ORAL HISTORY INTERVIEW
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with

WALTER MACK

December 16, 1985

at

New York, New York

By Scott Ellsworth

For the "Pepsi Generation" Oral History Project

Archives Center
National Museum of American History
Smithsonian Institution

TAPE ABSTRACT AND INDEX

Walter S. Mack, Jr.

Biography

Walter S. Mack, Jr. was born in 1896. He attended Harvard University, graduating in 1917. After serving as an ensign in the Navy during World War I, Mack became involved in a variety of business enterprises.

From 1939 to 1950 , Mack was president and a director of the Pepsi Cola Company. As president of Pepsi he introduced the use of the jingle, "Pepsi Cola hits the spot. 12 full ounces, that's a lot."

Mack resigned from Pepsi in 1950, turning his interest to a variety of business ventures.

Mack has been a long-time supporter of the Republican party in New York State.

The interview focusses on Mack's involvement with the Pepsi Cola Company during the 1940s. Mack details Pepsi's purchases of raw materials in Mexico during World War II when various substances were rationed. Other major topics include: the jingle, "Pepsi Cola hits the spot", cola compeition, Pepsi bottling, Pepsi Board of Directors, and overseas expansion.

The interview took place in Mr. Mack's office in New York City.

Abstract of interview with Walter Mack, December 16, 1985
New York, New York
Interviewer: Scott Ellsworth

Tape 1, Side 1

1:45 THE PEPSI JINGLE

No radio jingle before the Pepsi jingle

Mack contacted a former classmate, Alan Marsh at CBS, to buy thirty second and one minute spots. This was not done in the business, five minute spots were usually sold. Bill Emmett, Mack's advertising agent, thought it was too much of a soft sell, what Mack needed was a hard sell.

"Amos" and Andy had a great following; but when commericals came on people talked or left the room. Mack wanted to give them something entertaining. Jingle seemed to be what he was looking for.

3:40 Tried the jingle out in 1939 in New Jersey, where there were many small radio stations which sold thirty second spots. Response came in sales and people talking. No response from Coke; Pepsi was too small.

AUTOBIOGRAPHICAL REMARKS

5:00 Mack describes several magazine articles about himself, the jingle and about the early days of Pepsi. (Media Magazine, Fortune, New Yorker).

18:00 COLA COMPETITION DURING WORLD WAR II.

Coke had things sewn up. If Mack hadn't bought sugar in Mexico, Pepsi would have folded.

Ed Barrio, VP, Coke, was appointed as head of rationing sugar for the government. Pepsi bottlers were not well established. Coke bottlers contributed to Congressional races; they had more influence. Very few Republicans in New York. Coke was also friendly with the Quartermaster.

20:30 PEPSI BOUGHT MEXICAN SUGAR

There was a shortage of sugar during the war because sugar had to be transported from the Philippines. Due to submarine warfare, little sugar was being brought in. Mack brought in sugar from Mexico on railroad cars. Signed contract with the Mexican Sugar Institute.

Mack agreed to build a syrup plant in Monterrey, Mexico, to convert sugar. Mack offered the U.S. Government the sugar.

26:10 TRICKS USED AGAINST PEPSI

Coke salesmen would take Pepsi signs down.

28:50 SECOND-HAND BEER BOTTLE

In order to save money, Mack bought second-hand beer bottles to bottle Pepsi.

Tape 1, Side 2

:30 USE OF SECOND-HAND BEER BOTTLES

Bottles were many different shapes and colors. Pepsi labels were put on them.

2:35 Pepsi fieldmen were paid to cover the territory.

Some bottlers grew very fast. Pepsi never sold any franchises. Today, Pepsi finds a buyer for a bottler who wants to get out of the business.

Pepsi gave franchises away; some trouble in giving them to the right people.

4:40 PEPSI BOTTLES

In 1940 or 1941 Mack wanted to put out a Pepsi-Cola bottle, with the name blown into the bottle.

Talked with glass manufacturers. He wanted to get a bottle for two cents, but glass makers said they could only make a bottle for three and one half cents, which Coke was paying.

6:05 Mack heard that a glass plant in West Virginia was for sale; he placed an option on it. Heinz ketchup people interested in joining Mack in the glass business.

7:25 Hazel Atlas Glass Company called and offered to make bottles for two cents.

8:35 SURVIVING THE WAR

Pepsi survived the war because of the Mexican sugar deal.

Royal Crown Cola suffered during the war; Pepsi grew during the war.

9:45 Mack built a syrup plant in Monterrey, Mexico. For transportation and supplies, he cornered the flat car market, bought a barrel plant and oak forest.

CAPITAL FOR PROJECTS

Midland Bank gave letter of credit for thirteen million dollars.

13:05 PEPSI BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Too many lawyers on the Board. Stockholders made a lot of money as Pepsi grew. Mack describes problems with lawyers on the Board.

19:40 Mack couldn't run both Phoenix Securities and Pepsi at the same time; not fair. Couldn't do everything he wanted to do.

