

Millersville University

The 1964 United States Presidential Election
as depicted through Political Cartoons

A Senior Thesis Submitted to
The University Honors College and the Department of History
In Fulfillment of the Requirements
For the University and Departmental Honors Baccalaureate

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March 2024

Abstract

Presidential elections have been a spectacle of speeches and debates to gain favor of the people. The media, more specifically political cartoons, have contributed to the exhibition with their ability to exaggerate and display actions or characteristics of the presidential candidates. In the 1964 election, Democratic nominee Lyndon Johnson won in a historical landslide against Barry Goldwater. To understand how that happened and why the people favored Johnson so heavily against his opponent, the general perspective of the American people must be studied-- including how the candidates were depicted in newspapers' editorial cartoons. This thesis studied the political cartoons of six different papers in different regions of the country and focused on the major issues of the campaigns to thoroughly study how the American public interpreted and perceived Johnson and Goldwater in their race for the presidency.

Introduction

Lyndon Baines Johnson, commonly referred to as LBJ, was the 36th president of the United States. He has been remembered for many things during his time in office such as the passing of the Civil Rights Act, America's involvement in the Vietnam War, and his plan for a Great Society. Not as often is he recognized for one of the greatest achievements of any president; he holds the highest percentage of popular vote ever when he received 61.1% of votes in 1964.¹

Political cartoons have a rich history in America; one of the first recognized political cartoons was done by Ben Franklin in 1754 titled "Join or Die."² Since then, political cartoons rose in popularity and publication; especially when a majority of the population had staggered levels of literacy political cartoons provided a medium for the public to debate social and political issues.³ But advancements in technology made it difficult for the medium to hold its popularity. As color photographs were prominently displayed on the front page of newspapers and more people were able to access their news on the television political cartoons had to fight for attention and relevance. Many cartoonists began to draw in an extreme fashion to aid in their job stability; some cartoonists even acknowledged that during the 1964 election, for a political cartoon to be seen as legitimate it had to make a bold statement in a brazen manner.⁴ The editorial cartoons have proved to be more popular and a better form of communication to its

¹ "Presidential Election Margin of Victory," Presidential Election Margin of Victory | The American Presidency Project, November 7, 2020, <https://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/statistics/data/presidential-election-mandates>.

² "Political Cartoons and Public Debates," The Library of Congress, accessed March 9, 2024, <https://www.loc.gov/classroom-materials/political-cartoons-and-public-debates/>.

³ Mohsen Zarifian, Irina Volkova, and Natalia Lazutova, "The Evolution of Cartoons Throughout the History of Mass Communication," *International Journal of Media and Information Literacy* 7, no. 2 (2022): 632, https://doi.org/https://ijmil.cherkasgu.press/journals_n/1670339632.pdf.

⁴ Dan Gilgoff, "Political Cartoonist Impact Presidential Races," US News, February 28, 2008, <https://www.usnews.com/news/articles/2008/02/28/political-cartoonists-impact-presidential-races>.

audience than the accompanied editorial articles.⁵ Political cartoons function in an important role of providing an honest, sometimes harsh critique of the political climate in an entertaining, succinct fashion for the general public to absorb and build their own opinions off of. This of course, does not just affect the public but also those in office or campaigning for a position. The president and those running for the position have a necessary and adversarial relationship as the media serves as the president's connection to the American public. The media has the power to shape the public's view of those running for office and the political policies about which the public cares.⁶

Methodology

This research began with the hope of finding a pattern of depiction of how President Lyndon Johnson and Republican candidate Barry Goldwater were portrayed. Also, to see if the cartoons' portrayals gave a realistic indication that Johnson would win in the landslide he did. To begin the research, six different states and newspapers were chosen to obtain the cartoons from. Four states and their papers represented four quadrants of the United States: *The New York Times* (East Coast), *The Chicago Tribune* (Midwest), *The Atlanta Journal Constitution* (South), *The Los Angeles Times* (West Coast). It was later decided to include the two home states of each candidate to see if they favored their candidate more regardless of political affiliation or candidate popularity.

With each newspaper the analysis would begin on March 1, 1964, where the editorial section and the corresponding cartoon was found. Some paper archives had the ability to sort through the pages and editions to filter the editorial cartoons, while others did not. The difficulty

⁵ Thomas M Kennitz, "The Cartoon as a Historical Source," *The Journal of Interdisciplinary History* 4, no. 1 (Summer 1973): 84, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/202359>.

⁶ George C Edwards, Kenneth R Mayer, and Stephen J Wayne, "The President and the Media," essay, in *Presidential Leadership*, 13th ed. (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2023), 187–224.

of finding each cartoon would range from paper to paper as many such as *The Dallas Morning News*, *The Chicago Tribune*, and others would publish their cartoons on the same page every edition. *The Los Angeles Times*, however, published their editor's section on a different page each time making it significantly more challenging to find.

When selecting each cartoon in the newspapers, the image would automatically be downloaded and cataloged if it depicted either candidate or the political party mascots. Also, cartoons that depicted legislation, commentary, or recounted an event that pertained to the Civil Rights legislation, the country's involvement in Southeast Asia, or America's economic state would be selected.

Once every cartoon was collected from each paper and filed in the inventory, they were printed and physically labeled with their paper acronym and the date they were published. From there, physical files were created for each topic addressed in the thesis with the cartoons in chronological order, which would help to create a timeline and figure out how the research could connect the cartoons.

When it came time to write each section, each cartoon would be evaluated to decide which worked best. There were some instances, the section on Southeast Asia for example, where more cartoons were selected that were later proven unnecessary or did not fit into the chronological narrative that was being formed. For other sections, such as an originally planned section on Latin America, there were not enough cartoons on the topic to support its own portion of the paper. To compensate for the unexpected shortcomings of the editorial cartoons the plan to have a section of the paper on the Soviet Union and Latin America was discarded. Instead, the sections were combined to have a more sustainable number of cartoons.

Economy

Johnson first introduced what he considered his ideal America, his domestic goals during his presidency, and what he would name his Great Society at the University of Michigan in May 1964. Historians such as Amity Shlaes speculated that Johnson had this plan since he was a Texan lawmaker during President Franklin Roosevelt's presidency where he was able to witness the good the President was able to do for society with social programs like the New Deal.⁷ Other historians go back even further into Johnson's life and credit the years he taught in Cotulla, Texas. It was there that the president learned to empathize with his Mexican American students who had to come to terms with their societal disadvantages of race, poverty, and limited access to education.⁸ Whatever the contributing factors were, the domestic policies Johnson promised during his campaign and throughout the years of his presidency were to create his Great Society. A significant aspect of the program was for the United States government to wage war on poverty. The war would increase impoverished people's professional skill level, their education, the number of public resources, and many other issues that kept almost one-fifth of the American population in poverty.⁹

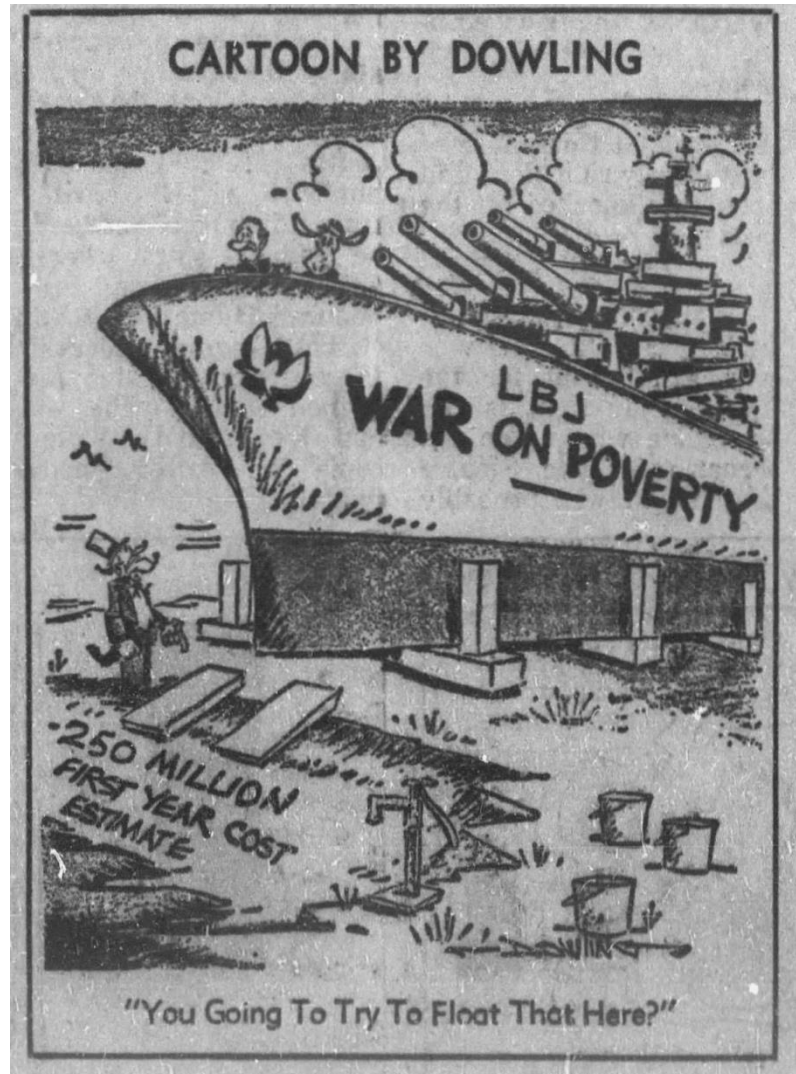
Though the Great Society was not announced until May, Johnson initiated his unconditional war on poverty at the start of 1964 and had already worked to pass legislation through the houses of Congress. Johnson sought to bring social awareness to the problem of poverty in the country. It was not a concept that was commonly talked about even though it

⁷ Amity Shlaes, "Great Society," in *Great Society: A New History* (New York, NY: Harper Collins, 2019), 95–137.

