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“What Was Done Cannot Be Undone”: Present-Day Apologies of Political Leaders for Transgressions of a Nation’s Past

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Within just the past few years, there has been a chain of political apologies through which various governments of many nation-states address previous wrongdoings that occurred under former administrations (Lazare 2004). Certainly, mediated public apologies are not confined to the nation-state: many different entities such as famous celebrities, renowned athletes, religious figures, as well as corporate enterprises, have delivered their own apologies. It is no surprise that because we come across these mediated acts so often, the meta-discourse surrounding the topic of political apology often conveys unreceptiveness and a great deal of cynicism. Public apologies can all too easily be dismissed as insincere efforts where the apologizer (especially if they are a politician) is simply read as someone who “lies” and inevitably has ulterior motives. “Political leaders only apologize so they can gain more votes,” one of my interviewees, who I shall refer to as “Nick,” candidly expressed: “Attempting to give an apology to those permanently burned seemed like salting the wounds.” But even though Nick was skeptical about the level of sincerity behind these acts, he still felt they were “good political moves” on the part of the apologizer: “You know, despite all his flaws, I think Clinton was a decent president because of everything he did for the country... he made it progress.” So, even though the interviewee thought negatively of the act itself, it was still possible for him to consider the apologetic politician as “decent.”

On the one hand, it is understandable that political apologies can sometimes have such a negative reception. Considering the atrociousness of some of the crimes for which political apologies have been given—xenophobic state policies, slavery, and complicity in mass murder, to cite a few—any attempt to mitigate a past transgression of this magnitude may not only be read as an inadequate way of trying “to heal past wounds,” but rather, the act of this kind itself is necessarily produced as lacking (Howard-Hassmann et al. 2008).

The context in which these political apologies are delivered, particularly the highly formalized and mediated arenas in which they take place, can certainly lead to skeptical interpretations that cast these apologies off as unsurprisingly insincere and the apologizer as a “liar” (after all, we are constantly reminded not to believe everything we see or hear on television). In spite of this, neither the dissonance nor the supposed meaninglessness of these mediated political apologies should prevent us from thinking about its possible significance. In his essay, “On Bullshit” (1986), Harry Frankfurt differentiates between *lying* and *bullshit*: bullshit “need not be false”

(14). Further, he adds, the bullshitter may not even deceive us—whether deliberately or unintentionally—about the “truth” of a particular occurrence or situation. In their political apologies, orators are not concerned with deceiving the public with faulty facts; rather, they are more concerned with leaving the spectators with a certain impression of him or her. Thus, these apologies have effects on the audience: *addressed hearers* (the victimized individuals, their family members and friends to whom the apology is made) but also *unaddressed hearers*, or non-recognizers (those individuals physically present during the speech act, as well as the national community indirectly witnessing the event through mediated contexts such as television, the radio, or the internet) (Goffman 1974).

Apologies are acts of recognition: to apologize presupposes that a particular action warrants that apology. Not only does an apology indicate recognition of a committed wrong, it is also an act that affronts all those who do not acknowledge the apology. Considering these effects tells us something significant about how we think of political apologies, and the kinds of assumptions we make about them. What makes certain apologies more successful than others? How do we know when an apology is sincere?

This paper addresses how and why political leaders publicly apologize for wrongdoings they did not directly commit but which transpired under former governmental regimes: what are the communicative strategies employed by politicians to persuade the audience that their apologies are truthful, sincere, and authentic? It is critical to look at political apologies through the concept of *framing*, as developed by Goffman (1974) and Lakoff (2004), for the act of apology is embedded in a landscape of struggle and contestation about reality itself. These apologies invite the audience to recognize, rethink, and remember events from a particular standpoint—one that minimizes the role played by current governments as well as one that seeks to heighten praise or diminish blame towards the apologizer and the government they represent. Apologies must be acknowledged as attempts at moral redemption.

It is also crucial to consider who is delivering the apology and why this person at this particular moment in time. In the sense of Bourdieu (1991), apologies are authorized and the deliverer of the apology legitimated, or authorized to speak. Given this insight, we can distinguish between Clinton-the-person and Clinton-the-president in the context of this apology. Politicians who deliver public apologies, such as Clinton, are authorized speakers who, in their apologies, are able to define and set the terms under which the audience must regard the act (Bourdieu 1991:99). Thus, trying to evaluate how speakers understand a particular utterance, like an apology, and also looking into the question of who is authorized to produce it, may be more valuable than trying to determine whether or not it could be claimed as “truth.” Apologies serve to reshape collective memory, legitimating a particular way a past transgression *ought to be* remembered and interpreted by members of the audience thereby reconstructing “truth.” These apologies and the manner in which they are received become part of the “national imaginary,” the “cluster of images and rhetoric that, however inadequately and imperfectly, signal to a population who and what it is” (Phelan 2001:7). More

specifically, an apology signals to its audience how distant transgressions *should be* remembered, privileging a single dominant frame with which to imagine the past, thereby reshaping collective national memory. The concept of framing will be of value to this discussion for it will highlight how the past, present, and future are interwoven together to *fit* a unilinear narrative whose function is to bind the national community. In doing so, politicians must navigate the slippery discourse of blame and accountability.

