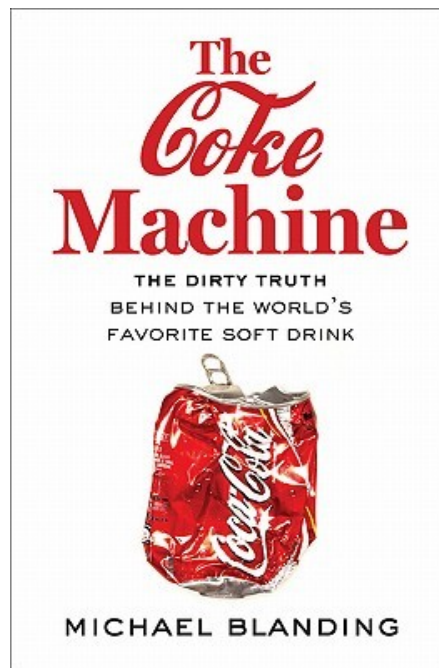




The Coke Machine

Michael Blanding

Download now

Read Online ➔

The Coke Machine

Michael Blanding

The Coke Machine Michael Blanding

Perhaps it's not too much of a surprise to find the Coca-Cola Company on the stand for these injustices. In this era of cynicism, it's standard practice to believe corporations from Halliburton to ExxonMobil capable of every form of evil, trained by the profit drive of capitalism to turn a blind eye to the worst consequences of their actions. The Coca-Cola Company, however, represents a special case-at once the quintessential example of a giant American multinational corporation through which it's possible to explore the excesses of capitalism as a whole and a beloved pop culture symbol that has spent billions of dollars to present an image of wholesomeness and harmony cherished by millions of people around the world. Finding the Coca-Cola Company accused of murder is like finding out Santa Claus is accused of being a pedophile.

So how is it that a company that, in its own words, "exists to refresh and benefit everyone it touches" now stands accused of drought, disease, exploitation, and murder? To truly understand that contradiction, it's necessary to go back to Coca-Cola's origins as a cocaine-laced "nerve tonic" in the turn-of-the-century American South. It's there that the seeds of its inexorable drive to growth were planted, along with the decisions that have allowed it to disavow responsibility for its bottlers around the globe. That's the essence of Coca-Cola-what one of its legendary executives once called "the essence of capitalism."

The Coke Machine Details

Date : Published September 16th 2010 by Penguin Group (USA) (first published 2010)

ISBN : 9781101443408

Author : Michael Blanding

Format : ebook 384 pages

Genre : Nonfiction, History, Food and Drink, Food, Business

 [Download The Coke Machine ...pdf](#)

 [Read Online The Coke Machine ...pdf](#)

Download and Read Free Online The Coke Machine Michael Blanding

From Reader Review The Coke Machine for online ebook

Sarah Crawford says

This is a book which is very strongly against the actions of the Coca Cola company. On page 4 he refers to the company as 'stands accused of drought, disease, exploitation and murder.' In effect, the author is coming out swinging.

Starting on page 13 he attacks the inventor of the Coca Cola formula, and charges that he 'regularly dipped into his pharmacy cabinet for hits of morphine.' He was said by three others in the pharmacist trade to be an addict.

This is how the book seems to be set up. A major charge is made against Coca Cola or someone associated with that. The charge seems to be 'guilt by association' more than anything else. In this case, the author claims Pemberton was an addict, yet can only offer the verbal accusations of others and no actual, hard evidence.

On page 14 he is basically accusing Pemberton of plagiarism of the formula, using something called Mariani as the basic formula and adding some other ingredients.

He also goes rather far in his sniping. From page 16: In referring to the drink's origins, the author says 'the drink's origins seem more like a religious creation myth than a product formulation.'

The the author goes after Asa Candler, who bought Coca Cola production rights. The author says it took years of maneuverings 'and possibly outright theft.' Again, the use of a rather vague term, 'possibly.' It proves nothing.

Then he oddly slips in something positive on page 50 about soldiers in World War II liking Coke and linking it to the fight for the Allies.

Then he accuses Coca Cola of going along with the Nazis, citing the case of a Nazi who kept Coca Cola flowing to Nazi soldiers, then later invented a different drink and named it Fanta. What it seems to me, though, is that the guy took what supplies of Coca Cola there were left and reserved them for the Nazis, but Coca Cola itself did not ship anything at all to Germany.