⁸ "LBJ in Cotulla," LBJ Museum of San Marcos, November 4, 2021, <https://lbjmuseum.com/exhibits/online-exhibits/lbj-in-cotulla/#:~:text=His%20assignment%20was%20to%20teach,the%20socioeconomic%20problems%20they%20faced>

⁹ Colin Campbell et al., Poverty in the United States: 50-year trends and safety net ..., March 2016, <https://aspe.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/private/pdf/154286/50YearTrends.pdf>.

affected two out of every five Americans at the time.¹⁰ Maybe it was due to the foreign concept that one of the first cartoons addressing Johnson's legislation regarding the economy and the war on poverty would be one of confusion and apprehension. The *Los Angeles Times* published the cartoon "You're going to try to float that here?" on March 16, the same day Johnson announced the Economic Opportunity Act (EOA) to the Senate.¹¹ The cartoon showed Johnson and the Democratic



donkey standing at the bow of the war on poverty battleship equipped with multiple weapons mounted on board. The pair was attempting to dock the battleship in a small man-made pond that represented the estimated cost of 250 million dollars in the first year of the war on poverty. Uncle Sam stood to the side of the boat as he asked the president how he expected to float such a large ship in the small body of water. The cartoon clearly expressed doubt about the

¹⁰ Joseph Roucek, "The Politics of President Johnson's War on Poverty," *Politico* 31, no. 2 (June 1966): 295, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/43206437?seq=1>.

¹¹ Dan Dowling, "You Going to Try to Float That Here?" Illustration. *Los Angeles Times*, March 16, 1964. From the Los Angeles Times Archives, <https://latimes.newspapers.com/image/382055566/?terms=Lyndon%20Johnson&match=1> (accessed July 18, 2023).

government's ability to sustain such an ambitious plan to overcome America's poverty. Especially a ship with so much artillery, as the battleship that represented the war on poverty held 10 guns pointed in different directions. Each gun correlated to the 10 different points of poverty on which the legislation focused. Also seen in the image were empty buckets and a water pump that had no water coming out of it. This signified that the government would not approve of the war on poverty legislation or the funding that the bills required, as shown later in the year with the EOA receiving the bare minimum number of votes to pass through the Senate.¹²

Though not everyone held the same skepticisms, as just three days later, on March 19, the *Atlanta Journal Constitution* printed Clifford Baldowski's (Baldy's) "Somebody's gotta work on the foundation" that portrayed the American economy as a construction site.¹³ As the other workers built the frames of towering skyscrapers that represented the new growing prosperity which America benefited from, Johnson worked alone on the base of the new building. The prosperity was built directly on top of



¹² "S. 2642. Economic Opportunity Act of 1964.," GovTrack, accessed February 12, 2024, <https://www.govtrack.us/congress/votes/88-1964/s443>.

¹³ Clifford Baldowski, "Somebody's Gotta Work on the Foundation" Illustration. *Atlanta Journal Constitution*, March 19, 1964. From the Atlanta Journal Constitution Archives, <https://ajc.newspapers.com/image/384643847/?terms=political%20cartoons&match=1> (accessed July 17, 2023).

a dilapidated house that represented the growing poverty, which when inspected closely clearly still housed people as a small person was seen in the front window. Baldy praised Johnson with this cartoon as he applauded the president for being the only person in government to address the problem of poverty and realize that a sound economy could not be built on an unstable foundation.

This sentiment was continued through the beginning of May as just a couple days into the month the *Los Angeles Times* published their opinion on Johnson's actions. "He also turned ON some lights" depicted an unnamed street in America where an affluent house and family lived on one side of the block and directly across the street a family lived in squalor.¹⁴ Not only did their houses reflect their income status but also the people shown in the image themselves, as the affluent family was purposefully drawn larger which was the direct opposite of the family that represented the country's



poverty with hollowed cheeks and thin features. Despite living across the street from one

¹⁴ Herbert Block, "He also turned ON some lights" Illustration. *Los Angeles Times*, May 5, 1964. From the Los Angeles Times Archives, <https://latimes.newspapers.com/image/382055566/?terms=Lyndon%20Johnson&match=1> (accessed July 18, 2023).

another, the affluent house expressed surprise at the state of his neighbors since he had never seen them, not until Johnson had fixed the bulb in the streetlamp. The message the cartoon illustrated was that Johnson was both figuratively and literally turning on the lights and opening the American people's eyes to so much of the population that was living under the poverty line.

This continued admiration of the president did not last much longer; the *Los Angeles Times* published another cartoon less than a week later that expressed concern about the longevity of Johnson's concern. Bill Mauldin's cartoon, "Will you love me in December like you do in May" showed Johnson extremely close with a shoeless and impoverished woman wearing a



tattered, patched up dress.¹⁵ She confided her fear that Johnson was only using her as a campaign promise and after he was elected their dance would end and she would be forgotten. Their positioning in the image also showed how much power Johnson held, the way that he led the dance with his arm slightly bent yet hers was fully extended. He appeared to be the person in control of the dance and their pace, much like how his focus on poverty would drive the war on poverty to be passed faster. These all contributed to the concern the woman and Mauldin expressed that Johnson was leading America in a romantic dance to entice

¹⁵ Bill Mauldin, "Will you love me in December like you do in May?" Illustration. *Los Angeles Times*, May 11, 1964. From the Los Angeles Times Archives, <https://latimes.newspapers.com/image/382055566/?terms=Lyndon%20Johnson&match=1> (Accessed July 18, 2023).

them into voting for him. As a literal interpretation of the image, being led in a dance was a common old English saying that meant tricking a person or making them do many unnecessary things.¹⁶ Mauldin could be using this expression to further his argument that Johnson was simply using the war on poverty to gain votes.

The doubt continued into the month as the *Chicago Tribune* printed “Background Spoiling the Picture” that displayed Johnson’s hypocrisy in his war on poverty.¹⁷ The cartoon featured Johnson taking promotional pictures for his campaign, specifically about the promised war on poverty. The pictures were spoiled by the background of the Johnsons’ tenants on their property in Alabama. This stemmed from an article the *New York Times* had published on May 15, three days before this cartoon was printed. The article interviewed the people who rented from the president and his wife, and though the tenants were happy and did not believe they lived in poverty the writing stressed their dilapidated living conditions. The roofs leaked horribly, and the exterior of each of the five homes had weathered and stood on eroding foundations.¹⁸



¹⁶ *Cambridge Dictionary*, s.v. “Lead someone a (merry) dance (*idiom*),” accessed February 14, 2024, <https://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/lead-a-merry-dance>.

¹⁷ Ed Holland, “Background Spoiling the Picture” Illustration. *Chicago Tribune*, May 18, 1964. From the Chicago Tribune Archives, <https://chicagotribune.newspapers.com/image/374711153/?terms=Lyndon%20Johnson%20and%20Political%20cartoon&> (accessed June 23, 2023).

¹⁸ “Tenants There 50 Years,” *The New York Times*, May 15, 1964, <https://www.nytimes.com/1964/05/15/archives/tenants-there-50-years.html>.

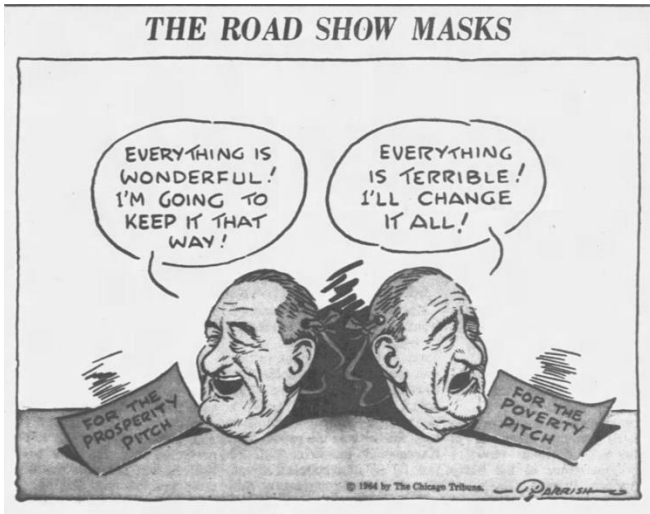
Cartoonist Ed Holland questioned this through his cartoon, asking why would the president publicly support legislation that would fight against poverty yet allowed his tenants to live in squalor. These two contradictions were destroying the image he believed Johnson tried to carefully curate during his campaign.

Though the next couple of months focused on other issues dealing with the campaign and American policy, such as the protests of the draft to the Vietnam War and the Civil Rights Act that moved through Congress, the trend of expressed contempt for Johnson's hypocrisy continued to the end of the campaign. The *Arizona Republic*, the *Chicago Tribune*, and the *Los Angeles Times* all published cartoons that featured Johnson using both economic prosperity and poverty to advance his campaign. The first cartoon, published in the *Arizona Republic* by Reg Manning on August 24, was "There are two sides to every street" that showed Johnson and the Democratic donkey putting makeup on identical twins.¹⁹ The men represent America's poverty and its prosperity to make them look respectively worse and better. Johnson in the cartoon proudly stated that there were two sides to the campaign and that he worked both.

Similarly, the *Chicago Tribune* printed "The Road Show Masks" on October 17 which continued the sentiment that the president was exaggerating the exceptional economy but also



¹⁹ Reg Manning, "There Are Two Sides To Every Street" Illustration. *Arizona Republic*, August 24, 1964. From the Arizona Republic Archives, <https://www.newspapers.com/newspage/119352796/> (accessed August 13, 2023).



the poverty of the country.²⁰ The cartoon showed the theater comedy and tragedy masks of Johnson's face; one had a huge smile while the other had an expression of despair. The happy mask that represented Johnson spoke about the prosperous economy made promises to keep everything just as it was in order to continue the

positive economy. The other appeared to express despair at the horrible state of the American economy while he promised to change everything if elected.

Finally, "Trick or Treat" was printed just a few days before Halloween in the *Los Angeles Times*. It depicted Johnson trick or treating for "Votes for LBJ" in the election.²¹ He dressed in a Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde type costume in which one side of his suit and body was prim and proper with a polished top hat and shoes. The other side that represented poverty was tattered and unkempt with scraggly lines above to contrast the straight lines on the prosperity side of the costume and emphasized the difference between the two halves. The difference this cartoon presented from the previous two was that this image provided an audience to



²⁰ Joe Parrish, "The Road Show Masks" Illustration. *Chicago Tribune*, October 17, 1964. From the Chicago Tribune Archives, <https://chicagotribune.newspapers.com/image/374711153/?terms=Lyndon%20Johnson%20and%20Political%20cartoon&> (accessed June 23, 2023).

²¹ Vaughn Shoemaker, "Trick or Treat" Illustration. *Los Angeles Times*, October 29, 1964. From the Los Angeles Times Archives, <https://latimes.newspapers.com/image/382055566/?terms=Lyndon%20Johnson&match=1> (accessed July 18, 2023).

Johnson's trickery. The man was obviously surprised and confused by Johnson's appearance as shown by the glasses that flew off his face and the question mark above his head. The man represented the American public, the confusion of Johnson himself, his stance on the economic state of the country, and his use of both sides of the economy to gain public favor.

