

BRAND AND REPUTATION RESILIENCE IN TIMES OF CRISIS:  
THE NATIONAL FOOTBALL LEAGUE, RAY RICE AND SOCIAL MEDIA

Tiffany S. Jones

A thesis submitted to the faculty at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill in  
partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts in Mass  
Communication in the School of Media and Journalism.

Chapel Hill  
2017

Approved by:

V.K. Fields

Lois Boynton

Ty Buckner III

© 2017  
Tiffany S. Jones  
ALL RIGHTS RESERVED

## **ABSTRACT**

Tiffany S. Jones: Brand and Reputation Resilience in Times of Crisis:  
The National Football League, Ray Rice and Social Media  
(Under the direction of V.K. Fields)

For six seasons, Ray Rice was an integral part of the Baltimore Ravens offensive attack. With an average of 4.3 yards per carry and 67.2 yards per game, Rice helped establish the team as a solid contender in the NFL (Players – Ray Rice, n.d.). Off the field, he spent time hosting camps and rallies, as well as promoting initiatives, such as his, “A Ray of Hope: A Pro-Kindness, Anti-Bullying, Teen Suicide Prevention Outreach.” (Ray Rice Makes Impact, 2012)

Unfortunately, for Rice, the Ravens and the NFL, none of that mattered when TMZ released video of Rice dragging his fiancée, Janay Palmer, from an elevator. The 2014-15 NFL season was marred with negative media attention — traditional and social — ending with Rice’s release from the Ravens.

This paper explores contributions of traditional and social media to the Rice and NFL’s campaign to protect the league’s brand and reputation during the 2014-15 season.

“Trust in the Lord with all thine heart and lean not unto thine own understanding. In all thy ways acknowledge Him and He shall direct thy paths.”

Proverbs 3:5-6

## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

First and foremost, this entire journey through matriculation in the School of Media and Journalism at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill has been divinely directed. From a layoff to a temporary job that became a passion and now a career, God has continued to strategically place people in my life who see far more in me than I do in myself. I am eternally grateful to the outstanding tribe of women who offered words of encouragement, an ear to listen, a shoulder to cry on and everything in between. This journey has not been easy but it has all been worth it.

This work and now my life is dedicated in loving memory of the best friend I will ever have on earth, my mother, Essie Jones McDonald. Your presence in my life will always be God's greatest gift to me and your absence has coincidentally been His greatest test for me. Losing you is the most pain I have ever felt. They will always be a void but I plan to live life in a way that will make you even more proud to have been my mother. I miss you more than I could ever express.

I am grateful that God loves me enough to have gifted me the absolute best family, friends and colleagues along for the ride. Thank you to my two dads, my brothers, sisters, nieces, nephews, cousins, friends, co-workers and my mentor. I love you all without beginning or end. I hope to be to you what you have been to me.

Many thanks to the best thesis committee in the history of academia. You all have been patient and understanding throughout the entire process. Thank you for your

feedback and your suggestions. I am eternally grateful to you all for agreeing to guide me through.

Not all of my support has been from people. God sent a stubborn, whip-smart, furry, four-legged guy to rescue me from a dull, companionless existence. He has stayed up with me while I completed assignments and forced me to play when I got frustrated.

Last and always most, thank you, God – for everything.

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION .....	1
Does violence beget violence? .....	2
Damage control .....	3
Purpose .....	4
CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW .....	6
Crisis communication .....	6
Social media in Crisis Communication .....	8
Research Questions .....	9
CHAPTER 3: ANALYSIS .....	11
CHAPTER 4: FINDINGS .....	14
Articles and op-eds .....	14
Tweets .....	17
Limitations and opportunities for additional research .....	20
CHAPTER 5 – CONCLUSION .....	22
The teams play on .....	24
APPENDIX I: INITIAL TRADITIONAL MEDIA CODING SHEET .....	25
APPENDIX II: FINAL TRADITIONAL MEDIA CODING SHEET .....	26
APPENDIX III: INITIAL TWITTER CODING SHEET .....	27

APPENDIX IV: FINAL TWITTER CODING SHEET .....	28
APPENDIX V: PRINT ARTICLES/OP-EDS LIST FIRST SET .....	29
APPENDIX VI: PRINT ARTICLES/OP-EDS LIST, SECOND SET .....	30
REFERENCES .....	31



## **Chapter 1: Introduction**

In the 2014 offseason, then-Baltimore Ravens running back Ray Rice was caught on video punching and dragging his then-fiancée from an elevator after a physical altercation. He soon found himself at the center of a firestorm of criticism aimed at the National Football League and league commissioner, Roger Goodell, for the perceived lenience on players arrested for domestic violence. Months after the altercation, a full recording of the Rice incident was posted to the celebrity news website, TMZ (Ray Rice – ELEVATOR KNOCKOUT, 2014). TMZ, or Thirty Mile Zone, bills itself as a celebrity gossip and entertainment news site (TMZ).

The video prompted what have been viewed as reactionary tactics from the league and Goodell (Bell, 2014) that include Rice's dismissal from the Ravens, his indefinite suspension from the league (Mihoces 2014) and changes to the league's personal conduct policy that include stiffer penalties for violations that relate to domestic violence or sexual assault (Pelissero, 2014).

Over the course of the 2014 season, Rice's assault on his partner and the league's reaction dominated the news cycle spawning a series of negatively toned and pointed news stories, op-eds – special features written by prominent or influential people that appear opposite of editorial pages in newspapers – blog posts and social media backlash (Glazer, 2014). The significance of the incident coupled with the negative press coverage and steady mentions on various social media platforms had a

significant impact on the brand's and reputations of the individual player, the league and the commissioner. This thesis will explore the effect of negative traditional and social media coverage – particularly on Twitter – and provide evidence that it was the effect of negative social media exposure that led to the demise of Rice's brand, reputation and career while having little impact on the NFL and consequently Goodell.

### **Does violence beget violence?**

The “Understanding Intimate Partner Violence” (2014) fact sheet from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, states, “on average, 24 people per minute are victims of rape, physical violence or stalking by an intimate partner.” Intimate partner violence or as it is commonly referred to, domestic violence, is a growing public health problem in the United States. Since 2000, there have been nearly 100 arrests of NFL personnel for domestic violence, and more than half of those have come under the tenure of Commissioner Goodell (NFL player arrests, n.d.).

Professional American football has been classified as one of the most-violent contact sports played in the United States. In American culture, organized contact and collision sports, like football, have emerged as a way for men to assert their masculinity (Welch, 1997). Messner (1990) said, “the mythology and symbolism of sports such as football are probably meaningful and salient to viewers on a number of levels: patriotism, militarism and meritocracy are all dominant themes” (p. 213). Because of this symbolism and elevation of players who excel to a godlike status, young males do not enter institutions of sport, specifically football, as a blank slate but with ideas that playing and excelling at the sport makes them masculine (Messner, 1990).

Welch described football as a “collision and combative sport” that is “an arena of controlled violence” which produces hypermasculinity (1997, p. 393). In an entry in the Encyclopedia of Race and Crime, hypermasculinity is defined as an “adoption of extreme machismo in males” (Craig, 2009, p. 367). This hypermasculinity, Welch deduces, makes it more likely for “violence to escape from the controlled environment of athletics and spill over into the larger society” (1997, p. 394).

### **Damage Control**

In the 2014 off-season and in-season, incidents involved Greg Hardy formerly of the Carolina Panthers; Ray McDonald, formerly of the San Francisco 49ers; Quincy Enunwa, formerly of the New York Jets; Jonathan Dwyer, formerly of the Arizona Cardinals (NFL player arrests, n.d.) and, most notably, Ray Rice (Borzi and Eder 2014).

