MEDIA FRAMING AS BRAND POSITIONING: ANALYSIS OF COVERAGE LINKING PHISH TO THE GRATEFUL DEAD

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ABSTRACT

This dissertation uses mass communication research about framing and positioning to explore media framing as brand positioning and analyze coverage that links the band Phish to the Grateful Dead. Based on content analysis, textual analysis, and interviews, this dissertation explores the framing of Phish—formed in Vermont in 1983 and often compared or connected to the Grateful Dead, a band formed in California in 1965— in a popular mainstream music magazine and beyond, placing particular interest in how this framing intersects with positioning the band vis-à-vis the Grateful Dead.

By exploring framing of a commercially-oriented subject that media coverage regularly constructs in terms of or in relation to another more recognizable subject, this project aims to contribute to mass communication theory and our understanding of media in society. Through comprehension of media about Phish and Phish/Grateful Dead connections, this dissertation studies how, why, and with what result stories are told through such associative coverage.

After reviewing previous works regarding Phish, positioning, and framing, media content is closely examined and discussed. A case study of Phish coverage employed a three-pronged multi-method approach focusing on content (Part A) and context (Part B). Part A1 is a content analysis of all Phish album reviews from *Rolling Stone*. This included 12 album reviews spanning from 1995-2009 and written by eight authors. Findings showed that the majority of reviews connected Phish to the Grateful Dead, that the connections were constructed through various link forms, and that Phish were connected most to the Grateful Dead. Part A2 is a textual analysis of all *Rolling Stone* coverage of Phish. This included coverage from 1992-2010 and 305 items such as magazine covers, articles, and letters to the editor. Findings identified five frames and four subframes used to portray Phish. Part B is a series of interviews involving a

primary group of 19 individuals who have significantly written, edited, and/or published content about Phish; and a secondary group of five individuals who added valuable context for understanding the issues. Findings included discussion of media conventions in general (journalistic) and specific (Phish) terms, and interpretation of the Phish/Grateful Dead link as a powerful, oversimplified reference point.

About Phish, the project found they are an entity that innately defies standard molds and thus makes for an extraordinary and fruitful case study. Their naturally complex nature and paradoxical success makes them a potentially perplexing challenge for people in media to understand and address. Media often use the Grateful Dead motif in Phish coverage as a potent method of information assimilation to reconceive simply Phish's unusual combination of characteristics via something more familiar and accessible.

In terms of the literature, the collection of media content illustrates framing of the band via socially shared and persistent organizing principles that symbolically structure Phish's character (Reese, 2003). The collection of content also illustrates positioning of Phish through portrayals that are often oversimplified and relate new information to familiar knowledge. The combination of literature on framing and positioning offers a productive explanation of media coverage about Phish, since both processes overlap in their tendency to oversimplistically relate X to Y. Thus, this dissertation's findings suggest a new way of thinking about cumulative media framing's ability to result in and serve as brand positioning, which may happen out of a brand's design.

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Dedicated to
Ernest Appel
and
Laura McClain

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

Using a three-pronged multi-method approach to a case study of Phish, this dissertation uses mass communication research about framing and positioning to explore media framing as brand positioning and analyze coverage that links Phish to the Grateful Dead. What might one learn from the study of media coverage about a band like Phish, who are often related to the Grateful Dead and whose career defies the standard template of what a popular, successful rock band is? A great deal. Studying coverage about Phish strengthens our understanding of how people communicate using mass media and what ensues from this.

Examining the content, messages, patterns, and institutional conventions of media coverage offers an effective path to better understanding our social world. This is facilitated by knowledge of prior mass communication studies that focus on media's capability to structure meaning through the way messages are organized, repeated, and propagated. And since humans are inclined to learn by assimilating new data in terms of the familiar, especially instructive is the sort of coverage that aims to convey its messages by linking, relating, connecting, tying, or associating concepts in the process of simply distilling information. This all makes one wonder about how a subject's character is constructed via media when coverage consistently utilizes unsolicited, unsought associations in its characterizations. It also makes one wonder about media's ability to help substantiate and sustain such a connection, plus what the outcomes are. Understanding these issues, among other questions, calls for close investigation into how, why, and with what result stories are told in media by relating a main subject to some other exemplar. This type of investigation may enhance our comprehension of the associations cumulative mass media coverage is capable of engineering through the messages it structures. Implications

discovered from dovetailing the study of coverage with the context of a particular subject helps expand our knowledge of how mass media use associative coverage to reconceive and simplify our complex world. With all that in mind, this chapter provides an overview of the dissertation, introduces the investigated issues, briefly describes how the content is studied, and addresses the theoretical and practical implications.

Dissertation Content

Phish, a band that formed in Vermont in 1983, are often related to the Grateful Dead, a band that formed in the San Francisco Bay Area in 1965. The relationship is often substantiated by a variety of reasons and a following chapter dedicated to an overview on Phish begins to address the background of this connection. In short, to longitudinally study media framing of a rock band, this dissertation precisely examines coverage of Phish that seems to position the band vis-à-vis the Grateful Dead. Such study requires an understanding of prior reports in order to analyze or draw conclusions about the content. Thus, three main areas of previous research are addressed in individual chapters: background about Phish, the topic of brand positioning, and the topic of media framing.

Phish

The chapter about Phish provides background in order to understand the band and their career. It offers details about why Phish are worthy of study, the band's formation, the timeline of their success, how they have been successful, what their shows are like, what their fans are like, the ways in which Phish and the Grateful Dead may be perceived as similar, what Phish sell, and what other major works exist about Phish.

In addition to the limited number of books about Phish, I informally examined a large amount of media coverage to prepare for this dissertation and sufficiently understand the many

facets of Phish portrayals. I found interesting similarities and variations among regional/national and specialized/mainstream views on issues including: Phish's music, their background, their history, the context of their career path, their place in the music industry, and much more. Sources I informally examined included many—and sometimes all—articles about Phish from the *Burlington Free Press*, the band's hometown Vermont newspaper; the *Boston Globe,* since Boston was the first major city where Phish became popular in the late 1980s; the *New York Times,* to explore a perspective that represents a general national news view of the band; *Entertainment Weekly* magazine, which broadly examines media ranging from music to movies to TV to books; *Billboard* magazine, to cull views that are the most industry specific; *Relix* magazine and Jambands.com, linked genre-specific music publications that target Phish's core audience; and *Rolling Stone* magazine, a music publication that became the main focus of the later case study and possibly best represents the band's place in mainstream music journalism.

Positioning

This dissertation explores and applies theory about brand positioning and offers a literature review of the positioning topic. In brief, positioning is the process of "how you differentiate yourself in the mind of the prospect" (Ries & Trout, 2001, p. 3). Emerging in the early-'70s, this area of marketing research has been well-explored theoretically and practically. But, to the best of my knowledge, the positioning approach has yet to be applied to the systematic study of a musical group. Looking at research on positioning helps this project interpret why Phish are often related to the Grateful Dead, since positioning research has concluded that "the mind has no room for what's new and different unless it's related to the old" (Ries & Trout, 1981, p. 37). Positioning research helps explain why a newer "something" is frequently discussed in media in terms of an older "something." Thus, Phish are conceptualized

as a newer version of an older brand, substantiated in the Phish chapter and explained further in the Methods chapter.

Framing

This dissertation also explores and applies theory regarding the topic of media framing, providing a literature review of the topic. To summarize, "frames are *organizing principles* that are socially *shared* and *persistent* over time, that work *symbolically* to meaningfully *structure* the social world" (Reese, 2003, p. 11). It is common and effective for framing research to study media representations of certain individuals or groups in order to interrogate the larger story it tells as a whole (Reese, 2007). By utilizing research on framing, this dissertation aims to explore the ways in which Phish are framed in media via socially shared organizing principles and the symbols used to give meaningful structure to the world of Phish and beyond. Thus, framing research helps explain that a pattern of media coverage on Phish may form a whole that is much more than just the sum of its parts.

Overview of Case Study

After reviewing previous works regarding Phish, positioning, and framing, media content is closely examined and discussed. To research this case study of Phish coverage, I used a three-pronged multi-method approach that is divided into two parts. Part A (consisting of two methods) focuses on content and Part B (using one method) focuses on context: Part A1 is a content analysis of all Phish album reviews from *Rolling Stone*; Part A2 is a textual analysis of all *Rolling Stone* coverage of Phish; Part B a series of interviews with individuals who have significantly written, edited, and published content about Phish. Together, these three methods combine to form a unified case study examining Phish coverage. The procedures, techniques, and rationale for these investigations are detailed further in the Methods chapter.

Discussion of Scholarly (Theoretical) and Social (Practical) Significance

This section offers a summary of the theoretical and practical significance of the dissertation work. While such information is explained further in each of the literature reviews, this overview seeks to underscore the project's significant and value.

Theoretical Benefits

The theoretical benefits of this project are numerous, as the conclusions serve to inform media scholars, inductively amplify our understanding of mass communication, and analyze the role of media in society. One key benefit is examining the underresearched topic of music-related media content. Much research has been conducted about media framing that examines political issues or events but none that I have located examines the topic of music-related coverage, to which large amounts of mass media are dedicated (e.g., biographies, concert previews, or album reviews). In particular, it makes sense to apply framing literature to music-related content because this coverage often includes discussions about people, issues, or activities, which are similarly intrinsic to political coverage. A key difference though is that music-related content, such as news inspired by a recent album or tour, often features commercial implications; so it also makes sense to introduce positioning into the analysis of such content. Looking at media coverage of music-related individuals or groups quickly raises many important framing questions that this project aims to answer. These questions and more are fully addressed in the details of the Methods chapter. The results of studying such music-related media content are beneficial by illustrating the reaches of media framing, thereby adding to our comprehension of the topic.

Second, this dissertation also contributes significantly by applying positioning literature outside the realm of traditional consumer products such as cars, foods, or electronics. No prior

research on positioning, to my knowledge, has addressed a music-related product like a band or an album. Consequently, this dissertation conceptualizes the band Phish as a brand—noting that others (Blackwell & Stephan, 2004) have illustrated how branding lessons can be effectively derived from the world of rock and roll—since the band makes millions by marketing and selling a long list of items branded with the Phish name or logo. It is sensible to apply positioning in this way because in the music industry an excess of products has everyone from musicians to record labels vying for consumer eyeballs and wallets. This challenge is not unlike the problems faced by car, food, or electronics industries. As new media have developed an increasingly competitive and saturated music market, with more and more choices available to consumers, the logic laid out in the Positioning chapter clearly applies to the novel case of a profitable, enterprising rock band. Similar to the merit of applying framing research in this dissertation, the application of positioning may benefit media and marketing scholars interested in learning more about the limits of positioning in order to enhance understanding of the topic.

Third, beyond exploring framing and positioning in relation to novel subject matter, this dissertation ties the media-centric framing approach to the marketing-centric positioning approach to further assess and illustrate the value. Drawing literature from both framing and positioning, this dissertation contributes a unique theoretical perspective, hopefully adding to mass communication research a useful view on the intersection of mass media, marketing, and music. It makes sense to jointly apply framing and positioning literature because both are about the process of conveying messages via media through oversimplifcation and by relating new concepts to familiar ones. Both areas are concerned with "how" processes: framing regards "how" we think about issues via media and positioning regards "how" brands are differentiated via media. The literature of framing and positioning is cooperatively used to explore and explain

media that connects Phish to the Grateful Dead, as the phenomenon is a matter of how we think about coverage of a brand that is oversimplified by relating the new to the old. Further details on the parallels between framing and positioning are addressed at the end of the Framing chapter and through the Conclusion chapter.

Fourth, this dissertation contributes novel primary data in the form of interviews with writers, editors, and publishers. These interviews emphasize the dissertation's methodological and theoretical contributions. In terms of method, the use of interviews advantageously complements the other two content-focused analyses, using background, insight, and context only available from experienced insiders. Lessons here indicate the value of mixed qualitative/quantitative methods in framing and positioning studies. Also, interviewing those who have significantly written/edited/published content about Phish provides useful insight into how a relevant group of content producers interpret the process and results of covering a single subject. Regarding theory, the assembly of context allowed by the interviews surely enriches an understanding of framing and positioning. Through this dissertation's case study about coverage of Phish, our awareness of how media operate is effectively heightened.

Practical Benefits

This dissertation also aims to provide a number of practical social contributions. First, it documents the perspectives available in media: a useful benefit of much framing research. Specifically, this documentation means quantifying and mapping the pattern of Phish/Grateful Dead connections in media. This matters because it reveals implications about how widespread the phenomenon is, which in turn reveals implications about who might be exposed to the content. Conclusions derived about these specific details may be most interesting to Phish- or Grateful Dead-centric fan communities—an audience that totals no small sum when combined—

keen to gain a precise comprehension of the phenomenon in order to parse, validate, or invalidate prior speculation.

Second, this dissertation closely examines the underresearched matter of media characterizations of Phish. For a band that has become very successful, media coverage—rather tendentious at points, as this dissertation shows—has played a compelling role. This project seeks to interrogate the role media played in the characterization of Phish and the social construction of Phish as a supposed new Grateful Dead. From this, the average American media consumer may benefit by gaining an awareness of how and why media commonly use accessible analogies or reference points to characterize topics ranging from music to politics to sports.

Third, interviews with writers, editors, and publishers offer a unique window to media stories, beyond content shaped by word count maxima and page-space margins. This is significant to understand in a media-saturated society where space limitations, shorthand, and oversimplified messages do not always provide audiences the full report. Again, it certainly benefits typical media consumers to understand such workings and strive to be savvy audience members. Additionally, practicing journalists may benefit from the knowledge and experience shared by the interviewees in this portion of the dissertation, which contributes dialogue not just about traditional journalism but also rock criticism. Many participants are very successful writers and highly respected music critics; capturing their opinions about media promises to inform and enlighten.

Finally, this dissertation yields branding lessons in regard to bands. This information could provide important new research for use by brand managers inside and outside the realm of music. The findings from this dissertation offer useful information for various music industry professionals, including record label executives, publicity agents, and musicians. Such

professionals may infer conclusions from the Phish example and apply them to the case of another band. Outside of music, managers may find they can extract a branding lesson about a band and transfer it neatly to any celebrity, actor, or politician. Beyond these eight major theoretical and practical benefits of the dissertation, I hope readers are able to identify additional value.

Conclusion

This chapter offered an introduction to the following dissertation work. This includes a case study of media coverage about the band Phish and uniquely marries theory about the topics of brand positioning and media framing. The chapter also outlined the topics examined, briefly introduced how the content is studied, and addressed the theoretical and practical significance of the research.

Overall, this dissertation assumes that studying mass media helps us better understand our society and that it is valuable to search for patterns in media to reveal the workings of our world. Therefore, this project explores media framing of a commercially-oriented subject—a study of a musical group, rather than political—that coverage regularly constructs in terms of, or in relation to, another more recognizable subject. In the process, this may implicitly or explicitly imbue Subject X with characteristics of Subject Y. Investigating these ideas helps reveal how media coverage, and consequently media framing, may serve to position a topic. Using the case of media about Phish, this dissertation studies how, why, and with what result stories are told through such associative coverage.

Based on content analysis, textual analysis, and interviews with journalists, this dissertation explores the framing process of the band Phish in a popular mainstream music magazine and beyond, placing particular interest in how this framing intersects with positioning

of the band in relation to the Grateful Dead. More precisely, it addresses—but is not limited to—the following questions, which are elaborated on in the Methods chapter: What major frames arise in the overall coverage of the band? How are Phish characterized in a single publication? How is the band characterized in relation to the Grateful Dead in that publication? How frequently are Phish connected to the Grateful Dead in a single publication? How frequently are Phish connected to musicians other than the Grateful Dead in that publication? Why do writers/editors/publishers believe Phish/Grateful Dead media connections exist? What do writers/editors/publishers believe has been the result of Phish/Grateful Dead media connections? To begin exploring such questions, the following chapter introduces Phish as the subject of this dissertation's media content.

CHAPTER TWO

PHISH

Phish have challenged media content producers to chronicle their remarkable rise to success. In the process, many have drawn parallels that link Phish to the Grateful Dead, further challenging writers to generate means for conveying the connection. This dissertation explores how the Phish/Grateful Dead connection is manifested in media. The goal is to use this case to enhance our understanding of mass media, framing, and positioning. This chapter explores Phish in detail and explains basic information about the Grateful Dead necessary to understand Phish/Grateful Dead comparisons. Overall, this chapter addresses why Phish are worth thorough examination, a brief history of the band, what the Phish brand sells, what characterizes the live Phish concert experience and how it may relate to the Grateful Dead, examples of Phish/Grateful Dead media links, prior significant works about Phish, and concludes that this dissertation should fill the research gap by academically investigating media coverage of Phish.

Phish Background

The New Rolling Stone Album Guide (2004) provides brief biographies for the artists whose albums it reviews and rates. It is both a dictionary of bands and an encyclopedia of recordings. Comparing that volume's Grateful Dead biography and its Phish biography representatively introduces the bands and this dissertation's various subtopics. About the Grateful Dead, Kot (2004) wrote:

> The Grateful Dead became such a larger-than-life social phenomenon that it would be easy to overlook their music, or simply to dismiss it as self-indulgent noodling for stoned hippies. But the Dead's music occupies a unique niche; their open-ended approach to songs and sound was unprecedented in rock. Their emphasis on live performance and

> their self-sufficiency—in effect the band became a self-contained music industry—fathered the jamband movement that flourished in the '90s with Phish, the Dave Matthews Band, Blues Traveler, and countless others. All forged lucrative careers built on the Dead's lead: Music mattered more than image, tours counted for more than slickly crafted studio albums, and concerts were improvised in the moment, assuring that no two would ever be alike. (p. 343)

Pages later, Phish are described by Randall (2004) as such:

> Comparisons to the mother of all jam bands, the Grateful Dead, are unavoidable, and in some cases warranted. Like the Dead, Phish had a pronounced fondness for the rustic and drew from a seemingly bottomless well of cover tunes. Like the Dead, Phish was helmed by a guitarist with a casual, conversational lead style who enjoys playing lots of notes. And like the Dead, Phish lacked a singer who's any more than competent. But in its frequent bursts of prog-style musical complexity as well as its taste for goofy humor (this is a band, after all, that incorporated trampolines, vacuum cleaners, and a giant hot dog into its concerts), Phish shows that it was very much its own entity. (p. 635)

Saving deeper analysis for later sections and future chapters, these bios clearly illustrate the way in which Phish are often generally portrayed and specifically depicted in relation to the Grateful Dead. To begin understanding this, it is necessary to address a number of points, starting with why Phish are important to study.

Phish Accolades

Many have made claims that illustrate why Phish are significant enough to deserve serious study. Budnick (2003), for instance, generally summarized Phish's weight by stating,

"Phish has become an estimable influence to a broad swath of its peers and many others peering up at the most celebrated of jambands" (p. 166).

In *Rolling Stone* alone, it has been noted that Phish enjoyed "a career as the hottest cult band in America: an object of apostolic devotion from a young, neohippie congregation small enough to party happily at the fringes of the mainstream music industry but large enough to fill arenas nationwide" (Fricke, 1999, p. 62). Their most-played live song, "You Enjoy Myself" has been ranked 85 on the list of top 100 guitar songs in history (Hiatt, 2008) and the band's guitarist Trey Anastasio is considered 73rd among the top 100 greatest guitarists of all time (Edmonds et al., 2003, p. 49). They have also repeatedly been given majestic titles like "apt heir to the Grateful Dead's legacy as the world's greatest jam band" (Eliscu, 2000, pp. 35, 42), "kings of the Nineties jam-band scene" (O'Donnell, 2008, p. 129), and "jam-band kings in the mid-Nineties" (Fricke, 2009, ¶ 3). Others (Puterbaugh, 1997) claimed, "Phish are probably the ultimate college band" (p. 45) and concluded that "on the concert front, the band has become the left-field success story of the '90s" (p. 44). Echoing this, Hendrickson (1998) proclaimed that "given their sense of community, their ambition and their challenging, generous performances, Phish have become the most important band of the Nineties" (p. 22), a statement that has since reverberated throughout assorted media.

Such titles should come as no surprise, considering Phish feats such as staging the largest North American concert in 1996 with about 70,000 in attendance according to *Pollstar* (as cited in Puterbaugh, 2009, p. 11), or being the sole headliner to a crowd of 80,000 fans at the largest paid concert event in the world on New Year's Eve 1999 to celebrate the new millennium with a show lasting from midnight until dawn ("Phish Band History 1999," n.d.; Puterbaugh, 2009, p.

198). These two events, The Clifford Ball and Big Cypress, respectively, are what one might logically consider the "twin peaks" of Phish's career (p. 199).

In terms of facts and figures, *Billboard* reported that Phish have earned "$175,541,923 in concert grosses, with 5,842,798 tickets sold" according to "Billboard Boxscore between 1989 and 2004" (Waddell, 2008). In addition, the band has "sold 7 million albums in the United States, according to Nielsen SoundScan, 2.2 million of them live sets" (Waddell, 2009). Writing about the close of Phish's management office prior to their temporary 2004 retirement, Waddell (2004) noted that "Phish's final year of touring… [is] capping one of the most remarkable chapters in the history of the concert business," concluding that the band "built a loyal following of fans—known as Phish-heads—that was arguably rivaled in their passion only by the Grateful Dead's legendary Deadheads."

Meanwhile, Gehr (1998) once stressed that what makes them such an interesting case study is that "Phish flourish outside mainstream rock and its so-called alternatives. To call them the most popular cult band in the world would not be an overstatement" (p. 4). Phish uniquely straddle the domains of mass audience popularity and mass media underexposure. With titles and accomplishments such as those listed above, examination of portrayals of Phish in media coverage is certainly worth thorough study.

A Brief History of Phish Members and Managers

The purpose of his chapter is not to present a complete chronological history of the band or their music. As mentioned below, many others have already provided such information with impressive detail. Instead, the purpose here is to assemble basic historical background about Phish, remarking on key events or characteristics of their story in order to better explore relevant media portrayals.

Phish—comprised of Trey Anastasio on guitar and lead vocals; Mike Gordon on bass and vocals; Page McConnell on piano, keyboards, and vocals; and Jon "Fish" Fishman on drums and vocals—formed at the University of Vermont (UVM) in the early '80s and became one of the most successful rock bands ever. Their success story is built upon a rare combination of raw talent, strategic business acumen, and various moments of rock and roll serendipity.

An abbreviated synopsis of Phish's formation helps to place their trajectory and subsequent press coverage in context. Recognized as the first Phish gig, Anastasio, Gordon, Fishman, and brief member Jeff Holdsworth played as Blackwood Convention at a UVM cafeteria on December 2, 1983. In late 1984, they adopted the name Phish, reportedly in homage to Fishman. Through this period in the early-'80s they were also joined by brief member Marc "Daubs" Daubert on percussion and occasional guest Steve Pollack, "The Dude of Life." In May, 1985, nearby Goddard College student Page McConnell joined the band for the first concert collaboration of what would eventually become the four constant Phish members. McConnell was invited to join the band permanently in September that year. In spring of 1986, Holdsworth graduated from UVM and left the band. With the departure of Holdsworth, Phish's current four-member lineup emerged (Mockingbird, 2004, p. 5). Gehr (1998) explained that "Phish had covered several Dead tunes during their first couple of years together but soon dropped them to avoid the onus of being pigeonholed as yet another Dead cover band" (p. 116). From the beginning, the Grateful Dead's influence on Phish was clear in their music, although debatably not much more than any other act.

In the late-'80s, childhood friends John Paluska and Ben "Junta" Hunter were college students in Massachusetts. Upon discovering Phish at a Vermont gig in 1988, a relationship with the band followed and in 1989 the pair formed Dionysian Productions. With the sole purpose of

managing the band, Dionysian helped expand Phish's popularity by booking them more shows outside of Vermont, in new areas like Syracuse, New York City, and Boston (Budnick, 1996, p. 15). Not long after the formation of Dionysian, Hunter left the team. Meanwhile, Paluska set up a Dionysian office in Massachusetts and began to seriously promote and grow the band. While Paluska (as cited in Puterbaugh, 2009) found Phish's uncommon character made booking gigs difficult, this ultimately inspired them to rent their own concert spaces and develop their successful entrepreneurial spirit:

> They were having a hard time because they were so unconventional…. People don't realize these guys were not an easy band to pitch. They were way complicated. This was the era of grunge. In 1989 and 1990, Pearl Jam and Nirvana were breaking on the scene…. We had to make our own breaks. (p. 84)

One such break came on November 22, 1991, when the band signed a record deal with Elektra Records (The Mockingbird Foundation, 2004, p. 6). This relationship lasted until 2004, when the band finished its contract with its 10th studio album "Undermind" and ultimately formed their own JEMP Records (Waddell, 2009). In hindsight, Gordon (as cited in Waddell, 2009) explained Phish's Elektra tenure by saying:

> Elektra was a great label because they always let us do what we wanted creatively; they were great to work with. But there was always someone there who would say "I'm going to be the one to break Phish and sell as many albums as they can sell concert tickets." Over time the catalog did well, but it never happened the way they imagined it could be, where they created this blockbuster hit. Not that we would have minded it, but that was not even our concern or direction.

By the early-‘90s, Phish were touring more and more, consequently drawing larger crowds to sell-out shows, and quickly evolving from a club and theater band to one that drew thousands and made millions. Phish’s popularity skyrocketed and they began headlining and selling out major U.S. arenas and amphitheaters. Meanwhile, “one of Dionysian’s main directives became to preserve sanity, along with Phish’s pristine image as an undercommercialized band that cared about its audience” (Bernstein, Steele, Chasnoff, & Celentano, 1998, p. 18). Similarly, Schuetze (2004) elaborated that “Dionysian has spent much time crafting the public perception of Phish, saying ‘no’ and exerting its own quality control on everything associated with the band: access, images, recordings, merchandise, right on down the line” (p. 69).

On August 9, 1995, Grateful Dead leader Jerry Garcia died of a heart attack, causing his band to dissolve. As this dissertation explores, Garcia’s death led to much discussion about who would fill the void left by the Grateful Dead. In media, attention was often directed to Phish, along with catchy labels about “heirs to the Grateful Dead” or the “next” or “new Grateful Dead,” despite the fact that Phish were already an incredibly successful arena-sized act.

As Phish grew, so did Dionysian. By 1995, Dionysian moved its offices to Burlington, Vermont, where they were ultimately “responsible for everything from tickets by mail to issuing the newsletter” (p. 18). Bernstein et al. (1998) observed that Dionysian Productions was arguably “unlike any major rock act’s management” because “Dionysian has just one client, and is as homegrown as the band itself, while still winning respect throughout the music industry” (p. 18). Paluska and Dionysian became “the unseen force behind Phish’s ascent” and “shepherded Phish to the next level without forgetting what got them there” (p. 18). Other notable members who joined the Phish organization in the early years include Jason Colton, who was once

Paluska's second-in-command, but manages the band today; Kevin Shapiro, the band's archivist and in-house counsel; Amy Skelton, the band's "first phan" and former merchandising manager; Brad Sands, former long-time road manager; along with Shelly Culbertson, Beth Montuori Rowles, Cynthia Brown, and many others. Further, any breakdown of the Phish organization would be incomplete without acknowledging the roles of Chris Kuroda and Paul Languedoc, widely known as "the fifth and sixth Phish(es), without question, for many years" (Puterbaugh, 2009, p. x). Kuroda began working for the band in March 1989 as their lighting designer/operator, the job he continues to perform ("Phish Band History 1989," n.d.). Languedoc, the band's chief live sound engineer and also a luthier, started with the band in October 1986 and continued until 2004 (Mockingbird, 2004, p. 5).

On September 30, 2000, Anastasio officially announced onstage in Las Vegas that Phish would embark on an indefinite hiatus at the end of the current tour, which concluded at California's Shoreline Amphitheater on October 6 and 7 (Mockingbird, 2004, p. 480). With the goal of revitalizing, Phish took their first major break after 17 years of constant touring. "Phish 1.0" came to a halt for a variety of interrelated factors, which included drugs, family issues, side projects, the burden of running an incredibly successful business, and the comedown that followed Phish's extraordinary Big Cypress festival on the eve of the millennium. At this point, according to Puterbaugh (2009) "behind the scenes, music was no longer the shared, all-consuming occupation it had been" (p. 201).

The band returned from hiatus ("Phish 2.0") with a New Year's Eve performance at New York's Madison Square Garden on December 31, 2002. But Gehr (2004) ultimately observed that "not unlike the Dead, Phish had transformed from band into brand, and nobody, least of all Trey, seemed particularly pleased by the reunion" (p. 92). After a few more successful tours,

with management still by Dionysian, Anastasio announced on May 25, 2004 (via Phish.com) that the band would dissolve for good at the end of that summer's tour. Puterbaugh (2009) explained that Phish 2.0 came to an end for various reasons, including "more of the problems that had caused them to declare a hiatus" (p. 207). And so Phish 2.0 culminated at their own Coventry festival in the band's home state of Vermont.

In hindsight, Brad Sands (as cited in Puterbaugh, 2009) explained, "a lot of the pressure of being Phish just got transferred to Trey. We all just started working for Trey. So I don't think he ever really got a break from the whole thing until after the second breakup" (p. 300). Puterbaugh (2009) observed that the "breakup actually turned out to be the *real* hiatus, in terms of addressing unresolved issues of physical health, interpersonal relations, and business arrangements" (p. 244).

On October 1, 2008, Phish announced on their web site that they would be reuniting once again in March 2009 for three nights in Hampton, Virginia. The proper return of "Phish 3.0" has seen the band return to their standing as a successful American touring act, in spite of a weak economy. One notable change in Phish 3.0 is the absence of Dionysian Productions. With Dionysian no longer active, Phish are now handled by Red Light Management, specifically Coran Capshaw, Jason Colton, and Patrick Jordan ("Red Light Management," 2009). Initially managing Anastasio after Phish split, Capshaw is considered "a logical choice… after the disbanding of Phish and dissolution of Dionysian Productions" (Puterbaugh, 2009, p. 249). Capshaw's resume includes work as founder of Red Light Management, longtime Dave Matthews Band manager, co-founder of ATO Records, and founder of entertainment marketing solutions company Musictoday (acquired by concert promoter Live Nation), among other accomplishments in and out of the music industry. Meanwhile, Colton's work managing Phish

through various phases makes him a significant thread of consistency that ties Phish's history with Dionysian to their future with Red Light.

What the Phish Brand Sells

Under the umbrella of Phish, Inc., the group sells an abundance of merchandise. To sell their swag, Phish have established three very innovative and successful entities, all of which emerged neatly out of Phish's independent spirit. The first entity is JEMP Records, a label created by the band in 2005 to function in the release of live concert CDs, DVDs, and digital downloads. In 2009, the band released their first non-archival release and 11th studio album, *Joy*, on JEMP. The second entity is Live Phish Downloads (http://www.livephish.com), which launched in December 2002 ("Phish F.A.Q.," n.d.). Arguably, Live Phish Downloads "set the standard for private label, direct band-to-fan online live music distribution" because "no band had ever before offered every note that they play for download within 48 hours of each performance" (nugs.net, 2009, "Phish"). Brad Serling, whose company nugs.net runs Live Phish with the band, reported that "it's been profitable from day one" (as cited in The Associated Press, 2003). The third entity is Phish Dry Goods (http://drygoods.phish.com), the band's merchandising company that sells countless variations of Phish-branded products, often featuring the cartoon Phish logo designed by Anastasio and Gordon (The Mockingbird Foundation, 2004, p. 879).

Between JEMP, Live Phish Downloads, and Phish Dry Goods, customers can purchase from a library that includes the following: the band's 11 proper studio albums; numerous other studio and live albums, some Phish, some solo works, some side projects; about 50 complete live concert CDs, approximately 150 full concert downloads, and 5 DVDs; countless items of clothing that span from a simple Phish logo T-shirt to shirts that commemorate tours or single

shows, as well as hooded sweatshirts, knit hats and baseball caps, baby onesies, socks, and sweatbands; additional Phish swag ranges from traditional band posters and gigposters commemorating a show to postcards, keychains, shot glasses, a puzzle, and even a Phish Dry Goods gift card so fans can "give the gift of Phish" ("Phish Dry Goods Gift Cards," 2009).

Outside of these examples, the Phish brand has also been expanded through other creative endeavors. For instance, Phish collaborated with Ben & Jerry's to produce in 1997 the popular ice cream "Phish Food." And in 2002 Phish appeared as themselves on an episode of *The Simpsons* (Vitti & Marcantel). Add to all this the profits of the most important Phish merchandise—ticket sales (albeit reasonably priced in comparison to bands playing the same venues)—and the strength of the Phish brand experience becomes crystal clear: buy your ticket for the show; get a hoodie or rain jacket on Dry Goods to wear to the show; go to the show and buy a limited edition poster and shirt; go home and piece together your Phish puzzle after you hang your poster and wait for the show to download.

The Live Phish Concert Experience and Objective Grateful Dead Similarities

To fully understand what makes Phish such a unique band—and social phenomenon—it is important to explain certain features of the typical live Phish concert, since they are primarily a live touring act. Therefore, this section addresses the details of the concert structure, Phish fans and taping, Phish and genre, the improvisational quality of each Phish show, and the lighthearted surprises Phish bring to their audience. It should be noted that this section is thorough, but not comprehensive, leaving the remainder to other works dedicated to chronicling the live Phish experience. Nonetheless, this section offers an overview of key elements one should understand in order to fully grasp media coverage of Phish.

The typical Phish show contains two sets—about 75 minutes each—plus an encore, a model that often draws comparisons to the Grateful Dead's similar framework. Meanwhile, Phish's pre- and post-show venue parking lots resemble the open-market community of the Grateful Dead's; a lively scene of fans and vendors. Phish fans—or "Phishheads" and "phans"—are thought to be some of the most enthusiastic, knowledgeable, devoted, and friendly fans in America. Many travel to see Phish play all over the United States and beyond; they concern themselves with facts and statistics about song histories; spanning all ages, some might be labeled hippies and others preppies, although many are arguably twenty- and thirty-something white males; and together they form a unique and dedicated community that has earned them countless comparisons to the Grateful Dead's Deadhead fan base.

Another important facet of the live Phish concert is audience taping and tape trading. While "taper" may be a misnomer in the age of digital recording, the label nonetheless describes those devoted fans who record, then trade live Phish performances. This practice of recording and trading Phish shows was present from the band's earliest days. A ritual inspired by the Grateful Dead, it has always been encouraged and nurtured by Phish, to the extent that their negotiations with Elektra included the rare condition—at least for the time—that the label allow Phish fans to record and trade the band's live material. Thus, the official Phish taping policy states that audience taping is allowed only for personal and non-commercial use ("Phish Audio Web Guidelines," 2009).

Above all, Phish may be understood best as a rock band, but their music is hardly limited to the rock genre. On this point, Budnick (2003) explained, "Phish's 1992 Elektra debut, *A Picture of Nectar*, has long served as the jamband primer…. Here the band glides from genre to genre with fortitude, heralding an approach that does not necessarily privilege any of the modes"

(pp. 162-163). The manner in which Phish flirt with genre is a quality that makes them difficult to define. Budnick (2003), who popularized the term "jamband," aptly explained that "Phish isn't a bluegrass band, a jazz band, a blues band, or a funk band, although at a given moment it may deliver any of these styles. Instead, Phish is a group that melds and intermingles these forms into its particular flow of music. It is a jamband" (p. 242).