21:30 Canadian Ed Taylor offered to sell Mack Orange Crush for Pepsi stock. Lawyers on the Board turned him down.

Mack chose to leave Pepsi at that time.

24:15 AL STEELE SUCCEEDS

Mack wanted someone in the company who had had Coca Cola experience. Mack went to a search company which came up with Steele. Mack wasn't aware that Woodruff was firing Steele.

Woodruff was going to fire Steele for chiseling money from Woodruff.

Steele was a good salesman, but not good with figures. Steele wasn't what Mack wanted.

26:30 PROXY FIGHT

Some bottlers visited Mack and gave him money for his proxy fight.

27:40 PEPSI IN CANS

Wanted to put Pepsi in cans. Built canning plant in New Rochelle.

Tape 2, Side 1

:5 QUESTION OF EXCLUSIVE RIGHTS TO SELL PEPSI

Mack wanted to put Pepsi out in cans; "legal" said he couldn't. Mack decided to get out of the business.

2:15 POST WORLD WAR II PROBLEMS

Problems after the war: expense of sugar (Twice as Much for a Nickel) hurting bottler. Cost margins going down. Two things to do--reduce the size of the package or increase the price. Chose to increase the price. Switched advertising from "Twice as Much for a Nickel" to "More Bounce for the Ounce."

Sales went down and in about four months the public came back; they liked the taste.

5:15 "More Bounce to the Ounce" was good campaign under the circumstances.

5:40 COKE AND "SPIES" AT PEPSI

Coke knew what Pepsi was doing. Pepsi learned about Coke through the grocers.

6:50 STEELE'S CONTRIBUTION TO PEPSI

Steele was a good showman and salesman. The bottlers liked him. Steele was interested in himself.

8:40 Steele engineered getting Mack out. He made deals with the lawyers.

9:45 DON KENDALL AT PEPSI

Kendall surrounded himself with capable people.

10:35 MACK'S ATTITUDE TOWARD ADVERTISING

A lot of money is spent on advertising; 50% is wasted.

12:30 First year ad budget was $350,000. Mack picked the "hole in the cheese", Pepsi advertised where Coke wasn't. They did skywriting and cartoon advertising in magazines.

Steele's era of advertising followed Coke's ads.

Kendall's era had so much money. Political ingenuity marked his tenure. Advertising not that distinguished.

15:00 FUTURE IS GOOD FOR SOFT DRINKS

Grocery stores make a high commission off soft drinks.

17:45 Change in Coke's formula was stupid.

18:35 MACK'S INVOLVEMENT WITH TEMPLE EMMANUEL

Mack describes his involvement in Temple Emmanuel, the largest temple in the United States.

19:45 DISTRIBUTION OF PEPSI COLA

23:05 PEPSI COLA FORMULA

Not a question of ingredients; importance in how it is mixed. Coke's formula is different than Pepsi's.

24:25	Public prefers Pepsi to Coke. Blind polls showed Pepsi's popularity. Coke made a change, but came out alright; put another cola drink on the shelf.
26:25	SUGAR-FREE SOFT DRINKS
	Saccharin in soft drinks.
28:05	Syrup makers demanded a rebate from Coke.

Tape 2, Side 2

:35	QUALITY CONTROL OF PEPSI COLA
1:55	Sugar in Pepsi
3:50	Early in Pepsi's history there were some quality control problems, mainly with local water
5:35	By the time Mack left the company, Pepsi rated second cola in the world.
6:00	COKE OVERSEAS
	Democrats were in power during the war. Coke had access to the Roosevelt administration. Coke convinced the government that Coke was needed overseas to win the war. Coke plants were put in overseas, giving them a way to break into foreign markets.
7:25	PEPSI AND THE BLACK COMMUNITY
	In approximately 1945 or 1946, the East River Plant opened. Mack wanted to hire Blacks, but the union resisted. Blacks were good consumers of Pepsi-Cola and it was a fair thing to do to hire them. Pepsi created additional jobs by putting in additional production line, an all-Black line.

9:05 Established a Negro Sales Division.

9:40 Few Blacks were able to get into scholarship programs. Fewer opportunities. Established Scholarship Campaign for Blacks only.

10:45 JEWISH LEADERSHIP OF PEPSI-COLA

Coke started rumors; Pepsi paid no attention to them.

11:25 PEPSI'S OVERSEAS EXPANSION

First Pepsi expanded in Canada and then in Germany. Because of troops in World War II, Pepsi was able to break the ice in Europe. They sold through the commissaries.

12:20 While at Phoenix Securities Mack studied the cola industry.

13:10 BEGINNINGS OF THE COLA INDUSTRY

Discussion of the "discovery" of the cola nut in Africa by the English.

English experimented with the cola nut.

U.S. Surgeon General published newspaper report on the cola nut.

16:10 Georgia chemist read the report; he mixed the cola syrup with cocoa leaves and sold it as spring tonic.

17:10 Chemist in New Bern, N.C. read the Surgeon General's report. He mad a stomach tonic of Pepsident and the cola syrup, Pepsin-Cola.