Prior to the 2014 season, Commissioner Roger Goodell’s stiffest punishment for a player with involvement in a domestic violence incident was a two-game suspension, which earned him and by proxy, the NFL, the reputation of being too lenient in incidents of domestic violence. With five domestic violence arrests in 2014, the NFL – and particularly Goodell – needed to do some damage control to prevent the loss of sponsors and maintain the league’s image as a positive example for children and the community (Webb, 2012).

While both Rice and the league were faced with having to repair their images, it appears that only the NFL utilized an effective image repair strategy, like the five outlined by Benoit (1997). The NFL utilized the “corrective action” (Benoit, 1997) strategy that “promises to repair the problem, which includes restoring the state of

affairs existing before the offensive action and/or promising to prevent the recurrence of the offensive act” (Benoit, 1997, p. 254).

While the league did make changes to the personal conduct policy and levy stiffer punishments, Rice was also released from the Ravens and suspended from the league indefinitely in September 2014 following the release of surveillance video from an elevator that showed him punching his then-fiancée with enough force to knock her down, hit her head on a rail and knock her out (Ray Rice – ELEVATOR KNOCKOUT, 2014). At the time of his incident, Rice was two years into a 5-year, \$35 million contract (Isidore, 2014).

In direct contrast with the league, Rice and his wife offered a pair of apologies at a press conference three months after the elevator incident (Mink, 2014). There were seemingly no corrective action strategies in place before or after the apologies.

## **Purpose**

Rice has not suited up to play professional football since 2014. He has, however, spoken with first-year or rookie players for the Ravens (Hensley, 2016) and college players at Florida State (Scott, 2016) and The Ohio State (Byrnes, 2017) universities about how he derailed his professional career and the importance of making good decisions.

More than three years removed from the onset of the incident in the elevator, there is no way of knowing whether Rice’s career would have been impacted differently had he employed a team to manage the incident that grew to a full-on crisis. This study seeks to determine whether traditional media coverage, social media coverage or the

lack of corrective action strategy on Rice's behalf, had the greatest impact in the demise of Rice's professional brand or the continued success of the NFL's brand.

## CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

### Crisis Communication

Before crisis communication can begin, one must first understand the definition of a crisis. In 2010, Coombs identified eight definitions that are the most common. There is not one that is universally accepted across the public relations and organizational communication disciplines.

Fink (1986) defined crisis as “turning point for better or worse,” while Barton (2001) defined it as “an incident that is unexpected, negative, and overwhelming.” This paper, however, will utilize Coombs’ (2012) definition of crisis, “the perception of an unpredictable event that threatens important expectancies of stakeholders and can seriously impact an organization’s performance and generate negative outcomes” (p. 2).

The definition of crisis communication also varies amongst researchers. For example, Reynolds and Seegar (2007) define it as an extension of public relations wherein “skilled communicators strategically defend and explain the organization’s position in the face of crisis-induced criticism, threat and uncertainty” (p. 46). Hermann (1963) described crisis communication as having three distinct characteristics – it’s a surprise, it poses a threat and has short response time, while Coombs and Holladay (2010) refer to it as “the collection, processing, and dissemination of information required to address a crisis situation” (p. 20). This paper will utilize Coombs and Holladay’s definition.

Traditionally in times of crisis, companies or individuals face the scrutiny of the press and their stakeholders. Now social media has created an environment that makes the general public and the press part of the companies' and individuals' stakeholder groups. Chief executive officers of 89 percent of Fortune 500 companies said business crises are practically "inevitable," yet half of them admitted to not having a crisis management plan and 97 percent feel confident they can adequately respond to a crisis (Fink, 1986, p. 67).

Reynolds and Seegar (2007) suggest that "crisis communication is the verbal, visual and/or written interaction between the organization and its stakeholders prior to, during and after a negative occurrence designed to reduce and contain harm, provide specific information, initiate and enhance recovery, manage image and perceptions of blame and responsibility, repair legitimacy, generate support and assistance, explain and justify actions, apologize and promote healing, learning and change" (p. 46).

Crisis communication is a necessity for businesses as traditional and social media report, and in some instances, fabricate, information about business missteps. Those reports, factual or not, can result in damages to the company's brand and/or reputation, which can translate into lost revenue and business opportunities.

According to Coombs, a quick response is needed for an effective crisis response due to technology like social media accelerating the spread of information (2012). The NFL's response to the Rice incident was perceived as reactionary, coming months after the event in the elevator and only after the public viewed surveillance footage from the hotel.

## **Social Media in Crisis Communication**

Jin, Liu and Austin, by way of the Pew Internet & American Life Project, describe social media as “an umbrella term that is used to refer to a new era of Web-enabled applications that are built around user-generated or user manipulated content” (2014, p. 75). Social media encompasses text messaging, social networking, i.e., Facebook, Twitter and mobile applications like Instagram and Snapchat. For this research, Twitter will be used. Twitter is a microblogging website that allows users to interact with each other using messages that are 140 characters or less.

A 2014 study by the Pew Research Center stated that social media or new media usage was on the rise with more than 52 percent of adults online utilizing two or more social media platforms (Duggan, Ellison, Lampe, et al., 2015). This increased usage also means that social media has become a part of everyday life for many users (Ellison, Steinfield & Lampe, 2007) and has been adopted as a key channel for marketing and communications professionals (Utz, Schultz, & Glocka, 2013). Pang, Hassan and Chong argue that this is because “New media technologies share at least three defining features: They are digital, converging and networked” (2014, p. 98). These defining features also make it faster to accept and disseminate information. Stříteský, Stránská and Drábik argue that, “The emergence of social media changed the rules of crisis communication to a large extent” (p. 105).

Social media presents an opportunity to communicate information to a large group of people in a short amount of time – as things are happening or “in real time.” A post on Twitter’s blog said that users sent more than 500 million tweets per day in 2014 (@gabrielstricker). This has created “both threats and opportunities for varied domains



of practice” (Khang, et al., 2012, p. 281). An example of both a threat and an opportunity is how social media has been utilized to break news stories ahead of traditional media (Pang, et al., 2014). That is precisely what TMZ did by posting the first video of Rice dragging Palmer from the elevator and the second, longer video that showed the punch in the elevator on its website and using Twitter to share the link to the video on its website.

Citing a number of resources, Eriksson and Olsson said that social media also creates the opportunity for individuals and corporations to “produce their own content, monitor potential crisis issues and engage in decentralized, speedy communication” (2016, p. 198). An example of this is the Baltimore Ravens’ response, just one day after Rice’s elevator incident. The team sent one Tweet, “Ravens statement on Ray Rice incident: [link]” (@Ravens, 2014). When TMZ released the full video in September, both the Ravens and the NFL sent a single Tweet announcing the termination of Rice’s contract.

Throughout the ordeal, the Ravens organization communicated with fans via Twitter to keep them updated on Rice’s eligibility status while the league distanced itself from Rice the individual player, similar to Transocean and Halliburton’s deny responses to “ensure that none of the organizational responsibility” (Bamber and Parry, 2016) that belonged to the Ravens organization was transferred to the overall league.

### **Research Questions**

Upon an initial assessment of news articles published in 2014 by The Baltimore Sun, The New York Times and USA Today – chosen due to their proximity to Rice and the Ravens, Goodell and NFL headquarters, and the comprehensive database of NFL

player arrests, respectively – as well as tweets sent at the onset of the coverage of the elevator incident as well as the release of the full video of the elevator incident by TMZ, two questions emerged:

RQ1: How did the tweets, stories and op-eds written about Rice create a narrative that led to the deterioration of his professional brand?

