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IS ALL PUBLICITY GOOD PUBLICITY? AN EXAMINATION THROUGH THE
LENS OF THE 1995 CALVIN KLEIN CHILD PORNOGRAPHY AD
CONTROVERSY

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this research was to explore the question “Is all publicity good publicity?” by performing a case study of Calvin Klein’s 1995 “kiddie porno” ad campaign as a standard of measure. First, literary research was done to gain background insight about the power of publicity. This understanding was then applied to the history of Calvin Klein’s controversial brand marketing strategies leading up to 1995. Next, an in-depth look into the 1995 ad campaign was completed. This was done by first researching the setting, target market and desired message of the campaign. Then, the physical content of the print and television ads were transcribed and examined.

Lastly, an analysis of the negative media backlash in response to the campaign was completed. While the media condemned Calvin Klein’s marketing tactics and called him a “child pornographer,” jean sales skyrocketed. Thus, the research was interpreted that in the case of Calvin Klein, all publicity is good publicity if it markets to the proper target audience.

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Chapter 1

The Historical Question: Is All Publicity Good Publicity?

The question has been debated since the 19th century: *Is All Publicity Good Publicity?* It is impossible to prove or disprove this with a black or white answer. However, it is very possible to *explore* the question. I will do so by examining the negative publicity effects in response to the landmark 1995 Calvin Klein Child Pornography scandal. Before delving into a single case study, it is important to understand the background of the question, and why it is a relevant debate today.

Origin

Advertising and Publicity experts have been exploring the validity of “all publicity is good” since Oscar Wilde, controversial Irish playwright and self-publicist, claimed that “the only thing worse than being talked about is not being talked about” (Desmond). Wilde received angry backlash from much of his work between 1855 and 1891. However, the more controversial discourse that circulated, the more ticket sales increased (Desmond). In 1895, his controversial work was used against him as evidence to prove that he committed scandalous libel and criminal suits. He was soon after incarcerated. The continued negative publicity and discourse circulating Wilde made him a cultural icon and shaped his legacy. To this day, his highly controversial words commonly appears on greeting cards, speeches, articles, and other various literary forms. Wilde is the historic case that provoked advertising and publicity scholars to further explore the effects of negative publicity (Becker-Lackrone, 2002).

A January 1915 edition of the Atlanta Constitution was the first publication cited that printed the controversial proverb. In an article titled, “What Advertisers Buy,” advertising expert J. LeRoy North was quoted for arguing that “all publicity is good publicity if it is intelligent” (“What advertisers buy,” 1915). The article was covering a speech Leroy made to a room full of YMCA members, regarding the importance of captivating and sometimes controversial newspaper advertisements. The speech caused an immediate debate among the audience of YMCA members, and sparked a long term debate after the article was published. North continued to explain in the article that “intelligent publicity” is catering to the right market. He says that the advertising and publicity of a brand in a newspaper is only valuable when it matches the “nature of the circulation.” While many communications professionals agreed that Leroy’s theory made sense, publicists were not ready to adapt this controversial strategy into practice (“What advertisers buy,” 1915).

The Current Debate

Since 1915, the debate of “all publicity is good” has greatly evolved. Since, the appearance of negative publicity in the media has caused mixed results for brands and celebrities. There has been a multitude of modern examples in popular culture that support the notion. In the early 1990’s, pop superstar Michael Jackson bombarded the media after he was charged for child molestation. However, the most negative publicity he received, the more records he sold (Walker, 2010). In 2011, Penn State University’s former defensive coordinator of the Nittany Lion football team, Jerry Sandusky, was charged for sexually abusing eight boys. The Penn State athletic department allegedly knew about the events. The scandal continued to unfold as legendary football coach Joe Paterno and president Graham Spanier was fired. The media ate up the negative publicity. However, 2011 incoming freshman application rates increased by four percent

(Ruiz, 2011). Most recently is the Miley Cyrus hoopla. After former Disney Channel star performed a shockingly obscene and offensive sexual performance at the 2013 MTV Video Music Awards, Cyrus appeared in the news headlines every day for the next month ([Strang, 2013](#)). Her performance was the most Tweeted event recorded in history, with more than 360,000 tweets a minute (Berger) After the publicity outcry, the young artist was the first musician in 2013 to top the charts in two categories at once, including singles chart with Wrecking Ball, and album chart with Bangerz ([Strang, 2013](#)). Marketing expert and professor at the Wharton School of Business, Jonah Berger, claims in his blog that Cyrus's commonly called "trainwreck" performance was the best career move ever (Berger).

On the flip side, there are just as many examples that refute that all publicity is positive. In 2005, Russell Crowe received a backlash of negative publicity after he threw a phone at a hotel concierge. Immediately following his stunt, his recent movie "Cinderella Man" severely decreased in box office ratings (Berger, Sorenson & Rasmussen, 2007). In 2009, Tiger Woods lost millions of dollars in endorsements after the media discovered that he had cheated on his wife. One month after the media publicized the story, he announced that he was taking a break from golf. This ended the rolling success of his career ("Is tiger out,"). One year later, BP's Oil Spill released 206 million gallons of crude oil. Not only did the environment suffer the impact, but so did BP. After media outlets covered the spill on a daily basis, BP sales profit dropped by 72% in the following quarter ([Berman, 2013](#)).

Based on differing outcomes of varying case studies, publicity experts have not been able to come to a single conclusion about the effects of negative publicity. However, one thing is unanimous: publicity is extremely powerful.

Chapter 2

Why Publicity?

The Power of Publicity on a Brand

While thinking about the question at hand, it led me to ask: Why exactly is publicity so powerful? According to a 1994 article in the advertising column of the *Wall Street Journal*, “No matter how many millions of dollars are spent on ads, nothing sells a product as well as free publicity” (Harris, 1998). This article was described as “a discovery article,” uncovering the importance of publicity as it highly impacts sales of a product. The topic of the article was sparked after *60 Minutes* covered a story in 1992 on the health benefits of red wine. The exposé claimed that French people consume foods with higher butterfat and cream content than Americans, yet have far fewer heart attacks. The story accredited fewer heart attacks to the fact that the French drink one glass of red wine daily. Red wine sales in America increased by 50 percent immediately after the story was aired (Harris, 1998).

A 1994 study performed by the Wirthlin Group for the Allen Communications Group provides evidence that shows the effects of publicity on consumer attitude. More than 1,000 mixed gender adults, 18-years or older, were asked what media sources would most affect their buying decision. The results showed that 95 percent of adults found newspaper articles to be most influential. Next in-line came magazine

articles, with 89 percent. The study showed that television commercials were least influential, with 24 percent. When asked the reasoning behind their choices, consumers said that news articles are most influential because they are most reliable (Harris, 1998).