18:00 No shortage of cola nuts during World War II. They were grown in the West Indies.

18:55 PEPSI-COLA INGREDIENTS

During the War there were no problems with ingredients for Pepsi-Cola, except the sugar shortage. To get sugar, Mack bought honey and molasses and took the sugar out.

20:10 PEPSI-COLA BOTTLERS

There were lead bottlers in volume, ingenuity, delivery and sales. Bottlers could advertise locally, but local advertising had to be approved.

MACK INDEX

MOE

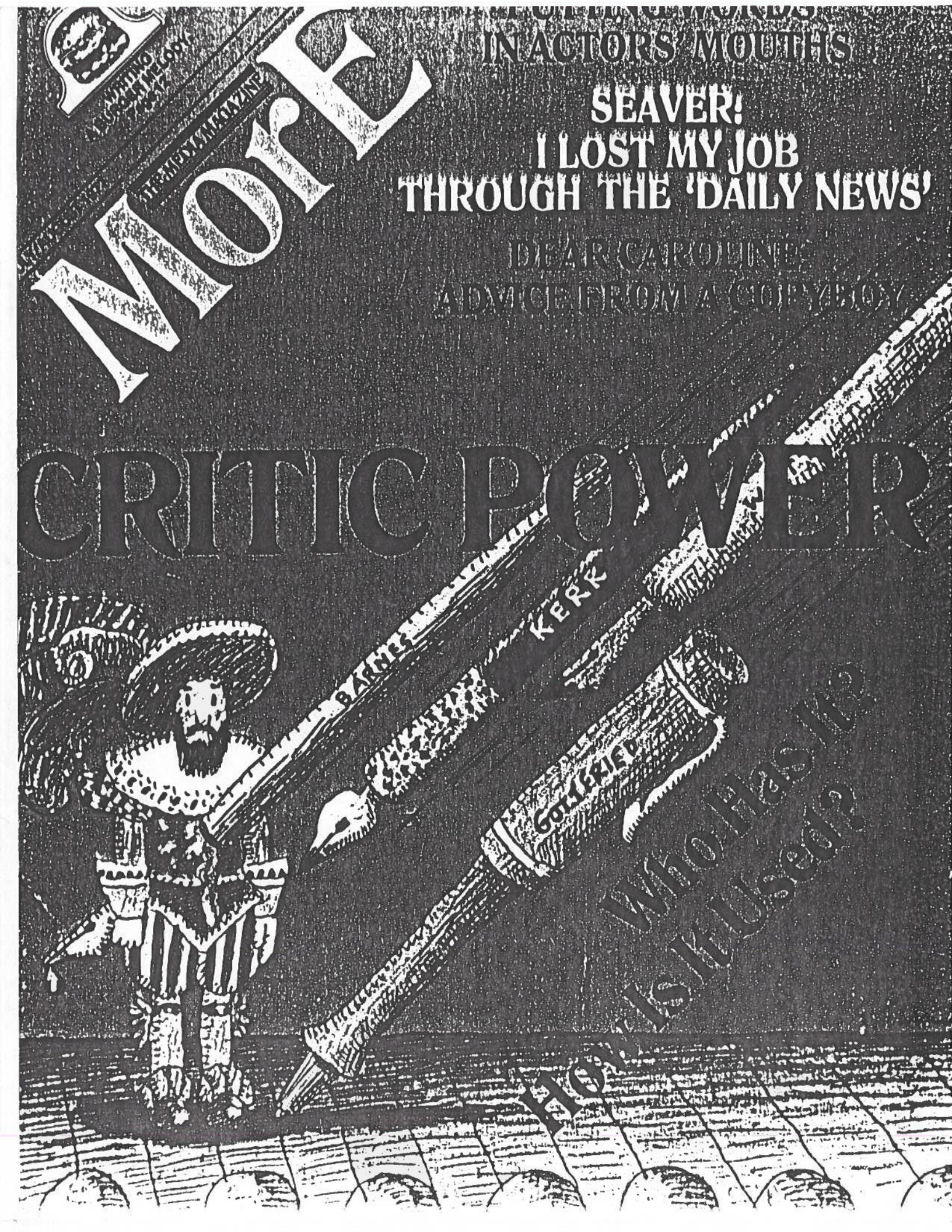
THE MONTHLY MAGAZINE

IN ACTORS' MOUTHS

SEAVER!
I LOST MY JOB
THROUGH THE 'DAILY NEWS'

DEAR CAROLINE:
ADVICE FROM A COPYBOY

CRITICPOWER



SONGS IN THE KEY OF HYPE

Jingles Sweeten Sales Pitch With Pop Tunes, Catchy Cliches

How to write a burger melody.

BY RANDY COHEN

While the true origins of certain landmarks of western culture are subject to debate, this is not the case with the singing commercial. Walter Mack knows who invented the jingle because he did it himself in 1938. (Which is not exactly true. In 1929, General Mills introduced the cereal song, "Have You Tried Wheaties?" on the *Jack Armstrong* radio program. But it was not until Mack came along that the floodgates of melodic hype were opened.)

