative and quantitative descriptions, of monologues from the *Tonight Show* from the months the recall election first came to light until the election. A more limited, comparative descriptive analysis will also be performed on David Letterman monologues to determine if there was more focus on the recall election in Jay Leno's monologues than David Letterman's. The analysis will also investigate the nature of Letterman's focus on the candidates and the recall election in general. Transcripts and footage from these come from the Center for Media and Public Affairs, since the *Tonight Show* does not give out transcripts from their show. The monologues will be investigated from the end of March 2003 until the day before the election October 6, 2003. This should give a clear indication if Leno placed a greater emphasis on the recall and Schwarzenegger's candidacy, thus being more biased politically.

Type of Research

The primary purpose of comparing the *Tonight Show* to the *Late Show* is to determine whether Jay Leno took the liberty to promote Arnold Schwarzenegger more so than other late night talk show hosts. The other purpose of comparing the *Tonight Show* with the *Late Show* is to investigate if the ability to promote candidates is exclusive to the *Tonight Show* because of the structure of the monologues.

The analysis will be largely qualitative but will also have some aspects that are quantitative. The interpretation of jokes and the perceived impact of these jokes

emphasize the qualitative aspect of this analysis. Additionally, figures for the number of jokes emphasizing specific candidate characteristics will be presented in the form of frequencies and proportions. Upon the completion of this analysis Jay Leno's potential political bias towards Arnold Schwarzenegger will become more evident.

Research Questions

A series of questions were established to help support the theory that Jay Leno's monologues favored Arnold Schwarzenegger's campaign in the California recall election, thus showing political bias.

#1: Were Jay Leno's jokes regarding Arnold Schwarzenegger as negative as his humor regarding other candidates in the recall election?

Through reading the transcripts and watching footage of the jokes it should be clear whether the jokes targeted towards Arnold Schwarzenegger would be negative towards his campaign in relation to other candidates. To answer this question it will be necessary to determine whether or not the jokes could be considered negative. Jokes will be investigated to determine if Jay Leno, in an effort to not hurt his friend's campaign, refrained from portraying Schwarzenegger negatively, while also working damage control in some of his monologues. Jokes that do not appear to meet these criteria will be termed negative. If they were considered negative they will then be compared to jokes targeted towards Arnold Schwarzenegger's opponents to determine if they were equally negative. Another important aspect of this research question is that there may have been

some potentially negative jokes regarding Arnold Schwarzenegger to reduce the negative impact that could be associated with his past; foreign born, drug use, Nazi father, etc.

#2: Did Jay Leno mention Arnold Schwarzenegger as a candidate more than other candidates?

To answer this research question it will be necessary to determine how often Arnold Schwarzenegger was mentioned and compare this to the other candidates running for the governorship. It will be necessary to separate Gray Davis from the other candidates, for reasons suggested in question three.

#3: Did Jay Leno prime his audience to recall Governor Gray Davis, thus setting the stage for Arnold Schwarzenegger to run?

To answer this research question it will be necessary to look at how Leno addressed the state of California in the months leading up to the recall. I will look at how often Leno mentioned California's economy and the energy crisis as well as how often Gray Davis was blamed for these. It can be assumed that by mentioning these he was preparing his audience to vote in favor of the recall and to later accept new candidates for the governorship.

#4: Did Jay Leno start off treating Arnold Schwarzenegger as a viable candidate?

This research question will look for a shift in the way that Leno addressed Schwarzenegger from the beginning of the recall until the election. If the manner in

which Schwarzenegger was portrayed was positive in the beginning and remained positive it can be stated that he was automatically treated as a viable candidate.

#5: Did Jay Leno treat candidates with similar backgrounds (from the entertainment industry, no political experience, etc.) as viable candidates?

By measuring how Leno treated the other candidates and comparing it to how he treated Schwarzenegger this can be answered.

#6: Did Leno portray sexual misconduct allegations against Schwarzenegger in a way that diminished their credibility?

This will be answered by examining ways in which Leno may have worked to discredit the allegations that came out against Schwarzenegger.

Answering Research Questions

The jokes will be analyzed based on their perceived potential impact on viewers. They will be looked at for their content and whether or not they could be potentially harmful to a candidate. They will also be looked at to determine whether they could make a potentially harmful subject seem less relevant. The jokes from Jay Leno will then be compared to the jokes told by David Letterman. This analysis along with frequency and proportion comparisons should create a clear picture as to whether or not Jay Leno's portrayal of Arnold Schwarzenegger could present political bias towards Schwarzenegger's candidacy. Frequencies and proportions will be employed because they are the only univariate statistics for nominal variables (Blalock 1979, 31-4).

Gathering Data

In order to analyze whether or not Jay Leno could have had an impact on Arnold Schwarzenegger it was first important to gather transcripts from that time period. After examining NBC's website it became apparent that I would not be able to obtain transcripts from the network, as they have an explicit policy against providing video or transcripts. After searching journal articles, I found a reference in the article titled, "The Political Content of Late Night Comedy," to a database containing transcripts from late night talk shows (Niven, Lichter, Amundson 2003). After contacting the principal author of the article, David Niven of Florida Atlantic University, I learned that the database used belonged to the Center for Media and Public Affairs. After contacting the Center for Media and Public Affairs, I worked closely with the research director, Daniel Amundson, to determine on which dates Jay Leno and David Letterman addressed the CA recall election. From here I determined what footage held the most relevance to my study. Once the dates needed were determined, I traveled to their office in Washington DC to dub video. Also during this time period I obtained copies of the written transcripts, which the center obtains through closed captioning.

CMPA

The Center for Media and Public Affairs was formed in 1985 by Drs. Robert and Linda Lichter. The center is nonpartisan and works to bridge the gap between academic research and the use of media in public policy. This organization uses a scientific approach which sets it somewhere between organizations that are "watchdogs" over the

media and academic researchers. The center provides an empirical basis for debates over media fairness through their studies on media content.[2]

The Center for Media and Public Affairs (CMPA) is nonprofit organization and must rely on contributions and projects for funding. A majority of their funding comes through foundation grants. These grants are both general and for specific research projects. They have also received funding from Pew Charitable Trusts, Kellogg Foundation, and Joyce Foundation over the years (Amundson 2005). Due to its external funding, the CMPA is willing to open its video archive to academic researchers at no cost.

Carrying out the Study

In order to gather the transcripts and footage there was an initial search conducted on the CMPA's database. By providing Dan Amundson, their research director, with a list of search terms to search the database, beginning January 1, 2003, he was able to send me an Access file containing all of the jokes matching my search criteria. Search terms included California, recall, Governor Gray Davis, Arnold Schwarzenegger, as well as the names of many of the other candidates. From this a set of dates were selected based on their content and their time period within the recall campaign. Once the dates were selected, I traveled to the Center for Media and Public Affairs, in Washington DC, and spent two days finding the dates needed, dubbing video footage and copying transcripts. By using the actual video footage and closed captioning transcripts I was able to eliminate any potential bias that could have come from coding error or political bias within the organization.

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[2] CMPA website.

After the transcripts were obtained it was necessary to sort through the transcripts to determine which monologues were pertinent to this research. Jokes and comments were stratified from the transcripts based on whether or not they made references to candidates in the recall election, Governor Gray Davis, California's government structure, economy, or taxes. In order to ensure that the jokes remained in context the jokes before and after them were also pulled from the transcripts. This allowed for comments to be made regarding the jokes as well as making the jokes easier to find when viewing the monologues.

The same process was followed for the *Late Show with David Letterman*. Then the types of jokes were compared to determine whether the questions supported the theory when looking at David Letterman's jokes.

Chapter Four: Analysis of Leno's Jokes Regarding California, the Recall Election, and Candidates

Introduction

When looking at whether or not Jay Leno could have shown political bias towards Arnold Schwarzenegger in the California recall election in 2003 through the way he portrayed him in his monologue jokes it is necessary to look at the ways in which he was portrayed leading up to the election. It is necessary to go beyond that to also look at the ways in which the other candidates were portrayed during this time period. The jokes were examined beginning on March 31, 2003 and continuing until the night before the election, October 6, 2003. The March 31st date was chosen as a starting point because this was the first 2003 mention of then Governor Gray Davis in the Center for Media and Public Affair's database.

In order to determine whether or not all of the answers to the research questions regarding the recall election and the gubernatorial candidates can support the theory it is necessary to first establish a set criterion by which the jokes will be categorized. This criterion will be established by grouping jokes with similar messages together. Jokes will then be selected from this to give examples of how the categories were established.

Governor Gray Davis

When looking at the research question regarding whether or not Jay Leno primed the audience to accept the recall of Governor Gray Davis leading the way for Arnold Schwarzenegger to run, it is necessary to investigate the ways in which Davis was portrayed leading up to the recall and its certification. Jay Leno's first mention of Gray

Davis in 2003 occured on March 31, 2003. This mention was not of the recall, but rather a joke associating Gray Davis with the condition of California, specifically it references the power outages and the budget crisis.

Davis Blamed for California's State—

Following the initial mention of Gray Davis there were many subsequent mentions of Davis blaming him for California's current situation. Several excerpts from the monologue on the *Tonight Show with Jay Leno* will illustrate the ways in which Davis was negatively associated with California. These excerpts were also used to suggest criteria for categorizing jokes that dealt with Gray Davis and California's circumstances.

> "I was thinking about this. They keep saying Iraq is about the size of California. They want to knock out electricity in Iraq; they should bring in California Governor Gray Davis. He's an expert. He knows how to knock out electricity. Perfect. Oh! He could have them broke and in darkness in a second!" (3/31)

This joke is significant in that it was the first joke that portrayed Gray Davis as an incompetent governor. This joke also places the blame for the power outages and the budget deficit on Governor Gray Davis.

> "Anyway, he [Jay Garner] will have the electric power back up in Iraq and he said it will be done as quickly and as cheaply as possible. I'm not sure who's helping him in this deal, but I'm pretty sure it's not Governor Gray Davis." (4/22)

This joke illustrates ways in which Jay Leno incorporated Governor Gray Davis into the punch lines of his jokes, regardless of the topic. Even though this joke does not directly mention California the joke is still potentially negative to Davis in that it infers that he is inept at handling an energy crisis in a timely manner.

"Later this week, President Bush coming here to California. He's gonna meet with our own Governor Gray Davis. And the two of them together are gonna sit down and come up with the worst economic plan ever, the two of them together -- working it together." (4/28)

This joke is significant in two different aspects. In this joke Jay Leno left very little pause for audience reaction, this joke was delivered very quickly and then he moved on to the next joke. This joke is also significant because it implies that Davis, with the help of President George Bush, is capable of creating the "worst economic plan ever."

"Oh, we have the -- had the lunar eclipse last night. That was something. It was total darkness for like an hour or something. See, here in California, people just assumed it was another Gray Davis energy screw-up. Didn't even know. 'Oh, power's off for an hour.'" (5/16)

This joke is relevant because it not only brings light to the energy crisis that California was facing at the time, but it also makes the outages look like a very common occurrence. In addition, the use of the term "Gray Davis energy screw-up" makes the power outages look like something that are Davis's fault and could have easily been avoided.

"Florida has these horrible floods. Arizona has wildfires. California has Governor Gray Davis. It's just awful. It's just awful no matter where you go." (6/23)

In this joke Jay Leno discusses a number of natural disasters and includes Governor Gray Davis in the list. This is implying that Davis is as dangerous to the state of California as floods are to Florida and wildfires are to Arizona.

These jokes work to illustrate negative aspects of California as well as blame these negative happenings on Governor Davis. They also mention Davis when there is

no news reason to associate these with him. As seen in Table 1, this type of joke

represented 17% of the total jokes examined regarding Governor Gray Davis.

California as the Topic

Still working to answer whether or not Jay Leno primed his audience to recall

Governor Gray Davis, it is also important to look at the ways in which he portrayed the

condition of California. In all of Leno's 46 mentions of California's government he

relayed the message that California was in poor shape. The jokes following represent the

ways in which California was portrayed by Jay Leno. These jokes could still reinforce a

negative image of Gray Davis and his competency, even though he was not directly

mentioned within the jokes.

California is in bad shape—

Following is a sample of the jokes in which Jay Leno mentioned the state of

California and its government is some manner. These jokes created the basis for which

the remainder of the jokes regarding California's government were counted.

> "As I mentioned, President Bush is now in California. You know, this state is so
> broke. I think our best chance is to surrender and try and get Bush to give us some
> of the Iraqi rebuilding money. Do you know what I mean? You know, to get our
> infrastructure back up and going again." (5/2)

In this joke Leno is comparing California to Iraq. This suggests that the government

should be overthrown in an effort to rebuild the state and bring it back to its full potential.

By comparing California to a war zone Leno is exaggerating the problems with

California's government. However, even after the audience takes into account the

inflated situation which California is facing they are still left with the impression that

California is in bad shape. Also, the comparison to a nation in which the dictator was

overthrown could suggest that Davis should be recalled.

> "According to the 'L.A. Daily News,' California students rank just about dead
> last -- I think we're tied with Mississippi, tied with Mississippi, in national reading
> test scores. We are the lowest. Isn't that amazing?" (6/24)

 By introducing a concern with education in this joke Leno could have potentially

motivated a group of voters against Governor Davis that otherwise would not have been

concerned. Education concerns tend to motivate parents, who may not have been as

concerned with issues like the budget.

