Research Question:
To what extent do the confessions of public figures have the purpose of using language and structure to manipulate audience response?

Title: Public speeches of apology by prominent figures

Subject: English A Language and Literature
Category 3
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Introduction

In today’s popular culture, the making of confessional speeches by disgraced public figures is neither shocking, nor commendable. Instead it is expected. Following this new protocol it is common for public figures to confess their guilt, apologise, and offer some justification. As a novel exercise in audience manipulation, it seems relevant to explore the importance of the language used and the primary objective of the exercise.

In this essay the question “To what extent do the confessions of public figures have the purpose of using language and structure to manipulate audience response?” is to be explored. An effort will be made to discover the true and core intent of public confessions by looking at the confessional speeches of Bill Clinton, a former US President, and Tiger Woods, a professional US golfer. Media and literary theory will also be called upon. The effect the language used has on the audience will be investigated, both on an individual word level and holistically. This will be done through research and analysis, personal interpretation, and through the results of a word choosing exercise.²

Main Body

Interesting use of language and structure can be seen in the confessional speech of Tiger Woods. Woods had a very impressive and inspiring story line until late 2009 when The National Inquirer exposed his extramarital affair. When he finally spoke out, the speech lasted fourteen minutes and was delivered live to a small audience, including his mother.

Woods’ transcript begins, “Many of you in this room are my friends. Many of you in this room know me. Many of you have cheered for me or you’ve worked with me or you’ve supported me. Now every one of you has a good reason to be critical of me.”³ Here we

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1 In an attempt to gain some indication of the overall effect on an audience, a select group of people viewed the two confessions and chose from a list of forty-eight words the ten, five, and then one word they felt best described the speaker. Half of the words on the list were positive and half negative, consisting of adjectives and synonyms (See appendix 1).

² He delivered his confessional speech on the 19th of February 2010, at TPC Sawgrass, a golf course in Florida. The press watched from a separate room by video. He took no questions.

regular rhythm. The repetition of this noun phrase also emphasises who and how many people he is speaking to. The contrast between the “many of you” and “now every one of you” emphasises his recognition that although only some people meet various other criteria, every single person has reason to criticise him, thereby humbling himself. The syntax in the next sentence is also interesting, as it is used to remove emphasis from what he has done. He says, “I want to say to each of you, simply and directly, I am deeply sorry for my irresponsible and selfish behaviour I engaged in.” Since “I engaged in” is placed at the end, the “irresponsible and selfish behaviour” mentioned becomes lost in the middle, a technique used in numerous places.

As for apologising, in the whole speech “sorry” is said three times, which is less than one might expect considering its length. Woods says that he is “deeply sorry” and later that he is “so sorry” and then “truly sorry”. J.L. Austin, a philosopher of language, noticed that “it is interesting to find that a high percentage of the terms connected with excuses prove to be adverbs”\(^4\). It seems that simply saying “sorry” is no longer enough, overuse having perhaps lessened the meaning of the word. Adverbs must be added if an apology is to be taken seriously\(^5\).

Further in he continues, “For many of you, especially my friends, my behaviour has been a personal disappointment. To those of you who work for me, I have let you down personally and professionally. My behaviour has caused a considerable worry to my business partners.”

His addressing of those who work for him is again lost in the middle, the focus being on his business partners. The three statements, broken up by slow pauses, make him seem thoughtful and repentant. He enables each acknowledgment of the parties that have suffered due to his actions to be processed by the audience. He mentions his business partners again near the end of his speech, making it appear that his primary intent is regaining his sponsors, rather than making amends with friends and fans.

Next, Woods speaks of his foundation. He begins, “Thirteen years ago, my dad and I envisioned helping young people achieve their dreams through education.” This sounds like

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\(^5\) ibid.
the beginning of a fairy tale, grand and almost hyperbolic. Parallels can indeed be made between Woods and a character in a story (this will be explored later). The words “envisioned” and “dreams” are enchanting and very positive. He continues by confirming the foundation’s continuation and reminding of its achievements. The relevance of this is questionable, and sounds rather boastful. It is a clear reminder of the good things that he has done prior to the scandal. He continues, “But still, I know I have bitterly disappointed all of you.” The use of “but still” makes the rest of his sentence sound secondary and of lesser importance to what he was saying earlier about his foundation.