Further, this was wartime, and I doubt very much that Coca Cola, in the U.S., could have made anyone do anything in Germany under Hitler. This is an example of taking something that has a grain of truth in it and stretching it all out of proportions.

Coca Cola is not the only business to be hit in the book, though, as the author takes on Maidenform (bras) and says on page 55 that 'Maidenform, for example, exploited what is said was women's subconscious exhibitionist tendencies.'

In another example of why mention this is a book against Coca Cola, he notes on page 57 that the civil rights movement began at a Woolworth's in Greensboro, North Carolina, when four students demanded their right to be served a Coke.

He then takes on Coca Cola over the obesity problem. What he doesn't say is that, if people drank a reasonable amount of Coca Cola, they would not have a major weight gain. There are many factors involved in obesity, and soft drinks of all sorts are but one of those.

He notes that, when state governments would consider a bill that would not be beneficial to Coca Cola, they lobbied the state governments heavily. He doesn't both to point out that virtually every other business that feels they are threatened, or wants some kind of advantage, also lobbies the all levels of government. It may not be nice, and I, for one, would like to see lobbying done away with totally, but that's not going to happen.

Then the book talks about Latin America and how Coca Cola 'had a more than cozy relationship with paramilitary groups' (p. 184) that worked to break up unions and were involved in the murder of union leaders.

Then it talks about problems with Coca Cola plants in India and how they use up the groundwater, and pollute the environment. Then it talks about an anti-Coke organization called Killer Coke, and how they write about things Coca Cola has done in other countries.

It is likely that Coca Cola doesn't like unions since no big business does, really, since it takes away from the people running the business lining their own pockets with the profits. It would also not be surprising if Coca Cola was having problems with pollution and over use of water in India. However, that is something that could probably be proven about almost any big corporation working there or in any other developing country.

Does it make it right? No, but it's not just Coke doing things and that is an impression that this book gives. Further, Coca Cola has been trying to do at least some projects friendly to the environment and the society they are located in.

The problem with his arguments about South America, and how Coca Cola has been directly, or at least indirectly, involved in the murder of pro-union people is that at no time does he show that the main Coca Cola base in Atlanta knew or directed what was going on. Granted, it could have been the leaders there directing the anti-union efforts, including intimidation and killing, but it also could have been the bottlers themselves without the main Coca Cola base knowing what was being done.

There is just no direct evidence proving that the base in Atlanta knew what was going on. It should have, of course, but it's also possible that incompetency or efforts to cover up by officials in South America could also be the cause of what was going on without the main Coca Cola group knowing.

Thus, the book presents a fairly strong case against Coca Cola as far as polluting and overuse of natural resources goes in India, a weak case as far as how much the main Coca Cola group knew about what was going on in South America, and also tends to use a lot of smear arguments (Coca Cola and the Nazis, for example) that the author would use to discredit the company, yet is based on only partial truth (the Coca Cola being sold there being Coca Cola that was already physically there in Germany, for example).

The book raises questions, of course, and their web site at <http://killercoke.org/> raises others, but still overlooks that there is a significant difference between accusation and proof.

Add says

Picking up this book I knew that the Coca Cola corporation had done some shady things in the past, but i did not know what was in store for me. The details of what this corporation has done to families and the environment is excrusinately annoying. From killing workers who are fighting for a better wage in Columbia, to outright stealing water from poor farmers in India. Also targeting children as young as infants for marketing in North America and Europe. I found a very good quote in a separate review that states what

happened exactly. "Its efforts to "do good" are laughable, especially at the moment, with its pledge to donate 5 million over 5 years (a mere drop in the profit bucket) to polar bear conservation (an icon adopted to promote the brand, albeit a fuzzy CGI version) without actually addressing its contribution to the climate change that is causing the issue in the first place!"- I myself have stopped drinking soda long ago because of its high-sugar high-calorie drink. But after reading this book its hard not to go around trying to spread the word to innocent consumers buying coke each day.

Rob Warner says

Interesting look at unsavory parts of Coke, but the author seemed to have an agenda that his facts insufficiently backed, and leapt to outrage at the non-outrageous. News flash: junk food makes you fat. We know that. People have known that for years. I don't believe companies have any responsibility to make sure customers eat in a healthy manner. People buy and consume what they want.

