

# “ADVERTISING IS NO BUSINESS FOR A GROWN MAN”

—Howard Gossage

He also said, “Freedom Of The Press must imply the public interest, otherwise why bother to guarantee it?” And, “It seems wrong to me that a newspaper (magazine) should go under while its readers still want it.” In fact, he said a great deal about advertising’s economic stranglehold on all forms of public communication and about the resulting loss regarding the public’s rights and considerations—and he was in advertising.

On July 9, he died.

[“STEALS YOUR WATCH”]

Gossage was really in the business of inventing people. He consistently maintained that his only genius was the ability to recognize and identify the talent of others and then to create an environment in which they could exercise it comfortably—“A rare ability indeed.”

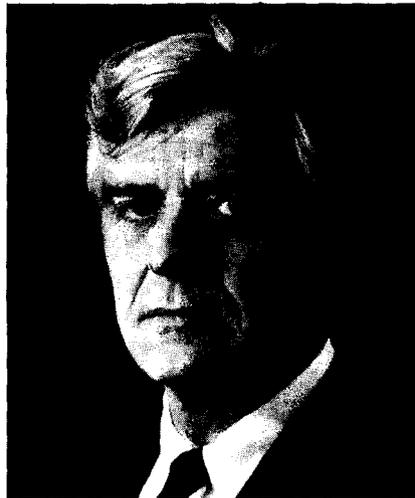
Nicholas Samstag, also recently deceased, once defined a consultant as one who “steals your watch and then tells you what time it is.” It’s been a bad year for good people.

[KICKBACK]

The advertising industry has long been operating under the illusion that its real business is purchasing space in the various mass media. Agencies make their money by buying the space from the publishers at a lower rate than you or I can, and then charging their clients the full tariff, pocketing the difference (20 per cent). The actual ads are produced almost as a sideline, as if an artist charged for the frame and threw in the painting as a bonus.

In the simplest terms, this means that the agency which is able to produce ads at the lowest cost, and can then con its clients into running them (often in the most expensive magazine pages or at prime time on television) makes the most money. Not only is this method inefficient, misleading and insulting, it is also probably illegal.

When he entered the ad game (at



about age 35), Gossage was called the “enfant terrible” of the industry, because he operated his agency on the principle that he should get paid for actually making ads for clients and products he liked—not for calling up some magazine to get a right-hand page up front. He even gave his clients back their 20 per cent, the premise being that everyone should pay the same price for the same space whether he called himself an agency or not, and that the only criterion for acceptability should be the question of taste—the editor’s analysis of the tolerance level of his readers. (The same applies to television.)

[ORIGINAL SIN]

“Newspapers (magazines) ought to belong to their readers.” Gossage felt that once the reader paid less for a publication than it cost to produce, he had traded away his power to keep it alive—much less to voice his opinion of its policies—and that this practice is patently wrong and probably ultimately disastrous to any notions we may still have regarding a free press.

It’s pretty difficult for an editor to keep his readers in mind when he is losing money on every copy he sells. Most magazines that go belly-up do so with their readership on the increase,

simply because there aren’t enough pages of advertising to pay for the difference in production costs.

And this is original sin: a publication loses its independence and its readers surrender their right to complain about that loss the moment those readers do not pay enough themselves to keep it alive. Make no mistake about it, the advertising industry is a most demanding mistress.

Gossage spent his life trying to reverse this trend. He felt that an advertisement appears only by permission of the editor and reader, that it should not insult, offend, or even interrupt the editorial flow; that it should be entertaining, informative, and never misleading. Advertising people called this approach “off-beat.” (They are nothing if not trite—a weird bunch.)

[“GROWN MAN”]

Some time ago RAMPARTS hired Gossage as a consultant and put him on the Board of Directors. One of the first things he did in this capacity was to drag me out of advertising to be RAMPARTS’ Art Director, telling me at the time that I would have to take a pay cut, and that the magazine had about enough money to last four more months.

This issue marks the fourth year since then, and our survival is largely due to Gossage’s efforts: raising investment capital, reorganizing the structure, and generally being a busy-body. (He was graceful when wrong, like the time he told us that the key to RAMPARTS’ success was the retention of its Catholic origins—“Fortunately they ignored me.”)

On the following pages appears part of a series of advertisements Howard wrote and designed for the Irish Whiskey Distillers. To my mind they are still some of the handsomest, best written, and most entertaining pages ever to appear anywhere in any publication.