In relation to their jamband title, the most potentially significant quality of Phish's performance style is their spontaneous emphasis on live improvisation, or jamming. This is yet another quality of Phish that draws comparison to the Grateful Dead. According to Puterbaugh (2009) Phish perform "without a net in real time, Phish in concert yields visceral peaks that can't be matched by sound waves emanating from a CD player. In other words, you have to be there to really 'get it'" (p. 16). The spontaneous nature of a show shapes a key promise of the Phish concert experience: that every show is different; no two shows are the same. At any given show, the band might introduce new material, rearrange favorite songs, revive old songs, turn a five minute song into a 30-minute adventure, segue seamlessly from one song into another, put a Phishy twist on a cover song, or tease familiar melodies from one song during another.

Improvisation is not the only source of unpredictability at Phish shows, as the band is infamous for their lighthearted and playful attitude. Phish are well-known for the surprises, musical and otherwise, that they bring to their audience from the stage. Such surprises are often characterized in media as "antics," "gags," "gimmicks," "nonsense," "silly," or "goofy."

Embodying countless forms, the range of surprises one might encounter at a Phish show includes, but is certainly not limited to: the band adopting a musical costume—instead of a physical one—on Halloween when they play another band's album in full (covered bands have included the Beatles, the Who, Talking Heads, the Velvet Underground, the Rolling Stones,

Little Feat); choreographed dances, some synchronized and on trampolines; performing songs from the Gamehendge suite about a fictional land and its characters, some including intricate narration; distributing macaroni-and-cheese boxes to the audience for use as percussion; utilizing a "secret language" of musical cues that instructs the audience, for instance, to all fall down on the ground or shout "doh!" like Homer Simpson; creating spontaneous music by sending into the audience four giant balls, each representing a member of Phish, who would then play music to correspond with their ball's movement ("Big Ball Jam"); swapping instruments; Fishman performing a musical solo by blowing into a vacuum cleaner; trying (unsuccessfully) to break the world record for the most people doing a dance simultaneously; hovering over their audience while inside a giant hot dog (12/31/1994; 12/31/1999), which is now exhibited in the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame and Museum; and in the infrequent event of a mass live broadcast, instructing the concert audience to act in bizarre ways that would confuse unsuspecting radio (12/31/92) or TV (12/31/99) audiences.

Phish/Grateful Dead Connections in Media

In addition to the background provided about Phish, an introductory examination of typical instances of media linking Phish to the Grateful Dead is useful. The following examples help illustrate how the two bands are often connected by different authors, in different media and sources, across time, and through the use of varied links and logic to substantiate some connection.

For instance, A 1991 *Boston Globe* single-sentence Phish show preview said, "The Deadhead-linked Phish open two nights at the Somerville Theater" (Morse, 1991), with the author quickly relating the band to Grateful Dead fans. Another early-'90s article, from the

Burlington Free Press, described Phish through the Grateful Dead-tinted lens by considering and then abandoning too-simple parallels:

> It is easy to characterize Phish as a sort of Grateful Dead for the 1990s. A rabid following and too many songs that resemble the work of that classic band will do that to a group. But Phish is much more than that. This is a band that is as comfortable playing neo-country honky tonk styles, neo-flamenco riffs and nice, speedy climaxes to well-played, sustained jams. (Doran, 1993)

Well-known "Dean of American Rock Critics" Robert Christgau's concise Consumer Guide critiques have included over the years multiple Phish album reviews utilizing Grateful Dead references. Originally appearing in the *Village Voice*, the *Farmhouse* review (Christgau, 2000) stated:

> Tuneful, sturdy, unfaltering, bland, it's the pioneering jam band's bid for the market share located some years ago by Dave Matthews. Enthusiasts may even claim it proves they're better than Dave Matthews, as indeed it does, though why that needed proving I couldn't tell you. Inspirational Verse: "Each betrayal begins with trust/Every man returns to dust." "One man gathers what another man spills" was taken.

This final sentence references a lyric from the Grateful Dead song "Saint Stephen." Christgau's review of Phish's *A Live One* (Christgau, 1995), also originally from the *Village Voice*, said, "Phish isn't a classic two-guitar jamming band like the Allmans or those guys from Marin. It's a keyb-guitar-bass-drums quartet, its music dominated conceptually by the high-cholesterol chords and florid arpeggios of Page McConnell's piano." It is safe to reason that this review implicitly linked the bands through geographic reference to the Grateful Dead's Marin County, CA, roots.

In a sarcastic article called "Jerry's Kids," *Entertainment Weekly*'s Browne (1993) compared Phish's sound to the Grateful Dead's *Terrapin Station* album and Anastasio's guitar work to Jerry Garcia's. The author criticized Phish by using the parodic voice of a ditzy audience member:

> And just about every Phish record, like the new one, RIFT (*Elektra*), sounds like the band practiced playing *Terrapin Station* all the way through and then learned it backward! But that's original, right? They're from Vermont, I know, but their ax man does the best Jerry I've ever heard…. I mean, Phish is even better than that Dead cover band that plays here every Wednesday. (p. 57)

A less harsh but still Phish-culture-mocking, Grateful Dead-linking article called "Phish Collapses Onstage" (*The Onion*, 1996) from news satire publication *The Onion*, led with this sentence:

> The music world was shaken by tragedy Sunday night when members of the popular rock band Phish collapsed on stage after being overcome by the stench of concert-goers during a show at the Red Rocks Amphitheater 20 miles outside Denver.

The article concluded with this sentence, which mirrored the fictitious Phish incident with a corresponding Grateful Dead fable:

> Sunday's Phish collapse marks the most serious odor-related incident at a rock concert since July 1988, when Grateful Dead bassist Phil Lesh fell into a coma after an obese female fan ran on stage and hugged him during a show at Chicago's Soldier Field.

In more sympathetic coverage, a 2004 *Relix* article analogized the challenges of the Phish organization to the Grateful Dead's well-known struggles:

> From 1995 onward, one of Dionysian's most difficult tasks was finding the delicate balance between streamlined and flexible functionality. Paluska wanted to ensure that the organization didn't become a burden on the band, as was the case with the Grateful Dead, and some have claimed became true of Phish. (Schuetze, p. 68)

More recently, the *New York Times* discussed Phish's live genre explorations by using the Grateful Dead context as boundary for description:

> The roots-rock links Phish to the inescapable echoes of the Grateful Dead, not only in the band's breezy two-chord lilts but also in the way Mike Gordon's bass bubbles up into the counterpoint and Jon Fishman's drums spatter snare-drum accents. The other mode, like the dissonant, harmonically wandering salsa of "Foam," connects Phish to jazz and progressive rock, as Page McConnell's keyboards and Mr. Anastasio's guitar pursue each other up and down the chromatic scale. (Pareles, 2009)

When broadcaster Bob Costas (2005) was a guest-host for CNN's *Larry King Live,* he recalled to his interviewee Conan O'Brien a story about Phish that described them via the new-Grateful Dead tag:

> Three years ago, I was scheduled to be on your show and the band Phish was going to be on. And Phish, P-H-I-S-H for the uninitiated, sort of a latter day Grateful Dead in that they're following traipses around the country and it's almost a state of mind rather than just an entertainment experience. There are these Phish heads who hang around waiting for tickets anywhere they are to appear. And they'll camp out on the sidewalks.

During ABC's global coverage of the millennium's eve and arrival, news anchor Peter Jennings (Jennings, 2000; Jennings & Brown, 2000) reported a segment about Phish's epic Big Cypress concert, saying this:

> We're going to go now to the Big Cypress Seminole Indian reservation in Florida. There was—The biggest traffic jam that we know of in the country was caused on what's sometimes called Alligator Alley, which is South Florida's east-to-west highway, and it was jammed today with fans of the Phish [*sic*], going to the Big Seminole [*sic*] Indian reservation to hear a Phish concert. If you don't know Phish, think Grateful Dead, at least in terms of their dedicated followers. And 75,000 people: it must have been the earliest sold out concert of anywhere on this millennium eve celebration, and they sang for us out on that reservation, and as well for their devotedly fervent fans.

Then, after a broadcast of Phish performing their song "Heavy Things" at Big Cypress, Jennings concluded the segment by saying:

> The Phish [*sic*]: four guys from the University of Vermont. Seventeen years ago, they like to say they were playing in a Vermont bar to one person. Here they are now with the kind of devoted fans, everywhere in the country, that have, in their equivalent, probably only those who were so devoted to the Grateful Dead. We'll be back in just a moment.

When Anastasio was interviewed on the PBS TV show *Charlie Rose* about Phish's 2004 breakup, Rose (2004) introduced him with a biographical overview that included this Phish/Grateful Dead link:

> Trey Anastasio is here. He is, as many of you know, a founding member of Phish, a band *Rolling Stone* magazine called "the most important band of the Nineties." They began in 1983 playing pubs in their native Vermont and slowly developed a devoted fan base, much as the Grateful Dead had done a generation before. Without heavy radio play or music videos, the four members of Phish achieved success through constant touring.

Like the Peter Jennings and Charlie Rose Phish bios, and in addition to the above *Rolling Stone* Phish bio, other unofficial biographies of Phish are telling examples beyond traditional news media coverage. For example, StubHub (2011), the eBay-owned online ticket marketplace, designed Phish's bio to correlate their band-fan relationship and live concert experience with the Grateful Dead's:

> Phish Tickets—Following the Grateful Dead
>
> Over the years, one of the things that has kept the band alive is its relationship with its fans. They're renown for respecting them, and vice versa. It's one of the reasons why so many live recordings of Phish shows are available—because this wasn't music made to be listened to at home. Why not get in on the action? Get Phish tickets now!

All Music Guide/AMG—an online database of original artist bios, music release facts, music reviews, etc., which license content to many other entities (About us | AllMusic, 2011)—composed this multi-paragraph Phish bio with an opening passage heavily focused on Phish/Grateful Dead links:

> During the early '90s, Phish emerged as heirs to the Grateful Dead's throne. Although their music was somewhat similar to the Dead's sound -- an eclectic, free-form rock & roll encompassing elements of folk, jazz, country, bluegrass, and pop -- the group adhered more to jazz-derived improvisation than folk tradition. Moreover, they sported a looser, goofier attitude; after all, their drummer regularly played a vacuum during their concerts. However, Phish's main claim as the inheritors to the Dead's legacy was their approach to their musical career. The band didn't concentrate on albums, dedicating themselves instead to live improvisation. Within a few years of their 1988 debut, Phish had become an institution in certain sections of America, particularly college campuses

> and other liberal locales. While their in-concert popularity didn't necessarily translate to huge record sales (their biggest-selling albums usually halted at gold status, with the notable exceptions of Junta and A Live One), Phish's members were still the de facto leaders of the neo-hippie jam band movement. (Erlewine, 2011b)

Per AMG's mission, their particular biography is recycled around the Web on a number of other notable popular sites, including Billboard.com (Erlewine, 2011c), MTV.com (Erlewine, 2011d), Apple's iTunes (All Music Guide, 2009), Ticketmaster.com (Erlewine, 2011f), AOL Music (Erlewine, 2010), Pandora Internet Radio (Erlewine, 2011e), and many more. The AMG bio also reappears on the pages of digital media entertainment company ARTISTdirect.com as the second of two bios, the first of which begins:

> LIKE the Grateful Dead before them, Phish has established an impressive reputation of tireless touring, dazzling improvisation, and innovative rock and roll. And with the demise of the Dead following the death of Jerry Garcia, the Vermont-based quartet is the reigning "jam" band in the land, boasting one of the most devoted followings in all of rock. (ARTISTdirect, 2011)

Prior Significant Works on Phish

Beyond press coverage, prior significant research about Phish also requires explanation. Journalists, fans, and those who identify as both, have produced a number of books in devotion solely to the topic of Phish. Dean Budnick's *The Phishing Manual* (1996) is an excellent detailed exploration of the band's roots, year-by-year growth, musical prowess, song histories, setlists, and more. From an early die-hard Phish fan's intellectual, cultural, and historical perspective, Budnick set the bar high. Notably, the text rarely discusses Phish in terms of the Grateful Dead. Dave Thompson's *Go Phish* (1997) is a collection of information about the story

of Phish, seemingly culled mostly from various articles about the band. Thompson occasionally explored Grateful Dead references throughout the book, alternatively acknowledging them as illogical or referencing the Grateful Dead in superficial passing on topics like lighting, taping, bootlegging, and drugs.

Run Like an Antelope is Sean Gibbons' (2001) tour diary that aimed to illustrate various components of the Phish concert and tour experience. While criticized for portraying parts of the Phish community negatively, this memoir is a unique exploration of Phish tour. In contrast, Jnan Blau's 2007 Ph.D. dissertation about Phish is perhaps the only other extensive doctoral project about the band at this time—in addition to a handful of M.A. theses focused mostly on Phish fan culture. Within, Blau thoroughly researched the Phish phenomenon with an emphasis on improvisation from a perspective related to performance and popular music studies. Along the way, he intermittently noted many sociological connections between the Phish and Grateful Dead scenes.

The Pharmer's Almanac (Bernstein et al., 1998; Cassels, Northrop, Dyer, Nicholson, & Del Campo, 2000), put together by a group of fans and reissued multiple times with contemporary updates, is a tremendous fan-compiled tome. It described band history, setlists, song overviews, show reviews, band bios, fan stories, show statistics, and more. Similarly, *The Phish Companion* (2004), executive edited by Ellis Godard and compiled by The Mockingbird Foundation—a non-profit organization founded in 1997 by Phish fans who donate their proceeds to music education for children— is as impressive and comprehensive as it gets; a "Rosetta Stone" (Budnick, 2003, p. 164) for Phish fans. It explored the band history and chronology, song histories, setlists (with informative notes), show reviews, notable Phish events, interviews with Phish associates, venue details, and more. Both *The Almanac* and *The Companion* briefly

addressed the Grateful Dead in various passing references typically about Phish songs or the Phish fan community.

Richard Gehr's *The Phish Book* (1998), co-authored with the band, is the only official book about Phish. It was based on a compilation of interviews Gehr did with all band members, with the help of the Phish organization, and during his time with them throughout 1997. Tied together by Gehr's expert analysis of the band's journey to that point, the book noted—some brief, others extensive—influences (on the band's sound, songwriting, persona) ranging from Frank Zappa to Miles Davis, James Brown to Carlos Santana, Pat Metheny to Jimi Hendrix, Jimmy Page to Jerry Garcia. Overall, it stands as an amazing insight into Phish's timeline of success and views on performance. It is, in itself, an essential part of the Phish story.

Phish: The Biography, by Parke Puterbaugh (2009), is a capstone to the aforementioned works, analyzing the band's trajectory by career phases. Not an exclusively musical analysis, the author effectively addressed the band's role, management's role, and audience's role in the story of Phish. Puterbaugh did not shy away from occasionally, yet rationally, exploring connections between Phish and the Grateful Dead; he even interviewed distinguished Grateful Dead academic Rebecca Adams about Phishheads and Deadheads. Additionally, Puterbaugh emphasized how Phish achieved considerable success despite the general lack of interest from mainstream media. Pulling from research and interviews with the band that he began in 1995, Puterbaugh achieved the task of clearly conveying the biographical essence of Phish.

Conclusion

This chapter addressed a number of points that are intrinsic to understanding media coverage of Phish. With this overview of the band in mind, this dissertation explores how Phish are portrayed in media, with particular attention to Grateful Dead references. First, it was

established that Phish are worthy of study because of the success and accolades they have achieved from notable sources. However, despite such accolades, it is worth noting that Phish are not always portrayed with such goodwill. Phish's success may be defined primarily as a live touring act that has seen assorted media treat them with varying levels of interest and seriousness. Second, a brief history of the band illustrated the timeline of Phish's career and who has helped shape Phish's success. Third, an overview about the Phish brand outlined the main entities utilized in the commercialization of Phish-related merchandise and what merchandise is sold. Fourth, a description was offered about what characterizes the live Phish concert experience and how it may relate to the Grateful Dead. This included details about concert structure, fans and taping, genre, improvisation, and surprises. Fifth, examples of Phish/Grateful Dead media links were reviewed to establish an overview of this phenomenon. Finally, prior significant works about Phish were explored to understand what has and has not been addressed.

Considering the most notable previous works on Phish, holes in the research remain unexplored. This dissertation focuses on three such gaps, intending to fill them by offering the first—to my knowledge—thorough and rigorous academic analysis of mass media coverage about Phish. First, the research reveals a need for further academic research on the Phish topic. Second, brief attention has been paid to the role of media coverage in Phish's career. This is ironic because media coverage has played such an interesting role in the story of their success, as Phish are commonly regarded as successful without extensive support from mainstream media. Third, Phish's success merits research that looks beyond the Phish band and closer at Phish as a brand, as many have observed Phish and its management have "worked hard to protect the brand from dilution" (Schuetze, 2004, p. 69).

CHAPTER THREE

POSITIONING

A good scientist knows when to use a telescope and when to use a microscope. Depending on the context, one chooses the right tool. Because we live in a society saturated with marketing communications, ironically, the right tool for breaking through the clutter is, in fact, a communication technique: positioning, or differentiating one brand vis-à-vis others. The positioning approach to marketing comes in response to persistent increase of competing brands and communication clutter. Since there is no reason to expect a decrease in clutter any time soon, understanding positioning is as useful now as it ever has been. Thus, one might argue that an astute modern marketer understands how to position a telescope by differentiating it from the right microscope.

As a matter of study, positioning is topical and one that deals with worthy concerns. Much has been written about positioning as it relates to the study of marketing (Anderson & Shugan, 1991; Assael, 1971; Blankson & Kalafatis, 2004, 2007; Blankson, Kalafatis, Cheng, & Hadjicharalambous, 2008; Crask & Laskey, 1990; DeSarbo, Grewal, & Scott, 2008; Dillon, Domzal, & Madden, 1986; Hooley, Sanders, & Piercy, 1998; Houston & Hanieski, 1976; Jaffe, 1991; Kotler, 2003; Pechmann & Ratneshwar, 1991; Pham & Muthukrishnan, 2002; Prince, 1990; Ries & Trout, 1981, 2001; Sujan & Bettman, 1989; Trout & Ries, 1972; Trout & Rivkin, 1996; Wilkes, 1977; Winer & Moore, 1989). Within this body of work, prior research is "convinced of the positive effect of positioning on firm performance" (Blankson et al., 2008, p. 108).

That is to say, of the many studies the clear consensus is that understanding and applying positioning strategy is an essential aspect of modern marketing. In fact, Prince (1990) stated that

studies on positioning "are among the most powerful and important activities in marketing research" (p. 25) because they illustrate how consumers compare brands within a category and describe brand positions as perceived by the consumer. The managerial and theoretical implications of these issues are countless. Since they take into account a variety of elements, comprehensive positioning studies can provide useful information about the role of marketers, media used to communicate marketing messages, and the audiences who receive those messages.

In terms of scope, this chapter mainly seeks to contribute a comprehensive overview from a general sociopsychological perspective. This includes a close look at the topic's definitions, themes, applications, and context in marketing. Throughout this process, the explanation of marketing offered by Ries and Ries (2002a) is accepted. They claimed that marketing should be a brand's "ultimate objective" (p. x), utilizing components such as advertising, PR, and various other forms of promotion to "[build] a brand in the mind of the prospect" (p. x). Furthermore, this dissertation accepts that traditional discussions of a brand in terms of positioning are limited to common categories such as foods, cars, electronics, service-related Internet sites, and occasionally celebrities or politicians. However, Ries and Trout (1981) explained that positioning starts with "a piece of merchandise, a service, a company, an institution, or even a person" (p. 2). Therefore, positioning can apply to many types of brands outside the scope of conventional discussion. Ultimately, this dissertation assumes that the knowledge gleaned from examining the topic may be applied to the unique realm of studying a musical band as a brand.

With the above factors in mind, this chapter aims to accomplish a number of objectives through an examination of the positioning topic. The literature reviewed is mostly concerned with the body of work offered by Al Ries and Jack Trout, as they are credited as the developers of positioning (Crain, 1994). It is therefore essential to understand every detail that the foremost

experts on the topic have presented throughout their careers. In a sense, the chapter offers a useful primer on the Ries and Trout marketing philosophy, which is strictly from a managerial standpoint. All of this information is organized by themes that best illustrate the relevant issues. These themes include examination of the following points: background and history on the development of the topic, interpretations of how the topic may be defined or classified, the relationship between communication clutter and positioning, the role of differentiation in positioning, the importance of relating new information to prior knowledge in positioning, and the value of oversimplified messages to positioning. The chapter concludes with a summary and discussion of relevant literature, as well as some thoughts on what is missing and what should come next.

The Positioning Topic and the Ries and Trout Philosophy

This chapter takes a close look at the topic of positioning. The purpose here is to provide a clear understanding of the most relevant themes. This is achieved primarily by considering the entire body of work that exists from the topic's developers, Ries and Trout.

Background and History

Al Ries has authored or co-authored a number of best-selling books during his career as a marketing strategist and consultant (Ries, 2005; Ries & Ries, 2002a, 2002b, 2004, 2009; Ries & Trout, 1981, 1986, 1989, 1991, 1993, 2001). In 1963 he formed Ries Cappiello Colwell in New York, which later transformed into Trout & Ries to focus less on advertising and more on marketing strategy. Ultimately parting with Trout, he formed Ries & Ries in 1994 with his daughter Laura Ries and is now based in Atlanta, Georgia. Today, he continues to explore and analyze products and markets in his regular *Advertising Age* column, with great consideration to the same principles developed in the original *Positioning* text (*Ries & Ries*, 2008a, 2008b).

Jack Trout is widely considered responsible for some of the most novel and influential marketing ideas of the last several decades, 26 years of which he worked closely with Al Ries. He has authored or co-authored numerous best-selling books and industry favorites (Ries & Trout, 1981, 1986, 1989, 1991, 1993, 2001; Trout, 2004; Trout & Rivkin, 1996, 1999, 2000, 2010). He currently writes a regular business column for *Forbes* and is president of the Connecticut-based marketing firm Trout & Partners, where he oversees an international network of offices across 13 countries. He continues to employ and refine the strategies about which he has spent his career writing (*Jack Trout*, n.d.).

According to Ries and Trout (1981), most people attribute the significant birth of the positioning approach to a series of articles the pair wrote for *Advertising Age* in the 1970s. Entitled "The Positioning Era," this series of articles ran on April 24, May 1, and May 8 of 1972. Ultimately, the three articles were combined into Ries and Trout's now-infamous "little orange booklet" (p. 3). This booklet, titled "The Positioning Era Cometh" (Trout & Ries, 1972) packaged the inventive principles into a brief but comprehensive introduction to the themes that would eventually inspire their landmark 1981 text *Positioning: The Battle for Your Mind.*

Long before their formal series on positioning for *Advertising Age*, however, Ries and Trout's ideas on positioning were clearly formulating in response to the events they witnessed in the marketplace. In 1969, they wrote an article called "Positioning is a Game People Play in Today's Me-Too Marketplace" for *Industrial Marketing* magazine (Ries & Trout, 1981). This article marks their claim that it "was the first time anyone had used the word 'positioning' to describe the process of coping with the mental position that a larger, more established competitor occupies" (p. 45).

The *Industrial Marketing* article predicted that a computer company competing head-on with industry market leader IBM would mean "no hope to make progress" (Ries & Trout, 1981, p. 45). Notably, the article suggested various alternative methods for competing with a market leader, but their rules of positioning warned against a head-on attack. Two hundred and fifty million dollars later, RCA learned the lesson that Ries and Trout had predicted. In traditional Ries and Trout I-told-you-so fashion, the pair wrote a follow-up to their 1969 analysis called "Positioning Revisited: Why Didn't GE and RCA Listen?" that was published in a 1971 issue of *Industrial Marketing* (Ries & Trout, 1981).

Roughly a decade later, Ries and Trout published *Positioning: The Battle for Your Mind* (1981), which Trout (2004) himself called "the most influential advertising book ever written" (p. 145). Fully developing their ideas on positioning, this collection of dos and don'ts and case studies detailed what many might consider the bible on marketing strategy. Not surprisingly, the book's logic and content remain insightful as it continues to influence widely today.

To put the basics of positioning into context, observation of advertising in the past is instructive. In the late 1800s and early 1900s, prior to the significant overcrowding in the market we know today, advertising copy tended to be more informative than creative or brief. Such informational advertisements are perhaps best exemplified by Victorian-era British, French, and American ads that contain as much copy as a front-page news story might have words (Heller & Fili, 1999). Typical ads from this information era ranged from furniture to clothing to medicine. Nonetheless, what they had in common was emphasis on a large body of informative text.

By the 1950s, when competition was relatively low compared to today's market, advertising was in a product-oriented era, where product features and consumer benefits were the primary foci (Ries & Trout, 1981). This era is perhaps best characterized by the Unique Selling

Proposition (U.S.P.) developed by Rosser Reeves (1961) in the early 1940s. In his explication of the U.S.P. philosophy, Reeves suggested three key points. First, an ad must propose to its reader that if you "buy this product… you will get this specific benefit" (p. 47). Second, the proposition must be unique, meaning that the competition either cannot or does not offer the same. Finally, Reeves suggested that the proposition "must be so strong that it can move the mass millions" (p. 48). In terms of positioning, these three components of the U.S.P. are not necessarily invalidated; they are merely interpreted from an inverted perspective. That is to say, instead of focusing on the "reality of the product" (Ries & Trout, 1981, p. 9), with positioning the emphasis is placed on "perceptions of the prospect" (p. 9) in relation to the product.

As Ries and Trout (1981) pointed out in *Positioning,* "the next phase was the image era" (p. 28). Characterized by David Ogilvy's popularization of the brand image concept and his distinct perspectives on long-term consistency, brand imaging illustrated that creating a certain personality for a brand would make or break its success (Ogilvy, 1985). The plan to develop a brand image, which may be thought of as a convergence of "its name, its packaging, its price, the style of its advertising, and, above all, the nature of the product" (p. 14), requires the advertiser to consider every single advertisement as a contribution to the overall brand image itself. For instance, Ogilvy's famously successful Schweppes campaign used and reused the mysterious and sophisticated image of a bearded Commander Whitehead, head of Schweppes, for 18 years (Ogilvy, 1985).

These three antecedent eras had a direct impact on what Ries and Trout (1981) termed "the positioning era" (p. 28). Unlike previous eras, with positioning invention and discovery are not considered keys to success. In fact, they may not even be necessary. This is because in the positioning era, strategy is the key to success. Through decisive strategy, the goal is to cut

through the clutter of competing brand messages and differentiate the brand, typically by relating new information to prior knowledge, using carefully selected tactics.

What is Positioning?

Outlining the chief components and themes is helpful in understanding positioning. According to Ries and Trout (1981), "the first step in any positioning program is to look inside the mind of the prospect" (p. 179). This is because solutions to positioning problems are typically located through focus on the prospect's mind, not just focus on product features. Therefore, the process of positioning requires the marketer to carefully select narrow target audiences and "position the product in the mind of the prospect" (p. 3).

In determining information to which the prospect will most likely respond, Ries and Trout (1981) explained that the mind generally "accepts only that which matches prior knowledge and experience" (p. 6). By this, the authors noted that positioning requires new information to be tied to existing information in order to increase message efficacy and cut through competing clutter. This process does not necessarily need to be complex, and is likely to be most effective when communication messages are extremely simple. In fact, "most positioning programs are nothing more or less than a search for the obvious" (pp. 179-180), or that which is most likely to resonate with the right segment. Therefore, Ries and Trout concluded that a key tactic in the positioning process is "to retie the connections that already exist" (p. 5).

In attempting to define the topic of positioning in one sentence, Ries and Trout (2001) explained that it means "how you differentiate yourself in the mind of the prospect" (p. 3). In this concise definition, "how" underscores the need for tactics and strategy. "Differentiation" stresses the need to acknowledge competing brands and messages, and yet to utilize prior

audience knowledge in the process. And "the mind of the prospect" clearly reflects the emphasis that the positioning approach places on consumer perceptions. Others have generally agreed that positioning is "a promotional strategy which attempts to place a brand along one or a number of dimensions relative to other brands in the same generic class" (Houston & Hanieski, 1976, p. 38). The definition set forth by Blankson et al. (2008) more specifically declared that "positioning is conceptualized as a complex multidimensional construct that attempts to positively adjust the tangible characteristics of the offer and the intangible perceptions of the offering in the marketplace" (Blankson et al., 2008, p. 107). Overall, this dissertation adopts these three definitions, sufficiently informed by much prior research on the topic, to serve as interrelated, complementary explanations of positioning.

Finally, it is important to establish how positioning is classified for the purpose of this dissertation. Ries and Trout (1981) considered positioning "a new approach to advertising and marketing" (p. 6) that was needed to combat the "assault on the mind" (p. 11) posed by an overcommunicated society. Because the topic of positioning is greatly concerned with strategy and planning, this dissertation adopts the view that positioning is an *approach* to the practice of marketing.

Meanwhile, others have generally discussed positioning as a concept (Blankson & Kalafatis, 2007; DeSarbo, Grewal, & Scott, 2008). Some have then detailed that "the concept of positioning is a higher order construct consisting of multiple interconnected dimensions… that are mutually inclusive and complement each other" (Blankson et al., 2008, p. 108). With such a characterization in mind, this dissertation adopts the suggestion that positioning is a *concept* commonly discussed in the context of marketing.

As a final point, Ries (2004) has explained that positioning is "a body of work on how the mind works in the process of communication" (p. 13). Regarding this body of work, Ries (as cited in Gregorksy, 2006) has also expressed how important it is to understand that positioning is quite simply "a way of looking at things" ("Start with the Mind of the Prospect – and Then?" ¶ 4) in the process of communicating with consumers. Therefore, this dissertation adopts the suggestion that positioning is a *process*, as it encompasses a collection of actions, and a *perspective* that has been frequently employed in a particular body of work commonly concerned with marketing communications and audience perceptions. For the purpose of this dissertation, the topic of positioning is comprehensively considered an *approach*, a *concept*, a *process*, and a *perspective*.

At this point, it is also valuable to address the distinction between marketing tactics and strategy as they relate to the positioning process. In *Bottom-Up Marketing*, Ries and Trout (1989) argued that a brand should not begin by "looking for tactics that fit their predetermined strategy" (p. 15). Instead, traditional strategy-dictates-tactics procedure should be reversed so that a brand first finds the tactics that work, then builds the tactic into the right strategy (Ries & Trout, 1986, 1989). This argument is based on the notion that a tactic is "a competitive mental angle" (Ries & Trout, 1989. p. 9) that should be turned into strategy. A tactic is a singular idea that has "an element of differentness" (p. 9) and takes into account the battle for mindshare and can be leveraged in the process of achieving a goal. Likewise, a strategy is more than just a goal; it is "a coherent marketing direction" (Ries & Trout, 1989, p. 11; Trout & Rivkin, 1999, p. 124). It has many elements and should be focused, comprehensive, and consistent with consideration to the corresponding tactic. The main purpose of devising the best strategy is "to keep the competition from adversely affecting your tactics" (Ries & Trout, 1989, p. 11).

In *The New Positioning: The Latest on the World's #1 Business Strategy*, Trout and Rivkin (1996) contended that a strategy will succeed or fail depending on how well one understands "five statements about the most important mental elements in the positioning process" (p. 8). These elements include the following: Minds hate confusion, so confusing concepts should be avoided and simple messages should be embraced; Minds are insecure and concerned with perceived risk, in that people tend to buy emotionally and not rationally; Minds don't change, and thus it is more effective to draw prospects in with what they already know or buy than try to change preexisting attitudes; Minds can lose focus, so poorly chosen line extensions of a brand name should be avoided because they will blur the focus of a strong and established position in the mind of the prospect; Minds are limited, in that they can only hold so much information and they only accept new information that matches its current state. This final statement effectively takes into consideration the number of commercial messages that people constantly encounter.

Overcommunication

Ries and Trout's (1981) fundamental argument for the need of the positioning approach to marketing is based on the steady increase in the volume of communication to which people are regularly exposed. This environment, termed by Ries and Trout as "the overcommunicated society" (p. 6), is so overly saturated with information that the quantity of communication itself becomes the challenge to effectively communicating. Citing newspapers, radio, television, and films as examples, Ries and Trout claimed that the mind is assaulted with more information than it could ever possibly retain. To this end, marketers must consider the best way to reach consumers, and the authors proposed positioning.

Since the need for the positioning perspective was originally elucidated, the communication jungle has grown even more wild and crowded. In New York, Times Square alone is a $69 million-per-year market where precious inches of property and space are exploited to extremes in the competition for eyeballs (Klaassen, 2005). While the exact number of advertisements people are exposed to on a daily basis is difficult to agree upon– it may range from 254 to 5,000 (Creamer, 2007, p. 1) depending on how "advertisement" is defined and how precisely the count is measured– it is certain and clear that day in and day out Americans are bombarded with many communication messages. And while consensus on clutter measurement may be uncertain, marketers and consumers are likely to agree that the average exposure is too high and "the industry's not doing anything to reduce its own overproduction" (p. 1).

In recent years, globalization has continued to increase commercial competition, due in large part to various significant technological, economic, social, and political developments (Friedman, 2005). Along with the rise of competition has come more inventive (and occasionally intrusive) forms of marketing communication. People are now commonly exposed to ads integrated into television and film content, found on the Internet, embedded in video games, attached to shopping carts, placed in the back of taxis, and even fixed above public urinals. It is clear that clutter continues to lead to more clutter (Tan, 2007).

Thus, employing the logic of positioning makes sense now more than ever. Since there is no reason to expect that clutter will soon decrease, it is a sound argument that communicating in an overcommunicated society requires the implementation of a corresponding marketing perspective. With this in mind, Ries and Trout (1981) developed the positioning approach and insisted that "to cut through the transmission traffic jam, you must use Madison Avenue techniques" (p. 16).

Differentiation

In their text *Differentiate or Die*, Trout and Rivkin (2000) clearly stressed the importance of differentiation techniques that brands should use. They suggested such techniques are essential to thrive in a highly competitive marketplace that offers prospects such an abundance of choices. The authors proposed that these practices are critical if a brand wishes to avoid getting lost in the clutter of an overcommunicated society.

The four key steps to differentiation are as follows: find a logical and strategic difference "then use it to set up a benefit for your customer" (p. 68); create a differentiating message that makes good sense in the context of the relevant category; make the differentiating idea real by demonstrating the necessary credentials to support it; and convey the difference to prospects by utilizing "every aspect of your communications" (p. 69). Furthermore, attributes such as quality, creativity, price, and breadth of line are considered poor ideas for a differentiation strategy. In contrast, the authors proposed the following as effective paths to differentiating ideas: being first into the prospect's mind with a new idea, owning a significant product attribute with focus, forming a leadership position or owning a category (the most powerful differentiating idea), highlighting a brand's heritage, specializing in a particular product or market, emphasizing significant others who prefer the product, stressing how a product is made, and being the hottest or latest in some significant way.

Hooking a Brand to What's Already There

Commenting on differentiation and how overcommunication presents great challenges to marketers aiming to ensure that prospects receive and process the new information sent to them, Ries and Trout (1981) claimed that "the mind has no room for what's new and different unless it's related to the old" (p. 37). This view suggests that it can be highly effective to penetrate the

prospect's mind by retying the connections that already exist and determine the best way to "[hook] your product, service or concept to what's already there" (p. 220).

Countless contemporary ads offer vivid evidence of this approach. Intel Centrino ads invite prospects to imagine the product is "like a double shot of espresso for your computer." Recent Vitamin Shampoo ads asks us to "think of it as an energy drink for your hair." Hershey's Special Dark Chocolate ads say that the product contains "as much antioxidants as green tea." Depending on what is being positioned, the relating of one idea to another is achieved through various tactics. For instance, some brands attempt to make meaningful insinuations or purposeful comparisons about alternate concepts or brands, while others employ a more direct repositioning strategy.

