OUR MASTER'S VOICE

ADVERTISING

BY JAMES RORTY

THE JOHN DAY COMPANY

New York

PRINTED IN THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA
FOR THE JOHN DAY COMPANY, INC.
BY H. WOLFF, NEW YORK

CHAPTER 4

PRIMROSE CHEESE:

An Advertising Accouchement

1. Prelude

FROM his window close to the top of one of the minor skyscrapers of the Grand Central district, Eddie Butts, for two months now, has been watching the spectral towers of Radio City climb into the western sky.

Eddie Butts sighs. It is after hours, and Eddie is tired. The sigh flies out the window, wreathes itself jocosely around the topmost tower, and returns as an ironic, incomprehensible whisper in Eddie's ear.

Eddie Butts shakes his head like a blind horse troubled by flies. He must get down to business. He must get out his work-sheet for the next day. Eddie turns to the dictaphone.

"Follow Schmalz on XYZ schedule stop Have Chapin phone Universal on LHJ extension stop Call up Hank Prentice stop Ask him how the hell he is stop Follow Chris on revises BDB layouts stop Call Gene at the Club [Gene is getting drunk with a client tonight strictly in line of duty, and it is standard practice to wake him up at noon of the next day] Revise plan for Primrose Cheese stop Lather Lulu a little stop [Lulu is the radio prima donna who got miffed at the last Cheery Oats broadcast] Organize Vita-pep research stop Follow Mac on Spermentine publicity stop Tell him to damn well watch his step stop Follow stop Follow stop—err Stop."

A telephone is ringing persistently at the other end of the

floor. Probably nothing important—some girl friend calling one of the boys in the checking room. But you can never tell. Eddie's sense of duty is strong. He decides not to take a chance.

"Hello . . . Hello . . . Who? Oh, hello, Bob. This is Eddie. What's the matter? Are you in trouble? . . . Oh, so I'm in trouble am I? . . . Go on, you're drunk . . . What's that? Sure, that's right. We're all ready to shoot. Old Himmelschlussel himself will be on here from Racine, day after tomorrow, and we give him the works, see? What? Oh, swell. Swell slant. Swell art. Thought I told you about it. Cheese and beer, cheese and cigarettes. Cheese for dessert. The continental idea, you know. Put cheese on the map. Himmelschlussel? No, I've never met him. What? Who says so? Who's Oscar? Yes? Well, is he sure about that? What? Say, how soon can you get over here? Sure, bring Oscar. Step on it. I'll wait for you."

Eddie Butts' shoulders sag slightly as he stumbles along the half-lit corridor back to his office. This might be just a space salesman's wise crack. On the other hand, it might be a real one—another fire alarm. In which case—

Eddie went to the bookcase and took down the three elaborately bound volumes that represented the agency's submission on the Primrose Cheese account.

Vol. I. Section 1. Market analysis, plan, and consumer. copy. (the layouts are already tacked up on the wall in the conference room) Section 2. Report of the domestic science Bureau. Section 3. Merchandizing plan, trade copy, dealer helps.

Vol. II. Report of the Research department.

Volume III. Media analysis and estimates. (This is an oversize volume composed of charts and hand-lettered captions)

For the layman, a word of explanation is perhaps required at this point. The submission as listed above involves an investment by the agency of approximately $10,000. It is a

gambling investment, even though in this instance the client has signed a contract appointing the XYZ company as his advertising agent, and certain frail safeguards to the agent are embodied in this contract. It is a gambling investment because all this work has been done subject to the client's approval, and most of it be paid for only when and if the client o.k's the campaign and the advertising begins to appear.

In some cases such presentations are sheerly speculative, since they are made *before* the agent is appointed, as a means of selling the client and securing the account. Such speculative selling by the agency is frowned upon by the organized profession and is prohibited in the NRA agency code of fair competition. There are, of course, many ways of evading this prohibition, and since the agency field is highly competitive, such evasions will probably continue, much as in the past.