> "According to a study in 'USA Today' -- and this is hard to believe -- California
> ranks last in managing its money. We're last. We're right below M.C. Hammer.
> Do you believe that? That's how bad we're doing. To give you an idea -- to give
> you an idea how broke California is, yesterday at the gas station, I won one of
> those $2 scratch-off tickets -- he gave me an IOU. I said, 'come on!'" (6/25)

This joke illustrates another area in which California is ranked last. It is also important to

not that these jokes were delivered on consecutive days, so within two days Leno

mentioned that two separate newspapers cited California as last in two different areas,

education and money management. Jokes solely about California's government made up

12% of the total jokes examined in this research, none of which reflected positively on

California.

Davis Unpopular—

Another way in which Jay Leno could have primed his audience to see Gray

Davis as an unfit governor is by portraying him as an unpopular governor. Potentially,

by convincing his audience that others do not like Governor Gray Davis he could influence the opinions of his viewers. Also, by mentioning how unpopular Gray Davis is could solidify negative feelings that Leno's audience has towards Davis. Those being affected most by the mentioning of Davis being unpopular are those who are undecided on how to vote in the recall or those who are indifferent.

> "And Governor Gray Davis has invited his supporters to a $5,000 a ticket golf tournament in Carmel, California later this month. You know, the sad thing is, even if all of Davis' supporters show up, that's still not enough for a foursome, you know? That's the problem. Governor Gray Davis now fighting a recall. They're trying to recall them. That's how unpopular he is. His approval ratings are way -- in fact, his approval ratings are now two points below SARS. Yeah, not good." (5/2)

These jokes illustrates that Davis's unpopularity. The first joke claims that Davis is so unpopular he has less than four supporters. The second joke puts his approval ratings below SARS, an air borne contagious disease which at the time was creating widespread panic in Pacific Rim countries.

> "CNN is reporting that California Governor Gray Davis has the worst approval rating of any governor in 55 years. He is now five points below Monkey pox, okay? That's how bad." (6/11)

This joke regarding Governor Davis's approval rating could potentially be more negative than the previous joke because in the beginning he references that a reputable news source, CNN, is claiming that his approval rating is lower than any governor in the past 55 years. This adds a sense of credibility to the joke. Again this comment is followed by a comparison of Davis's approval ratings and another dangerous disease.

"Scott Peterson is getting hundreds, hundreds of love letters in jail from women. Isn't that amazing? Scott Peterson. How does this make California Governor Gray Davis feel? You know? An accused murderer getting fan mail, he's getting recalled. I mean, there must be -- and Gray Davis is not popular with anybody." (6/19)

This joke looks compares Governor Davis to a man that was arrested and then later convicted of murdering his pregnant wife. The reference to Peterson getting fan mail and Davis being recalled suggests that even a murderer is more popular than Davis. Leno is also incorporating Davis in a joke that he was not the subject of. At the end Leno states that Gray Davis is not popular with anybody, reinforcing his unpopularity.

"And back in California, Governor Gray Davis does something similar. He takes a picture of you with him, and then threatens to show it to people unless you give him $5,000. 'Cause that could ruin your career. Yeah, Davis' approval rating now fallen to 21%. and that's just a survey of his immediate family. So, that's -- well, you can see why he's not popular." (6/25)

Here Leno's joke attacks Davis's popularity in two different ways. In the first part of the joke he discusses how Davis photographs himself with individuals and then blackmails that into paying $5,000 so that he will not show others and ruin an individual's career. This suggests that being associated with Davis could be detrimental to a person's career. He informs his audience that Davis's approval ratings have fallen again, and that even his family is no longer supporting him. Leno then reaffirms it all in the end of the joke by stating that Davis is not popular. This all suggests that nobody supports Davis

"California Governor Gray Davis visited an elementary school here in Los Angeles where he taught a class -- I don't want to say it was unpopular, but the kids gave him a wedgie and stuffed him in a locker. Not good, not good. Yeah. Not good. Listen to this. According to today's 'Los Angeles Times,' Gray Davis

now gets negative job ratings from White people, Black people, Latinos, Republicans, Independents, even Democrats." (7/8)

This joke discusses how Governor Gray Davis visited an elementary school which could have positively affected his career, but the main focus of the joke was that he wasn't even popular among the elementary school kids. In order to illustrate this point Leno compares Davis to the unpopular kid that got tormented in school, by suggesting that he was given a wedgie and stuffed into a locker. Leno also refers to many different factions of people, those separated by race and politics specifically, and states that they Davis has worked to bring them all together. These two jokes demonstrate that Davis is liked by no one.

The jokes in this section suggest that Davis is less popular than widespread diseases and a man that murdered his pregnant wife. The jokes also suggest that he is so unpopular even his family disapproves of the job he is doing. The final joke implies that he is like the unpopular child in school and is disliked by all races and political parties. To further encourage the audience to recall Governor Gray Davis, Jay Leno actually stated on numerous occasions that Davis was unpopular. Of the jokes regarding Governor Gray Davis 17% were directed towards his popularity, or lack there of.

Davis & Recall—

Another way in which Jay Leno may have primed his audience to vote to recall Governor Gray Davis is through mentioning Davis and the recall in his jokes. There were many instances in which Leno discussed the need to recall Davis directly, in other jokes he simply mentioned the recall and Davis together implying a need to recall Davis.

It can be argued that by mentioning the recall Leno primed his audience to accept the recall.

> "Boy, I'm driving to work today, saw something strange, I see this guy with a sign, 'the end is near,' you know, I'm thinking it was some religious nut, no, it turned out to be Governor Gray Davis. Apparently the end is near, a big sign up there. Well, this is pretty amazing. A Republican-led campaign to recall California Governor Gray Davis. This was thought, oh, improbable, never happen. Well, now, it looks like it's gonna happen. It's gonna be on the ballot. It shouldn't be surprising. If there's one thing the Republicans are good at, it's overriding the popular vote." (6/16)

The beginning of the excerpt is a joke about Davis holding sign saying that the end is near, this suggests that the end will come with the recall election, further suggesting that Davis will soon be removed from office. The footage of this joke showed that Leno was fairly serious in the beginning of the joke and then he had to try not to laugh towards the end of the first joke. When discussing the recall Leno's statement is made in a very matter of fact manner, this could be seen as a promotion of the recall.

> "Oh, an embarrassing moment today for California Governor Gray Davis. He went to the supermarket right over here. He was flattered when someone out front asked for his autograph, signed it and then realized it was a "Recall Davis" petition." (6/17)

This joke works to promote the recall as well as inform the audience that recall petitions are in many locations. When looking at the way that this joke portrays Davis we see that not only is he unpopular and people are working to recall him, but also that he lacks the intelligence to recognize a recall petition.

"Oh, and this summer, experts are predicting an extreme fire danger here in southern California. Meanwhile, up in Northern California, Gray Davis in extreme danger of being fired. So it's tough. Very tough." (6/20)

This joke is fairly simple in stating that there is a good chance that Governor Gray Davis will actually be recalled. The power of suggestion may encourage Leno's audience to vote in favor of the recall.

"Things not looking good here in California. Unemployment, nine year high. 6.4%, in fact. The way this recall thing is going, unemployment will get a little higher real soon. Well, proponents of this election to recall Governor Gray Davis claim they now have 988,000 signatures. Isn't that amazing? I didn't realize that many Californians spoke English. Where are they?" (7/7)

This joke attacks two aspects of California; the high unemployment rate and the high number of immigrants. Leno suggests that unemployment being low is Davis's fault and that by recalling Davis employment rates could potentially go back up. Leno delivered this section with a very serious tone, Leno is also serious when he talks about Davis about to be unemployed. This could mean that Leno was taking these areas very seriously and wanted his audience to as well.

"Well, it's official. Gray Davis has become the first governor in California history to face a recall election. This is unbelievable. Do you know how the recall works? Do you people understand this? You know what's going to happen? On October 7th, 15 bachelors will move into the governor's mansion and each week, Trista will eliminate one person. And that last person will become governor of the great state of California. That's how it works." (7/24)

In the preparation for this joke Leno announces that Davis is the first governor in

California's history to face a recall election. This alone is a very negative statement.

Leno then continues to make fun of the recall process by comparing it to the Bachelor.

> "Hey, Kev, do you know what Gray Davis is going to be for Halloween?
> Kevin: what's that?
> Unemployed. Yeah, this looks good. This looks good." (10/6)

This quick little joke was made the day before the recall election. This joke was not

regarding the election, or popularity, it was just a statement that Davis was about to lose

his job.

Recall Jokes

This category falls within the same realm of the previous two categories, meaning

that by merely mentioning the recall the idea was planted within the minds of Leno's

audience thus making them more likely to vote in favor of the recall. Also, since this was

a recall of Governor Gray Davis, any mention of solely the recall would also reflect

negatively on Davis. There were a total of 45 mentions of the recall alone, making up

12% of the total jokes. This would imply that there were 45 jokes that could have

reinforced the idea that the recall election was a good idea.

> "Governor Gray Davis has asked the California State Supreme Court to delay the
> October recall vote, 'cause he says that's not enough time to put on a fair election.
> Let me tell you something -- if we didn't need a fair election to pick the President
> of the United States, we don't need a fair election to pick the governor of
> California. Yeah! [applause] do you know how many people are going to run for
> governor now? It's now over 300. Over 300 people are prepared to file to run for
> governor. That's more people than saw the movie 'Gigli' this weekend." (8/4)

This joke discusses the effort that was undertaken to delay the recall vote and the number of candidates to replace Governor Gray Davis if recalled. When discussing the delay of the recall Leno comments on the unfairness of the 2000 presidential election and explains that the California gubernatorial should not be held to higher standards than the national election. In the latter part of the joke he explains how there are over 300 people willing to file to run for governor if Davis is recalled.

> "You know, it's interesting, this recall thing here in California has actually reached what they call critical mass. You know what that is? That means there are now more people registered to run for Governor than there are registered to vote. So that's critical mass, basically." (8/7)

This joke, like the previous example, makes fun of the number of people running for governor.

Davis Compared to Schwarzenegger—

There were a number of instances in which Governor Gray Davis was compared to gubernatorial candidate Arnold Schwarzenegger. These references were included with other Gray Davis jokes because they tended to reflect on the recall of Davis and make him look like he would best be replaced by Schwarzenegger.

> "It looks like it's gonna be Arnold Schwarzenegger or Gray Davis. You got a robot from the future or the robot with no future. Pick the one you want." (8/11)

In this joke Leno presents only two options for the governor making it look like only a two man race. Also when delivering the joke he says Arnold Schwarzenegger optimistically and has a less than optimistic facial expression when he says Gray Davis.

Leno also implies that the only candidate with a future is Schwarzenegger. Furthermore, by referring to Davis as a robot he is making another joke about Davis's personality, or lack there of.

> "Gray Davis today, god bless him, Gray Davis said he had nothing, nothing do with these stories coming out about Arnold. And if this doesn't hurt Arnold in the polls, he'll have nothing to do with the next two stories coming out either." (10/3)

This joke about Gray Davis and Arnold Schwarzenegger was delivered after discussing the stories that came out about Schwarzenegger's sexual misconduct. The joke blames Davis for the outbreak of the stories. By blaming Davis it makes him look as if he should be concerned about Schwarzenegger's candidacy because Schwarzenegger could potentially win. This not only works to discredit the rumors about Schwarzenegger but it also makes them look like a last-stitch effort from Davis's campaign to discredit Schwarzenegger's candidacy. Jokes comparing Arnold Schwarzenegger and Gray Davis make up 10% of the total jokes targeting Gray Davis.

Davis Other—

Not all of the jokes targeting Governor Gray Davis could be categorized into the above areas. The jokes that did not have enough similar jokes to create a new category were lumped together into the Other category. In all, 14% of the jokes about Gray Davis can be put in this category.

> "And yet another Saddam Hussein tape has come out. In this one he urges citizens to fight back and feel free to loot and steal state property. I'm sorry, that was Gray Davis' new tape. I'm sorry. I was confused." (8/4)

In this joke Leno confuses Gray Davis with Saddam Hussein, a criminal dictator who has

lost control of his country, possibly implying that Davis is about to lose control of

California and has performed criminal acts.

> "All nine Democratic presidential candidates have come out in support of Gray
> Davis. All nine of them. And today at Disneyland, all seven dwarves came out for
> Gary Coleman. So that was good." (8/12)

This joke is the only joke that was found during the dates examined that could be seen as

positive for Davis. Even though it was used to set up another joke, Leno stated that all

nine Democratic candidates for president supported Davis. This could potentially lead

California Democratic voters to further support Davis, however since it is the only

positive mention towards Davis it is highly unlikely.

> "But Governor Gray Davis, he said he welcomed the decision. That's what he said.
> He said, using the punch card machines wouldn't be fair to the people. And he has
> a point. After all, those machines had helped him get elected in the first place."
> (9/15)

This is another joke regarding Davis's desire to delay the recall election. Here Leno

discredits the validity of the attempt by bringing to light that the system which Davis is

protesting is the same system that he was elected by.