"I took over the presidency of Pepsi Cola in 1938," says Mack, now in his 80's. "At that time, everything was radio. It was the time of *Amos and Andy*, and everybody would listen. But during the intermission, everybody started to talk. They didn't listen to the commercials."

Mack believed that the solution was to make the advertisements sing. "I had a limited budget for Pepsi when we started. It seemed to me that we could get the most for our money in competing with Coca-Cola by short radio spots. And I wanted a spot that would be sufficiently entertaining, so that at least people would enjoy it."

Like most innovators, Mack was met with skepticism on all sides. But Walter Mack, like Thomas Edison before him, persevered. "One day my secretary came in and said there were a couple of boys in the reception room who had open shirts and white shoes and they looked a little strange. They said they had an advertising idea that they'd like to talk to me about. I always listened and talked to anybody, particularly if they had any new ideas, and I told them to come in. They said to me: 'Mr. Mack, we hear in the advertising world that you are a little bit of a nut, and so are we. We thought maybe you'd be interested in a jingle that we have for Pepsi Cola.' They had a portable phonograph machine and they had this jingle on a record. They brought it in and played it for me. It was the now famous jingle: 'Pepsi Cola hits the spot. 12 full ounces, that's a lot.' It was played to a nursery rhyme from England. I think the tune was 'John Peele.' It seemed to be what I was looking for."

Mack bought the jingle for $1,000 down, with another $2,000 to follow if it worked successfully on the air. His colleagues, however, remained unconvinced. Newell Emmot, the ad agency handling the Pepsi account, cautioned that it was too soft a sell. And they pointed out that no one would sell commercial time except in blocks of five minutes or more.

"I told them that it fit the thing I was looking for, which was a sugar-coated pill to give the public. I liked it and thought the only answer was in testing it. We left it that way because, after all, I was president and boss, so I had the right to do what I wanted."

But the captains of the radio networks were not so receptive to Mack's new ideas. "I had a schoolmate friend by the name of Allen Marsh who was a vice president at CBS. I talked to him about it, and he said, 'I'm sorry. We will not sell you less than five minutes of time on the air.' I talked to NBC and got the same answer. Then I decided to try out some of the small stations in Jersey that were starving and needed business badly. They were receptive to selling me a lot of 30-second and one-minute spots."

So Mack placed his Pepsi jingle on six or seven stations in New Jersey and Westchester and waited for the returns to come in. "Within two weeks, the increase in sales in those areas told the story. The people enjoyed it. I heard people humming it. It came echoing back in full force."

Newell Emmot called to admit that they had been wrong. Soon the radio networks fell into line. "About three months later, Allen Marsh from CBS called. 'We've decided to take your spots,' he said. 'We can't afford to have success like that on the radio without the national broadcasting companies having a part of it.' NBC came right along after that. And that's how the thing was launched."

Randy Cohen is a freelance writer in New York City.

The Three B's

In the 40 years since the introduction of Mack's curious device, jingles have gone on to permeate radio and to make the change to television without missing a beat. Today, over half of all television commercials use music, and the percentage in radio spots is even higher. There are a dozen jingle writers in New York making over $150,000 a year practicing the art of the eminently hummable melody. And the singers do even better. Their unions enforce a system of residuals that allows the top half dozen singers to gross over $500,000 annually. (Recently some composers have united to form the Society of Advertising Music Producers, Arrangers and Composers, SAMPAC, which is seeking a royalty system for its members. Currently, song writers receive no residuals, only a one-shot fee for their work.)

It has become a sophisticated craft to implant the song of the burger into the psyche of the consumer, under the assumption that he will whistle his way down the street and into McDonald's. It's a skill the clients are willing to pay for. For a national spot, a composer earns up to $10,000 for producing 30 seconds of catchy cliches. This is regarded as a trivial expenditure, considering that the cost of a single airing of a spot on national television can run in excess of $1,000 a second.

The headwaters of this river of song flow down Madison Avenue where the creative directors of the ad agencies have developed a conception of music far more pragmatic than the *Poetics* of Aristotle. On this street of dreams, music is categorized according to the Three B's. The first is the "Broadway." These are the attention grabbers, the audio billboards. Jingles like "Datsun Saves" and the Plymouth Volare spots are designed to cut through layers of indifference and grasp the viewer in a hammerlock of harmony. The lyrics are often more important than the spoken copy.

"Backgrounds" are unobtrusive music set under the copy to impart a sense of comfort, security, and receptiveness. They are constructed so as not to be noticed. It is the technique of the seducer: a romantic proposition goes down easy if a thousand violins play softly in the background. The industry refers to this sort of music as a "rug" or "carpet." The commercials for Lancers and Wella Flex Balsam rest on rugs.

"Bandaids" are the most prevalent form. Their primary function is to set a mood that will reinforce the copy. They act as punctuation, setting out the rhythm of the spot and underscoring key points. This music, also known as a "spoonful of sugar," may shift roles with the copy several times in a 30-second spot, moving in and out of the lead role. The Volvo test track spots and the Hertz O.J. Simpson ads use this musical sweetening.