Publicity is believed to be one of the most powerful tools in the Integrated Marketing Communications (IMC) network because it generates credibility. According to a study published in a 2005 edition of *The Journal of Advertising*, publicity is the most reliable aspect of IMC because the message is communicated from an external source. Thus, the consumer is led to believe that the product or brand is of value; not because the company wants you to buy their product, but because the product is actually good. Advertising creates awareness of the brand, whereas newspapers, trade publications and broadcast media tell a story about *why* the product is good. Or, in some cases, why the product is bad. Consumers are likely to believe that publicity is recapping first-hand experiences with a product, which increases credibility. On the opposing spectrum, advertisements are presented in a manner that makes consumers feel as if they are being persuaded to purchase a product, whether the product is of value or not (Stammerjohan, Wood, Chang & Thorson, 2005).

Breaking Through the Ad-Wall: The 1990's, It's About Discourse

One of the world's most renowned marketing leaders of the 1990's, Philip Kotler, explains in his book titled *The Marketer's Guide to Public Relations*, " why PR is so essential for companies, come the start of the 90's. Kotler says:

"In an over communicated society, consumers develop communication avoidance- routines. As mass advertiser and even target advertisers lose some of their cost effectiveness, message senders are driven to other media. They discover, or rediscover, the power of news, events, community programs ... Sooner or later they discover marketing public relations"
(Harris, 1998).

The start of the 90's was like a tug of war competition for marketers. Consumers were the rope, and marketing companies were fighting to win their attention. There was more advertising clutter than ever before. Magazines, newspapers and television channels were starting to feature advertisements as media content. Consumers were consciously tuning out advertisements to get to the media they wanted. Marketers had to get creative. A 1997 CNN segment called "Getting their Attention" says, "Consider it a law of human nature. Get their attention and you'll get their business as well." This was the leading segment on CNN's "The World Today," which shows the importance of breaking through the ad-wall in the 1990's (Harris, 1998).

In 1996 the Dartnell Corporation published *Dartnell's Public Relations Handbook*. The handbook explains the four primary reasons regarding why it was necessary that companies switch over to PR-driven marketing techniques. First and foremost, there was an apparent clutter of commercial messages. Public relations was the newfound answer to this problem, enabling marketers to not only spread awareness about a brand, but make them care about it. Secondly, the media had been broken down into marketing niches that cater to separate audiences. Marketers could no longer rely on one channel of media to reach consumers like they could during the World War II era, when audiences young and old would get their media from one source. Marketers needed to channel a variety of mediums, in which publicity covered. Thirdly, organizations were forced to reduce their budget in the 1990's as a result of growing global competition. As a result, marketing departments budgets were cut. The cheap and effective answer was public relations. Finally, an increase of cross-product competition made it more difficult for brands to position their product as unique. Publicity allowed for companies to tell a story about their product, providing an introduction for repositioning (Dilenschneider, 1996).

Controversial PR: Whatever Gets 'Em Talking

Thus far, it is safe to conclude that public relations was a necessary tool for marketers in the 1990's. However, the point of public relations was to get people

talking. And that is where edgy, dangerously controversial public relations come into play. Why would a brand *want* to offend their beloved consumers?

Taco Bell was one of the first brands to successfully do so. On the morning of April 1st, 1996, the *New York Times* printed an ad headlined in bold letters, “Taco Bell Buys the Liberty Bell.” The copy of the ad read:

“Taco Bell is pleased to announce that we have agreed to purchase the Liberty Bell, one of our country's most historic treasures. It will now be called the 'Taco Liberty Bell' and will still be accessible to the American public for viewing. While some may find this controversial, we hope our move will prompt other corporations to take similar action to do their part to reduce the country's debt” (Williams, 2006).

As expected, Americans were outraged. The National Historical Park of Philadelphia received thousands of appalled and angry callers. By noon that day, Taco Bell revealed the joke to America, explaining that it was merely an April Fools joke. In response, more than 650 print media outlets and 400 broadcast news outlets reacted. The next two days, Taco Bell’s sales increased by \$1,100,000 (Williams, 2006). Taco Bell’s marketing stunt showed American marketers that when you get consumers talking, they will buy.

According to modern marketing expert Lois Kelley, “conversations are the soul of marketing.” In order to get consumers talking, a marketer must make them care. The most efficient and promising way to make consumers to care is by

challenging their morals, beliefs and passions. In Kelley's book "Beyond Buzz," she has highlighted the top four marketing themes that get consumers talking. First, marketers must design a plan that challenges or affirms consumers beliefs (Kelley, 2007). For example, American patriots were offended and angered by the Liberty Taco Bell stunt, but comedic-enthusiasts found the prank to be hilarious (Williams, 2006). Whether consumers affirmed or challenged the controversial stunt, Taco Bell got what they wanted: Discourse.

Secondly, an effective marketing plan should challenge assumptions. This theme should make consumers question the norm. When a common belief is "X," the marketing campaign should prove it to be "Y" (Kelley, 2007). For example, a Chicago liquor manufacturer, Jeppson's Malort, launched a liquor campaign stating, "When you need to unfriend someone, in person" (Kelley, 2014). Common assumption is that consumers want to make friends, not "unfriend" them.

It is also suggested that marketers should create a story about their brand as if it is "the next big thing." We live in a society where people want to be included. If consumers believe that a product is the next "must have" item, they will likely respond in two ways: Rush out to buy the product before the next, and ask others if they have yet purchased that "must-have" product. This is commonly seen in fashion and luxury item campaigns (Kelley, 2007).

Lastly, marketers will also successfully create discourse if they instill a sense of anxiety, fear or apprehension in the consumer (Kelley, 2007). For example, an extremely controversial Public Service Announcement commercial in England was

aired four years ago, featuring a young female texting while driving, accompanied by three friends. The commercial then shows every detail of the car crash, complete with painfully gory images of the passengers fatal injuries. People argued that the commercial was far too graphic, yet it went viral on YouTube and teens claimed that they were deeply affected by the graphics (Spak, 2010).

Calvin Klein's 1995 Child Pornography Ad Campaign managed to accomplish all four: challenge beliefs, defy assumptions and instill anxiety, all while making consumers feel that Calvin Klein jeans are the "next best must-have thing." The campaign is a direct reflection of the newfound IMC ideals introduced in the 1990's. However, Calvin Klein takes the idea of "getting publicity by controversy" to a new level. Thus, Calvin Klein's 1995 controversial jean campaign is a landmark case for exploring the idea that "all publicity is good publicity." However, before delving into the case it is important to understand the Calvin Klein brand personality and the company background leading up to the launch of the 1995 ad campaign.

Chapter 3

Calvin Klein Leading Up to 1995

The Brand (Anti) Culture

The Calvin Klein, Inc. brand has always been known for pushing limits. The brand personality is about challenging what is expected and *accepted*. If there was a hot controversial topic of the time, chances are there was an oversized, sexually-explicit Time Square billboard speaking to just that (Tucker, 1998). For instance, in the 1980's when the AIDS epidemic brought light to homosexuality in America, there was a larger-than-life Calvin Klein billboard featuring naked men on top of more naked men (Gross, 1986). The male and female clothing and underwear lines were not as much about what they looked like, but how they were perceived (Tucker, 1998).

