

## HIGH-PRESSURE INTEGRITY

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The false front, the cultivated bedside manner, the glib tongue and the over solicitous concern are familiar to all of us in medicine. We see this approach in an occasional practitioner of medicine, and although it may pay handsome dividends to the user and surround him with an enthralled multitude of innocent patients, it is easily spotted and disliked by the rest of his professional associates. In deference to professional courtesy and community harmony, most of us tolerate behavior of this type, preferring to keep silent or to reply in an evasive, noncommittal manner when confronted directly for an opinion. Most of us have no difficulty living with such situations, but beneath the surface the irritation remains.

In similar fashion, one of the things that has bothered us continuously since the advent of Mr. Kennedy and the New Frontier is the high-pressure, image-creating, publicity organization that the President and his advisers feel is an essential to insure that the people of this country appreciate the great qualities of the present administration. It is hard to escape the inference that the basic qualities may not be there and that they must be created and maintained by clever and extensive publicity work—that the illusion must not dim, no matter what the reality.

This sort of legerdemain has become an acceptable, though hardly admirable, procedure in the field of entertainment, where self centered young women of loose morals and limited mentality, or cocky, adolescent male delinquents can be transformed into paragons of virtue and intelligence and converted into objects of admiration and respect by energetic press agency. Somehow it does not seem proper that the same techniques should be necessary to sell a president and his administration to the public.

Whatever the failings of Mr. Eisenhower and his predecessor, Mr. Truman, there was little preoccupation on their parts about their "images"; and their dedication to presidential duties, their basic integrity and their sincerity got through to the public without difficulty. Mr. Kennedy, on the other hand, seems to be plagued with the typical concern of the show business world (where unfortunately he has many long-standing connections) that constantly asks, "Was I good? Should I change the routine? How did they like me tonight?"

The carefully contrived and edited television specials, the organized and manipulated news conferences, the press releases, the controlled leaks, the planted magazine articles, the opinion polls and rating indices—all of these, which used to be called propaganda devices in the direct language of earlier years—are the promotional tools of the advertising and entertainment worlds and seem better suited to Hollywood than to Washington. Because these are used, it is perhaps inevitable that we should wonder whether some of the personalities and performances in the nation's capital could

be as phony as most of those in the film capital.

Images may be true ones or false ones; they may be real or illusionary. If we are being deceived by what we see and hear, it is time that we should become aware of it. Wisdom, ability, integrity and dedication are all qualities that stand solidly on their own merit. They need no promotional aid. When they have to be helped, or manufactured artificially by an overt, public relations staff, the nagging doubt as to whether they are present at all is bound to remain.

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