Woods then talks of his wife. He says “Some people have speculated that Elin somehow hurt or attacked me on Thanksgiving night. It angers me that people would fabricate a story like that. Elin never hit me that night or any other night.” This section may serve to distract from issues he doesn’t wish to discuss, but also makes him appear a “good guy”, defending his wife. Interestingly however, the words suggest underlying blame of Elin. In the sentences “Elin somehow hurt or attacked me” and “Elin never hit me”, Elin takes the place of the active person in the sentence and therefore comes off as the aggressor. If the voice were changed from passive to active and he had said “speculated that I had been hurt or attacked by Elin” or “I was never hit by Elin that night” the effect would have been very different, the use of negative rather than positive words having a subtle, but notably different impact. He continues by saying, “There has never been an episode of domestic violence in our marriage, ever. Elin has shown enormous grace and poise throughout this ordeal. Elin deserves praise, not blame.” The term “domestic violence” is a serious one, and again serves as a momentary distraction. The way that “not blame” is placed at the end of the sentence emphasises the words, suggesting an opposite meaning. The audience now considers blaming Elin, when really no one was blaming her to begin with. The use of the word “blame” is unnecessary as “not blame” is simply a negatively spun repetition of “praise”.

Only now does Woods explicitly confess saying, “I was unfaithful. I had affairs. I cheated. What I did is not acceptable, and I am the only person to blame.” Embedding this within his speech detracts from his confession, making it less memorable. He again employs the pattern of three, quickening the pace so as to move on. This is followed by an explanation for his actions. “I felt that I had worked hard my entire life and deserved to enjoy all the temptations around me.” This reminds the audience of his achievements and his status, and
also induces sympathy. When he says, “I don’t get to play to different rules” he reminds the audience he is just like them, appearing humble. Woods then promises to change and better himself. He informs of the therapy he has been receiving as proof, saying, “I have a long way to go. But I’ve taken my first steps in the right direction.” This is positive and as his final sentence on this topic, leaves us with feelings of progress and hope.

Towards the end Woods says, “In recent weeks I have received thousands of emails, letters, and phone calls from people expressing good wishes. To everyone who has reached out to me and my family, thank you. Your encouragement means the world to Elin and me”. By mentioning people who are still on his side, his transgression doesn’t seem so bad and those who are judging him will perhaps feel ashamed for not being more supportive. When he says “Elin and me” it presents them as a united couple, alluding to Elin staying by her husband despite what he has done and therefore, so should the audience.

Woods ends the speech saying, “Finally, there are many people in this room, and there are many people at home who believed in me. Today I want to ask for your help. I ask you to find room in your heart to one day believe in me again.” His plea “believe in me again” shows his desire to return to how things were, attributing to the audience a share of the responsibility. This also promotes him to god-like status, which may be helpful in gaining support. People would not turn their backs on a deity. It is also a reminder of all that Woods stood for and that it is not only about the man, but his message as well. Making him this larger than life character perhaps makes it easier for him to be forgiven for what becomes a smaller more unimportant mistake.

Entering Woods’ transcript into Wordle⁶, the words that appear largest for his speech are predominantly to do with his family, such as “wife”, “Elin”, and “kids”. The words “behaviour”, “want”, and “know” were also shown to be used more than once. “Therapy”, “believe”, and “life”, similarly stand out. This demonstrates a clear emphasis on family, making him appear family orientated, as well as an emphasis on the future.

⁶ Wordle is an application that allows for text to be entered and a Word Cloud to be generated. The bigger the word, the more the word appeared in the text, showing key lexical fields and main ideas used in the speech. (See Appendix 3) http://www.wordle.net/create
Overall, Woods’ speech consists of confessing, apologising, and some justification. He is very critical of himself and promises to change. He appears to lay his soul bare, grovelling and lambasting himself to an almost uncomfortable extent. William Benoit\(^7\) outlines five image restoration strategies used in speeches, Denial, Evading Responsibility, Reducing Offensiveness, Corrective Action, and Mortification\(^8\). Woods uses Mortification, as seen by his apologising, Corrective Action, informing about therapy and arguably some Reducing Offensiveness, for example by bringing up his foundation.

