



ADVERTISEMENT:

HOST:

It feels like branding and marketing goes in cycles of themes, from earnest to snarky to authentic to sarcastic.

A few years ago, Terry O'Reilly, gave his Walrus Talk about VICE -- are we cycling back up to marketing vice again? Is that even possible in isolation? It was time for an update from the master of advertising himself.

This is the Conversation Piece.

And this is Terry O'Reilly.

TERRY O'REILLY:

Lust, gluttony, greed, sloth, envy, pride, wrath: the seven deadly sins or an advertising brief for Molson Canadian.

It's hard to tell.

Branding. Vice has a long history in my industry. I give you Don Draper. As he lit a lucky strike, he was pouring three fingers of bourbon over ice, as he seduced his client's wife, all the wild dreaming up some zippy new copy for a beer in his head. Yes, Donald was a multi-tasker, but the love of ice goes back much further than the Madmen of the sixties. Many of the mightiest advertising agencies that started in the early 20th century, the ones that still stand today, like young and Rubik ham, and BVDO were all founded by the sons of preachers, which I find most interesting while those young men watched their fathers rail against the deadly sins with fire and brimstone and saw a repentant congregation come back week after week for forgiveness. Those boys saw a future in vice and built monolithic corporations. See advertising stumbled onto its greatest insight back then. And the insight was this. Everybody is really two people. The person you are and the person you want to be all marketing is squarely aimed at person. Number two, you want to be sexy. You want to eat in the finest restaurants. You want to be a highly paid individual. You want to vacation in the exotic locales. You want your neighbours to admire your car. You want to show off your house. You want to let off a little steam on the golf course. That is code for less gluttony, greed, slot, envy, pride, and rats.

Maybe you're thinking there was more vice advertised back in the bourbon soaked skin, Shea skirt chasing rather mad men days. I say no. With the exception of tobacco, there is way more vice marketed today. There are now



hundreds of beer brands. The liquor category is overflowing casino. Advertising is big business. There are plastic surgery ads. There's a 24 hour channel dedicated to home shopping. The Victoria's secret fashion show is now a major network broadcast event. And then of course, there's Ashley Madison. When I was a young green copywriter, I saw firsthand how unstoppable vice was. I had written a TV commercial for Labatt. The script had three guys sitting around talking about beer. It was clever. I thought and funny and the client read it and said, where's the girls? And I said, well, there are no girls in this commercial. And he said, it'll never fly.

And I said, well, wait, wait, wait, wait. I said, beer drinkers are smart. They like to laugh. And they don't need girls in every single commercial. So we just stared at me and said, fine. We'll bring your commercial into a focus group and test it against another commercial we already have. And I said, great. There were 12 male beer drinkers in the focus group that night. My commercial was shown to them. There were a few half smiles. Then the other commercial was shown, which I seem to recall featured this Swedish bikini team. And in a show of hands, the men were asked to vote for their favourite commercial and 12 hand shot up for the bikini team, which proved to me that you can't fight vice, but I'm going to make a confession right here. And right now truth be told advertising. Vice is fun. I'm sorry. It just is. I won't be surprised if at least one of my esteemed fellow speakers stands up here tonight and points to marketing as the root of all evil, the source of all vice newness. And I'll sit down there in the penalty box, but I have to tell you something. Branding vice is wickedly delicious. Cause look, I spent 20 years working on Goodyear tyres, trying to come up with interesting ways to make you fall in love with vulcanised rubber.

It's not easy. I had heroin. I started in this business. My job as an advertising copywriter was to infuse emotion into products like tyres and toothpaste and deodorants and, and cheese. And it was difficult. It was vaccing, but with beer and liquor and casinos, we had the opposite problem. The naughtiness overflow with we had to just pump the brakes on that, right? Entire advertising. You're trying to attract attention with tread patterns and rain, displacing technology. But with beer, you just need to show a guy in a bar, ordering a certain brand and an attractive girl notices him done with toothpaste to have to find ways to animate, animate rather Gingervitis.

~~But when you're advertising hedonistic, adult vacation spot, you're shooting on a beach in Bali. When you're advertising deodorant, you're photographing underarms. When you're advertising a casino, you're filming slot machines and spilling spinning roulette wheels. And this cast from Cirque de Solei in slow motion. And when you're advertising cheese, you're advertising cheese. I think you know where I'm going with this. It's so much more fun to advertise a vice plus~~



branding advice is so easy because you're dealing with just three ingredients, temptation seduction, and a little dollop of shame. Now tempting with advice is easy. Seduction voluntary and shame is the parent theoretical unsaid part. It's the elements. See a vice isn't advice until you have mixed feelings about it. It tempts you seduces you and leaves you with a couple of small red marks. And that's why it's so much fun to advertise. It's the same reason why actors love to play villains.

They get to tiptoe onto the dark side. As a matter of fact, over the past 20 years, 11 actors have won Oscars for playing evil villains. Clearly moustache twirling is profitable. There's even a vice fund. You can invest in. It consists of tobacco, alcohol and defence industries. Okay. When it comes to devices, that's a touchdown, an end zone dance and a ball spike all in one, which brings me full circle to the founding fathers of the modern advertising industry. Those preacher sons understood the undertow of human nature without vice. There is no virtue without virtue. You can't define vice it's the circle of life Simba. And if you don't agree with me, we can talk about it right after this event, meet you at the bar.

HOST: Terry O'Reilly is the host of CBC Radio's Under the Influence, and a new podcast called WE REGRET TO INFORM YOU. And he's just one of the over 800 fantastic Canadians who have walked, wheeled and webcammed onto a stage at The Walrus Talks.

You can subscribe to WE REGRET TO INFORM YOU on Apple iTunes, Spotify and Google Podcasts.