

ARTS & CULTURE

The cola conquest: the big sell

BY AVI LAMBERT

The Gods must be crazy. Coke bottles are dropping from the sky, and Disneyland's invading China.

Never again will I take a drink of Coke or Pepsi without tasting their involvement in the modern history of the world and a sour taste on my tongue.

The Cola Wars, the recently finished Monday night series on CBC, sheds light on places I would not have thought it possible for a beverage company to tread. Cocaine and war, racism and colonization, behind these all lies the American dream — these are places the cola conglomerates dwell. Cola dwells in our minds not so much as a taste, but as an image; as a representation of a dream, an entire culture and society.

The three part series moved cunningly from the origins of Coke and Pepsi — the two major players in the "Cola Wars" — to their involvement in war and peace, and, in the third and last part of the series, to cola's move towards cultural integration and more or less an empirical conquest. Coca-colonization.

I'm tempted to give you all the hundreds of startling and indispensable facts I received from the series — that Santa Claus was created by Coke; that Coke was peddled to the Nazi's; that the CEO of Coke helped elect at least one president; Pepsi's drive to

put their product in Soviet leader Nikita Khrushchev's hand; that Guatemalan Coke employees were murdered to quash their union drive.

See, I'm already doing it. If



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not for the lack of room

in this paper, and the fact that I don't want this article to turn into a boring essay, I'd tell you all the points I found relevant. I think the message the series gives you

is like a slap in the face you knew you had coming.

Greenpeace can attack a nuclear research vessel and protesters can form human walls, but to stop Coke and Pepsi's monopoly on our thirst there has to be a unified train of thought about these companies to make changes.

This series gives you information you have trouble resisting telling the next person.



But sadly, the series is a rare gem in a media plagued by kickbacks from cola companies and stories that

don't cover the full scope of a corporation's failings. But I'd like to think the world is waking up to the pitfalls of corporations without human interests in mind.

This series gives both

the full scope and acknowledges the problems with two of the most well known corporations in the world today.

There was a story in the series about a World War Two soldier shot on the beach in Normandy who, crawling on the beach dying, found a Coke bottle. After he was rescued he said the feel of the Coke bottle kept him alive. To him, the Coke bottle represented America and freedom.

Let go of the bottle. For links to corporate watch sites visit www.adbusters.org and www.corpwatch.org

From dancehalls to movie theatres

BY AVI LAMBERT

Disc jockey, dance jockey, turntablist — or petty music recycler. The movie *Hang the DJ* holds up a powerful magnifying glass to a huge music industry now at the brink of mainstream popularity. The documentary film questions whether DJs will be able to stay true to their underground roots as more of the world turns their ears to the dance floor.

Hyperactive cinematography and turntable driven music complement each other throughout the film as it hops from city to city and continent to continent. The opening gives you a brief 90s-style glimpse of the places you'll visit throughout the course of the film — the Las Vegas strip, Paris, New York City and Spain are only but a few of these places. Based on pure cinema-

tography alone, the movie is breathtaking.

Hang the DJ highlights the lives of several famous DJs, some who have reached international status. Some of the main DJs documented in the film, compared at times to rock stars like the Beatles, are Roger Sanchez, Junior Vasquez, and Q-Bert. The DJs are shown to lead vastly different lives, yet are all seemingly united by a common love for the turntable and the joy of feeding an audience craving a beat.

Some interesting history I got from the movie surrounds how Q-Bert, the Jimi Hendrix of the turntable, got his start on the "instrument". Trying to stop a car jacker in his hometown of San Fran, Q-Bert busted his hip and was laid out for weeks. During that time he picked up some turntables and

scratched the hours of immobility away. So, all you hopefuls, bust your hip.

The movie also reviews the feelings of the promoters and studio producers of this musical genre. Also portrayed is the much questioned club scene, with its abundance of drugs and young children. But the movie by no means says all is negative with the club scene — if you haven't already been to a rave or a club, this movie will springboard your interests.

The visuals and the soundtrack keep moving nicely, but towards the end of the movie the history of the turntable loses its novelty and becomes a little too eclec-

tic. And the dialogue gets boring. When this movie is released in major theatres, I hope they make space at the front for a dance floor. I know by its end, that's what I'd be doing.

Film Review

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