RQ2: How did the stories and op-eds written about Goodell and the NFL create a narrative that absolved them of wrongdoing in Rice's case?

### **Chapter 3: Analysis**

The quantitative analysis of the print articles and tweets was proposed as a case study defined as a study that investigates a contemporary phenomenon in depth and with a real-world context (Yin, 2014). There are a multitude of research methods available depending upon the kind of research and the kind of outcomes being sought by the researcher. Yin recommends that researchers identify their research questions first to determine whether a case study is the most-effective method (2014).

Per Ellet (2007), “Cases are verbal representations of reality that put the reader in the role of participant in the situation” (p. 13) and all cases have a common purpose, “to represent reality, to convey a situation with all its cross currents and rough edges” (p. 13).

This paper utilizes the method of framing analysis, defined by Elliot, Fairweather, Olsen and Pampaka as, “An analytical method closely related to thematic analysis but involving highly structured coding of qualitative data into matrices of codes” (2016). Entman (1993) pointed out that framing “essentially involves selection and salience” (p. 52) and usually “define problems, diagnose causes, make moral judgements and suggest remedies” (p. 52).

In their article, Gillespie, Richards, Givens and Smith (2013, p. 224) mentioned Bullock and Cubert’s (2002) four media frames, related to how newspapers framed stories of domestic homicide and domestic violence that include:

- A police frame (Just the facts)
- Event involved people different from us
- Victim blaming/excusing the perpetrator
- Shock at the identity of the perpetrator because he is normal

These frames make moral judgements, or “evaluate casual agents and their effects” (Entman, 1993, p. 52). A variation of these frames was used for this paper to code tweets, news stories and op-eds in two specific times (Appendices I-IV).

The process of collecting sample tweets began with an initial search of “Ray Rice” on the Twitter platform for February 19-21, 2014 – four days after the incident and two days after it broke on the microblogging site – and September 8-10, 2014 following TMZ’s release of the longer video. This search yielded an excessive number of tweets with varied subject matter. With more than a half billion tweets (@gabrielstricker, 2014) sent daily, it was necessary to decrease the number of tweets using a Boolean search using the keywords “Ray Rice AND punch” to yield a smaller, more targeted data set of 1,912 tweets.

Sample news stories and op-eds were collected in similar fashion utilizing the LexisNexis News and America’s News databases to access:

- *The Baltimore Sun*, daily circulation 133,169; Sunday circulation 253,333 (*The Baltimore Sun*, 2014). Chosen for its proximity to Rice and the Baltimore Ravens
- *The New York Times*, daily circulation 2,149,012; Sunday circulation 2,517,307 (*The New York Times*, 2014). Chosen for its proximity to Goodell and NFL headquarters

- *USA Today*, daily circulations 4,139,380 (Yu, 2014) Chosen for the comprehensive database of NFL player arrests

The initial search utilized the keywords “Ray Rice,” “NFL” and “Roger Goodell” separately for February 17, 2014-February 17, 2015, yielding more than 1,000 articles, op-eds, letters to the editor, and briefs that covered a variety of topics, many of which were not directly related to this analysis. To get a smaller, more targeted sample, Boolean searches were conducted utilizing the keyword combinations “Ray Rice AND NFL,” “Ray Rice AND Roger Goodell,” and “Roger Goodell AND NFL” for February 17-March 17, 2014, the onset of the initial incident, and September 8 – October 8, 2014, the release of the video accepted as the full incident.

## **Chapter 4: Findings**

One student and one professor/researcher coded two random samples of 14 articles and op-eds out of 138 total articles and op-eds as well as two random samples of 191 tweets of 1,912 tweets. The student and researcher coded the first sample of 14 articles to establish intercoder reliability and to extract emerging frames.

The numbers 14 and 191 were chosen based on selection procedures outlined by Riffe, Lacy and Fico (2014) that recommend “five percentage points higher than the minimum reliability” (p. 110). This equals out to a sample of 10 percent of the total number of articles.

### **Articles and op-eds**

The first sample set of 14 articles and op-eds included 7 news articles, 4 sports articles, 1 business article and 2 op-eds (See Appendix v). The sample set was used to establish intercoder reliability or “intercoder agreement” (Baxter & Babbie, 2003, p. 124). Intercoder reliability was established through research-process coding, which “includes categorization of the process employed by you in collecting and analyzing your textual data” (Baxter & Babbie, 2003, p. 367). This process is to determine if the student and researcher’s agree on the coding of each article aligned with an existing frame or an agreed upon emerging category. Of the 14 articles, the pair agreed on 11.

To code the sample set, a variation of Bullock and Cubert’s (2002) frames were utilized. The modified frames are:

- Just the facts (Tells only the who, what, when, where, how)
- Ray Rice as the villain (Utilizes negatively loaded adjectives – abuser, bully, etc.)
- Goodell/NFL is to blame (Words and phrases – indifference, obtuse, lack of understanding, etc.)
- Other (Share themes that emerge that are not illustrated in the framing choices)

Below is a breakout by the numbers of how the first sample of articles and op-eds fit the aforementioned frames:

- Just the facts – 4, which mostly included information available in the police report. For example, “Casino security called officers to the Revel Casino at about 2:50 a.m. Saturday after a domestic dispute between Rice and Janay Palmer that was recorded by video surveillance, according to a statement from police. Footage appeared to show the two parties involved in a physical altercation” (Fenton, 2014)
- Ray Rice as the villain – 1, “The Rice video has horrified the country, and rightfully so. It's never acceptable to hit a partner, and the callous disregard with which Rice treats Janay Palmer, the mother of his young child and now his wife, is stomach turning” (Armour, 2014).
- Goodell/NFL is to blame – 5, “Bisciotti added, ‘We all failed’” (Zrebiec, 2014).
- Other – 4 – “Ray Rice is a father, a partner and a bastion of the community” (Childs, 2014).

In the first sample, more than 25 percent of the articles and op-eds seemed to paint Rice as a man who made a bad decision or offered additional excuses for his behavior that include saying he is a human being. Even some of the articles that fit

frames besides “Other” offered excuses for Rice, with some of the people interviewed saying, “That’s not the Ray Rice I know.”

Given this emerging theme, one more frame was added to the existing coding sheet, “Excusing Rice’s behavior (Words and phrases include ‘getting help,’ ‘he’s young,’ and ‘he’s human’).” This brings the total number of frames to five.

Moving forward with the new coding sheet for the second sample of 7 news stories, 3 sports stories, one feature story and 3 op-eds, a breakout by the numbers of how the second sample of articles and op-eds fit the aforementioned frames:

- Just the facts – 3, included, “Reid became the third Ravens player to be arrested in 22 days. Starting running back Ray Rice and his fiancée are facing simple assault-domestic violence charges stemming from a physical altercation Feb. 15 at an Atlantic City, N.J., casino, and reserve wide receiver Deonte Thompson was arrested Feb 21 in Gainesville, Fla., and charged with possession of marijuana.” (Wilson 2014
- Ray Rice as the villain – 1, included, “The answer is that Mr. Rice’s infraction was captured in all its horror on video, and that video made six months of unwavering support from the team, and implicitly the league, look at best willfully ignorant and at worst a calculated bet that the public would never see what happened between Mr. Rice and his now-wife, Janay, in an Atlantic City casino elevator in February” (Will we forget, n.d. 2014).
- Goodell/NFL is to blame – 6, “What has the N.F.L. reeling now are the violent acts committed by its players against women and children. The disease of violence is spreading” (Branch, 2014)



- Excusing Rice’s behavior – 1, “Marshall also maintained that players were often the targets of people trying to take advantage of them” (Strauss, 2014).
- Other – 3, “If not for TMZ, Ray Rice would still be a Raven today and back in the National Football League, having served his joke of a two-game suspension from commissioner Roger Goodell” (Zurawik, 2014)

In the second sample, nearly half of the articles and op-eds outright blamed the league or the commissioner for the incident. Emerging frames from the other category painted TMZ a hero, blame the criminal justice system for its lax attitude toward intimate partner violence incidents and the league’s commitment to its own bottom line.