Table 4.1

Davis Jokes	No.	%
Davis Blamed for California's State	18	17
Davis Unpopular	18	17
Davis & Recall	35	34
Davis Being Mocked	8	8
Davis Compared to Schwarzenegger	10	10
Davis Other	14	14
Davis Total	103	100

By looking at the breakdown of jokes we see that many of the jokes towards

Davis can be deemed negative. A large portion of the jokes regarding Governor Gray

Davis are regarding the recall election, him being blamed for California's state, and him

being unpopular (34%, 17%, and 17% respectively), making up a total of 68% of the

jokes. Another 8% of the jokes were blatantly mocking Governor Gray Davis; either

because of his personality, dancing, or misguided campaign slogans. It is also important

to note that ten percent of the jokes regarding Gray Davis are comparing him to Arnold

Schwarzenegger. By comparing Davis to Schwarzenegger Leno is not only setting up

Davis to be recalled but also implying that Schwarzenegger would be the next logical

candidate to take his place.

Of the 388 jokes and comments analyzed for this paper Gray Davis jokes made up

27%. When this is added to the 12% of jokes about California's state and 12% about the

recall alone, it is apparent that 51% of the jokes and comments analyzed could be

potentially harmful to Governor Gray Davis.

Arnold Schwarzenegger Jokes

It is necessary to analyze the jokes regarding Arnold Schwarzenegger to answer

research questions one, two, four and six. Question one looks at whether or not Leno's

jokes regarding Arnold Schwarzenegger were not as negative as his jokes regarding other candidates. The second questions is did Leno mentioned Arnold Schwarzenegger as a candidate more than other candidates. Question four tests whether or not Leno automatically accepted Schwarzenegger as a viable candidate. Finally, question six looks at whether or not Leno handled Schwarzenegger's alleged sexual misconduct in a way that would diminish its credibility. The answer to these questions can help to determine if Leno could have had an impact on Schwarzenegger winning the recall election.

Based on the jokes about Arnold Schwarzenegger I have created five categories; Schwarzenegger as Governor, Schwarzenegger as actor, Schwarzenegger being foreign, Schwarzenegger scandals, and other. These five categories best represent the jokes that were told about Schwarzenegger.

Schwarzenegger as Governor—

By examining the ways in which Leno mentioned Schwarzenegger as potential governor it become clear whether or not, as investigated in question four, Leno automatically accepted Schwarzenegger as a viable candidate for governor.

> "How many think Arnold Schwarzenegger would be a better governor than Gray Davis? How many think Snoop Dogg would be a better governor?" (6/26)

Of the transcripts used for this analysis, this was the first mention of Schwarzenegger as well as the first mention of him running for governor. Following this joke Snoop Dogg's appearances on *Girls Gone Wild* videos are mentioned discrediting him as a gubernatorial candidate. However, there is no attempt made to discredit Schwarzenegger. This joke

was also delivered during the monologue of a show in which Schwarzenegger was the guest.

Schwarzenegger's appearance on the *Tonight Show with Jay Leno* on June 26, 2003 bears further examination based on the number of times Schwarzenegger's potential candidacy was discussed. Beyond the aforementioned joke, Leno's comments regarding Schwarzenegger were not added to these data because they happened during the interview portion as apposed to the monologue. Since this was one of the few transcripts that continued past the monologue portion of the program it was determined that using the interview could adversely impact the validity of the results. For this reason, it was excluded from the quantitative data, but will be discussed presently.

The aforementioned joke was actually a poll of the audience which was taken right before Arnold Schwarzenegger was introduced. Schwarzenegger was to appear on the *Tonight Show* to promote the release of Terminator 3. When introduced by Leno Schwarzenegger was introduced as "the next governor, from the great state of California, Arnold Schwarzenegger." Leno announcing Schwarzenegger as the next governor of California demonstrates that the answer to question four can support my theory, and that Leno did in fact automatically accept Schwarzenegger as a viable candidate for governor.

Leno's promotion of Schwarzenegger that night did not end with his introduction. There were many times within the interview section that the conversation termed towards Schwarzenegger running for governor. During discussion of Schwarzenegger being backstage with the next guest, Snoop Dogg, Schwarzenegger told Leno that Snoop had given him the rap name Notorious GOP. From that comment Leno turned the conversation to whether or not Schwarzenegger was going to run for governor.

Schwarzenegger evades the question by changing the subject to what he would be wearing to the opening of Terminator 3. At this point Leno made a reference to the fact that they have known each other for a long time, 25 years. Leno then asks Schwarzenegger again if he is going to run for governor to which Schwarzenegger responds that he does not know. Schwarzenegger explains that at that time he was focusing on Terminator 3.

Leno then informs Schwarzenegger that if he decides to run for governor that he has put together some campaign slogans for him, since they have "been friends for a long time." The slogans discuss everything from his accents to his acting. In all Leno offers three campaign slogans. They are "Schwarzenegger—Who better to represent a state where no one speaks English?," "I wanna be governor as long as I don't have to live in Sacramento," and "Not a good enough actor to fool you on taxes." Then in what seems to be a mocking manner Schwarzenegger told him that they were very good jokes. It is important to consider whether or not these jokes are negative, or if they could potentially negate Schwarzenegger's flaws before attention is drawn to them, much like the way President Bush handled his mispronunciations.

The interview then turns towards Schwarzenegger's family. Schwarzenegger tells Leno that he and his family have been in Ireland volunteering with the Special Olympics. Schwarzenegger then tells Leno that his kids "do the same things all kids do. They play ball, they hang out at the shopping mall, and gather signatures for the recall." This not only implies that his children live ordinary lives, but also makes collecting signatures for the recall seem like an ordinary thing in California. Then they must take a commercial break and Leno that they are taking "a break with the governor" and will be right back.

After the commercial break Leno and Schwarzenegger are discussing the movie and Schwarzenegger tells Leno of a trip he has planned to Iraq and Kuwait to screen the movie for American troops. Schwarzenegger then takes this opportunity to discuss the blackouts, lack of money, and lack of leadership in those countries and then states that they are pretty much like California. This is another chance for Schwarzenegger to bring attention to the necessity of a recall, without mentioning the recall, because California is in such bad shape.

After Leno's interview with Schwarzenegger he interviews Snoop Dogg. When Snoop comes out Leno immediately asks him if he had met Schwarzenegger and then states that Schwarzenegger could be the next governor, to which Snoop says that he would "love that." This can be seen as an endorsement made by Snoop Dogg, which could broaden Schwarzenegger's support. Later in the interview Snoop Dogg turns the conversation back to Schwarzenegger running for governor and suggests that he can be Schwarzenegger's running mate. Schwarzenegger then challenges him to come up with a rap song that has something that rhymes with Schwarzenegger. The transcript ends shortly after this point.

This interview with Arnold Schwarzenegger and Snoop Dogg was largely geared towards Schwarzenegger running for governor. Throughout the interview it was clear that Schwarzenegger's candidacy would be supported by Leno, as well as by Snoop Doggy Dogg. This was a very positive way to introduce the idea of Schwarzenegger running for governor to Leno's audience. Following this performance there were numerous mentions of Schwarzenegger running for governor.

"I mean, we need Arnold in there. I don't even know if Arnold can -- I don't know what he could do but it's gotta be better than that." (7/23)

This joke comes directly after a joke stating that Governor Gray Davis has done a "horrible" job. By following with this joke it not only suggests that Davis should be replaced but states who Leno feels should replace him. Leno not only suggests that Schwarzenegger should replace Davis he makes the comment that California needs Schwarzenegger. This implies that Schwarzenegger is the best candidate for the job, even before he has announced that he will run.

"And there's all this talk about Arnold Schwarzenegger. You know where he is now? Visiting Mexico. He's in Mexico right now. See, I think this means he's definitely going to run for governor. See, Arnold is smart. He's in Mexico campaigning in front of the very people who will be living here by election time. You see what I'm saying? He's smart. He knows, he knows." (7/25)

This is another joke that is setting up Arnold to run for governor. An ordinary trip to Mexico is now referred to as a campaign trip. Also, when Leno says that he knows at the end of the joke referring to Schwarzenegger he seems sincere.

By looking at the ways in which Leno set Schwarzenegger up to run for governor, even before the official announcement was made, it is clear that Leno did automatically treat Schwarzenegger as a legitimate candidate. Of the 77 Schwarzenegger jokes that were analyzed, 23% of those jokes where promoting Schwarzenegger's candidacy for governor.

Schwarzenegger as Actor—

Since Schwarzenegger's latest movie, Terminator 3, was released the summer

prior to the recall election there were numerous mentions during the time period leading

up to the recall election of Schwarzenegger as an actor.

> "You're starting to see a lot of negative ads about Arnold now. They're all kind of
> ganging up. But, you know, Arnold can take it. You know it's interesting, all his
> critics say he's not an administrator, he's an actor. He's not an environmentalist,
> he's an actor. He has no government experience, he's an actor. And Arnold's
> thrilled. For the first time in his career, critics are calling him an actor. Do you
> realize that's the first time! Yeah." (10/1)

While a joke of this nature was not the only instance where Schwarzenegger's acting was

mentioned, this is among the few jokes that deal with Schwarzenegger as an actor

running for governor. In most circumstances the two issues, Schwarzenegger's acting

and Schwarzenegger's candidacy, were separated. In this joke Leno discredits the

negative comments that have been made about Schwarzenegger being an actor and

running for governor by making the acting comments seem positive.

These mentions of Schwarzenegger should not negatively impact his candidacy

for governor since the general public tends to look favorably upon celebrities (Fraser and

Brown 2002, 158). When looking at the comments and jokes regarding

Schwarzenegger's acting career, either promoting Terminator 3 or otherwise, 23% of the

total jokes and comments about Schwarzenegger could be categorized as acting based

jokes.

Schwarzenegger's Foreign Born—

The fact that Arnold Schwarzenegger was not born in the United States could

potentially be a problem to his candidacy. In order to determine how Leno addressed this

issue these jokes have been grouped together for purposes of counting the number of

mentions. A sample of these jokes were then stratified from the transcripts to depict

ways in which the issue was addressed.

> "And it looks like Arnold Schwarzenegger still debating whether to run for
> governor of California. See, he should run. He has the one thing, the one thing
> that practically every person from -- people from California can relate to, he was
> born in another country. You see what I'm saying? Right away. See, right there,
> he has that one tie. Actually, you know where he's making his official
> announcement? Right here on our show next week." (7/31)

This joke was given the week before Schwarzenegger made his announcement that he

was going to run for governor. Leno actually starts the joke by saying that

Schwarzenegger should run. His reasoning for this is that Schwarzenegger has a

common tie with other citizens, which is being foreign born. By bringing to light the

high immigrant population in California Leno makes this issue seem not only

unsubstantial, but like something that could be an advantage over other candidates. This

comment was also made shortly after Leno reported that the Sacramento Bee said that

Schwarzenegger would not be running, knowing this it seems as if Leno may have know

that Schwarzenegger was planning to run and announce his candidacy the following week.

> "You know something, I'm glad Arnold's running, just so I can hear him keep
> saying -- [imitating Arnold] 'California.' yes. 'Here in California. California.'
> where's he from, India, now? 'Yes, California, I love California.'" (8/8)

This joke deals mainly with Schwarzenegger's pronunciation of the California. Here Leno is making fun of Schwarzenegger's accent, which could potentially make it a non-issue for later scrutiny. When looking at Leno's attitude in delivering jokes it is obvious that he is very happy. Not just that the joke is funny but Leno is in good spirits. This joke was made two days after Arnold announced his candidacy, so this attitude could be the result of genuine happiness of Schwarzenegger's decision to run.

Through the examination of these jokes it is can be stated that while Leno chose to bring light to the subject of Schwarzenegger being foreign born he did not do so in a way that was negative to his candidacy. In all, 12% of Leno's jokes regarding Schwarzenegger addressed the point that he was born in another country or his accent.

Schwarzenegger Scandal—

Towards the end of the campaign news of sexual misconduct surface about Arnold Schwarzenegger. This section deals largely with how Leno handled these allegations and other controversial issues, such as feelings towards Hitler. This section will also be used to answer question six: did Leno portrayed Schwarzenegger's alleged sexual misconduct in a way that was not completely negative to Schwarzenegger's campaign. Also incorporated into this section is a comment made after Schwarzenegger appeared on MSNBC's Hardball with Chris Matthews in which Schwarzenegger was asked about a comment he made regarding marijuana twenty-six years prior.

> "On MSNBC's 'Hardball,' Chris Matthews asked Arnold about these
> controversial statements he made 26 years ago about marijuana. And Arnold said
> back then, he would say outrageous statements. He would make outrageous
> statements like that to promote bodybuilding, and he said it worked. Well,

bodybuilding and smoking pot, Kev, does that make any sense? Does that make any sense." (9/5)

This is more of comment in which Leno addresses the issue of Schwarzenegger making a comment about marijuana that was picked up on by Chris Matthews during an interview. Leno then gives Schwarzenegger's explanation about how outrageous comments of this sort would promote body building. In this comment Leno does not state the specifics of the incident. There is no mention as to whether or not Schwarzenegger actually did use marijuana, nor are there any assumptions made. The direction of the joke is then turned towards Leno's band leader, Kevin. This seemed much more like an acknowledgement of the interview than an opportunity for Leno to make fun of his friend Schwarzenegger.