Though the campaign of the war on poverty began with positive and hopeful reception the idealistic future that the Great Society promised was quickly lost as doubt crept into the American media and into the public's mind. Perhaps this was because economic change or benefit to the poor was not something that could be socially cured as clearly as other bills were able to do. For instance, the difference in society before and after the Civil Rights Act was visible as society began to fully integrate. While with poverty, Johnson exposed the poor conditions in which people lived, and Congress passed legislation to aid them, but there was no moment where society could see an improvement in the impoverished state as the bills provided no immediate assistance.

Civil Rights

In a speech to Congress shortly after taking office in 1963, Johnson announced the policies and plans President John Kennedy wanted to complete that he was prepared to see through in the name of his late predecessor. One of the more controversial ones mentioned was the Civil Rights Act that Kennedy had initiated after his inauguration. The bill was introduced into the House of Representatives in February 1964, and quickly passed to the Senate. There it was met with two months of filibusters and rewrites. Hubert Humphrey (D-Minnesota), who Johnson would soon name as his vice president, recalled his and Johnson's work to end the filibuster. Specifically, Humphrey stated that he was unable to conceive of a way to end the stalemate and it was President Johnson's "vote-getting determination" that helped seal the

cloture of the filibuster in a vote of 71 to 29.²² From the Hill, the bill moved to the White House for Johnson to sign into law on July 2, 1964.

Though Johnson withheld the amount of persuasion and work he was doing in Congress to move the Civil Rights Act onto his desk, the American media portrayed the President as the one with the driving force behind the

legislation. This was especially evident

in *The New York Times* cartoon “Repeated 100 Years Later” on May 10, 1964, which was published while the Senate was still deliberating.²³ In

the image, Franklin Alexander portrayed Johnson in a long coat labeled the “Civil Rights Bill” in the same standing position as President Ulysses S. Grant in the photo next to him. Both presidents stated the same



Alexander in *The Philadelphia Evening Bulletin*
“Repeated 100 years later.”

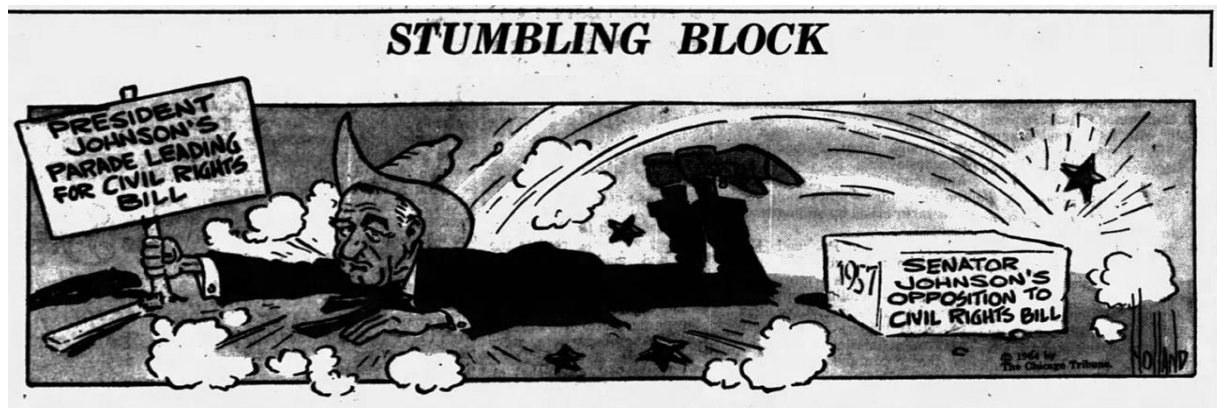
sentiment of continuing to fight their respective battles and finishing victoriously no matter how long it would take. Grant’s most known and largest accomplishment was leading the Union to victory over the Confederacy and bringing an end to the Civil War. The comparison between the two presidents showed Johnson not only in a supportive light but also as righteous in his fight

²² Joseph Califano Jr., *The Triumph & Tragedy of Lyndon Johnson* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1991), 55; and “Landmark Legislation: The Civil Rights Act of 1964.” United States Senate, August 8, 2023. <https://www.senate.gov/artandhistory/history/common/generic/CivilRightsAct1964.htm>.

²³ Franklin Alexander, “Repeated Every 100 Years” Illustration. *New York Times*, May 10, 1964. From *The New York Times Archives*. <https://www.nytimes.com/> (accessed March 16, 2023).

against the bill's opponents. It also shamed the opposers or those who criticized Johnson for his stance on Civil Rights as the cartoon not only compared Johnson and Grant, but it also inadvertently compared their opposers-- white southerners who did not believe that African Americans deserved equality.

Yet, as expected, not everyone held that same view of Johnson's actions as there were many cartoons published throughout the months of his campaign that criticized the Civil Rights Act and Johnson's involvement. One of the more critical cartoons came just two days later in the *Chicago Tribune*. "Stumbling Block," illustrated by one of the paper's editorial cartoonists, Ed Holland, portrayed Johnson tripping over his opposition to the Civil Rights bill proposed in the Senate in 1957.²⁴ In publishing this cartoon, both the artist and the paper highlighted what they perceived as Johnson being hypocritical or the coincidental nature that he would support a bill during his campaign for presidency but not during his time in the Senate. Some who analyze the campaign wondered the same; Robert Divine wrote in his work *Exploring the Johnson Years* that the passage of the Civil Rights Act came at a critical moment of the campaign when Johnson was



²⁴ Ed Holland, "Stumbling Block" Illustration. *Chicago Tribune*, May 12, 1964. From the Chicago Tribune Archives, <https://chicagotribune.newspapers.com/image/374711153/?terms=Lyndon%20Johnson%20and%20Political%20cartoon&> (accessed June 23, 2023).

able to secure not only African American support but hopefully quell any violent protests that could “frighten white voters into the camp of Barry Goldwater.”²⁵

Though the cartoon correctly asserted that Johnson originally came from a Southern state and had a complicated history with Civil Rights, it portrayed his actions in 1957 incorrectly. Historian Paul Conkin examined Johnson’s experience with the earlier bill. He asserted that before 1957 Johnson was unabashedly opposed to any Civil Rights legislation but, as Senate Majority Leader, he was able to recognize the inevitability of a progressive legislation. It was his attempt to push the bill through the chamber and keep his constituents happy that Johnson found hard to balance. After what Conkin called a “series of Johnson-backed amendments, which considerably emasculated the House bill,” he was the driving force behind cloture and the eventual passing of the 1957 bill.²⁶ Many people thought similarly to Holland and did not understand how Johnson could oppose Civil Rights legislation then but pushed for it so forcefully during the election. Others considered that Johnson knew there would be more progression to come and that each bill made into law could lay foundation for stronger acts until there would be full equality among Americans.

It is possibly due to this complex past that most cartoonists chose not to negatively portray Johnson in relation to his support of the legislation, but instead critiqued the bill itself and the effects it could have on the country. In his *Arizona Republic* cartoon “‘Big Uncle’ Will Be Watching” which published just over a week before the bill was signed into law, cartoonist Reg Manning depicted the application of the Civil Rights legislation as the dystopian, big brother

²⁵ Robert Divine, *Exploring the Johnson Years* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1981), 102.

²⁶ Paul Conkin, *Big Daddy From the Pedernales: Lyndon Baines Johnson* (Boston: Twayne Publishers, 1986), 139-42.

overseer closely watching a representation of United States businesses.²⁷ Specifically what Manning wanted his readers to focus on in this cartoon was the concern of wages. There are many documents on the desk yet the only one labeled was “payroll” in large letters across the top. This would reference the seventh title of the Civil Rights Act that bars discrimination by an employer on the basis of race, meaning black men and white men would have to be paid equal amounts for equal work.²⁸ Manning attempted to scare the paper’s audience by reminding them that the bill might affect their wages, urging readers to not support the bill or the man who signed it. This especially could be because the *Arizona Republic* favored Barry Goldwater, who was a vocal and adamant opponent to the Civil Rights Act. He was the only one out of the five combined House and Senate votes for Arizona that voted against the final bill.²⁹



²⁷ Reg Manning, “‘Big Uncle’ Will Be Watching” Illustration. *Arizona Republic*, June 23, 1964. From the Arizona Republic Archives, <https://www.newspapers.com/newspage/119352796/> (accessed August 13, 2023).

²⁸ “Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964.” US EEOC. Accessed September 17, 2023. <https://www.eeoc.gov/statutes/title-vii-civil-rights-act-1964>.

²⁹ “Hr. 7152. Passage.” Govtrack. Accessed September 17, 2023. <https://www.govtrack.us/congress/votes/88-1964/s409>.

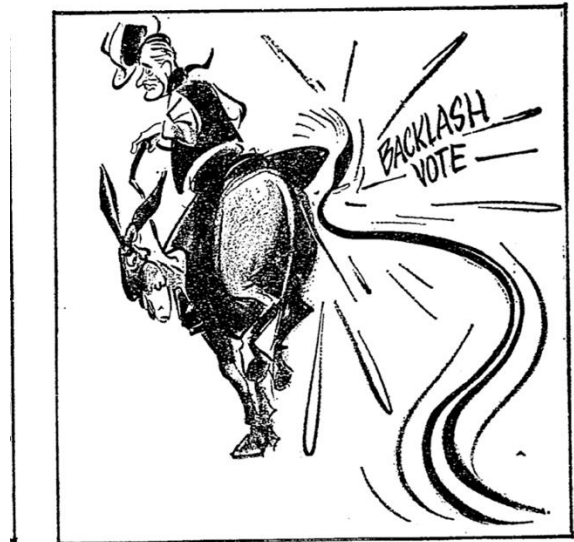
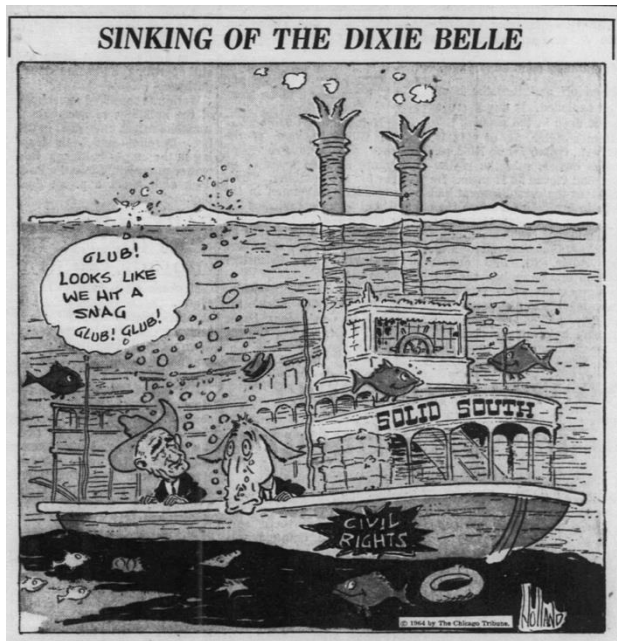
Goldwater's disdain for the Civil Rights legislation was not hidden; rather, it was a key portion of his campaign for the presidency. He believed that States should have the option to handle their Civil Rights issues on their own terms and their own timeline. Though he also argued that he was not for segregation of private business based on race or color, the people he began to represent and their actions reflected extreme racial bias on both Goldwater and the GOP. On July 17, 1964, the *Atlanta Journal Constitution* printed the cartoon featuring Candidate Goldwater



leading a crowd of people making up his Republican support. These members include a sheriff in uniform, older white men and women, the GOP elephant, and most strikingly a white-sheeted Klan member. Goldwater, pointing to a black man depicted to be his equal in both height and age, informed him "It's unanimous. We're still going to call you 'Boy'..."³⁰ His views severely impacted the way the black community saw the Republican candidate. Any support from the black community died just a couple days before this cartoon at the July 12, 1964, march in protest of Goldwater becoming the official Republican Party presidential candidate, where some

