



IMAGE REPAIR TACTICS



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ABSTRACT

This research uses William Benoit's Theory of Image Restoration to evaluate Tom Brady's success in image restoration following the Deflategate scandal. The absence of mortification or corrective action among Brady's chosen image repair tactics magnified skepticism surrounding the scandal and his reputation. Brady's use of defeasibility, denial and bolstering failed to restore not only his own image, but also that of the New England Patriots.

INTRODUCTION

The Deflategate scandal began with accusations that Brady allegedly was involved in deflating footballs used during the 2015 AFC Championship game, during which the New England Patriots defeated the Indianapolis Colts. The scandal continued as Brady denied the allegations and appealed his punishment, a four game suspension to begin at the start of the next season. He was granted his first appeal, but the controversy continued in court until his suspension was reinstated for the following season, at which point Brady withdrew from court action and accepted his punishment without admitting guilt.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The literature reveal across a number of cases the most effective image repair campaigns have utilized sincere mortification. In most cases where mortification is absent, the public figure under scrutiny does not escape his or her tarnished image. These findings are consistent across cases involving not only athletes, but also other types of public figures such as talk show hosts and politicians. Even studies regarding companies imply sincere mortification is the best strategy.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

Q1:

Was Brady's decision to forego the use of the mortification strategy one that was to help his overall image or solely his career?

Q2:

How does this event continue to impact career?

Q3:

What image repair strategies did Brady use during his press conference?

Q4:

Did the lack of use of social media negatively impact his repair campaign?

METHODOLOGY

This study analyzes the tactics Brady used during his press conference that immediately followed initial accusations. It also considers his use of social media, or lack thereof, during the controversy. To discern the lasting effects of the scandal on Brady's reputation, the study evaluates recent references to Deflategate as well as the frequency and tone of the references.

The study will also provide information regarding the possible consequences had Brady utilized the mortification strategy; this research will shed light on whether he neglected to use mortification because of his image or to save his career.

IMAGE REPAIR TABLE

DENIAL	DEFEASABILITY	BOLSTERING	ATTACK THE ACCUSER	MORTIFICATION
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Yes • Through press conferences, social media and interviews, Brady consistently denies involvement. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Yes • Through social media, print and press conferences, Brady denied having prior knowledge of 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Yes • During a press conference and in print media, Brady stated that he would "never do anything to break the rules" 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Yes • Through social media Brady stated that he was dissatisfied in the Commissioner's decision and that all who claim he purposefully destroyed his phone are "completely wrong". 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No



Tom Brady

July 29, 2015 · 🌐

I am very disappointed by the NFL's decision to uphold the 4 game suspension against me. I did nothing wrong, and no one in the Patriots organization did either.

Despite submitting to hours of testimony over the past 6 months, it is disappointing that the Commissioner upheld my suspension based upon a standard that it was "probable" that I was "generally aware" of misconduct. The fact is that neither I, nor any equipment person, did anything of which we have been accused. He dismissed my hours of testimony and it is disappointing that he found it unreliable.

I also disagree with yesterday's narrative surrounding my cellphone. I replaced my broken Samsung phone with a new iPhone 6 AFTER my attorneys made it clear to the NFL that my actual phone device would not be subjected to investigation under ANY circumstances. As a member of a union, I was under no obligation to set a new precedent going forward, nor was I made aware at any time during Mr. Wells' investigation, that failing to subject my cell phone to investigation would result in ANY discipline.

Most importantly, I have never written, texted, emailed to anybody at anytime, anything related to football air pressure before this issue was raised at the AFC Championship game in January. To suggest that I destroyed a phone to avoid giving the NFL information it requested is completely wrong.

SOCIAL MEDIA

To try and reconcile the record and fully cooperate with the investigation after I was disciplined in May, we turned over detailed pages of cell phone records and all of the emails that Mr. Wells requested. We even contacted the phone company to see if there was any possible way we could retrieve any/all of the actual text messages from my old phone. In short, we exhausted every possibility to give the NFL everything we could and offered to go thru the identity for every text and phone call during the relevant time. Regardless, the NFL knows that Mr. Wells already had ALL relevant communications with Patriots personnel that either Mr. Wells saw or that I was questioned about in my appeal hearing. There is no "smoking gun" and this controversy is manufactured to distract from the fact they have zero evidence of wrongdoing.

I authorized the NFLPA to make a settlement offer to the NFL so that we could avoid going to court and put this inconsequential issue behind us as we move forward into this season. The discipline was upheld without any counter offer. I respect the Commissioner's authority, but he also has to respect the CBA and my rights as a private citizen. I will not allow my unfair discipline to become a precedent for other NFL players without a fight.

Lastly, I am overwhelmed and humbled by the support of family, friends and our fans who have supported me since the false accusations were made after the AFC Championship game. I look forward to the opportunity to resume playing with my teammates and winning more games for the New England Patriots.

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