"Well, the latest wrinkle in this whole recall thing -- six women have come forward to say that over the last 30 years -- 30 years -- they come forward just days before the election to say that Arnold Schwarzenegger groped them without their consent. Again, this proves he would be a hands-on governor. So I don't know. 6 women over 30 years, or as Clinton calls that, Thursday. What is that? Six women, what an amateur. 6 women over 30 years. Come on. Now Arnold said this is a last-minute attack by Democrats. And here's my -- how did Arnold know to grope only Democrats? See, that's what I don't understand. How did he know? And, of course, all the other candidates are jumping on this, they're all attacking him now. Like today, Cruz Bustamante said that during the debate, he caught Arnold staring at his cleavage. Yeah. So that's the other -- he's not the only one. Today, two women came forward to say they had their legs humped by Gary Coleman. They said, "hey, now I don't know what" -- yeah. Yeah." (10/2)

This is the first mention of Schwarzenegger's alleged sexual misconduct. By keeping all of these jokes together the context of each joke can be better illustrated. Here Leno discusses how six women have come forward saying that Schwarzenegger groped them on separate accounts over the past thirty years. Leno then seems to work to discredit these allegations by pointing out that the women came forwards just days before the

election and that this is a last minute attack made by Democrats. He also makes light of the situation by comparing this situation to Clinton's indiscretions and saying that this means Schwarzenegger would be a hands on governor. Beyond this, Leno turns the focus towards other candidates, Bustamante and Coleman. Leno states that Bustamante made claims that Schwarzenegger was staring at his cleavage and that Coleman had humped the legs of two women. This not only makes light of Schwarzenegger's situation but also gives Leno an opportunity to make fun of Bustamante's weight and Coleman's height.

> "Arnold told her he'd like to cruise her Bustamante. I don't know what that means. He wanted to cruise her Bustamante. I don't know what that means." (10/3)

This joke is directed towards Schwarzenegger's alleged sexual misconduct as well as making fun of Cruz Bustamante's name. In this joke Leno is attempting take a non-sexual phrase, Bustamante's name, and make it have a sexual connotation. The younger viewers are more likely to pick up on the sexual implications within this joke, while others may not understand, because apparently even Leno doesn't know what the joke means.

> "Today, there were allegations that Arnold once admired Hitler, and the odd thing is, Hitler is now three points ahead of Gray Davis in the polls. Which is just hard to believe. Now it was all a misunderstanding. Arnold said he was never a fan of Hitler. And today, Pat Buchanan said, 'well, that's it, he's lost my vote, I'm sorry.' You know, I think these allegations are starting to get to Arnold. Like today, when reporters asked him about the poll, he said, 'it was wrong for Hitler to invade them. They should not have done it.' 'It was wrong, yeah.' and Gray Davis today, god bless him, Gray Davis said he had nothing, nothing do with these stories coming out about Arnold. And if this doesn't hurt Arnold in the polls, he'll have nothing to do with the next two stories coming out either. I tell you, you know who's really getting lost in this recall race is Cruz Bustamante. In fact,

today -- well, he was so desperate for attention, today he fondled himself. Yeah, just to try and get himself on the news." (10/3)

In this set of jokes the main focus is Schwarzenegger's alleged fondness of Hitler. Leno informs his audience that this was a misunderstanding. Leno also takes this information to make jokes regarding other candidates who have not relation to this joke. For instance, the Leno immediately mentions that Hitler is ahead of Gray Davis in the polls, which is directing the audiences attention to Davis being unpopular and is exceptionally bad considering Hitler is possibly the most hated man in history. Leno then later blames Davis for these allegations. Bustamante is also mentioned as fondling himself in an attempt to gain news attention. Overall, this joke worked to discredit allegations that were made about Schwarzenegger's admiration of Hitler.

"If we could get serious for just a moment. As we mentioned, Arnold Schwarzenegger has been accused by a number of women of fondling them over the past 30 years. We have backstage tonight one of his female accusers. Now, she has asked that her identity be hidden. These women are always -- their identities are always hidden as you know. But she does not want to be known. Are you there, Miss X?
Miss X: yes, I am.
Jay: Miss, I want to thank you for being here tonight. I understand that it's pretty traumatic for you." (Ends up being Rob Schneider in a wig) (10/3)

This is a much longer segment, but has been shortened for the purpose of this paper. In this joke a woman is shown with a light behind her so that her face is blacked out. This woman then goes into detail about the ways in which Schwarzenegger groped her. Finally the interview is ended when the woman turns on a light to see something and it is discovered that the woman is really Rob Schneider in a wig. Even though Leno starts by saying that he would like to be serious it is obvious that he does not take the allegations

seriously since he had a fake woman do the interview. This could lead his audience to believe that the allegations are a sham.

> "Now I know why they call this election a recall. Suddenly women are going, 'yeah, I know he touched me 30 years ago. I just recalled it now.' Yes. That's what it is. I tell you now more -- more allegations about Arnold came out today. Turns out he was at a Democratic fundraiser a few years ago, which his wife, Maria, made him go to, because she's obviously a big Democrat. And, I guess, as Arnold reached under the table to touch a woman, he felt Clinton's hand coming from the other side." (10/6)

This joke was made the night before the recall election. This is negative in that Leno announced that more allegations had come out about Schwarzenegger, but in a way these allegations were discredited when he mentioned that the women making the allegations were Democratic. This makes it seem like an attempt from the Democratic Party to discredit Schwarzenegger's candidacy. At the same time, he was comparing Schwarzenegger to Clinton, which made it seem like if a president did it so can a governor. So the direction that Leno took after announcing that more victims had surfaced made the act seem less significant.

> "See, people are really split on this thing. Like Jamie Lee Curtis, you know, Jamie Lee Curtis, the actress. She said when they made the movie 'True Lies,' Arnold -- perfect gentleman. Although Tom Arnold said he did grab his breasts. So I don't know. I don't know what to make of that one. And Gray Davis, he told reporters that Arnold Schwarzenegger's behavior towards women warrants a criminal investigation. And then he had to leave to go meet Bill Clinton for a campaign rally. But other than that, I tell you, and Arnold -- yes. Arnold is not the only one. Today, six inflatable women claimed they were groped by Cruz Bustamante." (10/6)

In this joke Leno recognizes the split on whether or not to believe the allegations that have come forth regarding Schwarzenegger's sexual misconduct. Here Leno mentions that co-star Jamie Lee Curtis has said that when on the set of their film True Lies Schwarzenegger behaved as a perfect gentleman. However, other co-star Tom Arnold did make allegations that Schwarzenegger had grabbed his breasts. This adds credibility to the side that does not believe the allegations and takes credibility away from the other side. Then Leno mentioned that Davis felt that criminal investigations were necessary, yet he was meeting with Bill Clinton, known adulterer. This joke is based on the irony of scrutinizing an individual for one deed and pardoning another. The final part of the joke claims that Bustamante has groped six inflatable women, implying that he would be unable to find real live women. This excerpt seems to work to negate the allegations made about Schwarzenegger.

While scandals did not come out until late in Arnold Schwarzenegger's campaign it is interesting to see that only 14% of the total jokes about Arnold were regarding scandals.

Schwarzenegger Other—

Many of the jokes that fall within the other category deal with issues like Schwarzenegger being hit with an egg or instances where there are multiple candidates mentioned. Schwarzenegger was mentioned in every spoof on the recall and in almost every instance were multiple candidates were mentioned.

> "Let's see what's going on with Arnold Schwarzenegger. Did you hear about this?
> Yesterday, as Arnold Schwarzenegger was about to give his speech in Long

Beach, someone in the crowd threw an egg at him, hit him. Hit him with the egg. But they said on the news, he went on and gave the speech anyway." (9/4)

This can be categorized more as a comment than a joke, in which Leno informed his audience that Schwarzenegger was hit by an egg on the way to give a speech. Leno also notes that Schwarzenegger went on to give the speech anyway; this shows a sense of perseverance, an admirable quality in a gubernatorial candidate.

"Hey, Arnold Schwarzenegger unveiled his new campaign slogan today. It's – 'okay, who threw that?' I guess you know, the other day, Arnold Schwarzenegger got egged. Someone threw an egg at him. Yeah, at a campaign spot. Hit him in the shoulder." (9/5)

This joke is another attempt for Leno to bring attention to the fact that Arnold was hit by an egg. The joke can neither be classified as harmful nor helpful.

"You know this debate with Arnold and Cruz and all these people, they get the questions beforehand. What is that? Even Miss America contestants don't get the questions beforehand. It's like jeopardy for dumb people, this stupid thing." (9/24)

This joke includes Arnold Schwarzenegger and Cruz Bustamante but it is more directed towards the debates for the recall election. In this he comments that it is stupid for the candidates to get the questions beforehand, because even Miss America contestants don't get questions beforehand.

When looking at the jokes that were categorized as other it is apparent that they had no impact on how the audience would view Schwarzenegger as a candidate. The jokes that fell into the other category made up 27% of the total jokes about Schwarzenegger.

Table 4.2

Schwarzenegger Jokes	No.	%
Schwarzenegger as Governor	18	23
Schwarzenegger as Actor	18	23
Schwarzenegger being Foreign Born	9	12
Schwarzenegger Scandal	11	14
Schwarzenegger Other	21	27
Schwarzenegger Total	77	99[a]

[a] This does not equal 100% due to rounding.

The examination of jokes and comments regarding Arnold Schwarzenegger helped to test whether or not answers to questions one, two, and four were useful to the theory. While only a portion of questions one and two could be answered through solely analyzing Schwarzenegger jokes and comments, questions four and six's answers did support the theory. It was obvious from the transcripts on June 26, 2003 that Leno automatically accepted Schwarzenegger as a viable candidate. This acceptance was gained even before Schwarzenegger's candidacy had been announced. Also after looking at the way in which Jay Leno handled the alleged sexual misconduct, it became apparent that the ways in which he portrayed Schwarzenegger helped to negate the charges that had been made against him.

By looking at Table 2 it is apparent that the ways in which Schwarzenegger was portrayed by Leno were not harmful to his career, and in fact could have been helpful. Of the jokes and comments regarding Arnold Schwarzenegger, which made up 20% of the total examined, 23% were about Schwarzenegger becoming governor and 23% were about Schwarzenegger being an actor. This means that 46% of the jokes about Schwarzenegger were definably helpful to his campaign. The categories of Schwarzenegger being foreign born and Schwarzenegger's scandals accounted for 12%

and 14%, respectively, of Schwarzenegger's total jokes. While these jokes were not blatantly helpful to Schwarzenegger's campaign many of them did work to negate possible aspects that would have been harmful to his campaign, these categories combined make up 26% of Schwarzenegger's total jokes. The remaining 27% are grouped into the other category which deals mainly with multiple candidate mentions that did not fit into the previous categories. Since these jokes were not targeted towards a single candidate they can not be considered helpful or harmful for a single candidate.

Larry Flynt Jokes

Throughout a majority of the jokes and comments regarding Larry Flynt he is referred to as a pornographer. In most of the jokes his name is preceded by "Hustler publisher" or the "publisher of Hustler," these jokes where all classified as depicting Flynt as a pornographer. The remaining jokes were categorized as other. In all there were 11 jokes about Larry Flynt, making up 3% of the total jokes examined.

Flynt as a Pornographer—

As previously stated a majority of the jokes regarding Larry Flynt could be categorized for referring to him as a pornographer. These jokes either dealt directly with the porn industry or mentioned that he was the publisher of a pornographic magazine.

> "You know who else enters the governor's race? 'Hustler' publisher Larry Flynt. I'm not making it up. Larry Flynt. Well, that should silence the critics who claim this recall is nothing but a big circus. Larry Flynt as governor. Suddenly Senator Jerry Springer doesn't sound so bad. Why would Larry Flynt want to leave the porno industry and get into something sleazy like politics? You work your way up and then you're back to the bottom." (8/1)

This joke shows Leno's amazement that Larry Flynt would enter the recall race. The

circus reference shows that Leno does not take his candidacy seriously, and the Springer

reference shows that he does not think that Flynt should be governor. Leno then

questions why Flynt would choose to leave the porn industry and get into politics. This

joke illustrates that Leno does not view Flynt as a viable candidate.

> "The publisher of 'Hustler' magazine, Larry Flynt -- he is also running. Flynt say
> he wants to solve our budget crisis by opening more casinos. And what a
> coincidence, Larry Flynt just happens to own several casinos. You know, that's
> like having a president whose background is in the oil industry making
> environmental decisions. You know. You know what I'm saying." (8/7)

This joke only mentions that Flynt is the publisher of Hustler magazine and then

continues to discuss how he wants to solve the budget crisis by opening more casinos.

Leno then points out the fact that Flynt owns several casinos, making Flynt look like a

corrupt politicians with ulterior motives. So, in this joke Leno manages to discredit

Flynt's candidacy by mentioning his ties to pornographer and suggesting that he may

have ulterior motives in his plan to solve the budget crisis.

> "We mentioned Larry Flynt, of course, the founder of 'Hustler.' He's running for
> governor. You know what his campaign slogan is? Anybody know? 'A smut
> peddler who cares.' Today, Bill Clinton said, 'hey, that was my slogan. Hey.'"
> (8/12)

This joke uses the fact that Flynt is a pornographer as a set up the joke. In this Flynt is

noted as the founder of Hustler magazine. His campaign slogan is also mentioned, in

which he refers to himself as a smut peddler. So, Leno's reference to Flynt in this joke

deals largely with his pornographic connections.