Coke is a marketing machine and has great advertising. They pay mightily for pushing their brand. They're good at it. So what. Also, if people want to overpay for tap water, that's their fault.

The murders in Colombia are terrible, but linking them to the Coca-Cola company seemed tenuous at best. My impression of Colombia is that, like many parts of the world, corruption reigns. Coke doesn't have the ability nor responsibility to fix that.

One part of the book that really piqued my interest, however, was the section on pollution and water depletion in India. If Coke is causing those things, they should fix them. As I read the book, however, I couldn't understand whether Coke really is to blame. Why, for example, does bottling Coke in India cause pollution, yet doesn't in other parts of the world? Are they doing something different, or are they starting with pollution and pushing it along? The book doesn't say. Also, the book doesn't definitively answer whether Coke is depleting the water, or if drought and farming are more to blame. The opinions expressed differ, and the "evidence" seems to depend on chronology, not any demonstrated fact.

The book presents some interesting arguments, and provides ample background information on Coke. It seems to be positioned in today's anti-big-corporation movement, which in my opinion is sadly misguided. Corporations, whatever the size, aren't evil, and we rely on them far more than we realize for our lifestyles. Some corporate leaders definitely do wrong, and we rely on exposes like these to find and fix the wrongdoing. I think, though, that this book was determined to find wrongdoing, whether or not there was any to find.

Jay Budzilowski says

3.5 stars

First half of the book (dealing with Coke history) was 4 stars. The second half was a trudge to get through.

Paul Pessolano says

Do not shy away from this book if you live in Atlanta, the home of Coca-Cola. Do not shy away from this book if you are a loyal supporter and drinker of Coca-Cola. There are things in this book that everyone

should know.

The book starts out with a history of Coca-Cola that is both interesting and questionable. If you go to the "World of Coca-Cola" in Atlanta the tour guides will give you the Coca-Cola version of their history. According to Michael Blanding that version leaves out some important facts concerning the rise of Coca-Cola into a multinational corporation.

Coca-Cola, for all its success, seems to have a seemier side that Michael Blanding brings to the reader. Many questionable business practices went unnoticed because they occurred when little if any laws were in place to control big business.

The real problem for Coca-Cola came about in foreign countries.

In Mexico, where Coke is King, action to stop unionization of their plants, has led to possible murder.

In India, where rain is at a premium, Coke has been accused of depleting the fragile water supply and of causing mass pollution.

In Coke's defense, they have been exonerated of any wrong doing in these matters, however, many believe that Coke is guilty because they did not take action when they could have used their influence to prevent these problems.

The reader will also get a look at Coke and childhood obesity and soda contracts with schools.

It is important to keep in mind that the problems that Coca-Cola has and is going through can be seen in many of the multinational companies in the world today.

Grumpus says

Recently, I have found that I have been the contrarian to these Goodread reviews and have found that disconcerting. For years, I have been able to count on these reviews in helping me identify books I would not have normally read.

I've read the anti-Coke reviews of this book and went in with the sneaky suspicion that the author had an agenda and I began reading with that understanding. I believe anyone could pick any company and write a book about them in a similar style.

I have to say as a marketing researcher myself, I found the history of the company extremely compelling and appreciate their marketing and branding from their earliest days. I found it clever the way they thought to get people to drink more Coke. . . bigger bottles. Seems so simple now but back then it was an innovation and now look at the sizes of the sodas we drink today--Big Gulps, Super Big Gulps, etc. It is reminiscent of how toothpaste manufactures got people to use more toothpaste. Think about it, how do you do that? Bigger holes in the tubes! Marketing genius.

So while I enjoyed all of that, I have to say I—with relief, ultimately agree with my fellow Goodreaders and can sum this up by saying, Mamas don't let your babies grow up to be Coke (or any soda for that matter) drinkers for which there are many reasons. The first being health. I still cannot believe that researchers cannot definitively prove there is nothing more than correlation (not causation) between high fructose corn syrup and obesity and/or diabetes. In my mind, the stuff is poison and it is in everything.

