

MALT LIQUOR: A HISTORY

KIHM WINSHIP

The family of American-born beers speaks proudly about two of its children. Ask about Steam Beer or the less gifted but very popular Light Beer, and the photos come out, the stories begin. But speak aloud the name of the other sibling, and the room grows quiet. Dad won't look up from his plate and Mom goes into the kitchen and cries into her apron. How could you mention Malt Liquor?

Born in the late 1930s, Malt Liquor looked like a promising child. Brewing had returned with the Repeal of Prohibition in 1933, but the Depression was making things tough for brewers, and beer drinkers complained that their beer lacked the 'kick' it had before. And then, in the 1940s, World War II came and America was rationing. Everything was tight at the nation's breweries. Not enough metal for bottle caps or cans, not enough gas for the delivery trucks or rubber for tires, not enough malt to make beer. Some brewers were even using sorghum and potatoes to fill out the mash.

Two brewers in the Midwest had an idea. At the Grand Valley Brewing Company in Ionia, Michigan, sometime around 1937, Clarence 'Click' Koerber first brewed Clix Malt Liquor. In 1942, at Gluek Brewing in Minneapolis, Minnesota, Alvin Gluek had a similar idea. The grandson of the brewery's founder, Alvin was happiest in the laboratory, tinkering. And one day, he found a way to brew a beer that would use less malt but have more of a kick. He named his malt liquor Sparkling Stite by Gluek, courting drinkers with champagne aspirations. Envisioned as an upscale product, Sparkling Stite was even promoted with score pads for bridge players.

Another Midwestern brewery, Goetz Brewing, created a competing version and called it Country Club Malt Liquor (Fig. 1), going after the growing post-war middle class, people with nice homes, a new set of clubs and a little extra money. The 'New Party Brew' was advertised in magazine ads with neatly dressed, smiling white people, enjoying themselves in a festive but polite manner, drinking out of frosty glasses filled from 8-ounce cans.

Following suit, Gettleman Brewing of Milwaukee appealed to tweed-jacketed faculty members with its



Figure 1.

University Club, complete with a faux college crest. The brewers of Gaybree Malt Liquor in Norfolk, Virginia, said it ‘tastes, looks, sparkles like champagne.’ Century Brewing’s Sparkling Grenáy touted its ‘superb wine-like character’ and sported a coat of arms with tiny winged lions and four medallions. Champetite Malt Liquor, from the Atlantic Brewing Company in Chicago, Illinois, advertised its product with an image of a laughing blonde and the slogan, ‘the bubbles tickle my nose.’ The Old Reading Brewery in Pennsylvania tried its luck with Sparkling Mardi Gras Malt Liquor, ‘fermented and aged to impart the character and flavor of real champagne.’ And in the same town, the Sunshine Brewing Company introduced Town & Country VVS Sparkling Malt Liquor.

In Minnesota, the diminutive Peoples Brewing served up Olde English 600: A Malt Liquor, with a jaunty Englishman wearing a plumed hat atop a white wig. A slogan in Latin ennobled the package: ‘Situr Duluth,’ the can announced, ‘It is being thirsted for in Duluth.’

In this manner, Malt Liquor, all dressed up and on its best behavior, tried to make its way in the marketplace for almost 20 years, but with little success. However, about the time Malt Liquor turned 21, something happened to change the brew’s life, the first of its watershed moments.

Malt liquor goes wild

In 1963 at National Brewing in Baltimore, Maryland, a man named Dawson Farber was leading the marketing effort. He was very concerned about the growing competition from other ‘national’ breweries - Anheuser-Busch and Joseph Schlitz - who were moving into his city with large budgets for promotion and advertising. Farber anticipated that his National Bohemian lager was not going to fare well against bullies like Budweiser and Schlitz. He had to find a niche where the brewery could compete.

At the time, the only malt liquor with anything close to a national presence was Country Club. Farber had a different vision, one that focused less on upper middle class aspirations and more on the reality of more kick in the can. He came up with the name Colt 45 and told a designer he wanted a label emblazoned with a kicking

horse and a horseshoe (Fig. 2). Farber was not going to hide the potent brew’s extra bang.

This was a master stroke. It was also a violation of federal law, if anyone had been paying attention. The Code of Federal Regulations, Title 27, Part 7, Prohibited Practices, Section 7.29 (g), states that a malt beverage’s label

shall not contain any statements, designs, or devices, whether in the form of numerals, letters, characters, figures, or otherwise, which are likely to be considered as statements of alcoholic content.

The future of malt liquor hung in the balance, but National Brewing needn’t have worried. Apparently insensitive to metaphor, the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms (BATF) approved Colt 45, kicking horse, horseshoe and all.

As the new brew with the kick of a colt enjoyed national success, the well-mannered malt liquor brands of the previous decade were trampled by a herd of animals. The BATF gave the green light to a zoo parade of mustangs and stallions, red lions, red bulls and pit bulls, big bears and big cats, jaguars and panthers, hawks and

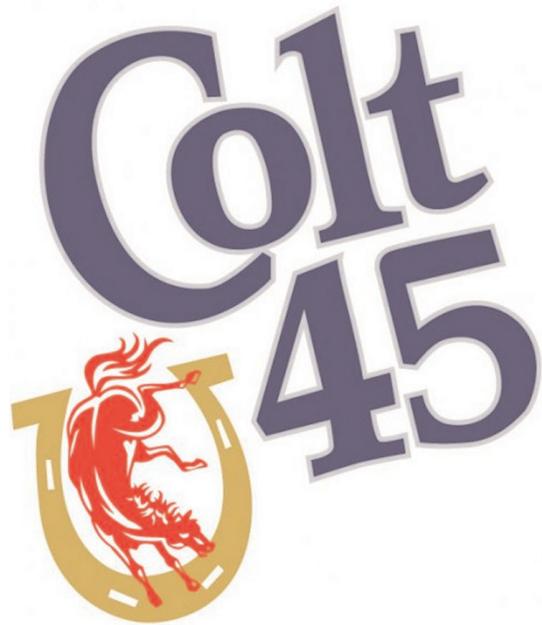


Figure 2.

eagles, scorpions and cobras - a Noah's Ark gone bad, a wild kingdom in the cooler. The allusions to potency were unleashed and unbridled.

But how were brewers to advertise these wild new brews? Print ads in the early 1960s hinted that Colt 45 was 'a completely unique experience'. As a part of the 'unique' campaign, Colt 45 television ads showed a man seated at a table on the edge of a waterfall. A white man, in a dark suit.

The Joseph Schlitz Brewing Company, the owners of malt liquor's first raging bull, ran a print ad showing a giggling woman wearing a pearl necklace, seated next to a tray of stemmed glasses bearing the Schlitz Malt Liquor stylized 'bull' logo. The ad read, 'Mildred never used to be famous for her parties. Then she introduced Schlitz Malt Liquor'.

The makers of Bull Dog Malt Liquor ventured this slogan: 'a pip of a nip in every sip'. Indeed, the colts, the bulls and the dogs were ready to run, but the brewers still hesitated to turn them loose.