It may be asked: why this extraordinary and costly elaborateness of selling? The explanation resides chiefly in the commission method of compensation. To the client that 15% commission looks like a lot of money—*is* a lot of money when applied to a total annual expenditure by the client of, say, $12,000,000 for advertising a single brand of cigarette.

The economic logic of the situation induces two opposing points of view. From the agency's point of view, the client is the squirming, recalcitrant fly in the otherwise pure ointment of that 15% commission. All clients are unreasonable in theory and frequently so in fact. In justice to the agency it should be said that the majority of reputable agencies strive earnestly to earn their commissions. They work hard and even in the best of all possible worlds they make big money only by a lucky break, to be discounted by a succession of bad breaks next year. But the client either doesn't know this or doesn't care. On the principle of caveat emptor, the client has to be shown.

To put it crudely, the agent, from the advertiser's point of view, is a bunk-shooter, a hi-jacker, with whom he is

obliged to deal merely because he has to pay that 15% commission anyway. In its relations to clients, the agency may be neither a bunk-shooter nor a hi-jacker, but it is guilty as charged until it proves itself innocent. When possible the client forces the agency to split the commission; or the advertiser may finance his own "house agency." There are arguments against both these devices. When they seem plausible, recourse is had to other forms of chiseling. The agency is perhaps asked to pay the salary of the client's advertising or sales manager. In any event the client insists on "service" and lots of it. He demands free research and merchandizing service, for which the agency would like to charge, and sometimes does charge an additional fee. He insists on dealing with the principals of the agency, whether his account is large or small, and irrespective of the competence of the staff workers assigned to the account. The advertising manager expects the agency's art department to design his Christmas cards and forget to bill him. The advertisers' statistician expects the agency's copy department to find a publisher for the verse of the Wunkerkind spawned by his sister-in-law. When the advertiser's advertising manager, or sales manager, or vice president of the Company, their wives, cousins, etc., come to New York, they are duly entertained in more or less Babylonian fashion, depending upon their estimated importance, and their previously ascertained habits and tastes. The bill for this entertainment is duly applied to the agency's overhead on that particular account.

But the necessitated elements of conspicuous waste are most apparent in the Presentation to the Client which our friend Eddie Butts, in the nocturnal solitude of his skyscraper eyrie, is now somewhat morosely examining.

The service embodied in that presentation must look as if it were worth at least twice what the client is asked to pay for it, as determined by 15% of the net recommended expenditure for publication, radio, car-card, poster, direct, and

other miscellaneous advertising. In this respect it is like the presentation of any advertised product to the consumer. The jar of cold cream worth 8 cents must look as if it were worth the $2.00 that is charged for it. The cheap car must look like an expensive car. The $1.98 dress must look like a million dollars. All this is what is known as "psychological" selling, and the principle operates in unbroken continuity through the whole fabric of the advertising business.

Eddie Butts conducts his examination of the agency's highly styled and psychologized product from back to front. The client, when the presentation is made to him, will proceed similarly, since the nub of the argument lies in the recommended net expenditure, a figure which appears inconspicuously at the end of Volume III.

In this case, the figure is only moderate—about $500,000—and as Eddie Butts, reading from right to left, weaves through the maze of charts, tables, graphs, copy and merchandizing these, etc., etc., he reflects ruefully that this presentation not only looks like a million dollars, but as a matter of fact, it has already cost the agency a good deal more than it should have cost.

There has been a lot of grief on this account. In the beginning it dropped into the house more or less out of the blue. Old Hanson came back from a trip through the Middle West with the contract in his pocket. Everybody was considerably surprised, since Hanson's function in the agency had come to be regarded as almost wholly ornamental. A rather handsome, gray-haired, middle-aged person, his appearance and manner suggested extreme probity, conservatism, and a certain wise and sophisticated benignity. Copy writers, art directors and other "creative" workers occasionally testified to each other that Hanson was stupid, and produced more or less convincing evidence to this effect. But the heads of the agency, being a shade more sophisticated than either Hanson or his critics, were aware that certain varieties

of handsomely packaged stupidity are not without their uses in the advertising business. So that Hanson's position was secure.