Clinton’s speech, delivered eleven years prior\(^9\) on national television, with Clinton speaking directly into the camera, lasted only four minutes. Similar to Woods, it was exposed that Clinton had been unfaithful. However unlike Woods who kept quiet when the news broke, Clinton strongly denied the allegation.

Clinton’s confession is short and succinct. He starts, “This afternoon in this room, from this chair, I testified before the Office of Independent Counsel and Grand Jury. I answered their questions truthfully, including questions about my private life, questions no American citizen would every want to answer.”\(^10\) This appears matter of fact, as if he is building up to something by laying out the necessary information. Using the term “American citizen”, he calls on people’s nationalism and solidarity, making him sound more relatable and playing on audience compassion. He continues, “Still, I must take complete responsibility for all my actions, both public and private. And this is why I am speaking to you tonight.” The use of the pronoun “you” makes it appear as though he is addressing everyone individually. Here he is acknowledging responsibility and setting up his confession.

\(^7\) William Benoit, a professor of communication studies. His expertise lies in political communication and image repair discourse. Author of the book “Accounts, Excuses, and Apologies”, in which these restoration strategies are outlined.


\(^9\) The speech was delivered on August 17th 1998.

The actual confession comes in the form of “Indeed, I did have a relationship with Miss Lewinsky that was not appropriate. In fact, it was wrong.” and is followed by, “I misled people, including even my wife. I deeply regret that.” The word “even” stands out and gives his wife the importance the audience would feel she should have. His use of the word “regret” is interesting, as some definitions of the word include notions of a lack of control over the situation that one is regretful over\(^{11}\). This would imply that Clinton did not have control over his actions, contradicting his acceptance of responsibility\(^{12}\). This notion may be conveyed to the audience on a subconscious level and as he is not actually vocalising any deflection of responsibility, they may feel more positive towards him. This approach could also explain his apparent lack of an explicit apology, although this could also stem from his high status and the powerful image that he must portray. To succumb completely to the shame of what he has done would make him appear weak and unfit for his job.

Clinton proceeds to offer an explanation, not for his actions, but for giving people a “false impression”. He says, “I can only tell you I was motivated by many factors. First, by a desire to protect myself from the embarrassment of my own conduct. I was also very concerned about protecting my family.” The “I can only tell you” implies a difficulty in expressing what motivated him. It could allude to exasperation, or awareness that really there is no justifying his actions and that whatever he says will not be enough. In this sense, it seems apologetic. Conversely, Clinton’s tone could also appear patronising or pompous, perhaps intentionally, again to remind the audience of his status, which he obtained honourably. This could also be an attempt to make the audience feel guilty for putting him in this ignominious position, which may be being portrayed as unnecessary.

Here on the tone changes. When referring to an investigation into “private business dealings twenty years ago” he says “The independent counsel investigation moved on to my staff and friends, then into my private life. And now the investigation itself is under investigation.” This clearly shows frustration at the intrusion into his private life, with the last sentence mocking the investigation. He goes on, “This has gone on too long, cost too much and hurt

\(^{11}\) For example, the definition “sorrow aroused by circumstances beyond one’s control or power to repair” can be found at http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/regret

too many innocent people." Here the rule of three has been applied, alluding to a sense of repetitiveness, redundancy and excess.

The last section is curious, as it consists of reprimanding the public. He says, "It is time to stop the pursuit of personal destruction and the prying into private lives and get on with our national life. Our country has been distracted by this matter for too long." This is clearly a bid to make the audience, who have shown an interest, or pursued the scandal, feel guilty. He is placing them on similar moral ground to himself, reassuming control and power. He continues, "Now it is time, in fact, it is past time to move on. We have important work to do, real opportunities to seize, real problems to solve, real security matters to face." His command to move on is very convenient for himself, but seems appropriate due to the context of the speech. His repetition of the word "real" implies that the issues spoken of before were superficial. He has completely changed the topic, making the first part seem distant and unimportant. This is reinforced by the ending of the speech: "And so tonight, I ask you to turn away from the spectacle of the past seven months, to repair the fabric of our national discourse, and to return our attention to all the challenges and all the promise of the next American century." Like Tiger, Clinton shifts some responsibility to the audience by asking for their help, and also ends the speech on a public issue as opposed to a private one. What he asks of the public is very engaging and difficult to refuse, as the future of the country is something most will hold dear.