Elsewhere, to relate new information to prior knowledge, some brands may utilize a technique that tells the prospect what the offering is *not*, in order to convey what the offering is. DiGiorno informs the prospect that "It's not delivery. It's DiGiorno" implying that their frozen food is just as good as the delivery alternative. Miller Lite ads tell us that the beer has "great taste that's never watered down." Dyson vacuums declare that "Others clog. Ours doesn't" to stress the benefit of their brand compared to everyone else in the category. And on television, HBO says "It's not TV. It's HBO," FX says "There is no box," and truTV declares its content is "Not reality. Actuality." All these examples relate new concepts to familiar ones in order to "position" the brand in the consumer's mind.

Many modern fast food examples also typify this positioning technique of relating new information to relevant prior knowledge. Taco Bell's "Think outside the bun" slogan encourages the prospect to think of the brand on the same level as popular burger-type fast food. Wendy's tells their prospects that "It's waaaay better than fast food. It's Wendy's" to differentiate itself

from the negative perceptions that the term "fast food" may carry. Meanwhile, Subway calls itself "Faster food" to similarly set itself apart, yet imply that its function is still a familiar and popular one.

Attempts to relate new information to prior knowledge are often, but not only or always, used for the purpose of "repositioning" (Ries & Trout, 1981, p. 77). This concept was developed by Ries and Trout to explain the practice of repositioning the rival positions held by competitors, thereby creating a hole for the repositioner to fill. In contemporary marketing, repositioning is exemplified clearly by a Campbell's campaign that declares Progresso soup is "Made with MSG," while Campbell's is "Made with TLC" and contains "Real ingredients. Real taste." The goal is to move an old idea out in order to move the new idea in. This is why Ries and Ries (2004) wrote that "the best way to put a new category into the mind is to use the new category to attack an old category" (p. 259). In remarking on the merit of comparative ads, Ries and Trout (1981) wrote that most would be much more effective if they actually tried to reposition the competition instead of simply claiming that Brand X is better than Brand Y. Exploiting the right details of the competition's weaknesses can effectively alter the prospect's perceptions of their position and strengthen perceptions of the other brand's position.

Trout and Rivkin (1999) claimed that "the simplest way to invent a new product is to adapt an existing idea" (p. 133). This is why Levitt (2001) celebrated "innovative imitation" (p. 148) as an incredibly useful method of brand growth. When considering how to reference or adapt an existing idea to introduce a new one, a variety of approaches could be considered. Purposefully selected components of the original idea can be substituted with new ones, combined with new ones, adapted slightly, magnified or minimized, put to alternative uses, eliminated, or reversed or rearranged (Trout & Rivkin, 1999, pp. 135-136). The implication is

that standing on the shoulders of giants allows new ideas to be generated more easily with inspiration than innovation. Thus, it makes sense that the "the basic approach of positioning is not to create something new and different. But to manipulate what's already up there in the mind" (Ries & Trout, 1981, p. 5). Messages like these that relate new information to prior knowledge must not necessarily be complicated. In fact, it is argued that they should be incredibly simple.

Oversimplification

Considering the incomprehensible amount of clutter people face each day, any approach in combating overcommunication must also consider what types of messages are most likely to cut through. In developing their approach, Ries and Trout (1981) claimed the best solution to battling overcommunication is utilizing "the oversimplified message" (p. 8) as part of the positioning process. But what are some of the most valuable attributes of an oversimplified marketing message? According to Trout and Rivkin (1999), to name a few, they include: keeping ideas short, utilizing simple and familiar words over complex ones, avoiding unnecessary words, emphasizing action verbs, using terms that prospects can picture, and tying new ideas to the prospect's prior experience and knowledge.

In addressing the value of an oversimplified message, with a focus mostly on brand-building from a managerial view, Trout and Rivkin (1999) claimed that oversimplifying a complex issue makes it easier for people to make decisions without excessive thought. In other words, "big ideas almost always come in small words" (p. 22). Many modern examples effectively illustrate the use of an oversimplified message to help simplify complex ideas and position the brand. In selling cars, computers, and televisions, for instance, it is common for a technologically complex product to be reduced to a very simple positioning message. The safe

car, the convenient computer, and the realistic-picture TV are common oversimplified messages used to position various products. Thus, the oversimplified message plays a valuable role in the process of getting the customer to know the brand (Trout & Rivkin, 1999).

Ries and Trout (1993) claimed that "the most powerful concept in marketing is owning a word in the prospect's mind" (p. 26). The "law of focus," as it is called, states that to be successful a brand should plan to own a word in the mind of the prospect in order to become very successful. They explained that to own a strong position in the mind means "simply this: The brand name becomes a surrogate or substitute for the generic name" (Ries & Trout, 1981, p. 129). The word need not be complicated or invented, just simple and narrow enough to express what the brand stands for. The word may be related to the benefit, service, audience, or sales.

A brief examination of any number of examples illustrates the law of focus and what words or phrases certain brands might currently own. For instance, Volvo owns "safety," Coke owns "cola," Kleenex owns "tissue," Monster.com owns "jobs," and FedEx owns "overnight" (Ries & Ries, 2002a). This positioning idea applies as much to products and services as it does to celebrities: Howard Stern owns "shock jock," Julia Roberts owns "pretty woman," Billy Joel owns "piano man," and Madonna owns "material girl" (*The Ries Report*, 2008). Ries and Ries (2002a) maintained that "the most important aspect of a brand is its single-mindedness" (p. 109). In other words, a brand should avoid shifting its focus from a simple and singular concept (such as safe cars). If the name stands for too many varying ideas, it will ultimately weaken the power of the brand. In emphasizing how vital a narrow and long-term focus on owning a term or category in a consumer's mind is for a brand, Ries (2005) explained that "it can't be complicated, high-minded, flowery, obtuse, or difficult to understand" (p. 268). Instead, it must

"be a simple idea, expressed with simple words, and immediately understandable by your customers, your employees, and the media" (p. 268).

Conclusion

This chapter provided an overview of positioning, which required a detailed understanding of the Ries and Trout marketing philosophy. Based on prior research, positioning is thought of as an *approach*, a *concept*, a *process*, and a *perspective*. An understanding of positioning requires a grasp of overcommunication, differentiation, relating new information to prior knowledge, and oversimplified messages.

Discussion

The literature on positioning confirms that the logic and themes developed by Ries and Trout have been elaborated on in more than a few marketing and academic works. Many general studies have been performed in relation to the topic of positioning (Anderson & Shugan, 1991; Assael, 1971; Blankson & Kalafatis, 2004, 2007; Blankson et al., 2008; Crask & Laskey, 1990; DeSarbo, Grewal, & Scott, 2008; Dillon, Domzal, & Madden, 1986; Houston & Hanieski, 1976; Jaffe, 1991; Pechmann & Ratneshwar, 1991; Pham & Muthukrishnan, 2002; Prince, 1990; Sujan & Bettman, 1989; Wilkes, 1977; Winer & Moore, 1989). This demonstrates the topic's importance to the world of marketing research. Much research has also continued to look at how new brand information may be effectively related to prior knowledge (Gregan-Paxton & John, 1997; Lanitis, 1970; Moreau, Markman, & Lehmann, 2001; Pechmann & Ratneshwar, 1991; Pham & Muthukrishnan, 2002; Sujan & Bettman, 1989; Zhang & Markman, 1998). It is clear that "hooking your product, service or concept to what's already there" (Ries & Trout, 1981, p. 220) is a valuable part of the positioning process. Within the various works on positioning and related topics, a handful of new models have been developed (Blankson & Kalafatis, 2007; Crask

& Laskey, 1990; DeSarbo, Grewal, & Scott, 2008; Gregan-Paxton & John, 1997; Pham & Muthukrishnan, 2002). These models prove quite useful for studying modern positioning, depending on the specific purpose and details of the study.

Patterns in the reviewed literature show that methods used in prior research related to positioning include the following: multidimensional scaling (Wilkes, 1977; Winer & Moore, 1989), clustering analysis (Wilkes, 1977), perceptual mapping (Assael, 1971; Prince, 1990), survey of preferences via pamphlets, in person, mail, or telephone (Assael, 1971; Blankson & Kalafatis, 2007; Blankson et al., 2008; Prince, 1990), experiments involving viewing ads (Jaffe, 1991; Moreau, Markman, & Lehmann, 2001; Pham & Muthukrishnan, 2002; Zhang & Markman, 1998), interviews with experts (Blankson & Kalafatis, 2007), and content analysis of marketing communications (Blankson & Kalafatis, 2007). Products used and cited in various positioning studies include the following: coffee, soda, beef, poultry, popcorn, raisins, soup, CD players, cameras, cell phones, cars and SUVs, financial services, credit cards, detergent, cleanser, and pens.

Nonetheless, very little research, managerial or theoretical, has considered the role of media coverage in the positioning process. Much more remains to be explored. The Ries and Trout body of work, along with most academic research, typically focuses on how marketers can create a positioning program; little attention has been given to subsequent media coverage of a brand's position. That is to say, the view is typically on how brand managers can actively inform audience perceptions, but rarely on the role that media coverage plays in mirroring positioning messages or continuing to shape audience perceptions (i.e. a complex feedback loop). On a handful of occasions, however, Ries and Trout have expressed that public relations

can be a valuable tool for a positioning program. This is because media coverage consistent with a positioning program may help to give the brand's desired position greater validity.

Trout and Rivkin (1996) briefly made the distinction between traditional public relations and how public relations can be used for positioning purposes. They explained that for positioning goals to work through public relations, "the emphasis has to shift from 'getting your name in the paper' to achieving marketing objectives" (p. 146). Therefore, the aim is to obtain media coverage of the right oversimplified positioning message. Ries and Trout (1991) claimed that media coverage, or riding "the publicity horse" (p. 40), can be very helpful for spreading an oversimplified positioning message. The authors believed that because many journalists obtain research from prior media coverage, "they extract the essence of your identity from previous stories" (p. 41) and allow a brand to "focus on one idea or concept" (p. 41). As the brand gets more and more press coverage the "brand creates its own momentum" (Ries & Ries, 2004, p. 279).

Furthermore, Ries and Ries (2004) contended that brands should highly consider the attributes that media coverage considers their most significant, claiming that "the media can be helpful" (p. 281) because they look "at a new product from the consumer's point of view" (p. 281). It is for this reason Ries and Trout (1991) argued that "good publicity ideas…. often walk in the front door, and they are usually invented by others" (p. 42). Thus, Ries and Ries (2002b) claimed that the best way to effectively launch a new brand is with public relations and not advertising, noting that the most important function of publicity is brand building, with a focus on creating positive perceptions and telling "your story indirectly through third-party outlets, primarily the media" (p. xi). In other words, prospects may find the story more credible through media coverage than through advertising messages. From this view, Ries and Ries (2004)

declared that, as a method of branding, publicity has become more powerful than advertising over the last two decades.

Ries and Ries (2004) further explored the value of positioning through publicity, making the case that media coverage "can supply the credibility that allows your brand to get into consumers' minds" (p. 274). They added that media coverage is "likely to prove extremely convincing to prospects" (p. 281) because reporters and editors "hold the reins of consumer opinion" (p. 281). Finally, they concluded that "what others say about your brand is much more powerful than what you say about it" (p. 275). These sentiments begin to address the value of researching positioning as it is reflected through media. This dissertation aims to explore precisely that: the relationship between positioning and media coverage, particularly when a brand's position emerges without the savvy design of a marketing strategy or the calculated goals of a PR campaign. With this in mind, focus is placed on how media, through framing, may or may not position Phish in relation to the Grateful Dead.

CHAPTER FOUR

FRAMING

Framing analysis as a tool for systematic research on media texts "is alive and thriving in communications land" (Gamson, 2003, p. xi). Prior framing studies have ranged in focus from media coverage of crises in Somalia (Bantimaroudis & Ban, 2003) to news stories about extremist groups (Boyle et al., 2006) to the construction of the motorcycle outlaw character via media portrayals (Fuglsang, 2003). Among the countless framing studies, most indicate that framing "is based on the assumption that how an issue is characterized in news reports can have an influence on how it is understood by audiences" (Scheufele & Tewksbury, 2007, p. 11). This assumption leads to many research questions worthy of investigation.

According to Reese, Gandy, and Grant (2003), prior research indicates that framing has been considered an approach, a theory, a paradigm, a model, or a perspective (p. xiii). To this end, Reese (2007) contended that framing is a valuable "model that bridges parts of the field that need to be in touch with each other: quantitative and qualitative, empirical and interpretive, psychological and sociological, and academic and professional" (p. 148). Agreeing with D'Angelo (2002), Reese (2007) concluded that "framing is more of a research program than a unified paradigm" (p. 148), as it adds "some critical flavor to the media-effects approach on one side" (p. 149) and tames "the media hegemony view on the other" (p. 149). This dissertation adopts such an expansive concept of the framing approach, as it is wide-ranging and firmly rooted in an extensive examination of patterns in prior research.

This chapter offers an overview on the state and value of framing. With framing, there is much to consider. Overall, what makes framing studies interesting and valuable is how multiple small stories may be studied together and analyzed to uncover a larger story (Reese, 2007). The

framing approach can help to reveal underlying themes in media coverage about a particular subject, from which useful conclusions may be drawn. Edy and Meirick (2007) explained that framing studies focusing on content can also "document the perspectives that were available to audiences" (p. 125), while framing studies focusing on effects can "show us how these perspectives were adopted by citizens and used to evaluate" (p. 125) relevant issues. Therefore, the study of framing addresses a number of critical components of mass communication, sensibly taking into account "the interplay of media practices, culture, audiences, and producers" (Reese, 2003, p. 7).

This chapter presents many of the most frequently cited works on framing, examines a wide variety of works about framing, clarifies how the relevant key terms are interpreted, presents various interesting examples of framing studies to illustrate how the topic is typically applied, and identifies what various phenomena, media, and methods are addressed in framing studies. First, to contextualize the topic a brief examination of the roots of the terms "frame" and "framing" is offered. Next, significant definitions of the terms "frame" and "framing" are identified. Following the definitions various framing studies are reviewed to offer examples of the many ways the framing approach has been applied in academic literature. Finally, this chapter concludes with a summary and discussion of the details explored within, in addition to reflections on what is missing from the literature, what should come next, and why the topics of framing and positioning may be fruitfully joined.

The Framing Approach

Sociologist Erving Goffman (1974), who attributed creation of the frame metaphor to Gregory Bateson (1972), is commonly credited with establishing the early socio-psychological perspective of the framing approach. In particular, Goffman (1974) is credited with inspiring

that which became the more sociological framing approach adopted by contemporary mass media and communication researchers (Reese, 2003). Tuchman (1978)—in her influential study of newsrooms and journalists—notably adopted Goffman's "notion of frame as an organizing principle for the analysis of newswork" (p. 216). She studied how journalists and media organizations "produce and reproduce, create and recreate" meaning (p. 216). From her perspective that inspired countless contemporary studies, she concluded that media have the ability to shape the social construction of knowledge and reality. Beyond Goffman, McCombs and Ghanem (2003) claimed that "the origins of the term *framing* in the context of communication are in photography and cinematography, where framing refers to such variables as camera angle and perspective in the styling of a visual message" (p. 71). This idea of message design via framing is easily transferred outside the specific context of visuals and to the broader realm of mass communication content. Meanwhile, Tankard (2003) claimed that prior conceptualizations of framing indicate that the frame metaphor may be interpreted differently. He explained that similar to a picture frame around a painting or a photograph, the metaphor addresses how media content may "isolate certain material and draw attention to it" (p. 98) and "suggest a tone for viewing" (p. 99). Like a picture frame, boundaries function to select and exclude content, while the particular materials that compose it such as wood or metal provide a context for interpretation. The frame metaphor could also relate to a building, in that "the frame is the organizing structure used to construct a house" (p. 99). This idea can be carried over to media in the way that a frame is considered "the organizing idea on which a story is built" (p. 99). With the roots of the framing metaphor considered it is also important to explore more detailed definitions and interpretations.

Defining Frames and Framing

Because the word "frame" may be used both as a verb and a noun, it is useful to recognize that media content may *be framed* and that media content may also *contain frames*. In this way, the vernacular suggests both "an active process and a result" (Reese, 2003, p. 7). Thus this section aims to review notable explanations of frames and framing with the goal of understanding the definitions and acknowledging the terms as inextricably linked.

Many scholars (to name a few: Entman, 1993; Gamson & Modigliani, 1989; Gitlin, 1980; Tuchman, 1978) have proposed definitions of frames and framing and "almost all these definitions, in one way or another, make reference to Goffman's" (Pan & Kosicki, 2003, p. 37). Goffman (1974) explained that frames are "schemata of interpretation" that "vary in degree of organization" and provide "a lore of understanding, an approach, [or] a perspective" in the process of allowing the frame user "to locate, perceive, identify, and label" (p. 21) any number of occurrences in order to find meaning and guide action. For Goffman, framing was a concept that explained how individuals make sense of their social world.

Similarly, Gitlin (1980) wrote that frames are "persistent patterns of cognition, interpretation, and presentation, of selection, emphasis, and exclusion, by which symbol-handlers routinely organize discourse" (p. 7). It is in this sense that frames have the potential to "bring otherwise amorphous reality into a meaningful structure" (Reese, 2003, p. 11). Frames are a property of media texts and it is the researcher's job to attempt "to identify a coherence and infrastructure that is contained" within (Gamson, 2003, p. x).

In his seminal definition of framing, Entman (1993) wrote that "to frame is to *select some aspects of a perceived reality and make them more salient in a communicating text, in such a way as to promote a particular problem definition, causal interpretation, moral evaluation,*

and/or treatment recommendation for the item described" (p. 52). Entman (1993) believed that framing was a useful and growing yet fractured paradigm in need of mending. However, responding to Entman, D'Angelo (2002) argued that the study of framing is better thought of as a research program that contains a range of paradigms, namely approaches that are cognitive, constructionist, and critical. Also responding to Entman's (1993) definition of framing, Reese (2007) pointed out that "Entman's definition begs the question of how [aspects of reality] are organized 'in such a way as to promote' their effects" (p. 152), concluding that "it is precisely *the way* that certain attributes come to be associated with particular issues that should concern framing analysis" (p. 152).

Bypassing various minimalist characterizations, this dissertation adopts the definition and explanation of frames and framing set forth by Reese (2003, 2007). The main strength of Reese's clarification is that it thoroughly takes into account various significant prior interpretations of the topic (to name a few: Entman, 1993; Gamson & Modigliani, 1989; Gitlin, 1980; Goffman, 1974). In the process a new focused yet flexible definition is formulated. According to Reese (2003), "frames are *organizing principles* that are socially *shared* and *persistent* over time, that work *symbolically* to meaningfully *structure* the social world" (p. 11).

Reese's (2003) notion of "organizing" implies that "framing varies in how successfully, comprehensively, or completely it organizes information" (p. 11). Information may be organized in various ways, which is why researchers should aim to understand "the scope of frames" (p. 13) and "evaluate the sweep of social reality they propose to explain and organize" (p. 13). It is important to note that "all frames are not equal in their ability to cause information to cohere, making sense out of the world" (p. 13). Framed information may be organized, but that does not necessarily make it convincing or effective.

Furthermore, Reese's (2003) definition encompasses organizing "principles" to suggest that "the frame is based on an abstract principle" (p. 12). The critical audience member must not "ignore the principle that gives rise to the frame" (p. 14) or "take media texts at face value" (p 14). Reese argued that frames, in the process of structuring social meaning, are like abstract schemata of interpretation that function via media (p. 14). Building upon Entman's (1993) suggestions, Reese (2003) concluded that "frames are principles of organizing information, clues to which may be found in the media discourse, within individuals, and within social and cultural practices" (p. 14). It is argued that organizing principles operate inside, outside, and through media texts to shape our social reality (p. 15).

Reese (2003) also explained that frames are "shared" because "the frame must be shared on some level for it to be significant and communicable" (p. 12). The researcher must consider that "the acceptance and sharing of a media frame depends on what understandings the 'reader' brings to the text to produce negotiated meaning" (p. 15), since frames are not entirely imposed on audiences. This is why it is argued that "frame sponsors… must capitalize on shared frames" (p. 15) if they hope to maximize communication efficacy.

Frames are also "persistent" in that "the significance of frames lies in their durability, their persistent and routine use over time" (Reese, 2003, p. 12). With this in mind the researcher should always "question what factors account for one frame's persistence over another" (p. 16) and consider if or how frames evolve forms over time. When a frame becomes noticeably established and recurring in media content this suggests it is routine, "second-nature, well entrenched, and built into the way of doing things" (p. 16). Reese (2003) contended that "the more persistent the frame, the more likely it deserves examination" (p. 16).

Additionally, frames work "symbolically" because "the frame is revealed in symbolic forms of expression" (p. 12), which may be manifested in verbal and/or visual forms. To locate substantiation of frames, media texts are ripe for analysis and "represent the most readily available evidence of frames" (p. 16), as a frame is commonly "distributed across a number of stories in its symbolic terrain" (p. 17). On this point the researcher should aim to determine how media content is "woven together to signify a frame" (p. 16).

Finally, Reese's (2003) definition suggests that frames "structure" because they "organize by providing identifiable patterns or structures, which can vary in their complexity" (p. 12). Frames "impose a pattern on the social world" (p. 17) constituted via symbolic devices such as media texts. A dominant frame may gain coherence over time to ultimately form its structure. It is worth noting that the structuring of meaning extends beyond the act of inclusion or exclusion; it normalizes a viewpoint by making what is "framed" seem logical (p. 19).

For this dissertation Reese's (2003) definition of frames and framing is optimal because it "gets at a more active structuring job that frames perform in conveying meaning, and moves beyond the presence or absence, or mere emphasis of information" (p. 18). The definition provides this dissertation with an understanding of frames and framing firmly rooted in the topic's rich history of interpretations.

Case Studies: Cohesive Subject Matter Framed

While the previous sections have examined the roots, definitions, and interpretations of framing, the next section offers examples of specific framing studies that support the rationale for studying how the band Phish has been framed in media. For each example, this section is primarily concerned with identifying the framed phenomena considered in media content, what

form(s) of media content are examined, what methods are used for the study of framing, and what key results and conclusions the framing approach enabled the author(s) to uncover.

This dissertation shares the common approach to framing where cohesive subject matter is studied, content analysis is employed, and frames are ultimately identified. Semetko and Valkenburg (2000), for example, did so when they used a quantitative content analysis of frames uncovered in 4,123 Dutch news stories about a single 1997 European political event. They addressed the five news frames of attribution of responsibility, conflict, human interest, economic consequences, and morality. The authors concluded that "the use of news frames depended on both the type of outlet and the type of topic" (p. 93).

Rhee's (1997) cohesive subject matter was the 1991 Philadelphia mayoral election, about which he researched "how news frames in campaign coverage affect individuals' interpretation of campaigns" (p. 26). From a social cognitive perspective Rhee argued that the framing process should be conceptualized "as the interaction between textual features and the interpreter's social knowledge" (p. 28). The author identified three consecutive subprocesses as part of interpretation: the reception of news, the integration of knowledge, and the construction of a discourse model (p. 28). Two experiments were conducted that utilized and manipulated broadcast and print news stories about the election. Rhee concluded that the examination of message structures contained in stories about campaign news led to the identification of two major campaign coverage frames: strategy and issue, both potentially effective frames for influencing campaign interpretations (p. 26).

More recently, Edy and Meirick's (2007) framing study focused on network news coverage of the September 11, 2001 attacks. For this subject the authors conducted a content analysis of transcripts from nightly national television news content to study the frame's

narrative architecture. The transcripts were limited to content that aired on CBS, ABC, and NBC; that occurred between October 15 and November 2, 2001; and that mentioned "September." One hundred fifty two stories were coded at the level of the paragraph to determine if they fit "a war frame, a crime frame, a mixed crime and war frame" (p. 126), or neither. The content analysis revealed "that U.S. media framed the events of September 11 in terms of both war and crime" (p. 119). A key goal of this study was "to document the perspectives that were available to audiences" (p. 125). Overall, the authors noted the complexity of the framing phenomenon, concluding that experimental framing studies may not fully capture the complexity of how people process political information.

Another example of how framing can be employed in the study of a cohesive subject or event is the research conducted by Billings and Eastman (2003). They studied 52 hours of prime-time NBC television coverage of the 2002 Winter Olympics, performing a textual analysis of the discourse of network employees "for proportions of descriptors and mentions of athlete names" (p. 575), as well as "the amount of time devoted to men's and women's events" (p. 576). In scrutinizing how content was framed the authors excluded guests, focusing instead on commentators' discourse because it was largely scripted. In terms of gender they found that "most of the clock time went to men, most of the top 20 most mentioned athletes were men, and most of the athlete mentions and descriptors were devoted to men" (p. 569). Additionally, they found that most of the athletes mentioned were White men. This study exemplifies socially constructed frames for audience appeal. In terms of nationality, for instance, non-American athletes were discussed more than American athletes, "but American athletes were characterized as being more composed and courageous" (p. 569). The authors claimed the observed framing was significant to interrogate because "ways of thinking… about sports can frame unconscious

thinking about racial and gender groups in nonathletic situations" (p. 582). The authors further concluded that via discourse and images the network may shape portrayals of gender, ethnicity, and nationality for audience appeal.

From a similar view of social construction, and sharing feminist themes with Darling-Wolf (1997), Lind and Salo (2002) executed a study concerned with representation of feminists and feminism in media content. They observed that much framing research centers on studying events at a "macrolevel" (p. 212). Utilizing microlevel linguistic analysis in their quest to acknowledge how language functions in constructing social reality, they performed a content analysis of transcripts from 35,000 hours of ABC, CNN, PBS, and NPR television and radio content from a convenience sample between May 1993 to January 1996. Based on prior research, Lind and Salo (2002) created six socially constructed frames that guided their analysis: the demonization frame, the personalization and trivialization frame, the presence of goals frame, the victimization frame, the agency frame, and the site of struggle frame (pp. 217-218). Their goal was to "interpret the underlying themes and frames present in mediated representations of feminists" (p. 212) and to uncover frames that present feminists and feminism to the public, then compare this content to representations of women in general. Some of the authors' key conclusions were that in comparison to "regular" women, feminists are represented less often, are regularly demonized when they do appear, are portrayed as victims less often, and are considered to have more agency. This study illustrates a purposeful use of frame analysis in studying a particular group's media portrayal to uncover how that group is framed.

In addition to content analysis, textual analysis is an effective contribution to framing research. Durham—with a focus more on theoretical matters (1998, 2003)—used textual analysis in his 1998 study of media coverage regarding the explosion of Trans World Airways

Flight 800 over Long Island Sound in July 1996, killing all 230 aboard. Conceptualizing framing as "a modernist social process that contributes to a dominant sense of continuity" (1998, p. 102), Durham's goal was not to define a particular new frame, but to interpret "the modern boundaries that frames produce and the postmodern meanings they exclude" (p. 100). Durham argued that functionalist, modernist theorists (citing Entman, Gamson, and Pan & Kosicki as examples) sufficiently describe the framing process but fail to adequately consider "broader social contexts of the meanings at play in the production, transmission, and reception of news messages by the mass media" (p. 103). Inspired by Foss's (2004) methods for rhetorical criticism, Durham subsequently performed a critical textual analysis of 668 *New York Times* stories about the crash and published between July 1996 and July 1997. The textual analysis illustrated the fallibility of the journalistic assumption that there would be a knowable cause for the crash. In contrast to traditional studies that presume media framing, the author approached the Flight 800 event as one that defied media framing, as it was "a case where a dominant frame was not determined" (p. 100). With this in mind, Durham concluded that with framing, "negative cases can contribute much to our understanding of what is happening in positive cases" (p. 100).

Finally, with more interest in thematic content than exact effects, Tucker (1998) analyzed media discourse characterizing Calvin Klein's August 1995 ad campaign, which was frequently framed in media as "kiddie porn" (p. 141). Her objective was to study the discursive components of the kiddie porn frame and link them to their sources from various political and social structures. The kiddie porn frame was analyzed in terms of four frame functions: defining problems, diagnosing causes, evaluating actions, and prescribing solutions (p. 145). News and opinion print media content about the campaign was analyzed, ranging from mainstream

newspapers to advertising industry magazines. Through a frame analysis focused on media discourse, Tucker drew the conclusion that "the kiddie-porn frame trivializes the significance of child pornography as a social problem as it works to shift political heat from the media industry onto Calvin Klein" (p. 154). This "kiddie porn" study indicates how the framing approach may be applied to a social issue at the intersection of media and marketing to yield informative results. Moreover, it demonstrates the power of the correct combination of words to crystallize a phenomenon in the minds of an audience.

Conclusion

This chapter examined the roots of the terms "frame" and "framing" to first gain context on the topic. Then, significant definitions of the terms were identified to learn more about how the topic is interpreted. Finally, relevant framing studies were reviewed to identify how others have applied framing and to support the rationale for applying the framing approach in this dissertation.

Discussion and Future Research

The interdisciplinary nature of communication research has led to a diversity of approaches (Reese, 2007). However, the most commonly examined topics tend to regard political media coverage. Other popular phenomena examined in framing studies include media coverage of specific events, ranging from the Olympics to plane crashes. Many framing studies also look at media representations of particular individuals or groups, such as athletes, feminists, or bikers, to uncover a larger story. In addition to such phenomena the literature also reveals that framing studies do not discriminate in the form of media examined. Newspaper, magazine, radio, and television content were all utilized. Elsewhere researchers (Mabry, 2003; Pavli, 2003) have found that new media content is an equally valuable source for the study of framing. The

literature also reveals that framing studies have used a wide variety of methods for investigation, the most common being content analysis.

Considering the reviewed literature as it relates to this dissertation, framing theory is open to the subject of music. Much media content is regularly dedicated to the coverage or criticism of music. Examples include biographies of musicians, articles about concert previews, or album reviews. Just as prior research has looked at media coverage of various individuals and groups, this research will similarly look at media coverage of a band.

Second, the interdisciplinary quality of framing makes it a valuable perspective for examining a rock band. This dissertation will continue to embrace framing's interdisciplinary quality, exploring how it might tie to other theorists. Such a marriage may yield productive insight. With this in mind there appears to be much potential for the framing approach to be explored in unison with the positioning approach.

Parallels between Framing and Positioning

Patterns in the literature show that both framing and positioning place notable emphasis on the themes of simplification and relating new information to what is familiar. These similarities are worthy of exploration.

For instance, Entman (1989) addressed both simplicity and relating new information to familiar information, explaining that "the media do not control what people prefer; they influence public opinion by providing much of the information people think about by shaping how they think about it" (p. 83). He described a conceptual model of news media and delineated institutional forces that shape it, such as the economics-based notion that "the primary business purpose of news organizations is to package audiences' attention for sale to the advertisers" (p.

49). He argued that media sources employ simplification and symbolization in order to attract a broad audience.

To Entman (1989), simplification meant that media sources tend to prefer stories that are simple to report and that media sources deem "simple messages more accessible and attractive to audiences" (p. 49). He argued that the result is a story stripped of context and depth. Addressing simplification, he concluded that "in explaining events, reporters omit a great many qualifications, nuances, and complexities. They employ several devices intended to convey the relevance or meaning of the news simply" (p. 56). This process of simplification clearly parallels the process of oversimplification, as advocated in positioning. The goal of simplification (framing) and oversimplification (positioning) is the same: appealing to the audience.

Entman (1989) also postulated that symbolization is the practice of condensing complex information through the use of a familiar model or "shared public understanding of the subject covered in the story" (p. 50). Dickerson (2003) elaborated that examples of symbolization include stories of high school violence defined through reference to Columbine, American terrorism via Oklahoma City, or "stories of abuse of power… simplified by analogy to 'Watergate'" (p. 164). Addressing symbolization, Entman (1989) concluded that "journalists themselves have these needs to assimilate the new in terms of the familiar, and they know audience members are even more in need of such assistance" (p. 51).

Entman (2007) more recently noted that framing is "the process of culling a few elements of perceived reality and assembling a narrative that highlights connection among them to promote a particular interpretation" (p. 164). This is strikingly similar to Ries and Trout's (1981) claims that a key tactic in the positioning process is "to retie the connections that already

exist" (p. 5) and that positioning requires the marketer to determine the best way to "[hook] your product, service or concept to what's already there" (p. 220) in the mind of the audience.

Scheufele and Tewksbury (2007) also highlighted the value of simplicity, claiming that framing is not just a journalistic trick for spinning stories and deceiving audiences, but rather "a necessary tool to reduce the complexity of an issue" (p. 12). In conjunction, regarding the process of relating new information to familiar information they claimed that framing is useful given the ability to allow media "to present information in a way that resonates with existing underlying schemas among their audience" (p. 12). They added that "framing effects will vary in strength as a partial function of the fit between the constructs a frame suggests should be applied to an issue and either the presence of those frames in audience members' existing knowledge or the content of the message" (p. 16). This is why the authors concluded that the effect of framing is one of applicability, with the goal of forming a "connection between two concepts such that, after exposure to the message, audiences accept that they are connected" (p. 15). Along with retying "connections that already exist" (Ries and Trout, 1981, p. 5), this brings to mind the premise from positioning that calls for marketers to draw prospects in with what they already know, or that which is most likely to resonate with the right segment (Ries & Trout, 1981).

In further defining the role of shared meaning in the process of framing, Reese (2003) expressed that "the acceptance and sharing of a media frame depends on what understandings the 'reader' brings to the text to produce negotiated meaning" (p.15). Reese (2007) believed that frames are "structures that draw boundaries, set up categories, define some ideas as out and others in, and generally operate to snag related ideas in their net in an active process" (p. 150). The view that framing involves shared meanings and "[snagging] relating ideas" is comparable

to Ries and Trout's (1981) argument that "the basic approach of positioning is not to create something new and different. But to manipulate what's already up there in the mind" (p. 5). Thus, Reese (2003) concluded that "frame sponsors… must capitalize on shared frames" (p. 15) in order to maximize how effectively a message resonates with an audience. Both framing and positioning take into consideration the way audience preconceptions shape the purpose and impact of a presumably simplified message.

An effective example illustrates how framing studies are capable of also revealing evidence of positioning. For instance, Bishop (2003), in studying media coverage of Fred Rogers, noted that he was effectively framed "as a calming influence" (p. 16). The author concluded that journalists constructed fantasy themes framing Rogers with monikers such as "the world's nicest grown-up" and "the Dalai Lama of television" (p. 16). The former moniker exemplifies an oversimplified message that came to represent Rogers in summary. The latter symbolization exemplifies how media characterized Rogers in relation to the Dalai Lama, effectively highlighting and retying certain connections to promote the interpretation of Rogers as peaceful, calm, and nice.

One may reason that framing is the name of the process that involves the journalist simplifying messages for a particular audience through the use of symbolization, and positioning is traditionally the name of the process that involves the marketer simplifying messages for a particular audience through the use of symbolization. With evidence of common themes in mind, it becomes clear that the function of framing as a tool for simplifying media stories is similar to the purpose of positioning as a strategy for oversimplifying brand or product characteristics. By marrying the topics of framing and positioning—each considered an

approach or perspective in its own right—this dissertation aims to provide useful insight into how a given entity may be simultaneously framed and positioned in media.