But he certainly had pulled a boner on this account. Eddie recalled the preliminary conference called to consider the problem of Primrose Cheese and to devise appropriate solutions.

The stenographer's record listed as among those present Hanson, Butts, (Eddie was the group director having supervisory responsibility for the account) McNear, the art director and Appleton, his young assistant; Blashfield, the brilliant copy-art-plan man, the outstanding advertising genius of the Kidd, Kirby & Dougherty Agency; Shean, the copy man, whose strictly disinterested facility made him a useful understudy for Blashfield and others; Mrs. Betts, the head of the Domestic Science Bureau, a rather grandiose, gray-haired personality, full of sex antagonism and quite without a sense of humor; Harmsworth and Billings, the last-named being merely a couple of obscure copy hacks.

The day previous to the conference, all these people had received, along with notice of their mobilization, a sample of Primrose Cheese, with strict injunction to eat it that evening. It was a large sample, and Eddie recalled that some of the conferees looked a little the worse for wear that morning.

In opening the meeting, Eddie made the usual preliminary pep talk, duly deposited the problem on the long mahogany table, and called for solutions.

Mr. Hanson: Since I am more or less responsible for bringing this account into the house, perhaps I should tell you some of the circumstances. Mr. Outerbridge, the advertising manager of the Primrose Cheese Company, is a college classmate of mine, and it is through him that the account was secured. The Primrose Cheese Company is one of the four largest manufacturers of cheese in America. Yet hitherto it has never advertised its products, except in the grocery trade

press. The reputation of Primrose Cheese with the trade is unexcelled. It is sold from Coast to Coast and from Maine to Florida. Recently sales have been declining. The competition of advertised packaged brands has been steadily eating into their business. They've got to advertise. Mr. Outerbridge is convinced of this. His principal, Mr.—Mr. Himmelschlussel, President of the Primrose Cheese Company, whom I did not have the privilege of meeting, is I understand still reluctant. But he realizes that something has to be done, and he has consented to the appointment of this agency subject to his approval of our recommendations. We've got a tough selling job on all fronts, gentlemen. We've got the whole job to do: packaging, merchandizing, branding, pricing, merchandizing the whole works. It's an old conservative firm and their credit is A1. Mrs. Betts is experimenting with Primrose Cheese and the Research department has already started its work. What we want today, I take it, is some first class advertising ideas. I have an idea myself, but I shan't spring it until I've heard from some of the rest of you.

Mr. Shean: What kind of cheese is it?

Mr. Hanson: Just good, one hundred per cent American cheese. You ought to know. You ate some of it, didn't you?

Mr. Shean: Yeah, I did. Will you excuse me a moment. I'll be right back.

(Silence)

Mr. Butts: Charley, why don't you start the ball rolling yourself. You said you had an idea.

Mr. Hanson: Very well. I have here, gentlemen, an option signed by the originator of Mickey and Minnie Mouse. By the terms of this option, it is understood that in consideration of a payment of one thousand dollars, which I took the liberty of making on my own responsibility, both Mickey and Minnie Mouse will positively refrain from writing testimonials for any other cheese for the next three months. My recommendation, gentlemen, is that our campaign be based

on the testimonials of Mickey and Minnie Mouse. When anybody says cheese, what's the first thing you think of? Mice. Who's the world's most famous mouse? Mickey Mouse. Gentlemen, it's never been done before, and it's a natural. What do you think?

(Silence)

Mrs. Betts: What do we need Mickey for? It's Minnie that runs the kitchen, isn't it? Excuse me for a moment, please. I'll be right back.

(Silence)

Mr. Billings: (Who has recently escaped from the copy desk of a tabloid) Ha!

Mr. Butts: Billings, will you stop that obscene cackle?