There are, of course, various sub-genres. The most common is the "Corporate," which might be a logo for IBM or a musical signature for Xerox. These tunes are not contrived to sell a product, but to promote the image of a corporation, often to counteract public criticism of an industry. An ambiguous statement of good intentions set to songs is considered superior to a direct acknowledgment of responsibility for a North Sea oil slick. This style of music must embody earnestness, wisdom, stability, and a mastery of high technology. These are the anthems of global corporate capitalism.

Walter Mack: the father of jingles. Now in his 80's, he's planning a cola comeback.

The master craftsmen of the Three B's operate out of jingle houses like Kevin Gavin Productions, whose credits include "You Deserve a Break Today" for McDonald's, "Pepsi People Feeling Free," and spots for Schaefer beer, Timex, and Mr. Coffee. Gavin, now in his fifties, sang in more than 20 movies as a kid, including *Broadway Melodies of 1938* and *Angels with Dirty Faces*. He sang his first jingle—for Firestone—in the early 1950s and started his tune factory in the mid-'60s. Always on the run between recording studios and tennis courts, Gavin's face records the pressure of his work.

"Years ago," he remembers, "there would be a musician who didn't know anything about advertising and a rep who would go around hustling the musician to the ad agencies, which didn't know anything about music. They'd sit in the studio, and nobody really knew what they were doing. They couldn't relate because there was no common ground. That's why I started Gavin-Woloshin, with Sid Woloshin. I realized there was a place for a full-service music house that could make music an extension of advertising." (Woloshin later left to form his own jingle house.)

Gavin acts as a musical overseer. The agency describes its needs in advertising terminology (demographics, marketing strategy, budget) and Gavin translates all of this into song. He develops a lyric and chooses the most appropriate composer, arranger, and singers for each job. Once they go into the recording studio, Gavin directs the production, and often sings on his spots.

You, You're The One

While the jingle houses with their teams of specialists dominate the industry, there are a few one-person operations that continue to thrive. Ginny Redington, 30 years old, is a master of the catchy tune, writing and singing spots for junk food, toys, and the U.S. Navy. She looks like a slightly rumpled country-western star, tosses off one-liners in a deep, sexy voice, and almost never turns on her television or radio.

In less than two years since her first professional job—"You, You're the One" for McDonald's—she has become one of the hottest acts in town. She has accomplished this without ever actively circulating samples of her work or engaging in any of the other forms of self-promotion that characterize the business.

She can sing with conviction a line like: "Look around, oh, what a sight to see those dogs and cats all wearing white." In addition to this jingle for the Hartz Mountain flea collar, her credits include singing lead and writing spots for National Airlines, Holiday Inn, and Dentyne Dynamints. She has also written jingles for Johnson's Baby Powder, Three Musketeers, Nutrament, and Schweppes Diet Ginger Ale.

Redington came up from pop music. In 1968, her group, Good and Plenty, had a small hit with "Living in a World of Make-Believe" for ABC records and followed it up with an even smaller hit. After the demise of the group, she took a year off to devote herself to song writing, resurfacing as one of half a dozen staff writers for Columbia Screen Gems, along with Carol King and Mac Davis. She returned to singing, doing solo club work. Ad men began offering her session work on commercials and she developed a reputation for her idiosyncratic vocal style. "I always got commercials that wanted a weird voice or a country voice," she says.

A few singing jobs for Sid Woloshin, Kevin Gavin's former partner, led to her first opportunity to write a jingle. She recalls: "I mentioned to him that I wrote songs and played him a couple. He then asked me to participate in the McDonald's competition." Her tune

Kevin Gavin realized music could be an extension of advertising. He penned jingles for Pepsi, Schaefer beer, McDonald's.

was one of over 50 pieces of music produced by writers through Woloshin's music house. "It's a very speculative business," Redington explains. "You bet on yourself. If you're good, you win." She was, and she did.

Creating a series of commercials like the McDonald's campaign takes two to six months. First, the ad agency will analyze the product and its relationship to the market, deriving a set of retailing problems to be solved and a set of key messages to be delivered to the consumer. Since the large corporations rarely compete by creating innovative products or through pricing, the marketing problem is often to differentiate a new item from existing products that are nearly identical to it. Since McDonald's is only marginally different from Burger King, the ad agencies, and hence the jingle writers, find themselves in the business of influencing trivial decisions: it simply makes no difference which hamburger one buys. One technique widely used to deal with this problem is to sell not the product, but various intangibles that can be associated with the product: sex, status, excitement, or Anita Bryant. Music has been found to be very effective in creating these associations.

Once the decision has been made to use music in the commercial, the ad agency must select the jingle houses that will be called in to compete for the job. Most of the larger agencies employ a music director to advise the creative teams about the use of music and to recommend which jingle houses would be most appropriate for a specific musical need. In the smaller agencies, the creative directors may choose the jingle houses themselves. In either case, the agency's initial contact with a music house is usually through the reps who are employed by the jingle houses to act as agents or salesmen, touting their work to the agencies.