Methodology

Although this project considered several political apologies, I will focus on one particular case, American President Bill Clinton’s public apology at the “Ceremony in Recognition of Survivors of the Study at Tuskegee,” with the aim of exposing the kinds of communicative strategies adopted by political leaders. The Tuskegee Syphilis Experiments ran from 1932 to 1972 in Macon County, Alabama (Stern 2005; Reverby 2010). It was not until Clinton’s presidency, in May 1997, that the federal government offered a formal and public apology to the survivors of the experiment. One of the central questions I asked my research participants was whether they thought there was ever a right time for politicians to apologize: should politicians apologize immediately or let time pass? One interviewee, “Dan,” poignantly shared his thoughts: “What I’ve learned in this lifetime is that if you wait to apologize, trying to find the right time, it almost never comes and you’re stuck in a deep hole you never want to come out of.” Another participant, “Kate,” strongly upheld a conflicting view:

Mitigate collateral damage. Wait. Everything is a game. It’s like when the Head of the Vatican apologizes for what others have done over the past hundred years—thanks for the apology, but it wasn’t *your* fault, and it’s a tad late for that.

Kate is differentiating here between individual and collective accountability, which implies that she reckons the wrongdoing is the “fault” of the institution in whose name Clinton speaks, not Clinton himself. Perhaps the reason for the lag between these kinds of apologies and past transgressions is that, with the passage of time, the connection of the injustice to members of both the government and the victimized group decreases and the apology is more likely to be offered and accepted.

While drawing on a combination of data based on ethnographic and theoretical frameworks, this project incorporated information on two levels.¹ On the one hand, I used the techniques of broad-reaching surveys through an online blog, six one-on-one interviews, and three group interviews that involved going through actual footage of the apologies with the research participants. All of the research participants’ names are fictitious for the purposes of keeping their identities private. On the other hand, I tried to integrate into my investigation the methods of Conversational Analysis (CA) and Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA), making it more possible to identify the effects of these individual acts of apology on the audience. The following characteristics of this

kind of apology will be examined: (1) the particular way in which blame is mitigated and praise is directed to previous and current systems of law and government, (2) diction, particularly the use of personal pronouns which signals shifts in alignment and differentiation, and finally, (3) how the past, present, and future are evoked, manipulated, and framed.

Assumptions about Apologies

What do apologies mean? Etymologically, the word *apology* derives from the Greek work *apologos*, which means to tell stories, to remember, recount, and narrate (Tavuchis 1991). An apology is also a speech act, “an action performed by an appropriate person saying appropriate words on an appropriate occasion,” designed to promote reconciliation between two or more parties (Austin 1962; Thompson 2008:32). Apologies include a combination of elements, such as (1) remorse, (2) acceptance of responsibility, (3) admission of injustice or transgression, (4) acknowledgement of victim harm or suffering, (5) forbearances, and (6) offers of repair (Lazare 2004; Scher and Darley 1997). Here are a few examples of these features cited from a detailed transcript of Clinton’s apology (see Appendix A for Transcription Conventions; see Appendix B for complete transcript):

(1) Remorse:

092 Clinton: .hhh We can stOp turning our heads away. We can LOOK at you
 093 Clinton: in the eye: and finally sa:y on behalf of the American
 094 Clinton: people (.) what the United States government did was
 095 Clinton: SHAMEful (0.2) and I:: (.) am: (.) SOrry.

(2) Acceptance of Responsibility:

097 Clinton: The American PEople (0.2) are sorry. .hhh for the loss?
 098 Clinton: for the years of hurt. (0.2) You did NOthing wrong:: (0.2)
 099 Clinton: but you were grievously: wro:nged.

(3) Admission of Injustice or Transgression:

082 Clinton: .hhhhh The United States government did something that was
 083 Clinton: wrong:: (2.6) DEeplly: proFOUndly: MORally: wROng.

(4) Acknowledgement of Victim’s Suffering:

097 Clinton: The American PEople (0.2) are sorry. .hhh for the loss
 098 Clinton: for the years of hurt. (0.2) You did NOthing wrong:: (0.2)
 099 Clinton: but you were grievously: wro:nged.

(5) Forbearances (or promises to behave better in the future):

118 Clinton: segment of our nation has no tRUst in America. (0.2) An
 119 Clinton: apology is the FIRst step. and we take it with a commitment
 120 Clinton: to rebuild that broken trust. .hhh We can begIn by making
 121 Clinton: SUre>there is never again another episode like this one.<
 122 Clinton: .hhh>We need to do MOre to ensure that medical research
 123 Clinton: practices are sound and ethical, and that researchers work

- 124 Clinton: more closely with communities.<
 125 Clinton: .hhh Today I would like to announce several steps (.) to
 126 Clinton: help us achieve these goals. (0.4) First (.) we will HElp
 127 Clinton: to build: that lasting memorial (.) at Tuskegee?
 128 Audience: ((Applause and Cheering)) (23.5)

(6) Offers of Repair:

- 125 Clinton: .hhh Today I would like to announce several steps (.) to
 126 Clinton: help us achieve these goals. (0.4) First (.) we will HElp
 127 Clinton: to build: that lasting memorial (.) at Tuskegee?

It is crucial to keep in mind that even if an apology includes all of the aforementioned features, as Clinton's apology does, this does not necessarily translate into acceptance and forgiveness by the audience, addressed and unaddressed hearers. "It's a very bureaucratic apology," Lisa suggests. Impersonating Clinton's prosody, she continues:

"I have been told I have to apologize so I'm going to." Clinton doesn't seem like he means the apology in the way that he should mean it. It's more of a pushed apology than anything else. He doesn't look like he feels the sorrow that he should feel for the families; he looks like he's playing the part just for the families. It's the apology that needs to be made by somebody that needs to make it. When I saw his apology for the scandal with Monica Lewinsky, there was a lot of emotion in it. This one seems like anybody else can be up there apologizing.

