How McGruff and the Crying Indian Changed America: A History of Iconic Ad Council Campaigns

Wendy Melillo
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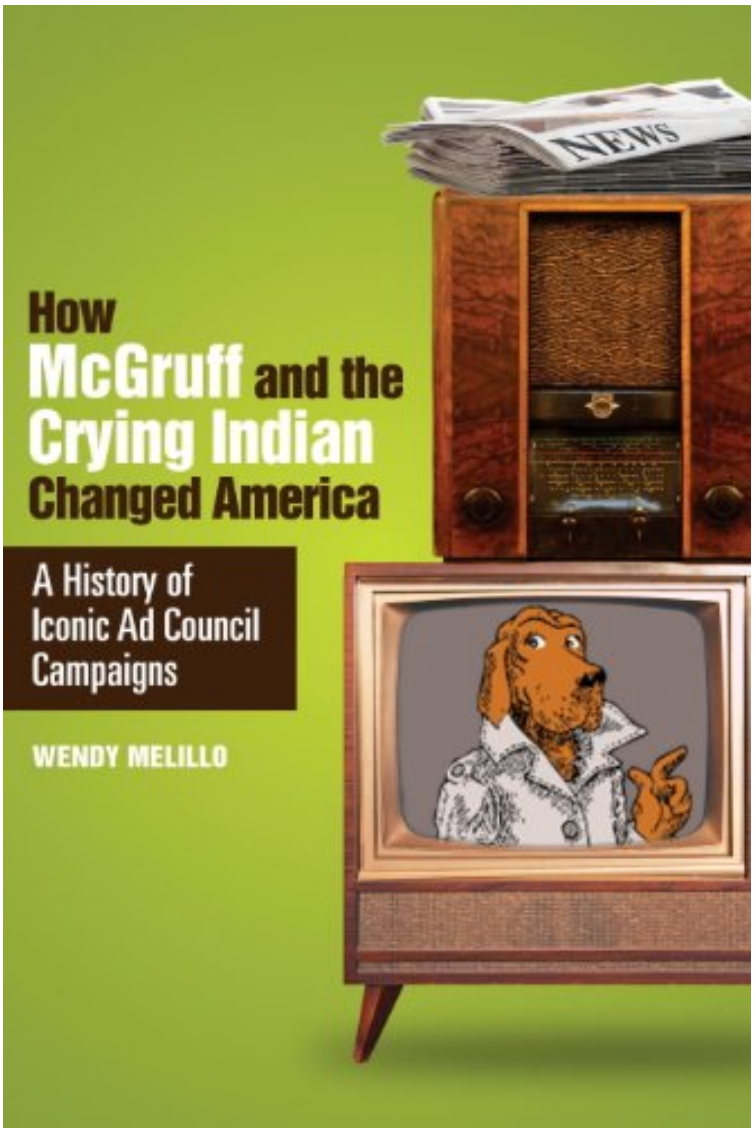

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Wendy Melillo : How McGruff and the Crying Indian Changed America: A History of Iconic Ad Council Campaigns before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised How McGruff and the Crying Indian Changed America: A History of Iconic Ad Council Campaigns:

5 of 5 people found the following review helpful. Very in-depth and straight-forwardBy Robert MI first heard of this book one early one Sunday morning when I heard the author interviewed on 94 WIP FM in Philadelphia, ironically a

sports talk station. This interview took please during one of their public affairs programs, I am sorry I cannot remember which one; yet this book was all about the ad council, the base behind it, and how some stations meet their obligations not only through broadcasting Public Service Announcements, but also broadcasting local public affairs programs as well.The book started out giving a nice, but not too in-depth history, behind what brought about what is the Ad council as we know it today. From the growing distrust of the advertising world at the turn of the twentieth century up to the beginning of WWII and the countries need to mobilize. I found it very informative how the book was laid out, telling the story by highlighting one major campaign after another. From Teddy Roosevelt and the conservationists, to Smokey the Bear, to the War efforts (such as mobilizing a female workforce) to the post war campaigns including the Crying Indian and Crime Dog McGruff.Wendy tells the true facts behind each campaign, such as how the government (despite needing to mobilize a female labor force during the war) was looking to put women immediately back in the kitchen afterwards, they actually discussed this point in-depth before even kicking off the campaign. The need for fighting men had to be weighed against the ability to not allow social change, an unfortunate theme we have seen far too often in American History.If you are a 20th century history buff or a fan of media, or just remember these memorable commercials, I highly recommend this book.