³⁰ Clifford Baldowski, "It's Unanimous. We're still gonna call you boy" Illustration. *Atlanta Journal Constitution*, July 17, 1964. From the Atlanta Journal Constitution Archives, <https://ajc.newspapers.com/image/384643847/?terms=political%20cartoons&match=1> (accessed July 17, 2023).

marchers held satirical signs supporting Goldwater while wearing white pillowcases and sheets on their heads.³¹



This benefited Johnson as he was able to secure the vote from the black community due to the racist perception of Goldwater and due to Dr. Martin Luther King, who stated that “[Goldwater’s] election would be a tragedy and certainly suicidal for the nation and the world.”³² Unfortunately, also due to his work for Civil Rights, Johnson pushed the southern voters of America into Goldwater’s reach. This became evident to not only the candidates but to the nation as the election day drew closer. The *Chicago Tribune* printed their understanding of Johnson’s disapproval from the south in their “Sinking of the Dixie Belle” cartoon from July 28, 1964 where Johnson and the democratic donkey have sunken any support from the south because of the Civil Rights debate.³³ Similarly, the *New York Times* published the cartoon “Off and

³¹Gabrielle Silva, “July 12, 1964, Human Rights March: A Closer Look”, *OpenSFHistory*, <https://www.opensfhistory.org/osfhcrucible/2020/07/26/july-12-1964-human-rights-march-a-closer-look/#1>.

³² *Mr. Conservative: Goldwater on Goldwater*, directed by Julie Anderson (2006; CC Goldwater) <https://www.max.com/movies/mr-conservative-goldwater-on-goldwater/7aaca1f0-37fb-4e34-8051-9f142eba1d96>.

³³ Ed Holland, “Sinking of the Dixie Belle” Illustration. *Chicago Tribune*, July 28, 1964. From the Chicago Tribune Archives,

Running”³⁴ about a month later on August 30, where they show that the south preferred and supported Goldwater as revenge against Johnson for signing the Civil Rights Act. The backlash was apparent, especially since the only states that would turn to the Republican after November 3, 1964, would be Arizona and a majority of the deep South.

Southeast Asia

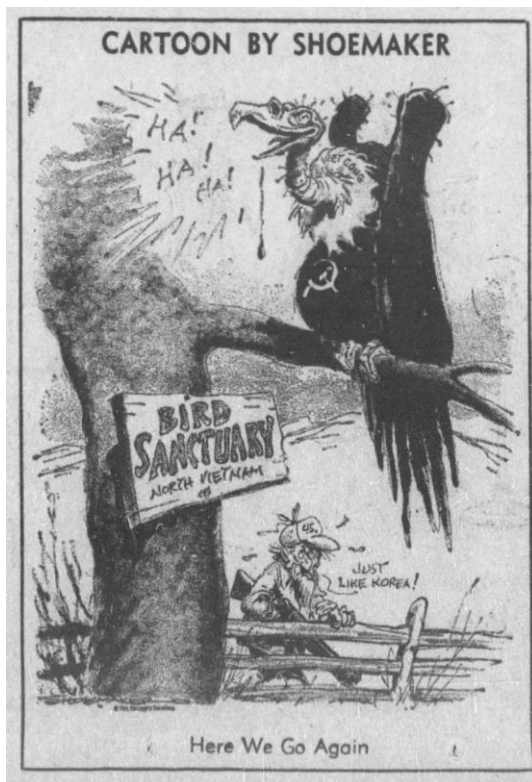
The United States’ involvement with South Vietnam was another political act that Johnson had inherited from Kennedy. Not only had Johnson inherited the country’s involvement, but he also chose to continue with the Kennedy administration and its policies in place. The Johnson administration saw this as a political and a campaign strategy with the election coming later that year. He was concerned that a divergence from Kennedy’s plan could cost him the election as he did not have congressional or popular support of the people on this matter.³⁵ Also, at this time the country was still wary of the United States’ involvement in Southeast Asia after the Korean War had ended almost a decade earlier and there were still American soldiers on that peninsula. In early 1964, the involvement in South Vietnam was marketed to the people as strictly a war fought by the South Vietnamese that was aided by American money and military advice. Both the American people and Congress were content with this strategic plan to aid in the fight against communism without becoming the sole defender of freedom internationally.

<https://chicagotribune.newspapers.com/image/374711153/?terms=Lyndon%20Johnson%20and%20Political%20cartoon&> (accessed June 23, 2023).

³⁴ William Crawford, “Off and Running” Illustration. *New York Times*, August 30, 1964. From The New York Times Archives. <https://www.nytimes.com/> (accessed March 7, 2023).

³⁵ Orrin Schwab, *Defending the Free World* (Connecticut: Praeger Publisher, 1998), 94.

A significant purpose of the United States presence in Vietnam, just as it was in Korea, was due to fear of the Domino Theory, a concern that if one section of the world fell to communism others would follow until the entire world was consumed. The topic was subtly touched on in “Here We Go Again,” drawn by cartoonist Vaughn Shoemaker and published in mid-March of 1964 by the *Los Angeles Times*, where a hunter stood at the fenced off border of a bird sanctuary that represented North Vietnam and its communist ally, the Soviet Union.³⁶ The hunter seems frustrated and stated that the situation was “just like Korea” as the vulture, a bird that is most commonly known as a warning symbol for death, sat perched inside the sanctuary and laughed as it cannot be hunted. Shoemaker expressed what many feared about Southeast Asia, that without the United States’ help the entire region of the world would succumb to



communism. In the image, a visible drip of blood fell from the vulture’s mouth and his full belly implied that he has eaten every other bird housed in the sanctuary. Communism had swallowed North Vietnam, and just like they had in Korea, and the United States would be the one up to the challenge of hunting the communist and protecting the other parts of the world that were at risk of next falling.

³⁶ Vaughn Shoemaker, “Here We Go Again” Illustration. *Los Angeles Times*, March 15, 1964. From the Los Angeles Times Archives, <https://latimes.newspapers.com/image/382055566/?terms=Lyndon%20Johnson&match=1> (accessed July 18, 2023).

Others did not share the same perspective about the similarities between Korea and Vietnam. Bill McClanahan published his cartoon almost two months later, May 6, 1964, in the *Dallas Morning News*. It highlighted the other position. The image depicted two Viet Cong soldiers stood in front of their supply base that had an abundant amount of ammunition, food, guns, rifles, grenades, and tanks at their disposal. The soldiers discussed how lucky they were that the “Yanks didn’t learn their lesson in Korea.”³⁷ With his image, McClanahan reminded the American people that Vietnam falling to communism should not be their only fear; instead, they should fear what was within the country and what laid beyond it. Many of the supplies of the Viet Cong were from the much

larger, much more powerful communist nation of China that shared a border with North Vietnam. In the Korean War, China attempted to appear neutral yet sent countless soldiers to fight alongside the Korean People’s Army and die in battle against South Korean, American, and the United Nations forces.³⁸ Similarly,

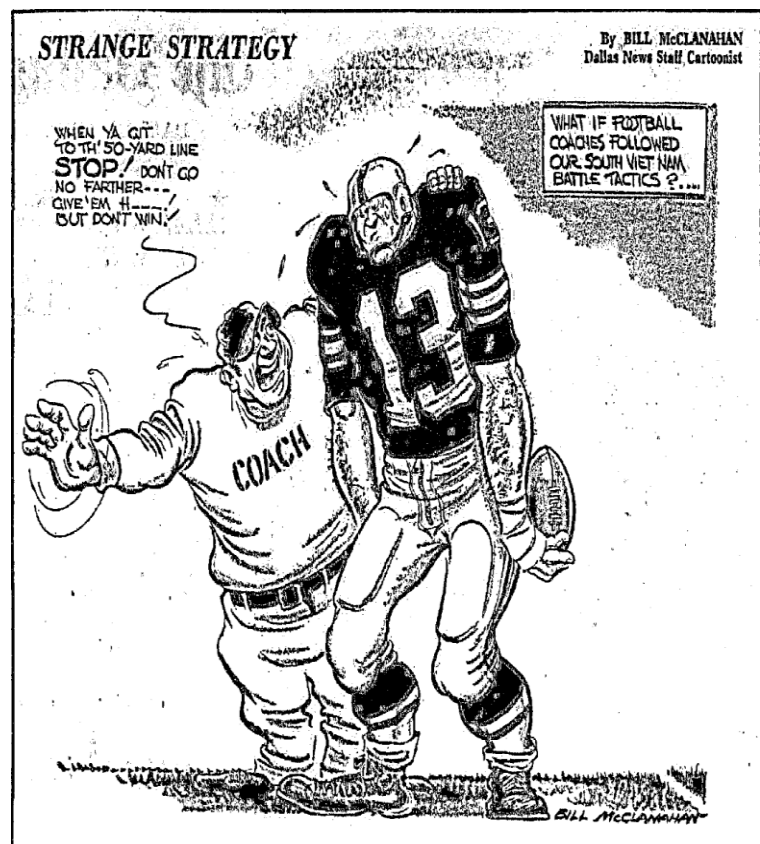


³⁷ Bill McClanahan, “Lucky for us th’ Yanks didn’t learn their lesson in Korea” Illustration. *Dallas Morning News*, May 6, 1964. From the Dallas Morning News Archives, <https://www.dallasnews.com/news/from-the-archives/> (accessed May 18, 2023).

