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## One for the (Sports) Books: A Case Study on Scandal in College Athletics

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COLLEGE OF EDUCATION

ONE FOR THE (SPORTS) BOOKS:  
A CASE STUDY ON SCANDAL IN COLLEGE ATHLETICS

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## **ABSTRACT**

Florida State University was thrust into the spotlight after quarterback Adrian McPherson was dismissed from the football team following allegations that included sports gambling. In the era of big-time college athletics, it is vital for institutions to respond effectively when issues arise that could negatively affect the school's image. The increase of sports-related scandals plaguing universities in recent years has led to the application of crisis communication theories to many athletic department crises. The purpose of this thesis is to utilize archived primary source documents, newspaper articles, and Foucauldian discourse analysis of crisis communications strategies to summarize and analyze the comparative discourses of those involved in the McPherson case. By studying the variations in individual accounts of the events in this case, it is possible to gain insight into the complex relationship between athletic departments, the NCAA, student-athletes, and the media.

***Keywords:** Adrian McPherson; Florida State University; Sports gambling; NCAA; Crisis communication; Foucauldian discourse analysis*

# CHAPTER ONE

## INTRODUCTION

Historically, sport has an idealistic appeal to American society. The idea of sport as a metaphor for life is so ubiquitous in American culture and literature that it has become a part of conventional understanding. Tangen (2000) describes sport as a “mirror function” whereby supposed improvements can be measured and tested relatively risk-free. For example, sporting events such as the Olympics have been used as a measuring stick to indirectly evaluate economic progress or the success of political systems. Sport is a highly integrated element of Western consumerist culture; therefore athletes often reach the status of celebrity due to their high visibility (Nixon, 2008, p. 154). Athletes are put on pedestals, constructed as heroes and examples of character, moral rectitude, and high achievement. If these elements are violated in any way, the underlying sanctity of the game expected by the fans can be tainted.

One of the appeals of sport is that it can be an escape from the “real” world to a simplified world where rule conformity, fair play, and moral conduct transcend all. A sport scandal is an event that sabotages the formal rules of the game and threatens the binary win/lose structure, such as when bribery produces a false winner or performance-enhancing drugs turn a marginal competitor into a sporting champion. Sport organizations and governing bodies are also held to certain standards because they are charged with the duties of representing and preserving the values of fair play and high moral standards associated with sport. As sport continues to grow both in popularity and influence in modern society, sports scandals are often discussed at length in both the media and research literature. While not a contemporary phenomenon, the scope of sport and the broad reach of mass media cause these “scandals” to reach a larger audience than ever before (Thompson, 2000). With this amount of societal influence, it is important to strive

for a better understanding of both the positive and negative effects of sport. In 2002, Florida State University quarterback Adrian McPherson was dismissed from the football team amid a gambling scandal. The focus of this research is to analyze the discourse that resulted from Adrian McPherson's actions.

In some ways, the strength of the philosophical values of the self-contained world of sport has led to it become a dominant aspect of American culture that attracts millions of people. Intercollegiate athletics, in particular, appeal more directly to the idealistic sentiments we associate with sport due to its supposed amateurism. In a world where professional sport is plagued with labor disputes and astronomical salaries, college sport attempts to position itself as the last bastion of untainted sportsmanship. The National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) and its member institutions tout mission statements of fair play undertaken for the purpose of education, self-satisfaction, and personal growth. The NCAA Division I manual states that its purpose is as follows: "A basic purpose of this Association is to maintain intercollegiate athletics as an integral part of the educational program and the athlete as an integral part of the student body and, by so doing, retain a clear line of demarcation between intercollegiate athletics and professional sports" (NCAA, 2012). Despite (or perhaps congruent with) these claims, college sports have grown into big business. A Knight Commission report found that the median expenditures of the 10 high-spending athletic departments rose to \$98 million in 2009, compared to \$69 million in 2005 (Pappano, 2012). While the lucrative nature of big-time collegiate athletics is understandably appealing to administrators, students, and alumni, the question is raised: how, if at all, do sports fit into the overall mission of higher education?

In the era of big-time college athletics, Division I programs and athletes are revered by the general public; thereby generating millions of dollars in revenue for their respective



universities. Undoubtedly, the university has a vested interest in preserving the image of the school, which is put at risk when the institution is subjected to both NCAA and criminal investigations. This is where the tension between the previous idealistic notions of sport and the shift in social and economic implications becomes significant. Strictly athletic-related stories can sometimes be overshadowed by the media coverage of off-the-field behavior by student-athletes. A recent study by CBS News and *Sports Illustrated* found that seven percent of the players in the preseason Top 25 had been charged with a crime (Benedict & Keteyian, 2011). Due to the importance of a positive public image, collegiate athletic administrations are faced with employing crisis management to handle instances of criminal behavior, investigate potential causes, and develop prevention programs and response policies.

Scandals are defined as “actions or events involving certain kinds of transgressions which become known to others and are sufficiently serious to elicit a public response” (Thompson, 2000, p. 13). Whether the facts surrounding an allegation are true or not, a scandal can evolve if there is enough public interest and response (Adut, 2005, p. 217f). Thompson (2000, p. 73) continues to break down a scandal into four distinct phases: 1) the pre-scandal phase; 2) the phase of scandal proper; 3) the phase of culmination; and 4) the aftermath. This study largely focuses on the scandal proper phase, where the public begins to take notice of the supposed wrongdoing and claims and counterclaims emerge from the parties involved, and the culmination phrase, where environmental pressure increases on the parties involved in a scandal to find a way to remedy the situation and restore balance to the system. The communication that takes place in these phases is vital in determining how the scandal develops and resolves. It is here where the power structure develops for the debate, subject positions are formed and

weighted, and the moral responsibilities and other contradictory themes offer up potential solutions and/or sanctions.

While there have been many instances of sport-related scandals, the most prevalent instances (and therefore the most studied) are related to doping (Carstairs, 2003; Laine, 2006), sexual harassment (Toffoletti, 2007), corruption (Bachin, 2003; Lee, 2008), and gambling (Cross & Vollano, 1999; Cullen and Latessa, 1996; Ellenbogen et al., 2008). While most of these transgressions are far removed from the majority of society and perceived as morally wrong, gambling has become an accepted part of modern culture (Udovicic, 1998, p. 404). It is estimated that eighty percent of the American population participates in some form of gambling activity (Layden, 1995). Sport betting contributes a considerable amount to this percentage (Udovicic, 1998), despite the fact that gambling on sports is only legal in two states. Newspapers and websites provide betting lines and odds in their sport pages, radio stations provide twenty-four hour sports commentary, and the media has an unprecedented amount of access to teams. Sports programming has contributed a great deal to growth and acceptance of gambling (Layden, 1995; Udovicic, 1998). Channels like ESPN provide a constant stream of sports statistics, news, scores, and more. Analysts discuss which teams are favored to win and provide insight into the factors that produce certain game outcomes. The average casual sports fan sitting on his living room couch can become an “expert” due to the amount of information available to him, and that provides an added level of confidence to make betting decisions.

Gambling activity has become increasingly skewed towards the younger demographic in recent years, with the average age of a Gamblers Anonymous member dropping from fifty years old to thirty years old in just twenty years (Udovicic, 1998, p. 407). College campuses are teeming with gambling activity, where campus bookies can collect seemingly innocuous bets

from naïve students who are looking for a rush and some easy money (Udovicic, 1998). The accessibility and anonymity of Internet gambling is particularly appealing to college students. Internet gambling is currently the topic of many political discussions, as arguments advocating regulation and/or prohibition remain unresolved. Whereas professional athletes have major contracts and endorsement deals on the line, collegiate sports are particularly vulnerable to gambling activity due to the fact that the players are unpaid. The NCAA has enacted strict rules against gambling, but it has become such a common aspect of society that student-athletes often take them about as seriously as they do the rules against underage drinking. A study conducted by Curry and Jiobu (1995) showed that athletes are more likely to gamble because they fit the mold of being natural “risk takers” and are more likely to adapt the mindset that they are above the rules (p. 32-33). In 2012, the NCAA conducted the “National Study on Collegiate Sports Wagering and Associated Health-Risk Behaviors” and found that 50% of Division I male athletes participated in gambling, with 2.1% of them considered “heavy” (at least one wager a week) gamblers (NCAA, 2012). It is when the student-athletes get in too deep that a seemingly innocent wager escalates into a pile of gambling debts. In these instances, it is possible to believe that student-athletes are more susceptible to being coerced to give inside information such as injuries or team dynamics or even alter their play in order to affect the outcome of a game (Udovicic, 1998, p. 409).

While gambling on sporting events itself is not inherently evil, its growth and the sheer amount of money involved has the potential to tarnish the integrity of the game. For example, the American Gaming Association estimates illegal wagers on sporting events totaled to as much as \$380 billion, an amount that is less than 1% of the total estimated sports bets placed (Kaburakis & Rodenberg, 2012). Scandals involving transgressions such as doping and gambling threaten

sporting culture in general. Despite the growth of gambling in today's society, participation in sports wagering by athletes is still considered a serious violation; recent scandals in Auburn and San Diego are examples of that (Dauster, 2013; Gleeson, 2013). Most fans consume sport with the expectation that each contest is comprised of individuals trying their best and competing on a level playing field to produce a fair and well-deserved outcome. If sport gives society a reason to question that, the public confidence in sports could be shattered. Big Ten Conference Commissioner Jim Delaney stated, "If the integrity of a college game ever becomes suspect, then what is left? Not much and nothing that you can be proud of...if there was a pattern of cases that crossed our conference or some others, there would need to be a clear effort to de-emphasize sports on college campuses" (Udovicic, 1998, p. 412). Student-athletes are lauded as positive ambassadors for their universities, increasing both the reputation and financial standing of the institution. Conversely, athletes also have the power to bring disgrace and financial losses to their school, cost athletic staff their jobs, and negatively affect a team even years after they leave the university. This study will closely examine an example of a sport scandal hurting both a young athlete's career and his school's reputation.

The story behind starting quarterback Adrian McPherson's dismissal from the Florida State University (FSU) football team is a complicated one. McPherson was kicked off the team in November 2002, but FSU administrators had questioned him about gambling rumors in early August and some reports say that the administration had been informed about his activities as early as May or June (Bianchi, 2003a; Robbins, 2003d). Apart from just gambling, investigators learned that accusations against McPherson of credit card theft were first brought to the athletic department by student equipment managers Jeff Inderhees and George (Mike) Pellicer. When these allegations initially came to athletic department's attention, associate athletic director Bob

Minnix spoke with McPherson and Inderhees, and that marked the end of the FSU's inquiry (Figone, 2012). However, the school was forced to confront the issues later.

In November 2002, Adrian McPherson found himself in trouble again, this time in relation to a forgery investigation. McPherson was originally arrested in connection with stealing and cashing a blank check for \$3,500 from an auto accessories company in Tallahassee. His dismissal from the team opened the door to allegations of sports gambling and point shaving as rumors began to spread that McPherson needed the money to pay off gambling debts (Fish, 2003). There is no evidence from the investigations conducted that the outcome of any games were altered, but the ingredients necessary for a scandal were in place: a young athlete, prominent within the team, who was allegedly \$8,000 in debt to a local bookie (Hill, IR #1-11897). Seven months later, McPherson stood trial in a courtroom televised on national television not for felony theft, but for a misdemeanor count of gambling. The media whirlwind that accompanied the former Florida Mr. Football/Mr. Basketball featured a considerable amount of criticism for the FSU athletic department and the part they played in the scandal. As the investigation progressed, McPherson, the FSU athletic department, the NCAA, and the media each shaped their own version of the series of events surrounding the scandal. In the end, McPherson's once-promising athletic career came to a screeching halt, while Florida State escaped significant NCAA sanctions despite strong media criticism (Indigo, 2003; Robbins, 2003f; Robbins & Schmadtke, 2003; Bianchi, 2003a).

### **1.1. Research Implications**

In a post-Penn State scandal society, the importance of institutional response to scandal has been augmented. The growth of big-time college sports has led to many schools crossing the line to "keep up" and stay competitive, but the rise of mass media can lead to an extremely

public and potentially devastating fall from grace if violations are committed and uncovered. By studying this individual case of institutional response to sports gambling by a student-athlete, it is possible to see organizational politics at work and determine power structures. The importance in this study lies with studying in-depth information of a scandal to gain knowledge of how the institutional actors responded to a crisis that had the ability to significantly affect those involved.

## **1.2. Purpose of Study**

The reality of any sequence of events in a sport scandal is mitigated by the intermediaries involved—the media, various athletic department personnel, the investigators, and the athletes themselves. The purpose of this study is to summarize and analyze the comparative discourses of the institutional actors in the case of Adrian McPherson. While crisis communication strategies have been applied to many scandals, few have applied them to the unique environment surrounding NCAA violations and big-time intercollegiate athletics. No known studies have attempted to analyze the discourse regarding this specific case of Adrian McPherson, leading to the following research questions:

RQ1: What is the relationship between the legal reality of this sport gambling case and stories presented by the intermediaries?

RQ2: What are the points of contradiction in the accounts from the various institutional actors involved in the scandal, and what do they suggest about big-time collegiate athletics?

These research questions all aim to study the communication forms that come out of moments of crisis and how they are manipulated.

## **1.3. Limitations**

The limitations of this study are largely the same as those for any case study. The issue of generalizability is significant here because no two scandals are exactly the same, so the

conclusions reached in this study will not necessarily be applicable to other sport scandals. However, this study is not striving for generalizability, but rather taking advantage of the opportunity for deeper understanding of how the McPherson scandal was navigated that the detailed primary source documents reveal. The most significant potential limitation is the assumption that FSU purchased the complete collection of documents from the investigation and nothing was removed or left out. Also, it is important to note that this scandal took place over ten years ago. This fact raises the question: Is sports gambling and potential game fixing still as big an offense in today's society as it was in 2002?

Another limitation for this study is time constraint. There were thousands of articles, blogs, broadcasts, and posts created regarding the Adrian McPherson scandal. Involving more of these in the sample size (such as the social media posts or nationwide publications) would help provide a clearer depiction of the public response to the scandal. However, this restriction is diminished because the strength and focus of this study are the primary source documents from the official police investigation. As of now, no scholarly research has been done on Adrian McPherson. This unique case and the availability of primary source documents can potentially lead to a better understanding of crisis response by those involved in athletic scandals.

The focus of this research is to analyze the discourse that resulted from Adrian McPherson's actions. The field of crisis communications will be utilized to understand how the various actors involved in the scandal shaped the narrative of their involvement. Crisis communication is a specific function of public relations designed to assist a person or institution whose reputation is being publically tested. Fearn-Banks (2007) describes crisis communication as a "dialog" between the person/institution before, during, and after a potential scandal that attempts to minimize the damage to those involved. As intercollegiate athletics has grown into

“big business,” individual athletes, schools, and the NCAA have a vested interest in controlling and shaping the message when sport scandals arise. The threats of sanctions, damage to public image, and loss of public confidence in the sanctity of sport in general are significant negative consequences from improperly managing crisis situations.

The following review explores the existing research on sports gambling, the effects of big-time sports on athletic administrations, crisis communication theory, and previous case studies on similar collegiate sport scandals. Additionally, the methodology for this study and the texts involved are explained.



## **CHAPTER TWO**

### **LITERATURE REVIEW**

With the emergence of big-time college sports, organizations and individuals must engage in crisis communications when scandals arise. Firstly, it is important to recognize the culture of big-time college sports and the role that this environment potentially has in the way that scandals are dealt with by the involved parties. The theoretical framework of this study will be based on crisis communications, Foucauldian discourse analysis, and their unique relationship to sport. Next, research on gambling legislation and its effect on sports must be examined to place the significance of McPherson's transgression in context. Finally, the literature review will conclude with relevant research of sport scandal case studies. While there has been no research conducted on Adrian McPherson's gambling scandal, there are many similar cases in both professional and intercollegiate sport that will provide a foundation for constructing this study.

#### **2.1. Big-time Athletics**

Opponents of sports gambling appeal to the idealistic notion of non-politicized fair play, saying that gambling on sport ruins the "sanctity" of the game. However, it is naïve to continue to believe that sport is the self-contained world of uninhibited sportsmanship it once was painted to be. Men's Division I basketball and football generates millions of dollars of revenue for their institutions and many universities use athletics as a vital mechanism to garner popular and political support. The spending gap between academics and athletics has grown across the board. The book "Big-Time Sports in American Universities" notes that average salaries at public universities increased 32 percent for professors, 90 percent for presidents, and 650 percent for football coaches from 1985 to 2010 (Clotfelter, 2011). According to a USA Today report, Florida State University can definitely be considered an institution deeply invested in big-time

sports: FSU was one of 13 universities that had more than \$100 million revenue in 2012, up from \$78,575,788 in 2011. FSU's licensing rights increased by more than \$9 million from 2011 to 2012. Collective coaching salaries increased as well, with FSU paying over \$27.5 million in 2012 as opposed to the \$15 million paid in 2005 (Harvey, 2013). However, these large sums of money are sometimes accompanied by unsavory practices; a search of the LSDBi database shows that FSU was found guilty of 7 major violations since 1968 (NCAA, 2013).