In the preliminary meeting, the ad agency describes its need to the jingle house. Ginny Redington notes, "Every time you go in to pick up a job they tell you: 'light, happy, contemporary, McDonald's, Coke, Pepsi, good-bye.' It's that simple. That's what everybody wants. Then, of course, what happens is you don't do that. You suit it to what the product is trying to sell." The ad agencies supply the composer with the lyrics for the jingle, although Redington will revise or totally rewrite the lyric to make it work well with the music.

The writer is given "submission money," usually about $500, to cover the time spent on the job and the costs of producing a rough demo of the jingle. Typically, he is expected to return with the demo three days after the initial meeting. A few agencies are known to exploit the speculative aspect of the business, sometimes calling in as many as 30 music suppliers to present jingles, and offering no submission money.

The writer now faces the task of producing a tune that, on its first hearing, sounds as if you had heard it a hundred times before, and yet still retains vitality. "Most people in this business are 'composers,' " Redington says. "I am not a 'composer,' but how many minor ninth chords do you have to use in a jingle? It's 28 seconds long; it's the bare bones of a song. You have no time to get fancy. You're looking for something that's going to stick in people's heads. You're not going to try anything atonal or strange-sounding. You're looking for things that everybody knows, everybody relates to. You know what chords are going to create that sound; you know how to use the little hook."

Redington has evolved a variety of techniques that help her to achieve these ends. "I resort to cliche books a lot. I've got a whole series of books of proverbs. It's a great songwriter's trick. I'll take a song and go to my cliche book and find, 'You made your bed; go lie in it.' I'll add an 'alone' on the end of it and you've got a great country song: 'You made your bed; go lie in it alone.' "

As she continued to write jingles, she became increasingly aware of her own methodology. "I know certain things now," she says. "I know I must write them in the morning; I can't write at night. I must not think of them as me sitting down and writing jingles. I must think of them as little puzzles. I look at them almost myopically, pushing everything else about my life out of the way. It's problem solving, and I get a kick out of doing it well. In the beginning I didn't have any work habits at all. I was thrown into the big leagues by a fluke and really didn't know the business at all. I was just guessing; I don't even know that I believe in advertising. But it's an interesting idea thinking that you can change a lot of people's minds about things."

She solves her puzzles not only very well, but very quickly. "I spend very little time working on the music. I spend an awful lot of time on the lyrics." One of Redington's most successful efforts was the National Airlines jingle, "Take Me, I'm Yours," which she wrote and sang. The "awful lot of time" devoted to the words clocked in at about three hours. She crafted the tune in 15 minutes, and then spent a couple of hours the next day "cleaning up the whole thing."

After the jingle is written, it's back to the agency where a selection is made from among all the jingles submitted. Several of them will be played for the client, who makes the final choice. The jingle producer now chooses an arranger, singers, and musicians to go into the studio and record the final version of the spot.

Patent-Leather Voices

In the studio, the singer is king. A top male singer, like Leslie Miller or Kenny Karen, can make up to half a million dollars a year in royalties. "It's staggering," Kevin Gavin comments. "Name a car, name a beer, name any kind of product and they're on it. Kenny's done McDonald's, Chevy, Buick, Pepsi, and so many more. Leslie is on an incredible number of spots, including Gillette, Toyota, Chevy, and Ford." One former jingle house rep explains why they are worth the big bucks: "They've got patent-leather voices. They can give you exactly what you want, any style, any sound, and give it to you fast, the first time. They're musicians. They can belt out a dozen variations on the theme and get each one letter-perfect every time out."

After the demo, the revisions, the master recording, laying the

music onto the filmed commercial, and approval by the agency and the client, the spot is still not ready for widespread airing. It must be tested. Some testing is done privately. An audience representative of the target group (age, income, lifestyle) watches the spot and then fills out a questionnaire. Some tests have been done using polygraphs, checking the viewers' blood pressure, heart beat, and galvanic skin response (how much the palms sweat) as indicators of emotional response to the commercial. But the most commonly used method is the Burke Recall Test. A spot is aired once in a test market, and then followed up the next day with telephone interviews. Did you watch *Mary Tyler Moore* last night? Do you remember any commercials? Any commercials for hamburgers? Any for McDonald's?

Burke scores vary with the product. Detergents, for example, tend to test well; cereals test average. The scores are scaled from one to 100. For cereal, a score of less than 20 is considered poor; 25 is respectable; over 30 is exciting, and a score of 50 is sufficient reason to break out the champagne. Unfortunately for the jingle houses, music does not tend to test as well as, say, a slice-of-life commercial. The consensus is that music has a cumulative effect: the more you hear it, the more it can work its wiles. Often the agency will contrive its spots to accommodate the client's attitude toward the Burke test. For example, a jingle tests best if the name of the product is mentioned within the first four bars. One jingle house head explains, "If a company loves Burkes, you don't use music in their spots." He adds, "Music can also have a cumulative negative effect: the more you hear the jingle, the more you hate the product."