The stenographer's record became defective at this point. Eddie's memory supplied the details. Harmsworth, Princeton, 1928, who had recently graduated from the apprentice course of the agency, had also elected that moment to be brought to bed with a big idea of some sort. Harmsworth was typical of the class of Unhappy Rich Boys for whom advertising agencies have been required increasingly to serve as dumping grounds. He was the nephew of the chairman of the board of Planetary Founders Corporation. It was rumored that on attaining his majority, he had inherited three million dollars from his mother. He didn't have to work. He played polo rather well, but not well enough to rate any great distinction in his set. And being a serious minded youth with no vices and no talents, it was necessary for him to have some occupation, some rôle in life, to which he could refer in his conversations with Junior League debutantes. Advertising, a romantic, more or less literary profession, filled the bill admirably.

Harmsworth got in at nine o'clock every morning and frequently stayed until six. With the other apprentices, he did his bit on research, which meant days of hot and heavy footwork in the wilds of Queens and the Oranges, ringing door-

bells, and asking impertinent questions of stolidly uncooperative housewives.

This was Harmsworth's first agency conference and his first Big Idea. Its delivery was complicated by the fact that in moments of great excitement, Harmsworth stuttered painfully.

Mr. Harmsworth: C-c-can't we t-t-tie this c-campaign up to the n-n-to the n-n-news? How about hooking it up with relativity? There's so much f-f- so much food value in ch-ch-cheese. Relatively, you know. More f-f food value than meat. More than eggs. Maybe we could g-g-g-g-maybe we could get Einstein!

Mr. Billings (who is frantically waving two fingers): Excuse me, please.

Mr. Butts: All right, Billings.

Mr. Harmsworth: Of course, it may be a b-b- a bum hunch. I just thought—

(Silence)

By this time the conference was pretty well mired. Something had to be done, and as usual, Blashfield did it. Blashfield's salary was thirty thousand dollars a year, plus his participation as a stockholder in the agency's profits. Blashfield didn't think that was enough. Every day, in every possible way, he proved it wasn't enough. Cruelly, sadistically, he exposed the incompetence, the muddleheadedness of his associates. He had a string of copy writers and layout men working under him, all of whom hated him cordially. Their work was rarely used, except as a foil to exhibit the superior brilliance of the agency's star copy-art-plan performer. At the last moment, in a day or two days, he would knock out the copy, rough layouts, plan and marketing strategy for a whole campaign. Artists, printers, engravers, the mechanical production staff of the agency, would be called upon to work nights and Sundays to complete the job. Blashfield's overtime bills were notorious.

Then, with the plan memorandum snatched from the stenographer and flanked by two or three subordinates carrying unwieldy art and other exhibits, he would lope out of his office, pile into a taxi, and catch the train for Baltimore just as it was moving out of the station. The next morning he would lope back into the office, like a half-back completing an end run, and deposit the okayed plan, copy, layout and appropriation on Eddie Butts' desk.

Blashfield had done it again: *his* plan, *his* copy, *his* layouts, *his* sale. Alone in Baltimore he had dazzled the client with the coruscations of his wit, the machine gun rattle of his logic, the facile improvisations of genius answering every objection with pungent phrase or graphic line. O.K. Now Eddie, it's up to you to follow it.

From sad experience, Eddie had learned what to do on such occasions. The first thing to do was to take the train to Baltimore himself and pick up the pieces. Eddie knew what he would find. He would find a group of business men experiencing a perfectly dreadful morning after hangover, and indulging in the usual orgy of remorse and mutual recrimination.

Blashfield had been, shone and conquered. Blashfield was a brilliant fellow—an advertising genius. Sure, and they hoped to God they never saw him again. Now about this damned contract they had signed. . . .

Eddie was no genius. As an advertising man he was only mediocre. But as a fixer he was an expert. Even so, he would be lucky if, after two weeks of hard work, he emerged with a modified appropriation and a revised campaign, in which some remnants of Blashfield's initial performance might or might not be discernible. The campaign as carried out might be better or worse than Blashfield's original. Usually it was worse, for Blashfield's competence was genuine enough. But for better or worse it was duly billed and commissioned, which was the sort of thing the agency's treasurer was forever grousing about. So that Eddie Butts' salary was thirty-five

thousand dollars a year, a fact that forever festered like a thorn in the Achilles' heel of the agency genius.