Second, I now feel they abuse marketing and show little ethics in this regard. Research shows that infants begin to recognize brands between 6 and 18 months of age. By age 3, children begin requesting brands. Coke manipulates this to their advantage through such marketing campaigns as the cute polar bears and Santa. For the 12 and under cohort, they target such shows as Spongebob Squarepants and for the teen group, they use product placement on shows such as American Idol as well as targeted advertising. While believing in capitalism and the goal of being an industry leader, you must do it responsibly. I don't think that Coke does this.

Then there are the Coke wars in Mexico and Colombia. We exploit these markets by manufacturing our Coke there where the people become obese through drinking it as Coke drains their water supplies leaving little clean water to drink. The result is the population has to drink the cheap alternative Coke as a water substitute. Coke also overlooks union battles in these countries. These battles ultimately lead to murder in many cases for which Coke assumes no responsibility. Ironically, these two countries ship us their "Coke" but in powered form (cocaine). While one is legal and the other not, the result is unhealthy for all.

It kills me to believe this about one of my favorite brands. While I don't think I can boycott their products as they are just too ubiquitous, I will severely limit my use of them in my household. C'mon Coke do what's right and become a good corporate citizen.

Kat A says

It's hard not to read this title and think that it is stating the obvious, but the details of just how badly this corporation are screwing everyone are still quite shocking. From killing workers who are fighting for a better wage in Columbia, to outright stealing water from poor farmers in India, to overt and relentless marketing to children in North America and Western Europe, this company this company is unbelievable in their dedication to the bottom line and to it's shareholders. Its efforts to "do good" are laughable, especially at the moment, with its pledge to donate 5 million over 5 years (a mere drop in the profit bucket) to polar bear conservation (an icon adopted to promote the brand, albeit a fuzzy CGI version) without actually addressing its contribution to the climate change that is causing the issue in the first place! Augh. And the worst part is, it's impossible to avoid drinking its products, especially since there have been a large number of acquisitions over the last couple of decades. It was a very good read and written by a very reputable journalist, so if you can keep your anger in check, then give it a go.

Jeff says

Wanders off narrative, occasionally more interesting as a result. Hyper critical, approaches crusade levels at times which diminishes the impact of some very valid criticism.

Alberto Lopez says

A bit on the yellow side, this book showcases the lengthy history of Coca Cola under a very dark light. The lesson I get from it is that along their way to growth and not just after they have arrived, companies must truly care about all stake holders or risk jeopardizing what they have built. I can't help but dislike Coke after this book. Finally, the book is not for the faint of heart.

Trevor says

<http://killercoke.org/>

This is quite a disturbing book and one that will convince you to stop drinking coke for so many reasons. Not least that it will make you healthier but also make you feel so much better about yourself.

There is a very amusing line by a judge that the name of the product was strange because the company denied there was cocaine in their product where there actually was and said that there was cola nut in it, when there wasn't. The history of the world's favourite drink is not terribly attractive, but at least it was amusing to hear how the power of marketing can make something as fundamentally silly as a soft-drink – I mean, essentially liquid sugar with bubbles – a 'life-style choice'. I kept thinking, god, humans really are stupid. Perhaps the fact the planet seems ready to evict us makes more sense than we like to admit.

The first half of this book is about the history of the company in the US and Europe and its various challenges – such as convincing people to keep on drinking coke despite childhood obesity and the kinds of problems with teeth that even dentists don't like to talk about. Getting coke into schools and taking water-fountains out are the kinds of things we have come to accept as a manifestation of our 'freedom'. Freedom has its costs and if part of those costs are our own health and wellbeing, well, at least we are free.

Did you know Coke once pretended to be medicine? Now it seeks to present itself as the beverage of choice for all of your instants of hydration.

The second half of this book documents Coke's somewhat less than union friendly behaviours in third-world countries. This part of the book is very hard to read. Coke is clearly guilty of murder, guilty of essentially poisoning third-world customers (my suggestion is that if you are in India to not drink the stuff – but then, my suggestion is to never drink the stuff anyway, wherever you are) and doing as much as possible to kill off farm land and diminish water-tables. This is a company so lacking in morality, so lacking in basic human feeling, that come the revolution they will be the first against the wall. I know, there is a long list of others who are doing everything in their power to beat Coke to this honour – but Coke executives can be proud of yet another first.