CHAPTER FIVE

METHODS

This chapter provides details regarding the project's three-pronged approach to studying Phish coverage, which employs multiple methods to triangulate and interpret all results. In sum, this dissertation offers one case study (about Phish coverage) divided into two parts (content and context) and consisting of three methods (content analysis, textual analysis, and interviews) that form a unified whole (see Table 1). Part A1 is a content analysis of Phish album reviews from *Rolling Stone*. It asks three quantitative-leaning "how" questions regarding the frequency of "connections" in media. Part A2 is a textual analysis of all *Rolling Stone* coverage of Phish and more qualitatively asks two "how" questions on the "characterization" in media. Part A (i.e. both A1 and A2) therefore examines coverage of the band from a pair of integrated approaches. Seeking context for the content, Part B is a series of in-depth qualitative interviews with individuals who have significantly written, edited, and/or published content about Phish. Here, a pair of "why" and "what" questions ask about the roots and results of the explored media content.

Table 1. *Three-Pronged Approach to the Case Study of Phish Coverage*

Component	Focus	Method	Orientation	Data	RQs
Part A1	Content	Content analysis	Quantitative	*RS* album reviews	How frequently?
Part A2	Content	Textual analysis	Qualitative	All *RS* coverage	How characterized?
Part B	Context	Interviews	Qualitative	Views of writers, editors, publishers	Why exist? What result?

After first addressing significant conceptualization of key dissertation terminology, the specifics of each part of this case study are explained in three comprehensive reports. The three reports aim to cover many details. Upon introducing each part, key goals are identified. Such goals are explained more in the later chapters, particularly in each investigation's conclusion section. Below, these goals are tied to a statement of research questions, which also earn further

explanation in the next three chapters. Following this chapter's review of research questions that shaped each approach, I address the source and rationale for the collected data/information. Once these particulars are laid out, I explain the procedures, process, and sequence of the executed method. Finally, the three reports remark on each general method as it functions in academia. Later in the dissertation, these reports serve as the basis for the method summaries presented in the three chapters that describe the results of this case study.

Conceptualization and Terminology

Clarifying terminology and interpretation of notable concepts should enhance understanding of how the following notions are applied throughout the dissertation. First, to reiterate the two key theoretical terms that shape this dissertation, previous chapters addressed the accepted interpretations of "positioning" and "framing."

Furthermore, this dissertation opts to discuss "media framing," as opposed to "news framing." This distinction is based on the broad consideration of Phish/Grateful Dead connections across various forms of media. The inclusive nature of the "media framing" term does not prohibit from this dissertation's examination what others might claim is not traditional news, such as album reviews or blogs. In this way I interpret "news framing" as an integral part of the "media framing" considered among these pages.

Third, Part A2 discusses frames and subframes, which should be explained. For the purpose of this dissertation, a subframe is regarded as recurring content that forms a subset of some particular frame, such that the subframe's content may be interpreted as a secondary level or subtopic to its primary frame. This is different from using the term "subframe" to indicate a more topic-specific theme while "frame" indicates a more culturally-generalizable theme (Hertog & McLeod, 2003, p. 159).

Fourth, it should be emphasized that this dissertation interprets Phish both as a band and as a brand. In keeping with the philosophy of Blackwell and Stephan (2004), it can be quite effective to extract branding lessons from the world of rock and roll. Phish sell a long list of items branded with the group's name or logo and they make a great deal of money in the process. It is to this end that *Billboard*'s Ray Waddell (2004), among many others, has called the band's success "one of the most remarkable chapters in the history of the concert business" (¶ 16). With this view in mind, what is Phish if not a brand?

In terms of usage, this dissertation alternately addresses Phish as a singular entity (e.g., "Phish is a Vermont quartet") and also pluralized as a group of people (e.g., "Phish are quite talented"), whenever appropriate. The convention of addressing Phish as a collective noun is standard in media coverage of bands and is a practice this dissertation favors (Relix Admin, 2007).

Sixth, this dissertation also studies "connections" between Phish and the Grateful Dead located in media coverage of Phish. The project figures that such media "connections"—synonymous with "links"—are made through "references" and/or "comparisons" to the Grateful Dead. But not every reference is necessarily a comparison. Overall, references and/or comparisons produce connections/links.

Finally, this dissertation does not limit interest in "Phish/Grateful Dead media connections" to explicit mentions of the phrase "Grateful Dead." Instead, it encompasses more subtle or nuanced mentions of the band name, band members, album names, song names, and any other decipherable reference. These ideas are more fully explored in later chapters.

Case Study Part A1, "Birds of a Feather":

Content Analysis of Phish Album Reviews from *Rolling Stone*

For Part A1, I executed a content analysis of all Phish album reviews from *Rolling Stone*. The goal was to examine how connections of one story element (Phish) to another (the Grateful Dead) recur, are constructed, and are prominent in a single media source. Also exploring indications of the presence or absence of a collective view, this investigation considered what the results might signal about the potential of media to form and further an overall story. Documenting such perspectives and understanding these issues offers the potential to inform anew about positioning and framing, as well as furthers exploration of the topic. To study the recurrence of the connection, how the connection is constructed, and how connections to the Grateful Dead compare with connections to other bands, these research questions shaped the investigation:

RQ1: How frequently are Phish connected to the Grateful Dead in *Rolling Stone* album reviews of Phish?

RQ2: How frequently is the connection of Phish to the Grateful Dead in *Rolling Stone* album reviews of Phish constructed via different forms of links?

RQ3: How frequently are Phish connected to musicians other than the Grateful Dead in *Rolling Stone* album reviews of Phish?

Data

The analyzed data included all 12 Phish album reviews available on RollingStone.com, the online manifestation of the magazine (Phish: Album Reviews, 2009). Material was collected in late-2009, prior to the site's April 2010 redesign that limited free access to many complete *Rolling Stone* magazine reviews. Written by eight distinct authors, the dozen Phish reviews span

from 1995 to 2009. Analysis starts with the earliest review and ends with the most recent: *A Live One* (1995), *Billy Breathes* (1996), *Slip, Stitch and Pass* (1997), *The Story of the Ghost* (1998), *Farmhouse* (2000), *Round Room* (2002), *Undermind* (2004), *Live at Madison Square Garden New Year's Eve 1995* (2005), *Colorado '88* (2006), *Vegas 96* (2007), *At the Roxy* (2008), *Joy* (2009).

Album reviews were chosen because they represent media snapshots of the band from meaningful event-to-event (i.e. album releases). Each album review is regarded as a significant media representation of the band during a noteworthy milestone in its career. In the music industry, reviews have the power to function as a critical component of an artist's commercial success or failure (du Lac, 2006). Reviews also have the power to convey the reviewed as a brand, uniquely providing context and appraisal of a commercial product in a way that everyday coverage may not. Devoting one part of this case study to coverage of Phish album reviews, which are fundamentally dedicated to a Phish product, facilitates conclusions about positioning and media analysis of Phish from a brand perspective. Similar to the way traditional news stories tend to frame political issues, music reviews commonly utilize comparative references as presumably shared shorthand to frame new information.

Rolling Stone is the chosen publication for all of Part A because of its standing as the preeminent mainstream rock music magazine and because it effectively illustrates significant mainstream coverage of Phish. Founded in 1967 by media mogul Jann Wenner, whose Wenner Media also publishes *US Weekly* and *Men's Journal*, *Rolling Stone* has been described by the *New York Times* as "the heavyweight of music magazines, with circulation, influence, quality and profitability that towers" (O'Brien, 2005). With a circulation of approximately 1.5 million and an ever-growing reputation for influential journalism (Peters, 2010), the biweekly's status as

an important chronicle of trends in rock music and popular culture—plus its deep history of Grateful Dead coverage—makes it an especially suitable source for this case study.

Procedures

This investigation employed a basic content analysis of the 12 reviews. Utilizing a coding manual (see Appendix A) for systematic measurement reduced the subjective nature of the data interpretation and maximized reliable interpretation. The coding procedure contained instructions on how to identify Grateful Dead and other references within a Phish album review, the simplest being band name references like "the Grateful Dead" or "the Dead." More intricate measures included references to Grateful Dead album names, Grateful Dead song names, and Grateful Dead members. When referenced in media content, any of these examples qualified as a link to the Grateful Dead. The author and two additional coders performed the content analysis on separate dates (twice in December 2009 and once in May 2010). Each coding session lasted between 60 and 90 minutes, including training. Overall, coding determined what reviews contained Grateful Dead references, what kinds of references each review made, and what other musicians the reviews referenced.

Thoughts on Content Analysis

As illustrated by the earlier literature reviews content analysis is a common and effective tool for the study of media framing, as well as brand research (Krippendorff, 2004; Maynard & Tian, 2004). The method incorporates quantitative questions about patterns of frequency in media content (e.g., "how frequently… connected?"), while also allowing consideration of the qualitative nature of the content (e.g., "how frequently… constructed?"). Additional benefits of content analysis for this dissertation include: necessary materials are relatively accessible, it is a relatively inexpensive process, and the research process is unobtrusive (Berger, 1998).

Case Study Part A2, "All Things Reconsidered":

Textual Analysis of All Phish Coverage in *Rolling Stone*

Continuing investigation of media content through a different approach, Part A2's textual analysis of *Rolling Stone* allowed comprehensive examination of coverage on Phish and the phenomenon of connections to the Grateful Dead in a wider context than Part A1. Textual analysis affords the opportunity to capture the larger stories told by the sum of the individual stories. The key goals of Part A2 were to learn more about how Phish are characterized, how Phish might be consequently framed, and how the framing structures the content to seem logical. To explore this the analysis asked the following research questions:

RQ1: How are Phish characterized in *Rolling Stone*?

RQ2: In *Rolling Stone* coverage of Phish, how is the band characterized in relation to the Grateful Dead?

These research questions are principally influenced and shaped by prior framing research even though they do not explicitly mention framing. The questions ask about characterization with the belief that it is likely wise not to assume a presence of framing, instead allowing the evidence to inform such conclusions. Further thoughts on characterization are explored below.

Data

Rolling Stone content was gathered between June 1-4, 2010, using the *Rolling Stone* All Access Archives, which are explicitly marketed as a complete digital library and allow virtual viewing of each back issue in its original form (*Rolling Stone* | *Subscribe*, 2010). Despite the site's occasional server glitches the fee-based All Access Archives provided a superior resource compared to other digital databases that offer only text and severely limited ranges of content. The word "Phish" was searched to obtain all coverage about the band. Search results were

sorted by date and yielded 367 items, of which 295 articles about Phish were subsequently included for analysis. The 72 search results classified by the Archives as "Display Ads"—advertisements about Phish that ranged from a few official Elektra ads for Phish albums (none of which mentioned the Grateful Dead) to many ads for the unofficial sale of Phish tickets—were examined and considered for helpful context, but ultimately excluded from the analysis to retain focus on *Rolling Stone*'s journalistic coverage of Phish. The Archives search did not consider the copy on magazine covers so I manually inspected again for the word "Phish" and found 10 issues that mentioned the name on the cover. These were added to the 295 for a final total of 305 items analyzed.

Analyzed articles commonly ranged from brief news items to album reviews to multi-page feature stories. Principal elements of interest included the article body, headlines, and photo captions. Surrounding articles were observed but deemed generally immaterial and not included in the analysis. Assuming the entirety of articles about Phish to be relevant, letters to the editor were included because they often extend or broaden an article's characterization of Phish. In other words, content from the letters to the editor has the potential to inform us about salient framing issues (Reese & Lewis, 2009; Wiggins, 2003). Search results included 14 issues that contained one or more actual letters to the editor about Phish, spanning from July 1992 to June 2007. The 305 analyzed items span 18 years from the first report of Phish in the May 29, 1992 issue to the most recent May 27, 2010 issue, encompassing Phish's early-'90s rise, late-'90s peak, and hiatus-breakup-reunion of the 2000s.

Procedures

Upon searching "Phish" in the Archives all results were read—chronologically for this and each following reading—to gain an initial understanding of the sample and determine what

to include or exclude. All search results were read-then-printed one-by-one to search for telling patterns. Next, hard copies of all items included in the analysis were closely read a third time and annotated with pencil and highlighter to distinguish emphasized characterizing themes and patterns in relation to the research questions. The now-annotated items were then read a fourth time and meaningful characterizations were manually recorded into a Word document. These recorded quotes were read once more then cataloged and organized to determine their fit into any one or more carefully defined frames and subframes; this fit was based on prominent characterizing patterns and in keeping with Reese's (2003) previously discussed interpretation of frames. Finally, the original search was repeated on the All Access Archives and the results were reread. During this last reading, the already-identified frame and subframe definitions were constantly referenced to situate and verify findings within the context of all coverage of Phish.

Thoughts on Frames, Themes, and Characterization

Reese (2003) pointed out that "frames are of greatest interest to the extent they add up to something bigger than an individual story" (p. 13), so a frame shouldn't be reduced to a simple theme. Rather, a theme that "organizes a way of viewing" (p. 13) by symbolically linking various concepts is most frame-like. In this way Reese (2010) asserted that "frames are specific and explicit agents of ideological processes, they tend to be more general and encompassing than news themes, topics, and issues. Frames organize and structure, and thus are bigger" (p. 18). This is why the textual analysis aimed to identify emphasized deep themes that persistently organize and structure characterization of Phish. In "characterizations" of the band, this analysis looked for description of Phish's nature and/or features. Themes in the characterizations were then identified. The deeper themes that tended to organize and structure Phish's character informed the definition of the frames and subframes.

For instance, a simple theme in the *Rolling Stone* content is the common observation that Phish improvise live. This theme is stimulating but falls short of telling us about how the coverage frames the subject matter. An example of a deeper theme that informs the definition of a frame is the frequent claim that Phish improvise like the Grateful Dead did before them. This theme symbolically links the two concepts, organizes a way of viewing the subject, and structures Phish's character.

Thoughts on Textual Analysis

Adding to the discoveries of the content analysis, Part A2 of this case study is essentially a textual analysis especially focused on locating frames. According to Reese (2010), the eclecticism and multiple perspectives of framing research suggest that "the definitive framing study will never be found" (p. 17). Nonetheless, textual analysis has been endorsed by many as an effective method for studying media (Fairclough, 2003; McKee, 2003) and studying framing manifested in media (Dickerson, 2003; Hertog & McLeod, 2003; Reese & Lewis, 2009; Reese, 2010). Explaining the value of qualitative text analysis for the study of framing, Hertog and McLeod (2003) asserted that "researchers must apply their cultural expertise to induce the meaning of texts" (p. 152). It is in this way that my combined experiences as mass communication theorist; longtime reader of *Rolling Stone, Relix,* and *Spin* magazines; avid follower of media coverage of Phish; and devotee of Phish culture facilitate the systematic and methodical analysis of the data. Framing scholars also suggest that the researcher should avoid identifying frames that are too topic specific, instead seeking to "identify a consistent set of frames generalizable over many cases" (Reese, 2010, p. 24). This was certainly a consideration for this dissertation, aiming within reason to bypass identifying exceedingly Phish-specific

frames. Consequently, the results offer more potential to inform future framing research about similar music-related subjects.

As a general guide for a framing study that employs textual analysis of news content, this dissertation uses Reese and Lewis' (2009) study of *USA Today* stories from 2001-2006 about the War on Terror frame; a study that also combined text analysis and interviews with journalists. Reese and Lewis (2009) contended that textual analysis for the study of framing may help identify "underlying master narratives" that structure and "guide the processing of new content" (p. 780). This is an applicable notion for the case of coverage about Phish, particularly in regard to how Phish are characterized and how Phish are linked to the Grateful Dead.

Fairclough (2003) argued that textual analysis is ideally used in union with other methods, warning of the limits of using textual analysis alone. He suggested that textual analysis is best used in conjunction with a method that considers "how texts practically figure in particular areas of social life" (p. 15). Therefore, this dissertation aims to augment the use of textual analysis through the process of interviews with journalists, as laid out in Part B.

Case Study Part B, "The Connection":
Interviews with Writers, Editors, and Publishers

For Part B, I conducted a series of in-depth interviews with individuals who have significantly written, edited, and/or published content about Phish. The goal was to contribute to our understanding of why, in the case of Phish/Grateful Dead connections, media may emphasize this link and what may be the result of such association. While Part A showed us "how" media tell a story a certain way, Part B provided background, insight, and context for "why" this started and "what" followed. The findings help to explain why journalists have told this story the way Part A indicated, as well as what the resulting pros and cons might be.

With this much in mind, the following research questions comprised Part B:

General Research Questions

RQ1: Why do Phish/Grateful Dead media connections exist, according to those who have significantly written, edited, and/or published content about Phish?

RQ2: What has been the result of Phish/Grateful Dead media connections, according to those who have significantly written, edited, and/or published content about Phish?

Specific Interview Questions

In targeting the general RQs, I asked interviewees questions based on but not bound to the following list of specific inquiries, helping generate a clear understanding of the investigated phenomenon:

IQ1a: What kind of history do you have with Phish?

IQ1b: What kind of history do you have with the Grateful Dead?

IQ2: What influence do you think the Grateful Dead have had on Phish?

IQ3: What is your opinion of typical media characterizations of Phish?

IQ4: How, if at all, do you think media coverage of Phish has evolved over time?

IQ5a: In what ways do you think relating Phish to the Grateful Dead makes sense?

IQ5b: In what ways do you think relating Phish to the Grateful Dead does not make sense?

IQ6: How would you characterize the origin of the Phish/Grateful Dead connection in media coverage of Phish?

IQ7a: In what ways do you think Phish have been positively affected by media connections to the Grateful Dead?

IQ7b: In what ways do you think Phish have been negatively affected by media connections to the Grateful Dead?

IQ8: Do you think Phish/Grateful Dead media connections are ultimately more of a good or bad thing?

IQ9: How would you interpret Phish members' perspectives on media coverage that compares Phish to the Grateful Dead?

IQ10a: What effect, if any, do you think Jerry Garcia's death had on Phish's career?

IQ10b: What role, if any, do you think media coverage played in this process?

IQ11: What role, if any, do you think press releases play in media coverage of Phish that relates them to the Grateful Dead?

IQ12: What do you think about the way Phish have handled media that relates them to the Grateful Dead?

IQ13: What do you think makes the Phish brand successful?

IQ14: How would you characterize Phish's importance in the music industry?

IQ15a: What story do you think the entirety of media coverage of Phish tells?

IQ15b: What story do you think the entirety of media coverage of Phish should tell?

IQ16: Do you believe Phish became the next Grateful Dead?

Who I Interviewed

I performed 19 in-depth interviews with a primary group of people who have significantly written, edited, and/or published content about Phish. Detailed interviewee biographies are available in Appendix B. All interviewees—males, ages unreported but estimated to range from approximately 30 to 60—from this primary group have been significantly involved with writing about Phish. Illustrating this common involvement, their various roles—some very prestigious—include journalist, music critic, author, blogger, academic, and publisher. Their experiences include writing, reporting, chronicling, editing,

publishing, interviewing, and researching as it relates to Phish. Their coverage of Phish has ranged in presentation from books and magazines to local and national newspapers, official Web sites to unofficial blogs, and even hired work directly for the band. Some of the notable publications where their coverage of Phish has been featured are the *New York Times, Rolling Stone*, *Relix*, *Spin*, the *Village Voice*, the *Boston Globe, Crawdaddy!, Filter,* and *Paste*. In particular, many of the interviewees have worked for *Rolling Stone* and/or *Relix*, which arguably represent the most important mainstream and niche media coverage of Phish, respectively.

Overall, the interviewees' work covers Phish across various media and through all decades and stages of the band's career, allowing their combined input to reveal the workings of the relevant phenomenon. The primary group of 19 interviewees is considered effective for a number of additional reasons: participants are easily considered many of the most knowledgeable and experienced writers on the topic of Phish (and a few on the topic of music criticism in general); participants provided insight about the process and challenges of writing about Phish and bands like Phish; participants provided context for interpreting media coverage of Phish and bands in general; the majority of participants are both Phish fans and Grateful Dead fans; participants offered perspective as content producer and often also as Phish and/or Grateful Dead fan, adding an element of the media audience view; and, while the interviewees should only be seen as delivering their personal opinions and never as speaking for Phish, many participants draw from their experiences interviewing Phish and Grateful Dead members.

About this final point regarding Phish members' opinions, it is worth noting that I contacted Phish management multiple times about interviewing band members and managers for this project and my requests were courteously declined. This is not an issue, however, because the alternative sources provided ample insight on the topic. Because I did not have access to the

band, I was inspired to seek other views. And I discovered that there are many perspectives: the band view, the media view, the audience/fan view. Thus, I have examined this case study of Phish by emphasizing one view (i.e. writers/editors/publishers), while aiming to acknowledge and never ignore other views (i.e. Phish's, Elektra's, fans', etc.).

A secondary group of five individuals was also interviewed. This group—all males, ages unreported but estimated to range from approximately 30 to 50, whose biographies are also available in Appendix B—provided additional context beyond the voices of writers/editors/publishers. Utilizing the second group helped reinforce conclusions from the first, yielding consistent and extensive findings. The individuals in the secondary group have all been highly involved with Phish-related media in various capacities, enabling them to comment knowledgably and uniquely on the topic. This group consisted of the former Senior Vice President of Marketing at Elektra Records, who provided valuable wisdom from his experience working with Phish from the marketing side of the record label; Phish's longtime merchandise artist, who shared helpful context from his extensive experience working with the band; a professional photographer, who offered visually-oriented commentary on the topic; and members of two popular bands often described as jambands, who shared key insights on their experiences dealing with media coverage often colored by Grateful Dead and Phish references.

With limitless time and money, the number of interviews could have been expanded. Additional individuals who might have contributed informative insights include John Paluska, Jason Colton, Robert Christgau, Les Kippel, Toni Brown, John Dwork, Dennis McNally, Sherry Ring Ginsberg, Ray Waddell, Charlie Dirksen, Jim Raras, Chris Bertolet, David Steinberg, Jeremy Goodwin, Will Hermes, Matt Hendrickson, and many others. Suffice it to say that the two groups of 24 total interviewees who participated in this study provided ample perspective.

Procedures

In terms of procedures I carried out the following sequence for all interviews. In May 2009, Temple University's Institutional Review Board approved this project's proposed research involving human participants. Around this time I began contacting specific individuals with interview requests and project details. Initial potential interviewees were selected using a few approaches, mainly by consulting knowledgeable acquaintances for recommendations and by thoroughly reviewing much media coverage of Phish to identify "who's who." Contact information was obtained either through acquaintances or Internet listings. Interviewees were subsequently asked for additional recommendations. This method allowed the selected pool to grow to a sufficient size. The interview sampling technique might be generally described as a snowball type. The goal was not to obtain a random sample size from which generalizations could be drawn in representation of a larger population, but to interview a specific plurality of those who arguably share the most extraordinary voices and experiences on the topic.

Interviews were conducted between June 2009 and June 2010. Most interviews were conducted by phone, although a few exceptions were face-to-face or by e-mail. I followed a standardized open-ended protocol during each interview. This consisted of roughly 20 uniform questions. Depending on time and participant credentials, the number of questions varied. Although I had a set order of questions I remained flexible and changed the sequence depending on the circumstances. I was also open to discussing other topics depending on what ideas the interviewee addressed, yet I always refrained from contributing more than the questions.

All but e-mail correspondences were audio recorded using a Sony ICD-UX70 digital voice recorder, always with the interviewee's permission. Each recording was then uploaded to a computer and personally transcribed word-for-word. Interviews ran between about 20 and 90

minutes, with the average length being approximately 40 minutes. The transcriptions were then read and annotated for themes that best responded to the research questions; many themes were identified. Highlights from each interview were then distilled into one of two documents, each corresponding with a research question, and organized by interviewee. These documents were then transformed a final time by further narrowing the content to only the most relevant statements, organized by the various themes that appeared regarding each research question.

In assembling the comments into cohesive passages I strived to accurately represent the interviewee's perspective. My aim was to quote accurately and in context of the original statement while fully acknowledging that responses should only be seen as part of the interviewee's unabridged view. I also aimed to balance responses to the extent that each interviewee's comments were featured at least once. Of course, this was determined by factors such as how long an interview lasted, how many quotes were available from which to select, or how thoroughly an interviewee spoke about certain themes. Such factors influenced why some interviewees are featured more than others.

Thoughts on Interviews

In-depth interviews allow issues to be explored thoroughly and in ways that are less possible via survey, for example. With the interview there is the possibility of learning something unpredicted. Or, as Hertog and McLeod (2003) wrote about qualitative analysis in framing research, "the ability to learn as part of the method itself is one of the strengths of qualitative analysis and should not be lost in an attempt at 'rigor'" (p. 153).

Since this dissertation is about media coverage the focus of Part B extends beyond just the content—examined through Part A's analyses—to incorporate the views of those who have significantly written, edited, and/or published content about the subject of Phish. To be clear

though, this part of the case study is much more than a review of what journalists think of Phish. Rather, it is a useful compilation of what key writers, editors, and publishers think of Phish, journalism, and media.

Interviews provided an advantageous and fitting complement to Part A's analyses. The quantitative nature of the content analysis is also favorably balanced by the qualitative findings of the interviews and textual analysis. Hertog and McLeod (2003) argued that framing research is improved by the use of mixed methods that allow findings to be compared and checked. They wrote, "One of the reasons we recommend a mixture of quantitative and qualitative analysis is the diffuse nature of frames, and their openness to varied interpretations" (p. 153). Highlighting interviews as an especially useful method for comparison, for example with content analysis data, they said, "primary interviews with [content] producers represent one of the most valuable research methods in the study of popular culture" because they "can draw out the basic frames content producers use to organize the world and how these are translated into texts" (p. 154). Affirming such suggestions, this study's interviews enhanced interpretation of the media coverage.

Conclusion

This chapter provided details of the dissertation's terminology and three-pronged approach to the case study of Phish coverage. The systematic investigations were informed by relevant prior research and used methods shown to be effective in research on positioning and framing issues, offering productive means of investigation. The research questions shaped the purposeful selection of the mixed methods, through which this dissertation strives to offer a methodologically balanced and effective examination. While Part A focuses on analyzing media content, Part B is concerned with content producers and other important individuals. While one

component of the case study accented quantitative findings about the frequency of coverage patterns the other two components employed more qualitative dissection of the topic. The combination of this dissertation's methods proved effective and profitable, as illustrated by the findings in the following chapters.

CHAPTER SIX

CASE STUDY PART A1, "BIRDS OF A FEATHER": CONTENT ANALYSIS OF PHISH ALBUM REVIEWS FROM *ROLLING STONE*

Birds of a feather may flock together, but to what extent? With this question in mind the following investigation aims to systematically analyze media coverage about Phish that connects the band to the Grateful Dead. The intent is more than a verification of Phish/Grateful Dead media links. The goal is instead to reveal how connections to the Grateful Dead recur, are constructed, and are prominent in a single meaningful source. This is accomplished by mapping the pattern of Phish/Grateful Dead connections and dissecting indications of a collective view. To begin studying these issues this chapter offers a content analysis performed on Phish album reviews from *Rolling Stone*.

Research Questions

The pattern of media coverage that connects Phish to the Grateful Dead remains formally unexplored. To begin systematically examining this phenomenon with a narrow focus on a single source it is useful to learn exactly how often this pattern occurs. This raises the first of three research questions:

RQ1: How frequently are Phish connected to the Grateful Dead in *Rolling Stone* album reviews of Phish?

Since there are many ways a connection between Phish and the Grateful Dead may be presented this raises the next research question:

RQ2: How frequently is the connection of Phish to the Grateful Dead in *Rolling Stone* album reviews of Phish constructed via different forms of links?

Understanding connections of Phish to other musicians in media content provides valuable context for understanding the extent to which Grateful Dead references are pronounced and notable. Thus, the third research question:

RQ3: How frequently are Phish connected to musicians other than the Grateful Dead in *Rolling Stone* album reviews of Phish?

Method

As detailed in the Methods chapter, this part of the case study is a content analysis of *Rolling Stone* Phish album reviews. The data were acquired from RollingStone.com in late-2009 and included all 12 available album reviews. Eight different authors wrote these reviews, which span from 1995-2009. Using a coding manual, three total coders each performed a content analysis on the dozen album reviews, with each coding session lasting 60-90 minutes.

Results

All coders identified corresponding, consistent findings in their analyses. Generally, results of the analysis revealed that most of the Phish album reviews in *Rolling Stone* connect the band to the Grateful Dead. These connections are constructed via different forms of links, as seen in Table 2. Further, Phish are connected to the Grateful Dead more than any other band.

Table 2. *Grateful Dead References in Phish Album Reviews*

Phish album (year of release)	Grateful Dead band name?	Grateful Dead album?	Grateful Dead song?	Grateful Dead member?
A Live One (1995)	-	-	-	-
Billy Breathes (1996)	"Grateful Dead"	"*Live/Dead*" "*Workingman's Dead*"	-	-
Slip, Stitch and Pass (1997)	"Grateful Dead"	-	-	-
The Story of the Ghost (1998)	"Grateful Dead"	-	-	-
Farmhouse (2000)	-	-	-	-
Round Room (2002)	"Grateful Dead"	-	-	-
Undermind (2004)	"Grateful Dead" "the Dead"	"*American Beauty*"	"Box of Rain"	-
Live… New Year's Eve 1995 (2005)	-	-	-	"Jerry Garcia"
Colorado '88 (2006)	"Grateful Dead"	-	-	-
Vegas 96 (2007)	-	-	-	-
At the Roxy (2008)	-	-	-	-
Joy (2009)	-	-	"Terrapin Station"	"Phil Lesh" "Jerry Garcia"

RQ1 addressed how frequently Phish are connected to the Grateful Dead in *Rolling Stone* albums reviews of Phish (see Table 2). Eight of the 12 reviews contained in some form at least one reference to the Grateful Dead. In total, the analysis identified 15 references to the Grateful Dead. The album review with the most references, *Undermind,* contained four through various constructions. Of the eight individuals who authored the 12 reviews, six writers made Grateful Dead references in at least one review and two writers made references in two reviews.

RQ2 dealt with how frequently connections to the Grateful Dead in *Rolling Stone* album reviews of Phish are constructed via different forms of links. The analysis observed that Grateful Dead references are constructed through various forms of explicit mentions of Grateful Dead-related band names, albums, songs, and members (see Table 2). Overall, five reviews contained a single form of Grateful Dead reference, two contained two forms, and one contained three forms. Six album reviews contained the phrase "Grateful Dead," with one of those also mentioning "the Dead." Two reviews referenced Grateful Dead album titles, with one of the reviews citing a pair of Grateful Dead records. Likewise, two reviews referenced a specific Grateful Dead song. In terms of references to Grateful Dead-related individuals, two of the 12 reviews mentioned singer/guitarist Jerry Garcia and one of those two also cited bassist Phil Lesh.

RQ3 sought to bring context to Grateful Dead references by discovering details about references to other musicians. The analysis found that after the Grateful Dead the Who are most frequently connected to Phish in the *Rolling Stone* album reviews. A total of eight Who connections were found in three reviews: three explicit references to "the Who," two references to the Who album *Quadrophenia*, two Who songs cited, and a single reference to bassist John Entwhistle. Beyond the Who, a handful of other artists were referenced twice among the 12 reviews (e.g., the Beatles, Pink Floyd, Dave Matthews, Blues Traveler, John Coltrane). Notably,

key Phish musical influences like Frank Zappa, Carlos Santana, Pat Metheny, and Led Zeppelin were mentioned in a single review each.

Discussion

The content analysis of the 12 Phish album reviews revealed details about how frequently Phish are connected to the Grateful Dead, how these connections are constructed, and how they compare to other references. **RQ1** found that the majority of units under analysis mentions the Grateful Dead in Phish album reviews. Notably, fifteen total references were found in eight of 12 reviews. This extreme connection injects the Grateful Dead as a subtopic within the topic of Phish, thereby positioning the latter band in relation to the former. Grateful Dead references practically span the entire range, starting with the second (*Billy Breathes*) and ending with the most recent (*Joy*). The majority of reviews and the majority of authors that connect Phish to the Grateful Dead suggests a compelling collective view.

For **RQ2,** evidence showed that connections are constructed via different links and presented in a variety of forms. Explicit references to the Grateful Dead name were most common. For example, the 1997 *Slip, Stitch and Pass* review declared, "like the Grateful Dead, the eternally jamming Phish are best judged by their concerts" (Hermes, 1997). A year later, *The Story of the Ghost* review discussed Phish in the context of "post-Grateful Dead pups" (Kot, 1998a). Likewise, the *Round Room* review called one Phish song an "idyllic Grateful Dead-ish gospel waltz" (Moon, 2002).

While most reviews containing a Grateful Dead reference had only a single mention, a few were more complex and drew deeper parallels between the two bands. For instance, the *Undermind* review conveyed that a certain Phish song "evokes 'Box of Rain,' one of the stronger tunes by Phish's obvious influence, the Grateful Dead. But *Undermind* is no vintage *American*

Beauty" (Kemp, 2004), citing the celebrated Grateful Dead album. After also referencing two Grateful Dead members, the *Joy* review stated, "on the multipart, 13-minute 'Time Turns Elastic'—Phish's own 'Terrapin Station'—there's none of the overreaching that's undercut the band's past work" (Hermes, 2009). Here the reviewer rendered an elaborate Phish piece into a catchy, quickly digestible form and suggested a legendary Grateful Dead epic to understand Phish's material.

The more complex references made to Grateful Dead albums and songs illustrate a certain finesse required to draw effectively such a layered analogy. With a knowledge of both worlds, Gehr (1996) suggested that "if *A Live One* was Phish's variation on the Grateful Dead's *Live/Dead, Billy Breathes* is part *Workingman's Dead* and part *Abbey Road,* focused on musical essences often obscured by rock-concert spectacle." The author connected the first official live Phish album to the Grateful Dead correlate, about a quarter-century its senior. He further expressed that the reviewed album resembles studio highs of both the Grateful Dead and the Beatles. Gehr's review utilized the Grateful Dead analogy to relay the essence of Phish, while acknowledging the band as unique.

As a whole, the pattern of connections reveals more than a direct, recurring "Recommended If You Like" reference. Rather, different forms of links introduce the Grateful Dead in various circumstances throughout common Phish parlance. In addition to conveying what the music sounds like, the Phish/Grateful Dead connection arises to help the audience understand issues like Phish's discography, the importance of Phish's live show, who Phish may be influenced by, and Phish's career path. The following chapter's textual analysis explores these threads further.

This last point about understanding Phish's career is exemplified by two particular reviews. The assessment of *Live at Madison Square Garden New Year's Eve 1995* explained, in hindsight, that Phish were "affirming the strength of the jam audience in the face of Jerry Garcia's death in August" (O'Donnell, 2006a) that year. The review for another archival release, *Colorado '88*, stated, "long before Phish replaced the Grateful Dead as America's greatest jam band, the foursome was one goofy-ass bar act" (O'Donnell, 2006b). Together the different examples of Phish/Grateful Dead connections illustrate how the media content assembles a multi-layered association between the two bands.

Meanwhile, **RQ3** found that no other band is connected to Phish nearly as often as the Grateful Dead. In comparison, the Who were the second most referenced band. However, of the eight mostly objective Who references, four were about Phish covering the Who's *Quadrophenia* album on Halloween 1995, three about Phish covering Who songs, and one paired directly with a Grateful Dead connection: "bassist Mike Gordon, like kindred spirits Phil Lesh and John Entwhistle" (Hermes, 2009). These results raise questions about why Phish's other key musical influences are not mentioned in closer frequency to the Grateful Dead, or why the Grateful Dead are conspicuously referenced so much more than others. It is highly questionable whether the frequency with which the Grateful Dead are mentioned matches the degree to which the group influenced Phish. Overall, the examples illustrate that Grateful Dead connections are not just the most present, but are the sole pronounced recurrence. In addition, they are typically conveyed with strikingly more subjective imagination than any other reference.