## **Tweets**

To establish intercoder reliability and extract emerging themes for the tweets, the student and the researcher coded two random sample sets of 191 tweets over two, three-day periods – February 19-21 and September 8-10, 2014. The final set of frames used to code articles and op-eds was used as the initial set of frames for tweets. Random numbers between 1-14 and 1-191 were chosen via a random number generator at <http://numbergenerator.org>. To avoid coding the same story, op-ed or tweet, if a number populated that had already been coded, one number off would be chosen, usually one number less than what populated.

Those frames are:

- Just the facts (Tells only the who, what, when, where, how)
- Ray Rice as the villain (Utilizes negatively loaded adjectives – abuser, bully, etc.)
- Goodell/NFL is to blame (Words and phrases – indifference, obtuse, lack of understanding, etc.)

- Excusing Rice’s behavior (Words and phrases include “getting help,” “he’s young,” “he’s human”)
- Other (Share themes that emerge that are not illustrated in the framing choices)

Starting from that set of frames proved to be useful as many of the tweets fit the existing frames. Examples of the Twitter posts are pasted verbatim from user accounts.

The breakdown for the first run is:

- Just the facts – 32, includes “Ray Rice Cut by Ravens After Video of Elevator Punch: The Baltimore Ravens terminated Ray Rice's contract today after a video...” (Bernard 2014)
- Ray Rice as the villain – 19, “Just saw the Ray Rice video. WTF? How could any man punch a woman in the face like that? Sickening” (Chu, 2014)
- Goodell/NFL to blame – 18, “THE NFL PRODUCES THUGS WHO GET AWAY WITH IT...” (AmericaStrike, 2014)
- Excusing Rice’s behavior – 5, “Technically ray rice didn't knock her.out the railing.did.he.jus mused.her that wasn't a punch” (Carey, 2014)
- Other – 87, “I don't get the added outrage of Ray Rice.....what did” (Sean, 2014)

That leaves an additional 30 tweets that became emerging frames — humor, where it is obvious the user was trying make a joke; sarcasm, where the user was trying to make a point; and blaming Janay Palmer. Examples of those Tweets include:

- Humor – “Wouldn't any punch from Ray Rice be an uppercut? He is pretty short” (Mark, 2014).
- Sarcasm – “Ray Rice's wife says the "Media" is causing pain in her life... here I thought it was her husband's punch in the elevator. #Enlightened” (Torino 2014)

- Blaming Janay Palmer, “No justifying Ray Rice's hitting a female but if she didn't charge him she might not of taken that knockout punch” (Raiders #1, 2014)

Adding those three frames to the coding sheet, and picking another random sample of 191 tweets, the second run breaks down as:

- Just the facts – 32, the vast majority of the tweets coded here were retweets from TMZ’s initial post, “Ray Rice -- ELEVATOR KNOCKOUT ... Fiancee Takes Crushing Punch (Video)” (TMZ, 2014. The original tweet has been retweeted 4, 876 times to date.
- Ray Rice as the villain – 29, many of the Tweets in this category were retweets from NFL writer, Adam Schefter, “The elevator knockout punch from Ray Rice is beyond disturbing and stomach turning. dlvr.it/6rRC1T” (Schefter, 2014). To date, it has been retweeted 7,539 times (Schefter, 2014)
- Goodell/NFL to blame – 7, “She was UNCONSCIOUS being drug out of the elevator! What did you think the punch would look like.. Shame on Ray Rice AND the league” (Steele, 2014)
- Excusing Rice’s behavior – 5, “All Ray rice did was punch a bitch which y'all knew now it's a big deal. I'm not saying hit women but that nigga provides her a lifestyle” (r. belly, 2014)
- Sarcasm – 5, “My, what a vicious accident!” (Dee, 2014)
- Blaming Palmer – 6, “That punch was mean by Ray Rice tho but bruh she was clearly provoking him in the video” (Kwasi, 2014)
- Humor – 19, “watching this Ray Rice video for the first time lmaooooo. he side stepped his wife's punch on some mayweather shit.” (lex, 2014)

- Other – 88, “I feel bad for Ray Rice's fiancée. I would not want to take a punch from that dude” (Marenyj, 2014). It is important to note that this tweet has since been deleted. It still populated in this search.

Framing for the articles and op-eds coded in this study skewed toward blaming the NFL and the commissioner for the Rice incident while there were more tweets in the “other” frame, Twitter users blamed Rice.

### **Limitations and opportunities for additional research**

There have been some limitations with this study that open up possibilities for additional research. There is limited information about social media analysis and coding. This is due largely to the fact that there is no widely accepted way to separate a user’s true opinions from sarcasm. There is also a great possibility that the tone of tweets can be misinterpreted due to the lack of access to the principle users’ accounts.

Because this was an exploratory study to identify and analyze frames, the next steps for this research could include a quantitative evaluation of the frames that emerged from the data. Another opportunity for research is what impact the gender of the writer or the person sharing the information on social media has on the frame that is used. It would also be interesting to code for tweets that in some way suggest or threaten harm to Rice and/or his wife, as it was difficult for both coders to determine whether those messages fit any of the identified frames.

Additional opportunities for research include the impact of chronic traumatic encephalopathy (CTE) on the behavior of current and former players as well as conversations about toxic masculinity and the professional athlete as a commodity on the league’s brand and reputation.

Since the Rice incident, the league has fielded crises that include inquiries about the brutality of the sport and the toll it has on the physical and mental health of players as it relates to CTE (Carey, 2016) as well as the decline in ratings over the 2016 season (Rishe, 2016). Further research can be done to determine whether unfavorable social media attention has been a major contributor to the league's declining ratings or whether there is simply a growing disinterest in the sport.

## **Chapter 5: Conclusion**

This research posed two questions: how tweets, articles and op-eds written about Rice create a narrative that led to the deterioration of his personal brand; and how did the articles, op-eds and tweets create a narrative that absolved the league and Goodell of any wrongdoing in the case.

In response to the first question, I contend that it was not the narrative created by social and traditional media alone that caused the deterioration of Rice's professional brand. It was his lack of response and the absence of an image repair strategy that destroyed his brand.

Perhaps the most compelling finding in this study is there was no obvious strategy in place – other than apology/mortification, which came three months later – to protect Rice's reputation. Benoit (1995) pointed out that mortification is difficult because there is not exactly an agreed upon set of criteria that identifies an apology as sincere. Per Benoit (1995), "No universally agreed conception of "apology" stipulates exactly what an apology must include" (p. 26).

Though he did apologize, he paid a penalty in some op-eds, blog posts and even on Twitter with critics calling him "a clown" (Aaron G, 2014) and pointing out that he never apologized to his wife (Hoffman, 2014; McColgan, 2014).

It turned out to be tweets of everyday people that were the most damning for Rice's reputation. Though opinions of Rice took a turn upon the release of the full video,

there were negative opinions about him from the onset of the incident. Users referred to him as a “punk” (JB4EVA 2014) and “not very manly” (woosh 2014).