The brains behind everything the Calvin Klein brand spoke to was backed by Mr. Klein, himself. The mission of Klein was to create more than a fashion line, but an “anti-culture.” The way he achieved this was through his outstanding marketing. The fashion mogul and ad-mastermind refused to use out-of-house agencies to create and design riveting ad campaigns, as he felt that only an in-house agency would understand and carry-out the unique personality of Calvin Klein. Thus, he created CRK Advertising (Grant, 2003).

CRK Advertising worked directly with Klein throughout the brands' growth to achieve exactly what he envisioned. His underwear and jean lines were simple and of "bare necessity," just as his nude models were depicted in the majority of his advertisements (Grant, 2003). Klein explained to a *New York Times* reporter in 1986, "The intention is to create an image of my own, the way I see things. The intention is also to be recognized. Of 700 ads in an issue of *Vogue*, you want people to notice yours" (Gross, 1986). And Klein achieved just that with his shocking images and controversial messages. Top competitor Donna Karen admits to the public, "Calvin Klein does it best. He touches a nerve" (Gross, 1986).

A History of Pushing Limits

The brand was born in 1968, after a young and broke Calvin Klein borrowed \$10,000 of startup money from childhood friend Barry Schwartz. With a mixture of luck and talent, Klein was discovered in an elevator holding a collection of sample coats and dresses by Bonwit Teller department store executive Don O'Brien. O'Brien is immediately taken by his samples, and introduces his pieces to the department store decision makers ("Calvin Klein (brand)," 2011). One year later, he had made \$1 million worth of sales (Grant, 2003). His brand soon expanded from one retailer to eight different retail front-window displays, full-page ads in *The New York Times*, and a feature spot on the cover of *Vogue*. By 1971, Calvin Klein hit \$5 million in sales ("Calvin Klein (brand)," 2011).

By 1976, Klein had enough resources to launch his designer jean line. The launch was a failure. Klein took the failure as an outlet to reinvent the branding of his line. With a higher waist, tighter fit and accentuated fit around the buttocks, he re-launched the line. However this time, his ad campaign spoke “sex” (Grant, 2003). The campaign featured a Time Square billboard of Patti Hansen on her hands and knees, complete with an arched back and buttocks perched high in the air, with the Calvin Klein logo just visible enough on her right hip (“Calvin Klein (brand),” 2011). The ad campaign triggered a youth craze. Thus, Klein established a target market of trendy youths, looking for a chicer, sexier and cheaper alternative to competitors Ralph Lauren and Anne Klein. By 1977, sales increased by \$40 million reaching a peak of \$90 million. Klein had unlocked the secret: Sex, edge and shock sell (Grant, 2003).

Klein built on this brand identity with the launch of the 1979 television ad campaign directed by Richard Avedon, featuring 15-year-old Brooke Shields seductively posed in a skintight pair of Calvin Klein Jeans. Shields says into the camera, “You want to know what comes between me and my Calvins? Nothing” (Tucker, 1998). In response to the commercial, there was an outburst of public complaint. Angry mothers were crying that the commercial was out-of-line and inappropriate for the Calvin Klein consumer audience of 15-year-olds. Television networks pulled the commercial. Yet, jean sales increased by two million pairs a month (Grant, 2003). As much as furious mothers hated the ad, Klein loved it. Calvin Klein was thriving off the controversial publicity. Limits would only continue to be pushed more with the birth of the Calvin Klein underwear line. (Gross, 1986).

Calvin Klein launched its underwear line in 1982 with an even more risqué ad campaign, featuring a lanky Olympic pole vaulter modeling in a multitude of provocative poses. CRK Advertising rented twenty-five bus shelters across New York to showcase the ads. Immediately after the exposure, all 25 bus shelters had their windows shattered and posters stolen overnight. Despite audience resistance, as Klein expected, the underwear line was a hit. So much so, that sales soon-after surpassed Calvin Klein manufacturing capabilities and was sold to Kayser Roth Corporation for \$11.2 million (Grant, 2003).

A 1983 article in *People* called “The Briefing of America” named Calvin Klein underwear a pioneer in more than just the undergarment market, but the market of feminism. Calvin Klein’s “locker-room lingerie” crossed a daring line between male and female underwear roles, as the women’s line was made up of skimpy briefs that closely resembled jockstraps. Young consumers loved the gender ambiguous panties, but conservatives did not. Feminist groups argued that the advertisements for the underwear line were objectifying to women. However, target consumers did not care; they had already been “Calvinized” (“The Briefing of,” 1983).

Conservatives were even more offended after the 1985 launch of Calvin Klein’s perfume line, *Obsession*. The \$17 million print ad campaign featured three different scenes: Two naked men enthralled around one female, a naked couple pressed together body-to-body, and three naked women enveloped in each other. The print ads were Calvin Klein’s most provocative yet (Grant, 2003). While many were

appalled at the images, the ad won most impressionable in an April 1986, *Adweek* survey (Gross, 1986).

Despite the explosion of success in response to Calvin Klein's controversial ad campaigns, Klein decided to try a new approach. Soon after Klein married his wife in 1988, he launched a new scent, "Eternity." Unlike his former perfume, floral-scented Eternity was marketed to bring consumers "spirituality, love, marriage and commitment." Two years later, another fruity and floral scent was introduced: Escape. The campaign marketed to the more mature working audience, suggesting that "After work you escape, and you do it with style" (Grant, 2003).

While this non-controversial, new approach made mothers happier, it caused Calvin Klein to lose millions of dollars. Revenue dropped by 13 percent (Grant, 2003). The *Wall Street Journal* wrote a 1991 article about "the CK magic slipping," and accused Calvin Klein of losing sight of its consumer base (Agins, Ten, and Jeffrey A, Trachtenberg, 1991). As a result, Klein attempted to revisit his old and edgy advertising methods by speaking to sex appeal once again, but the effort was fruitless (Grant, 2003). He lost hold of his loyal rebellious-youth audience, and did not quite grasp that of an older, more mature audience (Agins, Ten, and Jeffrey A, Trachtenberg, 1991).

Klein knew that action had to be taken to save his name and his brand, so he did what he knew how to do best; designed an entirely new campaign that would surely offend the conservatives once again. He lowered the price of his underwear to an affordable \$16, and launched a promotional campaign that became his most

famous yet. Featuring 1992 rapper Marky Mark, (now Mark Wahlberg), showing off his bare muscles while holding his crotch, posed with also nearly-naked Kate Moss, the pairing revived Calvin Klein. Mother's were angry again, and Calvin Klein re-entered the green area with sales reaching \$85 million within in the next year ("Calvin Klein (brand)," 2011).

Because Kate Moss was such a hit, Klein rehired Moss to pose nude for the new Obsession campaign. Moss was dangerously naked, and dangerously skinny according to critics and publicity response. Publications like *People* tried to defame and deglamorize the anorexic, "heroin-chic" look. Klein was accused of promoting anorexia in women. However, Klein laughed in the face of publicity, because sales continue to skyrocket, once again (Grant, 2003).