So, in addition to the features of apologies highlighted above, not only what is said but also the way the message is delivered plays an important part in how audience members interpret the act and determine whether or not the apologizer and the act are sincere and deserve moral redemption.

An apology is characterized as taking place in an emotional setting, but it cannot be reduced to a purely solemn occasion as is typically assumed. What immediately struck all of the research participants as they watched the live footage of Clinton's apology was the frequent audience applause throughout the entire speech. At the beginning of the speech, when Clinton introduces the survivors present at the ceremony, he facetiously teases Mr. Fred Simmons, a Tuskegee survivor, which produces laughter from the audience (lines 18, 20, 22):

- 008 Clinton: I would like to:: (.) REcognize: the other (2.0) surVIvors
 009 Clinton: who are here todAY:: an their FAMilies: uh (.) mister
 010 Clinton: Charlie Pollard? hh is here?,
 011 Audience: ((Applause)) (3.0)
 012 Clinton: mister Carter Howard? (1.0) (here?)
 013 Audience: ((Applause)) (5.0)
 014 Clinton: >mister< Fred Simmons?,

- 015 Audience: ((Applause)) (7.0)
 016 Clinton: → mister SIMmons just TOok his first airplane ri:de n he
 017 Clinton: → reckons he's about a hundred n TEn years old so (2.5)
 018 Audience: → ((laughs))
 019 Clinton: → I thINK it's (1.0) ti:me for him to take a chance or two?
 020 Audience: → ((laughs))
 021 Clinton: → I'm glad he did.
 022 Audience: → ((chuckles))

Clinton mischievously remarks, “Mr. Simmons just took his first airplane ride, and he reckons he’s about a hundred and ten years old, so I think it’s time for him to take a chance or two.” A research interviewee, “Joe,” insightfully regarded the applause as a means to “legitimate the apology”: he explains further, that “it does not take into account how those affected truly take it; it is stripping the victims of any say in its acceptance.” On the online blog I created in which I provided the link for video footage of the apology, “Mavis” similarly expressed:

The applause is just an act of approval. If you were to view this on television, people are more likely to agree with individuals who are being approved by their peers. Honestly, the applauding to me is like white noise. I try to tune it out just to hear the bulk of the message so that I can fully understand the composition of the presidential speech.

The potent rhetoric of Clinton’s apology and its unanticipated reception goes to show how apologies are perceived as an effective means of encouraging people to “come to terms” with past wrongs: they demand the approval and forgiveness of the audience. So, does it truly matter that governments respond to historical injustices that occurred decades or even centuries ago? All that can be said is that the unaddressed hearers I interviewed were skeptical, but to addressed hearers the apology seemed to matter a great deal.

Mitigating Blame and Assigning Praise: Framing the Past, Present, and Future

As Goffman (1974) describes, interlocutors try to shift *frames* within a social interaction by shifting their *footing*, which he calls *stance*: the alignment interlocutors take up vis-à-vis one another and their utterances. Goffman (1981) further elaborates that shifts in footing affect social roles and interpersonal alignments. Thus, a shift in footing can affect the prior status and social arrangements among interlocutors.

Further developing frame theory, Lakoff (2004) notes that frames shape the way we see the world. Frames are mental structures that cannot be “seen” or “heard” but are known through language: “all words are defined in relation to conceptual frames. When you hear a word, its frame (or a collection of frames) is activated in your brain”

(Lakoff 2004: xv). Thus, Clinton's apology has effects insofar as it can shape how we think about the past, present, and future. It may influence how we perceive one another, the president, and the government. In many ways, apologies of this sort can be read as attempts to rewrite past historical events and *fit* them into a unilinear narrative, a cohesive narrative that the national community can evoke in the present and future.

What has been so often missed about political apologies is that they are as much about looking forward as they are about looking back. Evidently, even President Clinton is mindful of this as he, on several occasions, refers to a "time not so very long ago that Americans would prefer not to remember":

055 Clinton: .hhh It is NOT only
 056 Clinton: in reMEMbering that shameful past that we can make amends
 057 Clinton: and repair our nation, (2.0) but it is in reMEMbering that
 058 Clinton: past (1.0) that we can build a better present (2.0) and a
 059 Clinton: better future. (1.0) And withOUt remembering it, (2.0) we
 060 Clinton: cannot make amends (1.0) and we cannot go forward.

109 Clinton: So let us reSOLve: (.) to hold forever in our hearts (.)
 110 Clinton: and minds. .hhh>the memory of a TIme not long ago in Macon
 111 Clinton: County, Alabama< (.) so that we can ALways see how adRIft
 112 Clinton: we can become. (0.3) when the RIghts of ANy citizens are
 113 Clinton: neglected: ignored: and betrayed. (2.0) And let us resolve:
 114 Clinton: here and now (.) to move FORward (0.6) together.

Clinton emphasizes the importance of remembering the past in order to "build a better present and future." In his apology, then, Clinton is not simply addressing or uncovering a wrong of the past. His words frame the past as something that is a crucial part of the present and future: the past must be remembered, not only so that we can come closer to solving the problem, but because we cannot just *simply* move forward. We must "resolve to hold forever in our hearts and minds" the memory of Tuskegee.