Because of the repetition of such experience, the heads of the agency had increasingly restricted Blashfield's pyrotechnics to the home grounds, where he could be carefully watched and protected against himself. No let-up of the Blashfield drive had resulted, but his hobbled ego required more and more bloody human sacrifices. His performance at the Primrose Cheese conference had been sanguinary in the extreme.

Beginning suavely, he had made some incisive remarks about the standards of agency practice, the nature and purpose of agency conferences. Abruptly he swung into a disquisition on the natural history and personal habits of mice; mice that live in old houses but are never housebroken; old mice, young mice; the love life of the mouse; mother mice and their pink and squirming progeny; mice and elephants, and the tactlessness of both as dinner guests; mice that creep out from under sinks and leer up at horrified housewives; (at this point Mrs. Betts lifted her skirts and barely suppressed a shriek.) Mice and cheese. The kind of cheese mice eat, and the obscene sounds they make while eating; the dumbness of mice and the dumbness of men.

By this time old Hanson was purple with rage. But before he could interrupt Blashfield, whom the stenographer had given up trying to follow, was well launched upon a burlesque of relativity, which rapidly took form as a convention of mouse domestic science experts, presided over by Minnie Mouse, and discussing the relative dietetic merits of meat, cheese, caviar, etc. Even Harmsworth laughed, partly to cover his confusion.

Then abruptly the wizard's mood changed. Come on fellows. Let's be serious. What's the best way to sell cheese? Primrose Cheese?

With rapid logic he outlined the campaign that could, should and must be conducted. The consumption of cheese in

America was negligible compared to its consumption in France, England, Germany, Switzerland—throughout the world. The dietetic habits of America must be transformed. An institutional campaign, then? No, a selling campaign, hard-boiled selling copy that would boost the sales of Primrose Cheese from week to week and from month to month. But the copy would be educational too. It would show the things that Americans do eat and drink, and dovetail cheese into the menu; Primrose Cheese for the cocktail party. Cheese for dessert—the continental idea. That's what all the best people are doing and the rest of America must be shamed into imitating the Best People. Style. Style in the copy. Style in the art. Jean Mazarin for the art—he'll be in New York in two weeks and he'll love it.

Now, as to the trademark that some of you have been worrying about. What is it? A primrose, crossed with a key. It looks a little like a swastika, and a little like a Jewish candlestick. But look at it now.

Blashfield executed a few swift strokes on his sketching pad.

There's your solution. It's still a little like a swastika, and all the patriotic Germans will notice it. It's also a little like a Jewish candlestick, and all the Jews will notice that. But a second look will convince anybody that it's neither one nor the other —and that's just fine for everybody.

As usual, Blashfield had swept all before him. The conference broke up after an assignment of preliminary tasks, all to be executed under his supervision. The other Big Ideas, of course, were never removed from the appropriate receptacle into which Blashfield, with surgical dispatch, had consigned them.

Harmsworth had played polo all the next week, and when he returned was assigned to a bank account. Hanson had groused for a while. His first idea in twenty years. And on investigation it proved not to be his idea after all. It was his

secretary's idea, and for several weeks thereafter the gossip of the women's room was enlivened by the lady's complaints about how hard it was for a girl to get ahead in a big agency.

The campaign had consumed the time of eight or ten people for three months. In the end, Blashfield had scrapped their efforts and done the whole job himself in a last minute orgy of nerve-racking and expensive nightwork by all and sundry.

Eddie Butts winced as he read a memorandum from the Treasurer, protesting against so huge a bill for preliminary work on what was after all, not a major account.

Well, there it was. And now if Bob Niemyer's steer was right, there would be hell to pay tomorrow.

Eddie sighed, pushed his dictaphone into the corner, and helped himself to a shot of the house liquor.

2. The Fire Alarm

It was close to midnight, and Eddie Butts was in the middle of his third pipe before Bob Niemyer, the space salesman, and his German friend, stumbled through the darkened outer office and banged on his door.