I'm not going to rehearse all of their crimes – although, given corporations in America are also 'persons', it is hard to know why they aren't in gaol for murder. Anyway, I've already given the link to Killer Coke and will do so again at the end.

Like I said, a disturbing read. But I am glad I did read it – I am convinced to never buy another product from Coke.

<http://killercoke.org/>

Kelly Kilcrease says

The explanation and details about the Columbia murder gets a little long winded. I would have liked to have seen more emphasis toward the health risks associated with Coke.

Christina says

I am horribly addicted to Coca Cola. I can easily down six or seven cans (or, their equivalent at a restaurant) without batting an eye, which obviously places me in the “heavy user” category by The Coca Cola Company.

I have tried many times over the past six years to kick the habit going cold turkey for ten weeks or ten months until I convince myself that my birthday or graduation or general stress or the fact that I do not smoke or drink means I should be able to have a can of Coke. Of course, one leads to one a day and then one a day leads to a can of Coke with my morning snack, my lunch, my dinner, and before bed. (And then I wonder why I can’t fall asleep.)

I know Coca Cola is bad for me; I have read multiple books arguing against the product based solely on health. But I still struggle not to reach for the product at every turn, and I had hoped in picking up this book that Blanding would offer an argument to help compel me to pick the habit once and for all. Unfortunately, the book relies on a narrative constructed for the filmiest strings and failed to convince me that Coke is worse for anything but my own personal health.

Blanding’s argument takes a three prong approach: Coca-Cola’s use of advertising to promote its unhealthy product, the relationship with its bottlers and links to paramilitary groups in Colombia, and water in both the bottled form and the production of its flagship products. The first prong was the most interesting and the most convincing, although I was largely familiar with the history of Coca-Cola and its use of advertisement. Clearly, utilizing Santa and adorable polar bears are going to teach children that the product is good for them because the associate good with those images.

But my interest during this section was piqued as Blanding detailed the ironclad, exclusive contracts public schools districts signed with Coca Cola in the United States. We had vending machines for Coca Cola products in my public middle school and public high school with varying access rules (i.e. only on afterschool in middle school) and the argument was that selling these products help cash strapped schools finance their students education. However, Blanding cites multiple examples and combs through several contracts to show how untrue this claim is.

The last two prongs, especially the sections on the death of union leaders in South America, are where the argument begins to fall apart. Blanding attempts to draw a direct line where one does not exist, and I found it difficult to follow his logic as he argued that Coca Cola was responsible for a manager of its bottling plant (which is a separate entity from the flagship corporation) fighting against a union in such despicable ways. I mean, no company wants to encourage their workers to unionize but that does not mean they are circling internal memos instructing their managers to kill union organizers. Fire them, yes, but I doubt kill them. Blanding readily admits that his proof is weak, that other companies in Colombia engaged in far worse tactics.

Bottled water is a crock; the product is rarely cleaner than tap water and provides no added benefits. In fact, the plastic bottles contribute to the trashing of our environment and require massive amounts of energy inputs including oil to produce. However, I have read more convincing and detailed arguments against bottled water than the one presented in this book, which read like an addition to stretch out a tired argument. There was nothing new or groundbreaking within the text about this particular product of the Coca Cola Company or about the company in general.

I listened to the audiobook read by George K. Wilson, whose monotone voice failed to make the subject

matter more interesting or engaging. Even the chapters on Colombia's civil war and the violence there were read in the same tone as the legal examination of Coca Cola's contracts with public schools.

Kinga says

I wonder if Michael Blanding's children drink coke in secret, making sure their father would never know. Just like other kids do when they are DOING coke.

I guess, I don't like to read anything so obviously and openly biased, even if the author's goal was good and true. I wouldn't call it eye-opening either. If you somehow came to whatever age you are, and you still haven't realised there literally aren't any limits to what corporations might do in search for profit, then you just have to wake up and smell the coffee, or coke. The main reason behind it is that the corporations weren't created to benefit the humankind; they were created to make money, so the flaw is in their very reason for existence. You can as much expect them not to think about dollar signs as you can expect a heterosexual fourteen year old boy not to think about boobs. It's a fact of life.