Conclusion

The content analysis determined how regularly the Phish/Grateful Dead media connection persists, is organized, and may seem salient compared to other references. In broad

terms, this chapter aimed to discover more about positioning via research questions concerning "connections" and by looking outside the realm of traditionally studied products, such as those discussed in previous chapters. These aims were part of the intention to learn about how the processes of positioning and framing could be related. Specifically, in the course of documenting available perspectives, this chapter was able to quantify how Phish/Grateful Dead connections recur, are constructed, and are prominent in media. Overall, fitting with the positioning literature, the evidence clearly indicates Phish being positioned. This is most clear in the way the coverage oversimplifies Phish and relates them to the Grateful Dead. Keeping with Reese's (2003) definition of frames—"*organizing principles* that are socially *shared* and *persistent* over time, that work *symbolically* to meaningfully *structure* the social world" (p. 11)—this chapter's results suggest much by the way Phish are characterized in *Rolling Stone*. First, these results specifically revealed that the majority of reviews and authors connected Phish to the Grateful Dead. Such meaningful persistence suggests a socially shared collective view. Second, the results indicated that the Phish/Grateful Dead connection is constructed via different links—ranging from the Grateful Dead's name to their songs—to assemble a multi-layered association between the groups. This organization suggests more than a simple thematic relationship, but rather the more complicated and symbolic structuring that defines framing. Third, results showed that Grateful Dead references are the most present, the sole pronounced recurrence, and the most subjectively and creatively conveyed. This suggests distinctly meaningful prominence and surely emphasizes why this topic merits further examination. With this in mind, the following chapter's textual analysis elaborates on such indication of media's potential to form and further a coherent total story.

CHAPTER SEVEN

CASE STUDY PART A2, "ALL THINGS RECONSIDERED": TEXTUAL ANALYSIS OF ALL PHISH COVERAGE IN *ROLLING STONE*

When all the individual parts of a puzzle are pieced together a complex and complete image is formed. This chapter is based on the presumption that like a puzzle multiple small individual media stories may add up and fit together to form larger ones. When critically assessing mass media it is therefore beneficial to collectively reconsider substantial sets of prior and present coverage to help investigate broader phenomena. By analyzing all coverage from one meaningful source, this part of the case study aims to discover what larger story or stories are told about Phish. The goal is more than identifying simple themes, but to understand how Phish are characterized, how Phish may be consequently framed, and how the framing structures the content to seem logical. To explore these issues this chapter offers a textual analysis of all Phish coverage from *Rolling Stone* magazine.

Research Questions

Throughout their career, Phish have been featured quite a bit in *Rolling Stone* magazine. Studying the band's characterization individually by article and cumulatively as a collection could illustrate much about framing. To begin understanding this it is necessary to ask the first in a pair of research questions:

RQ1: How are Phish characterized in *Rolling Stone*?

Further narrowing the issue posed by RQ1, the second research question looks specifically at coverage of Phish that also mentions the Grateful Dead in some way. Compared to Part A1, this question utilizes the more qualitative manner of textual analysis to augment the findings of the previous content analysis, which indicated that Phish were most often linked to

the Grateful Dead. Thus, RQ2 aims to better understand how such characterization is manifested.

RQ2: In *Rolling Stone* coverage of Phish, how is the band characterized in relation to the Grateful Dead?

Method

As thoroughly laid out in the Methods chapter, this part of the case study is a textual analysis of all *Rolling Stone* coverage of Phish. The data were obtained using the *Rolling Stone* All Access Archives, a digital library of the magazine's back issues, wherein the word "Phish" was searched. The 18 years of subsequently examined *Rolling Stone* coverage ranged from the first report of Phish in the May 29, 1992, issue to the most recent May 27, 2010, issue as of this analysis. In total, this investigation analyzed 305 items, which included magazine covers, articles, and letters to the editor.

Results

A careful analysis of the Phish coverage revealed various frames through which Phish are regularly portrayed. Seeking details about how Phish are characterized, through an inductive approach this part of the case study identified five frames and four subframes (see Table 3).

Table 3. *Five Frames and Four Subframes Characterizing Phish in Rolling Stone*

Frame (RQ1)	Subframe (RQ2)
(1) Phish as superlatively successful	-
(2) Phish as an unconventional band	-
(3) Phish as the subject of mockery	-
(4) Phish in relation to peers and/or successors	-
(5) Phish in relation to the Grateful Dead	(1) Musical
	(2) Historical
	(3) Sociocultural
	(4) Organizational

RQ1 addressed how Phish are characterized in *Rolling Stone* coverage. The analysis revealed five dominant frames in the typical characterization of the band: (1) Phish as

superlatively successful; (2) Phish as an unconventional band; (3) Phish as the subject of mockery; (4) Phish in relation to various peers and/or successors; (5) and Phish in relation to the Grateful Dead. Throughout the coverage these frames function to attempt to make sense of Phish's unique character.

First, the frame characterizing Phish as superlatively successful was defined by comments that credit the band with superlative qualities, designations, or achievements. Second, the frame characterizing Phish as an unconventional band was defined by comments that depict the group as unconventional, mainstream outsiders, odd, atypical, or exceptions to some rule/norm. Third, the frame characterizing Phish as the subject of mockery was defined by comments—ranging from minimal to severe—that utilize mockery, derision, ridicule, or sarcasm in the discussion of Phish. Fourth, the frame characterizing Phish in relation to various peers and/or successors was defined by references to musicians deemed comparable to Phish, typically as peers and/or successors. Finally, the frame characterizing Phish in relation to the Grateful Dead was defined by any decipherable reference—implicit or explicit—to the latter band that relates/connects/links them to former.

RQ2 asked how in *Rolling Stone* Phish are characterized in relation to the Grateful Dead. The analysis found that the two bands are typically linked via four subframes: (1) musical, (2) historical, (3) sociocultural, and (4) organizational. These subframes make the link between the bands seem logical.

The musical subframe was defined by content relating Phish's music to the Grateful Dead's. Identification of this subframe was qualified by comments about the sound or style of the music. The historical subframe was defined by content relating the historical chronicling of Phish's career to the Grateful Dead. Qualifiers here included discussion about specific

times/timelines or succession-status labels like "new Grateful Dead" or "heir to the Grateful Dead." The sociocultural subframe, which regards only the audience, was defined by content relating social and cultural factors associated with Phish to the Grateful Dead. This subframe was mainly typified by comments about audience characteristics and customs like following the band, concert taping, drug use, or attire and appearance. The organizational subframe—which in contrast to the sociocultural regards only the band—was defined by content relating the Phish organization's operations to the Grateful Dead. Classification into this subframe was qualified by comments about regular touring, grassroots promotion, band commerce, or business strategies (ranging from canny ideas to rock and roll pitfalls).

Discussion

Textual analysis identified five frames about coverage of Phish and four subframes about coverage that relates Phish to the Grateful Dead. Ample evidence from many articles throughout the sample illustrates the various ways Phish are portrayed and the various ways a connection between Phish and the Grateful Dead is structured to seem logical.

Using the definitions above, the following discussion interprets the findings frame-by-frame. This discussion aims to avoid citing redundant evidence from album reviews examined in the previous content analysis. The focus here is instead on new examples. Among such evidence some of the passages fit neatly into one frame, while other comments fit multiple frames; this section presents both types for the sake of clarity and comprehensiveness. As demonstrated below, a quote may sometimes fit multiple frames but be appropriate evidence for discussion of one frame in particular. This is not meant to imply distinct categorization, only useful representation of a certain pattern.

Research Question 1

For **RQ1**, the analysis found five frames, (1) the first of which is the frame characterizing Phish as superlatively successful. This frame uses various superlative plaudits to portray Phish as a phenomenally successful contemporary jamband. The frame tends to answer the general question, "What is this thing the leader of?"—a common rumination in the positioning process. When considering the frame as a whole and what it seems to indicate about Phish the content emphasizes how successful Phish have been throughout their career. Regarding its evolution, the superlatively successful frame blossomed around 1995 and continued consistently and dominantly forward as Phish's popularity also grew.

A long list of examples illustrates framing of Phish in this manner. Some articles accent the paradoxical cult-like nature of Phish's success, calling them "the country's biggest cult act" (Gehr, 1996, p. 66) or describing "a career as the hottest cult band in America" (Fricke, 1999, p. 62). Other content focuses on Phish as the "biggest," like the article that stated, "By the fall of 2000, Phish were one of the biggest acts in rock" (Fricke, 2003c, p. 42). A 1997 *Rolling Stone* cover—featuring *X-Files* star Gillian Anderson—declared, "PHISH AMERICA'S BIGGEST JAM BAND!" (*Rolling Stone—The X FILES*, 1997, cover), while certain articles apply the phrase: "Phish, America's biggest jam band, are putting their jams online for easy downloading at a friendly price" (Fricke, 2003a, p. 20). Some content also focuses on the scale of Phish's economic success, calling the band one of "music's biggest moneymakers" (LaFranco, 2004, p. 48). Another piece explained, "Two years ago, Anastasio walked away from Phish, the world's biggest jam band, dissolving one of music's most lucrative touring operations" (Scaggs, 2006, p. 44). In addition to an emphasis on being the "biggest," other content frames Phish as the "greatest," like the 2003 cover—Phish's only front-page feature appearance—that proclaimed,

"Phish America's Greatest Jam Band Returns" (*Rolling Stone—Phish,* 2003). Another 2003 article listed Phish as one of "The Twenty Greatest Live Acts in the World" (Hendrickson et al., 2003, p. 47), calling them "rock's best current improvisers" (p. 48).

Equally so, their habitual summer festivals have been called "the single most dynamic and reliable summer-concert experience" (Healy, 1999, p. 63) and their New Year's Eve 1995 concert at Madison Square Garden in New York was named one of "fifteen of the best and most historically significant concert events" (Fricke, 1999, p. 42) from the 1990s. Highlighting the band's success during the end of that decade one article called Phish "the most important band of the Nineties" (Hendrickson, 1998, p. 22). A decade later another looked back and similarly declared them "kings of the Nineties jam-band scene" O'Donnell, 2008, p. 129). Likewise, a pattern of content describes Phish via supreme titles, the most frequent being the many articles that call Phish "jam kings" (Fricke, 2003b, p. 11; Jarnow, 2003, p. 47; LaFranco, 2004, p. 52). Other instances include calling Phish "jam masters" (Malley, 2004, p. 114) and "the Vermont-based mother ship of the jam-band nation" (Kot, 1998b, p. 73), or calling Anastasio "king of the jams" (Dana, 2001, p. 33) or a "guitar god" (Scaggs, 2006, p. 44).

(2) Next, the frame characterizing Phish as an unconventional band seems to address the general question, "How does this thing fit into the norm or conform to what is typical?" The content suggests that Phish's qualities—their music, their career, their success—do not easily fit with what one might consider normal expectations. Relatively consistent from 1992 to the present, the unconventional band frame is a clear thread in the narrative of Phish's career.

Examples from this frame are plentiful. The review for *The Story of the Ghost* called that recording, "a jam-band album for people who hate jam bands" (Kot, 1998b, p. 74), implying that the band's offering is an unconventional exception to the norm. A review of Phish's 2003

summer festival, IT, concluded that "more than 60,000 Phish fans… witnessed the end of Phish's summer tour – and one of the most bizarre rock spectacles ever seen" (Jarnow, 2003, p. 47). Here, the phrase "most bizarre" points to the band's atypical nature, not unlike the live Phish review that decided, "a rarefied few bands in rock history have achieved such fusion with their audience (Young, 1998, p. 30). One letter to the editor commented, "Kudos to your article on Phish.... It reads as though Phish actually sink some of their earnings back into the fans – a pleasant change in an industry where fans get only a stage show and a ticket stub for their troubles" (Truxell, 1998, p. 26).

Another dimension to this frame highlights Phish's place outside the mainstream. Analyzing the phenomenon of Phish's live success one writer stated, "While the music world spent the past few years obsessing over grunge, a grass-roots, militia-movement-style takeover of the amphitheaters of America progressed virtually unnoticed" (Moon, 1995, p. 99). Further summarizing this another article said, "Phish are one of the most successful bands of the last ten years. But then, you might not know that, because their rise… has been accomplished with no radio play and scant notice from the mainstream media" (Hendrickson, 2000, p. 3). And in a similar way, Puterbaugh (1997) creatively likened Phish to their home state and city to illustrate the group's orientation outside the mainstream:

> In many ways, the band reflects its milieu. Vermont endures as a bastion of Old Guard liberalism where signs of "progress" that are foregone conclusions elsewhere – urban sprawl, environmental ruin, a handgun in every household, a Wal-Mart in every neck of what used to be the woods – still meet principled resistance. Burlington, with a modest population of 137,000, is Vermont's largest city. (p. 45)

(3) The mockery frame presents Phish, Phish fans, and Phish concerts as the butt of an endless joke. This frame seems to answer the general question, "How cool or uncool is this thing?" The content seems to indicate popular media's resistance to seriously embrace and report on the Phish phenomenon. Similar to the success frame, the mockery frame's evolution swelled around 1995 and continued to blossom along with Phish's success. Although the mockery arguably eased by the latter half of the 2000s, post-breakup, it did not disappear.

For instance, a comment making Phish the subject of minimal mockery includes: "The real highlight of the four-hour jamathon took place at midnight, when the audience counted down the seconds as a giant hacky sack was dropped. OK, that last bit isn't true. But it sounds true" ("New year's Phish phrenzy," 2003-2004, p. 52). In contrast, a review of notable events from the year 2000 addressed the start of the band's hiatus and exemplifies a more severe example of the mockery frame:

> Because the group had no comment ("The plan is that there is no plan," said a representative), the press was forced to interview stunned Phish fans instead, many of whom follow Phish from city to city, Grateful Dead-style, noodle-dancing and eating parking-lot tofu sandwiches. "It's a good thing," said twenty-three-year-old Josh Rousseau. "They need time to chill." Time to chill? From jamming? From packing the bong? How about being a coal miner for a living? ("Phish fans, like, bummed," 2000-2001, p. 75)

It is worth noting that within this frame, *Rolling Stone*'s annual "Rock & Roll Yearbook" issues are unmistakably harsh. Typically compiled by a group of *Rolling Stone* writers, the "Yearbook" content often reviewed remarkable Phish accomplishments like successful concerts or festivals with an overt tone of mockery ("Buzz killed," 2004-2005, p. 126; Dunn, Panahpour, Rubiner, &

Wiederhorn, 1996-1997, p. 74; "New year's Phish phrenzy," 2003-2004, p. 52; "Phish fans, like, bummed," 2000-2001, p. 75; "The jam goes ever on," 2001-2002, p. 88). While Phish may not be the only ones targeted by the often-humorous recap issue, the magazine's tone serves to magnify the mockery of Phish across year-round coverage. In this way, the "Yearbook" content represents an annual summary view of Phish.

Comments that clearly and outwardly mocked the band exemplify this frame. The headline for a review of an Animal Collective album read, "Imagine that cooler version of Phish that you always wished for" (Sarig, 2004, p. 118); this is apparently an effort to characterize the reviewed band as a mix between indie rock (i.e. cool and irreverent) and a Phish-like jam band (i.e. not cool, but technically talented). Overlapping the superlatively successful and mockery frames, one Phish fan's letter to the editor wondered about this notion of cool: "You have finally put Phish, one of the most significant, innovative and influential bands of the last decade, on the cover [RS 917]. Now how long until you make them look cool?" (Freeman, 2003, p. 14). In a review of notable 2004 events, another quote derisively explained, "Mellows were harshed around the world at the news that Phish were finally calling it quits. And by 'it,' we mean 'a touching yet doomed twenty-year campaign to prove that fretless bass solos don't suck'" ("Buzz killed," 2004-2005, p. 126). Similarly, the album review for Phish's *A Live One* mercilessly claimed, "Phish are probably the most self-indulgent act ever to sell out New York's Madison Square Garden" (Moon, 1995, p. 100). Another of Moon's album reviews, for *Round Room*, mocked the band as follows:

> Then Trey Anastasio begins to sing. And suddenly, with whiplash force, the new vistas vanish and we're yanked back into the phantasmagoric world of Phishspeak, circa 1995 – that shadowy realm where everything has triple meanings and the words are too

> cumbersome for the elegant music that carries them…. Oh, the heaviosity! (Moon, 2003, p. 63)

With this tone in mind it is unsurprising that one *Rolling Stone* preface to the letters to the editor stated, "Phishheads continue to pummel us for a Random Note knocking their beloved band. To foster good will, we've made a generous contribution to the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Phish." ("Correspondence love letters & advice," 1994, p. 12).

Accordingly, some content extends focus from the band to also include Phish fans, making them the target of the joke. One article cracked, "Now that Phish are on hiatus, what are all the hardy souls who follow the band across the country going to do? Will they return to their jobs and marriages?" (Kemp, 2000, p. 42). Another article similarly noted, "Phish's big, heartfelt goodbye last year didn't exactly cure their legions of fans of the urge to spend their summers touring the country in VW buses" (Hoard, 2005, p. 90). Following this pattern, an article stated:

> "If there's one thing I learned from Phish," noted the on-hiatus band's singer-guitarist Trey Anastasio, "it's how to pace a show." Not to nitpick, but is "pacing" really that tough to pull off when your audience is stoned by the end of the first guitar solo? ("The jam goes ever on," 2001-2002, p. 88)

Other comments falling into this frame mocked Phish concerts. For instance, one writer mockingly recounted his apparent outsider experience at a Madison Square Garden show:

> When the lights came up for the second intermission, this guy leaned over and said, "This is New Year's Eve. You're sitting down. Why are you here?" Which meant: "The whole point of a Phish concert is to obliterate the neocortex with Noodle Dance Delirium, to become one with the Monolithic Pulsing Protoplasm, to devolve for an evening of

> Invertebrate Ecstasy before resuming our genetically endowed hell of human individuation. Would that I could cast thee into fire for just sitting there, infidel!" (Young, 1998, p. 30)

Often references to Phish concerts occurred outside articles strictly about Phish and were explicitly tied to quips about drug use. One article about Bill Clinton's work in China jokingly noted, "In case Phish tour China, the DEA will aid Chinese police in making sure that anyone who sells LSD in the concert parking lot gets a ten-year prison sentence" (O'Rourke, 1998, p. 46). An article from the magazine's 1999 "Hot List" issue reported the trend of mail-order urine: "Worried that Big Brother will find out how you spent your Saturday night at the Phish show? Now, for sixty-nine dollars a shot, you can use someone else's urine for that stressful drug test" ("Hot piss," 1999, p. 86). And in yet another example of Phish, Phish fans, or Phish concerts being mocked, one article reviewed a Cypress Hill album by noting, "B-Real and Sen-Dog come on as a hip-hop Cheech and Chong, praising the sweet leaf with a devotion rarely seen beyond the parking lot at a Phish concert" (Touré, Sheffield, & Hunter, 1999, p. 72).

(4) The frame characterizing Phish in relation to various peers and/or successors captures content that references other musicians, defining them as comparable to Phish in some way. The concepts of both peer and successor are lumped into this single frame because the two descriptors are not necessarily distinct, as a peer may also be a successor. This idea is illustrated by a quote about Phish's old tour mates: "Capitalizing on the void left by a Phish-free summer, Widespread Panic have scheduled a tour for June 13th-July 29th" ("Tour news," 2001, p. 55). The full frame tends to answer the general questions, "Who are this thing's peers?" and/or "Who might follow in this thing's footsteps?"

This frame positions Phish by indicating where they and various other bands fall in the *Rolling Stone*-defined hierarchy of music and culture, while providing reference points for processing and comparing information. This frame, combined with the next and its subframes, contributes to the continual construction of a rock and roll/jamband hierarchy that clearly defines the Grateful Dead at the top of a first generation, Phish clearly at the top of a second generation, and a third generation that apparently has no single leader, but a narrow pack of contenders. Further evidence arises in the discussion of the four subframes revealed through RQ2.

This frame has always been present in coverage of Phish, as it is a common tool of music criticism. In particular, the frame has evolved such that Phish was once just a peer to fellow H.O.R.D.E. tour bands, such as Blues Traveler and Spin Doctors. As Phish's success grew and they became "America's Biggest Jam Band," Dave Matthews Band appears to have become the group best suited for comparison as a contemporary peer, if even a cultural match and not a musical one. Meanwhile, Phish also became a more frequent reference in coverage of other bands.

Despite persistent references to the Grateful Dead, coverage of Phish evolved to the extent that the Vermont quartet became an occasional reference in coverage of seemingly Phish-like successors. Through the same sort of vocabulary that often links Phish to the Grateful Dead, one article called Umphrey's McGee "leading contenders for Phish's jam-smeared crown" who were "odds-on favorites in the next-Phish sweepstakes" (Fricke, 2004, p. 74). A Disco Biscuits album review stated, "The rave-schooled Disco Biscuits have been among Phish's heir apparents for a decade now" (Hermes, 2010, p. 76). "Of all the Dead Jr., extended-Phish-family bands, Moe. are among the few whose composing approaches that kind of focused greatness" (Fricke, 1998-1999, p. 159), read another review. Other passages fitting this frame included references to

String Cheese Incident, Particle, Gomez, Animal Collective, Matisyahu, and Medeski, Martin, and Wood.

In characterizing Phish and their peers the band is often lumped alongside other musicians to convey some manner of comparison. General examples from this frame often resembled the statement from the review of Phish's *The Story of the Ghost*, which challenged, "You want rock flash? Consult Dave Matthews or Blues Traveler" (Kot, 1998b, p. 74), to explain that Phish slightly differ from their friends. The lumping of Phish's peers through reference to the Grateful Dead is also a common device. One review of a Hampton Grease Band reissue stated, "Fans of post-Grateful Dead jamming units like the Dave Matthews Band, Widespread Panic and Phish will be pleasantly blown away" (Coleman, 1996-1997, p. 189). In hindsight, the magazine's earliest article about Phish is representative of this and the budding *Rolling Stone* perspective on the band: "For the last few years, young, jam-happy outfits like Blues Traveler, Phish and the Spin Doctors have been riding in the wake of old road warriors like the Allman Brothers and, most notably, the Grateful Dead" (Giles, 1992, p. 15). The cover of this issue even prominently featured the phrase, "*the* NEW HIPPIE BANDS," with the trio listed underneath: "BLUES TRAVELER, SPIN DOCTOR [*sic*], *and* PHISH" (*Rolling Stone—Tom Cruise, 1992, cover*).

(5) The frame characterizing Phish in relation to the Grateful Dead is an organized pattern of content that somehow links the former to the latter. This frame tends to answer the general questions, "Who are this thing's superiors?" or "What older or more familiar thing is this newer thing like?" What these issues actually tend to tell us about Phish is that the Grateful Dead are their superior, Phish are following in the Grateful Dead's footsteps, and Phish may be best understood as a modern analog of the Grateful Dead. Since the earliest article, this frame

has persisted across time and authors. The findings for this frame revealed four subframes, for which evidence is thoroughly reviewed below in RQ2.

Research Question 2

Still keeping with the frame guidelines set forth in the results above, **RQ2** revealed four Grateful Dead-related subframes. As defined earlier, comments characterizing Phish in relation to the Grateful Dead qualified for classification in this grouping.

(1) The musical subframe connected Phish to the Grateful Dead through comments about the sound or style of the music. Comments from this subframe ranged in focus but always related one band's music to the other's. This is perhaps the least surprising subframe and manifestation of a Phish/Grateful Dead link since the examined content is from a music-centric magazine and about a musical group. Despite this the manifestations are no less inspired.

One review briefly considered similarities and differences between the two bands, commenting about Phish, "Apart from the venerable Grateful Dead, no arena band soars so freely about the astral blues-rock plane…. Then the band [Phish] slid into an a cappella Hebrew folk song – Jerry Garcia can't do *that*" (Robicheau, 1995, p. 35). Meanwhile, a Trey Anastasio live DVD review stated, "Jerry Garcia wasn't around, so the Phish head roped in Carlos Santana, the next-best local guitar deity, when he brought his band to San Francisco last year" (Dana, 2004, p. 103). About the music from Phish's December 31, 1995, concert, one review explained the songs bore "the unmistakable imprint of the Dead's free-fall jam aesthetic" (Fricke, 1999, p. 102). Similarly a review of Dave Matthews' *Some Devil* noted, "the subtle bursts of Jerry Garcia-like guitar in 'So Damn Lucky,' courtesy of Phish's Trey Anastasio" (Fricke, 2003d, p. 84). "It is the sound of Phish doing what they love best: playing without a net, in the psychedelic-dance-party tradition of the Grateful Dead and the Allman Brothers Band; making

new music out of nothing but friendship and telepathy" (Fricke, 2003c, p. 42), read another quote that clearly touched upon the musical subframe, as well as the historical, through the consideration of tradition.

(2) The historical subframe revealed many interesting comments with focus on chronicling Phish's career from a historical perspective. Specifically, there is a recurring emphasis on relating Phish to the Grateful Dead through discussion of time, timelines, chain of events, or catchy labels.

For example, a 2008 obituary for Merl Saunders, a frequent Jerry Garcia collaborator, laid out a biographical timeline and capsule history that connected the two groups: "By the early Seventies, Saunders and Garcia began touring and recording together as the Saunders-Garcia Band" and "by the 1990s, Saunders was an elder statesman in the jam-band community, sitting in with Phish and Widespread Panic until a stroke robbed him of his voice and the use of one side of his body in 2002" (Greene, 2009, p. 32).

Various other articles discussed in this section and throughout the chapter illustrate the use of historically-focused catchy labels fitting this subframe. One article said, "Many have called Phish the Dead of the Nineties, but [Grateful Dead bassist Phil] Lesh doesn't see it" (Bozza, 1999, p. 26). Another called Phish "an apt heir to the Grateful Dead's legacy as the world's greatest jam band" (Eliscu, 2000, pp. 35, 42). Elaborating on this historical perspective, one letter from the editor—which appeared adjacent to a surreal illustration of Trey Anastasio sporting an arguably exaggerated Jerry Garcia-like bushy beard and sunglasses—prefaced a feature article on Phish as follows:

> When longtime contributor Parke Puterbaugh first hooked up with Phish, in the spring of '94, the band was primed to be the heir apparent to the Grateful Dead. Little did Phish

know how soon that chance would come. Fifteen months into Puterbaugh's reporting of the story in this issue, Jerry Garcia died, ending the Dead's 30-year reign as the daddy of all jam bands. For Phish, it was either sink or swim. (Kemp, 1997, p. 11)

And a letter to the editor—accompanied by a *Rolling Stone* cartoon of a road marked first with a street sign reading "Dead End," then a "Phish" sign beyond with an arrow pointing further down the same path—touching on the historical link via words like "continuing" and "gone," later addressed that same article:

> Parke Puterbaugh's piece was a gift to Phish's always growing family of fans ["Phresh Phish," RS 754]. As much as we miss the Grateful Dead, it should be acknowledged that Phish are continuing in much the same vein, all the while tracing the wonderful web of human fraternity spun by the Dead. They may be gone, but we are not alone: We have Phish. (Lipton, 1997, p. 14)

Another article reported the timeline of Phish's career this way:

> But with the death of the Grateful Dead's Jerry Garcia on August 9th, 1995, and the de facto end of that band, Phish became, by popular consensus, the primary guardians of the vagabond idealism of the Deadhead life. With responsibility came reward: A year after Garcia's passing, Phish played to a two-day audience of more than 135,000 at the Clifford Ball in Plattsburgh, New York, and made waves at commercial radio for the first time with their seventh album, *Billy Breathes*. (Fricke, 1999, p. 62)

This quote is clearly situated in the historical subframe, while also straddling the sociocultural through its consideration of "the Deadhead life." Such overlap was also present in an article from the memorial issue for the Grateful Dead's Garcia, who appeared on a September cover after his August '95 death. This article about the Grateful Dead's music noted, "They inspired

several generations of bands – from '60s peers like the Allman Brothers Band to successful youngsters like Phish – who absorbed and recycled that family vibe, not just the musical notes" (Fricke, 1995, p. 73), explicitly defining a connection beyond music but also extending to a historical and sociocultural nature.

(3) The sociocultural subframe related Phish to the Grateful Dead through social and cultural factors focused on the audience. Many articles featured comments that emphasized this pattern. For instance, "Phish's audience includes many Grateful Dead types, but like the guys in Blues Traveler and the Spin Doctors, the band members aren't complaining, because they know that no one listens to the music longer or harder than a Deadhead" (Giles, 1992, p. 17), observed the earliest coverage of Phish.

Many passages fitting this subframe focus on the Phish "scene." Upon Garcia's death an article called "Life After Garcia" predicted, "Some people will find other bands to follow. Phish, for example, may find themselves heirs to a certain more or less unwelcome element from the Grateful Dead parking-lot scene" (Gilmore, 1995, p. 86). With a comparable focus, an article about Phish's 1998 Lemonwheel festival said, "But while other music scenes, such as rave, goth and the Grateful Dead, have an undercurrent of seediness or evil, here a sense of purity and community prevails" (Hendrickson, 1998, p. 21). Likewise, one response in a letter to the editor captured both the musical and this sociocultural link:

> Although Matt Hendrickson included a reference to the Grateful Dead, it was used with great candor and respect. I've read countless articles about Phish in which the author finds it essential to compare Phish with the Dead. Phish have worked very hard for the past fifteen years to push the limits and excel in their music. I think I speak for a number

> of Phish fans when I say that Phish don't deserve to be reduced to a band that merely offers a scene for lost tourheads. (Savitske, 1998, p. 26)

In another pointed example of content connecting Phish and the Grateful Dead socioculturally, a 2010 article about the band Vampire Weekend described the group's drummer as "a Phish fanatic" who, paragraphs later, is also reported as "[renting] the same room he lived in before getting signed, a laundry-strewn, seven-by-seven-foot shoe box with a framed copy of the Grateful Dead's *Workingman's Dead* on the wall" (Eells, 2010, p. 50).

Meanwhile, the following example illustrates the sort of passage that doubtlessly fits into multiple subframes, including the sociocultural:

> From Day 1, Phish have deliberately plotted their fate, evolving at a steady and uncompromising pace. Lately, however, the band's career is all but out of the members' hands as their audience multiplies, lured to the Phish camp by the bait of a musical and social environment that – since the death of Jerry Garcia and the demise of the Grateful Dead – can be found nowhere else. At a Phish show, you're likely to see first-generation Phish-heads alongside musk-drenched, dreadlocked, tie-died Deadhead émigrés, plus a growing army of neophytes that has latched onto Phish as the next big thing. (Puterbaugh, 1997, p. 44)

This quote introduced the Phish/Grateful Dead connection through the historical subframe, then also explicitly overlapped among the sociocultural and musical subframes. In addition, the same article featured a photo of Phish, captioned, "Come see Uncle John's band" (p. 45), referencing a well-known Grateful Dead song. And in an example that illustrates an overlap of the sociocultural and organizational subframe, one article explained Phish and their audience this

way: “The foursome… has toured relentlessly, à la the Grateful Dead, attracting an audience that follows it around the world and trades tapes of the shows” (Hendrickson, 2000, p. 3).

(4) To elaborate on the band-centric organizational subframe, this type related Phish to the Grateful Dead through discussion of organizational operations, as previously defined. A quote fitting this subframe explained, “If truth were known, the aforementioned groups owe more to the Grateful Dead’s business strategies than they owe to the Dead’s musical ones. They’re trying to learn from the Dead’s organizational model – health benefits, profit sharing – and have met with varying degrees of success. Phish runs a fastidious, small-scale touring operation and turns a neat profit” (Giles, 1992, p. 16). The obvious focus on organizational similarities is representative of this subframe’s pattern.

Recollecting the escalation to Phish 1.0’s 2000 hiatus, an article containing an uncommon Phish-member-opinion on the Phish/Grateful Dead link conveyed:

> The only thing they knew about their future was that they didn’t want to turn into the Grateful Dead. “They were obviously these big role models for us,” says Anastasio, “and I was never going to end up in that situation, where I felt like a tour was happening because I needed money to support all these people.” (Dana, 2001, p. 33)

A 2003 article similarly reiterated, upon the band’s reunion for Phish 2.0, “‘A part of what killed Jerry Garcia,’ McConnell says, ‘was the bigness of what the Dead became. He couldn’t stop touring. It’s the antithesis of what I want to happen’” (Fricke, 2003c, p. 46). These two examples compare the successful independent operations and consequential demand on both acts to constantly tour.

Describing the band String Cheese Incident—once called “Phish’s ski-bum cousins” (Miller, 2003, p. 78)—an article stated, “The band created SCI Ticketing… as the Grateful Dead,

Dave Matthews Band and Phish have done for years" (Knopper, 2003, p. 22), drawing a direct parallel between the organizations' approach to selling concert tickets. Additionally, *Rolling Stone*'s 1996 "Rock & Roll Yearbook" coverage of Phish's summer festival sarcastically quipped, "Phish rolled into Plattsburgh, N.Y., bringing all their buds – not to mention more than 70,000 fans – for two days of Dead-like jamming known as Clifford Ball. More Cherry Garcia than 'Dark Star,' the shows took place on a decommissioned Air Force base" (Dunn, Panahpour, Rubiner, & Wiederhorn, 1996-1997, p. 74). This quote exemplifies the organizational subframe, in addition to the musical subframe and mockery frame. The passage defines Phish by analogy to a playful Grateful Dead product, the Ben & Jerry's ice cream flavor called Cherry Garcia, rather than the beloved and respected Dead tune.

A number of additional quotes fit the organizational subframe while overlapping others. For instance, one article explored the role the Web played in Phish's career and grassroots success, defining this historically, socioculturally, and organizationally via the Grateful Dead and their audience:

> The Phish online community was born in 1991. Fans of the Grateful Dead were becoming aware of the Vermont foursome and began monitoring Phish on the Dead's newsgroup, rec.music.gdead…. Word continued to spread, and in March 1992 rec.music.phish became only the fourth newsgroup dedicated to a rock band, behind the Dead, Bob Dylan and the Beatles. (Hendrickson, 2000, p. 4)

Similarly, another article stated, "Then success got in the way. With the death in August 1995 of Grateful Dead guitarist Jerry Garcia, Phish – already packing arenas on their own – became the box-office heirs of a huge concert audience stranded by the end of the Dead" (Fricke, 2003c, p.

42). This remark also overlaps between the historical, sociocultural, and organizational, as it connects the bands through a timeline, an audience, and the box-office.

Conclusion

Textual analysis of all *Rolling Stone* Phish coverage illustrated much about how Phish are regularly characterized, how Phish are therefore framed, and how exactly the framing structures the content to seem logical. The first research question discovered five frames and the second discovered four subframes. Overall, the analyzed coverage illustrates a compelling version of the Phish story, portraying them as an unconventional band that became quite successful. Perhaps rationalizing this potential contradiction of atypical success, portrayals mocked the band and also positioned them via links to peers, successors, and especially the Grateful Dead.

This part of the case study examined coverage of a single subject (i.e. Phish) and coverage of that subject in relation to another (i.e. the Grateful Dead), with the aim of better understanding not only media framing but also positioning. Regarding framing research, this analysis clearly enhanced our knowledge of how frames—as opposed to more commonly explored political topics—may work in the coverage of music-related phenomena. In terms of positioning, this analysis identified how Phish are linked to the Grateful Dead in media. These results lead us to a greater understanding of how positioning and framing may be related. This notion is explored more fully in the Conclusion chapter, which succeeds the following explanation of interviews with writers, editors, and publishers.