A Word Cloud generated using Clinton’s speech shows the words "private", "investigation", and "questions" as the largest and therefore most used. This is very different to Woods, Clinton maintaining an impersonal and more professional focus. This is understandable and to be expected considering Clinton’s position. Had Tiger proceeded in this manner, it would not have been well received as he is of more similar status to the average audience member. Due to this, he appears more greatly indebted to the public and is expected to reveal more. The words "life", "matter", and "family" are also prominent, showing that such issues are addressed, but with less divulgence.

Overall, Clinton’s speech consists of a confession, an implied apology, some justification, followed by a scolding of the audience. Evading Responsibility and Reduce Offensiveness are

13 See appendix 4.
two of Benoit’s Restoration Strategies used by Clinton. He clearly reflects a portion of the responsibility onto the audience and reduces his offence by putting it into the context of his duties as President and the important issues facing their country.

To further explore the effect of these two speeches on an audience and determine the viability of using language and structure for the manipulation of audience response, a word choosing exercise was carried out. After viewing Woods’ speech, the results\(^{14}\) indicate that when asked to choose ten words, the majority of words chosen were positive, as they were when asked to narrow down to five words. Interestingly, when asked to narrow down to one word, the majority of the words chosen were negative. This perhaps suggests that the overall and lasting impression of this speech was more often negative, but that with more options positives also came through. When asked to describe Woods in five words, the words “awkward”, “nervous”, and “emotional” were chosen repeatedly. When asked to do it in ten, the words “human” and “remorseful” were also a popular choice. These results show quite a mixed response to the speech, suggesting that elements did not all work in his favour, but that certain manipulative devices were perhaps not well enough concealed.

The results of the same exercise for Clinton’s speech are very similar, with the majority of the single chosen words being negative, whereas the majority of the five and ten words chosen being positive. The words chosen more than once to describe Clinton included “calm”, “respectable”, “powerful”, “dignified”, “disgraceful”, “confident”, “arrogant”, “hedging”, and “evasive”. These results also show a mixed response. The effect of the language and structure therefore varies for different people, and is not guaranteed to be positive. Is attempting to induce a positive response through language and structure then the core intent of the exercise?

Considering that public figures such as those investigated can be seen as characters with their own story, certain media and literary theories can be applied here. These would suggest that the fulfilment of a certain sequence of events is critical to the recovery of fallen heroes, and is the true intent.

\(^{14}\) The results of the word choosing exercise for Woods and Clinton can be seen in appendix 2.
Todorov’s Theory\textsuperscript{15} addresses the structure of a story. All stories begin with Equilibrium, where harmony reigns. Disruption occurs, causing chaos and disorder, followed by recognition of the disruption and action taken to restore Equilibrium. New Equilibrium ensues and the disruption is forgotten\textsuperscript{16}. This simple structure can be applied to the figures being explored. Both had an Equilibrium period consisting of their rise to fame and their following successes. Both behaved badly, disrupting this period leaving them disgraced. The only way to return to Equilibrium is by accepting responsibility through confession, halting rumours and assuming control of the scandal. When completed, this period on the character’s timeline is left behind and hopefully forgotten. This interpretation indicates that the action of making the confession is very powerful and the critical step that must be taken.

Aristotle’s Theory of Tragedy may also be applied by likening the offending public figures to great men with tragic flaws\textsuperscript{17}. In the above cases, this flaw is perhaps womanising. In Tragedy, the flaw makes the hero’s downfall inevitable. The Peripeteia or Reversal stage occurs when the situation suddenly changes and can be likened to the public figure committing their offence. The next stage, Anagnorisis or Recognition, is characterised by growing awareness such as the discovery of the public figure’s wrongdoing, or their realisation that they must act. In the final stage Pathos, a painful act, is carried out and only then can catharsis be achieved\textsuperscript{18}. The painful act is the public confession and the catharsis is the relief that comes from it.