In 1994, Klein hired risqué photographer Stephen Meisel to photograph an ad campaign for the the first-ever unisex eau de toilette, featuring Kate Moss who became the face of Calvin Klein, and LGBT activist Jenna Shmizu. Together, the duo touched upon multiple controversial hot debates: Eating disorders, substance abuse, homosexuality and the colliding of gender roles. Sales hit \$60 million, and Calvin Klein was back on top ("Calvin Klein (brand)," 2011).

In order to stay on top, Klein and CKR Advertising needed to figure out another campaign to shock audiences and make publicists talk. Klein rehired Stephen Meisel, and designed a campaign to push the limits even further. Thus far, bad publicity has only done Calvin Klein good. However, come the 1995 Child

Pornography Ad-Campaign, many argue that the line was pushed one-inch too far (Tucker, 1998).

Chapter 4

The 1995 Campaign; Child Pornography or Just an Edgy Ad?

The Campaign

The jean campaign was launched in early August of 1995 (Lilley, 1998). Three and a half weeks later on August 28th, the campaign was dropped ("Calvin Klein drops," 1995). Never before has Calvin Klein given into the pressure of bad press. Apparently, "kiddie porn," as coined by the media, was too much for the Calvin Klein name to swing (Garfield, 1995).

The multi-faceted campaign was designed to run in magazines, billboards, buses, and on television (Elliott, 1995). While the campaign cost over \$6 million, the ads were made to look cheap, resembling that of a low-budget porno. The setting takes place in a scarcely-lit, dingy room that gives off a "back room, basement" feel. The models appeared no older than 18-years-old, all posing in provocative, sexually suggestive, and vulnerable positions (Lilley, 1998).

The campaign targeted both male and female teenagers and young adults, ranging from ages 15 through 21. The message was aimed at young consumers living in large metropolitan areas, especially focused in New York City and Chicago. The ad was placed in fashion magazines like *YM* that reaches an audience as young as 13, to *Vanity Fair* and *Rolling Stone* that reaches consumers in their early twenties (Tucker,

1998). The television campaign was primarily featured on MTV which targets teenagers and young adults (Garfield, 1995).

The content of the photo ads featured unknown models wearing nothing but CK Jeans, peering into the camera in a vulnerable and innocent fashion (Lilley, 1998). The jeans fit the models tight enough so that they remain on their wastes, but loose enough so that the top of their underwear peaked hello to the camera. [The child models were clearly undeveloped, showing no signs of maturity via hair growth, muscle definition, or womanly curves. For instance, one boy model who looks no older than 15-years-old, poses in an awkward manner against a rickety ladder, his undeveloped body and lanky limbs creating a chilling effect] (*See Figure 1*).

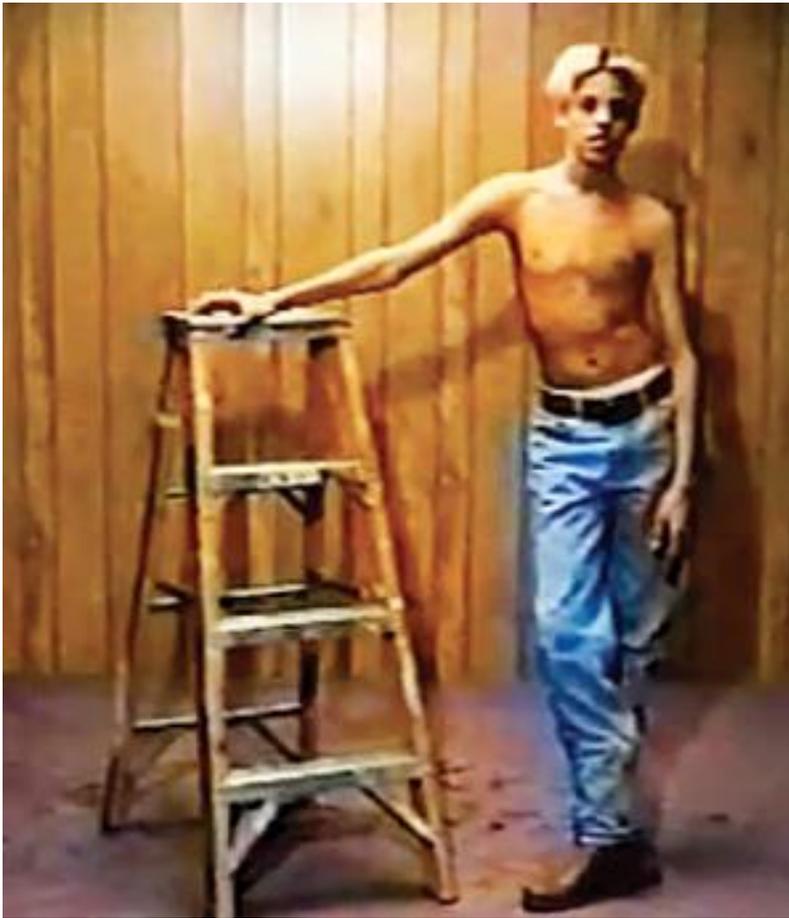


Figure 1: 1995 Calvin Klein Jean Campaign, Print Ad 1. Photo featured in *Adweek*, 2012

[Similarly, another boy with brown curly hair poses uncomfortably in a similar position, looking lost at what to do with the placement of his hands] (*See Figure 2*).



Figure 2: 1995 Calvin Klein Jean Campaign, Print Ad 2. Photo featured in *CBSNews*, 2010

[In another ad, the provocative photos are combined together to create a side-by-side of all of the underage models in different suggestive poses, peering emptily into the camera] (*See figure 3*).



Figure 3: 1995 Calvin Klein Jean Campaign, Print Ad 3. Photo featured in *The Underwear Expert*, 2010

While the photo ads were deemed offensive, the television campaign was really what sparked media backfire. The series of television commercials featured the same young models in the same dingy basement setting, except role playing as if they were auditioning for a pornographic film. Although it is never specified that the audition is for a pornographic film, the scenario is unmistakably suggesting so. There is a middle-aged man's voice in the background that is only heard and never seen, asking the young models uncomfortable questions about their bodies. The voice plays the role of the film director (Tucker, 1998). The following are excerpts of dialogue transcribed from the original commercials:

Dialogue 1: To lanky, shirtless blonde boy who appears 14-years-old.

Director: Go ahead, show me what you can do.

Boy: I'm not sure what to do
 Director: What do you do when you are just standing around, and you hear a good song on the radio?
 Boy: I mosh. I like, run around the room.
 Director: You march?
 Boy: Mosh.
 Director: Go ahead.
 Boy: Okay. (*moshes in circles around ladder*).
 (*silence*)
 Director: That's a pretty good Mosh.
 Boy: Thanks.
Blackout. CK Jeans logo.

Dialogue 2: *To jock-looking blonde boy who appears 17-years-old.*

Director: You got a real nice look. What's your name?
 August: August.
 Director: Why don't you stand up. Are you strong?
 August: I'd like to think so
 Director: You think you could rip that shirt off of ya?
 (*August reluctantly rips shirt off of himself*)
 Director: That's a nice body. Do you work out?
 August: Mmm hmm.
 Director: Yea, I can tell.
Blackout. CK Jeans logo.