CHAPTER EIGHT

CASE STUDY PART B, "THE CONNECTION":

INTERVIEWS WITH WRITERS, EDITORS, AND PUBLISHERS

Part A's two analyses revealed a frequent and structurally potent Phish/Grateful Dead connection in media content. But why and to what effect does this connection occur? Shifting the focus beyond content to context, this chapter intends to answer that question through interviews, incorporating the views of those who have significantly written, edited, and published content about Phish. The objective is more than to explore the history of Phish coverage, but to allow the case of Phish to illustrate and inform what inspires media framing and what the results of media framing may be, particularly in terms of positioning.

Research Questions

Whereas methods of content analysis and textual analysis explored "how" a story is told, this chapter utilizes the interview method to help determine "why" that story is told in a particular way and "what" resulted. Closely examining the circumstances that have spawned Phish/Grateful Dead media connections may add to our understanding of what generally motivates framing. This raises the first of two research questions:

RQ1: Why do Phish/Grateful Dead media connections exist, according to those who have significantly written, edited, and/or published content about Phish?

In broader terms, RQ1 helps clarify what generally motivates the sort of framing detected in Part A. With knowledge of the origins it also makes sense to wonder about the consequences. What are the positive and negative results? Thus, the second question:

RQ2: What has been the result of Phish/Grateful Dead media connections, according to those who have significantly written, edited, and/or published content about Phish?

In broader terms, RQ2 helps inform us about the basic pros and cons of framing.

Method

Part B—thoroughly described in the Methods chapter—is a series of in-depth interviews with a primary group of 19 individuals who have significantly written, edited, and/or published about Phish. Interviews with a secondary group of five were also conducted to provide context beyond the writers/editors/publishers. Brief interviewee biographies are located in Appendix A. The primary group offers 19 perspectives from acclaimed music critics, influential media publishers, groundbreaking academics, prolific bloggers, and professional journalists who have succeeded as book authors, biographers, Web columnists, newspaper reporters, and magazine editors. The secondary group of five includes voices from the former senior vice president of marketing at Elektra Records, Phish's longtime merchandise artist, a professional photographer, and members of two music groups often described as jambands.

The interviewees were accessed by a combined approach: (a) purposeful selection of notable individuals based on examination of Phish media coverage and (b) recommendations from interviewees or knowledgeable acquaintances. Interviews took place between June 2009 and June 2010 and were mostly conducted by phone, although some took place in person or by e-mail. After transcribing the interviews, all of which except e-mails were audio-recorded, the themes that best responded to the research questions were identified.

Results

Assessed as a whole, the interviews revealed many recurring views about Phish/Grateful Dead media connections. Most if not all interviewees were frequently in agreement regarding the broadest relevant inquires. Beside slight variations in viewpoint—enough to ensure the responses are revealing—no major conflicting opinions arose.

Overview of RQ1 Themes

RQ1 asked why Phish/Grateful Dead media connections exist. The responses concentrated on a few key factors, themes that are summarized here and fully explored below. Interviewees clearly expressed that to their knowledge Phish/Grateful Dead media connections do not exist as a result of Phish promoting themselves as analogous to the Grateful Dead. Evidently, the band did not do that. Interviewees also said that Phish/Grateful Dead media connections exist because the bands share some musical similarities, although the likeness is usually not considered substantially greater than any other Phish musical influence. Beyond musical similarities, interviewees also emphasized sociocultural ones. Further, interviewees noted that understanding and writing about Phish can be challenging, particularly for Phish novices because the band is different from mainstream acts, their music is seen as eclectic and weird, and the band enjoys a fervently devoted audience. Thus, a solution to the challenge of understanding and writing about Phish has been to link them to the Grateful Dead. Some argued it is easier to write about the culture than the music of Phish. Finally, interviewees also discussed why Phish/Grateful Dead media connections exist in relation to the broader context of general media conventions. Points explored here included the idea of Phish/Grateful Dead media connections being among other things a shorthand, an oversimplification, a reference point, a box, or a tool. The discussion of media conventions also raised the issues of limited word counts and whether such shorthand is lazy writing or a useful tool.

Overview of RQ2 Themes

RQ2 inquired about the results of Phish/Grateful Dead media connections. Interviewees commonly addressed both positive and negative outcomes, offering answers to this question as

two sides of the same coin. Responses were therefore divided into themes of positive results or negative results.

In terms of positive results of Phish/Grateful Dead media connections, interviewees shared numerous explanations. For instance, some of the many suggested positive results included: people who like the Grateful Dead may be curious about Phish; Phish may be pushed toward originality; comparisons may favorably predispose people to Phish; assignment of the Grateful Dead mantle to Phish may be an advantageous endorsement; Phish may become more easily describable and understandable; Phish may gain more attention; the Grateful Dead is a good brand for Phish to be associated with; Phish built on the Grateful Dead's preexisting fan infrastructure, rather than nothing; the Grateful Dead are a useful, well-known cultural touchstone to employ as a reference point or signpost; Phish became well-situated to fill a void left by Jerry Garcia's 1995 death; the generational gap between Grateful Dead and Phish fans was bridged; and opposition to mainstream media may have helped foster the Phish fan community.

Some of the negative results of Phish/Grateful Dead media connections included: Phish may be stereotyped or pigeonholed; Grateful Dead comparisons may be lazy and overly simplistic; potential listeners may become prejudiced; Grateful Dead comparisons may carry a pejorative connotation; listeners may find it hard to detach Phish's music from the Grateful Dead's; Phish may lack their own independent characterization in media; Phish may be frustrated by constant comparisons in media; unfavorable connotations attached to the Grateful Dead scene may reflect on the Phish scene; Phish may be misrepresented in media; and Phish were often depicted as merely "second" or "followers" in relation to the Grateful Dead.

Discussion: RQ1

Interviewee responses relating to **RQ1** centered on several themes that help explain why Phish/Grateful Dead media connections exist. These factors are arranged by the following overlapping explanations: Phish did not seek Grateful Dead connections from media; there are musical similarities; there are similarities beyond music; Phish are challenging to cover; and reflections on the way media work.

Phish Did Not Seek Grateful Dead Connections From Media

One important observation was that Phish/Grateful Dead media connections do not exist because Phish sought or seek such comparisons from press coverage. This was explained by many and contradicted by none. For example, when asked about the origins of Phish/Grateful Dead links, Jon Pareles (personal communication, June 17, 2009)—chief pop music critic for the *New York Times*—summarized a sequence of events in which Phish/Grateful Dead media connections emerged in relation to existing fan vernacular, as well as Phish's music and audience culture:

> Phish didn't go around promoting itself by saying, hey, we're like the Dead, even though Anastasio has told me that the band looked carefully at the way the Dead did things, particularly its business model of building a career on touring instead of radio…. When people who knew about Phish wanted to tell other people about them, obviously the Dead comparison was one of the first ones to use. Phish's audience built first by word-of-mouth. Then media helped spread that word of mouth, and latched onto the Dead comparison because it's concise and clear. What could more easily sum up the combination of roots-rock vamps, absurdist lyrics, open-ended jams and tie-dye-wearing fans who were perhaps using drugs?

Pareles continued:

> Then of course Phish fans got all huffy because Phish isn't exactly like the Dead in every respect—as the media would agree. No one, or at least no one reputable, is accusing Phish of being a Dead tribute band. But the Dead are clearly one of Phish's main touchstones. If the media didn't say so, it wouldn't be telling the whole story.

David Fricke (personal communication, November 11, 2009)—senior writer for *Rolling Stone*—also observed that Phish do not seek Grateful Dead comparisons from media coverage, saying:

> I can't vouch for every press release the band has ever sent out, but I've never gotten the impression from any of the public information that the band has shared either with myself as a writer or with their fans or the public in general. They don't go around mentioning the Grateful Dead. They're Phish…. They don't have to bring up the Dead every time somebody talks to them. They don't have to bring it up. Because they're not thinking of themselves as heirs to the Grateful Dead, they think of themselves as Phish.

Parke Puterbaugh (personal communication, October 19, 2009)—Phish biographer, longtime *Rolling Stone* contributor, former in-house writer for Phish, and writer for the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame and Museum—echoed this, saying his press releases for the band did not aim to elicit Phish/Grateful Dead connections from press coverage:

> I think I might have made a conscious effort not to…. I think it could only work out for the better not to mention them [the Grateful Dead]…. I thought their [Phish's] music and albums should be heard for what they are: as original creations, bearing very little resemblance, in my mind, to the recorded works of the Grateful Dead.

Musical Similarities

Puterbaugh's comment about Phish's music raises the question of whether or not Phish/Grateful Dead media connections simply exist because the bands are musically similar enough to warrant widespread comparison. A common reaction was that musically Phish are not significantly more like the Grateful Dead than any other act.

When discussing the accuracy of media comparisons linking Phish to the Grateful Dead musically, Richard Gehr (personal communication, July 8, 2009)—official Phish chronicler and one-time contributor to *Rolling Stone*, *Spin*, *Relix*, and more—emphasized his perspective on the limited musical similarities between the two bands:

> Although one can certainly detect a Grateful Dead influence in their music, one can also detect the influence of Neil Young, The Band, Prince. Easily three dozen other bands that influence them almost as much as the Grateful Dead—I would say they influence them as much as the Grateful Dead. They [Phish] say that Peter Gabriel and Genesis are as big an influence. Frank Zappa is certainly a big influence—big, if not bigger, influence on the early Phish than the Grateful Dead were. So Grateful Dead influence? I don't know—10 percent.

Puterbaugh (personal communication, October 19, 2009) concurred, discussing the oversimplification of Phish's character:

> Well, it depends on how knowledgeable the media is. Obviously *Relix* gets what they're all about more than, say, *Entertainment Weekly*. The more overground and general the publication, the more likely they are to, sort of, typecast them as the second coming of the Grateful Dead…. I think it really overlooks the fact that Phish, and Trey in particular, had multitudes of influences—everything from New Wave groups, like Talking Heads, to

other prog-rock sources, like King Crimson and Peter Gabriel-era Genesis, to Frank Zappa. It's a much deeper well than people ever take trouble to inspect, I think.

Puterbaugh added that while musical similarities may be limited, sociocultural similarities are also important to consider:

> I don't think there's been a group who's attracted quite the same sort of mobile following the Grateful Dead did, that Phish has. In that sense, it is a pretty similar scene…. But in terms of musical influences, again, I think Phish is a composite and a collage of so many different musical influences that to make them out to be the Dead reincarnated is a little shallow. It overlooks a whole lot.

Beyond Musical Similarities

Musical similarities were often linked to talk of non-musical similarities. Many interviewees discussed this issue, focusing on the way Phish/Grateful Dead media connections connote more than musical features.

Pareles (personal communication, June 4, 2009) emphasized that the Phish/Grateful Dead link exists and is referenced in media for a host of reasons beyond just music, saying, "The Grateful Dead connection is just too obvious not to mention, both sociologically and musically, from the Grateful Dead business model to decisions about arrangements and improvisations."

Benjy Eisen (personal communication, July 29, 2009)—contributing editor at AOL Music/Spinner—explained that Phish/Grateful Dead media connections based on non-musical similarities might exist for various logical reasons:

> If the music itself—the way that it sounds—is not a factor, then I totally think the Grateful Dead/Phish comparison is legitimate. Phish took a lot of things from the Grateful Dead. They took the idea of the two sets, and changing them entirely every

> night. The idea of mail-order tickets. The idea of the taper's section. The idea of community.

But Eisen also pointed to the limits of non-musical similarities, noting, "There's definitely some sharp differences, too…. They're a different band, obviously."

Addressing why Phish/Grateful Dead media connections exist, Fricke (personal communication, November 11, 2009) highlighted organizational similarities between the bands and shared his approach to considering such factors when he covers Phish:

> It's not like I look at Phish as a replacement for the Grateful Dead. You can talk about some of the economic parallels—the way they basically made their bones and frankly their fortune in a similar way: by working off the radar, by pursuing their own interests and not necessarily being part of the mainstream record industry…. So yeah, there are some parallels, but it's not like when I write about Phish I'm thinking, "Well how is this similar or different to the Grateful Dead?" I need to do something more than that. I'm trying to tell their story, not their story refracted through someone else's.

Meanwhile, Dave Calarco (personal communication, July 10, 2009)—prolific blogger for fan site Phishthoughts.com—maintained that coverage tying Phish to the Grateful Dead focuses less on Phish's music and more on fans and culture. He stated, "I think the majority of the comparisons come from the culture itself and not necessarily from the music." Calarco explained:

> Because of [the Grateful Dead's] following, which at the time was a cultural phenomenon and something that was very relevant in America, [the Grateful Dead] became famous much, much less from their music than through their place in society and what they represented…. I think much of the media attention on Phish and how they've been

> portrayed comes from the presumption they're basically just another band that hippies are following around and taking acid. It's almost like a continuation of [the Grateful Dead's cultural] legacy.

When asked why journalists often compare Phish to the Grateful Dead in media, Gehr (personal communication, July 8, 2009) offered this explanation:

> Because they're lazy. Because they don't listen. Because that is the band they seemed to most resemble in terms of presentation. Both in terms of their casual presentation and codified two-sets-plus-encores performance form. No opening act, extended improvisations, hippies. You have to say because of the audience…. That's the reason the media compared them to the Grateful Dead most frequently. Because of the audience rather than the band.

However, Gehr elaborated on the validity of linking Phish's audience to the Grateful Dead's:

> I think it was essentially a younger version of the Grateful Dead audience. My friends, the first people I knew who were Phish fans, were Grateful Dead fans first. And they discovered Phish as a fresh mutation of what the Grateful Dead were doing: they were young, they were vital, they were ceaselessly inventive, they had all the energy that the Grateful Dead used to have and were now no longer displaying.

Likewise, Anthony DeCurtis (personal communication, June 8, 2010)—contributing editor and longtime writer for *Rolling Stone*—explained his view of why sociocultural connections inspire ties to the Grateful Dead in media coverage of Phish and why similarities get more attention than differences:

> Well, I think it's about the musical culture surrounding the band, and less about the band musically. I think from the standpoint of—even music journalists—but from the

> standpoint of more conventional journalistic outlets, I suppose, you go to a place, you see a lot of hippies, a lot of pot smoking and whatever else, and a lot of dancing, and you get a sense that there's a through line. And there is a through line. I don't mean to diminish that connection. In many ways that connection is more important than the music. As with any linkage—As with any relationship between bands, over the course of generations, there are probably as many points of departure as there are similarities. And I think that the points of departure tend to get downplayed. That's more to do with music. It's too technical for a lot of people—even music outlets in many ways—to kind of get into all that. But I think that's what the origins are. I think the origins are—when I used the word "sociological" before, that's kind of what I meant. I think that's where that connection derives from.

Phish Are Challenging to Cover

Considering Phish's unique nature it is no surprise that many would consider them rather difficult to write about, particularly for a newcomer to the band. Eisen (personal communication, July 29, 2009) emphasized that when Phish began garnering mainstream media coverage, they seemed quite different compared to other popular music, making coverage of the band a challenge:

> I don't think anybody in the mainstream media, at that point, necessarily had their ears open for new things that were so radically different like Phish. Phish was so radically different. They were a new phenomenon at the time. But I think people just didn't understand it.

Lockhart Steele (personal communication, August 10, 2009)—co-author of unofficial Phish guide, *The Pharmer's Almanac*, and former editorial director of Gawker Media—further dissected the issue chronologically:

> I'm a big believer that the media was the creator of the whole idea of like "Phish as Grateful Dead." There is just such a huge difference between how Phish was perceived culturally in, let's say, 1992, '93—and flash forward to, let's say, 1996, '97…. In '91, '92—back then Phish was usually compared to bands like Ween…. They were usually described as eclectic and weird. They just played such a mix of styles—they played bluegrass, they played jazz fusion, they played hard "Big Black Furry Creature"-style weirdness.

Based on his view that media—rather than the band, or in contrast to what Pareles said about fans—were collectively most responsible for constructing the common Phish/Grateful Dead connection, Steele (personal communication, August 10, 2009) generally discussed the Phish/Grateful Dead link as media's solution to the challenge of reporting on Phish's unconventional character and music, especially as their career progressed:

> What you saw by the mid-'90s was just a general lack of interest, from any mainstream critic, to try to get inside and figure out what is really going on here musically. It becomes much easier to write about them from just a cultural perspective.

When asked for his opinion of how Phish are typically covered in media, Andy Gadiel (personal communication, August 25, 2009)—Jambands.com co-founder, founder/president of concert listing database JamBase.com, and creator of pioneering fan site Andy Gadiel's Phish Page—addressed why the challenge of understanding Phish's music and fan culture might prompt Phish/Grateful Dead media connections:

> Lazy. Lazily. I think the music of Phish was very hard to fully understand by a lot of journalists. Especially the fanaticism. More so, "Why are these people following this band around the country. Why is there so much excitement over this music? Oh wait, this looks a lot like that other band [the Grateful Dead] from San Francisco. So we're just going to draw the line for people so they can understand it."… Musically, they sound similar—when you're looking at it from 30,000 feet—but when you get inside of it, it's a completely different vibe, it's a completely different type of music, and a totally different energy.

Gadiel continued, discussing Phish's perplexing nature:

> But journalists are looking for something that their ears are going to understand, and Phish is a really hard band to understand, even for people that are fans. It takes a very certain type of quirkiness to really geek and get it, which a lot of us in the mid-'90s, going through college, were embracing. That energy, that young, fresh, exciting, story-telling mythology, and geeking experience. That was beyond anything else we had seen at that point. And it's tough for the newspapers to write about that.

Discussing how Phish are typically characterized in media, Jesse Jarnow (personal communication, September 30, 2009)—contributing editor at *Relix*, senior editor for Jambands.com, and one-time *Rolling Stone* contributor—also emphasized that the Phish/Grateful Dead connection is a useful solution to the potentially puzzling task of covering Phish:

> I think most media don't get it [Phish]…. And I think comparing them to the Dead is the shorthand—it's really easy for a lot of people. But I also don't think it's entirely inaccurate, because the cultures are very, very similar. But musically, they're way different. I think that a lot of people who have written about Phish for mainstream

> publications don't get it, in a sense, but it's also not their job to get it. I feel like in order to really understand Phish you kind of have to be part of the culture, in some sense.

Reflecting on this conundrum Andy Bernstein (personal communication, June 17, 2009)—co-author and editor of *The Pharmer's Almanac*, as well as co-founder and executive director of HeadCount—explained:

> There is credibility that comes from broad context. When you sound like a fan you don't sound like a professional. With Phish, there's almost no way to sound like both. There's a lot of nuances that only a fan understands. There are people who can do it, such as Richard [Gehr], but it's very hard to do…. There's a very, very, very small group of professional mainstream music writers who really, really understand the band.

Tying the challenge of writing about Phish to media conventions and framing, Ellis Godard (personal communication, July 1, 2009)—executive editor of unofficial fan guide *The Phish Companion* (2nd ed.); executive director of the Mockingbird Foundation; and Assistant Professor of Sociology—concluded this about Phish/Grateful Dead media connections:

> It's a tool…. It's hard to write an article about something you can't relate to something else…. You got to put it into a frame…. It's just much easier to write and talk about something [using frames]. It's a function of the job of being a journalist and being in the media.

The Way Media Work

As Godard's comment illustrates, discussing the issue of why Phish/Grateful Dead media connections exist often raised broader reflections on the way media regularly work. Such commentary helps to place the specific conventions of covering Phish within the overall context of general media conventions.

Dean Budnick (personal communication, November 22, 2009)—executive editor of Relix Media Group; founder/editor in chief of Jambands.com; author of unofficial fan book *The Phishing Manual*; co-founder of the Jammy Awards; and often credited with popularizing the term "jamband" (Budnick, 2003, p. 241)—summarized the origins of Phish/Grateful Dead media connections by highlighting the initial need for a means to describe Phish in their formative years:

> Well, let's get past the fact that Phish, at the beginning, played some Grateful Dead songs. I don't think most people really knew that. I think that when Phish started really coming of age and getting recognition in the late-'80s, there really wasn't a point of reference for the media to address these bands. For better or worse, the term "jamband" wasn't there. And people didn't quite know how to lump these bands together that certainly had a connection to their audience, that would go out and do shows every night, that people were taping, that would do two sets. And at least initially, especially before H.O.R.D.E. first came together in '92, I think there really just wasn't, again, a reference point. And so people sort of saw Phish in that [Grateful Dead] mold.

Budnick then elaborated on why media might utilize such a reference point or mold:

> The media, often times—you know, you're looking for a shorthand, in order to convey what you're trying to convey without having to explain it too much. And that [Grateful Dead connection] was, in many ways, the simplest way to express, to the mainstream that didn't know what Phish was about, what they seemed to be doing.

Godard (personal communication, July 1, 2009) also emphasized "aspects of the media process, and that more so than the individual journalist," as key factors that lead to Phish/Grateful Dead media connections. He qualified his views by stating his intent not to

"either overindividualize or oversocialize the institution" and he also considered what the average journalist might know about Phish:

> Well almost nobody who writes an article about Phish knows a great deal about them. Their [journalists'] job is to write an article about whatever the new concert that's happening in their area, or album that came across their desk, or their editor says we need you to cover this band because people are talking about them. So they, in most instances, don't know anything about the music.

Godard concluded that media conventions have much to do with why Phish may be linked to the Grateful Dead in press coverage:

> So they [journalists] look for stereotypes. They look for symbols, and keys, and shorthands, and heuristics, and labels, and whatever helps them put it into a box. And when there are reports of drug arrests and there are people wearing tie-dyes, and the songs are long, it's just sort of easy to label those being like the Grateful Dead.

Meanwhile, Fricke (personal communication, November 11, 2009) raised the issue of evolving media conventions, particularly space limitations or shrinking word counts, and emphasized that such changes may shape content. He said:

> I think it's really important to remember that when you're writing about something like music—your opinion is not only what counts. The way you express it means a lot…. And it's not that easy because you're working in a media culture now where it's all short hundred-word reviews and all this business. The way people were able to write about Phish in 1983 is a little different than they're able to write about it now. When you're talking about media perception, you have to talk about changes in media as well. What we perceive isn't the only variable we have to deal with.

Kevin O'Donnell (personal communication, June 8, 2010)—associate editor of Spin.com and former *Rolling Stone* contributor—similarly discussed space limitations shaping journalistic expression and why that may foster Phish/Grateful Dead media connections:

> If you look at just printed publications, the space for how much… can be written about Phish… is just a lot smaller. Record reviews are shorter. So you have to keep in mind, too, that sometimes you just have to get a quick reference in there that will immediately spark a reader's attention…. Because you have one adjective you can use, as opposed to eight.

O'Donnell continued:

> The ultimate goal is to make a reader connect with something on a very visceral level. Sometimes you just have to cover that ground as quickly as you can, which you might be able to do with an adjective like "Grateful Dead-like," as opposed to "expansive" and "experimental" and "jammy." And then you're also trying to connect with readers who aren't familiar with Phish, and you wanna find a reference point, specifically to a band that might spark some kind of interest in their mind.

Likewise, Bernstein (personal communication, June 17, 2009) determined that one reason Phish/Grateful Dead connections are prevalent in media is because the Grateful Dead comparison is simply a potent tool for reaching audiences:

> It's just an unmistakable thing. So that a rock writer would compare them to the Grateful Dead, well, they really wouldn't be doing their job if they didn't. The Grateful Dead were around for thirty years. Middle America understands the Grateful Dead. They might have some basic familiarity with Deadheads and that people go from show to show. So if you're trying to explain what Phish is, it would be foolish not to use that construct. Why

> wouldn't you?... Journalists want readers or ratings. The best way to do that is to tell a story and the best way to tell stories is to use classic constructs…. From a mainstream media standpoint, that image of Phish looking like the Grateful Dead, Phish fans looking like the Grateful Dead, all these very natural associations, they were just very powerful tools to tell a story. And every writer's goal is to tell a story, and to tell a story that makes sense to their audience.

Brent Hallenbeck (personal communication, July 28, 2009)—arts and entertainment reporter for the *Burlington Free Press*—discussed the common practice of music journalism utilizing shorthands, adding that such tools may be used or abused:

> Well I think, certainly, those of us who write about music take shorthands, take shortcuts a lot. Sometimes for good reasons and sometimes for lazy reasons. But normally we'll write like "indie rock" or "singer-songwriter." You're looking for something that will make people go, "Oh, okay, I know what they're talking about." And there's a good intent behind that but I think that sometimes it becomes really lazy. And if people are trying to describe Phish, as writers they might be inclined to say "similar to the Grateful Dead."

Paul Robicheau (personal communication, July 28, 2009)—longtime *Boston Globe* reporter, who has also covered Phish for *Rolling Stone*—further explored this idea of whether Phish/Grateful Dead media connections exist because of lazy writing, concluding that it can go either way:

> There's aspects of what Trey does that certainly echoes his appreciation for Jerry or Carlos Santana or Pat Metheny…. He's obviously listened to all these guitar players, all these different types of music. But what's going to get mentioned in the press is that he

> sounds like Jerry Garcia… and that really kind of shortchanges him.… That's a thing to consider when you're writing or covering music, that reference points can definitely be lazy and definitely shortchange the artist, but in some ways I think there's no better way to kind of synthesize a bunch of different ways you could describe something, in a reference point that people can relate to.

Robicheau concluded:

> It's kind of a catch-22. You can describe things in total musical terms and I think a lot of people will just kind of read it and not really hear it or not really visualize it. Whereas sometimes when you compare a band—"it's like a cross between this and this"—it can be lazy, but in some cases it can definitely inform people that they can like—bang—really relate to it.

Talking about how Phish compares to the Grateful Dead, Peter Shapiro (personal communication, July 8, 2009)—publisher of Relix Media Group, co-founder of the Jammy Awards, and producer of several relevant motion pictures—said, "There's differences in the band, but they have some similarities. And they're similarities that are very overt, so it's very easy for the media to grab them and link them together." He therefore discussed why a cursory Phish/Grateful Dead analogy may simply be the result of lazy reporting:

> The improvisational music leads to this fanbase that is somewhat similar in nature—closer than anything else—to the Grateful Dead thing. So that's a quick, easy way for media and writers to just have a comparable. I think writers—media—can be either very hard working and go the extra mile or sometimes can be lazy and look for the easiest comparables, easiest metaphors. And so when you're writing about Phish, the easiest thing is the Grateful Dead analogy.

DeCurtis (personal communication, June 8, 2010) similarly concentrated on the ease of employing a superficial Grateful Dead analogy and reminded that digging deeper into the validity of Phish/Grateful Dead links likely poses an increased challenge. When asked why journalists might utilize links and references such as the Grateful Dead comparison to tell stories like Phish's, DeCurtis said:

> Because it's easy. I don't mean to be that glib, but I don't think it's much more complicated than that. Because to not do it, you have to think a lot. Look, partly it's there if you want it. And it's something that you know people will understand, and it's kind of fun to write about, and it doesn't really require much from you. I think that's it. In media, the more time you spend around it, or in it, you realize how middlebrow a lot of people who practice it are. In the same way you want to think that most journalists who cover politics are immensely sophisticated about politics, but really they might as well be covering horse races or something like that…. And unfortunately, I think the same thing is true for music journalists.

DeCurtis related such ideas about media to the case of Phish:

> If the Jerry Garcia slot becomes open, well then there has to be somebody to fill it. And if we have somebody who sort of fits, well we could tell that story, we could make that work. And you know, people want it. There was kind of an emotional hole there to be filled, which is a motive I find a little more sympathetic. I can appreciate that desire. But for the most part it's just easier than thinking it through. You kind of take the story that's handed to you, rather than the one that you have to really grapple with to figure out. Let's say it's a valid comparison—again, I don't mean to dismiss it—you don't want to be reductive about it. So then once you start really interpreting it and analyzing it and

> evaluating it, that's complicated work. If you don't have to do it, there are certainly incentives to try to get around it.

Jnan Blau (personal communication, June 16, 2009)—Assistant Professor of Communication Studies, whose Ph.D. dissertation is called *"The Trick Was to Surrender to the Flow": Phish, the Phish Phenomenon, and Improvisational Performance Across Cultural and Communicative Contexts*—also considered the factor of easiness, while deeming Phish/Grateful Dead media connections a result of how media regularly operate:

> That's the nature of media, right? They need to put a quick something out there and they need a quick handle on how to describe something…. It's a facile comparison. It's easy. And from that perspective it makes sense. But… it's also too easy and oversimplifies. It's understandable that the media have to do that, but it also has its unfortunate consequences.

This idea of consequences invites further examination into the issue of Phish/Grateful Dead media connections. Going beyond "why they exist," RQ2 explores the result.

Discussion: RQ2

For **RQ2**, responses are divided into themes of positive and negative results. An individual's commentary within each group should be interpreted as merely a part of their perspective, unless otherwise clearly identified as their general view.

Positive Results

Responses suggesting a positive result mostly focused on the Grateful Dead being a useful, well-recognized exemplar to employ as a reference point or signpost in Phish coverage. When asked if Phish/Grateful Dead media connections have been overall good or bad, Pareles (personal communication, June 17, 2009) reviewed the advantages with this statement:

> To me there's no question that it's positive. People who hate everything the Dead stood for are almost certainly not going to like Phish, so there's no downside there. People who love the Dead are going to be in the very least curious about Phish, which helps the band. People to whom the Dead are completely irrelevant are going to take Phish on its own merits—or maybe even check out the Dead because they love Phish. Phish itself can, and perhaps does, respond to the comparisons by trying to sound less like the Dead, pushing the band toward originality (or at least other ingredients), which is all to the good.

DeCurtis (personal communication, June 8, 2010) also considered why the media connections might ultimately be considered a beneficial edge for Phish:

> It favorably predisposes people to them [Phish]. The Grateful Dead, certainly by the end of their career—or to the extent that it has ended—everybody liked the Grateful Dead. To anyone who would care, they represented something positive and so to drape that mantle on a band's shoulders was in many ways to anoint them. So it's a positive from that standpoint. So I think it created opportunities for them [Phish] and opened doors for them. To this day, Phish is, as far as notoriety goes, by a factor of three or four or five, bigger than any other band on the jamband scene. Now, you could say they're also better—maybe they are—but that Grateful Dead comparison, I think, has something to do with that [bigness]. It allowed them to achieve a scale of success that might've been more difficult otherwise.

Godard (personal communication, July 1, 2009) discussed Phish's success as well. "Hesitant to be normative" by calling Phish/Grateful Dead media connections solely good or bad, he explained the positive aspects: "Overall, they were probably beneficial to the band's commercial success. Because… nobody's going to go see anything that's completely

undescribable or unknown. It has to be related or compared or connected with something that you're interested in, or worried about." He added, "It's something that benefitted Phish because it gave them some attention."

Gehr (personal communication, July 8, 2009) supposed that fans drawn to Phish/Grateful Dead comparisons may have been favorable for Phish. He said, "It probably attracted them an audience early on that they might not have had otherwise. Because Grateful Dead audiences were very, very faithful; and very, very forgiving; and very, very generous. And Phish benefitted from this." Pareles (personal communication, June 17, 2009) elaborated on this idea, stating that Phish may have gained from fitting into the already-established fan culture of the Grateful Dead:

> The positive aspect is that the Grateful Dead had an active, well-connected, musically inquisitive fan base, and one that prized the experience of live music. In horrible marketing speak, it was a good brand for Phish to be associated with. For Dead fans to find out that there was another band—younger and arguably more vital—providing a similar live concert experience gave Dead Heads at minimum a stopgap and at maximum a new focus for what they enjoyed about the Dead…. So Phish didn't have to build a whole fan infrastructure from scratch—Dead Heads had already done some of that.

Many interviewees also focused on the benefit of Grateful Dead references providing a positive association or signpost to potential Phish listeners. Steele (personal communication, August 10, 2009), considering Phish/Grateful Dead media connections mainly negative, said this about potential advantages:

> I don't want to say that being compared to the Grateful Dead is inherently an insult. I think being compared to the Grateful Dead, from a cultural touchstone perspective, is

probably very useful—because the Grateful Dead also built a following in their own organic ways, really legitimately, and played really legitimate great live music for decades. So I'm sure it didn't hurt Phish in that way.

Gehr (personal communication, July 8, 2009) considered Phish/Grateful Dead media connections an overall "value neutral thing" and talked about the bonus of comparisons guiding fans, saying, "The positive aspects were that they attracted the Grateful Dead's audience, which was good for the box office I guess. And it gave people an indication of what they might be in for. They might be in for a certain kind of experience."

Budnick (personal communication, November 22, 2009) also addressed the benefit of Phish/Grateful Dead media connections serving as signposts:

> Especially when Phish started out…. One thing that the comparison to the Grateful Dead did do, is it was sort of a signpost to other young people in particular, or even some old people, who maybe didn't know about Phish in other regions of the country, especially outside of New England. And it just keys them in that there's a band that *in some way* is doing something like the Grateful Dead. So if you like improvisational music, if you like a band that mixes it up every night, that tours around, has a touring fanbase—here's a band that might interest you. So I think in that respect it did have some positive impact.

Mike Greenhaus (personal communication, June 30, 2009)—executive editor of Relix Media Group and Jambands.com—agreed, saying:

> The fact that media says they're like the Grateful Dead, maybe they [audience members] would pick up an album for the first time and go check them out live…. I think it was a good thing in the sense that maybe it introduced them to new people.

But after weighing the two sides, he added, "In the short term it helped expose them to some readers that perhaps might have overlooked them."

O'Donnell (personal communication, June 8, 2010) talked about a similar hypothetical:

> I think it's a good thing at first, because it gives people an immediate reference point; somebody they can connect to. If someone who's never heard of Phish, like an old hippie, is picking up a copy of *Rolling Stone* and he sees an article on Phish and it says, "This is like the next Grateful Dead," I think that might pique their interest.

Likewise, Shapiro (personal communication, July 8, 2009) commented that media connecting Phish to the Grateful Dead might have helped situate Phish after Jerry Garcia's death:

> Phish's popularity went to the next level after Garcia passed away in '95, and all those Deadhead fans were looking for who to listen to, what to do, what shows to go to. And Phish was well-positioned to fill that void that the loss of Jerry Garcia created.

And Calarco (personal communication, July 10, 2009) similarly discussed the blending of Phish and Grateful Dead audiences, arguably an invaluable factor in the formation of the contemporary jamband scene:

> I would say that the comparison between the bands themselves, whether it be from the media or from fans, certainly helped bridge a generational gap, between people that saw the Dead and younger kids who were now seeing Phish.

Additionally, Budnick (personal communication, November 22, 2009) considered the possibility that cursory Phish/Grateful Dead media connections helped engender the Phish audience's devotion and fellowship, which are undeniable assets to the band. He explained:

> I do think the Phish community sort of developed in opposition to a lot of other things that were out there at the time. And I think part of that opposition was in response to the

> mainstream media's caricature of Phish. So even as I say that now and I think it through, I do think that probably was a backwards benefit…. Perhaps that only solidified the connection with their fanbase, who liked the fact that Phish was not accepted by the mainstream—I think that's an open question. I do think it's possible. One could make a case that a strong measure of that connection was built out of the lack of respect…. And so maybe the mainstream media—in picking on Phish and not giving them their fair shake, their fair due—maybe that really sort of helped to foster that within the tight-knit Phish community.