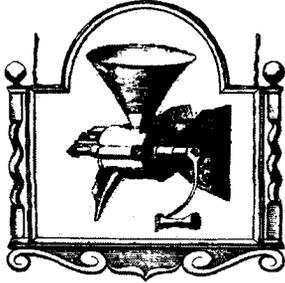
Howard Gossage finally got out of advertising. —DUGALD STERMER



[ NUMBER 1 ]

## HAS IRELAND BEEN LED FALSE BY A BAKED BRAZILIAN BERRY?

We'll not pretend that we [The Whiskey Distillers of Ireland] weren't the pleased ones when Irish Coffee became the darling of the Western World. We still are. There are few things more enjoyable than standing on the quay seeing the great ships off to America with golden cargoes of matchless Irish Whiskey. And yet, have we sold our birthright for a mess of coffee pottage? And money? It may well be. For while Irish Coffee is admittedly a luscious drink the fact remains that the Whiskey is somewhat *obscured* by the coffee, frothy cream, and the sugar cube. ☞ Do you begin to see the shape of this bittersweet quandary? There's much, much to be said. You will fathom how much when you recall that Joyce's *Ulysses* took over three-hundred-thousand words to deal with just twenty-four hours in a tiny corner of Dublin and not one of the very best tiny corners of Dublin at that. ☞ Our subject covers several years and a hundred and twenty degrees of longitude. So it's not likely this one page will do it justice. Still, advertising costs the earth and when we reach the bottom we'll just have to stop wherever we are and continue over to next week. ☞ Back to Irish Coffee and its popularity. The upshot is that thousands upon thousands of Americans have taken the Irish Whiskey without ever having fully known the goodness of it. [Its emphatic, burnished flavor must (fortunately) be tasted to be appreciated]. Otherwise they'd be drinking it all the time; in other ways less darksome and exotic, to be sure, but equally satisfying. There's no need to tell *you* what these other ways of drinking fine whiskey are. It'd be like teaching your grandmother to

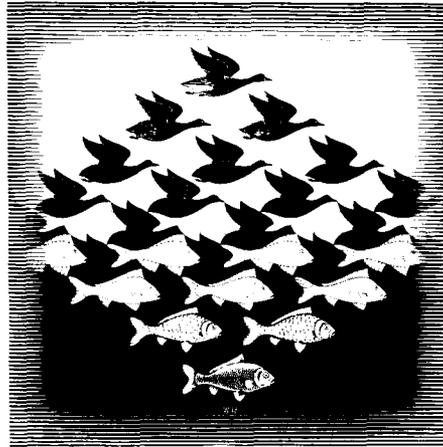


# OH, IT'S A HORRID THING TO BE TORN BETWEEN PRIDE & PROFIT

[ NUMBER II ]

suck eggs. ¶ [What we were saying when we (The Whiskey Distillers of Ireland) ran out of space last week is that it would be presumptuous of us to tell *you* how to drink fine whiskey. It'd be like teaching your grandmother to suck eggs, as they say. Whatever that means.] ¶ Still, there's no denying that, thanks to Irish Coffee, any number of the Americans have taken Irish Whiskey without having *truly* tasted of it and that's a fact. What happens is the fragrant coffee and the sugar cube and the cool, frothy cream on top all but drown out the principal ingredient! At no *monetary* loss to us, mind. It has been a real treat to watch the dear sales curve soaring. ¶ But Profit is not all in all; Pride has its innings. We are an enormously Proudful lot when it comes to the elegant, burnished, *emphatic* flavor of our whiskeys. This is why we should like you to buy them, to drink them, to cherish them for themselves alone. ¶ "Ah! but there are nine grand brands of Irish Whiskey," you say, "Which to choose?" You've stated the problem well, we think, if floridly. Look, why don't you ask the man at the whiskey store for *his* recommendation. He will be overjoyed at your humility. ¶ Now you've grasped our dilemma you'll no doubt be wishing to take your stand for Pride or Profit as the case may be. You'll appreciate that we must remain neutral ourselves, can't afford to do otherwise. But don't let our shilly-shallying prevent *you* from being forthright. ¶ To this end we are issuing badges which we trust you will wear openly and diligently. They are quite attractive and are sure to draw admiring glances from one and all. You may obtain either the Pride Badge or the Profit Badge at no cost to yourself, that is to say, absolutely free for the asking. Address your requests to: Pride, P. O. Box 186, Dublin, Ireland, or to Profit, P. O. Box 207, Dublin, Ireland, as the case may be. Air Mail is fifteen cents; surface mail, is eight cents; post cards, four cents. ¶ The lovely stamp you'll get on the return envelope is alone worth the effort, not to mention the brave badge. Perhaps you'd better write us via the air mail. It's speedier for one thing, more flamboyant, and be-