Dialogue 3: *To excited, peppy blonde girl who appears 16-years-old:*

Director: I like the way those jeans fit, do you?
 (*silence*)
 Director: Oh, you're bored...
 Girl: huh?
 Director: You're bored...
 Girl: No I'm not bored
 Director: Can you dance?
 Girl: Umm yea I can dance, but not for you
 Director: Why?
 Girl: I don't want to.
 Director: Oh, well there's a reason. Do you always do what you don't want to do?
 Girl: Uh, no. I always do what I want to do. And I don't do what I don't want to do...

Blackout. CK Jeans logo.

From a personal standpoint, the campaign is blatantly overt and offensive. However, as a communications scholar I have learned that what is safe does not always sell, nor is it what gets people talking. By thinking in the like mind of Klein as an advertiser and promoter of his own name, I believe that he was not promoting child pornography, but rather discourse. However, perception is reality. Thus, since discourse employed the idea that Klein was promoting child pornography, in those consumers eyes he was. The “kiddie porno” campaign evidently triggered an outburst of negative publicity. The following chapter will explore the surrounding publicity, providing further interpretation into the historical question: Is negative publicity good?

Chapter 5

The Backlash

Intentions Gone Wrong

It is evident that Calvin Klein was seeking an outburst of publicity coverage in response to the launch of his 1995 ad campaign. Klein admits to the public in a 1995 *New York Times* article regarding his campaign, “Controversy is good for business. Kids will want whatever outrages their parents.” He further explains, “I’d have more a problem if no one cared” (Dowd, 1995). While Klein’s intentions were clearly to cause controversy, ad-experts claimed that he was over his head with this one (Carlson & Faltermayer, 1995). The way that Klein interpreted his knowingly controversial ad was far different from how the media perceived it. Klein wanted his young models to speak to America’s youths about independence, freedom, and modernity. Klein says, “These pictures are supposed to make people stop. Stop and shop. But everyone is so blasted media-savvy, it gets harder and harder to push back the edge of the envelope” (Dowd, 1995). After an outburst of outraged editorial articles and a furious American Family Association (AFA), *The New York Times* reported Klein asking:

“Doesn’t anyone in my operation know which way the wind is blowing? I want to exploit, not mis-exploit. And I don’t want my

pictures flashed on the news with the phrase “Kiddie Porn.” Memo to myself: Send a check to the Children’s Defense Fund” (Dowd, 1995).

While it might not have been the type of controversy that he wanted, controversy he got. The influx of negative publicity was further ignited after the FBI, AFA and The Catholic League decided to publicly take a stand against Calvin Klein and his ad campaign.

The AFA and the FBI Attack

The FBI investigation was officially launched September 8th, only a couple of weeks after the campaign was pulled. The focus of the investigation was to examine if Calvin Klein breached child pornography laws. According to Justice Department spokesman John Russell, the investigation was launched after receiving extreme pressure from AFA’s director of governmental affairs, John Trueman, and influential Christian group based out of Mississippi, The Catholic League (Lowry, Beuttner & Singleton, 1995). Trueman played an especially large role in the investigation, as he previously served as the chief of the U.S. Justice Department for child exploitation and obscenity, and helped redefine the qualifications for child pornography during the Knox administration. Trueman stated that the campaign’s “message is not acceptable to the public,” and was not going to back down until the FBI took serious action (Sachs, 1995).

As Trueman suspected, Calvin Klein found himself defending his company in the Federal Courts against child pornography allegations. The courts established a six-point system to help define whether an ad qualifies as child pornography or not. The six points measure the sexual content of the ad, the intent of the photographs, the surrounding environment in which the photographs were taken, the sexual coyness of the models, and the focus on the female and male private part regions. Analyzing these six elements against the Calvin Klein photographs, Trueman along with other members of the FBI and federal court system strongly believed the ad qualified as child pornography. The photographs met each criteria on some degree, which put Calvin Klein in jeopardy of going to jail for five years on accounts of child pornography. (Sachs, 1995).

Klein managed to dodge the charges. However, his reputation was publicly damaged. The media went crazy in response to the controversy gone federal, and Calvin Klein, Inc. became associated with “kiddie porn,” as coined by the media (“Calvin klein drops,” 1995).

Department Stores Join In

As if an FBI investigation was not enough, the AFA did not stop there. Donald Wildmon, founder of the AFA, pressured retailers to pull the advertisement from display in their stores (Lilley, 1998). Additionally, Wildmon sent letters to 50 different leading retailers urging them to call Calvin Klein and put pressure on CRK

Advertising to stop running the ad. If retailers did not comply, Wildmon threatened to boycott stores. He would do so by organizing a group of AFA members to stand in front of department stores selling Calvin Klein jeans while distributing copies of the ad. Thus, angering customers and steering potential consumers away from entering stores (Goldman, 1995).

Department stores quickly complied to Wildmon's demands, as they did not want their name associated with "kiddie porno" (Lilley, 1998). Stephen Watson, President of Dayton Hudson Corp., which owns a multitude of powerhouse department stores including Marshall Fields, was the most vocal to boycott the ad. Without needing much convincing from the AFA, Watson called up Klein and pressured him to pull the ad. When Klein refused, he demanded that the Marshall Fields name be removed from Calvin Klein ads. Watson explained, "Calvin Klein is a leading-edge designer, and we have come to expect his ad campaigns to be challenging and move in new directions. But in this case, it was just too challenging and the wrong direction" ("Calvin Klein feels," 1995). Soon after, *Advertising Age* reported that Macy's, Bloomingdale's and Bon Marche followed Dayton Hudson's lead and requested that their department store names be removed from the ads (Decoursey, 199

Chapter 6

The Media Goes Wild

While Calvin Klein did not want a battle against the AFA, The Catholic League, the FBI or the loss of his valued department store sponsors, he did get one thing he wanted: Free publicity. Lots of it.

Columnist writer for the *Washington Post*, Bob Garfield, describes it best:

‘[Klein releases his ads and] “*lobs them into the firetrap of the media culture. The ladder trucks and pumpers of journalism race to the scene, bystanders run to see what the commotion is about and, as they stand in their nightclothes gawking, appalled but somehow also titillated by the conflagration, Klein strolls by and sells them \$100 million worth of pants*” (Lilley, 1998).

Everyone was talking about the controversy. Even President Bill Clinton made a point to publicly condemn the ads, calling the campaign distasteful and inappropriate (Davidson, 1995). Between late August and mid-September, mainstream news outlets were reporting on the status of the controversy on a regular basis. From network television channels like Fox, to a variety of print news sources, Calvin Klein’s name was everywhere (Tucker, 1998).

CK Hot off the Presses

I will focus my discussion on print media following the controversy, as it is the most tangible form of media to explore nearly two decades later. The Calvin Klein controversy was covered in a wide variety of print categories. Based on my research of news databases, using primarily LexisNexis Academic and Access World News Newsbank, I found that the three print categories that most frequently reported on Calvin Klein's ad debacle was mainstream press outlets, general adult-targeted magazines, and marketing industry magazines (Tucker, 1998). I have selected a total of nine articles from leading print news sources in the three categories to discuss further.