President Clinton does not personally or overtly accept responsibility for the wrongs committed but is apologizing on behalf of indistinct entities like "the American people" or "the American government." Thus, it is an apology produced by Clinton-the-president, not Clinton-the-person (think about how inappropriate the apology would be, or even how it would be received, if Clinton were not the president and delivered this very same apology). Clinton attempts to shift frames by shifting his footing: this is manifest in his choice of words, such as the use of personal pronouns (*your; their; our*) and the definite article "the," which can be used mark out acts of alignment and distancing:

071 Clinton: MEdical people are supposed to HElp when we need care? but
 072 Clinton: even once a cure was discovered they were deniE:d help
 073 Clinton: (1.0) and they were LIed to (1.6) by their: (0.2)

- 074 Clinton: government. (2.0)nts .hhh Our government is supposed to
 075 Clinton: proTEct the rights of its citizens? (1.2) their rights were
- 082 Clinton: .hhhhh The United States government did something that was
 083 Clinton: wrong:: (2.6) DEePLY: proFOUndly: MORally: wRong. (0.6)
- 105 Clinton: I: am sOrry that YOU:r FEderal government orchestrated a
 106 Clinton: study so:: clearly racist. that can never be allow:ed to
 107 Clinton: happen again. It is against everything OURr country stan:ds
- 207 Clinton: YOur presence here chu- (0.4) shOWs us (.) that you have
 208 Clinton: chOsen (.) a better PAth. than your government did so long
 209 Clinton: ago. (2.5) You have no:t withheld the power (.) to forGIve.

This communicative strategy helps him to simultaneously mitigate blame and assign praise during the apology. He dissociates himself and the present governmental system from the system that permitted the injustice to occur, emphasizing throughout his speech that the injustice occurred in a time “not so very long ago,” when the laws, values, and beliefs were different than what they are today. Clinton’s expression, “I am sorry that *your* federal government orchestrated a study so clearly racist,” subtly implies that he is removing or distancing himself and the current government for which he stands from the former government who approved the Tuskegee Study. When paying close attention to this speech, it becomes apparent that Clinton is not apologizing on behalf of the current government he represents, but rather for something “your” government has done. Clearly, blame is assigned to governments and institutions in the past. Clinton objectifies previous administrations in saying that what “*the* United States government did [was] something that was wrong—deeply, profoundly, morally wrong.” He does not attribute blame to any particular person in the administration nor any scientific figures or organizations. Although Clinton admits that wrongs have been committed, he does not propose in his address the prospect of holding an individual or collective accountable for committing these wrongs.

By distancing and condemning the actions of past governments, the locutionary effect of Clinton’s speech is that it frames the current system of government as *morally grounded* and *committed to justice*, unlike previous administrations: “it is against everything our country stands for and what we must stand against is what it was,” Clinton says (See Appendix B, lines 107–108). His speech is saturated with the praising of current systems of laws and government: “it was an outrage to our commitment to integrity and equality for all our citizens” (lines 84–85). The use of praise in this manner helps to frame the current government as a “democratic” entity that “protects” the health of its people.

Clinton also takes his speech as an occasion to diminish the harm of prior injustices by attributing praise to the victimized group, in emphasizing the important and unique contributions of the group to society as a whole. Praise as such demonstrates to

the victimized group that they are valued citizens, which may lead to a more forgiving reception of the apology.

Clinton appeals to the emotions of his immediate (addressed) audience through use of hyperbole, in statements of exaggerated praise. The first example is an instance where Clinton pays tribute to George Washington Carver in his speech:

130 Clinton: the school founded by Booker T. Washington distinguished by
 131 Clinton: the renowned scientist George Washington Carver (.) and so
 132 Clinton: many others who advanced the health and well-BEing of
 133 Clinton: African Americans .hhh and aLL Americans is a fitting site.

Nick ambivalently reacted to the second example (below). “They’re really playing with people’s emotions on this because he’s talking about them [the victimized group] being better than the government,” he explains.

207 Clinton: YOur presence here chu- (0.4) shOws us (.) that you have
 208 Clinton: chOsen (.) a better PAth. than your government did so long
 209 Clinton: ago. (2.5) You have no:t withheld the power (.) to forGIve.

The exaggeration of praise is often employed by apologizers to try to enhance their apologies. Intensified praise often plays on the emotions of those on the receiving end; it possibly attempts to win the forgiveness of the victimized group and indirect audience. Quite distinctively, Clinton’s utterance in excerpt (8) presupposes that the audience has already forgiven the transgression (“your presence here shows us that you have chosen a better path than your government did so long ago. *You have not withheld the power to forgive*”). Clinton praises the Tuskegee survivors and their families by implying that they have chosen a “better path” (in other words, they are better than) the previous government.

Closing a Chapter in History

The word “Tuskegee,” Susan Reverby (2010) explains, has become a metaphor, linking worries over health care and experimentation to African American men in the infamous research study. The lack of participation of African Americans in current medical studies and the paucity of African American donors is particularly problematic for President Clinton and his administration; it poses an impediment to conducting “promising research” and to providing the “best health care” for all Americans (Stern 2005). “You must—every American group must,” Clinton says, tripping on his words, “be involved in medical research in ways that are positive” (lines 156–158). “We have put the curse behind us,” he emphasizes, “now we must bring the benefits to all Americans”: “We must move forward” (lines 158–159).

Although “what was done cannot be undone” (lines 90–91), Clinton offers to repair the wrongs of the past by announcing several steps he will take in order to prevent

the same mistakes from happening in the future. Clinton authorized the establishment of a Bioethics Institute at Tuskegee University and increased postgraduate training in Bioethics, particularly of African American and minority students (lines 135–188). These financial commitments are used to supplement the apology because words are not enough to resolve the past transgression: in other words, the apologizer has to ‘put their money where their mouth is.’ All these “steps” also function to assure the victimized group that the current government upholds the moral principles that were violated and is committed to upholding a legitimate and just social system (Lazare 2004).