They were not drunk; merely very formal and very, very earnest.

"Eddie, meet my friend Oscar Schleiermacher . . . Thanks, I guess I can stand another . . . Eddie, I'm afraid this is serious. Oscar knows what he's talking about, and he tells me that the big shot of the Primrose Cheese Company, Hakenschmidt—

"Himmelschlussel, August B. Himmelschussel," prompted Oscar.

"All right, Himmelschlussel. Well, as I was saying, I was telling Oscar about the swell presentation you'd worked up for Primrose Cheese—naturally he wants a piece of it for his

friends on the Vortschrift—and when I got to the big idea, cheese and beer, cheese and cigarettes, cheese for the cocktail party, why I'm telling you Oscar almost passed out. Didn't you, Oscar?"

Oscar made an eloquent gesture, hitched his chair forward, and drained a large glass of Scotch at a swallow.

"You see, Eddie, this bird Himmelschlussel runs his own business. And how! He's got the o.k. on everything, see? What he says goes. And what he's going to say when he sees this campaign of yours won't even be funny."

Mr. Schleiermacher nodded solemnly.

"Er ist ein Herrenhuter. Sein Frau auch."

"There," said Bob. "What did I tell you? He's a Herrenhuter. What's a Herrenhuter? That's what you're going to find out when old Himmelschlussel gets an eyeful of that French night club art moderne Blashfield has cooked up for him. A Herrenhuter is a Fundamentalist, only worse. Let's be serious, Eddie. This Himmelschlussel is religious as all hell. He's a prohibitionist. Some of his coin goes to the Anti-Saloon League. What's more, Mrs. Himmelschlussel is one of the big shots in the Anti-Cigarette League. Nobody that works for Primrose Cheese can drink, smoke or forget to say his prayers. Isn't that right, Oscar?"

"Ach, ja," said Oscar. "Er ist ein Herrenhuter. Sein Frau auch."

"His wife too," said Mr. Niemyer. "So when Oscar gives me the lowdown, I says to him: 'Eddie Butts has got to know about this. Eddie Butts is a friend of mine. Eddie and I are just like this'. Y' get me, Eddie? What makes it worse, this Himmelschlussel has a bad case of shell shock on advertising anyway. Ain't that right, Oscar?

"Schrecklich," confirmed Oscar with an expansive gesture.

"The story goes like this," continued Mr. Niemyer. "The local team of the League wins the pennant, see? And Himmelschlussel, he's a fan. Sure, baseball, that's his only vice. It

seems he has a nephew playing shortstop on the team. That was eight years ago. Well, Old Himmelschlussel, he's the proud uncle, and he's got to do something about it, see? So what does he do? A big dinner for the team, see? Hell with expense. Sauerbraten, Kartofelkloss, leberknudel, hasenpfeffer, the whole works. No beer, no hard liquor. No cigarettes. Cheese. Boy, was there cheese! Big camembert in the middle of the table. Four feet high, weighs eighty pounds. Mottoes. Clock works. Imitation dugout. Birdie pops out of dugout. Cuckoo, cuckoo, cuckoo—counts the score, see? Fine. Swell. Cost a lot of money. Only thing is, you know camembert. Eighty pounds of camembert. Ripe. Not so good. And those bush leaguers thirsty as camels, and no beer. So they get tough. Bean the birdie with pop bottles. Raise hell, see? That's bad enough, but next day the papers get funny. Himmelschlussel don't advertise, see? They keep it up for days. Himmelschlussel sore. Feelings hurt. You tell him, Oscar. Were his feelings hurt?

"Vom herz, Herr Butts. Vom herz. Ach, schrecklich." Oscar held his head and rocked in remembered sympathy.

"So Himmelschlussel goes Herrenhuter again, worse than ever. Ten thousand simoleons that year to the Anti-Saloon League. And no more advertising stunts. That contract of yours—how his sales manager got that out of the old man I just can't imagine, unless they're in trouble . . . What's that, Eddie. Don't want to rub it in. Just trying to do you a favor, see? You and me are pals. As I says to Oscar, I says—what d'you say, Eddie?"