Many of the tweets fit the “just the facts” (Bullock & Cubert, 2002) frame, that is due largely to the retweeting or sharing of links to news sites that wrote about or showed video of the incident, including TMZ’s initial tweet. To date, that tweet with the link to the elevator video has been retweeted, or shared, 4,876 times (TMZ, 2014). Many of the remaining tweets fit the “humor,” “sarcasm” and “other” frames expressing, directly and indirectly, outrage or disgust.

Rice’s Twitter account has been silent since February 12, 2014, three days prior to the incident. In an interview with *The Baltimore Sun*, his attorney, Michael Diamondstein said, “At this point in time, the only thing Ray can do is remain silent until such time as the prosecutor has decided where this matter will go” (Childs, 2014). He or his communications team missed a great opportunity to employ image repair strategy, such as corrective action, utilizing Rice’s own Twitter account.

The second research question asked how news media and social media narratives absolve the NFL and Rice of any wrongdoing. The short answer to that is the league and Goodell were not absolved, they also endured bad press. A major difference that should be noted is the league, as well as the Baltimore Ravens organization, utilized their Twitter accounts to send links to the team’s initial and subsequent statements on Rice’s status as a player. The NFL also utilized its account to send links about the various corrective actions and statements from Goodell including policy changes and participation in and promotion of the No More campaign. Even with the

strategy in place, the league and Goodell were still subjected to scrutiny on social media.

### **The teams play on**

The 2014 season brought about targeted campaigns against domestic violence from the NFL including the No More campaign against intimate partner violence and sexual assault (Jones 2014) and a revamped conduct policy (Wilson 2014) that levied harsher punishment for intimate partner violence and child abuse offenses. These modifications were an example of the NFL employing both mortification and “corrective action” strategy (Benoit 1997) to protect the league’s reputation in the wake of what turned out to be a crisis.

It has been three seasons since Rice has suited up to play for the NFL and in essence dropped out of the public eye. The narratives about the league have shifted and Rice is still not a member of a team. As recently as March 2017, Rice was quoted in a story by Sports Illustrated saying that he could still play football (Axson, 2017). When he is not speaking to young athletes about making good decisions, he is volunteering as a running backs coach at his alma mater, New Rochelle High School in New York (Dunleavy, 2017).

If Rice hopes to rebuild his image, he has to seize the opportunity to document his new life as a coach and mentor to young athletes utilizing social media channels like Twitter and Instagram. Using Twitter and Instagram will enable him to create content and, by proxy, a brand that tells the story he wants told in lieu of being at the mercy of the media and the everyday people of social media.



# APPENDIX I: INITIAL TRADITIONAL MEDIA CODING SHEET

Brand and Reputation Resilience Code Sheet

1

Story title:

Story type: (Circle) News Sports Editorial

Source Number: BS-\_\_\_\_\_ NYT-\_\_\_\_\_ UST-\_\_\_\_\_

Framing

In total, coders will read through the article three times – first to understand; second to make notes of the categories; and third to enter the data.

\_\_\_\_\_ Just the facts (Tells only the who, what, when, where, how)

\_\_\_\_\_ Ray Rice is the villain (Utilizes negatively loaded adjectives – abuser, bully, etc.)

\_\_\_\_\_ Goodell/NFL is to blame (Words and phrases indifference, obtuse, lack of understanding, etc.)

\_\_\_\_\_ Other (Share below the themes that emerge that are not illustrated in the framing choices above)

Comments:

## APPENDIX II: FINAL TRADITIONAL MEDIA CODING SHEET

Brand Reputation and Resilience

1

Story title:

Story type: (Circle) News Sports Editorial

Source Number: BS-\_\_\_\_\_ NYT-\_\_\_\_\_ UST-\_\_\_\_\_

Framing

In total, coders will read through the article three times – first to understand; second to make notes of the categories; and third to enter the data.

\_\_\_\_\_ Just the facts (Tells only the who, what, when, where, how)

\_\_\_\_\_ Ray Rice is the villain (Utilizes negatively loaded adjectives – abuser, bully, etc.)

\_\_\_\_\_ Goodell/NFL is to blame (Words and phrases indifference, obtuse, lack of understanding, etc.)

\_\_\_\_\_ Excusing Rice's behavior (Words and phrases include "getting help," "he's young," "he's human")

\_\_\_\_\_ Other (Share below the themes that emerge that are not illustrated in the framing choices above)

Comments:

## APPENDIX III: INITIAL TWITTER CODING SHEET

Brand and Reputation Resilience – Sheet 1

1

Source Number: Twitter- \_\_\_\_\_

### Framing

In total, coders will read through the article three times – first to understand; second to make notes of the categories; and third to enter the data.

\_\_\_\_\_ Just the facts (Tells only the who, what, when, where, how)

\_\_\_\_\_ Ray Rice is the villain (Utilizes negatively loaded adjectives – abuser, bully, etc.)

\_\_\_\_\_ Goodell/NFL is to blame (Words and phrases indifference, obtuse, lack of understanding, etc.)

\_\_\_\_\_ Excusing Rice's behavior (Words and phrases include "getting help," "he's young," "he's human")

\_\_\_\_\_ Other (Share below the themes that emerge that are not illustrated in the framing choices above)

Comments:

## APPENDIX IV: FINAL TWITTER CODING SHEET

1

Source Number: Twitter- \_\_\_\_\_

### Framing

In total, coders will read through the Tweet three times – first to understand; second to make notes of the categories; and third to enter the data.

\_\_\_\_\_ Just the facts (Tells only the who, what, when, where, how)

\_\_\_\_\_ Ray Rice is the villain (Utilizes negatively loaded adjectives – abuser, bully, etc.)

\_\_\_\_\_ Goodell/NFL is to blame (Words and phrases indifference, obtuse, lack of understanding, etc.)

\_\_\_\_\_ Excusing Rice's behavior (Words and phrases include "getting help," "he's young," "he's human")

\_\_\_\_\_ Humor

\_\_\_\_\_ Sarcasm

\_\_\_\_\_ Blaming Janay Palmer

\_\_\_\_\_ Other (Share below the themes that emerge that are not illustrated in the framing choices above)

Comments:

### Appendix V: Print Articles/Op-Eds, First Set

Story	Publication	Type of story
Ray Rice, fiancée arrested in N.J.	The Baltimore Sun	Sports
Assault case may deliver big blow to Rice's image	The Baltimore Sun	News
Rice faces questions as fallout continues	The Baltimore Sun	News
Rice, fiancée to attend couples seminar, Harbaugh says	The Baltimore Sun	Sports
Ravens front office vows greater scrutiny	The Baltimore Sun	News
Let's reappropriate Purple Friday	The Baltimore Sun	Op-Ed
A trying week in Baltimore sports	The Baltimore Sun	Sports
Advertisers stick with NFL	The Baltimore Sun	Business
Ex-FBI Leader's Inquiry Into Handling of Rice Incident Poses Risks	New York Times	News
Women's Views on NFL Dim	New York Times	News
Where Fans Have Stake in Team	New York Times	News
Dollar-driven NFL sells its soul	USA Today	Op-Ed
More issues on deck for NFL	USA Today	Sports
Overhaul needs diligence	USA Today	News

