

2. Evaluate *American Factory* in terms of social justice. What might John Rawls, Amartya Sen, or Martha Nussbaum say about the film?
3. *One Child Nation*, a documentary about China's one-child policy that was reversed several years ago, also provides an in-depth look at some elements of Chinese culture. Contrast what you learned about China in *American Factory* with those of *One Child Nation* (available on Amazon). How are you developing your own version of "the truth" about contemporary Chinese culture?

CASE 10-B

THE *DAILY SHOW*'S ONE-CLIENT LEGAL TEAM

CHAD PAINTER

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Trevor Noah and his *Daily Show* team bought full-page ads on Aug. 27, 2020, in the *New York Times*, *Washington Post*, and *Los Angeles Times* to "promote" their new law firm—Trevor Noah & Associates & Sons Presidential Attorneys. The ads were timed to coincide with Donald Trump's nomination acceptance speech at the Republican National Convention.

The text of the ad reads, "Are you a soon-to-be ex-president? About to lose legal immunity? Has your lawyer gone to jail? Call the very fine people on YOUR side." Noah and his team say they can defend clients against "Corruption," "Mega-corruption," "Emoluments (we know what that is!)," "Shady rich guy tax stuff," "Obstruction of justice (same price for multiple counts!)," "You told people to inject bleach for some reason," and "Mail murder." They also promise to "get you off . . . and you won't even have to pay us \$130,000."

The ad also features the phone number 1-210-WH-CRIME. It is a working number, and callers are prompted to press 1 if they are president, and 2 if they are not president. Pressing 1 prompts the following prerecorded message from Noah:

Hello, Mr. President. I'm Trevor Noah, managing partner of Trevor Noah and Associates and Sons. Have you ever been to Uganda, sir? It's a beautiful country with a strong goat-based economy. And most important, it does not extradite to the United States. At any time on or before January 20th 2021, I can transport you and any members of your family you actually like to Uganda. I can provide the service for, I don't know, \$10 million. Let me know. Oh, and if you made a mistake, and you're

not actually the president, press or say two now. Otherwise, goodbye, Mr. President. (Haysom, 2020)

Pressing 2 prompts a cheery woman saying, “Congratulations on not being the president. Goodbye.”

Trump left office with a looming impeachment trial—his second—as well as a host of legal problems. While Trump was in office, he was protected from criminal liability by a Department of Justice policy that shields presidents from indictment while they are serving as president; however, that protection does not extend to ex-presidents. So, Trump could face federal and/or state charges for inciting the Jan. 6 riot at the US Capitol and for his phone call pressuring Georgia Secretary of State Brad Raffensperger to “find” votes and declare him the winner of that state’s presidential election (Thomson-DeVeaux, 2021). He also could face several potential financial crimes in Manhattan related to tax fraud, his dealings with the Trump Organization, and his alleged hush-money payments to porn star Stormy Daniels and *Playboy* model Karen McDougal (Cuza, 2021).

Micro Issues

1. How is this ad more effective than if the *Daily Show* had aired a segment on Trump’s legal issues? How is it less effective?
2. Why do you think the ad was released to correspond with Trump’s speech at the Republican National Convention? Would it have been more or less effective at other points in the campaign (for example, before the first presidential debate)?
3. Months after this ad appeared, President Trump was impeached a second time. Should Noah consider a repeat?
4. What do you think is the purpose of this ad? Can it pass the TARES test outlined in [chapter 7](#)?

Midrange Issues

1. How should the *Daily Show* balance entertainment and journalism/news? To what extent should a news parody show adhere to conventional journalistic standards?
2. Evaluate the fact claims made in the ad. To what standards of truth should Noah and other mock newscasters be held?
3. To whom does Trevor Noah owe loyalty? How does that answer change if Noah is considered a journalist as opposed to a comedian?

4. Is ridicule ethical? If your answer is yes, are there certain people or groups for whom it might be considered unethical? If your answer is no, does that eliminate all forms of biting, humorous criticism?

Macro Issues

1. In *Amusing Ourselves to Death*, Neil Postman argues that public discourse about politics, news, religion, education, and commerce increasingly is mediated through entertainment programming. Evaluate his argument in regard to *The Daily Show*.
2. What is the role of a political satirist in modern political debate and discussion? How does Noah fulfill (or not fulfill) that role?
3. The *Daily Show* has inspired similar mock news programs in France, Germany, Hungary, Pakistan, Israel, Japan, and Canada. What might a similar ad look like in one of those countries?
4. There is substantial research to suggest that the most significant effect of advertising is to reinforce previously held opinion. Considering this likely impact, evaluate audience response to this ad. Do you think the ad accomplished Noah's goals?
5. Compare this ad with those of the Lincoln Project, focused on Trump's 2020 campaign. Which do you think is the more socially responsible? Effective? In the realm of political persuasion, is it ethical for effectiveness to supersede social responsibility?

CASE 10-C

#OSCARSSOWHITE: REPRESENTATION IN THE CREATIVE PROCESS

LEE WILKINS

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In January 2015, April Reign ended a single tweet with the hashtag #OscarsSoWhite. Reign, at the time managing editor of *Broadway Black*, viewed the Academy Award nominations as essentially erasing people of color from the film industry.

While the viral hashtag began in 2015, there was still a great deal of discussion about the composition of those who vote for the Academy Awards five years later (as of this writing, the Academy is still predominantly a Caucasian-dominated organization), as well as the appropriateness and impact of the movement itself.