Clinton’s apology can also be read as an act that tries to add closure to the events of Tuskegee. Nearing the end of the apology, Clinton emotively expresses:

202 Clinton: Today: all WE
 203 Clinton: can do, (1.0) is apologize. But YOu have the power, (1.5)
 204 Clinton: for only YOu- (.) mister SHaw: the others who are here
 205 Clinton: (0.2) the FAMily members who are with us in Tuskegee
 206 Clinton: .hhhhhh only YOu have the power (0.5) to forGIve. (2.5)

“They use him as a coy,” “Alaine” expressed in her interview:

Here, you’re meeting the President, see? Doesn’t that make up for everything you’ve gone through? Oh, you are better than the government because you’ve forgiven us for the mistakes we’ve made. You can kind of forget it now.

As soon as the apology is delivered—as soon as Clinton says “sorry”—the onus is suddenly on the “other” party to act, to forgive. In a similar vein, while reflecting on the position of the victims of the Tuskegee Study, “Nick” reflected, “the government is trying to apologize the best they can, they [the victims] have to be there because otherwise, if they don’t go, they look like the asses that didn’t let the government apologize.” After May 17, 1997, it is difficult to invoke “Tuskegee” without also bearing in mind Clinton’s apology. The apology itself signals to Americans that reparations have been made, that the transgression has been resolved and the wounds are now healing.

This paper has shown why it is important to consider the effects of Clinton’s apology on the audience. It is not only directed at the Tuskegee survivors and African American groups, the addressed hearers, but also unaddressed hearers, all American citizens, in the way it re-shapes America’s historical narrative. If, as Mary Stuckey (1991:1) claims, we think of the president as an “interpreter-in-chief,” the person who “tells us stories about ourselves, and in doing so tells us what sort of people we are, [and] how we are constituted as a community,” until Clinton’s formal apology, the Tuskegee Experiments were not a part of America’s story, its historical narrative (Bates et al. 2008).

Gibney and Roxstrom (2001:937) suggest that “the apology phenomenon is best viewed as part of a much larger effort at seeking, establishing, and understanding

the truth, exemplified in the myriad of truth commissions that have been created throughout the world." Apologizing is not only the act of "saying sorry," it is an act embedded in a landscape of struggle and contestation about reality itself. It is also about establishing one "truth" which delegitimizes other ways of framing the past, other more solemn ways about thinking of Tuskegee. The moment of "suffering" has now shifted into a process of "healing."

Through a detailed examination of these kinds of apologies, like Clinton's apology for the Tuskegee Study, the kinds of communicative strategies deployed by politicians and their effects on the audience become readily apparent. The way in which Clinton frames the past, present, and future, as well as the way he dissociates the current government from former governments, all serve to invite the audience to rethink and remember events from a particular standpoint. It signals to the audience how distant transgressions *should be* remembered, privileging a single dominant frame with which to imagine and interpret the past, thereby reshaping the collective national memory.

NOTES

¹ This project secured Ethics Approval through the University of Toronto.

APPENDIX A

Transcription Conventions (from Sidnell 2010)

I. Temporal and sequential relationships

Overlapping or simultaneous talk is indicated in a variety of ways.

[Separate left square brackets, one above the other on two successive lines with utterances by different speakers, indicate a point of overlap onset, whether at the start of an utterance or later.

] Separate right square brackets, one above the other on two successive lines with utterances by different speakers, indicate a point at which two overlapping utterances both end or where one ends while the other continues, or simultaneous moments in overlaps which continue.

= Equal signs ordinarily come in pairs, one at the end of a line, and another at the start of the next line or one shortly thereafter. They are used to indicate two things:

- (1) If the two lines connected by the equal signs are by the same speaker, then there was a single, continuous utterance with no break or pause, which was broken up in order to accommodate the placement of overlapping talk.
- (2) If the lines connected by two equal signs are by different speakers, then the second followed the first with no discernable silence between them, or was "latched" to it.

(0.5) Numbers in parentheses indicate silence, represented in tenths of a second;

what is given here in the left margin indicates 0.5 seconds of silence. Silences may be marked either within an utterance or between utterances.

- (.) A dot in parentheses indicates a “micropause,” hearable, but not readily measurable without instrumentation, ordinarily less than 0.2 of a second.

II. Aspects of speech delivery, including aspects of intonation

- The punctuation marks are not used grammatically, but to indicate intonation.
- .
- The period indicates a falling, or final, intonation contour, not necessarily the end of a sentence.
- ?
- A question mark indicates rising intonation, not necessarily a question.
- ,
- A comma indicates “continuing” intonation, not necessarily a clause boundary.
- ¿
- The inverted question mark is used to indicate a rise stronger than a comma but weaker than a question mark.
- ::
- Colons are used to indicate the prolongation or stretching of the sound just preceding them. The more colons, the longer the stretching. On the other hand, graphically stretching a word on the page by inserting blank spaces between the letters does not necessarily indicate how it was pronounced; it is used to allow alignment with overlapping talk.
-
- A hyphen after a word or part of a word indicates a cut-off or self-interruption, often done with a glottal or dental stop.
- word
- Underlining is used to indicate some form of stress or emphasis, by either increased loudness or higher pitch. The more underlining, the greater the emphasis.
- word
- Underlining sometimes is placed under the first letter or two of a word, rather than under the letters which are actually raised in pitch or volume.
- WOrd
- Especially loud talk may be indicated by upper case; again, the louder, the more letters in upper case. And in extreme cases, upper case may be underlined.
- °
- The degree sign indicates that the talk following it was markedly quiet or soft.
- °word°
- When there are two degree signs, the talk between them is markedly softer than the talk around it.
- :
- Combinations of underlining and colons are used to indicate intonation contours:
- If the letter(s) preceding a colon is (are) underlined, then there is an “inflected” falling intonation contour on the vowel (you can hear the pitch turn downward).
- :
- If a colon is itself underlined, then there is an inflected rising intonation contour.
- ↑ or ^
- ↓
- The up and down arrows mark sharper rises or falls in pitch than would be indicated by combinations of colons and underlining, or they may mark a whole shift, or resetting, of the pitch register at which the talk is being produced.
- ><
- <>
- The combination of “more than” and “less than” symbols indicates that the talk between them is compressed or rushed. Used in the reverse order, they can indicate that a stretch of talk is markedly slowed or drawn out. The “less than” symbol by itself indicates that the immediately following talk is “jump-started”,