### Appendix VI: Print Articles/Op-eds, Second Set

Story	Publication	Type of story
Rice faces questions as fallout continues	The Baltimore Sun	News
Help at RB could come via NFL draft	The Baltimore Sun	Sports
Backup offensive lineman Reid arrested in Fla	The Baltimore Sun	Sports
Will we forget?	The Baltimore Sun	Op-Ed
TMZ is definitely for real, and it's changing the media landscape	The Baltimore Sun	Feature
Rice, wife, lawyer to meet NFL, NFLPA investigators	The Baltimore Sun	News
After Punch is Seen, Rice is Out	New York Times	News
Rice Case Draws Attention to a Crime Often Obscured	New York Times	News
Comments by Marshall, Bears' Top Receiver, Reflect Complexity of Abuse Issue	New York Times	Sports
As life imitates brutal sport, cheers have uneasy resonance	New York Times	Op-Ed
Hot seat spikes for NFL	USA Today	Op-Ed
Marshall's past suddenly very present	USA Today	News
Domestic violence issue on school's radar	USA Today	News
NFL has a history of leniency	USA Today	News

## REFERENCES

- Aaron G. [@aarong3000]. (2014 May 23). Ray Rice is a clown, I feel so sorry for his wife, she apologized for getting knocked out, WTF! [Twitter Moment]. Retrieved from <https://twitter.com/aarong3000/status/469964871552233472>
- About TMZ. (n.d.). *TMZ*. Retrieved July 18, 2017 from <http://www.tMZ.com/page/about/>
- AmericaStrike. [@AmericaStrike]. (2014, September 8). THE NFL PRODUCES THUGS WHO GET AWAY WITH IT... [Twitter Moment]. Retrieved from <https://twitter.com/AmericaStrike/status/508997794489991169>
- Armour, N. (2014, September 9). Dollar-driven NFL sells its soul. *USA Today*. Retrieved April 19, 2017, from <https://www.usatoday.com/story/sports/nfl/2014/09/09/roger-goodell-ray-rice-baltimore-ravens-domestic-abuse/15337221/>
- Axson, S. (2017, March 20). Ex-Ravens running back Ray Rice: 'I can still play football'. *Sports Illustrated*. Retrieved July 18, 2017 from <https://www.si.com/nfl/2017/03/20/ray-rice-football-future>
- Baltimore Ravens. [@Ravens]. (2014, February 16). Ravens statement on Ray Rice incident: <http://www.baltimoreravens.com/news/article-1/Ravens-Statement-On-Ray-Rice-Incident/26e2202a-77bd-42d2-ace1-49fd402c1396?mobile-id=802770&media-type=N>. [Twitter Moment] Retrieved from <https://twitter.com/Ravens/status/435217205874020353>
- The Baltimore Sun Media Group. (2014). *The Baltimore Sun*. Retrieved January 16, 2017, from <http://baltimoresunmediagroup.com/media-portfolio/newspapers/the-baltimore-sun/>.
- Bamber, M. & Parry, S. (2016). A study of the employment of denial during a complex and unstable crisis involving multiple actors. *International Journal of Business Communication*, 53(3), 343-366. DOI: 10.1177/2329488414525454
- Baxter, L. A. & Babbie, E. (2003). *The Basics of Communication Research*. Boston, MA: Wadsworth/Cengage Learning
- Belly, R. [@ShonathonSEY]. (2014, September 9). All Ray rice did was punch a bitch which y'all knew now it's a big deal. I'm not saying hit women but that nigga provides her a lifestyle. [Twitter Moment] <https://twitter.com/ShonathonSEY/status/509225111145443330>
- Benoit, W. L. (1995). *Accounts, excuses and apologies: A theory of image restoration*. Albany, NY: State University of New York Press
- Benoit, W. L. (1997). Hugh Grant's image restoration discourse: An actor apologizes. *Communication Quarterly*, 45(3), 251-267, DOI: 10.1080/01463379709370064

Bernard, El Negro. [@HenkilBernardRZ] (2014, September 8). Ray Rice Cut by Ravens After Video of Elevator Punch: The Baltimore Ravens terminated Ray Rice's contract today after a video... [Twitter Moment]. Retrieved from <https://twitter.com/HenkilBernardRZ/status/509092496182214656>

Bullock, C. F., & Cubert, J. (2002). Coverage of Domestic Violence Fatalities by Newspapers in Washington State. *Journal of Interpersonal Violence*. 17:5, 475-499. DOI: 10.1177/0886260502017005001

Borzi, P. & Eder, S. (2014, September 18). Arrest Adds to N.F.L.'s Off-Field Turmoil. *The New York Times*, p. 11. Retrieved May 7, 2014 from [https://www.nytimes.com/2014/09/18/sports/football/nfl.html?\\_r=0](https://www.nytimes.com/2014/09/18/sports/football/nfl.html?_r=0)

Branch, J. (2014, September 20). As Life Imitates Brutal Sport, Cheers Have Uneasy Resonance. *The New York Times*. Retrieved April 19, 2017 from <http://www.baltimoresun.com/news/opinion/editorial/bs-ed-ravens-rice-goodell-20140910-story.html>

Byrnes, D.J. (2017 March 8). Video: Ray Rice Speaks to Ohio State Football Team as Part of Real Life Wednesday Program. *Eleven Warriors*, Retrieved March 10, 2017 from <http://www.elevenwarriors.com/ohio-state-football/2017/03/80685/video-ray-rice-speaks-to-ohio-state-football-team>

Carey, B. (2016, March 27). On C.T.E. and Athletes, Science Remains In Its Infancy. *The New York Times*. Retrieved on July 19, 2017 from <https://www.nytimes.com/2016/03/28/health/cte-brain-disease-nfl-football-research.html>

Carey, Tariq. [@RexFranchise]. (2014 September 8). Technically ray rice didn't knock her.out the railing.did.he.jus mused.her that wasn't a punch. [Twitter Moment]. Retrieved from <https://twitter.com/RexFranchise/status/508998614082154496>

Childs, W. (2014, February 22). Rice faces questions as fallout continues. *The Baltimore Sun*. Retrieved April 19, 2017, from <http://www.baltimoresun.com/sports/ravens/bs-sp-ravens-ray-rice-week-20140222-story.html>

Chu, R. [@RikDaddy]. (2014, September 8). Just saw the Ray Rice video. WTF? How could any man punch a woman in the face like that? Sickening. [Twitter Moment]. Retrieved from <https://twitter.com/RikDaddy/status/509028861355786240>

Coombs, W. T. & Holladay, S. J. (2010). *The Handbook of Crisis Communication*. Retrieved from <http://crisiscommunication.uga.edu/wp-content/uploads/2016/02/The-Handbook-of-Crisis-Communication.pdf>

Coombs, W. T. (2012). *Ongoing crisis communication: Planning, managing, and responding*. Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE.