Television is one of the leading reasons for the boom in college sports. A 1932 NCAA vote showed that 90 percent of the member institutions believed that broadcasting the games over the radio hindered football revenue and game attendance (Zimbaslist, 1999). However, the technology boom quickly changed that mindset. Improved scope and quality of broadcasting led to a number of schools signing television deals to broadcast sports. In 1984, the Supreme Court of the United States ruled in *NCAA v. Board of Regents at the University of Oklahoma* that the NCAA control of television contracts violated antitrust laws by unreasonably restraining trade (Arico, 1985). In the past 10 years, the number of college football and basketball games shown on ESPN channels grew from 491 to 1,320 (Pappano, 2012). In addition to this number, games are also shown on networks such as Fox, CBS, NBC, and Versus. The latest Atlantic Coast Conference television deal with ESPN is worth \$3.6 billion over the next 15 years (Dosh, 2012).

These television contracts have led to many non-weekend games, and the importance of athletics on college campuses is apparent by how the institutions handle these weekday contests. Schools such as the University of Central Florida, Mississippi State, and Boston College all cancelled classes on the days of televised weekday games (Pappano, 2012). The NCAA multi-million dollar budget has grown at an annual rate of 15 percent since 1982, and the rule handbook has grown along with it. In 1970-1971 the manual was 161 pages and now it is up to

444 pages for just Division I schools (Zimbalist, 1999; NCAA, 2012). Intercollegiate athletics is a unique industry; it claims non-profit tax exempt status to avoid paying its principal workers a salary, but generates millions of dollars per year.

“Big-time sports has become the public face of the university, the brand that admissions offices sell, a public-relations machine thanks to ESPN exposure” (Pappano, 2012). Several studies have been conducted on the relationship between an institution’s success in athletics and subsequent applications to the university. A study conducted by J. Toma and Michael Cross (1998) found that football championships appear to have the most profound impact on applications, with 13 of 16 football champions receiving a significant gain in application rates relative to peer schools. The study also showed that positive attention following a championship often continued for at least 3 years (Toma & Cross, 1998). One 2008 survey showed that making it to the NCAA basketball tournament “Sweet Sixteen” yielded a 3% increase in applications, a 4-5% increase if the school reached the “Final Four”, and a 7-8% increase for winning the tournament. The same study also studied football performance and concluded that teams ending the season ranked in the top ten brought a 3% increase in applications, while winning the national championship brought a 7-8% increase (Pope & Pope, 2008). Increases in applications can allow schools to be more selective in which students they accept, increase tuition, and increase enrollment.

However, that kind of public exposure associated with big-time college sports comes with drawbacks as well. A survey conducted by Widmeyer Communications found that 85% of respondents blamed the “culture of big money” in college sports for Penn State officials’ failure to report Jerry Sandusky’s child abuse to the police (Grasgreen, 2011). The Duke lacrosse team rape scandal prompted a public outcry on the intersection of race, class, and gender and a report

that the university reacted “sluggishly” to the rape allegations leveled against members of the lacrosse team due to their attempt to avoid the scandal (Lipka, 2006).

### **2.1.1. Organizational Deviance**

The National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) was formed in 1906 to oversee the administration of collegiate athletics and establish its rules and regulations. The member institutions of the NCAA include the universities, conferences, associations, and other groups related to intercollegiate athletics. The NCAA appoints a Committee on Infractions to oversee the enforcement of NCAA rules, conduct investigations, and impose the appropriate penalties (Green, 1992). The Supreme Court decided in *NCAA v. Tarkanian* that the NCAA is not a state actor and therefore does not have to comply with due process; however, the organization has come under criticism for its ability to enforce its rules, with many claiming the process is biased, inefficient, and selective (Goplerud, 1991; Koch, 1973; Nelson, 2011; Young, 1992). One writer suggests that the NCAA should accept its inability to adequately investigate the issues that plague the college sports landscape and transfer its enforcement responsibilities to an outside organization (Miller, 2012). Miller states the NCAA enforcement staff consists of 40 “investigators” whose expertise lies in athletic department experience (the majority of the staff are former student-athletes) rather than in investigative experience. The NCAA also lacks subpoena power, so it relies heavily on the self-reporting of the member institutions. Miller attributes the weak enforcement powers of the NCAA to inherent conflicts of interest and inconsistent punishment, stating these issues diminish respect for the organization’s integrity and effectiveness.

The effect of big-time sports has led to somewhat of a crisis in its governance. Former NCAA President Cedric Dempsey stated that a “change in culture” was necessary in order for

the NCAA to progress in its effectiveness (Schroeder, 2010, p. 98). Former NCAA President Myles Brand echoed a similar thought by saying his goal was to “close the gap between the cultures of athletics and academics” (Schroeder, 2010, p. 98). However, NCAA rules continue to be violated. A search of the NCAA Legislative Services Database (LSDBi) shows that there were 23 cases of major infractions since the beginning of 2012. This does not include the cases that are still under investigation (NCAA, 2013). Intercollegiate athletics elicit such strong emotions from its fan base that students, alumni, and boosters often transform their passions into values that become entangled in the financial factors of athletic operations (Schroeder, 2010). It is the institutional culture, external environment, internal environment, and leadership that shape an athletic department’s values and priorities.

Scandal stemming from criminal behavior by student-athletes is no longer the sole responsibility of the justice system, nor is it a new phenomenon. In the 1980s, Colorado State athletes had so many brushes with the law that campus police used the football program as a mug book for crime victims to identify the perpetrators (Fried, 1997). Sexual assaults have been a particularly prevalent crime committed by athletes. A study at 30 colleges reported that the 3.3 percent of all male students that were athletes committed 19 percent of the reported sexually-related crimes (Fried, 1997). Though schools have historically tried to separate themselves from any criminal conduct from their players, the pervasiveness of the media and popularity of sports makes it very difficult for institutions to remain uninvolved. To avoid potential liability for the criminal conduct of their students, many colleges are adopting new risk management techniques like criminal background checks for student-athletes.

Despite the potential negative publicity and backlash from scandals, reports of deviant acts from within intercollegiate athletics continue. Some of the responsibility for this has shifted

from specific individuals to college sports in general. The main distinction is motive: did the individual commit the deviant act for personal gain or to achieve organizational goals and objectives, i.e. winning? Santomier (1980) says that sociologists look beyond the personal circumstances that push an individual to engage in illegal activity and rather focus upon rule-breaking as a predictable product of a person's membership within a particular organization. With the growth of big-time college sports and the pressure to remain competitive, there is more potential for athletic departments to shift their priorities from protecting the well-being of their athletes to focus on organizational survival needs. Santomier defines four prongs that must be met in order for an act to be considered organizational deviance: 1) the deviant act must be contrary to the norms outside of the organization; 2) act must find support from the organization; 3) behavior must be known to the dominant portion of the organization; 4) new members must be socialized to participate in the deviant action.

When examining the factors that contribute to sport scandals, it is important to take organizational culture into account. While the individual institution's athletic department is a key player, the NCAA as the controller organization also plays a part in determining the priorities of student-athletes and the schools for which they compete. Santomier (1980) criticizes the NCAA's effectiveness as a controller organization, stating that "within the structure and function of the NCAA and its enforcement procedures, there is a congruence between the normative primary beneficiary and the deviance that is NCAA's concern" (p. 30). In other words, no organization commits a violation without weighing the benefits of breaking the rules against the likelihood of being caught and sanctioned. It is in the context of big-time sports that this study analyzes the discourse surrounding the Adrian McPherson scandal.

## **2.2. Crisis Communication**

Due to the high exposure of big-time Division I programs, criminal activity by student-athletes becomes a high-profile public relations issue for their institution (Huang, 2006). In instances like these, there is a power struggle between the student, institution, and media to create the final narrative. The prominent role intercollegiate athletics plays in shaping a school's reputation requires public relations theories to study the discourses around the McPherson dismissal. Crisis communication is a branch of public relations that is designed to defend an entity facing a public challenge to its reputation. A crisis is defined as "the perception of an unpredictable event that threatens important expectancies of stakeholders and can seriously impact an organization's performance and generate negative outcomes" (Coombs, 2012, p. 2).

The study of crisis communications is part of the conceptual framework that will shape the analysis of the events in the following research. Crisis communication can be described as "the dialog between the organization and its public prior to, during, and after the negative occurrence...the dialogue details strategies and tactics that are designed to minimize damage to the image of the organization" (Fearn-Banks, 2007, p. 9). Studying the "crisis communications" of a university can provide insight to the relationship between the duties owed to the involved parties. Individual institutions, the NCAA, student-athletes, and the media all have some kind of obligation to each other. The question that becomes most important in these instances is which of these relationships commands the most power in a crisis situation? Coombs states that, ethically, the priorities in any crisis for managers must be to use communication to address the physical and psychological concerns of the victims before turning their attentions to their reputation (2007, p. 165).

Many crisis communication theories are centered on how to respond to an event *after* it occurs. The focus of this research is the discourse created *throughout* the unfolding of the McPherson scandal. Mitroff (1994) outlines a five-stage crisis management process: 1) signal detection, when there are warning signs of an impending crisis that can be detected and acted upon; 2) probing and prevention, when administrations should look for risk factors and work to prevent the crisis from occurring; 3) damage containment, where organization members attempt to minimize the damage done by a crisis; 4) recovery, or regaining normalcy and using image repair strategies; and 5), learning, reviewing and analyzing how the crisis was handled.

The organizational renewal theory presented by Ulmer, Sellnow, and Seeger (2010) outlines a strategy employed by institutions and the NCAA when scandals arise. “One of the key factors of a crisis is that it reveals the ethical values of the organization. Crises do not build character; they expose the character of the organization” (p. 19). The focus of this theory is learning from organizational mistakes and seeing how events can be prevented and/or dealt with in the future. The first research question of this thesis aims to find the relationship between the reality of the McPherson sport gambling case and the stories presented by the intermediaries. In this study, the news stories and individual accounts of McPherson’s actions are analyzed against each other. Ideally, the core of the stories should all be the same in order to avoid mixed messages that could lead to mistrust in the organization.

Benoit and Hanczor (1994) define image as “the perception(s) of a person, group or organization held by the audience, shaped by the words and actions of that person, as well as by the discourse and behavior of other relevant actors” (p. 40). Sports image repair has taken on greater importance because of the globalization of sports, increased news coverage of troubled athletes, and also increased activism of sports fans (Meyer, 2008). The need to maintain and



repair an athlete's image is important because a poor image can affect their career. Brazeal (2008) writes that an athlete's endorsement power is ultimately dependent on their image. It is imperative that teams respond to their athletes' transgressions. Athletes (or in this case, student-athletes) are effectively employees of the organization for which they compete, and an athlete's words and actions are directly linked to the institutions they represent.

Benoit (1994) identifies five main strategies that blamed parties use to repair their image after an attack: denial, evade responsibility, reduce the offensiveness, corrective action, and mortification. The first strategy, **denial**, is when the accused party denies the fact that they were involved in any wrongdoing. Using this method, the person can either simply refute the claim or shift the blame to someone else. The second strategy is to **evade responsibility** and there are four variations of this method. *Scapegoating* claims that the accused party performed the act in response to someone else's wrongdoing, whereas *defeasibility* involves the accused person claiming they committed the wrongdoing because of a lack of control or information. Other forms of evading responsibility are claiming it was an *accident* or done with *good intentions*. The third strategy is to **reduce the offensiveness** of the perceived wrongdoing. This can be done through *bolstering* (focusing on positive acts done in the past), *minimization* (making the offensive act seem less serious), *differentiation* (comparing the wrongdoing to worse acts to make their accusation look less serious), *transcendence* (framing the act in a more favorable context), *compensation* (provide relief for the alleged victims), and *attacking his/her accusers* to reduce their credibility. The fourth strategy is **corrective action**, where the accused party takes steps to show commitment to make sure the problem never happens again. The final strategy is **mortification**, where the accused admits responsibility and apologizes.

The importance of image repair is not just limited to individual athletes. A survey by Hessert (1998) of professional sports team public relations staff reported that athlete behavior is the most common crisis experienced. The general public is exposed to crises that would not have been widely known in the past due to the rapid growth of technological advancement (Perrow, 2007). Coombs (2007a) gives five reasons that illustrate the necessity for effective crisis communications management: 1) importance of reputation; 2) rapid growth of communications technology; 3) rise of stakeholders voicing opinions when organizations are not living up to their expectations; 4) crises that affect an organization do not just have to happen internally; and 5) organizations can now be held legally responsible for not taking reasonable action to reduce or eliminate known or foreseeable risks caused by crises that could cause harm.

A study done by Brown and Billings (2012) seeks to establish NCAA investigations as a crisis. If we accept that intercollegiate athletics constitutes “big business,” then individual institutions and the NCAA have a vested interest in managing the message when it comes to sports scandals because sanctions and damages to the institution’s public image could result in financial damages. Coombs (2007) states that crisis management occurs in three stages. The pre-crisis stage involves signal detection, prevention, and preparation. In the crisis stage, the organization recognizes the crisis, attempts to contain it, and responds. The post-crisis stage includes making sure the crisis is over, evaluating the crisis plan, adjusting it as needed, and ensuring the recovery of the organization’s reputation. This study will focus largely on the crisis stage—what an organization says and does during a crisis. The general keys for those responding to a crisis are to be quick, consistent, and open (Coombs, 2006). Although crises are generally associated with negative outcomes, positive consequences can result from crises when dealt with successfully (Augustine, 2000; Heath, 2006).

Coombs (1995) says that an organization would be considered more responsible for a crisis if the scandal is internal to the organization. In instances like these, stakeholders may consider the organization more liable for athlete offenses that occur during play or team activities (internal) rather than off-the-field (external) offenses. Though McPherson had other criminal charges such as stealing the fake check, the accusations that he had altered his play to affect the outcome of games is what drew public backlash to both him and the university. Coombs (1995) also states that an organization's crisis history is important. When an institution has a history of scandals then it could point to a larger problem that should be addressed. As addressed earlier, sport scandal is not limited to McPherson or even Florida State. The narratives created by the different parties involved in this particular case could point to a larger issue with big-time college sports in general.

Another one of the research questions in this study concentrates on the points of contradiction in the crisis communication strategies used by Adrian McPherson and Florida State University and gauging their respective effectiveness. Sport scandals contain political elements because moral communication often emerges from controversies, prompting political or organizational change/intervention. Despite these similarities, there are several factors that make sport scandals unique. Firstly, there are few other social activities than sport in which the individual and/or body is focused on to such a great extent (Tangen, 2000, p. 74ff; Rowe, 1994). Success and performance in athletic endeavors is generally regarded as a direct result of the effort and will of the individual performing the feats. Secondly, the general public or "non-participants" of a scandal tend to place the blame for a scandal on a key individual seen as the transgressor of specific social values or expectations (Adut, 2005, p. 11-12; Thompson, 2000, p.

19). Because sport performance is already so individualized, it is very easy to find an individual upon which to place the responsibility.

Sport communication is unique in several ways: firstly, most of its publicity occurs through media coverage and is less controllable by the organization. This interdependent relationship is largely based on the fact that each relies on each other for commercial success. This dynamic breaks free from the typical model of hegemonic power where one individual/group is firmly in control over another individual/group. Of course, the media plays a critical role in the process of crisis communication. The majority of the population will get their information about an event/crisis from news reports rather than directly from the parties involved. Due to this relationship, sports organizations are largely reduced to reactive rather than proactive public relation strategies.

### **2.3. Gambling and Sport**

As sport continues to expand in popularity and revenue, it is important to understand why gambling by a student-athlete constitutes the public interest and backlash that constitutes a scandal. In 1995, one of the leading experts on gambling research, Illinois State University criminal justice chair Henry Lesieur, stated that he was sure the percentage of Americans that gamble is at least 85% and “growing at a phenomenal rate” (Udovocic, 1998, p. 401). As gambling becomes more commonplace and sport becomes more commodified, does the general public become more apathetic or accepting of the possibility of sports gambling influencing the outcome of the game? The United States government must have agreed with Lesieur; in 1999 Congress launched the National Impact Gambling Study Commission to find the social and economic implications of gambling. The findings were as follows: 1) many Americans were unaware that most of sports gambling was illegal; 2) sports gambling does not contribute to the

economy or produce jobs; 3) the social costs of gambling is significant; and 4) sports wagering is prevalent on college campuses and can act as a gateway to more serious forms of gambling (p. 1-8). The Commission recommended a ban on all collegiate and amateur sports gambling because it threatens the integrity of sport and puts vulnerable student-athletes in positions that can devastate their careers and lead to more serious gambling problems (National Impact Gambling Study Commission, 1999). A meta-analysis of gambling research concluded that while only about 6% of adults were considered to be problem or pathological gamblers, approximately 12% of adolescents reported being problem or pathological gamblers. College students yielded an even higher estimate at 16.5%. Despite college students having the highest gambling rates, only 19 of the 139 study samples from the meta-analysis focused on that demographic (Shaffer, Hall & Bilt, 1999). Even fewer studies have been conducted on student-athletes. Curry and Jiobu (1995) theorized that the competitive spirit in the social environment of Division I athletics puts the student-athletes at a higher risk for gambling problems.

### **2.3.1. Gambling Legislation**

#### ***Federal***

Since illegal gambling involves interstate commerce, it is open to regulation under the Commerce Clause in the Constitution. Following the spread of organized crime networks and their involvement in interstate commerce in the 1950s, the Wire Act of 1961 was passed to make it illegal to bet over the radio, television, telegraph, and telephone. The most important Wire Act court case is *United States v. Cohen* (2001), where the courts ruled that offshore sports books were still subject to persecution by accepting bets from U.S. residents (Rodenberg & Kaburakis, 2012). The reach of organized crime and threat of Internet gambling led to even more legislation that applied to sports gambling, including the *Illegal Gambling Business Act of 1970*, the

*Racketeer Influenced and Corrupt Organizations Act, and Unlawful Internet Gambling Enforcement Act of 2006* (Rodenberg & Kaburakis, 2012).