Flynt Other—

There were other circumstances where Flynt's pornographic connections were not

mentioned. While at times these connections may have been implied, if there was no

mention of anything related to pornography the joke or comment was grouped into the

other category. Other jokes within this category dealt with multiple candidates.

> "Like today, the California Secretary of State said that of the 247 candidates, so
> far, 115 of them have been certified. He's reviewing the other 132 to see if they
> qualify. How embarrassing is that? Imagine being turned down because you don't
> meet the high standards set by Larry Flynt and Gallagher." (8/12)

In this joke Flynt's standards are under question. The reference here is that Flynt doesn't

have very high standards, probably because he is a pornographer. So, while there is not

direct mention of Flynt's ties to the porn industry it is still implied.

Table 4.3

Flynt Jokes	No.	%
Flynt as Pornographer	6	55
Flynt Other	5	45
Flynt Total	11	100

Of the eleven jokes and comments regarding Larry Flynt those directly

commenting on his pornography affiliations made up 55% and those directed at him in

other areas made up the other 45% of jokes. There were no jokes or comments that

seemed to portray Flynt as a legitimate contender for the position of governor.

Gary Coleman Jokes

Gary Coleman received more scrutiny than Larry Flynt. The jokes and comments targeted at Coleman dealt largely with his height, career as security guard, and past career as a child star. All other jokes were grouped into the other category. The 26 jokes and comments examined made up a total of 7% of the jokes used for this analysis.

Coleman Height Jokes—

Gary Coleman's short stature was the main focus of the jokes directed towards him. In this category he is compared to children and fictional character, such as the lollipop guild. There were also jokes that dealt with him being short without comparing him to anyone.

> "You know who's running? You know who's running? Gary Coleman. Remember Gary Coleman?
> Kevin: Gary Coleman? Really?
> Jay: Gary Coleman. I swear to god. He paid his fee. He's running for Governor. He says his first order of business, lower the minimum height requirements on rides at Disneyland. They want to get rid of that little thing – 'you must be this tall.' that's out." (8/7)

This joke begins by talking about the fact that Gary Coleman is running for governor. In discussing this with his band leader, Kevin Eubanks, Leno seems to be in disbelief. Leno then goes on to explain that Coleman's plans include lowering the height requirement at Disneyland. This joke implies that Coleman is so short he is not permitted to ride the rides at Disneyland.

"If you're running, if you're a legitimate candidate, we have 300 seats, so we can fit everybody in and make sure they all -- oh, and Gary Coleman, don't worry, we will have a booster seat." (8/12)

In Leno's invitation for all the candidates to come sit in the audience, he makes a joke about Coleman's height by informing him that they will provide a booster seat.

"All nine democratic presidential candidates have come out in support of Gray Davis. All nine of them. And today at Disneyland, all seven dwarves came out for Gary Coleman. So that was good." (8/12)

This joke was previously included in the Davis section of the analysis. In this Leno informs his audience that all democratic presidential candidates were supporting Gray Davis and all seven dwarfs were supporting Gary Coleman. In the way that this joke was delivered the audience can gather that since Gray Davis is a Democrat, Coleman must be a dwarf.

"Good news for Gary Coleman, he got his first endorsement today from the Lollipop Guild so he's very excited" (8/15)

This joke like the previous one deals with Coleman getting an endorsement from a fictitious set of characters; the lollipop guild. This too is targeted at his height because the lollipop guild is a group of midgets, and endorsements typically come from groups with similar characteristics.

"A lot of political experts are now saying the governor's race is so close, that Gary Coleman could sneak in under the wire." (9/3)

This joke is a quick, easy shot at Coleman's height. Typically when someone sneaks in under the wire they win unnoticed. In this circumstance Leno is implying that Coleman is so short he can sneak in beneath the wire.

In all 35% of the jokes about Gary Coleman dealt with his height. Considering that he is so short he can only be compared to children, dwarfs, and midgets, none of which have ever held political office, this can be seen as negative to his campaign.

Coleman Security Guard Jokes—

Previous to deciding to run for governor Coleman was employed as a security guard at a mall. This profession, following his child stardom, left him open to much ridicule.

> "Gubernatorial candidate Gary Coleman said today he wishes now he had never become a child star. He says because it has become a hindrance to developing any other kind of career. Oh, yeah, if he hadn't gone in to show business, he could have been the head of mall security right now." (9/9)

This joke can be categorized as both dealing with his child stardom and his work as a security guard. Coleman credited his lack of professional development to his past career as a child actor. Leno then takes this and makes fun of his current career, as a security guard, and implies that this hindrance has kept him from becoming the head of mall security.

> "The crowd started getting out of control a couple of times. Luckily, the security guard, Gary Coleman, was able to calm them down. Calm things down." (9/25)

During this mention of the show which all candidates were present Leno explained how the crowd was getting out of control but luckily Gary Coleman was a security guard and could handle the situation. This was just an easy opportunity for Leno to make fun of Coleman's career.

Security guard jokes made up 15% of the total jokes about Gary Coleman. Much like children, dwarfs, and midgets, moving from the position of security guard to governor is unthinkable. Since his current career does not lend well to a future career in politics jokes highlighting his career choice can be seen as negative.

Coleman Child Star Jokes—

As stated by the joke in the previous section referring to Coleman's child stardom Coleman stated towards the latter part of his campaign that he had wished he hadn't been a child star because he viewed it as a hindrance on his career. All references to Coleman's childhood acting career were grouped into this category.

> "Because of the FCC regulations during the governor's race, local TV stations here in California cannot show any of Gary Coleman's old TV show, 'Diff'rent Strokes.'" (9/5)

This is more of a commentary that was used to set up another joke than a joke about Coleman. This basically informs the audience of the FCC regulations on what they can air and that Coleman used to be on Diff'rent Strokes. Jokes of this type can not be seen as having a negative impact on a campaign, so by solely mentioning Coleman Leno could be helping his campaign. Jokes of this type made up 12% of the total jokes about Coleman.

Coleman Other—

Jokes that could not be categorized in the three aforementioned areas were grouped into the other category. In Coleman's case this section was not reserved for just jokes that mentioned multiple candidates, there were also numerous scandals that fell within this category.

> "Now the rumors about Gary Coleman. You hear about this?
> Kevin: No.
> Jay: Yeah. You laugh. This is serious.
> Kevin: No, Jay, I'm sorry. I'm sorry. It's serious.
> Jay: They say he has a drinking problem. In fact, every night last week, he was spotted at a different mini-bar, that's what they say." (9/15)

This joke not only bring light to Coleman's alleged drinking problem, but by saying that he has been at a mini-bar it is also another comment on Coleman's height.

> "A lot of the candidates are having problems already. Gary Coleman said today, running low on funds.
> Kevin: Oh, yeah?
> Jay: Yeah, yeah.
> Kevin: Oh.
> Jay: Yeah, that's what he said. No, he said. He said he never should have let his parents handle his campaign money. That was a big -- big mistake. [laughter] It's all gone, all blown on hors d'oeuvres." (9/16)

In this joke Leno informs his audience that Coleman is running low on funds. This also credits this shortage on money mismanagement by Coleman's parents, this is especially humorous because Coleman claims that his money from his childhood acting career is gone because of his parents mismanagement.

There were a wide variety of jokes included in the other category, making up 38% of the total jokes about Coleman.

Table 4.4

Coleman Jokes	No.	%
Coleman Height	9	35
Coleman Security	4	15
Coleman Child Star	3	12
Coleman Other	10	38
Coleman Total	26	100

After examining the jokes and comments made by Jay Leno regarding Gary Coleman it is apparent that the manner in which Coleman's candidacy was treated was not at the same level of Arnold Schwarzenegger. When looking at the categories pertaining to Coleman's height and his current career it is clear that the way in which Leno portrayed him was no helpful to his campaign. These categories made up 50% of the total jokes directed at Coleman (height 35% and security 15%). When taking this into consideration and the other jokes and comments made regarding Coleman it is apparent that Leno did not accept him as a viable candidate for governor.

Arianna Huffington Jokes

Another candidate that Jay Leno focused on was Arianna Huffington. The twenty-three jokes and comments about Huffington made up 6% of the total jokes analyzed. These jokes were broken down into four categories; Huffington being Greek, Huffington having a gay ex-husband, Huffington's tax evasion, and other or comments about Huffington.

Huffington being Greek—

This section looks at the ways in which Leno handles the fact that Huffington is Greek. It will be interesting to compare the ways in which Leno addresses Huffington being foreign to the way that he handled Schwarzenegger being foreign. Of the jokes regarding Huffington 9% were directed towards her being Greek.

> "And Arianna -- Arianna Huffington, you know her – 'yes, dear, you know, we must have' you know her. She's running. She announced her candidacy for the governorship, as well. They're talking about a debate, now, between Arianna Huffington and Arnold Schwarzenegger. First, they have to agree on a language. They will debate in that language." (8/8)

This joke about Huffington's accent is very similar to the type of joke that would delivered in regards to Schwarzenegger. In the beginning Leno makes fun of her accent and then suggests that she should debate Schwarzenegger, further connecting this type of joke.

> "I love this story. Arianna Huffington, you know, she is a Greek woman. [in an accent]" (8/25)

This is the set up to another joke in which Leno informs his audience that Huffington is Greek and once again imitates her accent.

By looking at these particular jokes it is clear that Leno handled Huffington being foreign born in the same fashion as he handled Schwarzenegger being foreign born.

Huffington's Gay Ex-Husband—

Another issue which Leno addressed on various occasions was the fact that Arianna Huffington's ex-husband is gay. Many of the jokes on this manner credited Huffington with her ex-husband becoming gay.

> "You know what's interesting, Arianna Huffington's former husband, Michael, he's the gay ex-Congressman -- he has endorsed Arnold. So this is the second time he's left Arianna for another man." (8/8)

This joke is potentially negative to Huffington for two reasons. The first reason this could be negative is because Leno points out that Huffington's ex-husband is endorsing Schwarzenegger, which shows that their post marriage relationship is less than desirable. Another way in which this is potentially negative is that Leno points out that Huffington's ex-husband has left her for another guy. This makes it look like her husband became gay during their marriage, and basically implies that she made her husband turn gay.

> "A number of candidates, now, are complaining that Arnold's getting so much of the spotlight that it's drowning out their message. Like, Arianna Huffington -- she said she hasn't been this ignored since her honeymoon." (8/25)

This joke discusses how Schwarzenegger is receiving most of the publicity and explains that Huffington has not been this ignored since her honeymoon. The comment on her being ignored on her honeymoon is a reference to her ex-husband being gay and not being interested in her sexually.

The issue of Huffington's ex-husband being gay came up very often in Leno's jokes and comments about Huffington. Huffington's comments and jokes regarding her and her ex-husband made up 26% of total comments about her.

Huffington Not Paying Taxes—

Huffington's nationality and ex-husband were not the only areas for which she received attention. Another area in which Huffington was ridiculed was the fact that she had avoided paying taxes for a time period leading up to her entry into the gubernatorial race.

> "That's bad. Have you heard Arianna Huffington's new catch phrase? 'No new taxes 'cause I haven't paid the old ones.'" (8/25)

The beginning of this joke looks like Leno is delivering a political message for Huffington, no new taxes. However, the joke ends up informing the audience that Huffington has not paid her taxes.

> "Arianna Huffington came out with a plan to lower property taxes. Yeah, don't pay them. That's her new thing. She's in trouble." (9/5)

This again looks like Leno with be delivering a political message regarding property taxes, which ends with a comment on Huffington not paying taxes. In the very end Leno states that Huffington is in trouble. To some of his audience this could reaffirm a preconceived notion, while for others this could make them believe that she is in trouble, and thus not a likely candidate to win the election.

> "Oh, and, folks, if you're worried about taxes, don't be, listen to this. Apply for the new Arianna Huffington exemption, this way you don't pay any taxes at all until you run for governor. Don't pay anything at all. In fact, did you know -- yeah. I didn't know this, Arianna is a Greek word for tax evasion. Did you know that?" (9/9)

This joke, like the previous two, is about Huffington's tax evasion. It also manages to incorporate the fact that she is Greek. By saying that her name is Greek for tax evasion Leno is setting this up as more than a mistake, he is setting her tax evasion up as a defining trait.

Leno's comments and jokes about Huffington not paying her taxes set her up as a dishonest citizen. So, he has not only characterized Huffington as foreign, but he also makes her look like a bad citizen, not the traits for gubernatorial candidates. In total, Huffington having not paid her taxes was mentioned seven times, representing 30% of the total jokes regarding Huffington.

Huffington Other—

The jokes that could not be categorized as a reference to Huffington's nationality, gay ex-husband, or tax evasion were categorized as other. This was the largest category showing that while most of the jokes were focused at a particular area, there were a large portion that dealt with other issues.

> "Now let me ask you something, from watching that debate last night, was it me or was there some weird sexual tension between Arianna Huffington and Arnold? Could you feel it? Were you like me? 'Just get a room you two! Go do it!'" (9/25)

This joke addresses the tension that was present during the debate between Schwarzenegger and Huffington. Leno labels this tension as sexual tension, but it could more appropriately be described as mutual contempt. It is important to recognize that Schwarzenegger and Huffington are addressed in the same manner.

> "I figured out why Arianna's running as an Independent. I don't think any party wants her. I think that's basically what happened." (9/26)

This comment recognizes that Huffington is running as an Independent. The comment also credits Huffington's decision to run as an Independent as beyond her control, because the other major parties would not support her.