There are various specialty jingle houses servicing the ad agencies. Many ethnic groups remain unmoved by the mid-American soundtracks so often used to sell soap. Those soft sounds trickling out of AM radios—what Alice Cooper referred to as "housewife rock"—are not wildly effective in black or Hispanic communities. Further, since many jingles are adapted for global use, the agencies require musicians who are familiar with a variety of idioms. One such specialty house is Latin Sound run by Marco and Sylvia Rosales, which supplies both originals and adaptations of commercials for the Spanish market. Among their credits are the Spanish voices for the bugs in the Raid spot and the elves in the Keebler commercials.

The Real Thing

Suzanne Ciani's specialty is electronic music. Like Ginny Redington, she is in her early 30's, but her interest in music is purely technical.

When General Motors needed a campaign to promote its 1977 line of smaller cars, it spiced its spots with Ciani's synthesized computer sounds. At one stage of her career, she was regarded as a "disease composer," creating the sounds of nasal drip, muscle aches, and head-cold distress. She would sit in the studio for hours, creating the sounds of anguish. Ciani is aware that she was launching a thousand headaches: "The motivation in this kind of music is to produce the discomfort and the tensions, however subconsciously, in the viewer, and then the relief comes at the point that he knows he was uncomfortable. He may not realize it at the time. You try to induce that reaction." These were musical problems for her, not medical problems. "You're not thinking of those millions of headaches. You're thinking of the musical structure."

Electronic music works well in advertising because it deals in caricature—in vastly simplified harmonic and dynamic structures. A beautifully complex acoustic sound, say a single note on a piano, is to its electronic equivalent as a duck is to Donald. These cartoon versions are easily recognized and recalled.

She has served up her synthesized sounds for, among others, Promise margarine, Crystal Springs shampoo, Uni-Royal sneakers, and MJB coffee. Every film produced by Columbia Pictures is tagged with the musical logo she composed. The jingle "Coke Adds Life" ends with the sound of soda pouring into a glass. Those are electronic bubbles created by Ciani, to sound more real than the real thing. She performed a similar re-creation job for a jai alai commercial. Ciani went through the film of a match, replacing each shot with a synthesized version that sounds more authentic than the original.

Memorability is the operative word on Madison Avenue. The potential consumer must waltz down the street with the Diet Rite theme buzzing in his head. One shortcut to the cortex is to adapt a pop tune, already burned into the subject's synapses, as a ditty. Thus the Beach Boys' "California Girls" re-emerges as "Herbal Essence Girls." There is a kind of revisionist history at work here. When Bill Haley's "Rock Around the Clock" blasts out of the radio of a '62 Chevy, one is expected to conjure up the first three gritty minutes of *Blackboard Jungle*. Currently bastardized as "Shop Around the Clock," visions of Vic Morrow in black leather have been supplanted by the cheerful reminder that Pathmark stores are now open all night.

One of the most successful tune transplants was the application of Carly Simon's "Anticipation" to a Heinz ketchup commercial. Simon, apparently tired of teasing from friends, has resisted new attempts to acquire her songs. This agency failure was not for lack of good bait. Payments have ranged up to $50,000 for commercial use of a pop tune.

Some rock stars have transformed themselves into hucksters. Joey Levine penned a string of top-ten songs in the late '60s spearheaded by "Yummy Yummy" and "Chewwy Chewwy." Reincarnated as a

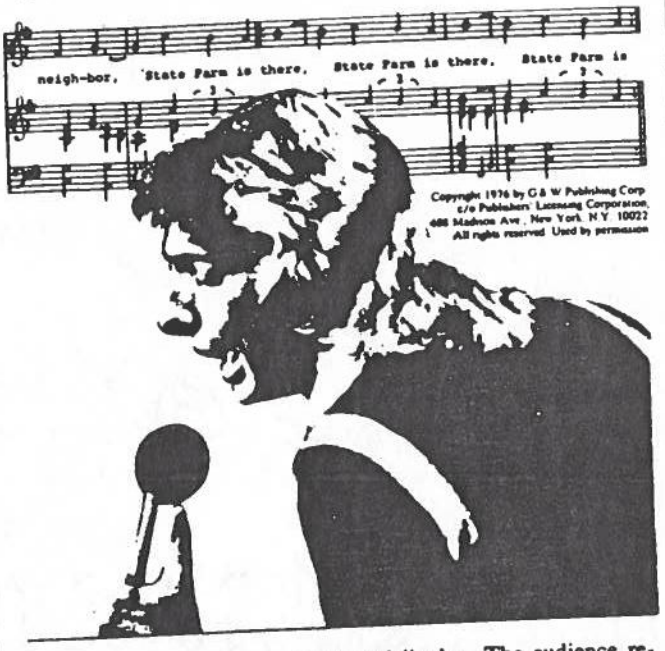
Ginny Redington scored big on her first jingle. She followed McDonald's with "Take Me I'm Yours."