The most important federal sports gambling legislation is the Professional and Amateur Sports Protection Act (PASPA) enacted in 1992 (Reib, 2012). The law states that it is unlawful for:

A governmental entity to sponsor, operate, advertise, promote, license, or authorize by law or compact, or (2) a person to sponsor, operate, advertise, or promote, pursuant to the law or compact of a government entity, a lottery, sweepstakes, or other betting, gambling, or wagering scheme based, directly or indirectly (through the use of geographical references or otherwise), on one or more competitive games in which amateur or professional athletes participate, or are intended to participate, or on one or more performances of such athletes in such games. (Reib, 2012)

The legislation was enacted to prevent the spread of legalized sports gambling and protect the integrity of sport. Though the federal legislation defers some ability for the individual states to have their own laws in regards to sports gambling, it is only allowed in two states in limited capacities: Nevada and Oregon (Udovocic, 1998). There is strong backing for PASPA led by Bill Bradley, a former U.S. Senator and professional basketball player (Rodenberg & Kaburakis, 2012). Bradley states that sport sponsored sports betting has the potential to threaten the character of sports and how people view them. “Just as legalizing drugs would lead to increased drug addiction, legalizing sports gambling would aggravate the problems associated with gambling...they would no longer love the game for the purity of the experience” (Rodenberg & Kaburakis, p. 21).

## *NCAA*

The NCAA policy on gambling is simple: it opposes all forms of legal and illegal sports wagering on intercollegiate athletics. These rules prohibit “student-athletes, and the athletics department, conference office, and NCAA national office employees from wagering on intercollegiate, amateur, and professional sports in which the Association conducts championships” (NCAA, 2012). According to NCAA Bylaw 10.3, this includes providing information to individuals involved in organized gambling activities concerning intercollegiate athletics, soliciting bets on any intercollegiate team, accepting bets on any team representing the school, and participating in any gambling activity that involves intercollegiate or professional athletics, whether it be through a bookmaker or any other method employed by organized gambling.

The NCAA has put these rules in place to protect the integrity of sports contests and the welfare of student-athletes and the intercollegiate athletics community. Their stance is that sport should be enjoyed for the inherent benefits that accompany participation in fair contests rather than the amount of money wagered on the outcome. Any student-athlete found engaging in activities that involve betting on their institution can permanently lose all remaining NCAA eligibility in all sports. Any student-athlete who participates in gambling activity at all will lose their NCAA eligibility for a minimum of one year. However, according to the NCAA representative in charge of gambling-related infractions, the committee has only heard an average of six appeals over the last three years (Layden, 1995). Despite this small number, Layden’s article (1995) stated that after months of research into campus gambling, he found it “nearly impossible to visit a college and not find sophisticated on-or off-campus bookmaking

operations with a large student clientele that often, according to bookies, includes athletes” (p. 2).

### **2.3.2. Threat of Gambling to Intercollegiate Athletics**

Gambling among student-athletes presents a significant problem to intercollegiate athletes, especially regarding sports wagering (National Impact Gambling Study Commission, 1999; Cullen & Latessa, 1996; Cross & Vollano, 1999; NCAA, 2012). One study conducted by two University of Cincinnati professors surveyed Division I basketball and football players and found that about 25% responded that they had gambled on sporting events, 4% bet on games that they played in, and 1% reported that they had received money to alter their performance in a game (Cullen & Latessa, 1996). Following the study by Cullen and Latessa, researchers at the University of Michigan conducted a similar study in 1999 on 758 basketball and football players and found that sports-related gambling by student-athletes was more prevalent than previously estimated. They found that 45.5% of male athletes had gambled on sports since attending college, compared with only 18.5% of their female counterparts (Cross & Vollano, 1999). Researchers believed the results of the above studies could even be underestimated due to their low response rates. In a similar study with an expanded sample size, 62.4% of male student-athletes reported participating in gambling activity in the past year, with 35% of them wagering on sporting events and 4.3% classified as problem/pathological gamblers (Huang et al., 2007). The threat of sport gambling growth prompted the NCAA to conduct its own gambling behavior studies on student-athletes. The most recent study surveyed 23,000 athletes and found that 57% of male athletes and 39% of female athletes had gambled for money in the past year (NCAA, 2012). In 2012, 27.5% of male athletes reported gambling on sports despite it being against NCAA rules, with 8.3% placing bets at least once a month. Another troubling finding from the



study showed that the betting companions of student-athletes who gambled regularly were most frequently teammates, other student-athletes, or students involved in the athletics program.

Cross and Vollano (1999) state that sport gambling “threatens to undermine the integrity of intercollegiate athletics, student athletes, and their sponsoring institutions perhaps more than any other single aberrant behavior.” The danger is that student-athletes can provide knowledge of games to other gamblers or alter their performance to affect the outcome of games, particularly if they acquire gambling debts. Cross and Vollano found that over 5% of male athletes had bet on a game in which they participated, provided inside information, or adjusted their game performance for gambling purposes (1999). In the NCAA survey (2012), 4.6% of Division I basketball players and 2.2% of Division I football players reported having been contacted by outside sources requesting inside information for gambling purposes, with about 1% of them actually providing the information. 2.1% of basketball players and 1.2% of football players were asked to alter their performance to change the outcome of the game, and 0.8% of basketball players and 1.3% of football players placed bets on games in which they played. While these percentages may seem small, it is important to keep in mind that even a seemingly insignificant percentage represents hundreds of athletes who have the power to affect the integrity of the game for a large number of people.

Sports gambling is a serious violation of NCAA rules, so collegiate athletic departments are tasked with making sure their student-athletes are aware of the rules and consequences. This led the NCAA to create a sports wagering task force to increase educational efforts to show student-athletes the dangers of sports gambling. Their initiatives included presentations to Division I Men’s and Women’s teams in the regional rounds of the NCAA Basketball Championships, the creation of a website and other education materials to distribute to

campuses, and sports-wagering curriculum for high school students (Copeland, 2009). Despite these efforts enacted in 2004, a later study found that almost half of the student-athletes surveyed were unfamiliar with the rules concerning sports gambling (Ellenbogen, Jacobs, Derevensky, Gupta, & Paskus, 2008). The 2012 NCAA study found that 71.5% of Division I athletes reported receiving anti-gambling education. Of the Division I student-athletes who had wagered on sports within the past year, the majority knew that gambling violated NCAA rules. However, the study showed that most athletes who were gambling didn't take the threat of NCAA sanctions very seriously: 70% believed sports gambling to be "harmless" and 57% believed it was acceptable to gamble as long as it was on a sport different from the one in which they participated. The results also showed that student-athletes believed that coaches weren't overly concerned with their gambling activities. 33% of respondents said that their coaches were aware of their gambling activity, whereas 67% said their teammates knew. 38% of the Division I male student athletes believed that college coaches thought sports gambling was acceptable so long as they didn't bet on their own games (NCAA, 2012).

There have been numerous scandals over the years involving sports gambling. Types of gambling behavior involve anything from game fixing, to point shaving, to betting on college sports overall or even on an athlete's own team. According to a search of the NCAA LSDBi database, there have been 21 major infractions by NCAA institutions involving sports gambling since 1976 (NCAA, 2013). Current scandals include University of San Diego and Auburn University. In San Diego, the point-shaving scandal accidentally uncovered by the FBI netted more than \$120,000 and involved former assistant basketball coach Thaddeus Brown recruiting players to alter their play (Dauster, 2013). At Auburn, former point guard Kyievarez Ward was indicted for trying to fix games and offering money to teammates to help during the 2011-12

season (Gleeson, 2013). This scheme was also discovered by the FBI and Ward could face up to five years in prison. Clearly, betting by athletes on sports is still a significant offense in modern society despite the increasingly more accepting attitude of the general public towards gambling.

#### **2.4. Previous Case Studies**

Researchers have conducted a considerable number of case studies on various sport scandals to examine their links to overarching issues. As previously mentioned, the most scrutinized topics are doping, sexual harassment, corruption, and gambling. Every scandal is viewed and criticized as impacting the fair playing field that draws people to sport. Doping scandals are nothing new to the athletic community, and the portrayal of sport as a metaphor for society is evident in the analyses of doping scandals. One study conducted by Laine (2006) examined the Finnish skiing doping scandal and how the media coverage promulgated a discourse of national shame. The scandal itself was a prominent story in the mainstream Finnish news for approximately a month, but the effects of the scandal remained in the media for an entire year. Laine (2006) concluded that the national shame was only alleviated once those who participated in doping were punished and the blame for the wrongdoings placed on the globalization and commercialization of sport.

In a contrasting study, Carstairs (2003) examined the public responses to four doping scandals to see their roles in sports and the future of doping control. Carstairs found that the narratives surrounding doping scandals had as much to do with race, class, gender, nationality, and age of the athletes as they did the breach of the sanctity of sport. “It is hard not to notice that the most criticized athletes—the Chinese—were the only non-white athletes in the sample, who came from a much reviled Communist Country, and were believed to be taking substances that imperiled their femininity” (Carstairs, 2003, p. 277). Laine (2006) also touches on the

differences in attitude towards scandal based on other factors, saying the United States media are “known for chastising the use of performance-enhancing drugs among other nations’ athletes while regularly diminishing American sports heroes’ foul play” (p. 68). These studies show the importance in understanding the context of a scandal and the imbalances of power between the parties involved that attempt to affect the overall discourse.

Another type of sport scandal that has been researched in-depth is sexual harassment. In one study, Toffoletti (2007) examines the narratives that emerged from a scandal involving Australian-rules football players and violence against women. While the allegations against the players involved multiple cases of sexual assault, pack rapes, hush money payments to a female victim, and inadequate investigations from authorities, the study found that many of the newspapers characterized the men as victims of “predatory” females. Toffoletti (2007) also points out that the articles “reinforce the notion that inappropriate male behavior is an individual rather than cultural phenomenon” (p. 433). Research found that news reports predominantly relied on gender stereotypes to frame the female victims as “groupies” and the errant male players as wayward individuals whose behavior was not indicative of Australian football culture as a whole.

These studies show us is that the impact of sport is not limited to simply the game; it has the social and political power to deeply affect and resonate with society. Sport is rarely able to be separated from the context within which it is constructed. Another scandal that has been researched is the discourse surrounding the Duke lacrosse team rape allegations. In 2006, a woman accused several of the Duke lacrosse players of rape after working as a stripper at a house party. The lacrosse players were eventually exonerated by DNA evidence, but not after a year-long media storm. Several public relations studies have been conducted on the scandal,

studying how the school focused on positive aspects of the university to deflect criticism regarding the criminal investigation (O'Brien, 2009; Fortunato, 2008). The case also raised questions about the intersection of race, class, and gender when it was found that white men were seemingly mistreated by the police, media, and prosecutors in efforts to promote their own social agendas (Baydoun & Good, 2007; Yaeger & Pressler, 2007; Taylor & Johnson, 2007). In contrast to these analyses, Leonard (2007) criticizes those who viewed the scandal as a "liberal, multicultural attack on White manhood" and challenged how "commonsense understandings of race and gender infect dominant discourses of sporting cultures, focusing specifically on how the combination of Whiteness, student, athlete, male, and upper class not only produced a recipe of innocence but rendered the often-used discourse regarding male athletes and sexual violence as relatively unused and insignificant" (p. 27). Similar to these other analyses, this research on the McPherson scandal emphasizes recognizing the construction of narratives that privilege certain intermediaries over others.

The most recent topic for discussion in intercollegiate athletics is the Jerry Sandusky sex abuse scandal. In November 2011, initial charges were filed against Penn State coach Jerry Sandusky that accused him of sexually abusing minors. It was found that Sandusky committed these acts in university facilities and school officials failed to properly report the abuse. Rossi (2012) used crisis communication theory to study how the university was represented following the accusations. Rossi's research showed that the local newspaper reported on the scandal significantly more than the school newspaper, but both news outlets utilized the corrective action strategy to attempt to repair the damage done to the university's image. Another study analyzed the ESPN coverage of Sandusky and Penn State, arguing that ESPN's framing of the story maintained a "hypermasculine fantasy of violent vigilante justice that reduces political agency to

personal and private acts” (Ott, 2012, p. 330). Cooky (2012) used feminist methodological considerations, Foucault’s concept of discourse and discursive silences, and media framing analysis to study how certain voices were marginalized in the representation of the story. She argues the silences within certain media frames ignored the critique of big-time athletic programs and was therefore used to reaffirm the institutional power of these programs that promote a culture where violence is normalized.

In another study done on the “Penn State Crisis,” Giardina and Denzin (2012) argue that the scandal is not an isolated incident, but rather a societal failure that created an environment that allowed such actions to take place. Giardina and Denzin’s multidisciplinary approach to framing and understanding the events that took place at Penn State yielded several methods of critical discourse: 1) analysis of institutional violence and abuse, 2) indictments of the commodification of higher education, 3) media coverage of the scandal, 4) spaces of resistance, and 5) roles of coaches and athletics in these instances (p. 261). Giardina and Denzin suggest that one of the problems of neoliberal universities lies in their prioritization of corporate brand protection over moral education. They state that “there is no way the neoliberal university can effectively police itself if it insists on hiring outside agencies to determine when and if ethics and laws have been broken” (p. 260). Questions about the distortion of higher education missions and the sport-institution relationship are the conversations that tragedies such as the Sandusky scandal should elicit. The strategies used in these analyses can be extended to the following research on McPherson, which explores the social and cultural implications of his sports gambling scandal.

One of the reasons that sport scandals garner so much attention is society’s idealistic notion of the purity of sport. When instances of bribery and corruption are brought to light, the

public typically reacts in a way that attempts to restore community faith in sport. One of the first widespread corruption scandals, known as the Black Sox scandal, occurred in 1919 when the Chicago White Sox were accused of intentionally losing games in the World Series to make money for gamblers. Bachin (2003) states that the scandal was more than just sports; it became a symbol of the “rising post-war tensions over labor relations, race, ethnicity, and nationalism in America” (p. 941). Initially, the players were depicted as traitors of the game and, therefore, American values. One reporter even likened the athletes to treasonous soldiers or sailors who betrayed their country in wartime. However, the blame shifted towards the professional gamblers as the scandal evolved. The “outsider” attack on wholesome American institutions, whether it be baseball or industry, shifted to portray the ballplayers as victims of the professional gamblers. By placing the blame on the gamblers, baseball and the media were able to distance the players from the brunt of the scandal and maintain the purity and “Americanness” of the game while avoiding the issues of working conditions, wages, or collective bargaining.

In a similar study of the Taiwanese professional baseball scandal in 1997 found that while the scandal had negative effects on fan attendance and attractiveness to sponsors, the problem was not necessarily limited to sports. Lee (2008) writes that the environment of political clientelism is a context that “does not determine how individual actors or groups of stakeholders might behave but it does favor some outcomes over others, and limits the resources available to actors to achieve goals which are not favored by the system” (p. 61). As in the other cases described, this research shows that sport scandals are not separated from the context within which they are embedded and therefore must be analyzed critically. In other words, sport is not just limited to the athletic realm; sport has significant relationship and implications on the society

surrounding it. In the case of Adrian McPherson, it is important to recognize the context of the gambling scandal in order to analyze the discourse that resulted from its exposure.

Since there has been no research conducted specifically regarding the Adrian McPherson gambling scandal, the most relevant case studies are those that have looked at the crisis communication image repair strategies utilized by athletes and sporting organizations during a scandal. Pfahl and Bates (2008) utilized Benoit's Image Repair Theory strategies to examine Formula One Racing at the United States Grand Prix in 2005 after malfunctions in the automobile tires led to a series of crashes. The study concluded that Formula One Racing and Michelin attacked each other during statements to the public, which led to contradictory statements and confusion over the cause of the crashes. The researchers addressed one limitation of their study, stating that "Benoit's framework accounts for public relations and image repair strategies taken, but does not address the power differences among stakeholders and the way in which individuals can shape non-organizational members' views of the organization" (p. 142).

In another study, Williams and Olaniran (2002) conducted a rhetorical analysis study to view the crisis communication strategies of Texas Tech University and the city of Lubbock, TX in response to the arrests of several Hampton University women's basketball players. These women were falsely accused of running a parking lot scam the day before a game and the incident spurred a racially-charged scandal. The women all made statements saying they believed their race played a part in their arrest and filed a \$30 million civil lawsuit against the city of Lubbock, and the local and national attention focused on the city of Lubbock being labeled as a "racist city." Lubbock won the case, but not after serious media criticism that focused on the alleged treatment of the women rather than the reason why they were detained. Williams and Olaniran (2002) viewed the image repair strategies utilized by the city of Lubbock



and Texas Tech University in response to the scandal and found that Lubbock was successful because the “responses demonstrated a confidence in their position and an unwavering dedication to the belief that no offense was committed...even denied that possible corrective actions had anything to do with the Hampton incident” (p. 308). Texas Tech University also managed to effectively remove itself from the crisis and escape too much public scrutiny.