³⁸“Foreign Relations of the United States, 1951, Korea and China, Volume VII, Part 2,” Office of the Historian, accessed October 15, 2023, <https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1951v07p2/d135#:~:text=The%20Chinese%20Communists%20had%20an,portion%20of%20their%20best%20forces.>

China aided the North Vietnamese capital of Hanoi with significant supplies of material, food, and munitions.³⁹

Ironically, as much as Johnson had been criticized for promoting a confusing strategy to handle the South Vietnam situation, McClanahan offered a change of mind with his view on Southeast Asia. Less than two weeks after he printed a cartoon warning against the United States' involvement in Vietnam, McClanahan published "Strange Strategy" where he illustrated a football coach telling one of his players that he should only run to the 50-yard line and then give the other team hell but not play to win.⁴⁰ The player stood over him, obviously very powerful, with the ball in his hand and looked dumbfounded at the confusing rules his coach gave him. In McClanahan's perspective, this was what football would be like if the game was run the same way as the military leaders were running the troops in South Vietnam.



This cartoon clearly questioned the military tactic of containment and how American and South Vietnamese troops never crossed the 17th parallel that split the country into two. An

³⁹Chen Jian, "China's Involvement in the Vietnam War, 1964-69." *The China Quarterly*, no. 142 (1995): 356-87. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/655420>.

⁴⁰ Bill McClanahan, "Strange Strategy" Illustration. *Dallas Morning News*, May 14, 1964. From the Dallas Morning News Archives, <https://www.dallasnews.com/news/from-the-archives/> (Accessed May 23, 2023).

interesting aspect of the cartoon was how McClanahan chose to illustrate the player that represented the United States military; the player towered over his coach and surely has an immense amount of strength to take on the other team. In turn, McClanahan questioned why a military so powerful would be told to stop when it had the ability to win, completely ignoring his previous concern about the weaponry and fortitude of the Viet Cong. The juxtaposition these cartoons presented displayed an attitude much larger than a simple criticism of the government's conduct. It showed how convoluted the situation was, especially considering the American people had little knowledge of what was happening overseas at this point in the conflict. This cartoon and the cartoonist's differing opinions on South Vietnam were perfectly summed up by Johnson in a private phone call to his Secretary of Defense Robert McNamara that took place months prior. When discussing the American people and how he should address Vietnam to them, Johnson stated, "Nobody really understands what it is out there, and they don't know, and they're getting to where they're confused. And they're asking questions, and they're saying why don't we do more."⁴¹

⁴¹ Michael Beschloss, *Taking Charge: The Johnson White House Tapes, 1963-1964* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1997), 249.

Also in May, Senator Barry
Goldwater was quickly gaining
popularity and by the end of the month
had won the popular vote in four
different state primaries. With the
gained attention as a prime candidate
for the Republican nomination the
journalists pressed Goldwater for his
stance on Southeast Asia. Goldwater
was known for having extreme and
unpopular views that he would refuse to
compromise on for the sake of more
votes; he addressed during his
campaign that he was fully aware he
would be called “‘impulsive’, ‘trigger-



happy’, ‘imprudent’, ‘hip-shooting’, and the like...’.⁴² That quote accurately represented how Goldwater was portrayed by a majority of American media. A cartoon by Mauldin appeared in the *Los Angeles Times* in late May that showed Goldwater balanced on a tightrope juggling atomic bombs, and keeping the hydrogen bomb balanced on his chin while a journalist who was not distracted by the foreign policy theatrics instead asked Goldwater about his domestic

⁴² John Kessel, *The Goldwater Coalition: Republican Strategies in 1964* (New York: The Bobbs-Merrill Company, Inc., 1968), 188.

policies.⁴³ Goldwater did not hide his criticisms of the current administration and how he believed they were too soft on the Viet Cong, and how there should be more applied power deployed into the situation. And though many Americans agreed that they believed the United States could be doing more, not all wanted a significant bombing campaign. This was proven by a poll that sorted people by their political identification to see the difference on how positively the people viewed the candidates on different stances. For foreign policy, Goldwater received positive comments from 16% of Democrats, 39% of Independents, and, barely gaining a majority over his own party, received 52% of Republicans.⁴⁴

In June, the American perspective began to shift more positively in Johnson's favor.

Early in the month he delivered a news conference in the White House where he reiterated his commitment to the safety of Southeast Asian freedom and to keep the American promise made to the late President Ngo Dinh Diem by President Eisenhower in 1954.⁴⁵ That same day, the *Atlanta Journal Constitution* published its editorial cartoon that illustrated Johnson and members of his administration scrambling to stop their position in Southeast Asia from completely



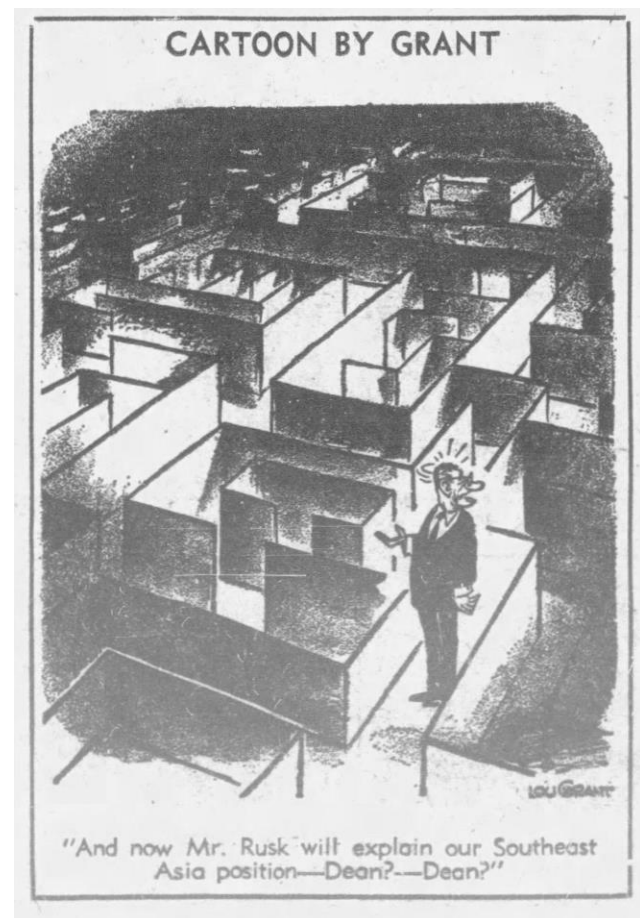
⁴³ Bill Maudlin, "How would you describe your domestic policy Sen. Goldwater" Illustration. *Los Angeles Times*, May 28, 1964. From the Los Angeles Times Archives, <https://latimes.newspapers.com/image/382055566/?terms=Lyndon%20Johnson&match=1> (accessed July 20, 2023).

⁴⁴Kessel, *The Goldwater Coalition*, 260.

⁴⁵"The President's News Conference," The American Presidency Project, accessed October 15, 2023, <https://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/documents/the-presidents-news-conference-1056>.

breaking.⁴⁶ As men were holding the beam together and stacked wobbly cans to help support the policy, Johnson was shown reaching for a steel bar with the word “determination” etched into the side. The cartoon reinforced the president’s own sentiment that he would stop at nothing to aid the situation in Vietnam, no matter how chaotic or stressful it got.

About ten days later, the *Los Angeles Times* published a cartoon that redefined their perspective on the foreign policy.⁴⁷ The Lou Grant cartoon showed Johnson alone in a highly complex, and seemingly never-ending maze that represented his administration’s Southeast Asian position. He expected to find his Secretary of State, Dean Rusk, behind him but when the president turned to seek support on the matter Rusk was nowhere to be found. The cartoon depicted Johnson as confused, which was not a positive trait, but it also portrayed the president in a sympathetic light. The situation he was in was complex to navigate and though he should have the support of his administration it was the president alone that the American people would look to be reassured or get answers to their questions.



⁴⁶ Clifford Baldowski, “Steel! Concrete! Hammer! Nails! Tape!” Illustration. *Atlanta Journal Constitution*, June 2, 1964. From the Atlanta Journal Constitution Archives, <https://ajc.newspapers.com/image/384643847/?terms=political%20cartoons&match=1> (accessed July 11, 2023).

⁴⁷ Lou Grant, “And now Mr. Rusk will explain our Southeast Asia position” Illustration. *Los Angeles Times*, June 12, 1964. From the Los Angeles Times Archives, <https://latimes.newspapers.com/image/382055566/?terms=Lyndon%20Johnson&match=1> (accessed July 20, 2023).

As the year moved to July the status quo of Vietnam was still intact. While there would be additional money and military personnel committed to Vietnam the Johnson administration continued to assert that the war still belonged to the Vietnamese. The Republican Party had yet to announce its official candidate for presidency, but the country eagerly awaited the party's platform statement. On July 12, 1964, the day before the platform was released, the *Los Angeles Times* printed the editorial cartoon "Don't forget this one, brother!" that showed the GOP elephant crafting the party platform and as he was building an elephant from Southeast Asia reminded the Republicans to build in the South Vietnam mess.⁴⁸ The campaign year of 1964 had



multiple different facets which the candidates had to speak on. One of the most pressing was the South Vietnam situation, since it depended on which candidate won the election to determine if the situation escalated. The next day, the Republican Party released its platform where Southeast Asia or Vietnam was only mentioned a handful of times. The context in which Vietnam was mentioned was not detailed or exhaustive, more so a simple paragraph or sometimes even a sentence where the party reaffirmed its dedication to aggressively fight communism and secure victory over the North Vietnamese.

