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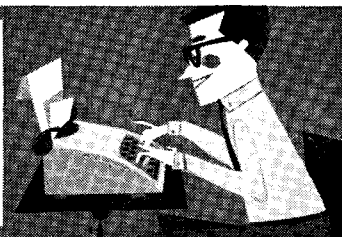
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## Top of My Head



### Madison Medicine Men on the Move

SHE IS a woman in the middle years of a comfortable life, but time hangs heavily. She has one hobby. She collects injustices. A long wait for an elevator, or a salesgirl who doesn't spring to, will become that day's what-is-this-world-coming-to.

It was suggested she find surcease from these soul-searing persecutions by joining a worthy movement, activating a social cause, or fighting a dastardly evil. "Remember," she was told, "ask not what your country can do for you, but what you can do for your country."

She admitted that was cute but where could she find the movement, the cause, the evil? It was pointed out they were in her daily newspapers. They would give her direction, a focal point. Had she read that morning's paper?

"Oh yes," she said, "and I'm on my way downtown to De Pinna's. They have a bag sale."

Wrong direction, wrong focal point. The entire world is in ferment. The very city in which she lives is mired in the muck of years of bad management, its schools and hospitals overcrowded, its teachers underpaid, and its impoverished in rebellion. Mix in. Join something.

"You mean like they say on television — give up our Caddy and join the Dodge Rebellion?"

And there you have it. Commercials and advertisements have taken over mass communications. The news in the dailies is so frightening, the entertainment on the home screen so banal that readers and viewers have shut out this worst possible of all worlds behind an endless barrage of hawking.

And no wonder. In past years many commercials have become so tastily produced and filmed, so smartly inventive, so adroitly language that it was no surprise, for example, when the Russians landed softly on the moon, that a high American executive of a jet propulsion laboratory paraphrased one of TV's soft sells: "Now I know," he said, "how it feels to be Avis."

The list of brightly conceived commercials grows daily. And in contrast to the programs they sponsor, the new-style filmed one-minute vignettes are not permitted to become monotonously overexposed. After having run a reasonable course they are replaced by new

and equally inventive concepts. Alka-Seltzer tablets come to mind. They were dropped into a glass of water over which were heard voices of soft, one-sentence bickering. A pleasant demonstration of the therapy they offer for a stomach sensitive to argument and stress. Having made that point, the copy writer moved on to the current catchy montage of body movements, over which a voice quietly says: "No matter what shape your stomach is in, Alka-Seltzer is the best of any medicine you can buy without a prescription."

There are even some copy writers who believe one picture is worth a thousand words of hard sell. These commercials have no dialogue until the picture has told its story. The Gulf tire that bumps merrily over hill and dale to an exciting musical accompaniment, at the close of which a voice delivers a word or two of sell. Or the little boy shown bouncing a rubber ball until it rolls away and is found under a car by a Texaco station attendant with no clinical dialogue about the gas and how they get the lead out.

Since it has been established that consumers don't buy products but do buy slogans and brand names, these serve their sponsors well. It wouldn't be surprising to learn that TV viewers buy these products out of sheer relief and a heart full of thanks.

THESE and many other remembered and talked-about sales pitches have become the oases of maturity in a wasteland of entertainment which grows vaster with each passing year and which this season has begun the descent to the comic-book level. And due credit is given to Madison Avenue, a thoroughfare that begins in New York at 14th Street, winds its way to midtown, spills over into Park and Lexington avenues on either side, and runs cross-country to Sunset Strip in California.

But there are still holdouts for the so-called irritating sell—the George Washington Hill, the Anne and Frank Hummert messages, repeated and repeated. And, it must be admitted, they sold cigarettes and medicinal properties most successfully. But of course that was radio, with no picture to lend an added dimension to their sales talk. And there are still many Madison Avenue

hawkers who use the picture not well and not wisely.

These are mostly in the commercials that incongruously link their products to the basic appeal of sex. As is evidenced in a troubled letter received here from Mrs. Ned Houston, Houston Ranch, Boerne, Texas. She begins with: "As pleased as one might be with clean clothes I cannot remember a single soul running about shrieking, 'They even smell clean!'"

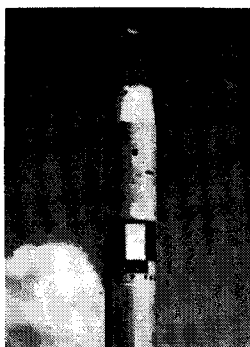
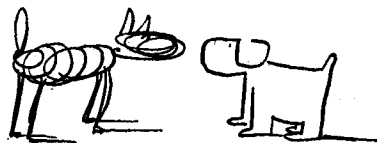
"I have had a master cold," she continues, "and the only thing I have been able to smell is Vick's Vaporub. When I turned on TV I heard a comely young woman say: 'Vick's Vaporub is so loving—so right.' Attached as I am to this emollient, I am certainly in no mood to have an affair. I have a happy marriage and now I'm afraid it's just a matter of time before my husband sues for divorce naming this Vick's jar as correspondent. It is my belief that if Vick's is 'so loving' it is not right. It is wrong! As much as I love Vick's Vaporub I want my love to be unrequited."