While the above research looked at image repair strategies of *organizations* involved in crises, another group of studies focuses on *individuals'* attempts to repair their image following criminal activity. One scholar studied one of Michael Vick's speeches following the dog-fighting scandal to see which image repair techniques he used (Meyer, 2008). Meyer found that Vick's religious references and recognition of the need to better himself showed the use of *bolstering* and *transcendence* techniques. He did not attempt any *denial* strategies, instead choosing to differentiate himself from the other convicted defendants who chose to testify against Vick instead of accepting responsibility for their own actions. In another study, Walsh and McAllister-Spooner (2011) researched the strategies utilized by Michael Phelps after he was photographed smoking marijuana by a British tabloid. Following the media firestorm that occurred after these photographs were released, Phelps released a statement that included *mortification* (he acknowledged engaging in “regrettable” behavior), *bolstering* (reminding people of his success as a 14-time gold medal Olympian), *defeasibility* (hinting that his age caused him to act in a “youthful and inappropriate way”), and *corrective action* (promising it will not happen again). Meyer (2008) states that Phelps' strategies were largely successful, benefiting from the timing of the scandal during Super Bowl Sunday, the media's acceptance that his young age led to his mistake, and the narrative that he could have done something much worse—such as taking performance-enhancing drugs (p. 3).

These studies show several instances where athletes' reputations were not ruined due to their quick and honest responses to scandal. Kruse (1981) states that image repair in sport is more straightforward because fans are preoccupied with winning over athletes' character. This is not true in every situation, so it is important to study many different cases to see what types of strategies prove the most successful in relation to the violation and contexts involved. By studying the image repair strategies employed by the various parties involved in the Adrian McPherson scandal in the context of big-time athletics, this study will hopefully provide a better understanding of how institutions and individuals cope with crisis situations.

## **CHAPTER THREE**

### **METHODOLOGY**

This study employs a case study method by performing a Foucauldian discourse analysis on the statements made by the various actors in the Adrian McPherson gambling scandal. The statements include both primary and secondary source documents and utilize inductive strategies to organize the discourses of those involved.

#### **3.1. Social Constructivism**

This study will be conducted under the social constructivist paradigm, which assumes that all knowledge is socially constructed and therefore cannot be separated from the researcher who created it. In this paradigm, the nature of language is viewed to be dialectically interconnected with other aspects of social life (Fairclough, 2003). Social constructivism is characterized by a subjectivist epistemology, inductive and qualitative methodology, and interpretive textual analysis approaches. The purpose of using this paradigm is to understand how organizational actors are created and influenced by their environment. The interpretation of the data will be centered on a single case and stress the different realities that the parties involved have constructed for themselves. Merkl-Davies *et al.* states that the “aim of research from the social constructivist paradigm is to understand and describe organizational actors’ definitions of reality” (p. 15).

Because textual analysis and its interpretations are based on the subjects’ and researchers’ individual realities, differences in interpretation are not an issue, but rather a potential source of data (Hardy et al., 2004). Whereas more positivist paradigms strive for the generalizability of its

research, social constructivist approaches are “labor intensive and can only be productively applied to small samples of text” (Fairclough, 2003, p. 6). In this study, the inclusion of primary source documents provides the trustworthiness and authenticity needed to provide credibility to a non-positivist study.

### **3.2 Foucauldian Discourse Analysis**

This research will take a case study approach to understand both the similar and varying aspects of the McPherson case. According to Markula and Silk (2011), case studies are useful in using specific cases to provide insight to the social world as a whole. This study employs discourse analysis to examine the accounts of the parties involved in the Adrian McPherson sports gambling case. Critical discourse analysis (CDA) is designed to “examine the relationship between language use (discursive practices), events and texts and the relationship between texts and broader social and cultural structures, relations, and processes” (Markula & Silk, 2011, p. 119). CDA introduces the concept of power into the analysis of a text, recognizing that the parties involved in producing a message are not always equal. Fairclough outlines a three-dimensional framework for conceiving and analyzing a communicative event: text (description of the content), discursive practice (how the text is produced and consumed), and social practice (how the text is connected to ideological dominance) (2003). While CDA is useful in studying texts in the context of the relationship between language and power, this method focuses more on the details of language rather than the positioning of objects in a discourse. “The analysis of lexical contents defines either the elements of meaning at the disposal of speaking subjects in a given period, or the semantic structure that appears on the surface of a discourse that has already been spoken; it does not concern discursive practice as a place in which a tangled plurality of objects is formed and deformed, appears and disappears” (Foucault, 1972, p.48-49).

Foucauldian discourse analysis (FDA) is a branch of discourse analysis that uses a unique critical approach to research the world by involving broader contexts. This method analyzes discourses rather than placing them under a single theoretical framework. Whereas traditional CDA views power as hegemonic, Foucault sees power as a relational concept. “From Foucault’s point of view individuals cannot be divided into those who ‘possess’ power (and thus oppress others) and those who are devoid of power and thus are innocent victims of the powerful” (Markula & Silk, 2011, p. 129). In other words, the main questions that Foucauldian analysis raises are “how” and “why” different discourses are created and privileged over others.

Discourse formations work to produce an impression of absoluteness that overwhelms dissenting narratives. Foucault refers to the contradictions that emerge from varying discourses as “spaces of dissension” (1972, p. 152). Rather than being destructive, these spaces can be productive. “Indeed, in Foucault’s account, the emergence of these contradictions can be seen as compelling the creation of new discourses” (Phillips, 2002, p. 334). In the McPherson scandal, it is possible to study the various narratives competing against each other and see how the “final” or “ultimate” discourse is created. The purpose of this study is not solely to determine a singular “truthful” representation of the McPherson scandal but rather an analysis of the numerous and competing accounts of the scandal that were being produced by the institutional actors. As stated in the first research question, this case study is concerned with the variations of individual accounts of the events and what these deviations say about the relationship between athletic departments, the NCAA, student-athletes, and the media.

### **3.3 Texts**

The texts for this study are the original documents from the “Operation Coin Toss” police investigation and court case surrounding Adrian McPherson. These materials include legal

documents, transcripts of taped statements, subpoenaed records, sworn questionnaires, and transcripts of computer files. The files were purchased by Florida State University from the Tallahassee Police Department on December 11, 2011, citing an interest in gambling related research. FSU paid approximately \$1,200.00 for the materials in mostly reimbursement costs- i.e. for the printing, binding, and administrative costs necessary to organize the materials. It is the understanding of Florida State that the files acquired from the Tallahassee Police Department make up the complete collection. These texts provide accounts from all the individuals involved in the scandal and also outline the closest approximation to the “reality” of the sequence of events. The documents from “Operation Coin Toss” to be utilized are the interviews (n=58) conducted under oath by police officers on those involved in the investigation. I will analyze the accounts provided to investigators from those involved in the scandal, paying careful attention to where there are deviations or contradictions.

This study also examines newspaper articles pertaining to McPherson as the scandal unfolded. The sample of articles was retrieved from the Access World News database. A search on “Adrian McPherson gambling” returned a considerable number of articles written about his gambling scandal from November 2002 to August 2003. The most articles about both scandals were written by the same three publications: Orlando Sentinel (n=54), St. Petersburg Times (n=50), and the Tallahassee Democrat (n=55). This study focuses on these local publications rather than national media attention because, while there was some national attention paid to the stories, the effects of these scandals were largely contained to a local level.

### 3.4 Coding

This study will use inductive readings of the texts in order to extract the evolving patterns of discourse and points of dissension. David R. Thomas (2003) outlines several purposes for utilizing an inductive approach in research:

- 1) To condense extensive and varied raw text data into a brief, summary format.
- 2) To establish clear links between the research objectives and the summary findings derived from the raw data and to ensure these links are both transparent (able to be demonstrated to others) and defensible (justifiable given the objectives of the research).
- 3) To develop a model or theory about the underlying structure of experiences or process which are evident in the text (raw data). (p. 238)

Markula and Silk (2011) present a modification of Foucault's methods to conduct textual analysis of physical culture. In order to detect discourses, researchers must identify the following: 1) objects; 2) enunciations; 3) concepts; 4) individualized groups of statements; 5) theories; and 6) link to power relations (p. 131). The first step is to identify the specific themes that the texts refer to, or the objects. In this study, the object is the Adrian McPherson gambling scandal. The next step is to find the enunciations, or sources, where these themes arise. The texts provided by the police records and media coverage will provide the necessary in-depth sources of the discourses. Once the sample is identified, the researcher can see which concepts occur and how they are arranged in the texts. The individualized groups of statements arise from viewing how the concepts relate to the larger theoretical framework and constructions. The last step in conducting textual Foucauldian analysis is to see how the themes are defined by the

contexts surrounding them. This link to operations of relational power is what separates Foucauldian analysis from other forms of discourse analysis.

In this particular study, the most useful way of organizing the data is to utilize an emergent coding method to create a timeline of the various accounts. The texts provide a blueprint for the discourse surrounding the McPherson scandal over several months, so tracking the individual versions of events and how they change over time is the most efficient way to answer the research questions of this study. As enunciated in the second research question of this study, the systematic reading of these transcripts allows underlying themes and biases to emerge and the similarities/differences across the different institutional actors to be compared in their proper contexts. This use of inductive analysis and emergent coding will potentially allow the issues uncovered in these cases to be expanded to other instances of crisis in higher education athletics.



## **CHAPTER FOUR**

### **RESULTS**

The results of this study include a detailed summary of the sequence of events and narratives that arose from the Adrian McPherson scandal. It is important to note that the following statements are not providing the “facts” of what happened but rather an overview of the different viewpoints from those involved. Any ambiguities and contradictory statements from the newspaper articles or police interviews are notated and used for future analysis on the power structures and competing narratives that arose in this particular scandal.

#### **4.1. Allegations Against McPherson**

In May 2002, Florida State University athletic department officials first heard rumors of Adrian McPherson being involved in illegal activity. Football equipment manager Mike Pellicer spoke to Andy Urbanic, Director of Football Operations, in May. He claimed that both his and his girlfriend’s credit cards were taken and used to buy hundreds of dollars of clothes and jewelry. Pellicer told Urbanic that Adrian McPherson was friends with his roommate and would take the credit cards from their wallets when they were asleep. Pellicer said there was an email created under his girlfriend’s name that would have goods shipped to the room in Burt Reynolds Hall right next door to McPherson’s (Hill, IR #5). Instead of going to the police, Pellicer consulted with his father and decided to go to Urbanic to get the issue resolved to avoid the public attention. “I work for the football team. And I realized that obviously Florida State, you know, high profile football team and anything...it’s gonna be on the Internet just like that. But I just wanted to save myself a lot of hassle because obviously, I mean police would be coming to me” (Hill, IR #5).

Urbanic called in Adrian McPherson, who vehemently denied the accusations. Urbanic told police that McPherson claimed Pellicer had full knowledge of the credit card use beforehand because they would “both do this into the wee hours of the morning and they have ordered things back and forth on the Internet before” (Hill, IR #3). However, when Pellicer confronted McPherson about the credit card charges, he blamed Pellicer’s roommate, Jeff Inderhees, for the theft (Hill, IR #5). Urbanic had the quarterback coach Daryl Dickey speak with McPherson as well, and McPherson denied all the allegations to him as well. Pellicer’s father corresponded several times with Urbanic, but the situation was relegated to a “he said, she said” situation. Urbanic told Pellicer’s father that it was not a Florida State matter, and if he wanted something done about it he should go to the authorities (Hill, IR #3).

Pellicer’s roommate Jeff Inderhees also approached the athletic department with accusations that McPherson had used his girlfriend’s credit card without permission on eBay. Inderhees’s girlfriend lived out of state and had never met Adrian McPherson, but her email account was pulled up on Inderhees’ laptop with numerous emails saying “my name is Jenna and I have a friend that plays football for Florida State...his name is Adrian and he lives in Burt Reynolds, room 119 and I want to get these shoes for him” (Hill, IR #6). Inderhees said he reported it to Andy Urbanic in an effort to “do it the easiest way” (Hill, IR #6). The credit card company said they would contact the police, but nothing ever came out of it because the company said they received a payment. When Inderhees confronted McPherson about it, his story was that “he had tried to put his number in, but it popped up her number and he hit accept accidentally” (Hill, IR #6).

Inderhees told police that he initially went to Andy Urbanic with his complaints.

I had told him about my girlfriend's credit card number being used over the Internet and her email address and account being used over the Internet to purchase some shoes from somebody without my knowledge or her knowledge. I had reported to him that Adrian had stolen clothes from me and some sunglasses from me. And I reported about my roommate's girlfriend's credit card coming up missing. And her credit card number being used also. And I let him know that there were things that I had known that Adrian owed a bookie Derek eight thousand dollars. He had eight thousand dollars debt to a bookie in town. And when I went to [Minnix] with this information, he seemed to blow it off and acted as if I was the one being accused of things...I told him that I have proof on Adrian about the thing he did with my girlfriend's credit card number, he told me over the phone that he didn't need to see that. That wasn't what he was looking into right now. And he didn't want to see that email." (Hill, IR #6)

According to Inderhees, Urbanic told him that he was making "strong accusations" and to "better make sure that they were true" because what he was saying could be considered slander if untrue (Hill, IR #6). In his second interview with authorities, Urbanic denied that an email was ever brought up (Hill, IR #45).

When Inderhees' father called Andy Urbanic about the situation, Urbanic told him that they would only go off hard facts and not hearsay. Urbanic stated that he would be heading the investigation and either McPherson or Inderhees would be found guilty and removed from the team (Hill, IR #3). Inderhees never met with Urbanic or spoke with him about the investigation after that. Urbanic told police that he first heard the gambling rumor when he spoke to Inderhees' father. "And of course when he told me gambling, that's when I told Dave [Hart] and Bob Minnix. And that's how we at first heard of a rumor on that. And then I think Bob ran with the

gambling thing and trying to track that down as the best could” (Hill, IR #3). The credit card charges were eventually resolved by the credit card companies and the allegations about McPherson’s involvement went unsubstantiated.

#### **4.2. Athletic Department Investigation**

When Inderhees made the gambling accusation to Andy Urbanic, the investigation was placed in the hands of the Associate Director of Athletics for Compliance, Bob Minnix. Minnix told police that the athletic department first heard of the rumors at the start of two a day practices in late July or early August (Hill, IR #2). He called Jeff Inderhees into his office to inquire about McPherson’s alleged gambling debt to a local bookie. Minnix told police that Inderhees reported to him that the bookie had come to Inderhees in an attempt to get him to encourage McPherson to repay a thirty-five hundred dollar debt. “And the gentleman who was supposed to be paid back was particularly upset that Adrian was kind of just blowing it off...the manager was concerned because it was appearing that this whole thing was escalating to where another level may be trying to get the money from Adrian to pay back for this guy to get his money back from him, you know” (Hill, IR #2). Minnix called Adrian McPherson in to get his response to the allegations and said McPherson denied everything, claiming that Inderhees was the one guilty of gambling.

Minnix also interviewed Dominic Robinson in July 2002, who was a close friend of McPherson’s who played on both the football and baseball teams. Robinson told Minnix that he believed that McPherson owed several hundred dollars to a bookie in the spring of 2002 and that Robinson had been approached by baseball players who knew the bookie and were encouraging Robinson to convince McPherson to settle his debt (Hill, IR #34). In Robinson’s first interview with police, he told them that he had been under the impression that Minnix knew who the

bookie was and was trying to make sure the story did not get out to the media. Robinson said, “It didn’t seem like he was trying to help Adrian along and get him better. It was more like he was just trying to make sure that the program wasn’t brought down. The program wasn’t tarnished in any way” (Hill, IR #34). Minnix said that he was planning on talking to Mike Pellicer but “somewhere he was supposed to come over and didn’t” and “somewhere along the way he fell through the cracks” (Hill, IR #2).

Minnix kept no records or notes from his interviews with Inderhees, McPherson, or Robinson, saying, “I did not want to take an official statement know that if I wrote it down that it might be subject to somebody reading it somewhere along the way quite frankly” (Hill, IR #2). Despite admitting to police that he believed McPherson was lying, Minnix took no action and simply informed the athletic director Dave Hart about his investigation. Minnix said that Hart showed concern about the gambling issue, but he didn’t want to be an “alarmist” because McPherson was saying one thing and Inderhees was saying another (Hill, IR #2). Dave Hart stood by Minnix’s investigative methods. “Right or wrong, that has been a practice for the simple reason that if we take notes every time we question someone on a rumor and those notes then become public in nature, then we could potentially be subjecting student-athletes to information that is in the form of a rumor becoming very public in its scrutiny” (Robbins, 2003a). Dave Hart had a conversation with Adrian McPherson about the rumors/allegations and voiced his concerns about the gambling rumors. McPherson responded, telling Hart, “I told you then and I’ll tell you that I have never been involved in gambling” (Hill, IR #4).

One of the aims of Minnix’s interview was to find out who the bookie was that McPherson was allegedly in debt to. In his interview with Jeff Inderhees, Minnix asked who the bookie was but Inderhees refused to give his name. Inderhees told police that Minnix said “I’d

like to talk with him so we can get this resolved and get this taken care of as quickly and as soon as possible without this leaking out to anybody” (Hill, IR #8). Inderhees stated that McPherson first started gambling because the bookie was “in with the football team” and “the bookie for athletes” (Hill, IR #6). Inderhees also said that he did not know any baseball players, but he had heard a rumor going around that the baseball team would place bets with the bookie. When Minnix called Jeff Inderhees again asking for the name and contact information for the person taking bets, Inderhees said he chose not to give any information because he was worried for his safety (Hill, IR #8). Minnix ceased his investigation after three interviews when he determined that the McPherson rumors were a dead end.

