

Our Man Hoppe

Joe Sikspak
Labels the Pols

Arthur Hoppe

DEAR PRESIDENT: I, Joe Sikspak, American, take pen in hand to grind an axe or two. You got to do something about all this truth in advertising stuff.

The way I know, I was down to Paddy's Place last night. "Give me a Seven-high, Paddy," says I, "and has it got the contents on the label?"

"Not yet, Joe," says he, "and I'm against it. It's bad enough they now got to tell me what's in my can of pork and beans. Some of those labels will turn your stomach."

"Don't you want to know what you're swallowing, Paddy?" says I.

"That I don't," he says. "And what's worse is this truth in advertising."

"You're against truth?" says I, surprised.

"That I am," says he. "It used to be a guy in a white coat on tee-vee would tell me to take one of these pills and overnight my post-nasal drip would dry up. So I would and it would. Now he tells me it won't. So I wake up still dripping. It's faith healing, Joe. And you know what they're going to label next?"

"What's that?" says I.

"Politicians," says Paddy.

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WHY WOULD they want to do that, Paddy?" says I.

"If they're going to label packages of remedies and nostrums, Joe," says he, "politicians should come first."

"It sounds like a good idea," says I.

"There's your candidate on tee-vee, Joe," says he. "And on his chest is a big label that says, 'Contents: water, 70.2 per cent; sugar, 3.2 per cent; protein, 9.4 per cent; and fat, 17.2 per cent (excluding head).'"

"What's wrong with that?" says I.

"Now he can't wear makeup to hide the bags under his eyes or his Five O'Clock Shadow," says Paddy. "The law says you can't artificially improve the looks of the product."

"I'm for that," says I.

"Then this baggy-eyed stubble-chinned candidate goes into the pitch for his remedies," says Paddy. "'Rush down to your neighborhood precinct,' he says, 'and pick me out. I will raise your taxes overnight.'"

"Raise my taxes?" says I.

"Anything else would be false and misleading advertising," says Paddy. "'Buy me,' he says under the same doctrine, 'and crime will go up, inflation will inflate and the poor will get poorer, just like always.'"

"Can't he say he's got a secret cure?" says I.

"No secret ingredients," says Paddy.

"No promises of cures. All he can say is he wants the office because it's a cushy job with great retirement benefits."

"Give me another Seven-high," says I.

"Then he takes a bow," says Paddy, "and on his forehead you see the label: 'Warning: The contents may be hazardous to your sanity.'"

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SO YOU SEE, President, Paddy's right. A thing like this will destroy democracy as we have come to know and like it. Who's going to bother to vote?

Like you remember back in '68 when you told us you contained a secret cure to the end the war? Well, where would you be today if you'd told us it was a Five-Year Plan?

Truly Yours,
Joe Sikspak, American