"I said, Jesus H. Christ!"

Eddie Butts wasn't listening. The fire alarm had rung. He was busy hunting numbers in the office telephone directory. Blashfield first. Damn Blashfield. Damn Hanson. Why hadn't they found out about this big shot?

"Thanks, Bob," said Eddie, as he led his visitors to the elevator. "I'll let you know what happens. We got a day and

a half. Maybe we can pull out. Good-night. Good-night, Mr. Schleiermacher, and thanks for the steer."

3. Rescue Party

After hours. The genius of advertising burns brightest after hours. When the noise of traffic is stilled, when the stream of office time-servers has flowed north into the Bronx, east and west under and over the rivers to be blotted up by the vast and formless spaces of Long Island and Jersey, light still lingers in the sky-scrapers of the mid-town district.

Light and vision. Not money alone could buy the devotion of these weary-eyed night workers. It is something else, something strange, incredible, miraculous—perhaps a little mad. Is it for beauty that they burn themselves? For truth? For some great cause? No, it is none of these. It is like a perverse and blinding discharge of human electricity, like athletes battling on the gridiron, or soldiers going over the top.

In the Sargasso pool of quiet, high above the night-stricken city, what toils, what genuine heart-breaks, what farcical triumphs are consummated!

From the moment that Eddie Butts turned in the fire alarm, the wheels of the Kidd, Kirby & Dougherty agency never stopped turning. Blashfield swooped in from Westchester, worked all night, and when his secretary came in the next morning, turned over a basketful of new copy for typing. Eddie Butts' dictaphone whirred continuously. Tense voices barked into telephones. Printers, appalled by impossible demands, wailed in anguish, achieved the impossible, and viciously pyramided the overtime charges. Layout men never left their drawing boards. Typists worked in relays. What had taken three months to do must be done again, but this time in thirty-six hours.

It was done. Miraculously, it was done. Blashfield again. Blashfield the magnificent. Never was the man so dangerous

as when, with his back against the wall, he was challenged by the impossible. A new Big Idea had been conceived and was well on the way to birth before he reached the office. Cheese and pie. New England stuff. Native American. Simple, homey. The New England grandma. The Southern mammy. To hell with Mazarin. Tell him, sorry, pay his bill or part of it, and charge it up to profit and loss. Forsythe is our man. Forsythe, the best buck-eye artist in America. He's busy? What of it? I said, get him.

Forsythe performed. Blashfield performed. Clerks, messengers, typists—everybody performed.

By noon of the scheduled day for the presentation the miracle was accomplished. Or almost. Typewriters still rattled and savage-lipped production clerks still yapped into the telephone. One o'clock. No lunch for anybody. Two o'clock, and the final pages of the revised plan were bound into the portfolio. Three o'clock, and Himmelschlussel was expected. Three-fifteen, and no Himmelschlussel. Had something gone wrong?

Only Colonel Kidd himself—Calvin Kidd, author, editor and advertising man—only Colonel Kidd remained calm. Back of his desk a framed motto proclaimed the solid premise on which his professional imperturbability was based: "There is somebody wiser than anybody. That somebody is everybody." It doesn't make sense, does it? Sure, that's just the point. Calvin Kidd was a mystic. He remained calm. But his associates, some of whom may have felt that their jobs were at stake, were less philosophic. At the telephone switchboard, the battery of skilled operators grew querulous striving to release the tide of out-going calls. Himmelschlussel. Himmelschlussel! Where in hell is Himmelschlussel?

4. The Delivery

It wasn't Dorothy's fault. Afterwards, since it didn't mat-

ter anyway—nothing mattered—everybody acknowledged that you couldn't fairly pin it on Dorothy.

Dorothy was the reception clerk, stationed in the lobby of the offices of Kidd, Kirby & Dougherty, with a pad of forms before her and a telephone receiver clasped over her lovely blonde hair. Dorothy knew her rôle, which was to make quick and accurate judgments and translate them into action.