#### **4.3. McPherson Dismissed from Team**

McPherson was able to remain on the football team since the investigations into both the credit cards and gambling rumors stalled. As the football season began, starting quarterback Chris Rix struggled, prompting Coach Bobby Bowden to bench him in favor of Adrian McPherson. In his first collegiate start on November 2, 2002, McPherson went 28 of 44 for 278 yards, two touchdowns, and added another 53 yards rushing in a win against Wake Forest. However, the success was short lived. On November 18, 2002 a blank check was stolen from R&R Truck and Auto Accessories, forged, and cashed for thirty-five hundred dollars. Adrian McPherson was alone in the owner’s office hours before the theft was realized. Shop owner Dale Acosta noticed the missing check and reported it to the police. When the investigation led to Adrian McPherson, he admitted stealing the check but denied that he forged or cashed it. His high school friend, Melvin Capers Jr., was charged with two third-degree felonies for cashing the check. Capers said that McPherson gave him the check to cash, giving Capers thirty dollars afterwards to “get something to eat” (Landman, 2002, p. 1C).

In a sworn statement, McPherson said that “upon leaving the store, I had in my possession a blank check” but he denied forging the signature or receiving any money from it (Maese, 2002, p. C1). His story was that he realized he made a mistake and threw the check away from he got to Capers’ home. McPherson said he notified his coaches about the check before the North Carolina State game on November 23<sup>rd</sup>. “Coach Bowden and the other coaches were informed that I did not cash the check, that I did not endorse the check, that I did not write out the check and that I did not know the check had been presented to a bank for payment. Coach Bowden and the coaches were informed that once I was told a check had been cashed, I made numerous accounts to contact Melvin Capers to tell him that if he had cashed the check that he should return the money. I did not receive any money from the check” (Landman, 2002, p. 1C). He was allowed to play in the game, after his coaches conferred and spoke to the athletic director. He played poorly that game, only completing 8 of 20 passes in a 17-7 loss.

On November 25, 2002, Adrian McPherson and his parents met with Coach Bowden. Bowden told them that McPherson was being dismissed from the team. In a public statement, Dave Hart said that McPherson was not dismissed for gambling, but rather because “he was not truthful about his involvement in the check incident” (Robbins, 2003b, p. D1). In a press conference on November 26, 2002, McPherson’s attorney Grady Irvin Jr. told the media that “Adrian has never, ever, ever, ever gambled on any sporting event” (Robbins, 2002, p. D1). The next day, McPherson turned himself in to the Tallahassee police and was charged with felony grand theft and misdemeanor theft.

#### **4.4. Response to Dismissal**

McPherson’s arrest and dismissal from the team sparked a multitude of rumors and accusations, mostly in regards to gambling. One rumor was that former players called Bobby

Bowden and accused McPherson of throwing the North Carolina State game to settle gambling debts. In his official statement to the police, Bowden said he could not remember any such instance. "I'd give anything if I could just say that...this guy called and said that. I guess I've had so many calls between now and then, I can't even hardly put my finger on what that was about" (Hill, IR #65). The interview with authorities also brought up a rumor that an FSU booster paid off McPherson's gambling debt in a closed-door situation with McPherson, a booster, Bowden, and a police officer present. Bowden's response to that was that he didn't think he could remember ever talking to McPherson in the presence of a booster or a police officer (Hill, IR #65). Minnix adamantly denied any truth to that rumor as well. "I have no idea what his debt was...I don't know if he had a debt, I don't know who he owed it. I could tell you very directly unequivocally that I never paid the debt wherever that might have been, nor offered to pay the debt. And that conversation for me, even joking about it, never came up" (Hill, IR #87).

Adrian McPherson did not have kind words for the Florida State football program after he was dismissed from the team. In a press conference, McPherson said that he felt like school officials just turned their back on him. "I would not like to play for Florida State. If I went to my mom and told her I did something wrong and she turned her back on me, I wouldn't have trust in her anymore either. So how could I go on the field and give my all for someone who turned their back on me?" (Landman & Lowitt, 2002, p. 1C). In early January, Adrian McPherson visited Murray State and surprised his parents by enrolling in classes there. Less than a week later, McPherson withdrew and returned to Florida after the Murray State athletic director told him that he was not there as an athlete until his legal situations were resolved (Landman, 2003a, p. 1C).

McPherson's lawyer, Grady C. Irvin, spoke to the press and said that McPherson was a "scapegoat" and a victim of a widespread problem that needed to be addressed. "And in this



particular instance, not only has the university not come to the aid of Adrian McPherson, but it appears that the state attorney's office...has chosen, in its own form and fashion, to zealously go after—if not overzealously go after—Adrian McPherson, and that's very disturbing to me” (Robbins, 2003c, p. D1). Irvin also said he anticipated that FSU officials would not cooperate with him in this case. “What are they running from? They can't be afraid of me. I'm just a little ol' country lawyer...So it's become very obvious this is David vs. Goliath” (Landman, 2003b, p. D1).

Irvin also threatened FSU with a civil lawsuit for not notifying McPherson's parents of the gambling rumors. “I don't think his parents have ever been informed of the fact that he was suspected of gambling. You must find it somewhat appalling, if not concerning, that if you know that a teenager is suspected of gambling that you don't...call the parents. That's very concerning because if he is gambling, then it's a disease, and you need to contact the parents. You don't just let a kid go on” (Robbins, 2003b, p. D1). In addition to that, Irvin hinted that jobs were going to be lost due to the mishandling of McPherson's situation. “It has been relayed to me that jobs are possibly going to be lost at Florida State University. I anticipate that this is going to be Coach Bowden's last year. I don't think you'll see Coach Bowden coaching football after this coming year” (Robbins, 2003c, p. D1). Irvin blamed the NCAA for not addressing the problem of gambling, saying he was shocked that there was no set process for how to assist student-athletes where gambling is involved. “That's not to say that Mr. McPherson has gambled or has a gambling problem, but he has nobody to turn to for counseling or for any type of resource, and a multi-billion dollar entity like the NCAA ought to be ashamed that it does not have in place something to help kids who need counseling” (Robbins, 2003c, p. D1). Even R & R Truck and Auto Accessories was not safe from Irvin's wrath. Irvin implied that the company regularly

committed NCAA violations by allowing student-athletes to exchange autographed items for cash. The athletic department replied, requesting proof from Irvin of any potential NCAA violations so they could investigate further.

#### **4.5. Police Begin Investigation**

In response to the rumors, FSU president Sandy D'Alemberte asked the FSU Police Department to launch an investigation into the gambling rumors. A task force was formed of FSU Police Department (FSUPD), Tallahassee Police Department (TPD), and Florida Department of Law Enforcement (FDLE) investigators. On December 20th, 2002, FSU issued a statement that said police were only investigating McPherson and that the investigation “does not currently extend to any other student-athletes at FSU” (Rosica, 2002, p. A1). Despite attempts from the athletic administration to frame the McPherson scandal as an issue limited to the individual, the media tended to widen the scope. “This isn’t just a story of a quarterback being put on trial; it’s the story of an entire football program about to be put on trial” (Bianchi, 2003b, p. D1). Bianchi (2003c) also said that there was no winner from the scandal—FSU fans lost faith, McPherson lost his career and money, and FSU lost the integrity of the institution (p. D1). FSU responded to the media coverage with indignation by closing the locker room for the first time, limiting interview opportunities, and severely curb media access to the previously open program (Robbins & Schmadtke, 2003, p. D1).

Police were very critical of Minnix’s investigative tactics in his interview. Investigator Robert Hill stated that he believed Minnix did not take notes during his meetings with the players because he was afraid someone else would see it and it would create an embarrassment for the program. “I would like to see what the department has done to address the issues. And with nothing written down, you have nothing to show the magnificent work you have done...now

you're left with nothing to show and it leads to interpretations. Right, wrong, or indifferent. I'm not here, nor are these gentlemen, to take a shot at this institution. We're all graduates of this institution. But we are here for one thing. For finding the truth. And it's only the truth that's gonna return integrity to any institution" (Hill, IR #2). When investigator Robert Hill asked Bob Minnix what action was taken with McPherson when they determined he misused the credit cards, Minnix said that it was his understanding that there was never any determination made one way or the other (Hill, IR #2).

In response to the criticism from police, Minnix pointed to his previous achievements and experience as an investigator at the NCAA. "And I think our track record here, mine specifically, since I ran this thing for two years, that thing is being pretty impeccably by the fact that we go after stuff nobody else goes after" (Hill, IR #2). Athletic director Dave Hart told police that "Bob's spent twenty years with the NCAA as head of enforcement so there's no one more qualified and knowledgeable in the area than Bob" (Hill, IR #4). Hart pointed to the fact that FSU has been lauded by the NCAA in the past for their gambling education program. "Bob's done a great job...I mean we've had bookies come in and speak to our kids. They want your life...so we go to great lengths to educate and the NCAA has a no tolerance policy" (Hill, IR #4). Minnix told police that he would only have involved them in the investigation if someone had told him that they had physically seen McPherson give money to someone or place a bet (Hill, IR #2).

As the task force began their investigation, they received some worrisome information from witnesses. According to sworn statements, McPherson was involved in gambling activity as early as January 2002. Football equipment managers Jeff Inderhees, Mike Pellicer, Billy Pickens, and Brett Pease all admitted to placing bets together for a period of time in early 2002 (Hill, IR

#8; Hill, IR #5; Hill, IR #18; Hill, IR #61). While most of the managers were placing relatively small bets of less than fifty dollars, several people told authorities that McPherson was making much larger wagers. In an interview with authorities, Brett Pease said when he would be there placing a bet with Jeff Inderhees, McPherson would come in and place his bets as well. "I never saw him bet less than five hundred on a game. And it usually was about a thousand dollars a game" (Hill, IR #61). Billy Pickens told authorities that McPherson would place high wagers ("like a grand a game") on multiple games at a time (Hill, IR #18). Mike Pellicer admitted to actively placing bets with Jeff Inderhees for about three or four weeks until his girlfriend found out and made him quit. "I mean any of the other managers, they all stopped pretty much the same time I did...I mean it started out real small at first. Like with the managers. I mean we're there and we'll pay ten dollars that...you know what I'm saying? And then Adrian came in and he started throwing around a thousand dollars" (Hill, IR #5). Pellicer also told authorities that he was ninety-nine point five percent positive that McPherson had bet on FSU basketball games (Hill, IR #5).

In his first interview with police Inderhees denied all involvement in gambling activities, saying that all he knew about gambling was from the bookie and baseball players telling him that McPherson had a gambling debt (Hill, IR #6). In later interviews, Inderhees admitted to gambling as well. He said that he, Pickens, and Pellicer had placed minimum bets of twenty-five dollars several times throughout a three week period in early 2002 (Hill, IR #8). Inderhees told police that McPherson would bet amounts from a hundred dollars to a thousand dollars on a single game, but he never heard McPherson bet on any FSU games. Coworkers said that Jeff Inderhees was not discreet about his gambling activities. Equipment manager Jeremy Willis told investigators that "up until this year, he just didn't really have any qualms about letting you

know that he did gamble. And at times, he would say I'm trying to get help or I'm going to gambling counseling" (Hill, IR #55). At the same time, McPherson's troubles began when he ran up a rumored eight thousand dollar debt with the bookie. Inderhees told police that in February a bookie approached him to tell McPherson that he owed money (Hill, IR #6). Dominic Robinson stated that he heard of McPherson's debt from members of the baseball team who warned him to tell McPherson to pay the money (Hill, IR #34). When the debt was not paid, the bookie stopped betting with McPherson.

Since he was no longer able to go through the bookie, McPherson called high school friends Melvin Capers Jr. and Otis Livingston in September 2002 to set up an online account through SBG Global to place bets. The initial account was set up in Capers' name and they all put money in together, but they eventually all created their own accounts. Capers said McPherson continued to use the one in Capers' name and never put his name on the Western Union wire transfers because he knew that he would get in trouble with the NCAA for gambling (Hill, IR #42). When asked by authorities, Otis Livingston said that McPherson knew that he would get in trouble if it got traced back to him (Hill, IR #82). Capers said that they primarily bet on NBA games, but that he specifically recalled McPherson betting on the Miami vs. West Virginia college football game (Bosquet, 2003, p. 1C). Livingston said that McPherson was betting on "everything" and that he definitely bet on college football. He even said that McPherson had told him that he had bet on a Florida State football game against Notre Dame, but that "he bet on himself...he bet on Florida State to win" (Hill, IR #82).

Information from the interviews led investigators to Derek Delach, a bartender at a local bar and roommate of FSU baseball player Mike Futrell. Futrell told police that Delach had two gambling accounts online with SBG Global and Data Bets. After initially leaving some details

out of his answers, Futrell told police that Delach would take calls from people, place money in the online accounts from the bets, and burn the papers afterwards (Hill, IR #36). In early 2002, Futrell heard from several baseball players and Delach himself that Adrian was “out of control” and got “six or eight thousand dollars” in debt after multiple failed attempts to double it up to break even (Hill, IR #36). Futrell also said that McPherson did not have any direct contact with Delach; all their interaction was through Jeff Inderhees. Delach refused to speak to the police without a lawyer present and never gave a sworn statement (Hill, IR #13).

Despite his initial interviews, Minnix told police that he was not able to ascertain the identity of the bookie until late November when the McPherson story hit the newspapers. A graduate assistant in Minnix’s office, Jill Gran, heard from one of her friends that Delach was the bookie that they had been searching for (Hill, IR #19). Her information supported Inderhees’s statements that Delach was close to several athletes. Minnix told police that when he received his information from Gran, she said that “everybody knows Derek” and he learned that “apparently he’s been around a long time...he hangs out with a lot of the football players and baseball players” (Hill, IR #2). In addition to knowing Jeff Inderhees, Mike Futrell said that Andy Urbanic knew Derek Delach and had helped him get accepted at FSU (Hill, IR #36). Urbanic told police in his second interview that he had nothing to do with getting Delach into FSU. He said that he and Delach were both from the Pittsburgh area and Delach’s father received Urbanic’s name through mutual friends when Delach decided to attend school at FSU. Urbanic said that “I probably saw either Derek or his daddy on five different occasions over the course of the years” in his office, but that the relationship was not a close one (Hill, IR #45).

When police interviewed Delach’s ex-girlfriend, Cheryl Kerridge, she also confirmed that Delach was taking bets. Kerridge said she overheard a phone conversation where Derek was

fighting with someone about money that was not being paid from McPherson. She estimated the amount that he owed Delach was four thousand dollars (Hill, IR #41). Investigators soon learned that Derek Delach used to live with FSU football player Brandon Myers. Myers attempted to distance himself from Delach in the police interview, saying that he knew Delach took bets but kept it away from Myers because he was an athlete. “I would say that he did take bets. I knew that. He takes bets. He always did. And I don’t know anything about those bets. I don’t know exactly who the people are he always betted with. He kept that on his own. I realize it was a problem and also a conflict of interest for me being an NCAA football player” (Hill, IR #71). When Myers heard “through the grapevine” that McPherson was placing bets with Delach and owed him money, Myers asked Delach about it. Delach told Meyers that McPherson had been placing bets with him but there was nothing he could do to get the money (Hill, IR #71).

Authorities spoke with FSU baseball coach Mike Martin about his players’ connection with Derek Delach and potential involvement in the McPherson rumors. Martin said it was not brought to his attention that one of his players was living with an alleged bookie until early 2003 and he could not remember how he found out (Hill, IR #73). Martin said he had not heard of any of his players placing bets and called Mike Futrell when he heard the rumors to tell him “it would be a good idea that he not room with this guy” (Hill, IR #73). Several baseball players told police that Delach was around the team frequently, tailgating with them before football games and using their athlete parking passes (Hill, IR #36; Hill, IR #37; Hill, IR #60). Delach also worked as a bartender at Ken’s Tavern, a local bar that would open specifically for the baseball team after their games on Sundays (Hill, IR #56).

Bob Minnix received a call from the NCAA the day after Adrian was arrested, so he decided to reopen his own investigation. He interviewed four female soccer players who were

friends with McPherson, McPherson's ex-roommate Loren Sam, Mike Futrell, and four other baseball players. He also re-interviewed Jeff Inderhees and Dominic Robinson (Hill, IR #68). Minnix told police that when he spoke to Inderhees again on December 19<sup>th</sup>, Inderhees denied involvement in taking any bets. Inderhees told Minnix that if McPherson was gambling, he was doing it directly with the bookie (Hill, IR #68). "[Minnix] asked me if I knew of Adrian doing it and I said I've never actually sat next to him and heard him do it. But I told him that I'd heard he had done it" (Hill, IR #66). However, Inderhees admitted placing bets with Derek when interviewed by police. Inderhees told investigators that he had attempted to tell Minnix that he did not have to speak to him about an ongoing police investigation, but that Minnix told him that he had to cooperate with the internal investigation. "He said, well, I know you care about the program and if you care about this program, you know, if you can think of anything or remember anything or if you hear anything else, you could come and talk to me first so we can try to clear this up and take care of it first" (Hill, IR #66).

Investigators were critical of Minnix's motivations in reopening the investigation. Robert Hill said, "Your initial investigation was three interviews. Now we're up to at least a dozen. And to be honest with you, I don't know what changed. Other than the newspaper got ahold of a story" (Hill, IR #68). When authorities asked why he had decided to look deeper into the McPherson rumors, Minnix said that that with the renewed interest in the case, "allegation is enough for us to start to expand...the NCAA can use information that is hearsay and it appears how the process works" (Hill, IR #68). The motivation of NCAA interest compelled Minnix to call McPherson back into his office, saying that they needed to be sure that they'll "meet our obligation from the institutional control standpoint" that the NCAA focuses on when contemplating sanctions (Hill, IR #87). Minnix said, "My focus was to be sure to get across to all



the people that I was interviewing the serious nature of the potential of a point shaving situation that could lead to not just an individual who might be involved in that, but the devastating effect it might have to the sport program” (Hill, IR #87).