Negative Results

Central among negative results were Phish being stereotyped or pigeonholed; Phish lacking their own independent characterization in media; Phish being frustrated by constant comparisons in media; unfavorable connotations attached to the Grateful Dead reflecting on Phish; and Phish being misrepresented in media. For example, Gehr (personal communication, July 8, 2009) explained:

> No one wants to be pigeonholed and I do know that they [Phish] were *extremely* sensitive about that early on. They really didn't like being compared to the Grateful Dead, especially in the media. I think even as much as… they knew there were all these similarities—and some of them [Phish members] were big fans of the Grateful Dead, even though some of them [Phish members] weren't particularly big fans of the Grateful Dead—they really chaffed at media comparisons. Simply because they thought they were lazy and oversimplistic and written by people who were not listening to the music. And I guess the most negative thing is being stereotyped prejudiced potential listeners from enjoying them.

Budnick (personal communication, November 22, 2009) also discussed the drawback of prejudicing potential audiences. He described how the Grateful Dead comparison could be off-putting to a potential Phish listener who may generally like prog rock, but not necessarily psychedelic improv rock:

> I think any descriptive term is limiting, in a sense. And to some degree, clearly, comparing them to the Grateful Dead carried a pejorative connation to any number of people who might otherwise be interested in the band. Phish has appeal to a lot of people who are into prog music, and those people don't like the Grateful Dead for the most part.

This view contrasts with Pareles' earlier comment about people with a Grateful Dead distaste being unlikely to enjoy Phish.

DeCurtis (personal communication, June 8, 2010) also addressed the challenges presented by listeners potentially influenced by Phish/Grateful Dead media connections:

> Any time a band gets framed that way, it's difficult for people to hear them [one band] without hearing that [another band]…. If somebody tells you there's this new band—or there's this band—they're just like the Grateful Dead, you have to really do a certain amount of work to liberate yourself from that idea. And to the extent that Trey is a pretty serious guy—the band, generally, are serious about music—I'm sure that that's had its frustrations, because they've worked hard at what they do and people who think that it's possible to just pull this phrase off the shelf and characterize them must be discouraging.

Shapiro (personal communication, July 8, 2009) also addressed band frustrations and desire for an independent identity uncolored by Phish/Grateful Dead media connections:

> I think they get frustrated, probably, by it. They want to have their own identity. But I'm sure in some ways they understand the positive aspects, the flattery, the positive

associations in some ways. And of course they want their own identity though. And that probably outweighs everything else. So they get frustrated doing interviews all the time where people say, "So you're the new Grateful Dead," or, "Trey, you're the new Jerry." So I think they want to have their own identity.

Likewise, Gadiel (personal communication, August 25, 2009) concluded about regular Phish/Grateful Dead media links, "I think that probably helped them [Phish] on some level, and hurt them on others. It's always rough to pigeonhole them." Calarco (personal communication, July 10, 2009) considered the notions of pigeonholing and identity, too, stating:

> I feel that in trying to forge their own musical identity, their own identity as a band, I feel that they really tried to distance themselves from these connections that you're talking about. Because, essentially, I feel like these connections earlier in their career were pigeonholing them into being just another Grateful Dead, just another hippie band that people would follow around and do whatever they do…. I felt like they probably felt a little bit smothered by those comparisons for a long time.

A few interviewees also discussed that one negative result of Phish/Grateful Dead media connections is the reflection on Phish of unfavorable connotations attached to the Grateful Dead scene. Steele (personal communication, August 10, 2009) explained the situation this way:

> I just think that it was unfortunate that Phish's rise coincided with the last days of the Dead—when Dead tour was a dark place, which I don't think was normally the case. Those years, like '93, '94, '95—you talk to people who were on Dead tour and it just sounds really sketchy. The Dead's reputation suffered sort of a very late-career fall-off, both musically and from a scene perspective. At the same time, Phish was on the rise. And then the two intersected almost right at that moment.

Steele placed this issue in the context of media coverage and concluded—while also offering an intriguing contrast to DeCurtis' earlier comment about the Grateful Dead mantle being positive—that a negative result of Phish/Grateful Dead media connections is an emphasis on covering Phish through an ill-disposed cultural lens more than an appreciative musical one:

> I think once you assumed the mantle of the Dead, there was sort of this media assumption that all these bad things were happening at or around Phish shows. But I think that's kind of a tough thing for a band to be saddled with…. I think the media just loves that stuff, and I think at times ended up fixating more on that than on Phish's music. And then it becomes very easy for the media to essentially ignore doing any sort of rigorous analysis of Phish as musicians.

Godard (personal communication, July 1, 2009) echoed this sentiment, discussing how Phish/Grateful Dead media connections sometimes trigger anxiety or overreaction from authorities cautious about Phish concerts. He said, "[There is] the expectation that there's going to be trouble for everyone involved…. I've seen places where the security was anticipating trouble far beyond what they actually experienced and I think were pleasantly surprised…. It generated concern and worries and hesitations."

Adding to this idea, Budnick (personal communication, November 22, 2009) reasoned why Phish/Grateful Dead media connections may spark such concerns:

> Clearly it brings people to the shows who are not interested in the music and are more interested in taking drugs, selling drugs, doing any of these things—any number of ways they can support themselves through a Grateful Dead audience, then they saw that they could do the same to a Phish audience, which is just one of the ways that I think that characterization negatively impacted the band.

Interviewees also discussed the negative result that Phish/Grateful Dead media connections may sometimes misrepresent Phish's character. People expressed concern about the two bands being simplistically linked in common media portrayals, thereby potentially inhibiting audiences from understanding that there is much more to Phish than Grateful Dead parallels—personally, musically, or otherwise. Blau (personal communication, June 16, 2009) put it this way:

> If you just say, "Oh, they're kind of like the Dead," and leave it at that, and don't really explain what the similarities and the differences are, than it really isn't that useful because you've not really issued a really useful descriptor of the Phish world. So it's useful to begin with, but if that's where it stays, then I don't think it's that productive. It's certainly not useful in terms of really getting a good feel for the breadth and depth of the Phish experience.

Steele (personal communication, August 10, 2009) discussed his view that certain media coverage generally undercredits Phish for their astonishing success:

> I think it was a real disservice to Phish that the media decided to credit the Grateful Dead, or the Grateful Dead's fans, with Phish finally breaking through, when Phish had very clearly broken through years before…. But I think in some ways it was almost like it was a *fait accompli*…. It was like there was this whole meme in the media that Phish had just become the new Grateful Dead before it was even remotely the truth.

So when asked if Phish/Grateful Dead media connections seemed overall good or bad, Steele concluded, "To me, it seems like it was a bad thing. I think it was premature and I think it was overblown."

Jarnow (personal communication, September 30, 2009) also addressed issues with faulty portrayals of Phish. In addition to failing to effectively critique the band's concerts, he described other concerns about coverage, saying, "That's another characteristic of the mainstream press. They sometimes miss the point with Phish in a bad way. In the sense that they'll characterize them cheaply as a Grateful Dead knock-off." Budnick (personal communication, November 22, 2009) elaborated on "knock-off" portrayals, concluding about negative results of Phish/Grateful Dead media connections:

> I think it probably didn't serve the band in their music very well, very accurately. I think that it probably held them back, in terms of gaining mainstream recognition and respect…. Because they were seen as sort of a knock-off Grateful Dead band…. Because there was that sort of pejorative sense that—"Oh, they're just like fourth-generation hippie-philes, or whatever"—that they really didn't hold their own as a creative entity, probably weren't worth the ink in *Rolling Stone* or certain newspapers or even other media and radio back then when radio mattered a lot more.

And Gehr (personal communication, July 8, 2009), like-minded, summarized it this way:

> In the '90s, when I was writing about them, no one else was writing about them. Nobody took them seriously. The mainstream media considered them to be… basically a Grateful Dead cover band that wasn't playing Grateful Dead covers. But there was just no sense of them as having a distinct musical identity apart from the Grateful Dead. That was, of course, ridiculous to anyone who ever listened to both bands. In the '90s they were stereotyped as being just a granola band from Vermont.

In discussing Phish/Grateful Dead media connections, many interviewees also tied the negative results—e.g., the stereotypes, frustrations, lack of independent characterization in

media, misrepresentations—to the way Phish handled Grateful Dead media connections. Interviewees agreed that Phish seemingly tried to avoid, minimize, downplay, or deflect media connections that often depicted them as merely "second" or "followers" in relation to the Grateful Dead.

For instance, Eisen (personal communication, July 29, 2009) said:

> I think for a while, for very good reasons, they totally avoided the comparison. And they probably shied away from it and they also were probably somewhat opposed and annoyed by it. Imagine if you're in a band and every single thing you ever—you finally get into the press—and every single thing you read about yourself says that you're just following somebody else's footsteps. Or that you're like a second version of this. It probably frustrated them to a great extent.

Shapiro (personal communication, July 8, 2009) echoed these ideas about identity and being known as second, while discussing how Phish handled Grateful Dead media connections:

> I think they probably tried to downplay it because they really want Phish to have their own identity, to be their own thing, and not a second position or second fiddle thing. Because the comparison to the Dead was always "Dead were first," "Dead led the way." I think they definitely see Phish as its own entity. They're not looking to highlight that association.

Like Eisen and Shapiro, Puterbaugh (personal communication, October 19, 2009) discussed the band's likely frustrations with frequent Grateful Dead media connections and how Phish managed this:

> I think that when they were trying to establish themselves and be heard for themselves, to be under this huge umbrella of Grateful Dead comparisons was frustrating. I can't put

> words in their mouth, but I think it was frustrating to the extent that they didn't want to dwell on it and they wanted to maybe minimize that a bit…. But again, I just think that often media, or certain writers—I don't want to damn the whole media—certain writers can come in with a preconception and that was frustrating to them because they're so much more than just a Grateful Dead clone band. They're the furthest thing from that. There are things they had in common with the Grateful Dead, but to have that be the thing—the basis of everything that was written about them for a period in time, until people got comfortable with them as a band in their own right, I think during that period they might've tried to minimize it a bit.

Speaking more about Phish's desire for a media characterization independent of Grateful Dead connections, Budnick (personal communication, November 22, 2009) added his thoughts about how the band and its management dealt with the challenges:

> I think that the band's management has always tried to deflect it, for many, many, many years. I think that the band, generally speaking, would be respectful, but deflect it, historically…. I think in some respects, the comparisons were certainly overstated, and while the members of Phish never wanted to be disparaging at all about the Grateful Dead, they also wanted to firmly establish, number one, they were doing their own thing, and number two, that the Grateful Dead frankly probably wasn't as big an influence as the media had led itself to believe.

Finally, when asked about the ultimate result of how Phish handled Grateful comparisons in media, Gehr (personal communication, July 8, 2009) considered Phish's success the necessary evidence, indicating that Phish handled things ideally. He said, "Yeah, I think that everything worked out just fine. Could it have worked out any better? Hardly."

Beyond the Research Questions: Additional Context from Primary Group Conclusions

This section presents additional commentary from the primary group. Beyond the major themes discussed above, which relate more directly to the research questions, these responses provide valuable context and enhance understanding of the phenomena. The findings include thought-provoking highlights that address a pair of important peripheral issues: portrayals of Phish as heir to the Grateful Dead and what the story of Phish "is" versus "should be," in media.

Phish as Heir

Throughout the interviews, many people discussed the common notion—occurring in and out of media—of Phish as "heir" to the Grateful Dead, an ostensibly axiomatic tag that has appeared in countless Phish/Grateful Dead media connections. While not strictly tied to the key research questions, examining these responses adds a necessary component to our understanding of the phenomenon, particularly RQ2.

Shapiro (personal communication, July 8, 2009) summarized the heir issue this way:

> I mean, they're [Phish] the kind of heir apparent. The heir to the Grateful Dead…. To be the heir of that, to be the kind of, leading the whole jamband culture, being the preeminent contemporary band in that scene I think has a lot of positives to it. People can kind of niche it, but it's a very large niche. It's got a fan base that has disposable income, it's never going anywhere [disappearing], it's consistent, it's loyal, it loves music, they'll travel to see music, they'll spend money to buy tickets. That's not such a bad thing.

When asked about Phish often being considered heirs to the Grateful Dead, Gehr (personal communication, July 8, 2009) explained these conditions:

> Yeah, sure, they are. They really took off when the Grateful Dead ended. And they had the same audience, they were providing that experience…. I don't think it was conscious. I don't think they were trying to be the heirs to the Grateful Dead in any way, shape, or form. I think it just happened. It just happened because Jerry Garcia died and they were the band that was always on tour and was playing psychedelic, improvised rock, and all the people who could no longer go to Grateful Dead shows could now go to instead.

O'Donnell (personal communication, June 8, 2010) also commented on the topic of Phish being labeled heirs:

> It's interesting because there was this resurgence in the '90s of kind of rootsy jamband music, and Phish definitely led that. And the connections to the Grateful Dead, of all those bands, is undeniable. So yeah, I think that'd be a fair assumption to say, or reference to make, that they [Phish] could be the next Grateful Dead. But there's more differences I think than there are similarities between the two.

As O'Donnell noted, the similarities and differences between the bands complicates the notion of Phish as heir to the Grateful Dead. In this way, some interviewees were more ambivalent or expressed mixed feelings on this issue. For instance, Puterbaugh (personal communication, October 19, 2009) said about Phish as heir:

> I would say they are and they aren't. Because I don't think there's been a group who's attracted quite the same sort of mobile following the Grateful Dead did, that Phish has. In that sense, it is a pretty similar scene. And I think the timing of the fact that Garcia died in '95 and then Phish started picking up all of these camp followers. It's fair to say there's a real nexus there. A lot of those Deadheads who no longer had the Dead to follow,

especially younger ones, I think, transferred their allegiance to Phish, and had been doing so even before Garcia died and the Dead disbanded, in my opinion. Because I thought the Dead were losing energy for the first half of the '90s and Phish were all about energy. And I think that appealed to younger fans more. But in terms of musical influences, again, I think Phish is a composite and a collage of so many different musical influences that to make them out to be the Dead reincarnated is a little shallow. It overlooks a whole lot.

Explaining his view on whether or not Phish are truly heirs to the Grateful Dead, Steele (personal communication, August 10, 2009) hesitantly stated:

Insofar as an heir needs to be appointed, then the answer would be yes. But I also think that the idea of sort of an heir in music is inherently problematic. I guess I'd like to think, personally, that the answer's no. Were someone to put a gun to my head and force me to name an heir, of course it would be Phish. Of course it would be the next band that made live touring and nightly improvisation with a two-set setlist that is mixed up in a different way every night. There's obviously some structural similarities there that Phish and the Dead probably share more closely than almost any other two bands of their ilk.

Budnick (personal communication, November 22, 2009), also reluctant about the heir term, said:

Yeah, I mean, I think there's a lot that's compacted into that. But if you were to ask me simply, flat-out this sentence: "What band do you think is the heir to the Grateful Dead? Pick one." I would pick Phish. That's all that I'll say. But for the record I'm squinting my eyes as I do it.

Finally, Gadiel (personal communication, August 25, 2009) emphatically rejected the notion of Phish as heir, saying, "It makes me think, 'The King is dead. Long live the King.'" He elaborated on the heir concept:

> The Grateful Dead created something so unique and so Utopian. I don't think the corollary exists. I don't think there's any heir. I don't think it's a kingdom you rule over. I think they are the lineage, for sure, when you look at the family tree. But I think what happened was the Grateful Dead spawned an entire generation of artists, based on what they showed was possible. And Phish has obviously captivated and dominated…. But I wouldn't say that they are the heirs. I think it's become a little more of a democracy…. Grateful Dead showed me the door, Phish pushed me through it, the Disco Biscuits kicked me off the ledge on the other side of the door, Tea Leaf Green were the glider that picked me up and flew me to safety.

What the Story Is and "Should Be"

In addition to the two research questions, many interviewees also explored the distinction between what the story of Phish is—across all collective media coverage—and what a better story might be. Answers to this difficult question have the power to produce compelling context to the framing patterns analyzed in earlier chapters, as the ideas here clearly illustrate the abundant approaches to covering Phish. General examples ranged from more accurate characterization of the band to a less sensational narrative. Specific suggestions included: focus more on the band's independent and grassroots success, more on music than culture, or more on the Phish fan community.

Puterbaugh (personal communication, October 19, 2009) interpreted the story of Phish in collective media by identifying phases:

> I think you have to take different slices of different periods of time. At one point, the story was—in mainstream media—this is the Dead redux; the Grateful Dead for a new generation, offering the same experience of travelling in parking lots and lengthy jammed-out concerts. And now I think people do know the dimensions of the story a little bit more—the ones that are willing to open their minds up a bit.

Explaining how the current story of Phish still finds them misconceived, he continued, "I think they [media] have moved beyond that sort of reflexive Grateful Dead comparison phase…. But I just think the broader rock audience still remains largely ignorant of what the Phish experience is all about, even what they sound like." And in terms of a better story to tell about Phish in media, Puterbaugh emphasized their truly independent nature, compared to other trends:

> In that period of the '90s, the mid-'90s especially, when grunge was so huge and indie rock snobbery was so much in vogue—it really excluded Phish from that conversation. And I thought, "Boy, they're really missing it, because there's no band more independent than Phish." Think about it: they made their own way, they made their own rules, they didn't play the game by any shot. If you want to talk about real indie rock, let's put Phish on the top of that list.

O'Donnell (personal communication, June 8, 2010) shared his view on what the story of Phish seems to be in collective coverage:

> Everyone kind of always talks about them with sort of a wink or a derisive tone. I think most major media outlets that don't cover music specifically—*Time* magazine, places like that—write about them more as like a cultural phenomenon…. That seems to be the focus. And because they omit the music you get the sense that they can't really take it seriously.

And in terms of a better story, O'Donnell suggested focusing more on the band's music:

> But ultimately, I think the story should be about the music. The music's experimental and it takes risks and touches on everything from jazz and pop to rock and funk, and there's avant-garde elements to it as well. Ultimately, I think that's what's important. It's not about the culture it was born out of and them being so successful. It should be about their art and giving that credit, not the fact that they can get 225,000 people to come to a festival in Maine and camp out and be dirty and filthy and not take showers.

Bernstein (personal communication, June 17, 2009), clearly having already contemplated this issue, suggested additional ideas about what the story of Phish "should be":

> I'll give you an angle: let's talk about the community, let's talk about the rags to riches story, let's talk about the Internet-driven success. Phish is one of the very first Internet-driven social phenomena on Earth. In 1991 or 1992, people were meeting each other through the Internet and trading tapes.

Steele (personal communication, August 10, 2009), also having apparently pondered this, elaborated on what Bernstein called Phish's Internet-driven success, saying:

> The [real] story of Phish is the ultimate grassroots story in the age of the Internet…. I always thought Phish was the first band invented by the Internet and mailing lists and plugging into that whole world…. [Back then] I thought it was utterly fascinating to follow the exploits of this band, and the setlists, and all that stuff directly from other fans. In this day and age it sounds like the most obvious fucking thing in the world. But this was like October '92…. Not that Phish was the only band doing it. Certainly, the Dead culture participated in that and so did a few other bands. But I think Phish was the one that really used the Internet as that springboard.

Steele continued:

> I always thought Phish should just get more credit for building a fan base the way they built a fan base, which was completely organic without any major marketing muscle behind it. And I think the results speak for themselves…. Phish was ahead of the pack on that and I think, ultimately, deserves a greater place in rock and roll history, when the credits for this generation are written…. Now you flash forward 15, 20 years and you see what Phish is doing with Twitter and Live Phish. They're still ahead of the pack in that way and I think that's a good media story that remains mostly untold.

In the end, echoing Steele, Puterbaugh (personal communication, October 19, 2009) concluded:

> I don't think they're really quite appreciated for what they've done yet—the fans know, obviously—but just in general. Personally, I think the first year they're eligible to be in the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame, they ought to be in in the first vote. To me, there's no question about that.

Beyond the Research Questions: Key Context from Secondary Group Conclusions

In addition to the group of 19 interviewees, a second set of five interviews was conducted to gain ancillary context. With the goal of enhancing understanding of results from the primary group, this secondary set looked beyond writers/editors/publishers to a medley of individuals uniquely experienced in the topic of Phish-related media.

In particular, interviewees added interesting context to the results of RQ1, regarding why Phish/Grateful Dead media connections exist. Overall, this context served to reinforce the findings discussed so far. From his many years of experience working with Phish, Brian Cohen (personal communication, October 19, 2009), former senior vice president of marketing at Elektra Records, stated the label's philosophy on Phish/Grateful Dead media connections.

Reinforcing the earlier results of RQ1, he explained that promoting Phish in relation to the Grateful Dead was not a part of their marketing plan:

> I can't speak for the band, but certainly they didn't want anything coming out of the label that compared them to the Grateful Dead, and of course we could not argue with that…. The people who were doing publicity for Phish [at Elektra] were probably just as irritated as Phish [about media coverage referencing the Grateful Dead]. A, because they didn't want the band to think that we were somehow perpetuating that. And B, because it stood in the way of creating a youthful aura around the band. So we didn't feel like it helped, because our mission was to sell new records to a new audience. And in general that means selling it to a youthful audience. So we certainly weren't interested in perpetuating anything that made this a retro phenomenon. So it was not in our interest either, to perpetuate that comparison. And we understood Phish to be the unique musical entity that it is. There were social dimensions that were similar to the cult that had developed around the Grateful Dead, but it was nothing that we were interested in making a comparison to.

Citing an earlier interviewee's coverage as an example, Cohen continued by emphasizing the idea that Phish/Grateful Dead media connections may take various forms, ranging from helpful to lazy:

> Jon Pareles doesn't use the Grateful Dead comparison for any other reason but to orient his readers, who might not have ever heard of Phish. But he certainly is much clearer about describing who Phish is, on their own terms, whereas someone who just doesn't know anything about Phish—a writer who just sort of has a peripheral understanding of who they are—it's an easy comparison.

And Cohen pragmatically concluded about the inevitability of the general phenomenon of connections in media:

> Pop culture is based on comparisons to precedent. There's no band that escapes—no matter how big—comparisons to some earlier band and doesn't struggle, to some degree, with those comparisons with earlier bands or current bands. AC/DC is still trying to make clear to people that the only people they should be compared to are Chuck Berry and the Rolling Stones…. And so it's not unusual that people would need some very inaccurate, yet easy to understand, point of comparison, such as the Grateful Dead.

Aron Magner (personal communication, August 20, 2009), discussing the Grateful Dead, Phish, and his band the Disco Biscuits—often described as a jamband and often subjected to Disco Biscuits/Phish/Grateful Dead media connections—explained that the unparalleled jamband culture is intriguing to unfamiliar audiences and naturally makes for an appealing news story, which is all right with him:

> I feel like to the layman, it's the culture that surrounds these bands that's more fascinating than the music itself. It's something that's unique unto the scene…. The heart of it are these die-hard fans, fans that are loyal and fans that are rapid. And there's cross-sections of them, amongst these three bands [the Grateful Dead, Phish, and the Disco Biscuits] that we're talking about, definitely. They share that in common…. The musical ethos are the same, the improvisation, switching up the sets every night, keeping everybody on their toes, keeping everybody travelling from show to show, and the sense of community that each band has built, they're all the same.

Magner concluded:

> So there's going to be comparisons in the media because it's easy for the layman to understand that. And that's really where the story lies. If you're a journalist and you wanna talk about this band that not a lot of people know… the story is definitely in the musical and cultural ethos of the bands. So sure, if that's what you wanna talk about, I think that it's a beautiful thing. If that's what mainstream media needs to talk about in order to expose it or in order to have a pitch to the story, then I welcome it.

Adding context to the results of RQ2, regarding the result of Phish/Grateful Dead media connections, interviewees from the secondary group talked about some interesting positive and negative consequences. Echoing earlier sentiments, Cohen (personal communication, October 19, 2009) weighed the band's frustrations against the power and effectiveness of Grateful Dead references as a signpost:

> Well, it's certainly an irritating thing for the band [Phish]. It was difficult for them probably in the early years. But at the end of the day, the band understands the Grateful Dead for who they are: musicians, important cultural reference points, and very rich people. So my guess is that, although it's irritating to be compared to something that you don't consider your art to be much like, at the same time, if they're going to compare you to the Beatles, take it.

Josh Clark (personal communication, August 26, 2009)—from the band Tea Leaf Green, who are also often described as a jamband in media coverage—talked similarly about how "everybody's got a pigeonhole they can fit into," and the pros and cons of media that employ this device in coverage of a band like Phish or Tea Leaf Green:

> I think it can be [beneficial]. If the kid out there in the tie-dye is looking for the scene and he sees something associated with the great time he had at the Phish show, well this is another band you'll like, then yes, it does help. But it's a two-way street: it also shuts you off from people who would—if they weren't already told this is the scene it's in—listen to it and be like "this is awesome," and be surprised to see a bunch of tie-dyes, or whatever.

When asked about any positive results of Phish/Grateful Dead media connections, Magner (personal communication, August 20, 2009) talked about Grateful Dead connections lending a sense of legitimacy to the Phish scene:

> Yeah. Definitely. I guess you could make arguments either way, but even though there were comparisons, it helped legitimize it a little bit more to the outside world. A band [Phish] that was a lot smaller, but the culture was still the same, just younger. Yeah, I think it helped legitimize it a little more. Definitely.

Clark's (personal communication, August 26, 2009) view, when asked if Phish/Grateful Dead media connections were overall good or bad for Phish, focused on the positive. He said, "I think it was great for Phish. Especially in '95 when Jerry died. And I remember there being a big media to-do about the mantle being passed." He suggested:

> There was probably a huge spike in their concert ticket sales right then. You had all these travelling college kids chasing down the American dream. And Phish was the mother ship, taking over at that point. So just being tied in there definitely helped them a lot.

Other interviewees considered the collective story of Phish in media and discussed what aspects seem underemphasized. Jason Kaczorowski (personal communication, August 19, 2009)—a professional photographer who has documented many Phish-related events and

represents longtime Phish artist Jim Pollock—focused, like Clark, on the notion of journeying fans and the American dream:

> I think a lot of the fans are living that American dream still. They're travelling the country in pursuit of happiness, which you just don't see anywhere else. You can't find that in [the] mainstream…. So I just think their [Phish's] story is, how it should be perceived is, they're paving the way to this Utopian lifestyle, where the core fans, the die-hards, are able to travel and see a different show each night, and the band manages to sell out their shows every single night, which is just phenomenal in this economy.

And Jim Pollock (personal communication, August 1, 2009)—college peer of the band and longtime Phish merchandise artist who has designed hundreds of items for the band—commented on media coverage often overlooking more important aspects of the Phish story beyond Grateful Dead comparisons. Keeping with Bernstein and Steele, Pollock said:

> I can see, it's people wearing tie-dye, and parking lots, and stuff like that. But they [media] don't really talk about the real crux of it, which is these bands let their fans tape them and they don't care. They want the music to be shared. These fans are very technically savvy, downloading live concerts off the Internet long before there was a Napster. It's crazy. It's crazy you don't hear more about them [Phish] in the news, actually.

Conclusion

The broad goals of the research questions were to learn more about what generally motivates framing and what the basic positive and negative consequences of framing may be, particularly in regard to positioning. The interviews yielded thematic responses describing Phish/Grateful Dead media connections—apparently not sought from media by Phish—as a

shorthand tool for media predisposed to oversimplification and limited word counts. This tool was described as offering a helpful or lazy solution to the challenge of covering Phish, depending on application. Such media connections may have various pros and cons, ranging from the function of helpful signpost to the strain of skewed representation.

In terms of framing, responses elucidated much about why Phish/Grateful Dead media connections operate as a common frame in Phish coverage. Furthermore, interview responses illustrated how the Phish/Grateful Dead media connection, as a powerful oversimplified reference point, serves to position Phish. The following Conclusion chapter explores these notions and the entire case study in greater detail.

CHAPTER NINE

CONCLUSION

This dissertation related framing and positioning research to media coverage of Phish, particularly the sort linking the band to the Grateful Dead. Exploring this, the case study's multi-method approach formed an instructive and unified body of evidence. The project asked questions about how frequently Phish are connected to the Grateful Dead (finding: often and more than any other connection), how Phish are characterized independently and in relation to the Grateful Dead (finding: through a set of certain frames, some positional), why such media connections exist (finding: various reasons, such as easier comprehension of an odd entity), and what the result of such coverage has been (finding: positive and negative outcomes). These questions and findings lead to several conclusions about media framing, brand positioning, and what the case of Phish illustrates in terms of mass communication research.

Learning From the Case of Phish

Findings indicated that throughout their career Phish's general portrayal has transformed only slightly—the biggest development perhaps being the scale of their own success. Even in the earliest *Rolling Stone* coverage of Phish the band's formative characterization is evident and comparable to modern depiction. Nonetheless, media coverage about Phish in *Rolling Stone* and elsewhere has evolved through several phases. Phish were initially overlooked or ignored by many into the early-'90s. The band was then placed into a tight box indelibly labeled "Grateful Dead #2" as they collected more and more national attention. Then Phish gained status as "jam kings" due to their success, the Grateful Dead's parting, and the ever-burgeoning jamband scene Phish helped spawn. While Phish went on to earn more acceptance as their own non-fad entity,

many still continued to view them simply as heirs walking in the footsteps of the Grateful Dead (i.e. same old box with slightly more wiggle room).

The media coverage of Phish informs us about various larger issues beyond the band and their music. Examination of Phish's framing and positioning found that the *sui generis* essence of Phish is naturally complex. Their makeup presents a potentially perplexing challenge for people in media to understand and address. This is because Phish have tended to operate just outside the musical and cultural mainstream; they release songs that are not in traditional respects radio-, MTV-, or otherwise chart-toppers; their body of work spans genres, hardly focused on a narrow or particular sound; they are not a band of standard sexy rock stars, but rather skilled musicians who sometimes act goofy; and perhaps most confounding of all to journalists who must tackle writing about such a nonconformist band, Phish are wildly successful. Supporting this notion a recent *Rolling Stone* review of *Phish: The Biography* (Puterbaugh, 2009) concluded, "The real story: Phish rose to become one of the biggest bands in the country by following none of the usual rules of success" (Greene, 2010, p. 58). The combined range of their uncommon nature makes Phish quite the challenge to cover faithfully. Phish's paradoxical success seemingly necessitated resolution and a tool for quicker and easier comprehension, so media made sense of Phish using links to the Grateful Dead and others. While it is difficult to determine if Phish's unique combination of career-features presented an exceptional need for media to oversimplify their character, it is evident that these features are what make Phish such a rewarding case study.

Phish also make for an extraordinary case because they seem to avoid presenting *themselves* in a clearly marked box. This is a notable anomaly in contrast to carefully packaged performers like Britney Spears: the teen pop princess; or Eminem: the antagonistic white rapper.

Billboard underlined Phish's fuzzy identity in a report about their 2009 recording *Joy*, stating, "Like Phish itself, the album is hard to define" (Waddell, 2009, ¶ 18). But defining, clarifying, categorizing, classifying, and ordering are habitual functions of media that aim to unscramble our intricate world in 250-word articles. So what is not presented in a box—whether a political issue or a rock band—often still gets placed in one. Thus, many journalists seem to have found an effective way to interpret and distinguish Phish—profoundly or patly, rationally or ridiculously—by insistently, inexorably linking the band to the Grateful Dead. Media use this sort of Grateful Dead leitmotif in Phish coverage as a potent method of information assimilation to reconceive simply Phish's unusual combination of characteristics via something more familiar and accessible.

Because media's conventional synopsizing makes it hard to escape oversimplification, Phish appear fortunate that persistent references to the Grateful Dead have not been harsher or career-crippling. Perhaps the band's greatest defense has been its authenticity. Phish's music is not a Grateful Dead rip-off, but its own thing. The band uniquely and successfully straddles the domains of mass audience popularity and mass media underexposure; brand and cult. If they were closer to being a musical carbon copy of the Grateful Dead, Phish might not possess the authenticity required to benefit from comparisons or earn their position as the next Grateful Dead. Arguably, Phish's individual musical authenticity protects them from severe consequences of constant Grateful Dead references, since comparisons seem more logical based on cultural similarities. Despite the fair share of perfunctory Grateful Dead-related tropes and epithets attached to Phish by uninterested columnists, more and more over the years the band have also been seriously covered by highly esteemed journalists like those interviewed for this project. The credibility of having critics like these further relate Phish to the Grateful Dead

seems only to have validated Phish's genuineness, as well as their position as the Grateful Dead analog. Perhaps Phish's overall authenticity therefore helps permit any benefits of their unrivaled Grateful Dead heir status.

As a whole, there are positive and negative perspectives for viewing this case study. Some people may generalize the recurrence of Phish/Grateful Dead links in media as a specious comparison that is inimical to Phish, a phenomenal band and brand, and claim any existence in the Grateful Dead's shadow is unfavorable because it robs Phish of a unique identity. Others may suspect Phish ultimately benefitted from the association or argue that a reputation as primary heir to the Grateful Dead is a precious designation that countless Phish peers would covet. Still, it is difficult to deduce how much of Phish's success has been the result of Phish/Grateful Dead media connections, as addressed below.

Framing Phish

Media depict Phish in a way that clearly illustrates framing of the band. During their early years, Phish operated successfully under the mainstream media radar. Once the band was eventually deemed noteworthy and national coverage accumulated, however, media framed Phish. Some aspects of the band's story have clearly received more attention than other aspects—persistent and simplistic Phish/Grateful Dead media connections are an excellent example of this aspect of the framing process. Fitting with the view that framing functions to help us make sense of the world (Goffman, 1974), media coverage like *Rolling Stone*'s framing of Phish helps guide and direct audiences through social life by suggesting how to comprehend the unusual, exceptional Phish phenomenon. As suggested by the interviews, framing like this can help audiences interpret and classify new or odd information.

Coverage of Phish has accumulated story-by-story and publication-by-publication to form a gestalt-like mass with the power to reveal how the band's characterizations add up to structure social understanding. As others have suggested, frames supply the context for discussion and interpretation by organizing a way of viewing the subject and structuring understanding (see Table 4). Media coverage of Phish that references the Grateful Dead symbolically links the two concepts using various link forms (addressed in the content analysis) to establish a connection. The coverage consequently frames the content by constructing context that makes a given link seem logical (addressed in the textual analysis).

Table 4. *Link Forms and Contexts in Coverage of Phish*

Subject A	+ Connection/Link +	Subject B	= Frame/Subframe
Phish	Link Form X (band name) (album) (song) (member) (etc.)	Grateful Dead	Link Context Y (musical) (historical) (sociocultural) (organizational) (etc.)

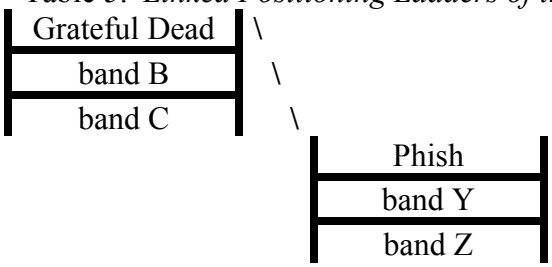
Overall, the collection of media content examined here conveys the message—one that utilizes socially shared and persistent organizing principles to symbolically structure (Reese, 2003)—that Phish are an unusual success, fair game for mockery, and most logically linked to the Grateful Dead. Reese (2003) noted that framing is often an outcome of "social and institutional interests" (p. 9). Combined with human nature, this all speaks to how mass media's adherence to social and institutional norms generates focus on band similarities over differences, fosters focus on Phish culture over music, and encourages journalists to oversimplistically distill the tangled factors of a given story. In this way, the media coverage characterizes the band in ways that fit readily with framing literature.

