

LIST

# Attack zone

Four nasty political ads  
by Vanessa Santilli

**ONLY A DAY AFTER** Justin Trudeau's federal Liberal leadership victory, the Conservatives released an attack ad that mocked Trudeau's ambitions of becoming prime minister by showing him stripping down to his undershirt (footage from a charitable event).

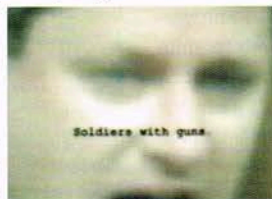
Despite the new Liberal leader's pitch to end the negativity, we can be sure there's more to come. A study from the Journal of Advertising Research found that while negative advertising intensifies voters' distrust of politicians, it's also very powerful in influencing voter attitudes. As the drama unfolds, here are four memorable attack ads from Canadian politics.



**JEAN CHRÉTIEN** During the 1993 federal election, the Progressive Conservatives ran an ad with extreme close-ups of Chrétien's face, emphasizing his facial paralysis. "They try to make fun of the way I look," Chrétien told the press. "God gave me a physical defect and I've

accepted that since [I was] a kid." Less than a day after the ad first ran, it was pulled amid widespread backlash. Then prime minister Kim Campbell apologized.

**STEPHEN HARPER** With the ominous beating of war drums setting the tone, the Liberals ran an ad leading up to the 2006 federal election zeroing in on the notion that Stephen Harper wanted to increase military presence in Canadian cities. "Soldiers with guns in our cities," said a cautious narrator's voice. Many political commentators pointed out some of the statements made in the series of ads could not be proven.



**STÉPHANE DION** One spot in a series of Conservative attack ads suggesting Stéphane Dion was "not a leader" showed the Quebecker struggling to communicate in English. Dion could not shake being framed as a weak leader and

stepped down from the helm a week after the Liberals lost the 2008 election.

**MICHAEL IGNATIEFF** When Ignatieff was a prime ministerial hopeful, the Conservatives ran a series of attack ads focusing on the fact that he'd lived and taught in the U.S. Using select snippets from interviews, the ads underscored the message that Ignatieff was "just visiting." When he faced voters in 2011, "Iggy" couldn't even hold onto his own seat as the Liberals were reduced to their lowest numbers in history.



## What's in a symbol?

Dr. Gail Nield wasn't too impressed with our sunscreen throwdown. Sun protection isn't a natural versus chemical argument, says the dermatologist at Woodbridge Dermatology and Laser Centre. "People should buy where the science is," she tells us. "A sunscreen that has been tested and carries the Canadian Dermatological Association symbol." But what exactly does the CDA logo signify? Sunscreen brands such as Coppertone and Banana Boat, for instance, are CDA-certified, but some of their products are also classified among the most chemically hazardous sunscreens according to the environmental health watchdog Environmental Working Group. In fact, a product must do fairly little to earn the logo: an independent laboratory must confirm the sunscreen has a SPF of 30 or higher, contains a broad spectrum UVA block, is minimally to non-perfumed, non-irritating, non-comedogenic, and is hypo-allergenic. The company must also pay an undisclosed three-year licensing fee. Funds gained go to CDA's sun awareness and skin cancer screening programs.

## PROGRESSIVE DETECTIVE

# Chemical burn

What sunscreen does to your body and the environment **BY HILLARY DI MENNA**

**Q:** I've heard that the use of traditional, commercial sunscreens may have negative consequences for both the environment and human health, but are natural sunscreens as effective?

**A:** Traditional, on-the-shelf sunscreens can contain parabens, cinnamate, benzophenone, and camphor derivatives. These ingredients are "thought to be the culprits killing coral reefs around the world," according to a David Suzuki Foundation report. The fragrances, preservatives, and moisturizers in such sunscreens also contain harmful chemicals, adds Maggie MacDonald, the toxics program manager at the Toronto-based action group Environmental Defence.

One such chemical, oxybenzone, disrupts the hormonal system, which can have implications for development, MacDonald says. Another ingredient to watch out for, she adds, is Vitamin A.

An argument can be made, however, that these chemicals, in small doses, are harmless.

"There is no evidence that [the chemicals are] harmful," says Dr. Paul Cohen from the Rosedale Dermatology Centre, "but they can cause irritation to sensitive skin." He suggests a natural sunscreen for people with skin sensitivities such as eczema.

Both kinds of sunscreen offer protection, he adds, but they work in different ways. "Chemical sunscreens absorb ultraviolet radiation and turn it into harmless heat," explains Dr. Cohen, whereas "physical sunscreens sit on top of the skin and deflect the UV from the skin."

The ingredients that create the sun-blocking barrier in natural sunscreen are zinc oxide and titanium oxide. Zinc is a powdered mineral that doesn't dissolve, so it won't absorb into the skin. It creates what Dr. Cohen refers to as a "chalky" texture. Natural sunscreens may not be as cosmetically appealing due to their thick consistency, though they protect just as well as the chemical kind.

Chemical sunscreens are absorbed into the skin, and need time to sink in before we bask in the sun's glow—something that is unnecessary with physical block. Whether using natural or chemical sunscreen, Dr. Cohen says, "Apply it again, make it thick enough and reapply after sweating or swimming."