The NCAA showed interest in the McPherson scandal but never showed any signs of leveling sanctions to the university. Minnix said he expected “nothing to happen” because they had “been in contact with the NCAA all the way” (Robbins, 2003d, p. D1). The NCAA Director of Agent, Gambling, and Amateurism Activities, Bill Saum, was hired by Bob Minnix during his career with the NCAA. Saum was clear to the media that it needed to be evaluated if FSU knew or should have known what was going on with McPherson, stating that he had not come across any evidence that FSU officials knew about McPherson gambling (Robbins, 2003d, p. D1). Despite NCAA interest, Hart made it clear that he did not expect any sanctions. “When the rumor arrived on a desk it was immediately pursued, taken to our compliance officer, who then brought it to me. I took it then to the president, and the NCAA was contacted. And again, until such time that the stolen check incident reared its head, we had no additional information. Only at that time then did the president say that he would engage three law enforcement agencies” (Ellis, 2003, p. C1). Following the police investigation, Adrian McPherson was charged with one misdemeanor count of gambling on March 5<sup>th</sup>, 2003 (Hill, IR #67). Derek Delach and Jeff Inderhees were each charged with one felony count of bookmaking (Hill, IR #116; Hill, IR #126). Bobby Bowden responded to the gambling charges in a statement saying, “I just can’t imagine what was going through his mind...I said in December that I would be shocked if any other of our players were involved, and I was correct despite others’ assumptions” (Landman, 2003c, p. 1C).

#### **4.6. Trial**

The trial for Adrian McPherson's gambling trial was not your typical affair for a misdemeanor charge. It was broadcast on Court TV and attracted reporters from Sports Illustrated and the New York Times (Fish, 2003; Nobles, 2003). With the future of McPherson's amateur career on the line, his attorney Grady C. Irvin stated "that we would all be living in a cave if we didn't realize that this case is of significant import, not only to McPherson as an individual, but it also shines a light on NCAA regulations" (Robbins, 2003e, p. D5). Several FSU athletes, coaches, and administrators were subpoenaed as potential witnesses, creating the impression that FSU was on trial along with Adrian McPherson. The Orlando Sentinel published an article that stated "the trial is really FSU vs. public perception, and there's no need to wait for the dramatic courtroom conclusion...any time your ex-QB goes on trial for gambling, the damage to the school's image can't be erased by a not-guilty verdict" (Whitley, 2003, p. D1). The university ended up avoiding numerous high-profile testimonies when only Coach Bobby Bowden and linebacker Marcello Church were called to the stand with relatively anticlimactic results. For example, the only reason why Bowden was cross-examined was because the prosecuting attorney just wanted "to be able to say I cross-examined Bobby Bowden" (Schmadtke, 2003b, p. D6). Church was on the stand for less than five minutes and was not cross-examined.

Since there is a one-year statute of limitations for gambling charges with a bookie, prosecutors were not able to charge McPherson for his gambling activities with Delach (Landman, 2003d, p. 8C). Instead, the case focused on the online gambling account McPherson had allegedly made with Melvin Capers Jr. and Otis Livingston. The prosecution presented wire transfers, cell phone records, and files from a laptop that clearly showed gambling activity

(Robbins, 2003f, p. D1). Both Capers and Livingston testified against McPherson. When Otis Livingston was called to the stand, he testified that McPherson called him on October 26<sup>th</sup> to place a wager on the Miami-West Virginia game that day as he was preparing to take the field against Notre Dame. McPherson lost \$1000 on that bet (Schmadtke, 2003a, p. D6). Despite the numerous records, McPherson's name was not directly linked to any of the specific wagers. The SBG Global account was in Capers' name, the cell phone records were in McPherson's mother's name, and his name was not on any of the betting receipts found on the seized laptop (Robbins, 2003f, p. D1). On June 6, 2003, the judge declared a mistrial because the six-person jury could not meet a unanimous verdict after ten hours of deliberation. The jurors later told reporters that there was one juror that opposed a guilty verdict, a woman who "seemed to have her mind made up nearly from the moment the judge gave them the case" (Bridges, 2003).

#### **4.7. Scandal Aftermath**

Following the fallout from the Adrian McPherson scandal, new FSU president T.K. Wetherell hired private firm MGT of America to study the athletic department's organization structure and communication practices. The study cost \$37,645 and was commissioned in March 2003 (Robbins, 2003g, p. D5). The report slammed the separation of the athletic department from the general University community, which "led to a perception the school had engaged in a cover-up" and "reflects lack of forethought and good judgment and the department's culture of working in isolation" (Robbins, 2003h, p. D1). Athletic department officials were criticized for not seeking assistance from the university police. The study also called Minnix's investigation "inadequate" and said Urbanic had "abrogated his responsibility" to the victims and the university by not going to the police when the credit card misuse was reported (Robbins, 2003h, p. D1).

Athletic director Dave Hart responded to the report, calling it “inaccurate” and “caustic” in a written formal response. He stated the report “cast people in a very unfair light and was played out that way by some in the media” (Robbins, 2003i, p. D9). Despite the criticism in the report, Hart gave Minnix and Urbanic high marks in their annual performance reviews on August 19<sup>th</sup>. Wetherell gave Hart a favorable rating as well, but said he would be expected to emphasize with staffers the importance of contacting police in regards to any allegations of criminal activity (Robbins, 2003j, p. D3).

Following the trial, McPherson struggled to return to normalcy. “Pretty much I want to move on with my life, get in school and hopefully get a chance to get back on the field” (Schmidtke, 2003c, p. D6). The NCAA did not share the sentiment, with Bill Saum telling the media that “if the young man ever wants to play at an NCAA institution again, he’ll need to talk to us” (Schmidtke, 2003c, p. D6). McPherson did not face another trial for his charges; he accepted a plea deal for 18 months of probation, \$4000 in court fees, and fifty hours of community service (Hill, IR #101). A no-contest plea did not automatically end his college eligibility; it left some room open for a potential transfer if the NCAA decided he had not gambled. However, the NCAA put in a public records request and acquired the records from the joint police investigation (Hill, IR #11897). The evidence implied that McPherson had gambled with a bookie but avoided being charged because the one-year statute of limitations had passed. Officials from the NCAA asked the state attorney’s office if McPherson could perform his community service with them, which consisted of McPherson flying around the country to different schools to talk about how he got involved with gambling (Schoffel, 2003, p. D1). The NCAA never allowed McPherson to play collegiate sports again.

## CHAPTER FIVE

### ANALYSIS

As seen in the summary above, there were multiple narratives that arose out of the McPherson scandal. These first-person accounts provide the all the information necessary to analyze the case in a way that has never been attempted before. In the next chapter, I will explore the deviations between the stories of those involved and discuss how the concept of power caused different narratives to be emphasized and/or ignored.

#### 5.1. Foucauldian Analysis

The narratives outlined in this study emphasize the elements of power, control, and crisis management in the context of a high-profile NCAA Division I scandal. The value of this case study is that it analyzes viewpoints that were not previously public and have yet to be studied. The integration of all the accounts leads to several conclusions based on the themes that emerged and theoretical frameworks. The interaction between the space created by a high-profile athletic department and the power relations of the institutional actors shine light on the culture of isolation that FSU's athletic department had at the time of the scandal. Each person and organization involved in the McPherson scandal responded with unique image repair strategies, and these differences provide insight into the complex relationship between athletic departments, the NCAA, student-athletes, and the media.

Foucault (1979/1995) asserts that each body in every society is confined by “strict powers, which impose upon it constraints, prohibitions or obligations” (p. 136). Division I athletic departments are perfect examples of a space that cultivates a highly normalized environment. “Even though they are not in a physical panopticon, student-athletes function in an institutionalized environment where a dynamic disciplinary power is always present, even if it is

not directly identifiable” (Rainey, 2013, p. 136) Student-athletes rely heavily on discipline—a term that is used in athletics to refer to the adherence of expectations or regulations set by a coach or athletic department. One who is highly disciplined has little room for deviance, so the agency of an individual student-athlete is minimized in this environment. Docile bodies are created by disciplinary mechanisms that are more effective when clear hierarchical observation, constant scrutiny, and normalization are imposed (Foucault, 1979/1995). This subculture is exemplified by elements of everyday life commonplace for student-athletes; examples being a common style of dress, strict practice schedules, and close team dynamics. A Foucauldian analysis of this space shows how the innate control of an institution offers an enclosed space for disciplinary power and normalization. “The student-athlete reaches a point where they feel obligated to their university, coach, teammates, and self to reach the highest level of performance possible; and this point is where they become self-regulating because the disciplinary power is perceived to be omnipresent” (Rainey, 2013, p. 112) The extreme discipline associated with being a student-athlete leads to the materialization of “panopticism of everyday” where people engage in self-policing behaviors even in the absence of a defined controlling space (Coakley, 2007).

Team mentality does a lot to shape the separateness of student-athletes from the general university population. Loyalty to the program is the key, and examples are seen in the McPherson scandal where those involved place the well-being of the program above themselves. Both Inderhees and Pellicer chose not to report their credit card thefts to the police, instead choosing to deal with the problem in-house to “save myself a lot of hassle” and “do it the easiest way” (Hill, Item IR #5; Hill, Item IR #6). When Bob Minnix asked Inderhees if he “cared about the program” in his second interview, it was an example of the emphasis on institution allegiance

over self-preservation (Hill, IR #66). Self-policing of the program is an important aspect to the insular nature of an athletic department. In this case, the investigative interviews suggest that many people involved in the athletic department approached McPherson about his gambling activity and debt in an attempt to get him to get the situation handled before it escalated.

Dominic Robinson said that he had a conversation with McPherson after several baseball players informed him that McPherson was in trouble. “When the baseball players came to me, that’s when I went to him. And I told him...this guy’s gonna come after you. He’s gonna try to hurt you or your career” (Hill, IR #34).

Those connected to the athletic department were also normalized in the narrative they produced. All of the athletes, managers, and administrators not directly implicated in the scandal (i.e. Inderhees and McPherson) espoused a very similar sequence of events: they heard rumors of McPherson’s gambling debt but had no firsthand knowledge of his activities. The word “hearsay” appears in eight different police interviews, and investigators took note of its recurrence (Hill, IR #71, #87, #60, #72, #62, #57, #6, #68). When baseball player Daniel Hodges said that his knowledge of McPherson gambling was limited to hearsay, investigators asked the definition of the term and where he had learned it. Hodges answered, “Hearsay’s just people asking questions, you know, people saying is he a bookie or does him and McPherson bet together” (Hill, IR #60). Investigators asked the same question when baseball Tony Richie used the term, and he answered, “That rumors are rumors, you know. You hear them from people, what they say” (Hill, IR #72). He stated he didn’t know where he had learned the term, but he assumed at school. The recurrence of this word suggests that the athletes had cultivated a common narrative and were even potentially coached on the specific terminology they should use when discussing their knowledge of the scandal. Baseball coach Mike Martin told

investigators that he held a team meeting in regards to the McPherson allegations, but that its purpose was to “reread to the team from the NCAA manual regarding what would happen if any of them were involved with gambling” (Hill, IR #73).

The concept of space becomes important when considering the agency, power, and surveillance of student-athletes. While the athletic department may not be an ultimately confined space, team clubhouses, locker rooms, home fields, and fields are examples of places that are heavily normalized environments. Student-athletes are required to dress a certain way, follow a particular time schedule, and adhere to a moral code. The pervasiveness of the student-athlete lifestyle is described several times in the police interviews conducted with student-athletes. The classification as a “baseball player” or “football player” places individuals into highly defined groups. Bob Minnix specifically interviewed Dominic Robinson in his initial investigation because of Robinson’s value as a football AND baseball player. Robinson told investigators that the baseball players were all “really close” and that the whole team knew about McPherson’s gambling problems (Hill, IR #34). Mike Martin also referred to the baseball team as “a close knit family” (Hill, IR #73). The moment that Adrian McPherson was dismissed from the team, he lost the identity associated with being classified as a student-athlete. Football player Patrick Newton told investigators that, “People...they don’t talk about it at all...it’s almost like once Adrian was dismissed from the team it was a gone subject” (Hill, IR #39). The abruptness with which McPherson was separated from the athletic department and his peers demonstrates the power that team spaces have over student-athletes’ identities.

## **5.2. Image Repair Strategies**

In this particular case study, it is important to look at how FSU responded to the situation and absolved itself from long term consequences while McPherson’s collegiate career ended.



This crisis communication analysis will look at the dialog between the institutional actors during and after the McPherson scandal. Even within the genre of crisis communications, different aspects of scandals will be ignored or emphasized depending on the situation. The distribution of power is significant in these instances because each institutional actor is attempting to control the narrative in order to protect their image. In the McPherson scandal, the FSU athletic department and Adrian McPherson used different image repair techniques to varying levels of success. Benoit's Image Repair Theory (IRT) will be the theoretical foundation for classifying the types of responses from the parties involved in the Adrian McPherson scandal. The athletic department staff largely relied on a combination of *bolstering* (pointing to past success) and *defeasibility* (placing the blame on lack of information) in order to isolate the scandal to just McPherson.

Bob Minnix was the first to point to FSU's anti-gambling education program that had been praised by the NCAA in the past. "Gambling's been a concern of mine before it became what it is in this investigation...and going back to 1996 when I launched the first gambling symposium. Nobody in the country's ever done it. And when we've had a problem we've owned up to them...we've gotten better and we've moved ahead" (Hill, IR #68). By focusing attention on the achievements of the department to discourage and educate against gambling, FSU framed the scandal to stem from a rogue individual rather than a systemic institutional issue. Athletic administrators continuously told the media that the McPherson scandal did not involve any other student-athletes (Rosica, 2002). The greatest threat to the athletic department was that the gambling problem would be more widespread and subject the program to questions of institutional control from the NCAA.

The other image repair strategy used repeatedly by athletic administrators in the police interviews and newspaper articles is *defeasibility*. FSU blamed the lack of information or control

over certain elements of the scandal, such as Derek Delach's identity or their ability to take sworn statements, for the sparse investigation. Minnix defended his decision to suspend his internal investigation into the McPherson allegations by saying there was not enough proof to justify its continuance. One major roadblock for the early investigation is that the identity of the alleged bookie was unknown. Minnix stated that he was not able to discern the bookie's identity until after the scandal went public because Jeff Inderhees refused to identify him. "He said I'm not gonna give you his name...I said well can you at least go ask him if he can talk to me and just kind of give me some direction of where he might be. He said I'll do that. But he never gave me a name" (Hill, IR #2).

Even if the athletic administration was able to get people of interest to sit down to speak with them, the threat of committing perjury was unenforceable. Investigator William Wooten with the FSU Police Department pointed out the lack of legal authority that Minnix's investigation had over those who he was interviewing. "We have witnesses that we've interviewed under oath that have given specific information to us. And then have been interviewed by you...and their statements are in conflict" (Hill, IR #68). Athletic administrators pointed to all the conflicting information as reasons why they were unable make a determination in the McPherson case, calling it a "he said she said" situation built on rumors and hearsay instead of facts. FSU even painted itself as the victim of malicious media, with Bobby Bowden lamenting, "It's amazing the way the press works nowadays," and closing the locker room to reporters for the first time (Bianchi, 2003d). In the end, these strategies were successful because the athletic administration produced a consistent and united narrative that deflected the blame for McPherson's actions solely on the individual.

Adrian McPherson took a different approach towards repairing his image during the scandal. Firstly, it is important to note that McPherson declined to give police officers a taped interview so only a small portion of his narrative comes from primary sources. He made very few public statements throughout the course of the scandal and relied on his lawyer and the media to disseminate his version of events. Throughout the scandal, McPherson denied any wrongdoing. From the moment athletic department officials were first alerted of potential misconduct by McPherson by Jeff Inderhees and Mike Pellicer, McPherson continuously proclaimed his innocence and said people were spreading hurtful rumors about him. In an interview with police, Bob Minnix said, “Adrian was as adamant that Inderhees was out to get him and that Inderhees was nothing but a liar” (Hill, IR #2). Dave Hart also told police McPherson told him, “I told you then and I’ll tell you that I have never been involved in gambling” when questioned about the stolen check (Hill, IR #4).

It is important to note that McPherson was very limited in the image repair strategies he could employ and still potentially salvage a collegiate career. If he had admitted to gambling in any way, he would have been ineligible to play according to NCAA bylaws. In a press conference two days after he was dismissed from the football team, McPherson painted himself as a victim. McPherson told the media that he had notified his coaches about the check incident and was under the impression that the school was going to handle it (Robbins, 2002). When he was kicked off the team, McPherson told the press that the FSU turned their back on him and he had no interest in playing for an institution he could no longer trust. McPherson’s lawyer, Grady C. Irvin, stated that Adrian was offended by the accusations and had “never, ever, ever gambled on a college football game or any professional sporting game” (Robbins, 2002). Irvin’s strategy was to deflect the blame from McPherson, and he made several accusatory statements to the

media. As mentioned in the previous chapter, Irvin called McPherson a “scapegoat” and blamed everyone from the FSU athletic administration, state attorney’s office, R&R Truck and Auto Accessories, and McPherson’s friends for turning on him and ruining his life and career with lies (Robbins, 2003b; Robbins, 2003c). So whereas the athletic department was attempting to isolate the problem to a sole individual, McPherson was attempting to show his lack of agency and expand the scope of the problem to the flawed environment that built him.