There is only one way to make the corporations 'do the right thing' and it's to threaten their profits, using either law or customer boycott. I suppose this is what this book is trying to achieve – make people so appalled that they stop drinking coke, using very similar methods that Coca Cola is using to make you drink it. Considering that the Coca Cola Company is 120 years old, I actually find it quite surprising that Blanding barely managed to fill out 290 pages with its sins (the rest are the notes) and that includes a lot of repetitions and all round boring shit.

The case he spends most time on is a murder of some union workers in Colombia and, boy, is that case thin. Even such a biased account of it couldn't convince me that the Coca Cola as a company is responsible for it. To me it just looked like a case of a rogue manager, and Coca Cola would find it hard to find a person qualified enough to be the manager of a bottling company that's not involved in any way in what could only be called an ongoing civil war. This is what any investor in Colombia has to come to terms with it, there is no way around it. You can't jump into the mud and expect to come out clean. The company didn't start the war and they weren't there to do end it. Some activists pointed out that the only ethical thing to do would be to close the shop and go home but that's hardly when the Union wanted, was it?

Even Blanding himself had to admit that other companies behaved worse in Colombia, and that in fact there was no proof for the connection between Coca Cola and the murders. But then he quickly adds: "Whether the company colluded with the violence against the union or just benefited from it [...]". Well, it hardly benefited from it, considering the PR disaster it all caused, non?

The other argument he uses is, of course, the fact that Coke like any other sugary drink makes people fat (and, for your information, that includes juices which might have more nutritious value but usually around just as many calories). Let's be honest here for a little bit – if something is sweet, it is because it either has a lot of sugar in it or aspartame or some other crap you shouldn't be putting in your body.

I think the bit that shocked me most was the chapter about how schools in the USA signed exclusive contracts with Coca Cola which forbid them to sell any other drinks on the premises. And mind you, it's not the company's behaviour that shocked me, after all let's remember they are like the 14 year old boys, it's the schools! It's the school responsibility to do what's best for the children.

As for the accusations about depleting scarce water resources in some poorer parts of the world, without getting into finer details of specific cases, I think it is plain sad that any water, as precious as it is, should be wasted on making hectoliters of something that is generally unhealthy. Nonetheless, I'm not entirely

convinced in Coca Cola's crucial role in the water crisis, as it's, unfortunately, the agriculture that should take the worse blame for the situation. Most of those countries have been experiencing droughts all over for the last few years, Coke or not.

The most laughable part of the book is when Balding criticise Coca Cola's advertising strategy, first that they claimed that Coke soothes the nerves, and then that invigorated. But then when Coke moved from advertising specific properties of the drink to selling it more as a lifestyle idea, he complains as well. What's the poor Coke to do to satisfy Balding's need for 'honest advertising'? Just say "Coca Cola is a sweet drink. Drink it so we can make money"?

And I like how Balding discovers Coca Cola dreadful secret of how to handle setbacks: "Lobby furiously behind the scenes, give in gracefully when the cause is lost, and be sure to associate the product with the highest national interest." Yes, truly shocking. Basically: "Play to win, if you can't win, lose gracefully and use it to your benefit". I bet no one used that one before. Balding also resents Coca Cola because even when they involves themselves in charitable work, they always have profit in mind. Well, no kidding, Einstein. If they didn't, they would go bust and would not be able to involve themselves in any charitable work this way or another.

Of course, Coca Cola is selling itself as a pure American dream in a bottle. And it's working. As a child in a communist country I dreamt of drinking Coca Cola. Some places sold Pepsi and I drank it on special occasions but deep inside we knew it was only the next best thing.

Make no mistake though, I might be playing a bit of devil's advocate here but I'm not defending coke. That shit is foul and will make your rot inside. Don't drink it. And for God's sake don't buy bottled water unless you absolutely must. There is absolutely no point to it. And corporations are bad, very bad. You can always suspect the worst of them. As a matter of fact, I would be hardly surprised if it turned out that this book was paid for by PepsiCo.

While researching what to cook to accompany this recipe I came across this page: <http://www.cookingwithcoke.com/> Ha ha. Apparently cooking meat in coke yields delicious results. Here is my garlic cola chicken, very loosely based on this recipe (<http://www.recipelion.com/Chicken-Rec...#>) accompanied with corn (corn, America – corn syrup, get it?). It was actually pretty fantastic, I recommend you try basting meat in coke. But for the love of God, use Pepsi!