BARRY MANILOW: KING OF HUCKSTER ROCK

Certain landmarks of literature, from the plays of Shakespeare to *Gravity's Rainbow*, have provoked controversy about their true authorship. Such is the fate of the first McDonald's jingle, "You Deserve a Break Today." The accepted public account assigns compositional credit to pop star Barry Manilow. This rumor, quite false, has dogged his career and engendered a great deal of resentment in the commercial industry. His public relations firm, Solters and Roskin, has become sufficiently concerned to include a disclaimer by Manilow in his press package: "And to settle the matter once and for all, no, I did not write 'You Deserve a Break Today.' There were numerous versions of that McDonald's jingle. On several of them, I was one of a group of singers; on one, I did a solo." Kevin Gavin, whose jingle house created the spot, confirms this, saying: "Sid Woloshin and I wrote that one."

Manilow wrote, arranged, and sang for commercials in the early days of his career, while he was half of the duo Jeannie and Barry. He later became the house pianist at the Continental Baths, where he met Bette Midler. He became her music director and toured with her show. In 1973, when Midler took a year off, Manilow went into the studio to record his first album. It was when he mounted his first national tour to promote that record that he decided to include jingles in his act. "I didn't have a hit single at the time of my first tour," he said, " and so I decided to include the only material I was associated with that the audience knew: my commercials. I called it 'VSM,' or 'Very Strange Medley.' "

His performance included jingles for State Farm insurance, Band-Aids, and Bowlene toilet cleaner, all of which he actually wrote. Also included in the medley were spots for Kentucky Fried Chicken, Stridex, Chevrolet, Dr. Pepper, Pepsi, Jack-in-the-Box, and the now legendary McDonald's theme. These were all numbers that Manilow sang but did not compose.



Barry Manilow is the most visible manifestation of the intimate relationship between pop music and jingles. The audience response to his "VSM" has been so positive that he continues to include it in his act, although he can now boast of a string of chart-topping singles, including "Mandy," "I Write the Songs," and "It Looks Like We Made It." All four of his albums have had sales of more than $1 million. His newest album, *Barry Manilow, Live*, was released this spring by Arista Records. It includes "Very Strange Medley."

giant of jingles, Levine was able to adapt both of his chart-busters as jingles for junk food. He went on to write "Sometimes You Feel Like a Nut" for Peter Paul Almond Joys and "You Asked for It, You Got It" for Toyota.

Jingle writer Charlie Morrow, best known for "Your Windsong Stays on My Mind," which he wrote for Windsong perfume, believes that the relationship of Madison Avenue to Tin Pan Alley is "generally a me-too situation," the jingles following the lead of the pop charts. But sometimes the roles are reversed. The theme from Jack-in-the-Box was number one with a bullet for Rodney Allen Rippy, and the Coke jingle "I'd Like to Teach the World to Sing" became a monster hit internationally.

In the '60s, when listener loyalty to specific bands ran high, The Yardbirds and the Blues Magoos cut spots for Great Shakes; the Jefferson Airplane sang for White Levis; and everybody sang for Coke. Ray Charles and Aretha Franklin did their first joint recording for a Coca-Cola commercial. (Some of these spots have become quite valuable among collectors of pop artifacts. A good tape of the Troggs singing a Miller beer commercial is worth several hundred dollars.)

Today, pop bands command far less loyalty and rarely get jingle jobs. The current Ray Charles spot for Scotch recording tape shows him on camera, something unheard of a decade ago. That spot and Paul Anka's "The Times of Your Life" for Kodak are more in the vein of celebrity endorsements. This change in the relationship of pop to jingle is apparent in other aspects of the sound of jingles. The solo voice is de-emphasized in favor of the large, anonymous choral effect. The attempt is no longer to link the product to a specific singer, but to bathe the listener in a sea of friendly voices.

Children have been particularly receptive to taking a dip in that sea of voices. Parents have frequently reported that their pre-school children ignore the programs on television, but attend to ads. For many youngsters, the jingle has superseded the nursery rhyme. The play *Equus* acknowledged the attractiveness of jingles to kids, particularly disturbed kids. When the boy was portrayed at the extremes of psychotic withdrawal, he communicated with his psychiatrist only by singing the Doublemint chewing gum jingle.

Religious Icons

Thanks to Walter Mack, the jingle today permeates modern culture. Song writer Charlie Morrow sees the jingle as almost a religious icon of industrial society. "Jingles are mantric," he says. "They are repeated endlessly and are invariable. The jingle is a hypnotic element, promoting not only the product itself, but the values and institutions of the society that created the product. It tries to rivet them on your brain."

And what of Walter Mack, the father of it all? How does his innovation appear in the light of the modern jingle? "I don't know that I'm proud of it now, when I listen to some of them on the air, because some of them, I think, are not very entertaining or amusing." Mack is hardly retired from either cola or commercials. "I'm working on bringing out a new cola now, which we're going to start to test out this month in Indianapolis. We think it's an improvement on Pepsi and Coke as far as taste is concerned. We've named it King Cola, the king of colas, and our motto is going to be: 'Twice as nice; about half the price.' "

There's music in that. ■