So that when the little old man with the umbrella stepped out of the elevator, she knew instantly what to do. The Primrose Cheese account was in a jam. A messenger was expected from the printer, bringing revised proofs. She had been warned to rush him through without delay to Mac in the mechanical production department. Dorothy spotted him instantly and beckoned him to the desk. The little old man advanced somewhat diffidently.

"I am Mr. Himmelschlussel. I—

"From Hazenfuss, yes. You're just in time. Go right through the side door and ask for Mac."

Hazenfuss Brothers was the printing shop which at the stern behest of Blashfield had performed the current typographical miracle.

The little old man hesitated, but Dorothy, gracious but imperative, motioned him to the side door.

He vanished into a welter of comptometers, typewriters and proof presses. Dorothy had just an instant to reflect that she hadn't seen this particular messenger before. Also, wasn't it Hazenfuss that dolled up their messengers in naval uniforms, so that they all looked like musical comedy Commodores? This must be a new one. Come to think of it, he did wear a kind of uniform, too—certainly was a funny old geezer. Maybe Hazenfuss had thought up a new advertising dodge.

Meanwhile, Mr. Himmelschlussel was still trying to find Mac. Successively, he was shunted to the shipping room, to the store room clerk, to the purchasing clerk. Early in the ordeal, Mr. Himmelschlussel began to lose things. First he lost

his umbrella. Then he lost his hat. Coincidentally with this second disaster, he completely lost his English.

Alarmed by the clamor of what he took to be a minor riot in the mechanical production department, Pfeiffer, the office manager, emerged from his cubicle to see an elderly German-American gesticulating wildly in the middle of a circle of bewildered clerks. At intervals, his gray pompadour bristling, he would make a determined break for one of the innumerable doors, only to be hauled back by an expostulating clerk.

Fortunately, Pfeiffer spoke German, for by this time Mr. Himmelschlussel could speak nothing else. . . .

When the perspiring Pfeiffer finally persuaded the long awaited client to permit himself to be led into the presence of Colonel Kidd himself, a strange quiet had descended upon the agency. Mr. Himmelschlussel himself was quiet. He would speak neither English nor German. In response to Colonel Kidd's urbanities he merely grunted. Blashfield's irresistible wisecracks died unborn upon the desolate air.

Silently, the procession wended to the conference room. In silence, Mr. Himmelschlussel listened to the reading of the plan. Upon the lavish exhibit of layouts, charts, proofs, etc., he turned a cold Prussian eye. Silence.

At last, Mr. Himmelschlussel spoke.

"Gentlemen, I haf joost come from de bank. Business is bad. We haf an offer from de Universal Foods Corporation to buy Primrose Cheese. It is a good offer. It is a very good offer. We have accepted that offer.

"Dese"—he gestured indifferently at the decorated walls of the conference room—"dese iss very pooty pictures. De Universal Foods people, maybe dey like to look at dem. I am sorry. I got to go now. My wife and I, we have friends in Brooklyn. Good day, gentlemen."

In the far corner of the lobby an elderly woman was waiting. She had been waiting a long time. Dorothy thought she was perhaps a cleaning woman, or the mother of one of the

shipping room boys. She said nothing and politely resisted Dorothy's gracious solicitudes. She had the corner to herself now, and Dorothy noticed that the space salesmen had put out their cigarettes.

Eventually Mr. Himmelschlussel emerged, escorted by Colonel Kidd. She put her hand under his arm. They got into the elevator. They went to Brooklyn . . .

Again that evening Eddie Butts worked late. He was tired, very tired. He had missed lunch entirely and it was after seven. Eddie was hungry. There, on the corner of the desk, was a left-over sample. Cheese. Primrose Cheese.

Holding the package at arm's length, Eddie went to the open window. It took a long time falling. You couldn't hear it strike, but you could just barely see the yellow splotch it made on the pavement.

Eddie lingered at the window. Thirty-two stories. Every now and then an advertising man jumps out of one of those high windows in the Grand Central district. Usually, it is the follow-up man, the old reliable. Usually, it is Eddie Butts.