Conclusion

Addressing therefore “to what extent do the confessions of public figures have the purpose of using language and structure to manipulate audience response?” it can be seen that language and structure are indeed used as an exercise in audience manipulation. Woods and Clinton used similar techniques, such as the transferring of responsibility onto the audience and switching the discourse to more public matters. They both use Benoit’s

\textsuperscript{15} Sometimes referred to as classic Hollywood narrative.
\textsuperscript{17} Also known as hamartia.
\textsuperscript{18} OHIO UNIVERSITY, Aristotle& The Elements Of Tragedy. [online], [Accessed 10 September 2013], Available from World Wide Web: http://www ohio edu/people/hartley/ref/aristotletragedy html
Reducing Offensiveness strategy, Woods by bringing up his foundation, and Clinton by contrasting his mistakes to the issues facing the US. They also both, to varying degrees, express a desire to repair the damage they have caused.

Techniques employed also set the two speeches apart, such as Clinton scolding the public, which Tiger would never have got away with. Clinton’s speech is concise, whereas Woods’ speech is longer. Woods is extremely critical of himself, whereas Clinton hangs on to the moral high ground. Woods cleverly utilises syntax to emphasise and conceal ideas.

However, the success of this manipulation would appear difficult to measure, as many factors may affect audience response such as how much was known about each case prior and what the original feelings were towards the person. Emotion displayed will also contribute to how the confession is perceived, as will the delivery. Woods was extremely emotional in his delivery and this is very compelling. The word choosing exercise, while only serving as a small indicator, showed that responses to Woods and Clinton were fairly similar, although Clinton received more negative adjectives than Woods. The word choices for each were quite different, with Woods criticised for the delivery of his speech, while Clinton more for his character. For Clinton words such as “insincere”, “arrogant”, and “selfish” were chosen, whereas for Woods, “cringeworthy”, “awkward”, and “nervous” were chosen. This suggests that Woods was perhaps the more successful of the two, but that neither achieved complete success. However, is success, in this sense of the word, of great importance?

Manipulation of audience response through language and structure may not be the primary purpose of public confession by disgraced public figures. As we have seen through the word choosing exercise, inspiring a positive response is very difficult, suggesting perhaps that using language and structure to manipulate audience response is not the primary intent. Rather the act of making the confession in itself is the most gainful. The language and structure and surely important, but it would appear that little more can be achieved than by simply making the confession. The confession completes a cycle, closes the chapter, and with time, restores the Equilibrium.
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Appendices

Appendix 1: Survey form for word choosing exercise

Confessional speeches of disgraced public figures
Tiger Woods and Bill Clinton

Tiger woods: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FA7ty2LQwcD
Bill Clinton: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UEmiwR0Rs20

After watching each speech please pick out the 10 words which you feel best describe the speaker (based on the speech). Then please narrow down to 5 and then 1 word. Please copy the words into the tables on second page.

Embarrassing   Repetitive   Human   Funny
Remorseful     Insincere   Kind    Fake
Cringe-worthy  Charming   Weak    Brave
Satisfying     Successful  Convincing Hedging
Disappointing  Selfish   Awkward   Calm
Bitter         Emotional  Believable Shy
Likeable       Boastful   Arrogant  Ridiculous
Honest         Inconsiderate Sincere Inconsistent
Confident      Powerful   Cowardly Nonchalant
Nervous        Evasive    Friendly Considerate
Relatable      Boring     Callous   Humble
Dignified      Respectable Loving  Disgraceful
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## Appendix 2

### The results of the word choosing exercise

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Appendix 3

Word Cloud for Tiger Woods’ speech

Appendix 4

Word Cloud for Bill Clinton’s speech
Appendix 5

Good morning, and thank you for joining me. Many of you in this room are my friends. Many of you in this room know me. Many of you have cheered for me or you’ve worked with me or you’ve supported me.

Now every one of you has good reason to be critical of me. I want to say to each of you, simply and directly, I am deeply sorry for my irresponsible and selfish behavior I engaged in.