Pulitzer Prize nominated journalist Wendy Melillo authors the first book to explore the history of the Ad Council and the campaigns that brought public service announcements to the nation through the mass media.How McGruff and the Crying Indian Changed America: A History of Iconic Ad Council Campaignsnbsp;details how public service advertising campaigns became part of our national conversation and changed us as a society. The Ad Council began during World War II as a propaganda arm of President Roosevelt's administration to preserve its business interests. Happily for the ad industry, it was a double play: the government got top-notch work; the industry got an insider relationship that proved useful when warding off regulation. From Rosie the Riveter to Smokey Bear to McGruff the Crime Dog,nbsp;How McGruff and the Crying Indian Changed America explores the issues and campaigns that have been paramount to the nation's collective memory and looks at challenges facing public service campaigns in the current media environment.

Library Journal, Starred Pulitzer Prizendash;nominated journalist Melillo (public communication, American Univ.) narrates a riveting account of the Advertising (Ad) Council, founded in 1942, and its impact on U.S. history, from its inception as a public relations tool through contemporary public service announcements (PSAs).Melillo focuses on the effects and controversy surrounding classic advertisements whose objectives ranged from mobilizing women during World War II, selling atomic energy, and fighting crime and communism to supporting environmentalism and black colleges. Included are illustrations of iconic campaigns that make up the backbone of popular culture and ad history, as well as intriguing questions regarding how well the move from strict Federal Communications Commission (FCC) controls to self-regulation serves the public interest. The two-page epilog sketching the advantages and potential pitfalls of PSAs venturing into social media is excellent. Todayrsquo;s students might find greater emphasis on new media and less of what could be dismissed as nostalgia for print and traditional television even more compelling and relevant. VERDICT Surpassing other treatments in articles, books, and sources cited in chapter notes, this work distinguishes itself by its breadth and by incisive commentary and analysis. A superlative history of public service advertising.mdash;Elizabeth Wood, Bowling Green State Univ. Libs., OHKirkus sFrom the back stories of McGruff and Smokey through the conflicts of political polarization, this compact history of the Ad Council puts the relationship between government and the advertising industry in fresh perspective. Solid reporting and analysis from Melillo, a former Pulitzer nominee for the Washington Post, distinguish this first history of the Ad Council to date. It also suggests that more of a feature approach rather than a drier tone more common in academic or public policy writing might better serve this very interesting story, one that shows how the industry has bolstered its own image through what it has termed "advertising's gift to America" and how the council's attempt to remain above the political fray has profound political implications. "Using simple messages to prompt individual action is the key to the Ad Council's public service model," writes Melillo, yet critics charge that placing such an emphasis on individual initiative tends to reduce environmental concerns to cleaning up litter rather than putting pressure on corporations that produce so much more packaging than is necessary and otherwise pollute far more than individual litterbugs. Similarly, Smokey's message that "only you can prevent forest fires" oversimplifies the often complex relationships of various constituencies for forest use and the role of fire in conservation. "The organization has a tremendous responsibility to disparate constituencies: the client, the public, the ad industry, and the media companies that run public service ads free of charge," writes the author. "Balancing the needs and interests of these groups in a way that is equitable to all involved is not always possible. That means that some campaign goals, despite good intentions, may not always serve the public's best interests." Maintaining a balance generally free of polemics, Melillo shows that the campaigns have done a lot of good but have also generated more controversy than readers might have suspected."... the first book-length study of the council's work and impact, it shows the Ad Council's significant role in shaping popular attitudes on some of the most important issues of our time."nbsp; Milwaukee Journal Sentinel"For anyone interested in the