Malt liquor makes new friends

For 20 years, brewers directed malt liquor advertising to white, middle class consumers. But the Civil Rights movement of the 1960s alerted many American businesses to the existence of a group that had been largely invisible to them: Black Americans. Prompted partly by social conscience and partly by threatened boycotts, marketers awoke to the wisdom of appealing to this audience - hiring black-owned advertising agencies, running ads in media that black people read, watched and heard, and featuring black people in the ads. It was the right thing to do and it was the smart thing to do.

Among the businessmen given a nudge were brewers. And smarter brewers asked themselves, 'Which of our products are black people buying already?' Brewery presidents asked the V.P. Sales, who asked his sales force, who asked distributors, who asked the retailers who spoke with consumers every day. The word came back up the chain that people of color drank proportionally more malt liquor than their white counterparts. Nobody knew why; they just did. To be precise, and move forward in time for a moment, while black Americans

comprise 12-14% of the population, they consume 30-33% of the malt liquor brewed in the U.S. The statistic is important for two reasons. First, it shows why brewers of malt liquor advertise more heavily to black people: As a group, they buy more malt liquor. The second important fact is that if a third of all malt liquor is consumed by black Americans, two thirds are consumed by people who are not black. Hold on to that thought.

Tobacco companies manufacturing menthol cigarettes made the same discovery: A larger share of their customers were black. They responded by directing more of their advertising to a black audience. A Praxis Project (Washington, D.C.) survey of *Jet* and *Ebony* magazines - black-owned publications targeted to black people - shows that from 1965 to 1975, print ads for menthol cigarettes and malt liquor appeared in these publications and increasingly featured people of colour. Advertising on black radio paralleled this trend.

In 1967, Maier Brewing in Los Angeles introduced Soul Stout Malt Liquor and Soul Mellow Yellow Beer for the black community. But the products, coming out just two years after the Watts riots, met with protests led by the NAACP. The brewery, on its last legs, let the Soul brand die.

In New Jersey, Trenton's Champale was one of the first malt liquor brewers to pay more attention to the black community. Long a champion of the 'champagne on a beer budget' approach, Champale ran a 1966 print ad showing a handsome black couple in evening dress with the caption, 'Ready, Set, Glow!' A 1971 Champale print ad showed a black hand holding two bottles, with the slogan, 'Live a little on very little'. In 1974, Champale ran an ad with a black couple in tennis garb, and the headline, 'Get Set for Living'. Also in 1974, they published a print ad with a young African American gospel composer, shown at his piano writing music, outdoors throwing a football, and indoors enjoying Champale in a champagne glass. In his spare time, the young man was campaigning for Maynard Jackson, the future Mayor of Atlanta. The ad signed off with 'Some people just know how to live'. In the same campaign, another ad featured a black couple in Harlem who owned their own greeting card company.

Colt 45 did some tentative reaching out in 1974 with print ads featuring comedian and actor Redd Foxx. He

had a highly rated TV show in Sanford and Son, he was black, and white people liked him. It must have felt like a safe way to dip a toe into the black market.

Another early sign of awareness was an Anheuser-Busch sales film for Budweiser Malt Liqueur. The 1973 production took distributors for a ride on the Budweiser Malt Liqueur Limited, a train where every car was filled with people enjoying Bud Malt. Along with beautiful women and groovy guys, the train was also populated with college students who drank Bud Malt while ‘rapping’, and a black man with a big hat who said, ‘Hey, man, maybe you don’t drink a bunch, but I drink a ton of it. You may call it malt liqueur, but it’s my beer!’ The host went on to describe the ‘new black market’ for malt liqueur, and interviewed a group of black men and women who talked about drinking malt liqueur when ‘you want to get down to it’.

In stores, at least one display from this era showed smiling black people enjoying Budweiser Malt Liqueur and characterized the newly introduced brew as ‘The Soul Grabber’, possibly an allusion to the Willis ‘Gator’ Jackson song of the same name.

Looking back, an observer might see the malt liqueur advertisements of the Sixties and Seventies as fairly tasteful, almost quaint. But that was going to change.

Malt liqueur discovers sex

In 1986, Malt Liqueur was 44 years old, and clearly a late bloomer. Then the middle-aged brew met actor Billy Dee Williams. When Billy Dee first said, ‘The Power of Colt 45, it works every time’, Malt Liqueur’s world changed forever. Billy Dee was black and he was sexy. And what a product promise: With the help of Colt 45, you could be as smooth as Billy Dee and beautiful ladies would yield gladly (Fig. 3).

The genie was out of the bottle. On Billy Dee’s coattails, basketball’s towering Wilt Chamberlain (who once estimated the number of his amorous conquests at more than 10,000) appeared in advertisements for Haffenreffer Private Stock Malt Liqueur, holding a swooning beauty while the headlines read, ‘High performance pleasure’ and ‘Nobody does it bigger’. Suddenly, it seemed as if you could say anything about malt liqueur.

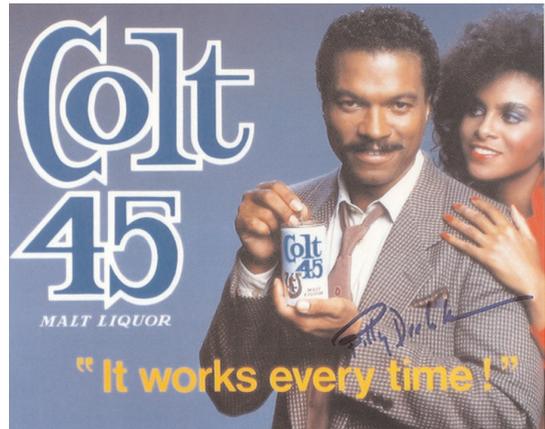


Figure 3.

Of course, one cannot discuss sex and malt liqueur without a bow to Don Vultaggio and John Ferolito. These two young men from Brooklyn came up the hard way. After high school, they scraped together \$200 and bought a VW bus to deliver beer to places avoided by timid truckers, stores in neighbourhoods like Crown Heights and Bedford-Stuyvesant. By 1982, the pair had 25 trucks and a decade of experience delivering refreshment in these less than pastoral settings. Vultaggio and Ferolito learned what their customers wanted because they were on the street with them every day.

One day they asked themselves why they were delivering other people’s beer when they could contract to brew their own and profit as both wholesalers and brewers. In 1986, they formed the Hornell Brewing Company and introduced Midnight Dragon Special Reserve Malt Liqueur.

What they lacked in marketing power, they made up for in audacity. Their first poster featured a woman sipping Midnight Dragon through a straw. The caption read, ‘I could SUCK on this all night’.

You didn’t need a gypsy to read those tea leaves. When women’s groups protested, Ferolito told the *Wall Street Journal*, ‘Real men like sex and sex sells beer’. In fact, 22 separate groups protested the poster. Propelled by its notoriety, Midnight Dragon sold like hotcakes with malt syrup. As a cultured touch, its cans and bottles

were emblazoned with an elegant crest and Latin inscription, 'Epulis Accumbere Divum' (line 79 from the first book of Vergil's *Aeneid*, 'To recline at the feast of the gods'). For those eager to recline, Vultaggio and Ferolito delivered their new brew by the truckload - three million cases of Midnight Dragon annually.