i.e. sounds like it starts with a rush.

hhh Hearable aspiration is shown where it occurs in the talk by the letter *h*—the more *h*'s, the more aspiration. The aspiration may represent breathing, laughter, etc.

(hh) If it occurs inside the boundaries of a word, it may be enclosed in parentheses in order to set it apart from the sounds of the word.

°hh If the aspiration is an inhalation, it is shown with a dot before it.

III. Other markings

(()) Double parentheses are used to mark the transcriber's descriptions of events, rather than representations of them: ((cough)), ((sniff)), ((telephone rings)), ((footsteps)), ((whispered)), ((pause)), and the like.

(word) When all or part of an utterance is in parentheses, or the speaker identification is, this indicates uncertainty on the transcriber's part, but represents a likely possibility.

() Empty parentheses indicate that something is being said, but no hearing (or, in some cases, speaker identification) can be achieved.

APPENDIX B

Transcript of President Clinton's Apology

Date: May 16, 1997

Place: The East Room

Time: 2:26 P.M. EDT

001 Mr. Shaw: Ladies and gentlemen (0.3) I give you (.) the president (.)
 002 Mr. Shaw: of the united states of America.
 003 Audience: ((Applause)) (37.0)
 004 (2.0)
 005 Clinton: hhrm. Ladies and gentlemen (1.2) on Sunday? (.) mister
 006 Clinton: Shaw will celebrate his NInety fifth BIRTHday.
 007 Audience: ((Applause)) (5.0)
 008 Clinton: I would like to:: (.) REcognize: the other (2.0) surVIvors
 009 Clinton: who are here todAY:: an their FAMilies: uh (.) mister
 010 Clinton: Charlie Pollard? hh is here?,
 011 Audience: ((Applause)) (3.0)
 012 Clinton: mister Carter Howard? (1.0) (here?)
 013 Audience: ((Applause)) (5.0)
 014 Clinton: >mister< Fred Simmons?,
 015 Audience: ((Applause)) (7.0)
 016 Clinton: mister SIMmons just TOok his first airplane ri:de n he

- 017 Clinton: reckons he's about a hundred n TEn years old so (2.5)
 018 Audience: ((laughs))
 019 Clinton: I thINk it's (1.0) ti:me for him to take a chance or two?
 020 Audience: ((laughs))
 021 Clinton: I'm glad he did.
 022 Audience: ((chuckles))
 023 Clinton: (alright) And mister FREderick Moss:: thank you: sir,
 024 Audience: ((Applause))
 025 Clinton: (thank you to all of you)
 026 Audience: ((Applause)) (4.0)
 027 Clinton: I would Also like to ask uh: three family represENtatives
 028 Clinton: who are here:: (0.3) uh: Sam Doner is represented by his
 029 Clinton: daughter: Gwendolyn COx. (0.6) Thank you Gwendolyn?
 030 Audience: ((Applause)) (6.0)
 031 Clinton: Ernest HEndon who is watching in TuskEgee is represented by
 032 Clinton: his brother North Hendon thank you sir for being here,
 033 Audience: ((Applause)) (5.0)
 034 Clinton: And George KEy is represented by his gRAndson Christopher
 035 Clinton: Monroe. (0.2) Thank you Chris?
 036 Audience: ((Applause)) (4.0)
 037 Clinton: I also uh (.) acknowledge the FAMilies, community leaders,
 038 Clinton: teachers and students (.) watching today by satellite from
 039 Clinton: Tuskegee. .hhh The WHite House is the PEople's house, (0.4)
 040 Clinton: we are glad to have ALL of you here today. I thank doctor
 041 Clinton: David Satcher for his role in this. .hhh I thank
 042 Clinton: Congresswoman WAters en (0.2) Congressman Hilliard
 043 Clinton: Congressman Stokes the entire Congressional Black Caucus.
 044 Clinton: doctor Satcher (0.2) >members of the Cabinet who are here,
 045 Clinton: Secretary Herman Secretary Slater.< A great friend of
 046 Clinton: freedom Fred Gray thank you for fighting this long battle
 047 Clinton: all these long years.
 048 (5.0)
 049 Clinton: The EIght men who are surVIvors of the syphilis study at
 050 Clinton: Tuskegee (2.0) are a living link. to a TIme not so very
 051 Clinton: long ago: that many Americans would prefer: not to (.)
 052 Clinton: remember. (2.0) but we DAre not (.) forget. (3.0) It was a
 053 Clinton: TIme when our nation failed to live up to its ideals. (2.0)
 054 Clinton: when OUr nation broke the trust with our people that is the
 055 Clinton: very foundation (2.0) of our democracy. .hhhIt is NOt only
 056 Clinton: in reMEmbering that shameful past that we can make amends
 057 Clinton: and repair our nation, (2.0) but it is in reMEmbering that
 058 Clinton: past (1.0) that we can build a better present (2.0) and a
 059 Clinton: better future. (1.0) And withOUt remembering it, (2.0) we