In the Newspapers

I found that the mainstream press outlets that focused most on coverage of the controversy were *The New York Times*, *Daily News*, *Wall Street Journal*, *Washington Post* and *USA Today*. By researching through the news databases, these publications had the highest numbers of articles relevant to the 1995 Calvin Klein controversy. The press articles most commonly discussed the hard facts regarding Calvin Klein's suit against the FBI, as well as strongly opinionated op-ed articles. For instance, as cited in Chapter 5, *The New York Times* dedicated an entire full page article simply comprised of quotes said by Klein and his agency representatives, regarding their intentions of the campaign (Dowd, 1995). In an August 29th *Wall Street Journal*

article, Irma Zandl, President of notable youth marketing agency Zandl Group, is quoted saying:

“Calvin Klein crossed the line. There are very few taboos left in this society, but child pornography is one of them. And it didn’t matter whether Calvin Klein thought the ads were pornographic. The public did”
(Goldman, 1995).

Zandl explains that the perception of mass media is essentially reality, which I agree with in the case of Calvin Klein. Even if all news articles spanned across the media spectrum did not tag him directly as a “child pornographer,” his name was constantly paired with this tag line. No matter what the angle of the article was, Calvin Klein was being discussed in terms of child pornography. The *New York Daily News* reports notorious NYC adman Jerry Della Famina saying, “The campaign is a lot of things, but it’s not kiddie porn, and to even think of it as such is to take an incredible serious issue and trivialize it” (Lowry, Beuttner & Singleton, 1995).

While the latter quote represents the angle from an industry professional, mainstream press sources also reported from the angle of everyday people. The *Washington Post* featured an editorial piece from an angered taxpayer, who says: “It is not the government’s job to punish bad taste ... The FBI is way out of line investigating Calvin Klein. He’s not selling pornography, but clothing” (Cohen,

1995). This op-ed writer is not only angered that his tax pay dollars are going to such a frivolous case, but he forcefully expresses that the government is wasting their time on the investigation when they should be focusing on “real issues” (Cohen, 1995).

The controversy even made headlines internationally, cited in multiple Canadian press sources. The *Toronto Star* consistently followed the progression of the controversy. An August 29th article quotes New York City Councilman Noach Dear, saying “If a regular person took pictures like that in their underwear, they would be locked up for peddling child pornography” (“Calvin Klein drops,” 1995). [The article reported Calvin Klein’s decision to drop the ad campaign, along with Dear’s quote that presents the angle of Klein as a child pornographer. Thus, Calvin Klein’s name was paired in discourse with “child pornography” beyond United States borders.]

In General Adult-Targeted Magazines

Through my research, magazines that I found to most commonly cite the Calvin Klein controversy include *TIME*, *Newsweek*, *World Report* and *US News*. *TIME* featured an article titled, “Where Calvin Crossed the Line” in a September 1995 edition. The article discusses how Calvin Klein went too far this time, offending The Catholic League, conservatives and parents everywhere. The article accused Klein of “changing his image from avant-garde to creepy.” Nevertheless, the article still commends Klein with knowing how to “milk it” in terms of free publicity (Carlson & Faltermayer, 1995).

An article in *Newsweek* features an anecdote that demonstrates the opposing view points of parents verse teenagers in response to the ads. *Newsweek* interviewed a mother and a daughter shopping in Marshall Field's. The mother, Clara Marks, 41, says that Calvin Klein's ads were undoubtedly pornographic and "they're exploiting children." She says that she would never allow her 15-year-old daughter to wear the jeans and support Calvin Klein's ad. On the flip side, daughter Jennifer says when asked about a girl in the ad, "I don't think they're exploiting her at all." She further says, "I think she looks cute there." Jennifer explains that Calvin Klein is the most popular designer in her school, and she "can't believe there is a controversy over this." The article continues to discuss the risqué past of Calvin Klein's advertising and the economic effects the scandal might have on his company (Ingrassia, Nayyar, Kalb, Miller & Mabry, 1995). [The article mentions "pornographic" or "pornography" four times throughout its discourse.]

In the Industry Magazines

Marketing Industry magazines went wild reporting on the controversy, most cited in leading magazines *Advertising Age*, *Ad Week* and *Marketing News*. From my research, I found that industry magazines included more editorial pieces than factual articles. In a September 4th article in *Advertising Age* titled "Publicity Monster Turns on Klein," the editor writes about his thoughts on the ad campaign. He refers to the ad as "nauseating" and "plainly repulsive." He accuses Klein of going "beyond

gratuitousness, beyond titillation, beyond vulgarity to the very core of our moral sensibilities” (Garfield, 1995).

One editorial piece in *Marketing News* titled “Calvin Klein Ads: Bad Ethics, Bad Business” condemns Calvin Klein for his lack of ethics in his ad campaigns; especially the 1995 jean campaign. The author writes,

“Seldom does an ad campaign stir up such opposition that the president of the United States feels obligated to weigh in with an ethical judgment. Unlike most discussion of business ethics, President Clinton's judgment was simple and straightforward: The ads were wrong.”

The author expresses a similar opinion to President Clinton’s. He explains that employing “child pornography” into your business plan is just wrong, and magazine editors were rightful in refusing to run the ads. The author says, “As much as publicity is good, brand equity and positive association is just as important.” He acknowledges the fact that Calvin Klein’s ad campaign successfully got free publicity, although the publicity is negative; the kind of publicity that will ruin his brand credibility and ultimately his sales (Davidson, 1995).

After citing the phrases that most commonly appeared in the press discourse, it is understandable why the above *Marketing News* author would project a decrease in

Calvin Klein sales. I most commonly cited the terms “sleaze,” “paedophile,” “bad taste,” “terrible taste” and “crossed the line” in the above articles. However, the one phrase said repeatedly in every single article was “child pornography.” Undoubtedly, this extremely negative association cast a dark shadow over Calvin Klein’s name. However, I must question the latter author’s projection: Will such negative publicity actually ruin his sales? The following chapter will explore just that.

Chapter 7

Brand Sales Tell All

(Not So Bad) Publicity

Calvin Klein might have been tagged by the media as a child pornographer, but that was not stopping consumers. The week after the ad was pulled, retail consultant and editor of the Fashion Network Report Alan Millstein surveyed stock of major department stores. Millstein reported that the jeans were “flying out of stores.” Millstein told Time Magazine that the terrible publicity was “more than he paid for and more than he could have prayed for” (Carlson & Faltermayer, 1995). He explains that Calvin Klein jean sales have been extremely lagging since the start of the 1990’s, and the large dose of negative publicity was a “B-12 shot for his company” (Gellene, 1995). Millstein points out that 40 percent of jean sales are made in two months: August and December. Therefore, the timing of the publicity hurricane created the perfect storm (Gellen, 1995).