Malt liquor finds its voice

Malt Liquor was living in a world of double meanings, metaphor and sly winks until it took up with a crowd of musicians. And not just any musicians; these young men played Hip Hop. One day they crossed paths with Minott Wessinger, a descendant of brewer Henry Weinhard. Wessinger had worked at the family brewery, Blitz-Weinhard, in Portland, until his family sold the business to G. Heileman Brewing Company. The deal included a 'non-compete' clause in the general beer market, but Wessinger started the McKenzie River Corporation, created a new malt liquor, and had Heileman brew it for him beginning in 1987.

The leading malt liquor brand at the time was Olde English, which was kind of Olde School, and Wessinger sought a way to appeal to drinkers who wanted something other than their father's malt liquor. He created St. Ides. Tropical breezes blew the palm trees pictured on the St. Ides label and gave it a kind of St. Barts, St. Kitts, West Indies attitude. (In addition, the name held meaning for the devout; St. Ides was a fifth-century Irish nun who worked miracles and foretold the future, although probably not this one.)

In the late 1980's, Wessinger heard Hip Hop artists singing about malt liquor in their songs. Singing about Olde English, 'O E,' now several owners away from its birthplace in Duluth, and about his own St. Ides, 'the S.T. Crooked I.' But Wessinger did not succumb to corporate thinking, which would have said, 'Let's have our ad agency produce radio commercials that sound like this Hip Hop.' Wessinger was smarter. He commissioned real Hip Hop stars to create the spots, from the sidewalk up.

The resulting songs, recorded and played in the early 1990's, are the stuff of legend. As one writer noted, they 'blew the funk up.' Artists included King Tee, DJ Pooh, E-Swift and Snoop Doggy Dogg. The work increased

St. Ides sales by 25%, and incidentally made St. Ides the malt liquor of choice among white college students. But black and white malt liquor drinkers were not the only listeners.

Community leaders and public health advocates were outraged by the lyrics. O'Shea Jackson, rapping as Ice Cube, urged his listeners to, 'Get your girl in the mood quicker, get your jimmy thicker, with St. Ides malt liquor.'

What a product promise! The community could only stand about four more years of that. At one point, public outcry led to the federal government's suspending all St. Ides advertising for three days. That showed 'em! The campaign ended after production of 30 radio spots. The use of sex to sell malt liquor would continue, but Ice Cube had planted the flag on a peak that might never be scaled again.

Lost in the hue and cry was the fact that Ice Cube's lyric was clearly a lettered homage to poet Ogden Nash, a 20th century American master of light verse, whose 'Reflections on Ice-Breaking' reads in its entirety:

Candy
Is dandy
But liquor
Is quicker.

For bringing a 1940s *New Yorker* magazine feel to the malt liquor milieu, we bid hail to thee, Ice Cube.

While some Hip Hop artists were getting paid to sell St. Ides, others were not amused. Carleton Ridenhour, rapping as Chuck D with the group Public Enemy, denounced malt liquor in his song 'One Million Bottlebags.' His very public stand against malt liquor made the appearance of his voice in a 1992 St. Ides radio spot all the stranger. The producer of a St. Ides ad had sampled a snippet of Chuck D from 'Bring the Noise.' Even though the spot was withdrawn from airplay as soon as the sampling was protested, Mr. Chuck filed a \$5 million lawsuit against the McKenzie River Corporation. 'It's unconscionable,' noted the rapper's attorney, Lisa Davis. 'He has taken a very strong position against malt liquor, and these ads make him look like a hypocrite.' In the end, a seven-figure settlement smoothed Chuck's ruffled feathers.

Power master: a bridge too far

G. Heileman's Power Master tore the envelope in 1991. The BATF approved the name for this new sub-brand of Colt 45, but a number of clergymen, including the Reverend Jesse Brown of the Philadelphia-based National Association of African-Americans for Positive Imagery, led a protest, and the U.S. Surgeon General Antonia Novella signed on as well, calling the new brand 'socially irresponsible' and sounding the battle cry. 'Tell the purveyors of alcohol and their hired-gun persuaders that we have had enough disease, disability and death. Tell them that we simply will not tolerate marketing that distorts and deceives the effects of products, or campaigns that are designed to keep our minorities enslaved by taking away their good health, freedom, and dignity.'

In a comment typical of the furore, David Grant of the Minneapolis-based Institute on Black Chemical Abuse said, 'The same kind of racism is at work here that is at work in society as a whole. It sees black life and the lives of other people of colour as intrinsically less valuable than the lives of European-Americans.'

At this point, the BATF experienced an awakening and noted, as if seeing the law for the first time, that the Federal Alcohol Administration Act of 1935 forbade the labelling or advertising of beer with words that could be construed as indicators of a product's alcoholic strength. Heileman was allowed to sell off its existing stock of Power Master over the next four months but had to stop advertising the product.

Already in bankruptcy proceedings, Heileman lost \$2 million on the failed product launch. Commenting on the Power Master controversy, a writer in *Fortune* magazine said, 'Targeting black consumers with anything less wholesome than farina has become politically risky.'

Malt liquor goes crazy

Less than a year later, Don Vultaggio and John Ferolito, of Midnight Dragon fame, found a way to offend a whole new minority. Inspired by the film *Dances with Wolves* and reprising the equine theme of Colt 45 and Mustang, they launched Crazy Horse Malt Liquor in

March of 1992. As the Hornell Brewing Company, Ferolito and Vultaggio did well with Crazy Horse, selling more than one million cases in its first year in the market.

However, Native Americans in general, and the descendants of Chief Crazy Horse in particular, were not flattered by this namesake brew, nor were they in a mood to say, 'Hey, *Dances with Wolves*, great flick.' Instead, this homage to the Old West coming from Long Island triggered bad press, a boycott, state and federal legislative initiatives to ban the brew, and a lawsuit that dragged on for 11 years.

From the beginning, Native Americans spoke out about the long history of their battle with alcohol and their reverence for Crazy Horse himself. Others joined the chorus. In a letter to the *Wall Street Journal*, Rep. Pat Schroeder (D., Colo.) noted, 'Crazy Horse was a spiritual and military leader of the Sioux Nation who witnessed the destructive force of alcohol among his people and adamantly opposed its consumption. Even today, substance abuse counsellors use his teachings in their work with Native Americans. The Hornell Brewing Co. could not have picked a more inapt symbol for their product.'

In thoughtful letters, Native American leaders appealed to Vultaggio and Ferolito's better nature. But if the pair had one between them, no one could find it.

'They're so callous about it; they don't see it,' said Phyllis Tousey Frederick, national coordinator of the Crazy Horse Defense Project. 'They say 'It's your opinion that you're offended.'

Perhaps it was their New York point of view. Had Vultaggio and Ferolito travelled to White Clay, Nebraska, they might have had an 'ah ha' moment. An unincorporated town with a population of 22, White Clay sits just across the border line from the Pine Ridge reservation of the Oglala Sioux Nation. Some 20,000 Native Americans live on the reservation, but Pine Ridge has no movie theatre, no public library, no department store. There is not much to do, and little money to do it with, given a 75-80% unemployment rate. No alcohol is sold on the reservation, which brings us, in the company of many Native Americans, back to White Clay.