060 Clinton: cannot make amends (1.0) and we cannot go forward.
061 (4.0)
062 Clinton: So today: America doe:s remember (.) the HUndreds of men
063 Clinton: used in research without their knowledge and consent. (1.0)
064 Clinton: We remember the:m and their FAMily members. (1.0) Men who
065 Clinton: were poor? and African American. (0.2) .hh without
066 Clinton: resources and with few alternatives .hhh they believed they
067 Clinton: had found HOpe when they were offered free medical care by
068 Clinton: the <United States Public Health Service.> (3.0) They were
069 Clinton: betrayed.
070 (3.0)
071 Clinton: MEdical people are supposed to HElp when we need care? but
072 Clinton: even once a cure was discovered they were denIE:d help
073 Clinton: (1.0) and they were LIed to (1.6) by their: (0.2)
074 Clinton: government. (2.0)nts .hhh Our government is supposed to
075 Clinton: proTEct the rights of its citizens? (1.2) their rights were
076 Clinton: tRAMpled upon.(3.0) ts. Forty years, (0.2) hundreds of men
077 Clinton: betraye:d along with their wi:ves and children. (0.2) along
078 Clinton: with the community in Macon County Alabama. (0.8) the city
079 Clinton: of Tuskegee. the FINE university there: (0.2) and the
080 Clinton: larger African American community.
081 (3.0)
082 Clinton: .hhhhh The United States government did something that was
083 Clinton: wrong:: (2.6) DEeply: proFOUndly: MORally: wROng. (0.6) It
084 Clinton: was an outRAge to our comMITment to integritY and equality
085 Clinton: for all: our citizens.(4.0)
086 Clinton: .thhhh to the survivors?,>to the Wives and FAMily members
087 Clinton: the children and the grandchildren< (0.2) I say what you
088 Clinton: know. (1.2) .hhh No POver on Earth can give you back the
089 Clinton: li:ves lost,(0.4) the pain suffered, (0.2) the yea:rs of
090 Clinton: internal torment (.) an:d anguish. (1.0) What was done::
091 Clinton: cannot be undone. (2.0) But we can: end the silence. (0.2)
092 Clinton: .hhh We can stOp turning our heads away. We can LOOK at you
093 Clinton: in the eye: and finally sa:y on behalf of the American
094 Clinton: people (.) what the United States government did was
095 Clinton: SHAMEful (0.2) and I: (.) am: (.) SOrry.
096 Audience: ((Applause)) (10.0)
097 Clinton: The American PEople (0.2) are sorry. .hhh for the loss?
098 Clinton: for the years of hurt. (0.2) You did NOthing wrong:: (0.2)
099 Clinton: but you were grievously: wro:nged. I apologize: and I am
100 Clinton: sorry. that this apology has been sO: long: in coming.
101 Audience: ((Applause)) (6.0)
102 Clinton: to Macon County to Tuskegee. (1.0) to the DOctors who have

- 103 Clinton: been wrongly associated with the events there, (0.2) you
 104 Clinton: have our apology as well:. To our African American citizens
 105 Clinton: I: am sOrry that YOU:r FEderal government orchestrated a
 106 Clinton: study so:: clearly racist. that can never be allow:ed to
 107 Clinton: happen again. It is against everything OURr country stan:ds
 108 Clinton: for (.) and what we must stand against is what it was.(0.4)
 109 Clinton: So let us reSOLve: (.) to hold forever in our hearts (.)
 110 Clinton: and minds. .hhh>the memory of a TIme not long ago in Macon
 111 Clinton: County, Alabama< (.) so that we can ALways see how adRIft
 112 Clinton: we can become. (0.3) when the REghts of ANy citizens are
 113 Clinton: neglected: ignored: and betrayed. (2.0) And let us resolve:
 114 Clinton: here and now (.) to move FORward (0.6) together.
 115 Clinton: .hhhThe legacy of the study at Tuskegee has reached far:
 116 Clinton: and deep: .hhh in ways that hurt our progress and divide
 117 Clinton: our nation. .hhWe cannot be ONe America when a whole
 118 Clinton: segment of our nation has no tRUst in America. (0.2) An
 119 Clinton: apology is the FIRst step. and we take it with a commitment
 120 Clinton: to rebuild that broken trust. .hhhWe can begIn by making
 121 Clinton: SURE>there is never again another episode like this one.<
 122 Clinton: .hhh>We need to do MORe to ensure that medical research
 123 Clinton: practices are sound and ethical, and that researchers work
 124 Clinton: more closely with communities.<
 125 Clinton: .hhh Today I would like to announce several steps (.) to
 126 Clinton: help us achieve these goals. (0.4) First (.) we will HElp
 127 Clinton: to build: that lasting memorial (.) at Tuskegee?
 128 Audience: ((Applause and Cheering)) (23.5)
 129 (2.0)
 130 Clinton: the school founded by Booker T. Washington distinguished by
 131 Clinton: the renowned scientist George Washington Carver (.) and so
 132 Clinton: many others who advanced the health and well-BEing of
 133 Clinton: African Americans .hhh and aLL Americans is a fitting site.
 134 (1.0)
 135 Clinton: >The department of health and human Services will award a
 136 Clinton: planning grant so the school can pursue establishing .hh a
 137 Clinton: center for bioethics in research and health care.< .hhh the
 138 Clinton: center will serve as a museum of the study and support
 139 Clinton: efforts .hh to address its legacy (0.2) and stREngthen
 140 Clinton: bioethics training. .hhhh>second we commit to increase our
 141 Clinton: community involvement so that we may begin<reSTORing lost
 142 Clinton: trust. .hhh>the study at Tuskegee se:rved to sow distrust
 143 Clinton: of our medical institutions< .hhhesPEcially where research
 144 Clinton: is involved. (.) Since the study was halted abuses have
 145 Clinton: been checked by making informed consent? .hhh and local