Positioning Phish

Phish are depicted in a way that also illustrates positioning of the band. Although crowned as the new/next Grateful Dead in much media coverage, Phish apparently did not solicit this title. Jerry Garcia's death seemingly solidified the designation and for better or worse the label has served to position the band. This oversimplified media hook (i.e. the new/next Grateful Dead) follows the logic of positioning, which presupposes that a brand needs to cut through the clutter of a media-saturated society by strategically differentiating itself in the mind of the right audience. Phish's positioning in media is oversimplified—perhaps most evidenced by the album reviews—in that the essence of their career, an extremely complex phenomenon that spans many genres and inside jokes, is often reduced through a set of pithy descriptors characterizing the band simply as Grateful Dead-like. In today's media-saturated society institutional conventions prompt a tendency of media coverage to hook new brands to what's already there, such as categorial exemplars. Even if Phish never sought to be labeled as the leaders of a new music scene *à la* the Grateful Dead, media nonetheless helped position the band as such.

Phish's leading place in the modern jamband scene is akin to their position at the top of their metaphorical positioning ladder (Ries and Trout, 1981, p. 36). In music, that ladder might best be thought of as a genre/subgenre/microgenre, with each rung representing a competing band. Ries and Trout argued that a new competitor "must either dislodge the brand above (a task that is usually impossible) or somehow relate its brand" (p. 37) to current offerings by connecting one ladder mentally to another. In positioning terms, Phish's status seemingly benefitted from media juxtaposing the band's leadership position at the top of the modern jamband ladder to the more familiar '60s-/'70s-improv-rock ladder that the Grateful Dead quintessentially top (see Table 5).

Table 5. *Linked Positioning Ladders of the Grateful Dead and Phish*



Ries and Trout (1981) also suggested that for brands "to find a creneau [a hole in the prospect's mind to fill], you must have the ability to think in reverse, to go against the grain. If everyone else is going east, see if you can find your creneau by going west" (p. 67). While much of the music industry was focused on selling albums, singles, and videos, Phish found massive success by concentrating promotion on their concert-focus in just the right way, at just the right time, and to just the right crowd. These auspicious variables enabled Phish's career to be situated for the fortuitous next-Grateful Dead positioning that media helped substantiate and authenticate. Ultimately, the media content produces the message—one that is oversimplified and ties the new to the old—that Phish are perhaps a modern version of and somehow logically linked to the Grateful Dead. The persistent pattern of media coverage connecting Phish to the Grateful Dead serves to position the former in ways that fit readily with the positioning literature.

Framing as Positioning

Prior research and new evidence indicate a compelling case of media framing as brand positioning. Both framing and positioning offer a productive explanation of media coverage of Phish, since both processes overlap in their tendency to oversimplistically relate X to Y or the new to the familiar. Instead of only literature about framing to address media content, considering also positioning literature helps enhance the psychological understanding of framing and explains the commercial/brand aspects of the framed subject. This fusion examines framing more closely and helps investigate the reaches of framing itself.

As a whole the fusion suggests a new way of thinking about media framing and its ability to result in and serve as brand positioning. Based on this dissertation's findings, I suggest "positional framing" as a fitting name for this process. Mainly adapting Ries and Trout and Reese, and those who they adapted, I submit the following definition for this form of media framing capable of generating brand positioning: a process wherein frames work symbolically to meaningfully structure the social world through production of the cohesive positioning of a branded subject, accomplished by persistently linking relative and oversimplified socially shared organizing principles.

The positional framing process may be active or passive: it is active when one or more subject is essentially the originator/perpetuator; it is passive when one or more subject is essentially not the originator/perpetuator, like the case of Phish in which media apparently contribute that function. The positional framing process may be explicit or implicit, depending on how directly the positional frame's vocabulary addresses the subject(s). Content in this case of Phish is usually explicit through clear references to the Grateful Dead. The positional framing process may therefore variably fit or not fit with the intended messages of the framed brand. For example, in Phish's case it seems media emphasized Grateful Dead connections more than what the band preferred.

The literature and evidence in the case of Phish illustrate various reasons why positional framing may work. Likening and differentiating relative and oversimplified socially shared concepts is a natural way for people to process social data, whether about political protests or music festivals. As it is for both effective media framing and brand positioning, this is how people easily and quickly learn and therefore appreciate information presented; compare-and-contrast is a useful and popular learning tool in countless contexts. The newer and stranger the

entity, the greater the need to relate information in familiar terms. Since they too are people, this is how journalists and marketers are also likely to learn and think and present information. Humans are arguably hardwired to deal with information this way. Framing and positioning both satisfy this psychological need to assimilate the new in terms of the familiarly established, which allows audiences and journalists to use, validate, and stay comfortably anchored to their preferred histories. With this in mind, it is sensible to deduce that positional framing works because framing and positioning work for similar reasons.

Besides Phish, others from the music world illuminate the notion of positional framing. Like Phish, the following examples have gathered large amounts of press coverage that go beyond random structureless references.

Through their extensive and fanatically-chronicled career, British rockers Oasis endured many comparisons to the Beatles. For example, *Rolling Stone* once said the band's confidence "permits Oasis to borrow shamelessly from... the Beatles without losing their own snide identity" (Wiederhorn, 1995). At the end of the group's run, the *Telegraph* pondered the Oasis/Beatles connection: "Most of all there was the Beatles, the group both the Gallagher brothers [of Oasis] revere. It was in the mop-top look of the band, the classic structure of the songs, the flowing melodies and elegant chord sequences" (McCormick, 2009).

Ever since New York's the Strokes arrived to supposedly save rock 'n' roll in the early-2000s, the band quickly garnered scores of Velvet Underground correlations. *Spin* plainly identified the band's "New York sound that's been compared to the Velvet Underground" (Cohen, 2001, p. 36). Pitchfork thoroughly pondered how the Strokes were "touted by the press as 'the second coming of the Velvet Underground'" and noted that "frontman Julian Casablancas' vocals bear more than a passing resemblance to early [Velvet Underground member] Lou Reed"

(Schreiber, 2001). *Entertainment Weekly*'s review of the band's full-length debut called it "the first album by some New York mopheads who just a year ago were bashing out variations on pre-alternative alternative music (Velvet Underground, garage rock, and so on) in clubs" (Browne, 2001).

Presently, media coverage of pop superstar Lady Gaga features endless Madonna references. One *New York Times* article described her by saying "she has the gumption of vintage Madonna" (Caramanica, 2009). Another *Rolling Stone* album review even concluded that "half the disc is Madonna knock-offs, but that's part of the concept" (Dolan, 2009).

While these examples may not be identical to Phish, they have elicited comparisons that also go beyond music to focus on culture such as fanbase, geography, celebrity status, and fashion/image links. Study of the similarities and differences between media coverage of Phish and these other musicians offers possible future research. Outside of music, various other forms of entertainment appear to be targets of the same media conventions. New movies are often introduced in media using a redesign template like "Hit Movie X crossed with Classic Movie Y, but this time in LA, set in the present day, and starring a younger lead." New TV shows are commonly described vis-à-vis genre models, such as *Twilight Zone* or *X-Files* references about anything remotely sci-fi (e.g. *Fringe*). Also often blessed/smothered by similar out-of-their-hands media branding are celebrities, such as actors/actresses (e.g. the Brat Pack as the new Rat Pack; the Frat Pack as the next Brat Pack; Chris Farley as the next John Belushi; Pam Anderson as the new Marilyn Monroe), athletes (e.g. Kobe Bryant as the next Michael Jordan), and politicians (e.g. Barack Obama as the new J.F.K.). As with Phish, these examples feature comparisons of varying rationale and illustrate media as presumable originator/perpetuator of the relative branding. Overall, casual survey suggests that this sort of positional framing is perhaps

most widespread in music coverage, which may be associated with the challenge of conveying music's abstract and aural qualities in media.

The above examples seem to typify the way positional framing can facilitate the ability to stand on the shoulders of those who came before, offering the possible power of a cohesive link imparted by media—such power associated with the benefits discussed in the interviews about the Phish case. Of course audience reaction to authenticity and connection rationale play a part in the power of positional framing. There is a thin line between being labeled a copycat and being usefully branded through positional framing. Again, due to many factors in and out of their control, Phish are fortunate to have come out on the positive side of such a thin line to enjoy a long, prosperous career.

Limitations

To address the limits of the methods and the dissertation as a whole, some points are worth acknowledging. Some might criticize the use of content analysis because of the interpretation required. However, the role of the researcher in this study was relatively unobtrusive, a coding manual strengthened the procedures, and the data interpretation required little more than coders identifying easily detectable words and phrases as Grateful Dead vocabulary. Still the content analysis might benefit from additional coders to further strengthen the findings.

One might also wonder what the subjective nature of the textual analysis means for the integrity of the case study. I would emphasize that the study is a good one because and not in spite of the interpretation involved. As Hertog and McLeod (2003) urged researchers interpreting texts to embrace their "cultural expertise" (p. 152), my background (discussed in the Methods chapter) facilitated my ability to piece together the data. Without my background as a

foundation, I may not have been as successful in connecting the dots of coverage on Phish. Thus the qualitative approach, combined with the previously stated systematic procedure of reading texts and identifying frames, freed me to investigate media characterizations with productive results.

A few limits regarding the interviews should also be acknowledged. The research questions limited the information I discussed with interviewees, although as previously stated I always remained open to any topic individuals were inclined to address and discovering unexpected information. The amount of time participants were able to talk also limited how much information I might glean from an interview. Ultimately, this potential issue was minimized by the abundance of interviews conducted. I eventually had so many conversations transcribed that I was never lacking an interesting response to any point.

Additionally, the slight lack of major disagreements from interviewees presented a limitation. Interviewee responses contained many minor variations and fascinating contrasting views, but few radically divided ideologies. The most notable differences were negligible, such as whether the interviewee tended to see things more from the perspective of a writer or fan, what part(s) of Phish's career the interviewee focused on, and what sort of media the interviewee discussed. This lack of major disagreements may have resulted in a scarcity of diverging perspectives, but ultimately reinforced the ability to infer conclusions from the interviews' reliable responses.

Beside each of the three methods, it is necessary to look at the dissertation as a whole. For instance, this work is based on the assumption that it is important and productive to study mass media and its capacity to reflect society and be reflected in society. As established in the chapter about framing, I assume framing has a social impact outside the boundaries of the media

content itself. I believe this assumption—a typical basis of mass media research— is fair whether the content is about a jamband or jihad. In the case of Phish, this importance was evidenced by discussion of the reciprocal feedback loop of fan and media culture addressed in the interviews.

This dissertation's chief focus on *Rolling Stone* coverage might also be considered a limit. While this may be restrictive, it is considered more a benefit since such focus allowed necessarily thorough novel analysis of the phenomena through all coverage in a significant mainstream source. *Rolling Stone* coverage worked as a key starting point because it is considered wide-reaching, influential, and composed of distinguished music journalism. These features made it an ideal choice to foster further discussion of media coverage.

The project also raised a few notable uncertainties related to media and audiences. Following the case study, one might wonder if media or the audience had a greater influence on the social circulation of Phish/Grateful Dead media connections, wonder exactly how much of Phish's success was achieved due to media linking them to the Grateful Dead, or wonder about the extent to which such media links aided Phish's success after Garcia's 1995 death. But these questions are unanswerable by this dissertation, as the evidence is not a definitive measure of such things. Determining whether media coverage or fan interactions propagated Phish/Grateful Dead links more is unlikely. It is also difficult or impossible to parse out the exact role of media in Phish's ascent after Garcia's death, which solidified Phish's position when coverage evolved from figurative to literal nominations of "new Grateful Dead." But it is clear that Phish were already quite successful by this point. It might make the most sense to think that if media coverage helped Phish then what it did was propel them with more force and give them a greater impact. That is to say, with or without media linking them to the Grateful Dead, Phish would

have been successful as a result of their own talent and savvy business sense. But the Phish/Grateful Dead link, via both media and fans, likely helped mold Phish's assorted musical styles and extraordinary achievements into a well-positioned and understandable product. This help is also surely the result of the consistently clever way Phish handled the coverage: often emphasizing non-Grateful Dead influences and rarely discussing, let alone fighting, Grateful Dead comparisons in interviews—not to mention practically never covering Grateful Dead music. Other bands could learn from Phish's example of downplaying explicit associations, yet nonetheless playing the cards they were dealt. Phish/Grateful Dead media connections may have been annoying to Phish—viz. a dual blessing/curse that is potentially precious or specious—but they handled the situation well and it seems to have helped their career by providing them a serendipitous edge.

Future Research

Future research addressing similar issues and media content could aim to accomplish several additional goals, some of which stem from the previously listed limits. These goals include adding audience views, utilizing additional methods, analyzing more media content, further studying Phish, developing understanding of the framing and positioning intersection, and bringing other literature into the discussion.

In the future, I hope to extend the study of media about Phish and containing Phish/Grateful Dead links to audience reception. Integrating the audience's—Phish lovers or haters—perspective into the analysis is the next logical step after this dissertation. Such work could demonstrate how frames discovered here are socially adopted.

Future research might also expand the methods used in this dissertation. For instance, it could be useful to employ multidimensional scaling or some other technique involving

perceptual mapping. Visual representations of how media consumers think about the Phish/Grateful Dead media link, or other issues related to the intersection of framing and positioning, would help bring an additional cognitive approach to the analysis.

I also hope to add media sources and extend the time range of media in future research. This dissertation thoroughly dissected *Rolling Stone* coverage and broadly considered various other sources, but future formal analysis of media content might also include, but not be limited to: *Relix*, *Spin*, *Billboard*, *Entertainment Weekly*, *New York Times*, *Boston Globe,* and *Burlington Free Press* coverage—all of which were informally reviewed for this dissertation. Formal methodical examination of these important sources was only excluded from this dissertation because of scope limitations. Representations of Phish in media beyond *Rolling Stone* could be analyzed and compared to the evidence from this study. I might also compare the features of national and local coverage perspectives. Additional research could examine media coverage of Phish over an even longer range than the one available here. Such work could also quantitatively measure the frequency of Grateful Dead references in coverage strictly divided by eras of Phish's career, differing from this project's primary focus on measuring the whole phenomenon and secondary interest in evolution. Further, the patterns and frames discovered in this dissertation's content and textual analysis of *Rolling Stone* coverage might fruitfully be compared with other bands also linked to the Grateful Dead in media—the Disco Biscuits or Animal Collective are appealing modern parallels—or with other sources. *Spin* would make a particularly similar mainstream counterpart to *Rolling Stone*'s approach to Phish. *Relix'*s reliable niche-yet-national viewpoint on Phish could also inform by providing a potentially more complete media account of Phish's career for comparison.

Future studies should also continue to research Phish academically. The band's cultural impact has shaped society to such an extent that more research is welcomed. Phish should not be as underrepresented in academic coverage as they have been in mainstream media. The ever-growing body of academic work known as Grateful Dead studies is an unmistakably fitting blueprint for future work about Phish. As the Grateful Dead are often seen as a cultural model for Phish, the compact yet prolific community of Grateful Dead scholars is a trailblazing academic model for the multi-branched study of Phish. Analysis of the Phish phenomenon, like Grateful Dead studies, presents inexhaustible opportunities for interdisciplinary synergy. In addition to mass media and other communication studies, the pursuit of research on Phish calls for an integrated range of focus on musicology, sociology, anthropology, history, popular culture, business theory, and much more.

In terms of theoretical advancements, a number of goals are accessible. One objective would be to continue research on the intersection of framing and positioning. This could be achieved through more studies like this dissertation's, exploring how media framing of certain thematic content can result in brand positioning. Research could also further explore positional framing of bands besides Phish. The study of music journalism should also be continued from a perspective inspired by mass communication theory to learn about how music-related issues are framed and positioned. Additional bodies of literature on topics such as music criticism, branding, consumer psychology, public relations, reputation, stereotypes, and celebrity might help further inform such analyses.

Conclusion

This dissertation applied literature on framing and positioning to explore media framing as brand positioning and analyze coverage linking Phish to the Grateful Dead. Highlighting

many major conclusions, this chapter reflected on: results of the case study; the band as an appropriate case study that informs us about larger issues; the nature of media coverage about Phish; the persistent framing and positioning of Phish; the notion of framing as positioning; limits of the research methods and dissertation as a whole; and recommendations for future research.

This project aimed to contribute to communication theory and our understanding of media in society, as well as specific comprehension of Phish/Grateful Dead media connections. Several notable contributions are apparent when reconsidering this dissertation's proposed value, introduced in the first chapter, in line with the findings. In theoretical terms, the dissertation showed that the analysis of framing in music-related media content is a worthy expansion of the literature. Likewise, the analysis of brand positioning outside traditional consumer products is productive when applied to music-related entities. As such, this project found that the combination of framing and positioning literature is a sensible, useful union and enhances our understanding of each body of research. Incorporating quantitative and qualitative analyses of content and content producers was found to be a suitable, fruitful method for the joint study of framing and positioning. In terms of practical social contributions, the dissertation provided a thorough documentation and mapping of *Rolling Stone*'s perspective on Phish, in addition to accounts from other sources. The project also offered serious analysis of Phish, enriching comprehension of their career and hopefully helping legitimize and encourage additional academic study of Phish. The collection of interviews provided a unique journalism-centric viewpoint on media content about Phish, creating a useful context for interpretation of Phish coverage. Finally, this project's extensive examination of the Phish case explored branding issues that may be instructive in and out of the music industry.

Assuming that the study of mass media helps us better understand our society and that it is valuable to search for patterns in media to reveal our world's workings, this project examined coverage about Phish as a path to such discovery. Using the case of media coverage about Phish, studied through a combination of quantitative and qualitative methods, this dissertation explored the framing process of Phish in a popular mainstream music magazine and beyond. Particular interest was placed on how this framing intersects with positioning of the band in relation to the Grateful Dead. Based on the case of Phish, this dissertation studied how, why, and with what result stories are told through such associative, concept-linking media coverage.

The analyses uncovered much significant knowledge and gleaned several central insights, strengthening our understanding of how people communicate using mass media. Following review of key theoretical perspectives, this dissertation's case study indicated that because media tend to assimilate the new in terms of the familiar—and in Phish's case make sense of such an entity that naturally defies the standard mold—cumulative media framing can function as a branding device by cohesively positioning a subject, which can happen out of a brand's design. While not requiring any extreme adaption of the literature, this dissertation's evidence suggests a novel and useful way of thinking about framing and about positioning.

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APPENDIX A

CONTENT ANALYSIS MANUAL

CODING MANUAL FOR DISSERTATION

ABOUT MEDIA COVERAGE OF PHISH

This manual includes:
I-Overview of the coding procedure
II-Information about Phish
III-Identifying Grateful Dead references
IV-Tables for recording findings

I. OVERVIEW OF THE CODING PROCEDURE

Thank you for helping with this research about media coverage of the musical groups Phish and the Grateful Dead. As a coder, you will examine and analyze the content of 12 Phish album reviews taken from *Rolling Stone* magazine. Your primary goal is to identify, list, and count references to the Grateful Dead within the Phish reviews. Your secondary goal is to do the same with non-Grateful Dead references.

A "reference" to the Grateful Dead, or any other musician, may take various forms. You are asked to classify references as one of the following:
-a reference to an entity/performer/band, including nicknames (e.g., the Spice Girls)
-a reference to an album (e.g., *Spiceworld*)
-a reference to a song (e.g., "Wannabe")
-a reference to an individual member of a group, including nicknames and all first-name-only or last-name-only mentions (e.g., Posh Spice; Posh; Victoria Beckham; Vic; Beckham; etc.)

Let your intuition guide your identification of the references, but also use common sense. For instance, band names and member names are typically capitalized, album names are typically italicized, and song names are typically in quotes.

Use this manual's guide as a starting point to identify Grateful Dead and other references. If you find anything ambiguous, use the Internet to determine who or what it may be referencing. You are encouraged to seek information or context beyond this guide to help you understand any references. Google is the recommended starting point. For instance, if you locate a reference to the song "Wannabe" and you don't know who sings it, then consider Googling phrases like "Wannabe" or "Wannabe song" to make your determination.

To perform the coding, you will need the following: 1 coding manual (including a table for recording findings), 1 set of Phish album reviews from *Rolling Stone*, 1 laptop with Internet access, 1 copy of the *The New Rolling Stone Album Guide* (2004), and something to write with.

Please read one review, record the findings for that review, read the next review, record the findings, etc. Feel free to mark the reviews while you work. Take your time and carefully read the content. Do not hesitate to double-check your findings. If you have any questions, feel free to ask. When you think you are done, please submit all of your work to the researcher. Thank you very much for your help!

II. INFORMATION ABOUT PHISH

This is basic background information about Phish that you may or may not need to interpret the reviews.

PHISH MEMBERS

Trey Anastasio – guitar, lead vocals
Mike Gordon – bass, vocals
Jon Fishman – drums, vocals
Page McConnell – keyboards, vocals

REVIEWED PHISH ALBUMS

This is a list of the 12 Phish albums reviewed by *Rolling Stone*. If you need the official tracklistings, please find the album details listed on this Web site: http://www.livephish.com/catalog.aspx

- *A Live One*
  -listed under "PHISH ALBUMS"
- *Billy Breathes*
  -listed under "PHISH ALBUMS"
- *Slip Stitch And Pass*
  -listed under "PHISH ALBUMS"
- *The Story Of The Ghost*
  -listed under "PHISH ALBUMS"
- *Farmhouse*
  -listed under "PHISH ALBUMS"
- *Round Room*
  -listed under "PHISH ALBUMS"
- *Undermind*
  -listed under "PHISH ALBUMS"
- *Live At Madison Square Garden New Year's Eve 1995*
  -listed under "ARCHIVAL RELEASES (SHOWS)" as "Madison Square Garden, New York, NY"
- *Colorado '88*
  -listed under "ARCHIVAL RELEASES (ALBUMS)"
- *Vegas 96*
  -listed under "ARCHIVAL RELEASES (SHOWS)" as "Aladdin Theatre, Las Vegas, NV "
- *At The Roxy*
  -listed under "ARCHIVAL RELEASES (SHOWS)" in 3 parts as "The Roxy, Atlanta, GA"
- *Joy*
  -listed under "PHISH ALBUMS"

III. IDENTIFYING GRATEFUL DEAD REFERENCES

Use this information to help you identify and classify Grateful Dead references in the Phish reviews.

GRATEFUL DEAD BAND NAMES

-The Grateful Dead
-Grateful Dead
-The Dead
-GD

GRATEFUL DEAD ALBUMS

To identify a Grateful Dead album, please see the band's entry in the supplied copy of *The New Rolling Stone Album Guide* (2004). Utilize the Internet if you need additional information.

GRATEFUL DEAD SONGS

To identify a Grateful Dead-related song, please use the band's official Web site: www.dead.net/songs

GRATEFUL DEAD MEMBERS (listed in order from source: www.dead.net/archives/band)

-Jerry Garcia
-Bob Weir
-Bill Kreutzmann
-Phil Lesh
-Mickey Hart
-Robert Hunter
-Ron "Pigpen" McKernan
-Tom Constanten
-Keith Godchaux
-Donna Jean Godchaux
-Brent Mydland
-Vince Welnick
-John Perry Barlow

IV. TABLES FOR RECORDING FINDINGS

Read the reviews, code the content, record the key words and phrases in these 2 tables, and respond to the questions below each table.

Phish album reviewed (year of release/review)	**Author**	**Grateful Dead band name reference?**	**Grateful Dead album reference?**	**Grateful Dead song reference?**	**Grateful Dead musician reference?**
A Live One (1995/1995)	Tom Moon				
Billy Breathes (1996/1996)	Richard Gehr				
Slip Stitch and Pass (1997/1997)	Will Hermes				
The Story of the Ghost (1998/1998)	Greg Kot				
Farmhouse (2000/2000)	Jon Pareles				
Round Room (2002/2002)	Tom Moon				
Undermind (2004/2004)	Mark Kemp				
Live at Madison Square Garden New Year's Eve 1995 (2005/2006)	Kevin O'Donnell				
Colorado '88 (2006/2006)	Kevin O'Donnell				
Vegas 96 (2007/2007)	Christian Hoard				
At the Roxy (2008/2008)	Kevin O'Donnell				
Joy (2009/2009)	Will Hermes				
12 albums	8 different authors	__ reviews, __ total refs	__ reviews, __ total refs	__ reviews, __ total refs	__ reviews, __ total refs

-How many reviews contain at least 1 reference? ____
-How many reviews contain 0 references? ____
-How many total Grateful Dead references did you find? ____
-What review had the most references? Review: _____ / Total references: ____ / Total forms: ____
-How many distinct authors made Grateful Dead references at least once? ____
-How many distinct authors did not make Grateful Dead references? ____
-How many distinct authors made Grateful Dead references in more than 1 review? ____ / Author last names:_____
-How many reviews contained 1 form of reference? ____
-How many reviews contained 2 forms of reference? ____
-How many reviews contained 3 forms of reference? ____
-How many reviews contained 4 forms of reference? ____

Phish album reviewed (year of release/review)	**Author**	**Other musicians that are referenced (via entity name, album, song, or member name)**
A Live One (1995/1995)	Tom Moon	
Billy Breathes (1996/1996)	Richard Gehr	
Slip Stitch and Pass (1997/1997)	Will Hermes	
The Story of the Ghost (1998/1998)	Greg Kot	
Farmhouse (2000/2000)	Jon Pareles	
Round Room (2002/2002)	Tom Moon	
Undermind (2004/2004)	Mark Kemp	
Live at Madison Square Garden New Year's Eve 1995 (2005/2006)	Kevin O'Donnell	
Colorado '88 (2006/2006)	Kevin O'Donnell	
Vegas 96 (2007/2007)	Christian Hoard	
At the Roxy (2008/2008)	Kevin O'Donnell	
Joy (2009/2009)	Will Hermes	
12 albums	8 different authors	-

Beside the Grateful Dead, who is referenced most, how often, and in what forms?
-Please circle all references to this entity that are listed in the table above.
-Name: _____
-Total references: ____
-Total forms: ____

APPENDIX B

INTERVIEWEE BIOGRAPHIES

Bernstein, Andy (phone interview, June 17, 2009)
-*Pharmer's Almanac* book series (co-author and editor for five volumes): a Phish guide estimated to have sold over 70,000 copies
-HeadCount (co-founder, along with Marc Brownstein of the Disco Biscuits, and Executive Director): "a nonpartisan, nonprofit organization dedicated to voter registration and inspiring participation in democracy through the power of music"; Bernstein sits on HeadCount board of directors with Bob Weir of the Grateful Dead, among other music industry leaders
-Worked as a full-time journalist for over a decade
-First Phish show: 1992

Blau, Jnan (phone interview, June 16, 2009)
-Wrote his dissertation about Phish: *"The Trick Was to Surrender to the Flow": Phish, the Phish Phenomenon, and Improvisational Performance Across Cultural and Communicative Contexts*
-Blogs for HeadCount.org
-Ph.D., Southern Illinois University, 2007 (Speech Communication)
-Assistant Professor, Communication Studies Department, California Polytechnic State University
-First Phish show: 1994

Budnick, Dean (phone interview, November 22, 2009)
-Relix Media Group (executive editor and senior vice president, online): publisher of *Relix* magazine, Relix.com, and Jambands.com
-Jambands.com (founder/editor in chief)
-Author of several books: *The Phishing Manual: A Compendium to the Music of Phish* (1996); *Jam Bands: North America's Hottest Live Groups Plus How to Tape and Trade Their Shows* (1998); *Jambands: The Complete Guide to the Players, Music and Scene* (2003)
-Commonly credited with popularizing the term "jamband"
-Jammy Awards (co-founder and producer)
-Ph.D., Harvard University, 2000 (History of American Civilization Program)
-Has written much about Phish and interviewed members multiple times
-First Phish show: late-'80s

Calarco, Dave (phone interview, July 10, 2009)
-Phishthoughts.com (founder and editor): an in-depth blog and audio archive dedicated to Phish music, where he prolifically and regularly analyzes the band's output
-JamBase.com (Former contributor)
-First Phish show: early-'90s

Clark, Josh (phone interview, August 26, 2009)
-Tea Leaf Green (guitar, vocals): San Francisco-based rock group often described in media as a jamband
-Has performed with members of both the Grateful Dead and Phish
-First Phish show: 1995

Cohen, Brian (phone interview, October 19, 2009)
-Elektra (senior vice president of marketing): major record label that released a significant amount of Phish's music
-Started at Elektra in 1990, regularly working with Phish—as well as Phish managers John Paluska and Jason Colton—from their 1991 signing until their 2004 breakup

DeCurtis, Anthony (phone interview, June 8, 2010)
-*Rolling Stone* (contributing editor): contributor for over 25 years
-Ph.D., Indiana University Bloomington (American Literature)
-Lecturer, Creative Writing, University of Pennsylvania
-Author of several books about music, including *In Other Words: Artists Talk About Life and Work* (2005), which features an extended interview with Trey Anastasio
-Co-editor of *The Rolling Stone Album Guide* (1992)
-Contributor to *Garcia* (1995)
-Grammy winner (1988, "Best Album Notes") for writing Eric Clapton's *Crossroads* liner notes
-Has interviewed Grateful Dead and Phish members multiple times
-Has written about the Grateful Dead and Phish for various publications
-His writing has also appeared in the *New York Times, Relix,* and many other publications

Eisen, Benjy (phone interview, July 29, 2009)
-AOL Music/Spinner (contributing editor)
-His writing about Phish has appeared in various publications
-His writing has appeared in *Relix*, *Rolling Stone,* and *Filter*
-Has written much about Phish and interviewed members multiple times
-First Phish show: 1993

Fricke, David (phone interview, November 11, 2009)
-*Rolling Stone* (senior writer): contributor for over 25 years
-Has written much about the Grateful Dead and Phish, including Grateful Dead liner notes and the 2003 *Rolling Stone* Phish cover story
-Has interviewed Grateful Dead and Phish members multiple times
-Contributor to *Garcia* (1995)
-Author of the 2009 and 2010 *Phishbill* essays for Phish's Halloween concerts

Gadiel, Andy (phone interview, August 25, 2009)
-JamBase.com (founder and president): a database of concert listings, ticket information, and more
-Jambands.com (co-founder)
-Creator of the prototypical Phish fan website, Andy Gadiel's Phish Page
-Has written much about Phish and interviewed members multiple times
-First Phish show: 1995

Gehr, Richard (phone interview, July 8, 2009)
-*The Phish Book* (co-author, with Phish)
-Has written much about the Grateful Dead and Phish
-Has interviewed Grateful Dead and Phish members multiple times
-His writing has also appeared in *Rolling Stone, Spin,* the *New York Times,* the *Village Voice, Relix,* and many other publications
-First Phish show: 1994

Godard, Ellis (phone interview, July 1, 2009)
-Mockingbird Foundation (executive director, board member, and treasurer): an all-volunteer non-profit organization of Phish fans raising money for charity
-*The Phish Companion: A Guide to the Band and Their Music* (2nd ed.) (2004) (executive editor)
-Ph.D., University of Virginia, 2005 (Sociology)
-Assistant Professor, Sociology Department, California State University, Northridge
-First Phish show: 1990

Greenhaus, Mike (phone interview, June 30, 2009)
-Relix Media Group (executive editor and vice president): publisher of *Relix* magazine, Relix.com, and Jambands.com
-Jambands.com (executive editor)
-Has written much about Phish and interviewed members multiple times

Hallenbeck, Brent (phone interview, July 28, 2009)
-*The Burlington Free Press* (arts and entertainment reporter): Burlington, VT's local newspaper, which has chronicled Phish since their earliest days
-Has written much about Phish, particularly contributions to a retrospective series covering their 2004 breakup
-First Phish show: 2004

Jarnow, Jesse (phone interview, September 30, 2009)
-Jambands.com (senior editor)
-*Relix* (contributing editor)
-Has written much about Phish, including for *Rolling Stone,* and interviewed members multiple times
-His writing has appeared in various publications, such as the *Village Voice*, *Paste*, and others
-Some credit his coverage of Phish, mentioned by Trey Anastasio in a *Charlie Rose* interview, as a catalyst for Phish's 2004 breakup
-First Phish show: 1995

Kaczorowski, Jason (phone interview, August 19, 2009)
-Professional photographer who has documented many Phish-related events, such as concerts and the process of artist Jim Pollock
-Artist representative for Jim Pollock and David Welker, both frequent Phish collaborators
-*Helping Friendly Phanzine* (creator and distributor): A unofficial fan zine sold in Phish concert parking lots; 1,000 sold every tour from 1997-1999

Magner, Aron (in-person interview, August 20, 2009)
-The Disco Biscuits (keys, vocals): a Philadelphia-based group that fuses rock, electronic, jazz and more; often described in media as a jamband; often described in media as a "next Phish"; certainly one of the most popular and successful bands to emerge from the jamband scene
-Has performed with members of both the Grateful Dead and Phish
-First Phish show: 1995

O'Donnell, Kevin (phone interview, June 8, 2010)
-Spin.com (associate editor)
-Formerly of *Rolling Stone* (2004-2010): contributor to *Rolling Stone*; associate editor of RollingStone.com
-Regularly covered Phish for *Rolling Stone*
-[note: O'Donnell worked at *Rolling Stone* at the time of our interview, but since moved to *Spin*]

Pareles, Jon (e-mail interview, June 4 and June 17, 2009)
-*New York Times* (chief pop music critic)
-His writing has also appeared in various publications, such as *Rolling Stone,* the *Village Voice*, *Crawdaddy!*, and others
-Regularly covers Phish for the *New York Times*

Pollock, Jim (in-person interview, August 1, 2009)
-Longtime Phish merchandise artist; designed hundreds of items from album covers and posters to clothing and ticket stubs
-Phish keyboardist Page McConnell's roommate at Goddard College in mid-'80s

Puterbaugh, Parke (phone interview, October 19, 2009)
-*Phish: The Biography* (2009) (author)
-*Rolling Stone* (former senior editor): contributor from 1979-2004
-Former in-house writer for Phish: assisted with press releases, record label bios, Web site copy, and more
-Has written much about the Grateful Dead and Phish, including Grateful Dead essay in *The Rolling Stone Illustrated of Rock and Roll* and the 1997 *Rolling Stone* Phish feature story
-Has interviewed Grateful Dead and Phish members multiple times
-Editorial contributor to *Garcia* (1995)
-Author of the 1998 *Phishbill* essay for Phish's Halloween concert
-Rock and Roll Hall of Fame and Museum (curatorial assistant and writer)
-First Phish show: 1995

Robicheau, Paul (phone interview, July 28, 2009)
-*Boston Globe* (longtime reporter)
-*The Improper Bostonian* (contributing editor)
-Has written about and photographed Phish for *The Boston Globe* since early-'90s
-Has interviewed Phish members multiple times
-Has also written about Phish for *Rolling Stone*, MTV, and other newspapers and magazines
-First Phish show: 1989

Shapiro, Peter (phone interview, July 8, 2009)
-Relix Media Group (publisher): publisher of *Relix* magazine, Relix.com, and Jambands.com
-Jammy Awards (co-founder, executive producer, musical director)
-Produced several relevant documentary films: *And Miles to Go: On Tour with the Grateful Dead* (1993); *Tie-Died: Rock 'n' Roll's Most Deadicated Fans* (1995); *American Road* (1997), in addition to many others
-The Wetlands Preserve (former owner, 1997-2001): landmark New York City music venue credited with helping produce jamband scene
-Brooklyn Bowl (owner): Brooklyn music venue
-3ality Digital Entertainment (principal founding partner): a digital S3D motion picture production company that has produced live concert movies such as *U2 3D*
-First Phish show: 1992

Steele, Lockhart (phone interview, August 10, 2009)
-*Pharmer's Almanac* book series (co-author and editor): a Phish guide
-Curbed.com (founder)
-Gawker Media (former editorial director)
-First Phish show: 1990