Every day, three small convenience stores sell beer and malt liquor to Native Americans from the reservation. Eleven thousand cans. 11,000. Every day. The revenue accrues to a few white residents of White Clay and to the Nebraska taxman. The consequences accrue to the Pine Ridge reservation. Looking at it from Pine Ridge and White Clay, one might see more clearly how the appearance of Crazy Horse Malt Liquor was not a day-maker for the Sioux nation.

On the other hand, when the lawsuit began, Crazy Horse Malt Liquor was one of hundreds of Crazy Horse products and businesses in the marketplace, including a Liz Claiborne line of clothing and a chain of American strip clubs. So why go after Ferolito and Vultaggio? Someone with a cynical nature might say, 'Deep pock-ets.'

In 1992, Ferolito and Vultaggio introduced Arizona Iced Tea. Since that time, their Arizona Beverages company - propelled by creative packaging and steady new product introductions - has become one of the largest independent beverage companies in the United States. In 2003, Arizona teas led the canned and bottled tea category with more than \$116 million in sales, ahead of both Lipton Brisk and Snapple. It is common knowledge that people investing time and money in a lawsuit are wise to sue someone with money. To that point, Lawrence I. Fox, an attorney for Hornell Brewing Company, said, 'They talk about the principle, but what they really want is the bucks.'

Fox was not entirely engaging in rhetoric when he talked about 'the bucks.' The family of Crazy Horse, in addition to demanding that Crazy Horse Malt Liquor be withdrawn from the market, also sought damages 'related to what Hornell has made from using Crazy Horse's name on their product.' In other words, while few would question the family's sincerity regarding their reverence for the name and memory of Crazy Horse, the family was on record as willing to profit, after the fact, from Hornell Brewing's use of their ancestor's name.

After 11 years, they met with success. In 2004, according to Chief Harvey White Woman, a descendent of Crazy Horse and an executor of the estate, the family settled for a promise by Hornell Brewing to stop using the Crazy Horse name and a cash settlement of \$150,000.

As the Crazy Horse saga ended for Hornell Brewing, it was just beginning for three cabaret owners in Paris, France. In 1951, their father, Alain Bernardin, opened a nightclub near the Champs Elysées. Fascinated by the Wild West culture of the United States, he named his club the Crazy Horse Saloon. It became famous for its glamorous nude showgirls, played a prominent part in the 1965 film 'What's New, Pussycat?' and inspired a 50th anniversary revue in Las Vegas. For 50 years, no one complained, until Chief Harvey White Woman of the Pine Ridge reservation tuned in.

In a letter to the Parisian club owners, Chief White Woman wrote, 'I saw on HBO a program showing your night club where women could be seen apparently wearing feather headdresses. My family is offended each time there is a lack of respect towards our culture and towards our venerable leaders. I want the young people of my tribe to remember Crazy Horse as a warrior and a strong chief, not as a Paris night club.' Chief White Woman demanded that the club change its name.

By chance, a family friend, Chief Red Cloud, was going to Paris to appear at a book signing, and he delivered the letter in person. Speaking with French reporters outside the club, Red Cloud said, 'The name is a sacred name to our people. Nobody uses that name back home - even our own people.' Overnight, White Woman's letter and Red Cloud's special delivery linked the name of Crazy Horse to the Paris strip club on more than 200 Web sites in France, the Netherlands, Italy, Scotland, Canada and Luxembourg, and most states of the USA. This is 758 sites fewer than the Crazy Horse Malt Liquor lawsuit inspired, but that suit had 11 years to work.

White Woman and Red Cloud are now waiting to hear from Paris. Should the club refuse to change its name, Red Cloud has threatened the owners with a return visit by more chiefs, and legal action. Financed, a jaded observer might assume, by the Crazy Horse Malt Liquor settlement.

If at first you don't succeed ...

If two guys from Brooklyn could spark national and international controversies on a shoestring budget, what could we expect from the nation's largest brewery? Anheuser-Busch did not reach the top by shying away

from challenges. But finding a way to market the #1 malt liquor has been a riddle the company has yet to solve. The 1971 introduction of Budweiser Malt Liquor, ‘the first Malt Liquor good enough to be called Budweiser’, did not meet with success.

In 1984, Anheuser-Busch tried again with its own entrant in the Wild Kingdom: King Cobra Malt Liquor. At up to 18 feet long, the King Cobra is the world’s longest poisonous snake. It can stand tall enough to look you in the eye. One bite delivers enough cardiotoxic, hemorrhagic venom to kill an elephant, or one man 20 times over. But even with a wild name and the marketing of Anheuser-Busch, King Cobra trailed industry leaders Olde English and Colt 45.

In 1996, Anheuser-Busch tried again, taking the wind-blown palm tree motif from St. Ides and introducing Hurricane Malt Liquor. On the Beaufort Scale, a hurricane is a 12, characterized by ‘extreme destruction’. An Anheuser-Busch spokesperson said, ‘Hurricane has a more street-relevant imagery. We want it to be part of an attitude’.

Part of the attitude included ‘bikini posters’ for Hurricane (Fig. 4), competing for cooler space with similar posters from Schlitz Malt Liquor, Mickey’s Malt Liquor, Colt 45 and Olde English, perhaps suggesting that malt liquor is the beverage of choice for those who swim.

In 1997, critics accused Anheuser-Busch of deliberately targeting Latino drinkers, yet another minority, with Hurricane. Two years later, the National Council on Alcoholism and Drug Dependence spoke for 25 public health groups in condemning Hurricane and asking the BATF to take action.

Anheuser-Busch’s failure to dominate the category, and the financial successes of McKenzie River and Hornell Brewing were not lost on other entrepreneurs in the 1980s and 90s. A number of attempts were made to create hip, young brands that would appeal to Malt Liquor drinkers: Mandingo Malt Liquor was marketed as a tribute to the ‘The Great Mandingo Empire of Mali, 1240-1400’ in a can bearing a map of Africa. But students of popular culture might also find it evocative of the 1975 film starring Ken Norton, about a well-muscled slave who is drawn into the thrall, and eventually the boudoir,

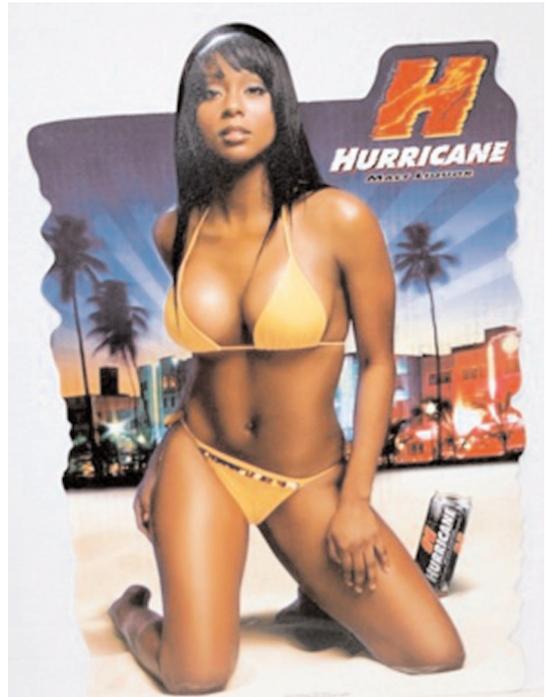


Figure 4.

of his white master’s wife. The film gave its name to the phenomenon of white women being attracted to black men, especially if the men are as good looking as Ken Norton. This message-laden potion was brewed by Mandingo Beer Inc, in the state of Pennsylvania, a long way from the kingdom of Mali.