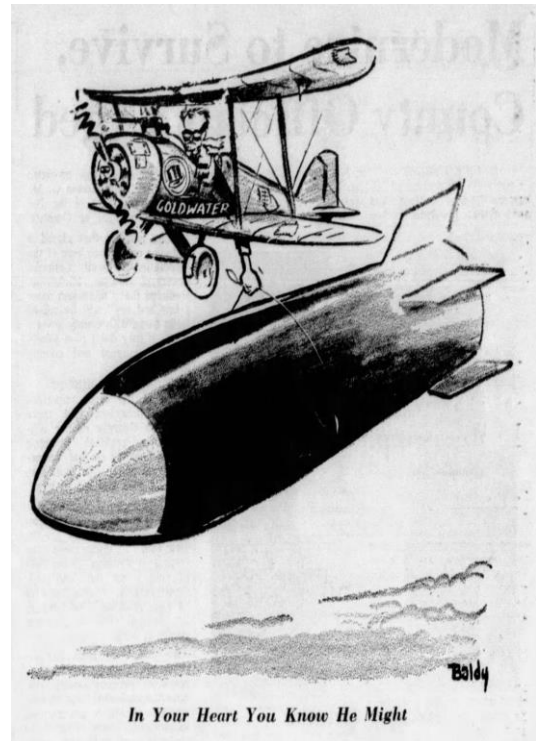
⁴⁸Vaughn Shoemaker, "Don't forget this one, brother!" Illustration. *Los Angeles Times*, July 12, 1964. From the Los Angeles Times Archives, <https://latimes.newspapers.com/image/382055566/?terms=Lyndon%20Johnson&match=1> (accessed July 21, 2023).

The situation only became more complex in August as an incident off the Gulf of Tonkin changed American involvement and ensured involvement for over a decade. Between August 2 and August 4, American naval ships were reportedly attacked by North Vietnamese torpedo boats. Johnson warned of swift repercussions if the attacks continued after the initial hit and when they allegedly did not stop, he ordered an official retaliation. Johnson then addressed Congress and the country to state his plan to defend South Vietnam's freedom and American soldiers. He was met with resounding support from the American public, yet Congress waited three days to approve the escalation through the Southeast Asia resolution. It eventually passed with overwhelming support from both the House and the Senate, and only received two votes against intervention.⁴⁹

Escalation with the justification of defense after the enemy attacked first went over relatively smoothly for the president. Even Goldwater paused his criticisms after the strategic air strikes began in late August. But just because Goldwater had no grounds to critique Johnson's policy did not mean that Johnson did the same. On September 7 the Johnson campaign team released one of the most remembered campaign commercials in American history, commonly referred to as "The Daisy Ad." The ad showed a young girl in a field counting the petals she picked off a daisy. As she counted to 10, a booming voice took over and began to count down. When the voice reached zero the screen cut to an atomic explosion and warned that it would be the future if Goldwater were elected to office. It was only played for one day before the Democratic Party took the ad off the air, but the damage had already been done.

⁴⁹ Orrin Schwab, "Toward the Gulf of Tonkin" in *Defending the Free World* (Connecticut: Praeger Publisher, 1998), 81-114.

Between the daisy commercial and Goldwater's own policy, which favored the air strike option in defense of the free world, the fear of what could be if Goldwater were president stuck with the American people. A poll taken in October 1964 found that eight percent of Americans thought Johnson as president would increase the possibility of a nuclear war, while forty-four percent believed this would happen with Goldwater in office.⁵⁰ This sentiment was especially apparent in the editorial cartoonist of the *Atlanta Journal Constitution* and the cartoon it published on October 24. The cartoon turned Goldwater's campaign slogan of "In your heart, you know he's right" into its title "In your heart you know he might" with the image of Goldwater flying a plane carrying an overly large bomb to his target.⁵¹



Though the United States' involvement in South Vietnam was not popular as it had already faced protests and draft card burnings in the summer of 1964, Johnson's approach to the war was better received than Goldwater, who appeared as an extremist to moderate Republicans and Democrats. Goldwater's name was never mentioned in the daisy ad and yet that spoke louder to American audiences than if it had been. This villainization of Goldwater and the contrary

⁵⁰ Mitchell Lerner, "Vietnam and the 1964 Election: A Defense of Lyndon Johnson." *Presidential Studies Quarterly* 25, no. 4 (1995): 751–66. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/27551510>.

⁵¹ Clifford Baldowski, "In your heart, you know he might" Illustration. *Atlanta Journal Constitution*, October 24, 1964. From the Atlanta Journal Constitution Archives, <https://ajc.newspapers.com/image/384643847/?terms=political%20cartoons&match=1> (accessed July 16, 2023).

effect it had on Johnson that made him more trustworthy to the people may have aided Johnson in the election but caused more turmoil in the later years of his presidency.

Communism

Though the Vietnam War demanded most of the attention when it came to foreign policy there was a larger, more general fear that dictated the United States' global relations. The fear of communism had overtaken America since the end of the Second World War. The presence of communism would decide if the United States would have an adversarial or friendly relationship with a country. The United States was wary of both the Soviet Union and Cuba, each of which played a key role in the Cold War. The conflict with Fidel Castro, leader of Cuba, was escalated during the Kennedy administration with the 1961 Bay of Pigs incident.⁵² Even with the failure of the mission most Americans held the belief that Castro was a threat to world peace. A May 1964

poll showed that ninety-two percent of American citizens held a negative perception of the Cuban leader.⁵³

This negative view was possibly due to the communist ideology in the Cuban government or to the treatment of its citizens. In the *Dallas Morning News*, McClanahan's March 1 cartoon "So! Whatcha Gonna Do About It?" showed



⁵² The invasion of the Bay of Pigs was President John Kennedy's failed attempt at removing Fidel Castro as the leader of Cuba. The plan was executed on April 17, 1961- its secrecy had been compromised before the United States' men had reached the Cuban shore, boats were sunk by the coral reefs, and support troops landed in the wrong location. Overall, 114 men were killed and over 1000 were taken prisoner. The loss deterred the Kennedy administration from taking any further action with Cuba that would possibly begin the next world war.

⁵³ William G Mayer, "Trends: American Attitudes toward Cuba," *The Public Opinion Quarterly* 65, no. 4 (2001): 585-606, <https://doi.org/https://www.jstor.org/stable/3078757?seq=2>.

Castro smugly standing and smoking in front of Johnson dressed as a judge in the court of the Organization of American States (OAS), a conference that focused on human rights and fair elections.⁵⁴ Johnson, in the cartoon, was charging Castro with subversion in Latin America. The perception was that Castro did not appear to be worried about being taken to the OAS court and Johnson as the judge was not holding a gavel or appear to be actively taking judicial force against him. This was a critique that Johnson was not taking enough action on Castro or his movements in Latin America. The cartoon showed Johnson not acting but rather only keeping Castro within his line of sight, as shown by how far Johnson leaned forward over the bench. This watchful eye could be due to Castro's renewed trade agreement with the United States' Cold War rival, the Soviet Union.⁵⁵ A similar sentiment was carried through the campaign of Johnson not taking enough action against communist countries.

In terms of the United States' larger enemy, both in physical terrain and potential threat, 1964 was a turning point for the country's relationship with the Soviet Union. The year started with Soviet Union Premier Nikita Khrushchev sending world leaders, including Johnson, an East-West non-aggression pact.⁵⁶ The dialog of the two world leaders continued past the 6,000-word document about the Soviet's relations with Germany and shifted focus into peace between it and the United States. Besides negotiating the advantages and disadvantages of economic union and trade agreements in March, the countries mutually agreed to cut back on their military production of uranium and plutonium.⁵⁷ One of the first cartoons that addressed the agreement

⁵⁴ Bill McClanahan, "So! Watcha Gonna Do About It" Illustration. *Dallas Morning News*, March 1, 1964. From the Dallas Morning News Archives, <https://www.dallasnews.com/news/from-the-archives/> (accessed April 8, 2023).

⁵⁵ "Foreign Relations, 1964-1968, Volume XXXII, Dominican Republic; Cuba; Haiti; Guyana," U.S. Department of State Archive, accessed January 27, 2024, <https://2001-2009.state.gov/r/pa/ho/frus/johnsonlb/xxxii/44657.htm#:~:text=The%20Soviet%20Cuban%20trade%20protocol,increase%20by%2022%20per%20cent.>

⁵⁶ Beschloss, *Taking Charge*.

⁵⁷ "Foreign Relations of the United States, 1964-1968, Volume XIV, Soviet Union," Office of the Historian, accessed January 25, 2024, <https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1964-68v14/Summary>.

was illustrated by Herbert Block, more commonly known as Herblock, in the *New York Times* on April 26.⁵⁸ It showed Johnson and Khrushchev smiling while they shed their large winter jackets labeled “excessive nuclear production.” Their friendly demeanor and the snow melted around them under the shining sun signifies the ending of the Cold War as the animosity between the two countries literally and figuratively thawed around them.

This cartoon was published just a little over a week after the newspaper had printed the headline “Johnson is ‘Glad Khrushchev talks of peace’...”. Taking this



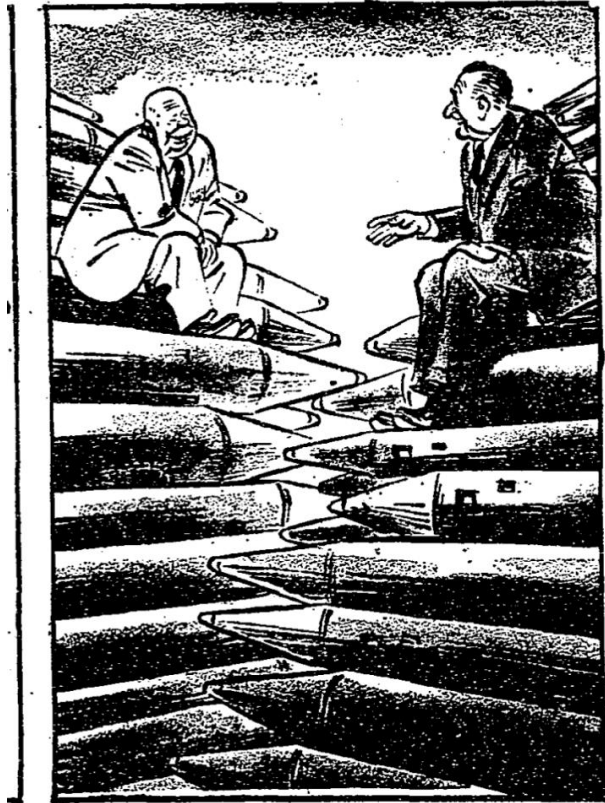
into account when analyzing Herblock’s illustration made the approval of the President’s actions with the Soviet Union transparent. The approval of his actions diminished slightly just a few months later when a second cartoon was published on June 21, also in the *New York Times*, drawn by Newton Pratt. His cartoon pictured Johnson and Khrushchev sat on their respective enormous stockpile of nuclear missiles. The pair smiled as Johnson lightly jested that after they complete the mutual agreement to curb the production of nuclear weapons each nation would have enough ammunition to “only kill each other once.”⁵⁹ Though the two leaders appeared to be

⁵⁸ Herbert Block, “It’s a relief to get rid of the overcoat” Illustration. *New York Times*, April 26, 1964. From The New York Times Archives. <https://www.nytimes.com/> (accessed March 16, 2023).