Perhaps the Vick's people will send Mrs. Houston a copy of the book they must have in preparation, *Sex and the Master Cold*. But this is only one sample of tying sex appeal to a product of neuter, if any, gender. The beautiful siren rising from the ocean inviting me "downstairs" to a tin of tuna is another. However, there are areas where appeal to the animal is almost required.

You will agree, I am certain, that a girl named Avon covered from head to toe in hat, suit, and a pair of low-heeled walking shoes and carrying a sample case, who rings your doorbell to sell a beautifier, is no match for the slithering girl in provocative disarray growling at women to buy Tiger perfume, or whatever she has for sale, promising if they wear it men will organize a safari to hunt them down.

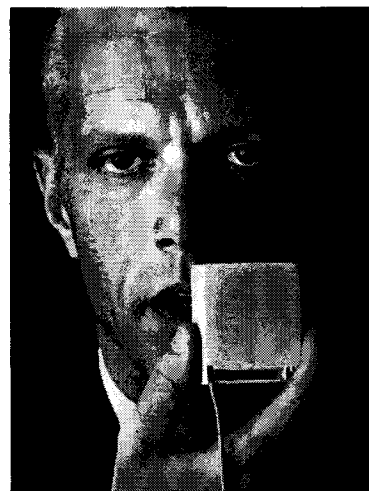
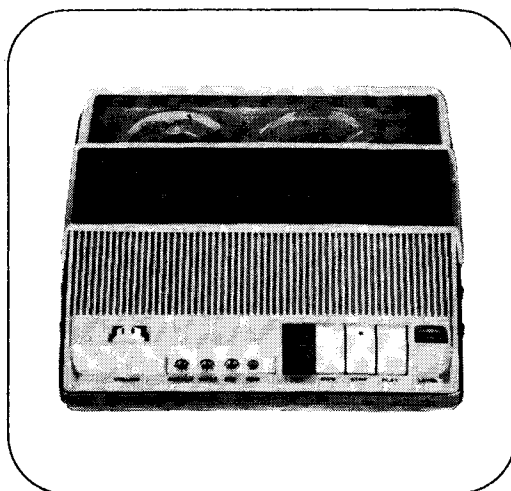
In cosmetics there is a point for using the basic rather than, say, the spiritual pitch. A perfume called "Why Not?" is basic, whereas a perfume called "Absolutely No" is, shall we say, spiritual? But a woman likes a man to wonder. And to douse herself in "Absolutely No" and remove all doubt would be shattering.

But the overall commercial picture looms bright. Letters arrive daily saying the commercials are better than the entertainment. It is only a matter of time till we may hear announcers say, "We interrupt this commercial for a moment of program." And this will be the moment that viewers will go to their refrigerators or their medicine cabinets for the sponsor's product. —GOODMAN ACE.



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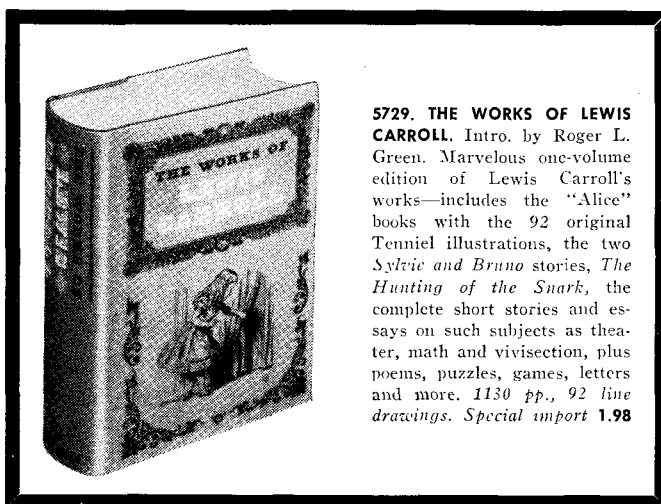
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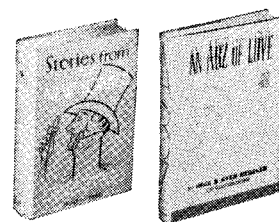
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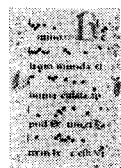
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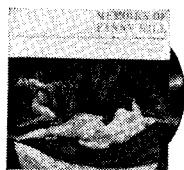
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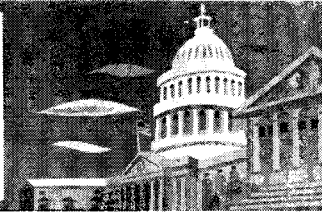
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# State of Affairs



## Chinese Puzzle

**A**LITTLE BEFORE President Johnson was faced with the anguish of a decision on whether or not to end suspension of the bombing in North Vietnam and the strategy to adopt thereafter, he approached one of his aides on the likelihood of China's entering the war. His aide replied that he thought this unlikely as long as he remained President. This was not some sort of deferential compliment to Mr. Johnson: he simply wanted to express his confidence in the President's caution, in the expectation that he would resist all pressures to escalate the war to a point where Chinese intervention could become a dangerous possibility.