Another Hall of Fame brew is Johnny 3 Legs, introduced in 1995 and contract-brewed briefly by Stroh. This fabulously blatant reference - to a man whose penis is so large that it looks like a third leg - was sent into the marketplace with a cover story regarding a three-legged rooster. Well, what can you say?

In 1997, Phat Boy Malt Liquor, laced with ginseng, was introduced by United States Beverage, led by Joseph Fisch who noted, ‘It’s very positive and it’s very fun’. However in November of that year, Phat Boy caught the attention of the Rev. Paul Scott of Durham, North Carolina, who held press conferences to complain that urban black youth were being targeted. Within a year, more than a hundred community activists, youth advo-

cates and health organizations, including the Marin Institute, had demanded Phat Boy's recall. In October of 1998, a Web-posted comment by Leslie Cason Jr. (quoted here as it appeared) noted, 'this shows you the sickness of the white man and his agenda to eliminate Afrikan People. This no good cracker is trying to exploit Afrikan people we must not allow this go on anymore. If Afrikan people must go and physically stop this company it must be done by any means necessary'. Not 'very fun' after all.

In 2000, the creators of St. Ides adroitly moved away from the flak surrounding malt liquor by selling the St. Ides brand and introducing another, Steel Reserve, that was not labelled as a malt liquor but rather as a 'high gravity lager'. To anyone with a knowledge of brewing, the similarities between a malt liquor and a high gravity lager are striking: lager style, higher alcohol content from a higher amount of fermentables, lighter body, and little in the way of malt or hops.

Malt liquor drinkers figured it out fast, and they liked it. With its spanking new design courtesy of the Turner Duckworth design firm of San Francisco and London, the product sold 'nearly 100 million bottles and cans' annually. Steel Reserve's brandmark was based on a medieval symbol for steel, which looked like the number 211. Conspiracy theorists quickly turned the number into something more useful. LeeRoy Jordan, Jr., a health professional and independent consultant, was one of many who noted that 211 was the California penal code for robbery, and he added that the alphanumeric gang code translation of 211, based on the 2nd and 11th letters of the alphabet, was 'Blood Killer'. And there you have it: another malt liquor brand promoting gangsterism and violence.

For makers of malt liquor, one of the costs of doing business is public outrage. Here are a few of the bouquets strewn in malt liquor's path:

This 'Attack of the Killer 40' is part of an overall scheme to control segments of the American population that might have reason to undermine the current power status.

(Keidi Obi Awadu)

The liquor industry has long targeted the Black community with its diabolical marketing schemes from the Schlitz Malt Liquor Bull bustin' through my TV after every video in the

'90's to the infamous St. Ides commercials that had every wanna be playa (and aspiring rap star) runnin' to the corner store to see if the stuff really did make you a Mack Daddy. (The Rev. Paul Scott, Messianic Afrikan Nation, Durham, North Carolina)

Not only are malt liquor products harmful themselves, but they're 'gateway' drugs that could pave the way to crack-cocaine and other illegal drugs.

(Dr. Walter Fagget, National Medical Association)

This is what the 'Malt Liquor Marketing Madness' looks like. It is excessive, persuasive and pathological. If you can decode the messages you'll find that their translation is death and destruction.

(LeeRoy Jordan)

We have to focus on the notion that we can and must control the sale and consumption of this liquid crack.

(State Rep. John Myers, D-Philadelphia)

One of malt liquor's most imaginative critics is lecturer and author Al 'Coach' Powell. In his essay '40 Ounces of Genocide', Powell links the number of crowns on the Olde English Malt Liquor label - 33 - to the number of crowns, a unit of currency, paid as a duty on each slave by English slave traders to the Spanish government under a 1713 agreement known as the Asiento. Powell maintains that the symbolism is deliberate, an 'in your face' move against the black community, and exhorts readers to keep fresh in their memories the misdeeds of 'the olde English.' Powell is one of many malt liquor critics who summons up images of the slave trade and portrays the sale and consumption of malt liquor as yet another enslavement.

It is easy to blame malt liquor. It is a tangible sign, a mute defendant left behind at the scene of the crime. Empty and broken containers, unconscious drinkers, dried spew, public urination and defecation, the aftermath of alcohol-fueled violence, fatal accidents, none of these deliver on the promises of the malt liquor label, the bikini posters, the upbeat radio spots. One can well imagine the frustration and rage of those who live with the consequences and seek a better life, a better place to live.

Few would suggest that posters of lightly clad women and glowering lords of Hip Hop are ideal fare for chil-

dren who have gone into a convenience store for a Popsicle, and brewers should not be high-fiving over the level to which their marketing has sunk.

But before we cast malt liquor as a racist and calculated attempt to harm minorities, we should recall that two-thirds of the malt liquor brewed in the United States is consumed by people other than African-Americans. Nor are problems with alcohol strictly an urban phenomenon. Didra Brown Taylor's PhD thesis, *Knowledge, Attitudes, and Malt Liquor Beer Drinking Behavior Among African American Men in South Central Los Angeles*, presents a review of the literature to date and her own original research. Among the findings:

Contrary to popular beliefs, rural students had equal or higher rates of usage of the two licit substances, alcohol and tobacco, than did urban students. Binge drinking for both male and female rural students exceeded that of their urban peers... rural students are more at risk for the negative consequences of alcohol. (p.36)

Studies of adolescents consistently find that Black youth initiate drinking at a later age than their White counterparts and have a lower prevalence of alcohol use. (p.18)

In Los Angeles, fortified wines were the drink of choice for 46% of problem drinkers, compared to 18% who preferred malt liquor. (p.2)

Of those who drank malt liquor, 56% reported drinking other kinds of alcohol at the same time. (p.103)

Advertising and pop culture were reported to have little influence on whether they drank malt liquor beer while alcohol use by family and others in the community most influenced their decision to drink. (p. xviii)

Nearly 44 percent of the respondents had their first drink of malt liquor beer with a relative with nearly one quarter having their first malt liquor beer drink with their mother or father. (p.98)

Frequency of church attendance emerged as the strongest negative predictor of smoking and daily drinking. (p.24)

The strongest predictor of advancement to heavy drinking were friends' drinking and low parental monitoring. (p.33)

If, in fact, malt liquor is not the main beverage of choice among alcohol abusers, or simply one among many, and if family influences are indeed the most powerful in determining the path one takes, then focusing the blame on malt liquor and malt liquor brewers may be a less than productive tactic for those who see the consumption of malt liquor as a threat to health, progress and the quality of life in their community.

Why should you care?

Government should: Set a maximum alcohol content for malt beverages of 5 percent by volume. This would lower the alcohol content of malt liquors.

(Michael Jacobson, et al; *Marketing Booze to Blacks*, p.42)

In order to solve the 'malt liquor problem', the Center for Science in the Public Interest has called for legislation that will restrict the alcoholic content of all malt beverages to 5% by volume. Should such legislation ever pass, beer styles such as barley wines, winter warmers, strong lagers, old ales, bock beers, imperial stouts and India Pale Ales would be banned and unavailable. This would affect every brewpub, every microbrewery, most importers, and millions of beer drinkers in the United States who would no longer be able to find the beers they enjoy.