## **CHAPTER SIX**

### **CONCLUSION**

The reality of the Adrian McPherson scandal is more complex than the legal conclusion suggests. McPherson was never convicted and never pled guilty to any gambling charges, so why was his college football career effectively ended by the outcome? Due to the statute of limitations, McPherson was only placed on trial for his online gambling activities and not charged in connection to Derek Delach. The prosecution was hindered by the fact that the gambling records on McPherson's computer were made with a foreign Internet sports book that could not be forced to give up records because it is based in Costa Rica (Robbins, 2003j; Hill, IR #112). The NCAA only needed to determine that McPherson had gambled at all, and they found him guilty. The points of contradiction in the accounts from the various institutional actors involved in the scandal are numerous. Overall, the documents and articles from this study suggest that McPherson blamed the athletic department, the athletic department blamed McPherson and the media, and the media blamed the athletic department. Where does responsibility fall in this situation: to the individual doing wrong, the organization that lets it happen, or the society that fosters the culture of big-time athletics?

#### **6.1. Implications of the McPherson Scandal**

Though it would appear that the athletic department wielded all the power as this scandal unfolded, Foucauldian thought rejects that notion. Foucault believed that power is relational rather than hegemonic, so there is no such thing as absolute power. Since each individual possesses some level of power, they can “embody sites of potential resistance to the dominance present in their social system, meaning that they are situation in a position to facilitate change from within” (Rainey, 2013, p. 43). In this scandal, McPherson is the individual that challenged

the disciplinary power. If McPherson had been completely powerless, his alleged criminal and gambling activities would not have produced any larger controversy. Instead, the accusations led to scrutiny of the culture of the FSU athletic department and intercollegiate athletic programs in general. The NCAA investigated the school for lack of institutional control and the media publicly questioned FSU's integrity. The spaces of dissension that emerged from McPherson's contradictory narrative did lead to some changes in the athletic department. Following the independent report commissioned by FSU President T.K. Wetherell after the McPherson scandal, he said, "Somehow or another over the past few year—either through real action or perceived—the athletic department and the university separated...that is not something we want" (Robbins, 2003h). Though some changes did emerge as a result of the scandal, Adrian McPherson is the only institutional actor that suffered long-term consequences. Often, it is more difficult to blame organizations because there is a sense that there is no single person responsible, and if all actors are culpable, then it is difficult for any actors to be culpable. It was relatively simple to attribute the problems to McPherson and remove him from the situation; if a larger entity had been found responsible it would have been a more complicated problem to remedy.

Despite the media criticism of the way Florida State University handled the McPherson scandal, it can be argued that the university handled the crisis perfectly. No one associated with the athletic department at FSU was going to leak the scandal because the main priority is to protect the brand and the program. The larger critique therefore becomes: is this a random case or an example of the optimal strategy? It is likely that the culture of insularity in college football is not an accident. A quick list of recent college athletic scandals shows that the whistleblowers often come from outside the organization, rather than from within. The Penn State child sex abuse scandal had early internal inquiries conducted by the athletic department, but no real

investigation was initiated until one of the victims came forward. The point-shaving scandals discussed earlier at University of San Diego and Auburn University were both accidentally uncovered by the FBI. The 2011 University of Miami athletics scandal was brought on only after booster Nevin Shapiro was convicted of operating a Ponzi scheme. The 2013 Jameis Winston sexual assault allegations evaded public scrutiny for almost a year until the case was reopened following media requests for information. The trend suggests that the only way a major scandal in college athletics breaks is if someone outside the program exposes it.

If this is indeed the case, it is in athletic departments' best interests to conduct a minimalistic investigation and make sure nothing goes public. In the isolated culture of college athletics, the system is working in an ideal manner if authorities are never involved. FSU conducted just enough of an internal inquiry to show some institutional control if the McPherson scandal did happen to reach the media and threats of NCAA sanctions arose. McPherson's gambling activities may have remained shielded from the general public had he not been accused of stealing and forging the blank check by the owner of the automobile shop; only then were the authorities involved and able to dig deeper into potential motives for the theft. From an image repair standpoint, FSU did a commendable job handling the Adrian McPherson scandal. Once the allegations reached the media, FSU chose to distance itself from McPherson sooner rather than later. The inquiries were halted before they extended further into the athletic department and the FSU brand remained protected.

While there is value in maintaining the highly disciplined and contained power structure of collegiate athletic departments for image and public relations purposes, the situation changes when viewed from an ethical standpoint. Many athletic departments are hesitant to involve authorities in the early stages of investigations, and understandably so. Student-athletes in

lucrative programs are public figures and can be unnecessarily subjected to heavy media scrutiny. However, allegations of criminal behavior should be dealt with in conjunction with police so that justice has the best chance of being served if any wrongdoing is substantiated. Even in recent scandals (i.e. Penn State Sandusky child molestation and FSU Jameis Winston sexual assault allegations), the appearance that schools prioritized protecting their program over justice can be more damaging to the institution than the initial wrongdoing (Grasgreen, 2011; Lipka, 2006, Coombs, 1995).

## **6.2. Future Research**

The value of this study is in the primary source documents from Operation Coin Toss that have never been academically analyzed. There has been no previous research conducted regarding Adrian McPherson, but this study produced valuable insight into how a collegiate athletic department responded to a crisis. Research on McPherson could be expanded to include more primary source documents, such as the trial transcript. It could also be valuable to utilize Foucauldian discourse analysis in other case studies involving Florida State athletics. This case study in itself is not generalizable, but continued research into similar incidents could show if there is a pattern of crisis management strategies employed by FSU. The literature could also benefit from applying these theoretical paradigms to other institutions to see if they have similar power structures and department dynamics. Overall, the details provided in this case study are valuable to examine how the institutional actors respond to crisis and negotiate power relations within the context of NCAA Division I athletics.



## APPENDIX A

### OPERATION COIN TOSS

<u>Box</u>	<u>Folder</u>	<u>Item</u>	<u>Title</u>	<u>Type</u>	<u>Date</u>
1	1	1	Case Opening	Background	12/2/2002
1	1	121	Computer Lab Analysis disks for Derek Delach's computer	Computer	12/16/2002
1	3	78	Computer Evidence Recovery for Otis Livingston	Computer	3/17/2003
1	3	79	Computer Evidence Recovery for Otis Livingston	Computer	3/17/2003
1	3	80	Computer Evidence Recovery for Derek J. Delach	Computer	3/17/2003
1	3	98	Computer Analysis for Adrian McPherson	Computer	3/17/2003
1	5	31	Records from search warrant on America Online for Derek Delach	Computer	2/4/2003
1	1	7	Undercover call to Derek Delach by Jeffrey T. Inderhees	Controlled call	12/4/2002
1	1	109	Directed call to SGB Global	Controlled call	7/30/2003
1	3	92	Directed call to SGB Global	Controlled call	5/6/2003
1	4	7	Controlled undercover call to Derek Delach by Jeffrey T. Inderhees	Controlled call	12/4/2002
1	1	102	Disposal of related items used at McPherson trial	Court document	6/16/2003
1	1	103	Plea by Adrian McPherson	Court document	7/2/2003
1	1	106	Redacted information regarding Adrian McPherson, et al	Court document	12/3/2002
1	1	116	Plea by Derek Delach	Court document	8/22/2003
1	1	119	Jeffrey Inderhees' change in charge to "Betting", 1 count	Court document	8/28/2003
1	1	123	Subject and witness profiles and database	Court document	12/2/2002
1	1	126	Sentencing of Jeffrey T. Inderhees	Court document	11/12/2003
1	1	21	Confidential Source records for Ronald Hobbs	Court document	1/23/2003
1	1	31	Records from search warrant on America Online for Derek Delach	Court document	2/4/2003
1	2	31	Records from search warrant on America Online for Derek Delach	Court document	2/4/2003
1	2	38	Search Warrant for 1182 High Road, Tallahassee	Court document	12/11/2002

1	2	47	Subpoenaed records from Robert Minnix and Dave Hart	Court document	2/17/2003
1	2	67	Obtaining Arrest Warrants, Surrender of Inderhees and McPherson	Court document	2/28/2003
1	3	70	Surrender of Derek J. Delach at Leon County Jail	Court document	3/10/2003
1	3	95	Copy of Search Warrant & related documents 2016 Melanie Drive	Court document	5/21/2003
1	3	96	Subpoenaed Subscribers	Court document	5/14/2003
1	CRIP	1	Florida Department of Law Enforcement Case Related Items Print	Court document	2003-2004
1	4	21	Confidential Source records for Ronald Hobbs	Court document	1/23/2003
1	1	9	Subpoenaed records from SunTrust for Derek Delach	Financial records	12/4/2002
1	1	101	Western Union wire transfer analysis for Adrian McPherson	Financial records	6/3/2003
1	1	107	Florida Department of Revenue for Ken's Tavern, Inc.	Financial records	12/5/2002
1	1	108	Capital City Bank, Avaya, & First National Bank subpoenas for Derek Delach	Financial records	12/12/2002
1	1	11	Subpoenaed records from Guaranty National Bank for Derek Delach	Financial records	12/19/2002
1	1	110	Subpoenaed records from ParkVale Bank for Derek Delach	Financial records	8/4/2003
1	1	117	Subpoenaed transactions for Western Union agents	Financial records	8/18/2003
1	1	118	Subpoenaed records from Global Crossing	Financial records	8/21/2003
1	1	12	Subpoenaed records from Equifax for Derek Delach	Financial records	12/26/2002
1	1	124	Financial Analysis for Derek Delach	Financial records	12/4/2002
1	1	17	Subpoenaed records from Saks, Inc. for Derek Delach	Financial records	1/22/2003
1	1	20	Subpoenaed records from JPI Investments Company for Derek Delach	Financial records	1/22/2003
1	1	23	Subpoenaed records from VanKampen Investment for Derek	Financial records	1/27/2003

Delach

1	1	25	Subpoenaed records from Citibank, NA for Derek Delach	Financial records	1/29/2003
1	1	26	Subpoenaed records from Bank of America for Derek Delach	Financial records	1/29/2003
1	1	27	Subpoenaed records from Fleet Credit Card Services for Derek Delach	Financial records	1/29/2003
1	2	32	Subpoenaed records from Morgan Stanley Dean Witter for Derek Delach	Financial records	2/4/2003
1	2	33	Subpoenaed records from Discover Credit Card for Derek Delach	Financial records	2/4/2003
1	2	50	Subpoenaed records from SunTrust Bank for Jeffrey Inderhees	Financial records	2/14/2003
1	2	51	Subpoenaed records from SunTrust Bank for Landy Labadie	Financial records	2/14/2003
1	2	52	Subpoenaed records from Western Union	Financial records	1999-2000
1	2	53	Subpoenaed records from Guaranty National Bank for Derek Delach	Financial records	2/19/2003
1	2	58	Subpoenaed records from Addison H. Gibson Foundation for Derek Delach	Financial records	2/27/2003
1	2	59	Subpoenaed records from Western Union	Financial records	2001-2002
1	2	64	Subpoenaed records from Washington Mutual Finance for Cheryl Kerridge	Financial records	3/3/2003
1	3	83	Subpoenaed customer request forms from Western Union	Financial records	3/28/2003
1	3	84	Subpoenaed account documents for Orco Bank, NV from Citibank, NA	Financial records	4/1/2003
1	3	97	SunTrust Bank records for Adrian McPherson	Financial records	5/27/2003
1	4	9	Subpoenaed records from SunTrust for Derek Delach	Financial records	12/4/2002
1	4	11	Subpoena for Guaranty National Bank account for Derek Delach	Financial records	12/19/2002

1	4	12	Subpoena for Equifax credit history for Derek Delach	Financial records	12/26/2002
1	4	17	Subpoenaed records from Saks, Inc. for Derek Delach	Financial records	1/22/2003
1	4	20	Subpoenaed records from JPI Investments Company for Derek Delach	Financial records	1/22/2003
1	4	23	Subpoenaed records from VanKampen Investment for Derek Delach	Financial records	1/27/2003
1	4	25	Subpoenaed records from Citibank, NA for Derek Delach	Financial records	1/29/2003
1	4	26	Subpoenaed records from Bank of America for Derek Delach	Financial records	1/29/2003
1	4	27	Subpoenaed records Fleet Credit Card Services for Derek Delach	Financial records	1/29/2003
1	1	2	Interview of Robert J. Minnix	Interview	12/2/2002
1	1	3	Interview of Andrew N. Urbanic	Interview	12/3/2002
1	1	4	Interview of David R. Hart	Interview	12/3/2002
1	1	5	Interview of George "Mike" Pellicer	Interview	12/3/2002
1	1	6	Interview of Jeff T. Inderhees	Interview	12/4/2002
1	1	8	2nd interview of Jeffrey T. Inderhees	Interview	12/4/2002
1	1	104	Interview of Dennis Adams, AAA Cash-A-Check	Interview	6/26/2003
1	1	105	Interview of John R. Carroll, SRC of North Florida	Interview	6/26/2003
1	1	111	Interview of Richard Mendelson	Interview	7/31/2002
1	1	122	Sworn Questionnaires from FSU football and baseball players	Interview	1/15/2003
1	1	13	Interview of Derek J. Delach	Interview	12/4/2002
1	1	18	Interview of William Pickens	Interview	12/5/2002
1	1	19	Interview of Jill Gran	Interview	12/5/2002
1	2	34	Interview of Dominic Robinson	Interview	12/10/2002
1	2	35	Interview of Christine Hernandez	Interview	12/10/2002
1	2	36	Interview of Michael "Mike" Futrell	Interview	12/11/2002
1	2	37	Interview of Patrick Newton	Interview	12/11/2002
1	2	39	Interview of Patrick Newton	Interview	12/12/2002
1	2	40	Interview of a Confidential Source about Kenneth Ayers	Interview	12/16/2002
1	2	41	Interview of Cheryl Kerridge	Interview	1/9/2003
1	2	42	Interview of Melvin Capers, Jr.	Interview	1/9/2003

1	2	43	Interview of Matthew Lynch	Interview	1/9/2003
1	2	44	Interview of Dan Lowry	Interview	1/10/2003
1	2	45	Interview of Andrew N. Urbanic	Interview	1/13/2003
1	2	46	Interview of Daryl Dickey	Interview	1/13/2003
1	2	49	Interview of Frank Lynch	Interview	1/13/2003
1	2	54	Interview of Kevin Lynch	Interview	1/21/2003
1	2	55	Interview of Jeremy D. Willis	Interview	1/23/2003
			Interview of Matthew Lane		
1	2	56	Owens	Interview	1/24/2003
1	2	57	Interview of Brian J. Battle	Interview	1/27/2003
			Interview of Daniel Wayne		
1	2	60	Hodges	Interview	1/21/2003
1	2	61	Interview of Brent Pease	Interview	1/22/2003
1	2	62	Interview of Chris Dunn	Interview	1/23/2003
1	2	63	Interview of Dominic Robinson	Interview	1/23/2003
			Interview of Coach Robert		
1	2	65	"Bobby" Bowden	Interview	1/14/2003
1	2	66	Interview of Jeffrey T. Inderhees	Interview	1/22/2003
1	2	68	Interview of Jeffrey T. Inderhees	Interview	1/14/2003
1	3	68	Interview of Robert J. Minnix	Interview	1/14/2003
1	3	71	Interview of Brandon J. Myers	Interview	1/13/2003
			Interview of Anthony "Tony"		
1	3	72	Richie	Interview	1/21/2003
1	3	73	Interview of Mike Martin	Interview	1/21/2003
1	3	74	Interview of Brian Smith	Interview	1/31/2003
1	3	75	Interview of Marcello Church	Interview	1/31/2003
1	3	76	Interview of Kevin Smith	Interview	2/3/2003
1	3	77	Interview of Lisa Marie Schiro	Interview	1/30/2003
1	3	81	Interview of Landy F. Labadie	Interview	2/13/2003
1	3	82	Interview of Otis Leon Livingston	Interview	2/12/2003
1	3	85	Interview of Lisa Marie Schiro	Interview	1/29/2003
1	3	86	Interview of Courtney Ashburn	Interview	2/26/2003
1	3	87	Interview of Robert J. Minnix	Interview	3/21/2003
1	CRIP	2	Interview of Robert J. Minnix	Interview	12/2/2002
1	CRIP	3	Interview of Andrew N. Urbanic	Interview	12/3/2002
1	CRIP	4	Interview of David R. Hart	Interview	12/3/2002
			Interview of George "Mike"		
1	CRIP	5	Pellicer	Interview	12/3/2002
1	4	6	Interview of Jeffrey T. Inderhees	Interview	12/4/2002
			Second Interview of Jeffrey T.		
1	4	8	Inderhees	Interview	12/4/2002
1	4	13	Interview of Derek J. Delach	Interview	12/4/2002
1	4	18	Interview with William Pickens	Interview	12/5/2002
1	4	19	Interview of Jill Gran	Interview	12/5/2002