I know people want to find out how I could be so selfish and so foolish. People want to know how I could have done these things to my wife Elin and to my children. And while I have always tried to be a private person, there are some things I want to say.

Elin and I have started the process of discussing the damage caused by my behavior. As Elin pointed out to me, my real apology to her will not come in the form of words; it will come from my behavior over time. We have a lot to discuss; however, what we say to each other will remain between the two of us.

I am also aware of the pain my behavior has caused to those of you in this room. I have let you down, and I have let down my fans.

For many of you, especially my friends, my behavior has been a personal disappointment. To those of you who work for me, I have let you down personally and professionally. My behavior has caused considerable worry to my business partners.

To everyone involved in my foundation, including my staff, board of directors, sponsors, and most importantly, the young students we reach, our work is more important than ever. Thirteen years ago, my dad and I envisioned helping young people achieve their dreams through education. This work remains unchanged and will continue to grow. From the Learning Center students in Southern California to the Earl Woods scholars in Washington, D.C., millions of kids have changed their lives, and I am dedicated to making sure that continues.

But still, I know I have bitterly disappointed all of you. I have made you question who I am and how I could have done the things I did. I am embarrassed that I have put you in this position.
For all that I have done, I am so sorry.

I have a lot to atone for, but there is one issue I really want to discuss. Some people have speculated that Elin somehow hurt or attacked me on Thanksgiving night. It angers me that people would fabricate a story like that. Elin never hit me that night or any other night. There has never been an episode of domestic violence in our marriage, ever. Elin has shown enormous grace and poise throughout this ordeal. Elin deserves praise, not blame.

The issue involved here was my repeated irresponsible behavior. I was unfaithful. I had affairs. I cheated. What I did is not acceptable, and I am the only person to blame.

I stopped living by the core values that I was taught to believe in. I knew my actions were wrong, but I convinced myself that normal rules didn't apply. I never thought about who I was hurting. Instead, I thought only about myself. I ran straight through the boundaries that a married couple should live by. I thought I could get away with whatever I wanted to. I felt that I had worked hard my entire life and deserved to enjoy all the temptations around me. I felt I was entitled. Thanks to money and fame, I didn't have to go far to find them.

I was wrong. I was foolish. I don't get to play by different rules. The same boundaries that apply to everyone apply to me. I brought this shame on myself. I hurt my wife, my kids, my mother, my wife's family, my friends, my foundation, and kids all around the world who admired me.

I've had a lot of time to think about what I've done. My failures have made me look at myself in a way I never wanted to before. It's now up to me to make amends, and that starts by never repeating the mistakes I've made. It's up to me to start living a life of integrity.

I once heard, and I believe it's true, it's not what you achieve in life that matters; it's what you overcome. Achievements on the golf course are only part of setting an example. Character and decency are what really count.

Parents used to point to me as a role model for their kids. I owe all those families a special apology. I want to say to them that I am truly sorry.
It's hard to admit that I need help, but I do. For 45 days from the end of December to early February, I was in inpatient therapy receiving guidance for the issues I'm facing. I have a long way to go. But I've taken my first steps in the right direction.

As I proceed, I understand people have questions. I understand the press wants to ask me for the details and the times I was unfaithful. I understand people want to know whether Elin and I will remain together. Please know that as far as I'm concerned, every one of these questions and answers is a matter between Elin and me. These are issues between a husband and a wife.

Some people have made up things that never happened. They said I used performance-enhancing drugs. This is completely and utterly false. Some have written things about my family. Despite the damage I have done, I still believe it is right to shield my family from the public spotlight. They did not do these things; I did.

I have always tried to maintain a private space for my wife and children. They have been kept separate from my sponsors, my commercial endorsements. When my children were born, we only released photographs so that the paparazzi could not chase them.

However, my behavior doesn't make it right for the media to follow my two-and-a-half-year-old daughter to school and report the school's location. They staked out my wife and they pursued my mom. Whatever my wrongdoings, for the sake of my family, please leave my wife and kids alone.

I recognize I have brought this on myself, and I know above all I am the one who needs to change. I owe it to my family to become a better person. I owe it to those closest to me to become a better man. That's where my focus will be.