The legislation would create a windfall for the major brewers and take us back in time to 1972, when all that was available to beer drinkers was light American lager and a few light imports. And that is why beer drinkers should be paying attention to the debate.

The future is not bright for malt liquor. In 2002, market analyst Robert Weinberg noted, 'Any economist knows the cheapest way to put alcohol in your system is fortified wine. Beer is a very expensive way to put alcohol in your system'. Weinberg also noted that malt liquor consumption in the United States was in decline. In 1997, it accounted for 4.3% of malt beverage sales; in 2001 just 2.6%.

Brewers, however, seem either unwilling or incapable of letting go of the profits that come from malt liquor, in spite of declining sales and consistently negative press. In the end, it's not nice to fool Mother Nature, and you don't do it without paying a price. Malt liquor is a beer

style that requires human engineering to override limits placed by nature. In place of flavor, sociability and a cultural experience, you have a quick ride to intoxication that seems to bring out the worst in everyone, even in the people who object to it. Greed, despair and destruction on one side - lies, bombast and posturing on the other.

It is a story without heroes.

What is malt liquor?

I guess you could say that malt liquor is like a beer that makes you want to break stuff.

Tim Teichgraeber

In some of states of the U.S., any beer with more than 5% alcohol must be labeled as 'malt liquor', even if it's a lager imported from Germany. But we are not here to deal with legal language. For our purposes, malt liquor is an American beer style characterized by high alcohol content, thin body, light color, very little hop character, and a variety of sweetish flavors and off-flavors.

Two things prevent normal lager beer from achieving higher levels of alcohol. First, yeast cannot break down 'unfermentable' dextrins. Think of these as long chains that are simply too big for a little yeast cell to feed on. Because the dextrins cannot be devoured by the yeast and turned into alcohol, they remain behind in the beer to provide body and flavor. Second, yeast is a living organism, and it dies when the alcohol level rises above a certain level; the yeast is essentially killed by the alcohol it has produced. This ends the fermentation, again leaving behind a portion of unfermented sugars that add body and flavor to the beer.

But with malt liquor, some things are done differently.

One: The mash contains 10 to 20% dextrose, sugars that the yeast can go right to work on. (The mash is usually made up of 50-60% malt, 30-40% corn grits and 10-20% dextrose. This produces a mash with a higher original gravity, i.e., a solution with more fermentables, hence the use of the phrase 'high gravity lager by brewers who want to brew malt liquor without the taint of the name 'malt liquor'.')

Two: Heartier strains of yeast, such as those used to ferment wine, are used. These yeasts can tolerate a higher level of alcohol and higher brewing temperatures. (In addition to producing more alcohol, these yeast can also produce some wine-like flavors, which provide a portion of the basis for claims of 'tastes like champagne.')

Three: The 'secret ingredient' that sets malt liquor apart from strong lagers - an enzyme called alpha-amylase is added to the mash to break down the longer chains of dextrins, so virtually all of the sugars become fermentable. This means that the brew will have more alcohol and fewer residual dextrins, therefore less body and flavor.

In summary: Stronger yeast have more sugars to work with and produce a beer with more alcohol, less body and some unusual flavor notes. Voila, malt liquor.

The addition of enzymes to the mash is also key to the production of light beer and dry beer, although the focus with those two styles is on lighter body and not higher alcohol. The formulas of today's brewers are proprietary (i.e., They're not going to tell you), but these are the three main techniques used to brew malt liquor.

And what isn't malt liquor?

Contrast the above explanation with that on page 14 of Didra Brown Taylor's Ph.D. dissertation, *Knowledge, Attitudes, and Malt Liquor Beer Drinking Behavior Among African American Men in South Central Los Angeles*:

Now, mainstream beers are made with ingredients such as corn sugar, yeast, malt extracts, and Irish moss (Papazian, 1997). The waste residue (malt) of mainstream beers, like Budweiser, is then mixed with chemicals such as methanol, formaldehyde, white sugar and bleach to make malt liquor beer (Afrika, 1999). The fact that malt liquor beer is made from the waste of other beers allows it to be sold in containers more than twice the size of regular beers for half the price.

She cites Charlie Papazian's book, *Home Brewers' Gold*: I shared her claims with Mr. Papazian who ran a search on the original manuscript and could find no content that would support any of her conclusions. Secondly, her citation of 'Afrika' for some of the more

outlandish claims leads us to her bibliography where 'Afrika' is absent. And her final citation of 'Brown' directs the reader to one of her own speeches, i.e., she is quoting herself.

On page 138, without a footnote, she writes, '... malt liquor beers contain addictive ingredients (sugar, ethanol, and carbon dioxide to name a few)' Fabulous. The addictive nature of sugar is familiar to anyone with a sweet tooth, and ethanol is a nasty chemical name for beverage alcohol which is indeed addictive to alcoholics, but carbon dioxide? This is news. The bubbles in ginger ale, addictive. Our every exhalation, addictive.

One wonders how the California School of Professional Psychology dissertation committee could keep this revelation to themselves. And that casual use of 'to name a few' suggests that there are more addictive substances in malt liquor that she is not going to name at this particular time.

To give credit, Dr. Taylor is within hailing distance on one point. Malt liquor can be produced more cheaply than regular lager beer, but not because it is made from the waste products of brewing. Rather, unlike lager beer, it uses smaller amounts of the more expensive ingredients, malted barley and hops, and larger amounts of the less expensive ingredients, corn grits and sugar. Also, the 'residue' of brewing, by which I assume Dr. Taylor meant 'residue,' is not malt, but rather spent grains, which are re-used as an ingredient in cattle feed, not to make malt liquor.

The Letter of the Law

The italics are mine:

(f) Use of words 'strong,' 'full strength,' and similar words. Labels shall not contain the words 'strong,' 'full strength,' 'extra strength,' 'high test,' 'high proof,' 'pre-war strength,' 'full oldtime alcoholic strength,' or similar words or statements, likely to be considered as statements of alcoholic content, unless required by State law. This does not preclude use of the terms 'low alcohol,' 'reduced alcohol,' 'non-alcoholic,' and 'alcohol-free,' in accordance with Sec. 7.71 (d), (e), and (f), nor does it preclude labeling with the alcohol content in accordance with Sec. 7.71.

(g) Use of numerals. Labels shall not contain *any statements, designs, or devices, whether in the form of numerals, letters, characters, figures, or otherwise, which are likely to be considered as statements of alcoholic content*, unless required by State law, or as permitted by Sec. 7.71.

(The Code of Federal Regulations: Title 27, Section 7.29 - Prohibited Practices)

Where Did the 40 Come From?

In addition to prompting the 'invention' of malt liquor, the rigors imposed by World War II had another effect. Bottles were returnable and reusable, which made them strategic to the war effort. The larger the bottle, the better. This is when pints, quarts and 40-ounce bottles came into use.