Craig, R. (2009). Hypermasculinity. In H. T. Greene & S. L. Gabbidon (Eds.), *Encyclopedia of race and crime* (pp. 367-368). Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications Ltd. DOI: 10.4135/9781412971928.n148

Dee, P. S. [@PeeteySDee]. (2014, September 8) My, what a vicious accident! [Twitter Moment] Retrieved from <https://twitter.com/PeeteySDee/status/508967875135025152>

Duggan, M., Ellison, N. B., Lampe, C., Lenhart, A. & Madden, M. (2015 January 9). *Social Media Update 2014*. Pew Research Center Internet & Technology. Retrieved July 10, 2017, from <http://www.pewinternet.org/2015/01/09/social-media-update-2014/>

Dunleavy, R. (2017, June 1). Ray Rice is coaching high school football ... but not in New Jersey. *NJ Advance Media*. Retrieved July 18, 2017 from [http://www.nj.com/rutgersfootball/index.ssf/2017/06/ray\\_rice\\_is\\_keeping\\_high\\_school\\_football\\_but\\_not\\_i.html](http://www.nj.com/rutgersfootball/index.ssf/2017/06/ray_rice_is_keeping_high_school_football_but_not_i.html)

Ellet, W. (2007). *The Case Study Handbook: How to Read, Discuss and Write Persuasively About Cases*. Boston: Harvard Business Review

Ellison, N. B., Steinfield, C. & Lampe, C. (2007). The Benefits of Facebook "Friends:" Social Capital and College Students' Use of Online Social Network Sites. *Journal of Computer-Mediated Communication*. 12, 1143-1168, DOI:10.1111/j.1083-6101.2007.00367.x

Elliot, M., Fairweather, I., Olsen, W. & Pampaka, M. (2016). A Dictionary of Social Research Methods. Online: Oxford Reference. Retrieved May 6, 2017 from <http://www.oxfordreference.com/view/10.1093/acref/9780191816826.001.0001/acref-9780191816826-e-0152?rskey=WhsGHh&result=151>

Entman, R. M. (1993). Framing: Toward Clarification of a Fractured Paradigm. *Journal of Communication*. 43(4), p.51-58, 10.1111/j.1460-2466.1993.tb01304.x

Eriksson, M. & Olsson, E. (2016). Facebook and Twitter in Crisis Communication: A Comparative Study of Crisis Communication Professionals and Citizens. *Journal of Contingencies and Crisis Management*. 24(4), 198-208. DOI10.1111/1468-5973.12116

Fenton, J. (2014). Ray Rice, fiancée arrested in N.J. *The Baltimore Sun*. Retrieved April 19, 2017 from <http://www.upi.com/Baltimore-Ravens-Ray-Rice-fiancee-arrested-at-NJ-casino/63471392643103/>

Fink, S. (1986). *Crisis management: planning for the inevitable*. New York, NY: American Management Association.

@gabrielstricker. (10 December 2014). The 2014 #YearOnTwitter. Twitter. Retrieved July 11, 2017 from [https://blog.twitter.com/official/en\\_us/a/2014/the-2014-yearontwitter.html](https://blog.twitter.com/official/en_us/a/2014/the-2014-yearontwitter.html)

Gillespie, L.K., Richards, T.N., Givens, E.M. & Smith, M.D. (2013). Framing Deadly Domestic Violence: Why the Media's Spin Matters in Newspaper Coverage of Femicide. *Violence Against Women*, 19(2), 222-245, DOI: 10.1177/1077801213476457

Glazer, J. [@JayGlazer]. (2014 September 8). I am never speechless [Twitter Moment]. Retrieved from <https://twitter.com/TaylorTwellman/status/509047210047451136>

Hensley, J. (27 May 2016). Ray Rice delivers 'important message' to Ravens rookies. ESPN. Retrieved March 11, 2017, from [http://www.espn.com/nfl/story/\\_/id/15751161/ray-rice-speaks-baltimore-ravens-rookies](http://www.espn.com/nfl/story/_/id/15751161/ray-rice-speaks-baltimore-ravens-rookies)

Hermann, C. F. (1963). Some consequences of crisis which limit the viability of organizations. *Administrative Science Quarterly*, 8, 61–82.

Hoffman, B. [@b\_hoffman11]. (2014 May 23). People Ray Rice apologized to: Owner, GM, Head Coach, fans, everyone else People Ray Rice didn't apologize to: His wife [Twitter Moment]. Retrieved from [https://twitter.com/b\\_hoffman11/status/469962545953251328](https://twitter.com/b_hoffman11/status/469962545953251328)

Isidore, C. (2014, Sept 9). Ray Rice likely to keep \$25 million. CNN Money. Retrieved March 12, 2017, from <http://money.cnn.com/2014/09/08/news/companies/ray-rice-contract/index.html>

JB4EVA [@Go\_FaSyoneM]. (2014 February 19). Ray Rice you have to be kidding me... I know you're a Raven and I hate you but you can't punch woman... you're a punk... [Twitter Moment]. Retrieved from [https://twitter.com/Go\\_EaSyoneM/status/436328568109662208](https://twitter.com/Go_EaSyoneM/status/436328568109662208)

Jones, L.H. (2014, September 26). NFL to broadcast anti-domestic violence PSA during games. *USA Today*. Retrieved May 7, 2017 from <https://www.usatoday.com/story/sports/nfl/2014/09/26/psa-anti-domestic-violence-public-service-announcement/16278983/>

Khang, H., Ki, E. & Ye, L. (2012). Social Media Research in Advertising, Communication, Marketing and Public Relations, 1997-2010. *Journalism & Mass Communication Quarterly*. 89:2, 279-298, DOI: 10.1177/1077699012439853

Kwasi, N. [@Oj\_blood]. (2014, September 8). That punch was mean by Ray Rice tho but bruh she was clearly provoking him in the video. [Twitter Moment] Retrieved from [https://twitter.com/Oj\\_blood/status/509064924342280192](https://twitter.com/Oj_blood/status/509064924342280192)

lex. [@AlexisAprilAnne]. (2014, September 8). watching this Ray Rice video for the first time lmaoooo. he side stepped his wife's punch on some mayweather shit. [Twitter Moment]. Retrieved from <https://twitter.com/AlexisAprilAnne/status/509069078074359808>

Jin, Y., Liu, B. F., & Austin, L. L. (2014). Examining the Role of Social Media in Effective Crisis Management: The Effects of Crisis Origin, Information Form and Source on Publics Crisis Responses. *Communication Research*. 41:1, 74-94, DOI: 10.1177/0093650211423918

Mark. [@MarkMizzouSteel]. (2014, September 8). Wouldn't any punch from Ray Rice be an uppercut? He is pretty short. Retrieved from <https://twitter.com/MarkMizzouSteel/status/436173604661637120>

Mareny, E. [@EMarenyi]. (2014 September 8). I feel bad for Ray Rice's fiancée. I would not want to take a punch from that dude. [Twitter Moment]. Tweet has since been deleted

McColgan, C. [@CMcColgan]. (2014 May 23) It's funny how Ray Rice apologized to everyone besides his wife. [Twitter Moment]. Retrieved from <https://twitter.com/CMcColgan/status/469965851261927424>

Messner, M.A. (1990). When bodies are weapons: Masculinity and violence in sport. *International Review for the Sociology of Sport*, 25, 203-220, DOI: 10.1177/101269029002500303. Retrieved at <http://journals.sagepub.com/doi/pdf/10.1177/101269029002500303>

Mihoces, G. (2014, September 9). New video 'changed things'; Harbaugh: Ravens acted after seeing punch for the first time. *USA Today*, p. 5C. Retrieved at <https://www.pressreader.com/usa/usa-today-us-edition/20140909/282484296957773>

Mink, R. (2014, May 23). Ray Rice Apologizes, Says He Failed. Baltimore Ravens. Retrieved July 12, 2014, from <http://www.baltimoreravens.com/news/article-1/Ray-Rice-Apologizes-Says-He-Failed/051d6955-43b8-4550-9dea-34c070f77d01>

The New York Times Announces Solid Circulation Gains. (2014, May 1). The New York Times. Press Release. Retrieved January 16 2017 from <http://investors.nytc.com/press/press-releases/press-release-details/2014/The-New-York-Times-Announces-Solid-Circulation-Gains/default.aspx>

NFL player arrests. (n.d.). *USA Today*. Retrieved March 12, 2017, from <http://www.usatoday.com/sports/nfl/arrests/>

Pang, A., Hassan, N. & Chong, A. (2014). Negotiating crisis in the social media environment. *Corporate Communications: An International Journal*. 19:1, 96-118, DOI: 10.1108/ccij-09-2012-0064

Pelissero, T. (29 August 2014). NFL toughens domestic violence stance; First offense will spur six-game suspension. *USA Today*, p. 1A. Retrieved at <http://www.usatoday.com/story/sports/nfl/2014/08/28/nfl-toughens-its-stance-on-domestic-violence/14746187/>.