# ECO-CATASTROPHE!



Wood Engraving by M. C. Escher

*In the following scenario, Dr. Paul Ehrlich predicts what our world will be like in ten years if the present course of environmental destruction is allowed to continue. Dr. Ehrlich is a prominent ecologist, a professor of biology at Stanford University, and author of *The Population Bomb* (Ballantine).*

[I.]

**T**HE END OF THE OCEAN CAME late in the summer of 1979, and it came even more rapidly than the biologists had expected. There had been signs for more than a decade, commencing with the discovery in 1968 that DDT slows down photosynthesis in marine plant life. It was announced in a short paper in the technical journal, *Science*, but to ecologists it smacked of doomsday. They knew that all life in the sea depends on photosynthesis, the chemical process by which green plants bind the sun's energy and make it available to living things. And they knew that DDT and similar chlorinated hydrocarbons had polluted the entire surface of the earth, including the sea.

But that was only the first of many signs. There had been the final gasp of the whaling industry in 1973, and the end of the Peruvian anchovy fishery in 1975. Indeed, a score of other fisheries had disappeared quietly from over-exploitation and various eco-catastrophes by 1977. The term "eco-catastrophe" was coined by a California ecologist in 1969 to describe the most spectacular of man's attacks on the systems which sustain his life. He drew his inspiration from the Santa Barbara offshore oil disaster of that year, and from the news which spread among naturalists that virtually all of the Golden State's seashore bird life was doomed because of chlorinated hydrocarbon interference with its reproduction. Eco-catastrophes in the sea became increasingly common in the early 1970's. Mysterious "blooms" of previously rare microorganisms began to appear in offshore waters. Red tides—killer outbreaks of a minute single-celled plant—returned to the Florida Gulf coast and were sometimes accompanied by tides of other exotic hues.

It was clear by 1975 that the entire ecology of the ocean was changing. A few types of phytoplankton were becoming resistant to chlorinated hydrocarbons and were gaining the upper hand. Changes in the phytoplankton community led

inevitably to changes in the community of zooplankton, the tiny animals which eat the phytoplankton. These changes were passed on up the chains of life in the ocean to the herring, plaice, cod and tuna. As the diversity of life in the ocean diminished, its stability also decreased.

Other changes had taken place by 1975. Most ocean fishes that returned to fresh water to breed, like the salmon, had become extinct, their breeding streams so dammed up and polluted that their powerful homing instinct only resulted in suicide. Many fishes and shellfishes that bred in restricted areas along the coasts followed them as onshore pollution escalated.

By 1977 the annual yield of fish from the sea was down to 30 million metric tons, less than one-half the per capita catch of a decade earlier. This helped malnutrition to escalate sharply in a world where an estimated 50 million people per year were already dying of starvation. The United Nations attempted to get all chlorinated hydrocarbon insecticides banned on a worldwide basis, but the move was defeated by the United States. This opposition was generated primarily by the American petrochemical industry, operating hand in glove with its subsidiary, the United States Department of Agriculture. Together they persuaded the government to oppose the U.N. move—which was not difficult since most Americans believed that Russia and China were more in need of fish products than was the United States. The United Nations also attempted to get fishing nations to adopt strict and enforced catch limits to preserve dwindling stocks. This move was blocked by Russia, who, with the most modern electronic equipment, was in the best position to glean what was left in the sea. It was, curiously, on the very day in 1977 when the Soviet Union announced its refusal that another ominous article appeared in *Science*. It announced that incident solar radiation had been so reduced by worldwide air pollution that serious effects on the world's vegetation could be expected.

[II.]

**A**PPARENTLY IT WAS A COMBINATION of ecosystem destabilization, sunlight reduction, and a rapid escalation in chlorinated hydrocarbon pollution from massive Thanodrin applications which triggered the ultimate

by Dr. Paul Ehrlich