In the 1950s, however, brewers packaged their stronger malt liquor in smaller 8-ounce cans because of malt liquor's added strength. Some of the first malt liquors to be packaged in these cans included Country Club, Schlitz Malt Liquor, Gluek's Sparkling Stite and Atlas Brewing's Bull Dog. Olde English 600 was packaged in 7-ounce green bottles. But eventually, informed by the successes of their competitors, brewers found that larger containers of malt liquor sold better than smaller containers.

In *American Demographics*, writer Eugene Morris noted,

Blacks have a strong preference for larger sizes of nonalcoholic beverages, for example. After the Coca-Cola Company discovered this phenomenon in the early 1970s, it began featuring and promoting 16-ounce bottles instead of the standard 12-ounce size when advertising to the black community.

And so it was with malt liquor. Several years ago, I spoke with a brewer in upstate New York who was visited by a beer distributor from Philadelphia, a gentleman of color, who pronounced the upstate brewery's malt liquor to be 'Bad!' and said that if the brewer could put it in a 40-ounce bottle, they could make a fortune together. The small regional brewer did not have a bottling line that could handle 40-ounce bottles at the time; I do not know if the distributor ever got his wish.

But one thing is clear: The size of the bottle is not a function of conspiracy, but rather history and consumer demand.

The Clix Riddle

In many quarters, including the present day Gluek Brewing Company, the origins of malt liquor are believed to lie with Gluek in Minneapolis, Minnesota. But there is a significant lobby that holds the first malt liquor was Clix Malt Liquor, brewed at Grand Valley Brewing Company in Ionia, Michigan. Beer writer Dave Gausepohl notes, ‘The Grand Valley Brewing Co. of Ionia, Michigan, created this style, followed shortly thereafter by the Gluek Brewery of Minneapolis’.

Gary Bauer, proprietor of Michigan Breweriana On-Line, writes, ‘As far as I know, Clix was the first Malt Liquor.’ Gary provided this excerpt from an article about the brewery which pushes malt liquor’s origins all the way back to 1937, well before the Gluek claim of 1942:

A six-page supplement in the Ionia Sentinel-Standard on July 5, 1934 announced the reopening of the brewery. Prohibition was a very dead issue and the brewery was now welcomed as a provider of jobs and suds. [Brewery owner] ‘Click’ Koerber became a local booster at a time when the country was deep in a depression and much needed to be done.

The brewery also produced Friars Porter, Friars Beer, a top fermented beer, and in 1937 introduced Clix Malt Liquor which was the first product ever to be labeled and sold as Malt Liquor.

Because of the need for added production facilities and the lack of area to expand the Ionia brewery, in 1943 the Grand Valley Brewing Company purchased the larger Kern Brewery in Port Huron, Michigan, and renamed it the Friars Ale Brewing Company. Both breweries were in operation until 1946 when the entire production was consolidated in the Port Huron Brewery.

The Friars Ale Brewing Company of Port Huron, Michigan, closed in 1950. There are Clix Malt Liquor labels that carry a copyright date of 1939 (Fig. 5), but it is not clear whether the date refers to a trademark on the ‘Clix’ brand name alone or to the ‘Clix Malt Liquor’ name in full. The U.S. Trademark registry lists the first use of Gluek’s Stite, ‘a pale, light-bodied, malt liquor,’ on September 23, 1943. There is no registration listed for Clix.

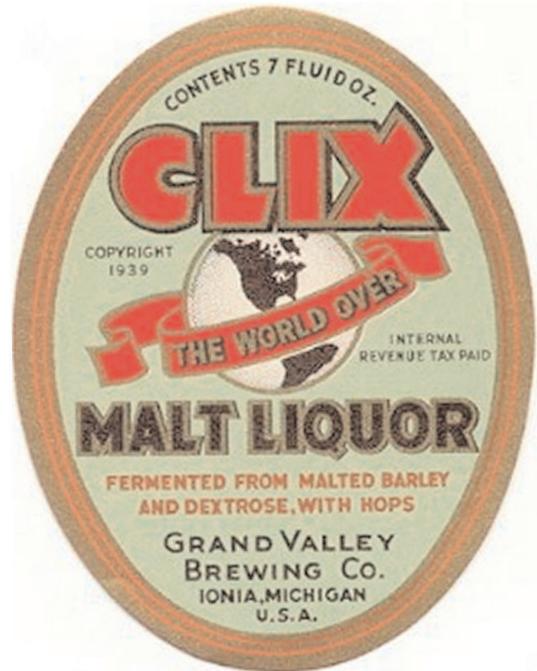


Figure 5.

The Clix label suggests Clarence ‘Click’ Koerber created his malt liquor with the addition of extra dextrose (sugar), and he was apparently the first brewer to call the stronger, thinner brew ‘Malt Liquor.’

The Stite page at Gluek.com talks about a patented process involving the fermentation and yeast:

By reinventing the fermentation process and adding yet more yeast, Alvin theorized the resulting brew would take on a distinctively pleasant dry taste. He lagered his new beer for several weeks, taking great pains to keep the temperature of the amber liquid just above freezing. Alvin had invented an entirely new category of beer. Alvin took his research and production techniques to Washington D.C. and applied for a patent. In a nearly unprecedented move, the United States Patent Office awarded Gluek Stite patent number 2,442,806 on June 8, 1948.

In his patent application, Alvin Gluek, in fact, referred to his new brew as ‘a new malt liquor,’ to separate it from earlier ‘malt liquors’ such as beer and ale. In his patent of June 8, 1948 (No. 2,442,806, which you can

read in its entirety at the U.S. Patent Office's Web site, he describes a process that involves an initial mash of malt, rich in 'the various enzymes including maltase, diastase and the various proteinases', of which a small portion is set aside to be reintroduced several days into the fermentation process, with more yeast, to further break down and ferment 'all possible sugar-producing substances', thus creating a brew with more alcohol and less body.

I don't know if Alvin Gluek worked in ignorance of Clarence 'Click' Koerber's product, or was aware of it. Gluek apparently did go after the same end result, but in a different way, and eventually referred to his Sparkling Stite by Gluek as 'the original Malt Liquor,' laying claim to the name. Which suggests either that he did not know Clix Malt Liquor ever existed, or felt his was a unique brew by virtue of the patented process and thus 'the original,' or that he was counting on the public's lack of awareness because the Grand Valley Brewing Company was small, obscure, and out of business by 1950.

So was it Clix or Stite? At the present, it seems that Clarence 'Click' Koerber created and named the first 'Malt Liquor' made with the addition of added sugar in 1937; Alvin Gluek created the first 'Malt Liquor' made by obtaining a more complete fermentation in 1942, selling it commercially in 1943 and obtaining a patent on the process in 1948.

On targeted marketing

A common charge against brewers of malt liquor is that they use targeted marketing on vulnerable black audiences. In fact, all marketing is targeted. You will never see an ad for denture adhesive on MTV, and you will never see an ad for the Apple iPod on an episode of 'Golden Girls.' No advertiser pays to send a message to consumers who are not likely to use their product or service.

Advertising cannot sell you something you do not want. People commonly abstain from buying malt liquor, cigarettes, tampons and fishing line, in spite of seeing ads for these products all their lives.

Advertising does influence brand selection. Businesses advertise so that when you do go shopping, you will

choose Maytag instead of Whirlpool, Kohler instead of American Standard, Birdseye instead of Green Giant, and yes, Kool instead of Newport, Colt 45 instead of Olde English.