Bcoghill Coghill says

I guess I knew all of this, having read the newspapers and magazines for the past 50 years. But, I guess it is good to have in one place... I guess.

I drink diet-pepsi and it probably aggravates my acid reflux, but if I was an alcoholic or smoked tobacco that would probably be worse, eh?

Do I contribute to killing union members in third-world countries - probably thru my shoe and IT purchases. What is a body to do in the evil world?

Satwika says

Buku ini mengupas tuduhan-tuduhan yang pernah dilayangkan terhadap Coca-Cola Company, sebagai produsen minuman ringan terkenal di seluruh dunia. Pada masa sekarang, rasanya sulit ditemukan seseorang di muka bumi ini yang belum pernah sama sekali mengecap minuman Coca-Cola.

Racikan Coca-Cola merupakan salah satu rahasia terbesar yang pernah ada di muka bumi. Meski begitu, asal usul Coca-Cola masih bisa ditelusuri. Hasil penelusuran mengindikasikan bahwa Coca-Cola tercipta pertama kali sebagai ramuan obat. Pada masa itu masyarakat Amerika masih jauh dari kesejahteraan yang tampak sekarang dan perang saudara pecah di mana-mana. Jatuh sakit menjadi momok yang sangat dihindari karena itu berarti pengeluaran tambahan. Bagi mereka yang telanjur jatuh sakit, mereka lebih suka untuk mencari obat-obat alternatif yang banyak dijual secara bebas. Kondisi ini menjadi sebuah tren, dan profesi tukang obat (baik meracik dan menjualnya) menjadi profesi yang menjanjikan di wilayah Atlanta, Georgia.

Salah satu yang tertarik memanfaatkan kondisi ini adalah John Pemberton. Dia meracik obat cair yang diklaim bisa menyembuhkan sakit kepala. Racikan inilah yang kemudian berevolusi menjadi minuman yang kita kenal sekarang. Selain rahasia racikan yang terjaga ketat, strategi marketing Coca-Cola lah yang membuat dirinya menjadi seterkenal sekarang.

--

Ini adalah buku pertama yang bikin gue gak ngerasa lagi kerja. Selama menggarap buku ini, gue beneran menikmati membacanya, as if ya itu tadi.. Gak lagi kerja. Buku ini beneran informatif sekaligus provokatif. Meskipun di setiap cerita dan tuduhan, pihak Coca-Cola Company selalu berhasil mengatasi keadaan, justru itu cenderung bikin gue makin percaya kalau Coca-Cola Company udah begitu berkuasanya sehingga bisa menggenggam pelanggannya dengan erat.

Di satu sisi, itu emang jadi kekuatan Coca-Cola Company, yaitu membuat orang tidak bisa hidup tanpanya. Coba deh, hari gini, bayangin akan jadi apa kemasyarakatan dunia tanpa minuman bersoda macem Coca-Cola? Intinya, secara isi, buku ini keren banget. Gue menemukan sebuah resensi yang mengatakan buku ini berat sebelah, jadi kayak black campaign melawan Coca-Cola Company. Tapi menurut gue, buku ini justru netral. Penulis menjabarkan semua kisah-kisah tuduhan terhadap Coca-Cola yang pernah terjadi, sekaligus dengan mewawancarai pihak-pihak yang terlibat. Penulis juga menyatakan bahwa dia selalu berusaha mencoba menghubungi pihak Coca-Cola Company untuk mendapat kedua sisi cerita. Tapi ya gitu deh... Baca aja sendiri di bukunya, apa jawaban yang sering diterima penulis dari Coca-Cola Company.

Menurut gue, penulis berhasil menerbitkan buku ini tanpa dituntut atau "diguna-guna" Coca-Cola Company aja udah bagus, deh. Trus manfaat membacanya apa? Ya selain jadi lebih tahu, kalo gue sih jadi makin ilfil minum Coca-Cola. Berhubung emang kalo dari segi kesehatan udah banyak anjuran untuk mengurangi asupan minuman berkarbonasi, berarti kan bagus donk, kalo gue ilfil sampe gak mau minum coca-cola lagi. Huehehheehhe...