⁵⁹ Newton Pratt, “-then we reduce to enough armaments to kill each other only once” Illustration. *New York Times*, June 21, 1964. From The New York Times Archives. <https://www.nytimes.com/> (accessed March 16, 2023).

happy and at ease with each other, the vast amount of munitions present served as a reminder that though the stockpiling might decrease, the threat of nuclear war was still present.

This opened the perspective that Johnson having a friendly relationship with Khrushchev was not something that should be applauded. Goldwater campaigned that Johnson was soft on communism. He maintained that Johnson's budding friendship with Khrushchev endangered the integrity of the country by surrendering its citizens to gain political power.⁶⁰ Goldwater openly defamed Khrushchev and the communist



Pratt in *The Sacramento Bee*
 "—then we reduce to enough armaments to kill
 each other only once."

party in multiple speeches and ads throughout his campaign. One advertisement that was televised would flash back and forth between American school children reciting the pledge of allegiance and Khrushchev's speech where he threatens to bury the United States and raise all American children as communists. At the end of the commercial Goldwater promised American kids would be raised with American values as he would be clear about the United States' intention to defend itself against communist influence.⁶¹ The animosity between the Senator and

⁶⁰ William J. Middendorf, *A Glorious Disaster: Barry Goldwater's Presidential Campaign and the Origins of the Conservative Movement* (New York, NY: Basic Books, 2006), 184.

⁶¹ Barry Goldwater, "We Will Bury You," *The Living Room Candidate* (Museum of the Moving Image, 1964), <http://www.livingroomcandidate.org/commercials/1964/we-will-bury-you#>.

the Soviet government did go both ways, and the Moscow officials and the Soviet press did not hold back their disdain for the GOP candidate.⁶²

This was the foundation of the *Arizona Republic* editorial cartoon published on July 28, “Demand for Equal Time.”⁶³ In the image Goldwater stood proudly to show his paper that read “Khrushchev denunciation of Barry Goldwater” as the Democratic donkey scolded the USSR leader for not giving Johnson equal denunciation and threatened it would be considered foreign interference with United States’ affairs if it was not rectified. This turned the positive perspective of a possible friendship between Johnson and Khrushchev on its head and instead praised Goldwater for being an enemy of the USSR, not an ally. There was also the idea of coercion and crookedness in the Democratic Party that this cartoon asserted with the threat given to Khrushchev. That could play hand-in-hand with the accusation that Johnson was too soft on communism, with the added layer of Johnson extorting the Soviet Union this cartoon could make citizens worry if Johnson was doing more than simply being accommodating for the sake of peace. It presented the worry that Johnson would



⁶² Morton Schwartz, “The 1964 Presidential Elections through Soviet Eyes,” *The Western Political Quarterly* 19, no. 4 (December 1966): 663–71, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/445142?seq=5>.

⁶³ Reg Manning, “Demand for Equal Time” Illustration. *Arizona Republic*, July 28, 1964. From the Arizona Republic Archives, <https://www.newspapers.com/newspage/119352796/> (accessed August 15, 2023).

simply do whatever would make him the most popular and gain the most votes.⁶⁴ This argument had been made by multiple different cartoonists about other campaign issues such as the Civil Rights Act or Johnson's take on the American economy.

Unfortunately, the nation's attention shifted to Vietnam in terms of the country's foreign involvement and the election campaign temporarily halted Johnson's discussions with Khrushchev by the end of the summer.⁶⁵ What this collection of cartoons achieved was the highlight of how each candidate and their supporters would twist or distort events to fit a specific narrative. The Johnson administration and those who supported its actions portrayed the President's amiable relationship with Khrushchev as a positive relationship for the United States to build. That did not affect his ability to fight communist threats such as Castro, but rather opened more possibilities to economic partnerships and contribute to global ease. The Goldwater campaign and its followers took the exact same events and presented them as an opening for corruption to leak into the American government. They believed that the Johnson administration would be overtaken by communism, and the country would follow. Electing Barry Goldwater would be the only chance the people would have to stop that from happening.

Character

As in any presidential campaign, the policy issues were often not the only aspect of the candidates which the public focused on. A considerable amount of attention was paid to the candidates' personality and personal lives to judge if they possessed presidential qualities. While candidates presented themselves as realistically as possible, they also had to market themselves to appeal or seem electable to a majority of the country. For instance, Johnson was advised by a

⁶⁴ William J. Middendorf, *A Glorious Disaster: Barry Goldwater's Presidential Campaign and the Origins of the Conservative Movement* (New York, NY: Basic Books, 2006), 184.

⁶⁵ "Foreign Relations of the United States, 1964–1968, Volume XIV, Soviet Union."

Hollywood photographer to never be photographed from his right side, so there were a scarce number of pictures during his campaign that were not taken head on or from his left side.⁶⁶

Political cartoons have the ability to both aid and harm a president's character as they have the ability of artistic design that uses exaggeration, irony, analogies, and symbolism to convey the artist's opinion of the candidate's true character.

A cartoon that was quick to criticize Johnson's character was the *New York Times* with its March 8 editorial cartoon titled "Watch out for Lyndon-- he's tricky."⁶⁷ The cartoon showed the president dressed in a traditional magician uniform, complete with a top hat, bowtie, and white gloves. He was shown to move so quickly that he was able to perform five tricks at the same time. One trick that Johnson performed was the recognizable sleight of hand of pulling a rabbit out of a hat, except in the image the rabbit was replaced with the GOP elephant. This implied that Johnson used the Republican Party as a pawn in the tricks he performed to push the legislation he wanted through Congress. This cartoon played on the perception that many held throughout his campaign, and something his opponents would often



⁶⁶ Middendorf, *A Glorious Disaster*.

⁶⁷ Hugh Haynie, "Watch out for Lyndon- he's tricky." Illustration. *New York Times*, March 8, 1964. From The New York Times Archives. <https://www.nytimes.com/> (accessed February 23, 2023).

advertise, that Johnson was a person who had tricks up his sleeve and performed deceptive magic to make him more popular with voters.

The *New York Times* did not hold back their criticism for Goldwater, either, with the cartoon “Can’t ya see? People like me this way!” printed in the same month as Johnson the



Poinier in *The Detroit News*
 “Can’t ya see? People like me this way!”

magician.⁶⁸ The cartoon depicted Goldwater in cowboy attire on top of a bar counter of a crowded establishment firing two guns haphazardly with smoke around him stating that it represented his policy statements. People abandoned their drinks and their belongings to take cover from the bullets, one man crouched around the corner of the bar and questioned why Goldwater was shooting without care. The candidate ignored the scared looks on people’s faces and instead justified his actions

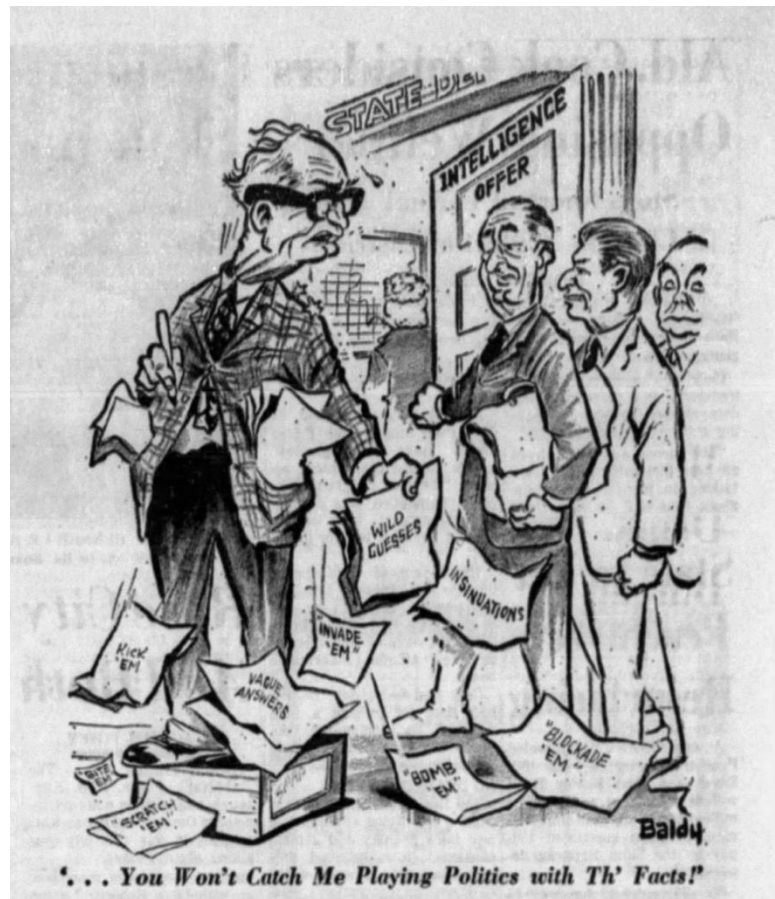
with the statement that people liked him and his actions. During his campaign, and even during his time in the senate, Goldwater gained a reputation for speaking off the cuff or opening up on his policy stances and later coming to regret or change them when he received political backlash. The cartoon highlighted his notorious characteristic of being known for trigger happiness, both in

⁶⁸ Arthur Poinier, “Can’t ya see? People like me this way!” Illustration. *New York Times*, March 29, 1964. From The New York Times Archives. <https://www.nytimes.com/> (accessed March 16, 2023).

his foreign policy and his public statements. Some supporters and historians did not view his candid nature as a negative; John Kessel believed it was a good trait that Goldwater spoke what he believed instead of changing his beliefs to gain votes like Johnson did. Most people, however, did not agree with this sentiment. Even Goldwater's own staff told reporters to write what Goldwater meant instead of what he said because they knew his openness would be his demise.⁶⁹

This same sentiment was still prevalent in newspapers a month later. The *Atlanta Journal Constitution* published Baldy's cartoon "You won't catch me playing politics with th' facts!" on April 25 which not only emphasized Goldwater's trigger happy statements but also displayed that he did not speak rationally.⁷⁰ In the cartoon, Goldwater was giving a soapbox speech where

he wrote the points of his speech while speaking as evident by the blank pieces of paper in his pockets and the pen in his hand. This heavily played into his trigger-happy reputation as the points of his speech are either Baldy's insult to Goldwater's intelligence or aggressive action such as invade, kick, bomb, scratch, etc. This behavior stood in contrast to Johnson in the



⁶⁹ *Mr. Conservative: Goldwater on Goldwater*, directed by Anderson.