Because black people 'over index' on some products, that is to say, they buy more of them than other Americans, advertisers of these products spend proportionately more money on advertising targeted to black people. Products favored by black consumers, and thus drawing more advertising dollars to black media, include hot sauces, bottled and carton orange juice, baby foods, instant pre-sweetened tea, hot dogs, corn and tortilla chips, and frozen vegetables.

In *American Demographics*, writer Eugene Morris noted:

Although blacks drink less coffee than average, they are much more likely than other Americans to lace their coffee with large amounts of sugar, cream, or nondairy creamer. Recognizing this trend, Coffee-Mate began marketing its product to blacks. It advertised in national magazines like *Ebony* and *Essence*, broadcast its message on local black radio stations, and used outdoor advertising in black neighborhoods. When it created a sweepstakes promotion that ran in local black newspapers, it generated double-digit increases in volume and share of sales among blacks.

Kool-Aid is a heavy favorite among blacks of all ages... The typical black household spends 54 percent more than the average white household on sugar each year... A similar pattern prevails for alcoholic beverages. Sweet-tasting drinks, premixed cocktails, and wine coolers are very popular in the black community.

In short, hundreds of advertisers target the black community because they have discovered that the black community, for whatever reason, buys and uses more of their products. One final example: Today, black people in America represent about 12% of the population and drink 50-70% of the Cognac sold in the U.S. Yet where is the hue and cry against the French?

Follow the bouncing numbers

Watch these numbers grow as reporters and advocates quote one another, in and out of context:

Black consumption of all malt-liquor brands in this country is estimated at 28 percent ...

(*Malt Assault* by J. Douglas Allen-Taylor)

Although African Americans are only 14% of the population, they are reported to consume 30% of malt liquor beers. -

(*Knowledge, Attitudes, and Malt Liquor Beer Drinking Behavior Among African American Men in South Central Los Angeles* by Didra Brown Taylor, p.xvi and p.136)

... while malt liquor accounted for only 3% of total beer sales in 1989, up to 32% of its sales are in African American communities (Alaniz & Wilkes, 1998).

(*Knowledge, Attitudes, and Malt Liquor Beer Drinking Behavior Among African American Men in South Central Los Angeles* by Didra Brown Taylor, p.27)

Although malt liquor is only 3% of total beer sales, up to 32% of its sales are in the African American communities.

(*Newsweek*, 1989)

According to the Institute on Black Chemical Abuse, African Americans consume one-third [33%] of all malt liquor although they constitute only 12% of the population.

(*Knowledge, Attitudes, and Malt Liquor Beer Drinking Behavior Among African American Men in South Central Los Angeles* by Didra Brown Taylor, p.4)

Given that African American men drink a third of all malt liquor beer ...

(*Knowledge, Attitudes, and Malt Liquor Beer Drinking Behavior Among African American Men in South Central Los Angeles* by Didra Brown Taylor, p.158)

Miller Brewing Co. has estimated that blacks buy 66% of the nation's malt liquor.

(*Marketing Malt Liquor in Beer's Clothing* by Bill Kurtz, 2 August 2001)

The italics are mine in the next, taken from the CSPI's *Marketing Booze to Blacks*, which cites an *Ad Age* article from 19 November 1984 as its source:

Of television ads directed to blacks, those for malt liquors are most notable for being directed almost exclusively to blacks, who account for most of their sales. A Heileman Brewing Co. regional marketing executive estimated that blacks purchased about 75 percent of Heileman's leading malt liquor, Colt-45, in his area.

The Marin Institute removed all the qualifying phrases and smoothly morphed the claim into:

One marketing executive of G. Heileman Brewing Company estimated that African-Americans consumed 75 percent of Heileman's leading malt liquor, Colt 45.

(*Fact Sheet*, The Marin Institute)

Note how the quote went from regional to national with the removal of a few words. And then note how this reference to Colt 45 only was broadened to include all Malt Liquors:

Urban blacks, however, make up almost 75% of the malt liquor market.

(Indiana Prevention Resource Center at Indiana University, 1998)

And was repeated here:

According to industry statistics, young, urban, African Americans make up 74% of the malt liquor market.

(*Liquid Crack*, by Rob Nelson)

The school of slanted writing

How can you twist the truth like the pros? Study the work of Michael Jacobson, head of the Center for Science in the Public Interest. He didn't invent slanted writing, or 'spin' as it's popularly known today, but he has elevated it to an art form and inspired a generation of crusaders.

For example, if the actual number is 45%, and you want it to appear larger, say, 'almost half'. If you want it to appear smaller, say 'less than half', or even better, 'not even half'. If the actual number is 75% and you want it to appear larger, you can say 'most' or 'an overwhelming majority'. If the number is 18% and you want it to appear insignificant, you can say, 'less than one in five'. Or, if your Group B is at 18% and you want it to look bigger and Group A is at 45%, try, 'second only to Group A'.

Suppose you can't say that something actually 'is' true. Try saying 'may be' or 'is believed to be' or 'can be seen as' or 'is estimated' or 'critics say' or 'are accused of' or 'few would doubt' instead. Most readers will take the

bait, especially if they want to agree with you anyway. Consider the work of Talise D. Moorer writing in the *Amsterdam News*. The italics are mine:

Rocket scientists aren't needed to decipher why African-Americans are targeted as guinea pigs for testing products. Racism and the hunger for the almighty dollar are apparent motivational factors, critics say, and it's done with no regard for age or health concerns. Manufacturers of alcohol and tobacco products are accused of having no shame in how they fatten their purse, nor respect of how products are marketed.

Moorer is able to call makers of alcohol and tobacco products racist, greedy and shameless with no supporting evidence or fear of legal consequences. The use of 'apparent' (rather than 'proven'), 'critics say' (rather than 'I say') and 'are accused of having no shame' (rather than 'have no shame', or at least 'are accused by X, Y and Z of having no shame'), allow Moorer to swing freely.

In '40 Ounces of Genocide,' author and speaker Al 'Coach' Powell cites the number of Africans enslaved and sold to European slave traders as 150 million. Scholarly estimates generally range from 11 to 15 million, but what's one more zero in a good cause?

I recommend the 1954 classic *How to Lie with Statistics* by Darrell Huff. Huff shows how to use numbers, charts and other visuals to pull the wool over readers' eyes without lying outright. And also how to see through them. 'Even if you can't find a source of demonstrable bias', Huff notes, 'allow yourself some degree of skepticism about the results as long as there is a possibility of bias somewhere. There always is'.

Name that bull

One brewer had an excuse for using animal imagery. The Joseph Schlitz Brewing Company launched Schlitz Malt Liquor in 1963 in 8-ounce cans bearing the stylized image of a bull. But they had been using pictures of a bull since the Repeal of Prohibition in 1933. The actual bull's name was Prince and he lived on the Uihlein family's Heaven Hill Farm at Lake Placid, New York. The bull later used in Schlitz Malt Liquor TV spots, shown bursting through walls, was a black longhorn Brahma from a farm outside of Los Angeles. He was

named Zane, had been neutered in his youth and was said to be as gentle as a lamb.

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