> "Yeah, listen to this. And reports say that Arianna Huffington is threatening to drop out. Oohh-h-h. Isn't that like Saddam Hussein threatening to commit suicide?" (9/30)

This comment that was made before Huffington dropped out of the race for governor could lead the audience to believe that her dropping out would be a good thing. By comparing Huffington's threat of dropping out to Hussein's threat of suicide, Leno makes his audience think that if this threat was carried through it would be in the best interest of all. This is also the second time that Leno compares a candidate to Hitler.

When looking at the jokes that were categorized as other it is obvious that some of the comments made were more negative towards Huffington's campaign than others. Huffington's comparisons to Schwarzenegger are not as negative as the comparisons of her to Saddam Hussein. Jokes and comments that were coded within the other category represented 35% of the total jokes directed at Arianna Huffington.

Table 4.5

Huffington Jokes	No.	%
Huffington being Greek	2	9
Huffington's Gay Ex-Husband	6	26
Huffington Not Paying Taxes	7	30
Huffington Other	8	35
Huffington Total	23	100

After examining the distribution of jokes regarding Huffington the potential

damage that Leno's jokes caused her campaign can be better established. Leno focused

9% of his jokes about Huffington on her being Greek. The ways in which her nationality

was depicted did not seem as if they would have a negative impact on her campaign.

However, when looking at the issues of her gay ex-husband and tax evasion it was

apparent that these were portrayed in ways which could have been potentially negative.

The issue of her ex-husband's sexual orientation made up 26% of her total jokes while

the tax evasion issue made up 30% of the jokes about her. The other 35% of her jokes

can neither be deemed helpful nor harmful because within the group of other there are a

wide variety of jokes, falling into both categories. The fact that over half of the jokes

about Huffington, 56%, portrayed her in a negative light could have been very negative to

her career.

Cruz Bustamante Jokes

Cruz Bustamante was another candidate that received much ridicule from Jay

Leno. Common sources of ridicule were the basis for categorizing jokes regarding

Bustamante. There are a total of five categories into which Bustamante jokes can fall,

these are Bustamante's name, his appearance, his affiliations with Indian casinos, his

completion of college degree, and an other category in which the remaining jokes fell. In all there were twenty-six mentions of Bustamante, making up 7% of the total jokes examined.

Bustamante Name—

One area which received much mockery was Bustamante's name. On several occasions Leno used Bustamante's name to refer to something else. Twelve percent of jokes directed at Bustamante were about his name.

> "Our Lieutenant-Governor Cruz Bustamante is also running. Have you ever heard of him before? Cruz Bustamante. Doesn't that sound like some sickness you get on one of those carnival cruises? Cruz Bustamante. Give me a Pepsi Bustamante." (8/11)

In this joke and its introduction the comments on Bustamante's name seem to come from him being unheard of. In this joke Leno also makes fun of his name in two ways, by saying that it sounds like a sickness and by saying it sounds like a soda. This type of mockery may work to make Bustamante look less legitimate of a candidate to Leno's audience.

> "I like that name, though, Bustamante. Doesn't it sound like some kind of push-up bra for Hispanic women? Put on your Bustamante. One of those things you tie in the back. You know, a Bustamante. Bustamante." (9/4)

In this attempt to make fun of Bustamante's name he says that it sounds like the name of a bustier. The comparison of Bustamante's name to a feminine undergarment could have a negative impact on his masculinity.

Bustamante Appearance—

Like Bustamante's name his appearance was also scrutinized by Leno. It can easily be said that Bustamante is no Mr. Universe, he may be in shape, but that shape is round. So, because of his weight he was left open for Leno to mock him. His weight was not the only focus of Leno's mockery. Leno also found humor in his overall appearance. Appearance jokes made up 19% of the total jokes about Bustamante.

> "And I was looking at that Cruz Bustamante guy. He's our Lieutenant Governor. He is now running for governor. I'm thinking, 'he looks like somebody in show business, too.' Well, show Cruz Bustamante. And I was trying to figure out. Yes, of course, yes, yes, that's it. 'Rocky and Bullwinkle' -- yes, that's who it is." (9/3)

This joke is trying to see who in Hollywood Bustamante looks like and it is finally decided that he looks like the cartoon characters Rocky and Bullwinkle. Comparing Bustamante to cartoon characters is much like the comparison of Gary Coleman to the lollipop guild, it takes away credibility. When a joke is delivered that can take credibility away from a candidate it is indeed harmful to their candidacy.

Bustamante Indian Casino Affiliations—

Jay Leno reiterated many times that Bustamante accepted contributions from Indian casinos. The ways in which Leno addressed these contributions made it seem as if they could lead to Bustamante providing special favors.

> "And a little bit of a scandal regarding Lieutenant Governor Cruz Bustamante, who is also running for governor. It seems he has accepted $2 million from one Indian tribe here in California. On top of $800,000 he took from two other bribes -- tribes. I'm sorry. Did I say bribes?" (9/4)

In this joke Leno informs his audience of the campaign contributions that Bustamante accepted from Indian tribes in California. During the delivery of this information Leno "accidentally" said the word bribe instead of tribe. The use of the wrong word implies that Bustamante will is accepting the money from the tribes with intentions to offer special favors once elected.

> "Cruz 'Dances with Casinos' Bustamante, it turns out now he's taken $2.5 million from Indian tribes, and now his brother got a job as the new general manager of an Indian casino. What are the odds? I believe his brother's Indian name is Kenosabi Bustamante." (9/5)

This joke recognizes Bustamante's affiliations with Indian casinos in to ways. By putting dances with casinos in his name Leno is implying that he is an Indian, because this phrase is reminiscent of an Indian name. Another way in which the affiliations are pointed out in this joke was potentially more negative to Bustamante's campaign, Leno mentioned how Bustamante has taken $2.5 million from Indian casinos in campaign contributions and now his brother has been employed by a casino. This could be another reason for the audience to be wary of elect a candidate with such close ties to the casino industry.

> "Well, the big story here in California politics -- you probably heard about this -- Lieutenant Governor Cruz Bustamante allegedly has taken $2.5 million from Indian tribes. All in quarters, by the way, did you know that? It's all in quarters." (9/8)

This joke is another way for Leno to bring attention to the large amount of money Bustamante's campaign has accepted in contributions from Indian casinos. The reference

to quarters did not seem to have any implied meaning, it was just a reference to slot machines that would seem typical in a casino joke.

The largest portion of jokes, next to the other category, regarding Bustamante dealt with his affiliations with casinos. Casino references made up 27% of the total jokes about Cruz Bustamante. This category dealt with possible corruption so it could be said to be the most harmful category.

Bustamante Degree—

To a lesser extent Leno ridiculed Bustamante for obtaining his college degree the year of the recall election. After dropping out of Fresno City College, Bustamante finally completed his degree via correspondence school from California State University, Fresno in 2003 (Wikipedia 2005).

> "When Cruz Bustamante finally got his college degree in 2003 -- he just got it this year, his college degree -- he received credit for a class he never even attended. Yeah. But he said it wasn't an important class. I think it was just ethics or something. Yeah, doesn't look good. Yeah, doesn't look good." (10/1)

This joke not only discusses how Bustamante waited to complete his Bachelors Degree until right before the election, but it also brings to light that he received credit for a class he didn't even take. By speculating that the class that he did not take was an ethics course brings into question his own ethics. Jokes and comments regarding Bustamante's completion of his degree made up 12% of the total jokes on this candidate.

Bustamante Other—

       As mentioned earlier a large portion of the jokes regarding Bustamante fell within

the other category. Like many of the other candidates there were a number of jokes that

dealt with multiple candidates within this category. Also, jokes in here dealt with his

stance on the recall and his policies.

> "Yeah, that's it right there. That's the big story. Lieutenant governor Cruz
> Bustamante no longer asking people to vote no on the recall. No on the recall.
> Now he's asking people just to vote for him." (9/10)

This is more of comment that addresses Bustamante's change on his stance for the recall.

Initially, Bustamante encouraged voters to vote no on the recall, Leno points out that he

is no longer supporting Gray Davis and he is now solely interested in his election.

> "Oh, what else? And Bustamante keeps talking about this tough-love policy for
> California. That's what he calls it, tough love." (9/25)

This is a comment on Bustamante's plan to correct California's then situation. This

comment was used to set up a joke about the recall. In all there were eight comments and

jokes that were placed within the other category, making up 31% of the total jokes about

Bustamante.

Table 4.6

Bustamante Jokes	No.	%
Bustamante's Name	3	12
Bustamante's Appearance	5	19
Bustamante's Indian Casino Affiliations	7	27
Bustamante's Degree	3	12
Bustamante Other	8	31
Bustamante Total	26	101[a]

[a] This does not equal 100% due to rounding.

When looking at the categorical breakdown of Leno's jokes on Bustamante we see that 31% of the jokes were mocking him based solely on his name and his appearance, 12% and 19% respectively. Leno also used jokes regarding his attainment of his degree and his affiliations with Indian casinos to question his integrity. These categories combined represent 39% of his jokes. The remaining 31% were categorized as other. In the end, 70% of the jokes that Leno told about Bustamante could be potentially negative.

Mary Carey Jokes

The final candidate that was discussed a substantial amount by Jay Leno was the porn star Mary Carey. However, a majority of the references to Mary Carey address the fact that she is a porn star. Very few of the mentions do not directly identify her as a porn star. The categories for her jokes are broken down into to porn star references and other references. Jokes about Mary Carey represent 5% of the total jokes examined.

Carey as a Porn Star—

As mentioned before a majority of the jokes regarding Mary Carey address the fact that she is a porn star. There were two main ways in which Leno provided this information to his audience. The first and most common way this was illustrated was by referencing her career with the introduction of her name. This could have been done to give the audience a better idea of what candidate he was talking about or it could have been done to discredit her candidacy. The other way that Leno informed his audience that Mary Carey was a porn star was by referencing her career in the body of the joke.

"And porn star -- a porn star by the name of Mary Carey, she is running for governor. You know what her platform is? She wants to make lap dances tax deductible." (8/12)

This joke illustrates how Leno introduces Carey as a porn star as well as referencing he pornographic affiliations in her policy issues.

"Gubernatorial candidate Mary Carey, you know, the porn star who's running. Don't confuse her with the pornographer, no, this is the porn star who's running. She is promising -- and this is her platform -- she says if she's elected, lap dances will become a legitimate tax-deductible business expense. Well, finally a tax break Democrats can support, here you go." (9/15)

This example is very similar to the previous example. Leno introduces Carey as a porn star and then references her pro-pornography platform.

"Mary Carey, the porn star candidate that's running for governor, listen to this. Listen to this. She said she will raise money here in Los Angeles by taxing breast implants. She says any Los Angeles woman with natural breasts will be tax exempt. No, no, see, I like that. She's reaching out to minorities, and that's important. That's important." (10/3)

This joke regarding Mary Carey once again introduces her as the porn star candidate. It also so discusses a policy that isn't exactly pornographic, but a reference to breast, which isn't altogether very wholesome. In all, jokes regarding Carey's pornographic affiliations made up 90% of the total jokes about her.

Carey Other—

Leno's jokes about Carey that did not reference her being a porn star only represented 10% of the total references to her. That means that there were only two

references that didn't portray her as a porn star. The first reference was a video of the "Recall Circus" aired on August 8, 2003, in which she was referenced as "the sword swallower." So this had pornographic implications, but did not directly mention her as a porn star. The second reference is given as an example below.

"There she is, right there, Mary Carey. She's not that well-known. She wants to be more Hollywood. She's now 'Mary Drew Carey.'" (Image of Mary Carey with Drew Carey's face pasted on.) (9/8)

This reference to Mary Carey was within a set of candidate references. Here Leno explained that candidates were attempting to get a Hollywood image in order to compete with Arnold Schwarzenegger. He then combined that faces of famous Hollywood figures with similar names onto candidates. For this reason, Mary Carey was turned into "Mary Drew Carey."

Table 4.7

Carey Jokes	No.	%
Carey as a Porn Star	19	90
Carey Other	2	10
Carey Total	21	100

Since Leno primarily depicted Mary Carey as porn star this could have negatively impacted the legitimacy of her candidacy. The policies in which she intended to implement in elected were the source of ridicule also hurting her campaign. Since 90% of the references to Mary Carey referred to her as a porn star it can be said the only thing that the only edge that Leno gave her was name recognition.

Marginal Candidates

While the previously mentioned candidates tended to be the focus of Leno's jokes

about the California recall there were a few marginal candidates that were mentioned.

The candidates which were marginalized in Leno's monologues were Jim Hahn, Peter

Ueberroth, Angeline, and Gallagher. In all there were a total of 10 jokes about these four

marginal candidates.

Jim Hahn Jokes—

Jim Hahn, former Los Angeles Mayor, was mentioned as a candidate running for

governor once on the *Tonight Show with Jay Leno*. The total mentions of Jim Hahn

represented 0.3% of the total jokes analyzed. This shows that he was not considered by

Leno as a viable candidate.

> "And political experts here in California say they don't think Los Angeles Mayor
> Jim Hahn getting a divorce will affect his standings with the voters of Los
> Angeles. A new poll is out. In fact, when asked if Jim Hahn getting a divorce
> would change how they feel about the man, 95% of the people in L.A. said, 'who
> the hell is Jim Hahn?'" (8/1)

This joke about Jim Hahn emphasizes the fact that he is unheard of in California. This

joke also points out the fact that he is getting a divorce which could turn away voters that

may have known who he was and considered voting for him.