1	1	112	INTERPOL response to investigative lead re: SBG Global Response letter from Jeffrey	Misc	5/7/2003
1	1	113	Postal re: subpoena of Internet Cash Card	Misc.	8/18/2003
1	1	120	Subscriber information for Global Crossings Telecommunications, et al	Misc.	8/1/2003
1	1	125	Exhibits pertaining to Derek J. Delach	Misc.	11/12/2003
1	3	88	Information from Mike Fish, ESPN/Sports Illustrated	Misc.	4/4/2003
1	3	89	"Task Force Investigative Findings" & "Supplemental"	Misc.	4/18/2003
1	3	91	Opening SBG U/C account Account created on	Misc.	5/5/2003
1	3	93	www.sbgglobal.com/ website copied	Misc.	5/7/2003
1	3	94	SBG Global CD-R & Mailing to Related Item Section	Misc.	5/20/2003
1	3	99	NCAA 2002 Football Schedule	Misc.	2002
1	4	10	Body Files from FDHSMV	Misc.	12/10/2002
1	1	100	Telephone toll analysis for Adrian McPherson	Phone records	12/10/2002
1	1	114	Subpoenaed records from Sprint for 850-222-5160 for Derek Delach	Phone records	8/14/2003
1	1	115	Subpoenaed records from Sprint for 850-350-0569 for Jeffrey Inderhees	Phone records	8/14/2003
1	1	14	Subpoenaed records from Sprint for 850-322-7000	Phone records	12/26/2002
1	1	15	Subpoenaed records from Sprint for 850-321-6147	Phone records	1/3/2003
1	1	16	Subpoenaed records from Verizon Wireless for 850-445-0317	Phone records	1/7/2003
1	1	22	Subpoenaed records from Sprint for 850-322-7000	Phone records	1/23/2003
1	1	24	Subpoenaed records from Sprint for Derek Delach	Phone records	1/29/2003
1	1	28	Subpoenaed records from Sprint for Derek Delach	Phone records	1/29/2003
1	1	29	Subpoenaed records from Sprint for Jeff Inderhees	Phone records	1/30/2003

1	1	30	Subpoenaed records from Sprint for Jeff Inderhees	Phone records	1/31/2003
1	2	48	Subpoenaed records from Verizon Wireless for 850-445-0317	Phone records	2/14/2003
1	3	69	Subpoenaed records from Verizon Wireless for Henrietta McPherson	Phone records	3/10/2003
1	3	90	Verizon Wireless subpoena response	Phone records	5/13/2003
1	4	14-1	Subpoenaed records from Sprint for 850-322-7000	Phone records	2/1/2000
1	4	14-2	Subpoenaed records from Sprint for 850-322-7000	Phone records	2/1/2000
1	4	15	Subpoenaed records from Sprint for 850-321-6147	Phone records	7/27/2002
1	4	16	Subpoenaed records from Verizon Wireless for 850-446-0317	Phone records	11/1/2002
1	4	22	Subpoenaed records from Sprint for 850-322-7000	Phone records	1/23/2003
1	4	24	Subpoenaed records from Sprint for Derek Delach	Phone records	1/29/2003
1	4	28	Subpoenaed records from Sprint for Derek Delach	Phone records	1/29/2003
1	4	29	Subpoenaed records from Sprint for Jeff Inderhees	Phone records	1/30/2003
1	4	30	Subpoenaed records from Sprint for Jeff Inderhees	Phone records	1/31/2003
1	1	10	Body Files from FDHSMV	Vehicle records	12/10/2002
Box	Folder	Item	Title	Type	Date
2	1	31	Records from search warrant on America Online for Derek Delach	Computer	2/4/2003
2	3	76	CD-R for Otis Livingston Laptop	Computer	3/17/2003
2	3	76	CD-R for Otis Livingston Laptop	Computer	3/17/2003
2	3	76	CD-R for Otis Livingston Laptop	Computer	3/17/2003
2	1	38	Search Warrant for 1182 High Road, Tallahassee	Court document	12/11/2002
2	2	67	Obtaining Arrest Warrants, Surrender of Inderhees and McPherson	Court document	2/28/2003
2	1	32	Subpoenaed records from Morgan Stanley Dean Witter for Derek Delach	Financial records	2/4/2003
2	1	33	Subpoenaed records from Discover Credit Card for Derek Delach	Financial records	2/7/2003

2	2	50	Subpoenaed records from SunTrust Bank for Jeffery Inderhees	Financial records	2/14/2003
2	2	51	Subpoenaed records from SunTrust Bank for Landy Labadie	Financial records	2/14/2003
2	2	52	Subpoenaed records from Western Union	Financial records	1999-2000
2	2	53	Subpoenaed records from Guaranty National Bank for Derek Delach	Financial records	2/19/2003
2	2	58	Subpoenaed records from Addison H. Gibson Foundation for Derek Delach	Financial records	2/27/2003
2	2	59	Subpoenaed records from Western Union	Financial records	2001-2002
2	2	64	Subpoenaed records from Washington Mutual Finance for Cheryl Kerridge	Financial records	3/3/2003
2	1	34	Interview of Dominic Robinson	Interview	12/10/2002
2	1	35	Interview of Christine Hernandez	Interview	12/10/2002
2	1	36	Interview of Michael "Mike" Futrell	Interview	12/11/2002
2	1	37	Interview of Patrick Newton	Interview	12/11/2002
2	1	34-2	Interview of Dominic Robinson	Interview	12/10/2002
2	1	35-2	Interview of Christine Hernandez	Interview	12/10/2002
2	1	36-2	Interview of Michael "Mike" Futrell	Interview	12/11/2002
2	1	37-2	Interview of Patrick Newton	Interview	12/11/2002
2	1	39	Interview of Patrick Newton	Interview	12/12/2002
2	1	41	Interview of Cheryl Kerridge	Interview	1/9/2003
2	1	42	Interview of Melvin Capers, Jr.	Interview	1/9/2003
2	1	43	Interview of Matthew Lynch	Interview	1/9/2003
2	1	44	Interview of Dan Lowry	Interview	1/10/2003
2	1	45	Interview of Andrew Urbanic	Interview	1/13/2003
2	1	46	Interview of Daryl Dickey	Interview	1/13/2003
2	2	49	Interview of Frank Lynch	Interview	1/13/2003
2	2	54	Interview of Kevin Lynch	Interview	1/21/2003
2	2	55	Interview of Jeremy D. Willis	Interview	1/23/2003
2	2	56	Interview of Matthew Lane	Interview	1/24/2003
2	2	57	Interview of Brian J. Battle	Interview	1/27/2003
2	2	60	Interview of Daniel Wayne Hodges	Interview	1/21/2003
2	2	61	Interview of Brent Pease	Interview	1/22/2003
2	2	62	Interview of Chris Dunn	Interview	1/23/2003



2	2	63	Interview of Dominic Robinson Interview of Coach Robert	Interview	1/23/2003
2	2	65	"Bobby" Bowden	Interview	1/14/2003
2	2	66	Interview of Jeffrey T. Inderhees	Interview	1/22/2003
2	2	68	Interview of Robert J. Minnix	Interview	1/14/2003
2	2	71	Interview of Brandon J. Myers Interview of Anthony "Tony"	Interview	1/13/2003
2	2	72	Richie	Interview	1/21/2003
2	2	73	Interview of Mike Martin	Interview	1/21/2003
2	2	74	Interview of Brian Smith	Interview	1/31/2003
2	2	75	Interview of Marcello Church	Interview	1/31/2003
2	2	76	Interview of Kevin Smith	Interview	2/3/2003
2	2	77	Interview of Lisa Marie Schiro Subpoenaed records from Robert	Interview	1/30/2003
2	1	47	Minnix and Dave Hart Subpoenaed records from Robert	Misc.	2/17/2003
2	2	47	Minnix and Dave Hart Subpoenaed records from Verizon	Misc.	2/17/2003
2	2	48	Wireless for 850-445-0317 Subpoenaed records from Verizon	Phone records	2/14/2003
2	2	69	Wireless for Henrietta McPherson	Phone records	3/10/2003
Box	Folder	Item	Title	Type	Date
3	1	11	CD-R for Otis Livingston Laptop	Computer	3/17/2003
3	2	12	CD-R for Otis Livingston Laptop	Computer	3/17/2003
3	3	13	CD-R for Otis Livingston Laptop	Computer	3/17/2003
3	4	78	Computer Evidence Recovery for Otis Livingston	Computer	3/17/2003
3	5	78	Computer Evidence Recovery for Otis Livingston	Computer	3/17/2003
3	5	80	Derek J. Delach	Computer	3/17/2003
3	5	81	Interview of Landy F. Labadie	Interview	2/13/2003
Box	Folder	Item	Title	Type	Date
4	2	98	Computer Analysis for Adrian McPherson	Computer	3/17/2003
4	1	92	Directed Call to SBG Global	Controlled call	5/6/2003
4	3	109	Directed Call to SBG Global	Controlled call	7/30/2003
4	1	11698	Copy of Public Records Request by the NCAA	Court document	4/14/2003
4	1	11897	Public Records Request by NCAA Disposal of related items used at	Court document	5/5/2003
4	2	102	McPherson trial	Court document	6/4/2003
4	2	103	Plea by Adrian McPherson	Court document	7/2/2003
4	2	12499	Copy of a PRR from the NCAA	Court document	7/10/2003
4	2	106	(Redacted information) regarding	Court document	7/10/2003

			Adrian McPherson, et al		
4	3	123	Subject and witness profiles and database	Court document	12/2/2002
4	4	123	Subject and witness profiles and database	Court document	12/2/2002
4	5	123	Subject and witness profiles and database	Court document	12/2/2002
4	1	83	Subpoenaed customer request forms from Western Union	Financial records	1/1/2001
4	1	84	Subpoenaed account documents for Orco Bank, NV from Citibank, NA	Financial records	4/1/2003
4	1	97	SunTrust Bank records for Adrian McPherson	Financial records	3/17/2003
4	2	101	Western Union wire transfer analysis for Adrian McPherson	Financial records	6/3/2003
4	2	107	Florida Department of Revenue for Ken's Tavern, Inc. et al	Financial records	12/5/2002
4	3	108	Capital City Bank, Abaya, & First National Bank subpoenas for Derek Delach	Financial records	12/12/2002
4	3	110	Subpoenaed records from ParkVale Bank for Derek Delach	Financial records	8/4/2003
4	3	117	Subpoenaed transactions for Western Union agents	Financial records	8/18/2003
4	1	82	Interview of Otis Leon Livingston	Interview	2/12/2003
4	1	85	Interview of Lisa Schiro	Interview	1/29/2003
4	1	86	Interview of Courtney Ashburn	Interview	2/26/2003
4	1	87	Interview of Robert J. Minnix	Interview	3/21/2003
4	2	105	Interview of John R. Carroll	Interview	7/10/2003
4	1	89	"Task Force Investigative Finders" & "Supplemental"	Misc.	4/18/2003
4	1	91	Opening SBG U/C account	Misc.	5/5/2003
4	1	96	Account created on www.sbgglobal.com website copied	Misc.	5/19/2003
4	2	99	NCAA 2002 Football Schedule	Misc.	6/3/2003
4	3	112	INTERPOL response to investigative lead re:SBG Global	Misc.	8/7/2003
4	3	113	Response letter from Jeffrey Postal re: subpoena of Internet Cash Card	Misc.	8/18/2003
4	3	122	Sworn Questionnaires from FSU football and baseball players	Misc.	1/15/2003
4	1	90	Verizon Wireless subpoena response	Phone records	N/A

Box	Folder	Item	Title	Type	Date
4	3	115	Subpoenaed records from Sprint for 850-350-0569 for Jeffrey Inderhees	Phone records	8/14/2003
4	3	114	Subpoenaed records from Sprint for 850-222-5160 for Derek Delach	Phone records	8/14/2003
4	3	118	Subpoenaed records from Global Crossing	Phone records	8/21/2003
4	3	120	Subscriber Information for Global Crossings Telecommunications, et al	Phone records	8/1/2003
5	1	123	Subject and witness profiles and database	Court document	12/2/2002
5	2	123	Subject and witness profiles and database	Court document	12/2/2002

## APPENDIX B

### WHO'S WHO IN THE MCPHERSON GAMBLING SCANDAL

<p>Adrian McPherson</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• FSU quarterback who was dismissed from the team in November 2002</li><li>• Accused of credit card theft, stealing and forging a blank check, and sports gambling</li><li>• Allegedly in debt to a local bookie</li></ul>
<p>Bob Minnix</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• FSU Associate Director of Athletics for Compliance</li><li>• Conducted the athletic department's initial internal investigation of the McPherson gambling allegations in May 2002</li><li>• Criticized by police for only interviewing four people before considering the investigation a dead end</li></ul>
<p>Andy Urbanic</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• FSU Associate Athletic Director for Football Operations</li><li>• Approached by two football managers in May 2002 with complaints of credit card theft by Adrian McPherson</li><li>• Could not substantiate the accusations and called the conflict a "he said, she said" affair</li></ul>
<p>Dave Hart</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• FSU Athletic Director</li><li>• Informed of McPherson accusations by Bob Minnix in May</li><li>• Told Minnix to keep him informed on the status of the investigation</li></ul>
<p>Derek Delach</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Florida State graduate and bartender at Ken's Tavern</li><li>• Alleged bookie to whom McPherson was allegedly \$8000 in debt</li><li>• Charged with felony bookmaking</li></ul>
<p>Jeff Inderhees</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• FSU football student equipment manager</li><li>• First brought accusations of McPherson's credit card theft to Andy Urbanic in May 2002</li><li>• Told Bob Minnix that McPherson gambled and was in debt to a bookie; refused to disclose the name of the bookie</li><li>• Admitted to placing bets with McPherson and other equipment managers through Derek Delach</li><li>• Charged with felony bookmaking</li></ul>
<p>Mike Pellicer</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• FSU football student equipment manager</li><li>• Jeff Inderhees's roommate; also went to Andy Urbanic in May 2002 accusing Adrian McPherson of credit card theft</li><li>• Admitting to placing bets with McPherson and other equipment managers through Derek Delach</li></ul>
<p>Melvin Capers</p>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Adrian McPherson's friend from high school and Tallahassee Community College student</li> <li>• Testified that he, McPherson, and Otis Livingston created online betting accounts through SBG Global to bet on sports in 2003</li> <li>• Charged with forging and cashing a blank check that Adrian McPherson was accused of stealing from R&amp;R Truck and Auto Accessories; said McPherson asked him to cash the check and kept most of the money</li> </ul>
<p>Otis Livingston</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Adrian McPherson's friend from high school and Tallahassee Community College Student</li> <li>• Testified that he, McPherson, and Melvin Capers created online betting accounts through SBG Global to bet on sports in 2003</li> <li>• Testified that McPherson bet on some FSU football games</li> <li>• Said McPherson specifically avoided putting his name on the accounts or wire transfers so he wouldn't get in trouble with the NCAA.</li> </ul>
<p>Mike Futrell</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• FSU baseball player and Derek Delach's roommate</li> <li>• Told police that Delach took bets and Adrian McPherson owed him a large sum of money</li> </ul>
<p>Brandon Myers</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Former FSU football player and former roommate of Derek Delach</li> <li>• Told police that Delach took bets</li> </ul>
<p>Dominic Robinson</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• FSU football and baseball player</li> <li>• Told Bob Minnix that McPherson placed bets and was in debt to a local bookie</li> <li>• Told police that he felt Minnix was trying to cover up McPherson's gambling issues</li> </ul>
<p>Jill Gran</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• FSU compliance graduate assistant</li> <li>• Told Bob Minnix the identity of the bookie (Derek Delach) in December 2002</li> </ul>

## APPENDIX C

### TIMELINE OF MCPHERSON SCANDAL

Early 2002: Police say McPherson and football equipment managers bet on basketball games with a bookie; McPherson ran up an \$8000 debt
May 2002: Mike Pellicer and Jeff Inderhees go to the athletic administration to accuse McPherson of credit card theft and sports gambling
June 2002: Bob Minnix investigates McPherson gambling rumors and notifies the NCAA but tells police he couldn't substantiate the allegations
September 2002: Police say McPherson began gambling with Melvin Capers and Otis Livingston through online sports book SBG Global
October 2002: McPherson wins the starting quarterback job for the FSU football team
November 18, 2002: A blank check is stolen, forged, and cashed for \$3,500 from R&R Truck and Auto Accessories; McPherson is accused of the theft
November 25, 2002: McPherson is dismissed from the FSU football team
November 27, 2002: Police charge McPherson with felony grand theft and misdemeanor theft in connection to the check
December, 2002: FDLE, FSUPD, and TPD launch a joint investigation into rumors that McPherson had been gambling
March 4, 2003: McPherson is charged by police with misdemeanor gambling via the Internet; Derek Delach and Jeff Inderhees are charged with felony bookmaking
June 4, 2003: McPherson trial begins
June 6, 2003: Hung jury; judge declares mistrial in the McPherson gambling case

## APPENDIX D

### WHERE ARE THEY NOW?

<p>Adrian McPherson</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Quarterback, Calgary Stampeders (Canadian Football League); signed in January 2014</li> <li>• Previous teams include: Indian Firebirds (Arena Football League; 2004-2006), New Orleans Saints (National Football League; 2006); Austin Wranglers (Arena Football League, 2006); Grand Rapids Rampage (Arena Football League, 2007); Montreal Alouettes (Canadian Football League, 2008-2013); Tampa Bay Storm (Arena Football League, 2013)</li> </ul>
<p>Robert Minnix</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Senior Associate Athletics Director, Washington State University</li> </ul>
<p>Jeff Inderhees</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Assistant Equipment Manager, Cleveland Browns</li> </ul>
<p>Dave Hart</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Vice Chancellor/Director of Athletics, University of Tennessee</li> </ul>
<p>Andy Urbanic</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Retired in 2010</li> </ul>
<p>Dominic Robinson</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Defensive Coordinator, Graceland College (Iowa)</li> </ul>
<p>Derek Delach</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Married and living in Houston</li> </ul>

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## **BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH**

Erin Marshall was born September 17, 1990 in Fayetteville, NC. She received a Bachelor of Science in Media/Communication Studies and Sport Management from Florida State University in May 2012. In August 2013 she continued her education at Florida State University, where she completed her Master of Science degree in Sport Management.