The Hard Evidence

The numbers do not lie. Calvin Klein jean sales rose from \$113 million in 1994 to \$462 million in 1995 (Sloan, 1996). Jean sales boomed so rapidly after the

controversy that the demand surpassed manufacturing capability. There were \$200 million in orders that Calvin Klein could not fulfill due to demand (Brannon, Chririchella, Schaffer & Wittmer, 2010).

Being that Calvin Klein was publicly acquired in 2003, detailed sales reports between 1994 and 1996 are unattainable, personally confirmed by Jennifer Crawford, current Senior Vice President of Corporate Communications at Calvin Klein, Inc. However, Crawford did confirm that there was a significant rise in jean sales after the 1995 controversy, as shown by the previous numbers. While a detailed sales report is inaccessible, Calvin Klein's profile on Hoover's includes total sales revenue for years 1995 and 1996. Total revenue in 1995 was \$127 million, and rose to \$141 million in 1996 (Biesada, 2013). I cannot make any conclusions from these numbers alone, especially without having data from before the controversy in 1994. However, based on the direct increase in jean sales and increase in revenue the following year, I feel that it is safe to make one assumption: The negative publicity certainly did not *hurt* the sales of Calvin Klein.

Chapter 8

The Future of CK Advertising

Later That Year

Despite the upheaval amongst angry Americans and the government, Calvin Klein did it again. Three months later.

Klein's next November campaign promoted his underwear line, featuring 20-year-old male model Joel West wearing tight gray briefs, legs spread eagle. Arguably, at least this time the model was a legal adult. However, the campaign did not only continue to upset conservatives, but was then dropped by Warnaco, the licensee of Calvin Klein jeans (Grant, 2003).

1996: A New Approach

With "Honesty" the goal of his 1996 jean campaign, is it possible that Klein actually learned his lesson? No evidence shows that Calvin Klein turned to this approach directly because he was sick of the negative publicity, but the campaign definitely is easier on conservatives eyes (Sloan, 1996). The new angle could be in part of Virginia Smith, the newly hired Public Relations Director brought on after the 1995 controversy, later promoted to Vice President of Public Relations (Voguepedia).

Advertising Age featured a full page article on Calvin Klein's new "honesty" approach, featuring a montage of "real people" wearing CK Jeans. To Calvin Klein,

real people range from nerdy high-schoolers to young men with a slight beer belly. Klein explained to *Ad Age* that “it’s about honesty rather than fake glamour.” The campaign was again created by in-house CRK Advertising, and targeted youth consumers between the ages of 18 and 35.

However, the “honesty” campaign was still true to Calvin Klein’s brand, as the “real people” appeared to be slightly intoxicated in the ads. Millstein believed that the campaign, while not as blatant as previous campaigns, still aimed for free publicity. The subtly drunk appeal “[is how] suburban teenager want to see themselves,” said Millstein to *Ad Age* (Sloan, 1996).

Despite the continuous upheaval from the public since the 1995 controversy, *TIME* named Calvin Klein one of the “Top 25 Most Influential American’s” in June of 1996. He was named “the Frank Lloyd Wright of fashion” by *TIME* editors. Interestingly, the title was awarded to Klein nearly one year to-date from the launch of the 1995 jeans campaign. The 25 winners were described as having in common “the ability to show us the world anew, to educate and entertain” (“Time 25: They range in age from 31 to 67”). [Notice, “the ability to make American’s happy” is not a measure.]

A Few Years Ahead: And He’s Done it Again

Maybe Calvin Klein missed hearing his name mentioned by the American Family Association. Or maybe, he missed being publicly condemned by government

officials (Fenner & Standora, 1999). Whatever Klein's reasoning was, he created another ad featuring half naked little boys, this time playfully "romping" on a couch. The campaign was promoting Calvin Klein's boys boxer and brief collection. However, the campaign was so controversial that it was pulled just hours before it was revealed to the public (Branson, 1999).

Still President of the AFA, Wildmon angrily preached to the public, as reported by the *Daily News*, "Don't buy Calvin Klein products and ... maybe he'll stop. The only message Calvin Klein understands ... is an appeal to his pocketbook." Wildmon was apparently fed up by Calvin Klein's "distasteful" marketing techniques. The article also reported on a statement said by New York Mayor Rudy Guliani, who said that "the First Amendment allows a whole range of expression. [But] I think it was done on purpose, and I think it's in very bad taste" (Fenner & Standora, 1999). Conservative group Morality in the Media once again took a stand against Calvin Klein's marketing tactics, as well as celebrity Rosie O'Donnell, who declared on her talk show that she would "never wear his underwear again" (Branson, 1999).

Based on my observations of Calvin Klein's advertising history, the more conservative activists speak out against Klein's marketing techniques, the more likely he is to make another controversial campaign. By activists publicly condemning the work of CRK Advertising, it appears to me that they are giving Calvin Klein exactly what he is scheming for: Negative publicity. In the following chapter, I will elaborate

on my interpretation of Calvin Klein's marketing techniques in respect to the original question at hand: Is negative publicity good?

Chapter 9

Discussion

Good Publicity is “Intelligent” Publicity

Based on the fact that jean sales rose over \$300 million after the launch of the campaign, I feel that the campaign was a success. While the campaign triggered an influx of negative publicity thus damaging Calvin Klein’s name among conservative audiences, Klein achieved his bottom line: An increase in sales. It is apparent that Klein did not care about conservatives “liking” him or his brand. He cared about speaking to his target audience, comprised of rebellious American youths looking to make an anti-social statement. I believe that in Calvin Klein’s case, negative publicity works for him solely because he is targeting the right “anti-culture” audience. With that said, if he received the same negative publicity but was targeting grandmothers’ ages 60 to 80, I do not think grandmothers would be very quick to buy their next pair of CK Jeans.

In an interview with Penn State professor Frank Dardis, expert in strategic communications and non-traditional marketing communications methods, Dardis said, “The negative publicity had a polarizing effect on Calvin Klein’s target audience.” Dardis continued to explain that the negative publicity caused consumers outside of his target audience to hate him more, which caused consumers inside of his

target audience to love him more. Calvin Klein willingly sacrificed his overall brand image to strengthen his pre-existing fan base. In a *Daily News* article, Delancey Bersin, 15-year-old model featured in the ad campaign, says it himself: “People complain that they’re selling the sexuality of teenagers, but those are the people who are buying it.”

This concept circles back to the 1915 article featured in *The Atlanta Constitution*, quoting J. Leroy North. As discussed in Chapter 1, this was the first written document to ever present the idea that “all publicity is good.” The article says:

“Mr North well says that newspaper advertising and its value depends largely upon the character of the paper ... that is, upon the class of clientele the paper has built up, its reputation for veracity, and the nature of its circulation and the homes into which it enters” (“What advertisers buy,” 1915).

This quote is following the earlier statement made by North that “all publicity is good if it is intelligent” (“What advertisers buy,” 1915). In the beginning of my research, I did not know exactly what was meant by “intelligent.” Throughout my case research, Calvin Klein has exemplified that “intelligent” publicity is not necessarily “good” publicity nor “bad.” Rather, it is “*right*” publicity; *right* publicity targets the culture, values, and morals of its target market. It appears that North pinpointed this concept nearly a century ago when the historical question of “is all publicity good” was presented.