compelling elements of American advertising history and the nature of social messaging, Melillo's insightful and eye-opening book is a must-read." Fern Siegel, Huffington PostAbout the AuthorWendy Melillo is an assistant professor in the School of Communication at American University. As a staff writer for The Washington Post she earned a Pulitzer Prize nomination, a Penney-Missouri Newspaper Award, and a White House Correspondents' Association award. For nearly a decade, Melillo was the Washington, DC, bureau chief and senior writer for Adweek, where she covered product and political advertising, marketing, PR, and regulation.Excerpt. copy; Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved.From Chapter 7:The memorable image of the Crying Indian was introduced in 1971. The September letter to broadcasters from W. Howard Chase, the American Can Companyrsquo;s vice president of public affairs, said, ldquo;Our hope is to show all peoplemdash; from cab drivers to corporate presidentsmdash;that pollution control is an individual responsibility.rdquo; In this campaign, the strategy broadened from presenting litter as costly or dangerous to positioning it ldquo;as the one pollutant that everyone can help eliminate.rdquo; Shifting from a focus on litter to the more general problem of pollution contributed to helping Americans realize that more needed to be done to protect the environment. nbsp; The fact sheet for the campaign included a new section called ldquo;The Environmental Crisis.rdquo; While the focus remained on individual responsibility, the target audience was broadened to include individual occupations: nbsp; Everyone contributes to the pollution problem. Pollution can stem from many acts by individualsmdash;things that most people do each day without even realizing it. People pollute as homemakers, as mothers, as students, as workers, as executives and as elected officials. People pollute in many different ways; and the beginning of a solution to the problem can only be found when individuals start to examine their actions and face up to their own responsibility. There are many things that person can do to help stop pollution; and if each individual makes some effort, America may find that it has turned the corner in the war to save the environment. nbsp; The famous television spot opened with an American Indian paddling a canoe down a stream, which became increasingly polluted with each stroke of his oar. Viewers watched him observe the garbage floating in the water, the nearby factories spewing smoke, and the waves churning out trash along beaches. After he left his canoe to walk along a littered beach, someone tossed a bag of garbage at his feet. A tear rolled down his cheek as the announcer said, ldquo;Some people have a deep and abiding respect for the natural beauty that was once this countrymdash; and some people donrsquo;t! People start pollution. People can stop it!rdquo; nbsp; The ad prompted viewers to send away for a pamphlet called ldquo;71 Things You Can Do to Stop Pollution,rdquo; which targeted home owners and business leaders alike. For example, it recommended fourteen steps a business owner could take to fight pollution. ldquo;Industry has a responsibility for pollution control,rdquo; the pamphlet read. ldquo;Probably the single most important thing the businessman can do is to factor ecological as well as economic considerations into his way of doing business.rdquo; It encouraged ldquo;examining your own plant and production pollution problemsrdquo; and taking the steps necessary to arrest them. It also recommended taking ldquo;an active role in efforts to restore rivers, lakes, and streams to their former natural state.rdquo; nbsp; Corporate responsibility was also directly addressed in some of the print ads. One magazine headline read, ldquo;Pollution Control: A Corporate Responsibility.rdquo; The copy called on businesses to address the issue: nbsp; Pollution and pollution abatement have become important aspects of every business. They affect budgets, profit and loss, position in the community, corporate image, even the price of stock in some cases. Pollution is now a problem that is receiving attention from astute businessmen. Water treatment plants, fume scrubbers and filtration systems, land reclamation, plant beautification, litter prevention, employee education programs, are all types of things industry is doing to help in the pollution fight. nbsp; But critics had begun to castigate the focus on individual responsibility. ldquo;The damage done by litter is . . . inconsequential compared to the damage done by industrial pollution, but the Ad Councilrsquo;s slogan suggest[s] that individuals . . . are responsible,rdquo; wrote Keenen Peck in a 1983 article in The Progressive. In a 2002 article in Advertising Age, which examined the Ad Councilrsquo;s impact on its 60th birthday, John McDonough recalled the Crying Indian campaign: ldquo;While different versions of the rsquo;70s campaign spots showed smokestacks as well as garbage, critics argued that by placing responsibility for pollution on individuals rather than institutions, the campaign was a powerful political decoy devised by corporate interests to divert public attention from the real issues of industrial waste.rdquo; nbsp; It didnrsquo;t help the campaignrsquo;s image when press reports revealed the true heritage of the actor Iron Eyes Cody to be Italian and not ldquo;a full blooded Cherokee,rdquo; as the Ad Councilrsquo;s press release announcing the campaign called him. In a June 2012 interview, Keep America Beautiful spokesman Wallace confirmed that Iron Eyes Cody was born Espera Oscar DeCorti. ldquo;He maintained to everyone, to our organization, and to Hollywood that he was a Cherokee,rdquo; Wallace said. ldquo;That was one of the reasons Marsteller wanted him.rdquo; Discussing the sense of betrayal many felt when they learned that Cody was not American Indian, Wallace said, ldquo;When people find out he was Italian, there is this feeling of being personally affected. There was such a deep connection to his nativeness and the themes of that ad.rdquo;