146 Clinton: review? MANDatory in federally-funded and mandated
 147 Clinton: research. .hhh Still, twenty-five years later .hhh>many
 148 Clinton: medical studies have Little African American participation<
 149 Clinton: .hhh and African American ORgan donors are few. .hhh>this
 150 Clinton: impEDEs efforts to conduct pROMising research and to
 151 Clinton: provide the bEst health care< .hhh to aLL our people
 152 Clinton: inclUDing African Americans. .hhh>So today I'm directing
 153 Clinton: the Secretary of Health and Human Services Donna Shalala
 154 Clinton: .hhh to issue a report in 180 days about how we can BESt
 155 Clinton: involve communities .hhesPECially minority communities .hh
 156 Clinton: in research and health care.< They ne- you MUSt- Every
 157 Clinton: American group must be invOLved .hh in medical research in
 158 Clinton: ways that are POSitive. .hhWe have PUt the CURse behind us
 159 Clinton: .hhh now we must bring the benefits to aLL Americans.
 160 Audience: ((Applause)) (10.0)
 161 Clinton: Third: we commit to strENgthen researchers' training in bi-
 162 Clinton: o- ethics. .hh>we are CONstantly working on making
 163 Clinton: breakthroughs in protecting the HEalth of our people and in
 164 Clinton: VANquishing: diseases.<>But all: our people must be
 165 Clinton: assURED that their ri:ghts (.) and DIgnity will be
 166 Clinton: respected as new dru:gs treatments and therapies< are
 167 Clinton: tested (.) and used. .hhh so >I am directing Secretary
 168 Clinton: Shalala to work in partnership with higher education< .hh
 169 Clinton: to prepare training materials for medical reSEArchers.
 170 (0.8)
 171 Clinton: They will be available (.) in a YEAr. They will help
 172 Clinton: researchers build on CORE ethical principles of respECT for
 173 Clinton: individuals jUSTice and informed consent .hhhh and advISE
 174 Clinton: them on how to Use these principles effectively in diverse
 175 Clinton: populations. .hhhh Fourth?to incrEase and broaden our
 176 Clinton: understanding of ethical issues and clinical resEARch .hhh
 177 Clinton: we commit to providing pOSTgraduate fellowships to trAin
 178 Clinton: bioethicists .hheSPECially among African Americans and
 179 Clinton: Other minority groups. HHS will offer these fellowships
 180 Clinton: beginning in September of nineteen-ninety eight .hhh to
 181 Clinton: pROMising students enrolled in bioethics graduate programs.
 182 Clinton: .hh And FInally by executive order I am ALso today
 183 Clinton: extending the charter .hh of the National Bioethics
 184 Clinton: Advisory Commission to OctOber of nineteen-ninety nine.
 185 Clinton: The NEed for this commission is cLEAR. We MUSt be able to
 186 Clinton: call on the tHOughtful COLlective wisdom of experts and
 187 Clinton: community representatives to FInd ways to FURther
 188 Clinton: strengthen our protections for subjects in HUman research.

- 189 (2.0)
- 190 Clinton: We face a CHALLENGE in our time? (0.5) .tchh science and
- 191 Clinton: technology are rapidly changing our lives? .hhh with the
- 192 Clinton: PROMISE of making us much HEALTHIER much more productive
- 193 Clinton: (0.2) and more PROSPEROUS. .hhh but WITH these changes we
- 194 Clinton: MUST work HARDER to see that AS we advance .hhh we don't
- 195 Clinton: leave behind:: our CONSCIENCE. .hh No ground indee- is
- 196 Clinton: gained. and indeed much is LOST if we LOSE our moral
- 197 Clinton: bearings. in the name of progress. (2.0) .hhhhh the PEOPLE
- 198 Clinton: who ran the study at Tuskegee (0.2) <diminished the stature
- 199 Clinton: of man.> (0.6) <by abANDONING the most BASIC ethical
- 200 Clinton: precepts.> (0.4) they forgot their ple:dge to HEAL (.) and
- 201 Clinton: repAIR. (2.0) They had the POWER to HEAL the survivors and
- 202 Clinton: all the others (0.3) and they did not. (2.0) Today: all WE
- 203 Clinton: can do, (1.0) is apologize. But YOU have the power, (1.5)
- 204 Clinton: for only YOU- (.) mister SHAW: the others who are here
- 205 Clinton: (0.2) the FAMILY members who are with us in Tuskegee
- 206 Clinton: .hhhhhh only YOU have the power (0.5) to forGIVE. (2.5)
- 207 Clinton: YOUR presence here chu- (0.4) shOWS us (.) that you have
- 208 Clinton: chOSEN (.) a better PATH. than your government did so long
- 209 Clinton: ago. (2.5) You have no:t withheld the power (.) to forGIVE.
- 210 Clinton: ((lightly)) I hope today and tomorrow .hhhEVERY American
- 211 Clinton: .hhh will remember your lesson. .hh and LIVE by it.
- 212 Audience: ((applauds))
- 213 Clinton: THANK you. and GOd bless you.
- 214 Audience: ((Applause continues))

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