Calvin Klein has a history of pushing limits and causing controversial discourse, because that is what has been proven to work for him. Before 1995, his habit of pushing the line brought him great success. When he tried to launch a softer, more diplomatic campaign with “Eternity,” sales suffered. He quickly learned his lesson: Negative discourse works for him. Thus, leading us to the groundbreaking 1995 campaign. As much trouble as this campaign caused, nearly putting him in jail for charges of child pornography, he did not change his habits. Three months after the controversy settled, another risqué campaign was launched. Why? Negative Publicity is good for Calvin Klein and his brand.

Calvin Klein Hits Home

As discussed in Chapter 1, marketing expert Lois Kelley defines in her book “Beyond Buzz,” what constitutes a successful marketing campaign. The most important goal of a marketing campaign should be to create discourse, thus making people care about your brand (Kelley, 2007). After re-visiting Kelley’s top four campaign themes that successfully get consumers talking, I have applied the themes to the 1995 campaign. I have used Kelley’s criteria to interpret the success of Calvin Klein’s campaign. Based on my analysis, it appears that Klein has hit home with not just one, but all four themes.

Klein’s 1995 campaign successfully “challenges or affirms consumer’s beliefs.”

The advertisements challenged conservative beliefs on what they believe to be appropriate in regards to child exploitation and underage pornography. On the opposite end, target audience member beliefs were affirmed by the campaign's message of "youth independence and freedom to express young sexuality." For a tangible example, take the *Newsweek* article that interviews the opposing opinions from a mother, 41, verse her daughter, 15 (Ingrassia, Nayyar, Kalb, Miller & Mabry, 1995). The advertisement challenged the mother's beliefs, while affirming her daughter's.

The Calvin Klein campaign also challenged assumptions by making consumers question societal norms. The AFA had to formally reconsider what constitutes "child pornography" in society by measuring the case on the six-point system (Sachs, 1995). The cultural assumption is that "all child pornography is unacceptable." However, Klein's campaign challenged members of society to ask themselves: Where do we draw the line between what is considered child pornography and what is not? Is this "soft" form of child exploitation acceptable to be distributed throughout the media? As Kelley describes, when a common belief is "X," the marketing campaign should prove it to be "Y" (Kelley, 2007). The common belief was that child exploitation was wrong, but Klein was proven innocent of FBI charges and continued to successfully make similar campaigns in the future.

Klein made his target audience believe that CK Jeans were "the next big thing" (Kelley, 2007). By angering parents, teenagers wanted the jeans more. As discussed in my interview with Frank Dardis, Klein's target age group, especially of

the high school age (15-18), is in the height of looking for social affirmation. Based on personal observation, teenagers in high school often find social affirmation by behaving rebellious, defiant and “cool.” Klein’s campaign promoted all of these youth values, causing teenagers to sprint to their local department store and purchase a pair of CK Jeans before their friend got to it first.

Lastly, the 1995 campaign instilled a sense of anxiety and fear in consumers (Kelley, 2007). Immediately after the campaign was launched, mothers were anxious about the image Calvin Klein was promoting to youths, and fearful that their children will take a liking to the message. This instilled fear and a sense of anxiety, which caused discourse among parent communities, as well as between parents and children. While the discourse was not positive, it was still discourse nonetheless.

If the hard evidence of an increase in jeans sales is not enough, the fact that the 1995 ad campaign meets all four of Kelley’s themes of a successful marketing plan shows that Klein is doing *something* right. Kelley defines a good campaign as a campaign that makes people care, and as a result creates public discourse. While many conservatives might disagree, I believe that Calvin Klein’s 1995 campaign “hit a homerun” and offended all the right people, causing the perfect negative publicity.

Chapter 10

Conclusion

While negative publicity has worked for Calvin Klein's brand, I can not claim that all brands would see the same success as a result of negative publicity.

Throughout my research and analysis of Calvin Klein and the 1995 ad controversy, I have learned a great deal about the posed question: Is all publicity good?

The concept dates back to the late 19th century, from the times of disputed self-publicist and playwright Oscar Wilde. Since, no communications theorist has been able to come up with a black and white answer. However, as a communications scholar I have explored the question further using Calvin Klein as my standard, focusing on the groundbreaking 1995 child pornography advertising controversy. After learning about the power of publicity in itself based on a collection of literature, I applied this to the history of Calvin Klein as a brand personality. Knowing the background information of the power of publicity enabled me to delve into the 1995 controversy, and understand *why* Calvin Klein would purposely create a campaign so offensive. After collecting and analyzing original print media from various news sources backlashing the 1995 campaign and then analyzing the brand sales results, I was able to understand Calvin Klein's positive relationship with negative media. This enabled me understand why Calvin Klein chose to stick with the same highly debated advertising techniques after 1995.

Overall, I have learned that publicity is an extremely powerful tool for a company when used right. Calvin Klein maneuvered the media so that his name was talked about. Media likes controversy, and Calvin Klein's "child pornographic" ads gave them just that. The thing to keep in mind about the power of negative publicity, is it must be used *intelligently*, as demonstrated by Calvin Klein. Intelligent publicity can be good or bad, as long as it targets the right audience.

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ACADEMIC VITA

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EDUCATION:

The Pennsylvania State University, Schreyer Honors College

State College, PA

Class of 2014

B.A., Broadcast Journalism, College of Communications

Minor: International Studies, College of Liberal Arts

Honors in Advertising/Public Relations

CEA Study Abroad: Liberal Arts & Social Sciences

Buenos Aires, Argentina

Spring 2013

Focus in Spanish and International Marketing

HONORS AND AWARDS:

- Awarded Howard J. Lamade Communications Scholarship
- Awarded Schreyer Honors College Scholarship
- Awarded 2nd Place in the Northeast Region for Radio Reporting by the Society of Professional Journalists

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE:

Pop2Life Creative, *New York City*

Marketing Intern, Summer 2013

- Assisted in creating and implementing marketing events for major clients such as MTV, NBC and HGTV
- Lead NBC's Grimm activation area and supervised 8 Brand Ambassadors at San Diego Comic Con

Clear Channel Communications, *New York City*

Marketing and Promotions Intern/ Part Timer, May 2012- December 2012

- Assisted Marketing director in planning major events for Z100 and Lite FM
- Hired as a part-timer to help plan and work on-site at Z100's Jingle Ball 2012 at Madison Square Garden

B94.5 All Hit Radio Station, *State College, PA*

Promotions Intern/ Producer, Fall 2012

- Promoted to Producer after interning
- Supervised and assigned roles to 18 interns during the daily morning show
- Increased listener ratings and promotional event attendance through social networking and the introduction of innovative promotional ideas

Marie Claire, *State College, PA*

Student Style Campus Ambassador, Fall 2011

- Promoted and marketed Marie Claire Front Row Challenge fashion show event at Penn State
- Designed marketing plan that sold out all 200 seats at the event