Unquestionably there has been a rising concern in Washington over the chances of China's entry into the war. It has shone through many of the questions put by members of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee during their hearings on the Administration's policy in Asia. There was General Gavin's concern that should the American troop concentration grow to 600,000 men or more, the Chinese "surely" would reopen the Korean war; there was Roger Hilsman, former Assistant Secretary for Far Eastern Affairs, who said before the same forum: "Today Communist China and the United States are on a collision course. The outcome can only be war." There are senior analysts in the State Department who also believe that stepped-up warfare could lead to a direct clash between the two nations. And Joseph Kraft, the columnist, says that the North Vietnamese themselves have ended "a policy of extreme caution," and that one of the Hanoi papers reports an entire Chinese division has volunteered to fight against the U.S.

A few, especially among the military in the Pentagon, are not worried about such a confrontation, and indeed would welcome it. And Senator Stennis of Mississippi, a ranking and influential member of the Senate Armed Services Committee, exhorted people the other day to brace themselves against the possible use of nuclear weapons if the Chinese were to intervene.

The assumption that meanwhile underlies all American plans for escalation in Vietnam is that the Chinese will not feel directly challenged to come into the war if the American buildup is kept below a certain level; even doubling or

tripling the number of American troops, it is believed, would not be considered by Peking as an outright provocation. The answer to those who cite Korea as an ominous precedent—for the majority view at the time was that China would not enter that war—is that in Korea the United States command made the fatal error of attempting to fight right up to the Chinese border and then, as it were, cornering the enemy by threatening some of China's most essential lines of communication, which left Peking no alternative but to intervene. In Vietnam, however, the United States, say the policymakers, has made it abundantly clear that there is no intention whatever to conquer North Vietnam. American troops would not cross the 17th parallel, as they did the 38th in Korea. No direct threat to China would therefore occur. The last thing the Chinese want is a direct clash with the United States. It is their policy, so the saying goes, to fight to the last Vietnamese with words, keeping their own regular forces out of it; for to engage them would run the risk of the U.S. retaliating directly against China.

The possibility that the Chinese would engage their Air Force to protect North Vietnam is rejected on the assumption that Peking will not risk the destruction of its small, obsolescent aircraft, which are needed for protection of the air space opposite Formosa. And the sharpening conflict with the Soviet Union makes it unlikely that the Chinese will take risks at a time when they cannot take Soviet military support, based on their mutual assistance, for granted.

At any rate, the assumption on which a limited escalation of American ground forces has been decided is that China will not intervene. President Johnson, up to now at least, has been anxious for the kind of psychological backing that the British Government has given the United States. It has been extremely important to him. Thus Prime Minister Wilson's statement that he could not maintain this support if the United States were to bomb Haiphong or Hanoi may have had a certain restraining influence on the escalation of the bombing, though it is known that President Johnson himself is also firmly set against hitting targets in those two cities.

It is my own impression that although the peace efforts at the United Nations

will continue at least in some sort of *pro forma* way, the United States will not attempt another major peace gesture—as the pause was—for possibly as long as another eighteen months, unless the other side takes a peace initiative. The general assessment now is for hard and unspectacular fighting ahead, possibly for as long as five years.

What is most unlikely to happen, though it is now being advocated by many of the military, is the sending of American forces into South Laos to cut off the Ho Chi Minh trail—the main supply line for the Vietcong forces. This would involve violating the sovereignty of Laos and for that reason and because of the number of troops it would require there is considerable hesitation.

**O**NE other important basic conclusion is that the war will not be won by bombing the north or the south or by fighting in the rice paddies (though all this will continue), but through the new rural reconstruction program—once called the pacification of the countryside. Whether it will be more successful than the original idea no one dares to predict. But the belief is stronger than ever that unless the peasants in the villages come to feel safe, unless they get better protection, the Vietcong will go on getting local support; that while the Vietcong have to be pursued and kept in check with arms they will not be defeated with arms, but only by "disarming" them of the protection the peasantry provide, for as long as they have this cooperation and protection they can hold out *ad infinitum*. These are the basic policy lines the U.S. will hold to from now on in Vietnam, and they commit the country more than ever to a prolonged stay in Vietnam, without any end in sight.

But to get back to the policymakers' chief worry now—direct Chinese intervention in the Vietnamese war: There seems to be unanimous agreement among the experts that the Chinese are convinced the U.S. is bent, in the long run, on attacking her. What they can't agree on, however, is whether this erroneous conviction (doubtless based on their own state of war-mindedness and not on signals sent from here) will act as a deterrent in keeping Peking out of the Vietnamese war come what may, or whether it will lead them to get into it.

The experts can only hope this will not happen and the President's calculations are based on this premise. But he has decided to see this war through, however long it may take. He is now fully engaging his personal prestige and he will do whatever is needed to prevent a Communist victory over South Vietnam. This at least is the mood in which he went to the Honolulu Conference and in which, reinforced, he returned.

—HENRY BRANDON.