⁷⁰ Clifford Baldowski, "...You Won't Catch Me Playing Politics with Th' Facts!" Illustration. *Atlanta Journal Constitution*, April 25, 1964. From the Atlanta Journal Constitution Archives, <https://ajc.newspapers.com/image/384643847/?terms=political%20cartoons&match=1> (accessed July 10, 2023).

background of the drawing who appeared much more put together in both his attire and with his papers carefully held in a suitcase. As Johnson stepped into a door labeled the “Intelligence Offer,” another insult towards Goldwater’s intellect, Johnson appeared to look down on Goldwater and his practice of not using credible facts when speaking.

These cartoons did not just judge the presidential candidates on their personality and character but also on the actions displayed during their campaigns. One action that took the country by storm was when Johnson gave a tour of the White House grounds with his beagle puppies, Him and Her, in tow. The President lifted the dogs by their ears to have them bark for the White House’s guests. This caused newspapers across the country to publish their displeasure with Johnson’s treatment of his pets. The first to publish a



cartoon about the event two days after it occurred was the *Arizona Republic*. On April 30, Manning drew “Don’t let him get you by the ears!”⁷¹ This showed one of Johnson’s beagles running out of the White House to warn the GOP elephant of the man who resided inside. The dog’s ears were drawn with stars and wavy lines around its ears to show the hurt they felt while the elephant has lines around him that showed how fearful he was of the president.

⁷¹ Reg Manning, “Don’t Let Him Get You By The Ears!” Illustration. *Arizona Republic*, April 30, 1964. From the Arizona Republic Archives, <https://www.newspapers.com/newspage/119352796/> (accessed August 13, 2023).

The mixture of Johnson's handling of his animals and the GOP elephant was continued in the *New York Times'* cartoon by Roy Justus that was published on May 3.⁷² Justus's cartoon depicts an eerie looking Johnson with a villainous smile as he found enjoyment in pulling the GOP elephant's ears. The elephant kicked and screamed in the cartoon as he tried to escape from



Justus in *The Minneapolis Star*
 "LBJ really is 'inhumane'!"

the abuse but could not break out of Johnson's grip. As he flailed, the elephant cried "LBJ really is 'inhumane'!"

These cartoons served to convey that the country should not want a man that acted so inhumanely as president. Johnson was aware of how his actions towards the dogs were perceived by people. In a phone call on April 29 between him and Senator Mike Mansfield (Montana-D), the president complained that he pulled the ears for a photoshoot, his actions were taken out of context which led to nationwide protests by dog lovers, and he was not cruel as the people made him out to be.⁷³

The opinion that Goldwater did not know what he was talking about when it came to politics was again touched on by the *Atlanta Journal Constitution* in August. "Eyeball to

⁷² Roy Justus, "LBJ really is 'inhumane'!" Illustration. *New York Times*, May 3, 1964. From The New York Times Archives. <https://www.nytimes.com/> (accessed March 16, 2023).

⁷³ Beschloss, *Taking Charge*, 332.

“Eyeball” done by Baldy showed an attempted conversation between Johnson and Goldwater but the conversation was not able to happen as the men were not able to agree.⁷⁴ The reason the conversation was unable to progress was because Goldwater was drawn with no eyes behind his iconic thick lens glasses, which implied that he was an unreasonable person that was literally unable to see situations eye to eye. The cartoon even played upon this implication and turned it into a joke with the numerous papers Goldwater

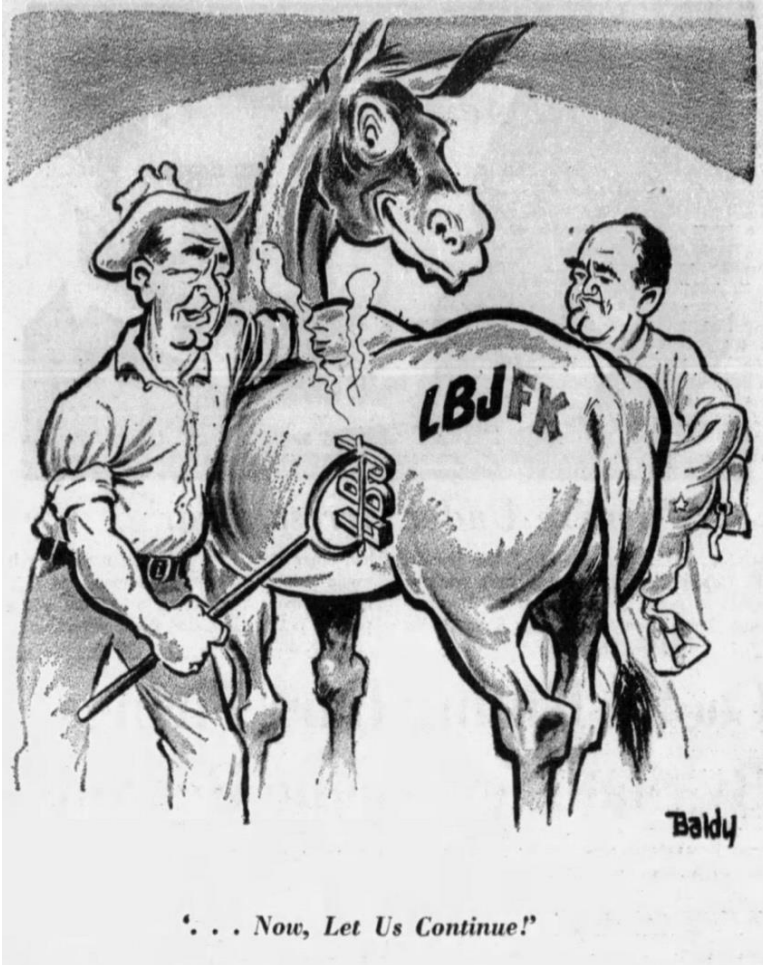


held which had different phrases all having to do with seeing or viewing political situations.

Another cartoon published by Baldy less than ten days later, August 27, was in favor of Johnson’s campaign.⁷⁵ The cartoon depicted Johnson and Vice President Hubert Humphrey around the Democratic donkey with the branding iron in the president’s hands. He branded the donkey over his predecessor’s initials and matched his initials so that the “j” in their names

⁷⁴ Clifford Baldowski, “Eyeball to Eyeball” Illustration. *Atlanta Journal Constitution*, August 18, 1964. From the Atlanta Journal Constitution Archives, <https://ajc.newspapers.com/image/384643847/?terms=political%20cartoons&match=1> (accessed July 13, 2023).

⁷⁵ Clifford Baldowski, “...Now, Let Us Continue!” Illustration. *Atlanta Journal Constitution*, August 27, 1964. From the Atlanta Journal Constitution Archives, <https://ajc.newspapers.com/image/384643847/?terms=political%20cartoons&match=1> (accessed July 17, 2023).



would overlap; it left “LBJ” in bolded letters with a faded “FK” behind it. All parties in the image, including the donkey, looked extremely pleased with the branding and Johnson exclaimed that since the donkey was branded the administration could continue. Baldy did not explicitly show what the men were continuing, but Humphrey held a saddle, which implied that they would ride the donkey. The donkey represented the United States and Johnson was taking the reins from his late predecessor in leading the country and the Democratic Party. The cartoon does aid the

Johnson administration as they released a campaign ad that promoted a similar message. The almost five minute ad started with footage of November 22, 1963, the day of Kennedy’s death, which then transitioned to multiple recorded Johnson speeches and narration where Johnson promised to run the country with Kennedy’s ideas and ideals in his presidency.⁷⁶ This was also corroborated by the number of officials from Kennedy’s administration that Johnson chose to keep after his transition into power, and the amount of legislation that Kennedy began to push through Congress. This was clearly a depiction of support by Baldy as during Kennedy’s time in

⁷⁶ Lyndon Johnson, “Accomplishments,” *The Living Room Candidate* (Museum of the Moving Image, 1964), <http://www.livingroomcandidate.org/commercials/1964/morality#>.

office his approval ratings across all Americans rarely went under 50%, so an association with Kennedy would have a largely positive connotation.⁷⁷

Conclusion

When analyzed, the criticism of both Johnson and Goldwater seem overwhelming; almost eighty percent of the cartoons evaluated in this study portrayed one or both candidates negatively. That said, Johnson was depicted much more positively than his opponent; he was positively portrayed in almost a quarter of the editorial cartoons whereas Goldwater was illustrated in a positive light in less than five percent. This may seem surprising given the sixty-one percent of the population that voted for Johnson, but the trend of the news reporting on stories and people unfavorably has been a common occurrence. Psychological studies have proven that people are more likely to be pessimistic about a person and their actions, specifically a study conducted in 1982 found there was an overall trend of people negatively evaluating other's work.⁷⁸ The same is even more true for political officials as the news media has presented the president or the presidential candidates in an increasingly negative manner. This was only amplified by the political cartoonists' instability in their profession which pushed them into creating more extreme and polarized images. The cartoons held political significance during the campaign and continued to hold a larger historical significance. They were able to capture the political atmosphere of the 1964 election, not only highlighting the issues that electors were most concerned about but also providing a comprehensive scope of political perspectives.

The results of the election were also determined by aspects of the candidates that were touched on in multiple cartoons. Goldwater's extremist views pushed many moderate

⁷⁷ Hazel Erskine, "The Polls: Kennedy as President," *The Public Opinion Quarterly* 28, no. 2 (Summer 1964): 334–42, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/2747000?seq=5>.

⁷⁸ Dylan Matthews, "Why the News Is so Negative - and What We Can Do About It," *Vox*, March 13, 2023, <https://www.vox.com/the-highlight/23596969/bad-news-negativity-bias-media>.

Republicans and Independents to vote for Johnson. He was a polarizing figure for the Republican Party from the beginning. During his nominee acceptance speech at the Republican National Convention, many of the delegates from New York walked out in protest of the party's selection.⁷⁹ Whereas the many critiques made of Johnson for being a beggar for votes, too broad in his political stances, basing his opinions on what would gain him popularity worked in his favor since he not only won the election with sixty-one percent of the popular vote but also got one in five republicans and fifty-five percent of independent voters.⁸⁰

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⁷⁹ Emmett Buell and Lee Sigelman, "The Runaway Races of 1964, 1972, 1984," essay, in *Attack Politics: Negativity in Presidential Campaigns since 1960* (Lawrence, Kansas: University Press of Kansas, 2009), 28.

⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, 30.

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