I have a lot of work to do, and I intend to dedicate myself to doing it. Part of following this path for me is Buddhism, which my mother taught me at a young age. People probably don't realize it, but I was raised a Buddhist, and I actively practiced my faith from childhood until I drifted away from it in recent years. Buddhism teaches that a craving for things outside ourselves causes an unhappy and pointless search for security. It teaches me to stop following every impulse and to learn restraint. Obviously I lost track of what I was taught.

As I move forward, I will continue to receive help because I've learned that's how
people really do change. Starting tomorrow, I will leave for more treatment and more therapy. I would like to thank my friends at Accenture and the players in the field this week for understanding why I’m making these remarks today.

In therapy I’ve learned the importance of looking at my spiritual life and keeping in balance with my professional life. I need to regain my balance and be centered so I can save the things that are most important to me, my marriage and my children.

That also means relying on others for help. I’ve learned to seek support from my peers in therapy, and I hope someday to return that support to others who are seeking help. I do plan to return to golf one day, I just don’t know when that day will be.

I don’t rule out that it will be this year. When I do return, I need to make my behavior more respectful of the game. In recent weeks I have received many thousands of emails, letters and phone calls from people expressing good wishes. To everyone who has reached out to me and my family, thank you. Your encouragement means the world to Elin and me.

I want to thank the PGA TOUR, Commissioner Finchem, and the players for their patience and understanding while I work on my private life. I look forward to seeing my fellow players on the course.

Finally, there are many people in this room, and there are many people at home who believed in me. Today I want to ask for your help. I ask you to find room in your heart to one day believe in me again.

Thank you.

President Bill Clinton

Aug. 17, 1998

CLINTON: Good evening.

This afternoon in this room, from this chair, I testified before the Office of Independent Counsel and the grand jury.

I answered their questions truthfully, including questions about my private life, questions no American citizen would ever want to answer.

Still, I must take complete responsibility for all my actions, both public and private. And that is why I am speaking to you tonight.

As you know, in a deposition in January, I was asked questions about my relationship with Monica Lewinsky. While my answers were legally accurate, I did not volunteer information.

Indeed, I did have a relationship with Miss Lewinsky that was not appropriate. In fact, it was wrong. It constituted a critical lapse in judgment and a personal failure on my part for which I am solely and completely responsible.

But I told the grand jury today and I say to you now that at no time did I ask anyone to lie, to hide or destroy evidence or to take any other unlawful action.

I know that my public comments and my silence about this matter gave a false impression. I misled people, including even my wife. I deeply regret that.

I can only tell you I was motivated by many factors. First, by a desire to protect myself from the embarrassment of my own conduct.

I was also very concerned about protecting my family. The fact that these questions were being asked in a politically inspired lawsuit, which has since been dismissed, was a consideration, too.

参考资料:
In addition, I had real and serious concerns about an independent counsel investigation that began with private business dealings 20 years ago, dealings I might add about which an independent federal agency found no evidence of any wrongdoing by me or my wife over two years ago.

The independent counsel investigation moved on to my staff and friends, then into my private life. And now the investigation itself is under investigation.

This has gone on too long, cost too much and hurt too many innocent people.

Now, this matter is between me, the two people I love most -- my wife and our daughter -- and our God. I must put it right, and I am prepared to do whatever it takes to do so.

Nothing is more important to me personally. But it is private, and I intend to reclaim my family life for my family. It's nobody's business but ours.

Even presidents have private lives. It is time to stop the pursuit of personal destruction and the prying into private lives and get on with our national life.

Our country has been distracted by this matter for too long, and I take my responsibility for my part in all of this. That is all I can do.

Now it is time -- in fact, it is past time to move on.

We have important work to do -- real opportunities to seize, real problems to solve, real security matters to face.

And so tonight, I ask you to turn away from the spectacle of the past seven months, to repair the fabric of our national discourse, and to return our attention to all the challenges and all the promise of the next American century.

Thank you for watching. And good night.

Monday, August 17, 1998

- Clinton Admits To 'Wrong' Relationship With Lewinsky
- Poll: More Americans Satisfied With Clinton's Explanation