Peter Ueberroth Jokes—

Peter Ueberroth, 1984 Los Angeles Olympic organizer, was another candidate

that was mentioned by did not receive a large amount of focus. Ueberroth was mentioned

twice in the transcripts examined making up a total of 0.5% of the jokes. Both of the

jokes regarding Ueberroth came after he dropped out of the recall election.

> "Peter Ueberroth has dropped out of the recall race for governor. People in the
> state are shocked, they had know idea he was running. 'Who, what, I didn't know
> that.' We can understand why Ueberroth dropped out. He pays his taxes, he
> doesn't take money from casinos, he's never had sex with three women at once, he
> can't compete in this race." (9/9)

This joke points out the fact that Peter Ueberroth had dropped out of the race for

governor. Leno also takes a stab at other candidates by pointing out that he hadn't done

some of the negative things that other candidates had.

Angeline Jokes—

Leno mentioned Angeline's candidacy on two occasions making up 0.5% of the

total jokes examined. The first mention of Angeline was a reference to multiple

candidates, with no real information on her candidacy. The second joke, as seen below,

was directed at her age.

> "This is the first governor's recall race in 89 years. 89 years. And I believe
> Angeline ran in that one, too. How old is she?" (8/12)

As previously stated this joke makes fun of Angeline being very old. It also points out

that this is the first recall race in a very long time. Leno poses a question as to whether or

not Angeline was a candidate in the last recall election.

Gallagher Jokes—

Of the candidates that were barely mentioned the comedian Gallagher received

the most attention. Gallagher was referred to on five occasions, making up 1% of the

total jokes. However, all of the mentions, with the exception of the one following, were

with multiple candidates.

> "Gallagher, the comedian, is running also. He began campaigning over the
> weekend. It didn't go well. I guess he kissed three babies and hit four people over
> the head with that sledgematic thing." (8/11)

This mention of Gallagher hitting people in the head with a sledgematic is a reference to

his outrageous comedy routine.

Table 4.8

Other Candidate Jokes	No.	%
Jim Hahn	1	10
Peter Ueberroth	2	20
Angeline	2	20
Gallagher	5	50
Total Other Candidates	10	100

The sparse mention to Jim Hahn, Peter Ueberroth, Angeline, and Gallagher made

up 2.5% of the total jokes examined. These candidates did not receive the same levels of

attention as other candidates because they did not have characteristics that lead well to

mockery or they were not considered to be contenders within the gubernatorial race.

Conclusions

After carefully studying all of the candidates mentioned by Jay Leno in the period leading up to the recall election the research questions can better be answered. The research questions that have already been answered show through explicit statements that Leno primed his audience to recall Governor Gray Davis (Q3) and that Leno automatically treated Schwarzenegger as a legitimate candidate (Q4). Also, question six was answered to show that Leno handled Schwarzenegger's alleged sexual misconduct in a way that diminished their credibility (Q6) was supported. I will now work to answer the remaining research questions through deductive reasoning.

The question about Leno's jokes regarding Schwarzenegger and their negativity as compared to his mentions of other candidates (Q1) will be answered first. For the purpose of answering this question Jim Hahn, Peter Ueberroth, Angeline, and Gallagher will be left out of the analysis because there were not sufficient mentions to determine the nature of the jokes regarding these candidates. While the scandal section on Schwarzenegger is the only area of Leno's which could be seen as problematic, it was handled in a way which minimized the negative impact. However, this negative section made up 14% of the jokes about Schwarzenegger. Another area which could have been problematic was Schwarzenegger being foreign born, which made up only12% of the jokes about Schwarzenegger, however Leno handled this in a manner which minimized this issue. Combining these categories makes 26% of the jokes about Schwarzenegger potentially negative.

The other candidates had a larger portion of jokes that were potentially negative to their campaigns. Larry Flynt was mentioned as a pornographer in 55% of his jokes.

When looking at Gary Coleman's jokes that solely mocked him (combining height and security jokes) they represent 50% of his total jokes. The jokes about Arianna Huffington that were potentially negative were about her gay ex-husband and her tax evasion, which together made up 56% of the jokes about her. Cruz Bustamante was mocked because of his name and his appearance and received much ridicule for his acceptance on contributions from Indian casino, the combination of these three categories make up 58%. Finally, Mary Carey was mentioned as a porn star, which would negate her legitimacy, in 90% of the jokes about her. These percentages show that all candidates, besides Schwarzenegger, were depicted poorly in 50% or more of their mentions during Leno's monologues, and since Schwarzenegger was only depicted poorly in 26% of the total jokes about him, it can be determined that the jokes about Schwarzenegger were not as negative as his jokes about other candidates, thus providing an answer to question one.

Another question, looked at whether or not Arnold Schwarzenegger was mentioned as a candidate more than any other candidate running for governor in the recall election (Q2), can be supported through examination of frequencies. Since Gray Davis was not running as a candidate in this election he will be excluded from the analysis. Jay Leno's monologues mentioned Arnold Schwarzenegger as a candidate 77 times. Cruz Bustamante and Gary Coleman were second in their mentions with 26 each. Next, Arianna Huffington was mentioned 23 times, and then Mary Carey with 21 mentions. Larry Flynt was mentioned 11 times, and the remaining candidates were mentioned 5 times or fewer. This illustrates that indeed Arnold Schwarzenegger was mentioned more often than the other candidates running for governor. It is important to note that the reasoning behind Leno focusing more attention on Schwarzenegger than

other candidates could have been that Schwarzenegger is an international celebrity whom the national audience would more quickly recognize.

The question regarding whether or not Leno treated candidates with similar backgrounds in the same manner which he treated Schwarzenegger (Q5) relies on a comparison of jokes about Schwarzenegger to jokes about other candidates with similar characteristics. To see if Schwarzenegger was portrayed in the same manner as candidates that were foreign born it is most useful to compare the way Schwarzenegger and Huffington were treated. The candidates' nationalities were addressed approximately the same proportion, Schwarzenegger 12% and Huffington 9%. For this reason it will be necessary to look beyond the number of mentions to the nature of the mentions.

When Schwarzenegger's nationality was recognized it was illustrated as a positive attribute. For instance, his not being born in the United States was said to be a good thing because most people in California were not. Also, when Leno addressed his accent he often made comments about how he loved his accent. When Huffington's accent was the subject of a joke it tended not to have a comment made about it, Leno would just imitate Huffington and move on. The same holds true for the way he addressed her being Greek. Since Schwarzenegger being foreign born was portrayed in a manner that implied he would be a better governor because of it and Huffington's national origin was only stated, but no implications came from it, it can be determined that they were not treated equally.

Another way to answer this question is to compare the ways in which Arnold Schwarzenegger's acting career was portrayed in comparison to Gary Coleman's acting career. The fact that Schwarzenegger had a movie released in the time leading up to the recall election made it so that he was mentioned as an actor on many more occasions that

Coleman. Schwarzenegger was mentioned as an actor 18 times while Coleman was only mentioned as an actor three times. Coleman also received more ridicule for his acting than Schwarzenegger. This shows that Coleman and Schwarzenegger were not portrayed equally as actors. It is possible that the differences in mentions are due to the credibility of their roles.

By looking at the ways that Schwarzenegger was compared to Huffington and Coleman it is apparent that his legitimacy as a candidate was enhanced by the same characteristics that did not benefit Huffington and Coleman. While Schwarzenegger was seen as a better candidate because he was born in Austria, Huffington did not receive the same benefits for being Greek. Also, Schwarzenegger's acting career was seen as a trait that could increase his popularity more so than Coleman's acting career.

Since the answers to all of my research questions supported my theory it can be determined that Leno showed political bias towards Arnold Schwarzenegger.

Chapter Five: Comparison of Letterman Jokes to Leno Jokes

Introduction

In order to determine if Jay Leno through his monologues on the *Tonight Show* showed political bias towards Arnold Schwarzenegger, because of their friendship, it is necessary to compare his monologue to another late night talk show host, David Letterman. Since Letterman is not the focus of this research, the analysis of him will be to a lesser extent. It was only necessary to analyze his jokes enough to create a basis for comparison. The *Late Show with David Letterman* was chosen for this comparison because he and Leno had similar backgrounds in late night television, and they were even contenders for the host position on the *Tonight Show* when Johnny Carson retired. Jay Leno and David Letterman have also been compared in the number of their political jokes by the Center for Media and Public Affairs. In this comparison it was determined that since 1989, the *Tonight Show* has delivered 30% more jokes than the *Late Show*, this number has increased dramatically since Leno took Carson's position (CMPA 2002, 1-2). Knowing this it is expected that the number of jokes delivered on the *Late Show* should be significantly lower than on the *Tonight Show*. Another reason it is expected for the number of jokes to be lower on the *Late Show* is because it is based out of New York, whereas the *Tonight Show* is based out of California. Knowing this the content of the jokes will be the main focus of this analysis.

The start date of analysis was chosen in the same manner as the Leno jokes, by using the database created by the Center for Media and Public Affairs to find the first reference to the recall election. The first reference to the recall was on August 7, 2003,

the day after Schwarzenegger announced his candidacy on the *Tonight Show*. The

analysis will continue until September 29, 2003. Due to the limited number of transcripts

available analysis can not go to the night before the recall election.

Description of Letterman's Jokes

The ways in which Letterman handled his recall jokes were very different from

Leno. The most logical explanation of this would be because he was not syndicated out

of California so the issue was not one of his priorities. With that being said he did focus

a sufficient amount of attention on the recall for comparison purposes.

Letterman did not pick up the issue of the recall until after Schwarzenegger

announced his candidacy on the *Tonight Show with Jay Leno*. Also it should be noted

that Schwarzenegger was the only candidate that was mentioned on several occasions.

Letterman did mention Gary Coleman, Cruz Bustamante, Arianna Huffington, and Peter

Ueberroth. Coleman and Bustamante were each mentioned on two separate occasions.

> You know this story by now, a couple of days ago in California Arnold
> Schwarzenegger is campaigning in Long Beach someone lobs an egg on him.
> Bingo. Not to be out down Lieutenant Governor Cruz Bustamante had himself
> pelted with a Spanish Omelet. (9/5)

In this joke Letterman illustrates how Schwarzenegger is taking much of the attention and

claims that Bustamante threw an omelet at himself in hopes to achieve the same publicity

that Schwarzenegger achieved from the egg incident.

> All right, now we're going to a day in the life of the California governor's race.
> Paul, take it away. (Paul sings) I read the news today, oh boy, a crazy race in

California. Will Schwarzenegger win the date, and will he terminate Coleman and everybody in his way. (9/8)

This reference to Gary Coleman is found within a song performed by Paul Shaffer, Letterman's band leader. This song places Schwarzenegger as the major candidate, posing the question of whether or not he will be able to terminate Coleman.

There were very few mentions of candidates other than Schwarzenegger. There were times in which Gray Davis was reference, but these references were not favorable.

How many of you folks remember Bill Clinton? Necessary California helping the Governor Gray Davis campaign, you know? Because you know nothing makes more sense than a recalled governor getting advice from an impeached president. You can't do wrong there either. Clinton is really trying to help. Today he gave Gray Davis phone numbers of three sluts. (8/26)

This joke points out the irony that Bill Clinton, having been impeached, would be helping Governor Gray Davis try to avoid a recall.

The Governor, the recall Governor, Gray Davis, was making fun of Arnold Schwarzenegger's accent, he said if you want to be governor of California you have to be able to pronounce it. And so, so this... this upset Arnold and Arnold said to be governor of California you should be able to govern it. (9/8)

This joke about Governor Gray Davis implies that he is unable to govern California. This implication is made because initially Davis was making fun of Schwarzenegger's ability to say California, and then the joke was turned around to attack his governing skills.

These two jokes provide insight into the ways which Davis was portrayed by Letterman on the few occasions in which he was mentioned.

It was also interesting to see that in a period of less than two months

Schwarzenegger was the focus of four Top Ten Jokes. The four categories of jokes were

"Arnold Schwarzenegger's Campaign Promises" (8/7), "Things Overheard at Arnold

Schwarzenegger's Campaign Headquarters" (8/26), "Arnold Schwarzenegger Debate

Conditions" (9/4), and "Ways Arnold Schwarzenegger Prepared for the Debate" (9/24).

By including Schwarzenegger as the subject of his Top Ten lists on four different

occasions Letterman is adding to the legitimacy of his candidacy.

> Top Ten Ways Schwarzenegger Prepared for the Debate (9/24):
> 10. Bribed moderator not to call on him.
> 9. Drew inspiration from the wise words of Chuck Norris.
> 8. Soothed his nerves with a gin and protein power martini.
> 7. Asked campaign staff to devise new and exciting ways to mangle the English language.
> 6. Prepare? Only wimps prepare.
> 5. Watched George W. Bush debate highlights, did the opposite.
> 4. Boned up on issues facing California with six episode marathon of the O.C.
> 3. Attempted to travel forward in time to see what he was about to do wrong.
> 2. Brushed up on topics he doesn't know much about—Education, Budget Deficits, Welfare, Tax policy.
> 1. "Oiled his glutes" If you know what I mean.