Players – Ray Rice. (n.d.). National Football League. Retrieved February 1, 2017, from <http://www.nfl.com/player/rayrice/941/careerstats>

Raiders #1. [@Cali\_Sax]. (2014, September 8). No justifying Ray Rice's hitting a female but if she didn't charge him she might not of taken that knockout punch. Retrieved from [https://twitter.com/Cali\\_Sax/status/509087197564121088](https://twitter.com/Cali_Sax/status/509087197564121088)

Ray Rice Makes Impact in Youth Community. (2012, August 21). Baltimore Ravens. Retrieved February 1, 2017, from <http://www.baltimoreravens.com/news/article-1/Ray-Rice-Makes-Impact-in-Youth-Community/3cad2e40-2599-47e6-8e48-83b28a8945be>

Ray Rice -- ELEVATOR KNOCKOUT ... Fiancée Takes Crushing Punch (Video). (2014, September 8). TMZ. Retrieved March 11, 2017, from <http://www.tMZ.com/2014/09/08/ray-rice-elevator-knockout-fiancee-takes-crushing-punch-video/>

Reynolds, B. & Seegar, M.W. (2007). Crisis and Emergency Risk Communication as an Integrative Model. *Journal of Health Communication: International Perspectives*, 10:1, 44-55, DOI: 10:1080/10810730590904571

Rishe, P. (2016, December 6). 2016 NFL TV Ratings Decline: Has Diminishing Marginal Utility Finally Set In? *Forbes*. Retrieved from <https://www.forbes.com/sites/prishe/2016/12/06/2016-nfl-tv-ratings-decline-has-diminishing-marginal-utility-finally-set-in/#5e5ceba65217>

Scheffer, A. [@AdamScheffer]. (2014, September 8). The elevator knockout punch from Ray Rice is beyond disturbing and stomach turning. dlvr.it/6rRC1T. [Twitter Moment]. Retrieved from <https://twitter.com/AdamScheffer/status/508921841294270465>

Schultz, F., Utz, S. & Göritz, A. (2011). Is the medium the message? Perceptions of and reactions to crisis communication via Twitter, blogs and traditional media. *Public Relations Review*. 37, 20-37

Scott, D. (2016, August 21). Ray Rice Spoke to the Florida State Football Team About How He Derailed His NFL Career. *Complex*, Retrieved March 11, 2017 from <http://www.complex.com/sports/2016/08/ray-rice-spoke-florida-state-football-team-derailed-nfl-career>

Sean. [@Slappppp] (2014, September 8). I don't get the added outrage of Ray Rice.....what did. Retrieved from <https://twitter.com/Slappppp/status/509069094218645504>

Steele, Blake. [@PLANB\_253]. (2014, September 8). She was UNCONSCIOUS being drug out of the elevator! What did you think the punch would look like.. Shame on Ray Rice AND the league. [Twitter Moment]. Retrieved from [https://twitter.com/PLANB\\_253/status/509086314637963264](https://twitter.com/PLANB_253/status/509086314637963264)

Strauss, B. (2014, September 19). Comments by Brandon Marshall, Bears' Top Receiver, Reflect Complexity of Abuse Issue. *The New York Times*. Retrieved April 19, 2017 from <https://www.nytimes.com/2014/09/19/sports/football/comments-by-bears-brandon-marshall-reflect-complexity-of-abuse-issue.html>

TMZ. [@TMZ]. (2014, September 8). Ray Rice -- ELEVATOR KNOCKOUT ... Fiancee Takes Crushing Punch (Video). Retrieved from <https://twitter.com/TMZ/status/508888544807374848>

Torino, A. [@AnthonyTorinoX] (2014 September 10). Ray Rice's wife says the "Media" is causing pain in her life... here I thought it was her husband's punch in the elevator. #Enlightened. Retrieved from <https://twitter.com/AnthonyTorinoX/status/509710053448773632>

Twitter, Inc. (2011). #numbers. Twitter. Retrieved June 14, 2017, from [https://blog.twitter.com/official/en\\_us/a/2011/numbers.html](https://blog.twitter.com/official/en_us/a/2011/numbers.html)

Understanding Intimate Partner Violence (2014). Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Retrieved March 12, 2017, from <https://www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/pdf/ipv-factsheet.pdf>

Utz, S., Shultz, F. & Glocka, S. (2013). Crisis communication online: How medium, crisis type and emotions affected public reactions in the Fukushima Daiichi nuclear disaster. *Public Relations Review*. 39:1, 40-46. DOI: 10.1016/j.pubrev.2012.09.010

Webb, B. (2012). Unsportsmanlike Conduct: Curbing the Trend of Domestic Violence in the National Football League and Major League Baseball. *Journal of Gender, Social Policy & the Law*, 20:3, 741-761. Retrieved at <http://digitalcommons.wcl.american.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1583&context=jgspl>

Welch, M. (1997). Violence Against Women by Professional Football Players. *Journal of Sport & Social Issues*, 21:4, 392-411, DOI: 10.1177/019372397021004006. Retrieved at <http://journals.sagepub.com/doi/pdf/10.1177/019372397021004006>.

Will we forget? (2014, September 10) *The Baltimore Sun*. Retrieved April 19, 2017 from <http://www.baltimoresun.com/news/opinion/editorial/bs-ed-ravens-rice-goodell-20140910-story.html>

Wilson, A. (2014, March 10). Backup offensive lineman Reid arrested in Fla. *The Baltimore Sun*. Retrieved April 19, 2017 from <http://www.baltimoresun.com/sports/ravens/ravens-insider/bal-ravens-reserve-offensive-lineman-jah-reid-arrested-charged-with-misdemeanor-battery-20140309-story.html>

Wilson, A. (2014, December 11). NFL stiffens, broadens personal-conduct policy. *The Baltimore Sun*. Retrieved September 17, 2016 from <https://www.pressreader.com/usa/baltimore-sun/20141211/281818577167359>

woosh [@walshjoey4] (2014 February 21). @jamisonhensley thats a huge problem for ray rice if.he really did punch his.girl and knock.her out. Not very manly of him. Retrieved from <https://twitter.com/walshjoey4/status/436971570029158400>

Yin, R. K. (2014). *Case study research: Design and methods*. London: Sage Publication

Yu, R. (2014, October 28). USA Today, WSJ, NYT are Top Three Papers in Circulation. *USA Today*. Retrieved January 16, 2017 from <http://www.usatoday.com/story/money/business/2014/10/28/aam-circulation-data-september/18057983/>

Zrebiec, J. (2014, September 28). Ravens front office vows greater scrutiny. *The Baltimore Sun*. Retrieved April 19, 2017 from <http://www.baltimoresun.com/sports/ravens/ravens-insider/bal-ravens-executives-address-ray-rice-investigation-in-exclusive-interview-20140910-story.html>

Zurawik, D. (2014, September 14). TMZ is definitely for real, and it's changing the media landscape. *The Baltimore Sun*. Retrieved April 19, 2017 from <https://search-proquest-com.libproxy.lib.unc.edu/docview/1562124485?accountid=14244>