The examination of Letterman's Top Ten list when looking at the ways that

Schwarzenegger prepared for the date provides a good example of the ways in which

Schwarzenegger was portrayed by Letterman. This illustrates how Letterman focused

much attention on Schwarzenegger, but the focus was often of ridiculing.

It is also important to be aware that September 4, 2003 there was a lengthy debate

during that night's show between Letterman and his producer about what he was allowed

to say on air. In this debate he was informed that he can only speak negatively of

candidates. As Shaffer said, Letterman was then a "rebel" and made positive comments

about Schwarzenegger. These comments included Letterman saying that

Schwarzenegger looked great at one of his appearances, and then saying that he would

vote for Schwarzenegger. The danger of getting in trouble with the FCC could explain

why this was the only positive mention of Schwarzenegger.

It is also worth noting that while Schwarzenegger was the focus of jokes

regarding the recall election that these comments were typically not positive in nature.

Many of the comments about Schwarzenegger referred to his mispronunciations, his

acting, and his intelligence. In many instances Schwarzenegger was depicted as a body

builder with little intelligence.

Letterman Compared to Leno

After illustrating the ways in which Letterman addressed the recall election it is

possible to do a comparison of Letterman's jokes to Leno's jokes. The jokes will be

compared based on the frequencies and range of mentions, the structure of jokes, and the

focus of jokes. By looking at these three aspects it will be easier to see if the research

questions geared for Leno can also be answered with Letterman's monologues.

When looking at the frequency of mentions instead of using counts the focus will

be on the range of candidates that were mentioned and approximate frequency of these

mentions. As mentioned above, Letterman mentioned Arnold Schwarzenegger, Gray

Davis, Cruz Bustamante, Arianna Huffington, Gary Coleman, and Peter Ueberroth, this is

almost half the number of candidates to which Leno discussed. Also the only individuals

mentioned by Letterman on any regular basis were Arnold Schwarzenegger and Gray

Davis, where as Gray Davis, Arnold Schwarzenegger, Gary Coleman, Cruz Bustamante, Arianna Huffington, and Mary Carey were mentioned over twenty times each by Leno.

The structure of Letterman's jokes is very similar to Leno's in style, but very different in the way that they are delivered and their content. Since the monologue portion of the *Late Show* is shorter than on the *Tonight Show* Letterman ended up incorporating more jokes throughout his show. The format of the jokes within the monologues is similar in that there is a set up and joke. However, Leno tended to give more factual background information when setting up his jokes. This allowed giving more information on the candidates and possibly providing information that could have affects on who they cast a ballot for.

It is also important to compare Leno and Letterman's style of comedy when looking at this issue. Letterman typically is more critical in his jokes, while Leno tends to go the comedic route in which he acts more friendly towards the subject of his jokes. Since Letterman is more cynical than Leno his audience may not have seen negative comments about Schwarzenegger in the same manner as Leno's audience would have perceived negative comments about other candidates and Gray Davis.

Finally the foci, or subject matters, of the jokes were compared. When looking solely at the jokes regarding Arnold Schwarzenegger it was obvious that Letterman did not show the same concern in sparing Schwarzenegger's reputation as Leno did. When Leno made a comment that could have been negative to Schwarzenegger he usually followed it with another comment that would negate the previous comment. Letterman on the other hand would make comments that could be potentially negative and leave it at that. The reason this may not have been altogether negative is because Schwarzenegger

was the only candidate mentioned numerous times on the *Late Show*. So, even though the comments were not positive Letterman was still recognizing him as a candidate more so than the other candidates.

So when attempting to answer the same questions directed towards Leno when analyzing Letterman it first must be recognized that not all of them can be tested because of the differences of jokes. Since Letterman did not begin discussing the recall until after Schwarzenegger announced his candidacy there was no opportunity for him to prime his audience to recall Governor Gray Davis (Q5). Also, due to the limited number of jokes regarding other candidates it could not be examined if jokes regarding Schwarzenegger were less negative than jokes regarding other candidates (Q1), and that Letterman did not treat candidates with backgrounds similar to Schwarzenegger as viable candidates (Q4). Finally, it is not possible to answer the question regarding the manner in which Schwarzenegger's alleged sexual misconduct was handled because transcripts were not available for the time period when Schwarzenegger's sexual misconduct allegations arose.

However, the two remaining research questions can still be tested. The first question to be examined looks at whether or not Schwarzenegger was mentioned as a candidate more than any other candidates. This can be determined by simply looking at the frequency to which Schwarzenegger was mentioned in comparison to other candidates. This answer to this question supports the theory since there were less than ten mentions combined of candidates besides Schwarzenegger and Schwarzenegger was mentioned more than ten times on the nights of August 7, 2003 and August 8, 2003 alone. Knowing this it can be stated that the answer to the second research question supports the original theory when looking at Letterman as well. The other question examines whether

or not Schwarzenegger was initially accepted as a legitimate candidate. The best way to answer this question is by looking at how Letterman portrayed Schwarzenegger in the first joke he delivered about his candidacy.

> Big night last night, you know what I'm talking about. Arnold Schwarzenegger announced he is running for Governor of California. Pretty exciting don't you think? I missed the whole thing. The one night, the one night that I forget to watch Leno and this happens. (8/7)

Considering that the comment following the announcement that Schwarzenegger was going to run for governor was "pretty exciting, don't you think?" instead of a joke implying that it was a bad decision it can be assumed that Letterman automatically accepted him as a viable candidate. Another comment made by Letterman that showed he viewed Schwarzenegger as a legitimate candidate was when Letterman said, on September 4, 2003, that he would vote for Schwarzenegger. By making this statement Letterman was implying that he though Schwarzenegger was the best candidate for the position. These two comments help to illustrate that Letterman automatically treated Schwarzenegger as a viable candidate.

Conclusions

By comparing Jay Leno's jokes to David Letterman's jokes it is apparent that there are many differences in content, set up, and volume. Whether or not these differences lead to different portrayals of Schwarzenegger is a different issue. It is clear that a larger emphasis was placed on the recall election by Leno than by Letterman. Taking this into consideration when looking at questions two and four it can still be

determined that these answers support my theory and Letterman did portray

Schwarzenegger as a legitimate candidate, which he mentioned more often as a candidate

than any other.

This shows that there was only minimal, if any, bias shown towards

Schwarzenegger by David Letterman when comparing him to Jay Leno. The reasons for

these discrepancies could be that Leno is better friends with Schwarzenegger, Letterman

did not focus on the California recall campaign because he, unlike Leno, is not based out

of California, and Leno's monologues allow him to discuss political events in more depth

because he provides more background information to his audience than Letterman does.

Chapter Six: Conclusion

Introduction

This thesis examined whether or not Jay Leno, through his *Tonight Show* monologues, presented Arnold Schwarzenegger as a candidate for the 2003 California recall election in a biased manner. The underlying theory to this research was that Leno indeed did possess political bias, due to the close friendship between Schwarzenegger and him. When looking for this bias it was helpful to compare Leno's monologues to David Letterman's jokes the *Late Show*, to see if the way Leno treated Schwarzenegger's candidacy was typical of late night talk show hosts.

Importance

A growing number of Americans are obtaining news information from late night programming (Pew Research Center 2000a). This makes it increasingly important to know if the information being provided to the audiences is biased. Audiences are increasingly gathering information on candidates and campaigns from late night programs such as the *Tonight Show with Jay Leno* and the *Late Show with David Letterman*. As stated previously the number of people obtaining this type of knowledge from late night programming is up three percent since 1996 (Pew Research Center 2000a).

Due to the fact that such a large number of people (28% of the respondents to the survey conducted by the Pew Research Center) are obtaining knowledge from late night talk shows it is important to determine if bias is present. When Leno delivers a joke in his monologue he often gives background information about the topic in the set up from

here individuals are gaining their political knowledge and should be informed if this knowledge is biased. While audiences may not care if the information they are being provided is biased it is important for them to know. Otherwise they are susceptible to manipulation by program hosts.

If late night programming can be held to the same standards as daytime programs it is safe to assume that the information can influence audiences. Through literature it was demonstrated that television programs deliver information that is subject to spin and filtering (Lichter and Noyes 1996, 19; Garay 1999, 77). It was also asserted that humor has the ability to make an argument more persuasive and easily remembered (Niven, Lichter, Amundson 2003, 120). Humor also makes the audience more lighthearted and less inclined to take information being presented seriously (Zillmann 2000, 41). Knowing all of this it can be inferred that when watching shows like the *Tonight Show with Jay Leno* and the *Late Show* with Davis Letterman the audience will be highly susceptible to bias. This susceptibility also makes this issue very important to study.

Research Questions

In order to test the theory that Leno presented Schwarzenegger as a candidate in a biased manner it was necessary to answer several questions using monologues and footage of the *Tonight Show*. The first question looked at whether or not Leno's jokes regarding Schwarzenegger were less negative than his jokes about other candidates (Q1). It was also questioned whether or not Leno mentioned Schwarzenegger as a candidate more often than other replacement candidates running in the recall election (Q2). Third, did Leno consistently criticize Governor Gray Davis as he was facing a recall, thus

priming the audience (Q3)? Also, did Leno initially treat Schwarzenegger as a viable

candidate (Q4) and not treat other candidates with similar backgrounds as viable

candidates (Q5)? Finally, jokes about Schwarzenegger's alleged sexual misconduct were

analyzed to determine if Leno worked to discredit the victims and the charges (Q6).

Letterman's jokes were then examined using these same criteria to provide a baseline for

possible bias. The analysis of these aspects provided a clear picture of political bias

within the entertainment media during the 2003 recall election.

Findings

When assessing the findings of this research there are two main questions which

must be answered. The first question is; did Leno show bias in his discussion of the

recall? The second question is; which candidate did Leno promote? These questions

were answered by looking at how the jokes broke down into categories. The jokes were

broken down by candidates and then again by categories of joke about candidates. The

answers to these questions came from looking at both summary data and the text of the

transcripts.

In answer to the first question, Leno did show bias towards the recall election.

The breakdown of jokes regarding Gray Davis (27%), California (12%), and the recall

(12%) suggests that there was political bias and Leno did promote the recall, in 51% of

the jokes analyzed. The jokes regarding Davis were overwhelmingly negative. He is

blamed for California's condition in 17% of the jokes, he is unpopular in 17%, and

mentions of him and the recall make another 34%. Combined, this means that 68% of the

jokes about Davis implied that he was a poor governor.

The second question, which candidate did Leno promote, was more complicated to address. Leno portrayed Schwarzenegger positively in comparison to the other replacement candidates. Schwarzenegger was mentioned 77 times, making up 20% of the total jokes, while the highest frequency of other candidate mentions was 26, just 7% (Gary Coleman and Cruz Bustamante). Leno also initially accepted Schwarzenegger as a candidate, illustrated by the fact that Leno suggested he should be governor before Schwarzenegger's candidacy was announced, while the other replacement candidates were mocked and had their faults accentuated. This discrepancy also appeared when comparing Schwarzenegger jokes to jokes about other candidates. When comparing Schwarzenegger's acting to Coleman's and his nationality to Huffington's it is clear that the portrayals are not equal, and that Schwarzenegger's jokes were positive when the others were negative. Finally, when sexual misconduct allegations surfaced about Schwarzenegger Leno worked damage control by diminishing the credibility of the allegations.

This illustrates that Leno did show bias in promotion of the recall and Arnold Schwarzenegger's candidacy. There were notable differences in the jokes that were delivered by Jay Leno and those by Davis Letterman. These differences were in joke structure, Leno set up his jokes more than Letterman, and content, while Schwarzenegger was the only candidate mentioned more than twice there was no effort made to negate potentially harmful claims. Letterman also places a smaller emphasis on the recall than Leno which is likely to be because Letterman is based out of New York, while Leno is in California. Due to location this result was expected. With this being said, Letterman did accept Schwarzenegger's candidacy the day after it was announced.

Implications

From this research it can be determined that Leno's monologues were clearly

biased in the way he portrayed his friend, Arnold Schwarzenegger, in his jokes leading up

the California recall. The presence of bias in this gubernatorial election leads to

questions of its impact. Did this bias change voter attitudes? Did this bias affect vote

choices? Could this bias be why Schwarzenegger won the election? If so, what next?

Letterman made the comment that "the road to the White House runs through [him]"

(CMPA 2002, 4). From Leno's behavior on the *Tonight Show,* it appears that he may feel

that he also had the ability to determine who got on the road, stayed on the road, and

made it safely into office.

The implications that exist for this election could also hold true at the national

level. Future research would be helpful to determine if this bias is present during national

campaigns. By looking at presidential campaigns Leno's monologues could be better

compared to Letterman's monologues. Since the audiences would have the same

information and interest in the election it would be expected that the hosts would provide

more even coverage of presidential campaigns. During a presidential campaign this

research could spread even further to examine other types of late night humor, such as;

Saturday Night Live, *Late Night with Conan O'Brian*, the *Daily Show with Jon Stewart*,

and other programs.

These findings only matter if bias could impact vote choice. Considerable

literature implies that entertainment programming may be more persuasive than news or

ads. With this in mind, it would be worthwhile to consider that this potential may not

only be present in late night talk shows, but other late night acts and daytime programming. Clearly, the entertainment industry is susceptible to political bias, and more research is needed to determine its presence on other shows, as well as the direct effect it has on vote choice.

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