

December 15, 2008

R. Bridger Rollins, CEO
Sweetwater Creek Ventures, Inc.
1577 Westheimer
Houston, TX 77002

Dear Bridge:

Following our conversation of November 23, I met with our team in Dallas. Karen Schools, Director of our Challenging Terrains Division and Skip Alpenhous, Ph.D., J. E. Hoover Chair in Communication Strategies, Murdoch University, were present as well.

The meeting began with an updated assessment of Sweetwater's Valuable Assets-DRC subsidiary. Principal issues of concern were identified and preliminary strategy proposals elaborated. The following is intended to provide you with an overview of the situation: what we have learned, what information we are seeking and how, and what we recommend as the best course of action for Sweetwater at this time.

Sweetwater's most urgent concern, at this point, everyone agrees, is the "Koltan Kills Kids" – aka "KKK" – campaign launched by the Braka Dju Collective. The campaign has had a significant negative impact on Sweetwater's public profile. Damage control is not considered sufficient. An aggressively proactive approach is urgent to counter an accelerating fall in Sweetwater share prices.

As you know, Braka Dju's campaign centers on a series of images whose purpose is to alert consumers to one fact: that the rush for coltan (columbite-tantalite), essential to the production of virtually all computers and cellular telephones and a significant number of devices vital to the arms industry, is fueling the war in Eastern Congo and its spread to adjacent countries (Rwanda, Uganda and so on). Large numbers of people are dying and entire communities (in the hundreds of thousands) are being uprooted. Although Africa tends to get little attention on the evening news, this story seems to be gathering steam and the UN is talking genocide. This obviously presents a significant PR challenge for Sweetwater, as it is one of the most visible coltan mining ventures in the region.

Braka Dju's "KKK" images have had a devastating effect. Two in particular are a problem: they have caught on like wildfire and, at this point, seem to be known pretty much everywhere. I attach reproductions for your files. Braka Dju has plastered poster and sticker-sized versions of the two images in cities across the globe. Graffiti versions have been developed as well. The trend has attracted other organizations, notably in Canada and Australia (which, as you know, are strategic coltan extraction sites as well) and now the images are appearing on T-shirts, bandanas and assorted "protest" gear from New York to Beijing. Most major cities are infected and clearly the phenomenon is spreading: this past hour, the tracking team we've put in place has reported sightings in a women's WC outside Yerevan, Armenia, in a bar near Las Tunas, Cuba, and on a halibut trawler in the bay of Kattegat, off the Danish Mainland.

The more graphic of the two Braka Dju images shows a gorilla at a computer with a briefcase full of broken cell phones, a dollar sign and a coltan symbol (specifically, the electron shell diagram for Tantalum, the 73rd element in the periodic table of elements), which doubles, here, as a target. The image has taken on a life of its own. Hong Kong and San Francisco tattoo parlors are offering several versions – the gorilla alone, the gorilla with the coltan symbol or the whole spread.

Along the way, the monkey has apparently acquired a name: Tsuba Ka. We have run the name by Gordon Fallous, head of African Linguistics at Bradenton State, and the news is not good. According to his report, filed yesterday:

The name functions on several metaphorical levels. Two, in particular, are worth noting. The first is clearly a reference to Congo: in Lingala, one of DRC's lingua francas, *tsuba ka* means "to penetrate with an object." Here, then, you have an allusion to mining, as well as, in all likelihood, a scatological statement – to put it bluntly, something along the lines of "up your ass."

A second meaning finds its roots in popular culture. I owe this insight to my colleague Patricia Schnausertrensch, a primatologist who is the mother of two young boys. "Tsuba Ka," she tells me, is almost certainly a willful deformation of "Chewbacca," the name given to the widely beloved simian creature played by actor Peter Mayhew in several of the Star Wars movies (episodes 3, 4, 5 and 6, in which Chewbacca appears, notably, as the first mate of protagonist Han Solo's spaceship, the Millennium Falcon). The name choice, Patricia suggests, is explicitly meant to tug at the heartstrings of ecologists, who are concerned with the disappearance of the Virunga volcano region's (DRC, Rwanda, Uganda) eponymous mountain gorilla (*gorilla berengei berengei*), whose dwindling population (fewer than 320 at last count) may not survive another year of warfare.

As, of course, you are aware, a great deal of attention has been paid to the plight of the mountain gorilla, as witness an article published yesterday by the *Los Angeles Times*, in which the DRC conflict is described as a "gorilla war." The fact that mountain gorillas are not only endangered, but also vegetarian, our Media Watch Division tells us, has won them a great deal of sympathy. (Parallel research backs this up: on the NRA's "tree-hugger index" – an informal but highly accurate source – the Virunga gorilla rates several point higher than the endangered Namibian Cheetah, which is considered equally in need of support, but less attractive because a carnivore.)

By linking its anti-coltan campaign to the gorilla situation, Braka Dju has, by all accounts, significantly increased its visibility. As the Chewbacca tie-in shows, the Collective has also tapped in quite effectively to pop culture. With Star Wars as an access point, it has been able to reach two generations – parents who were in their teens when the first Star Wars movie came out, as well as their children, who are familiar with more recent episodes of the saga. This broad demographic significantly complicates the task of countering the Braka Dju action, as does an additional factor.

The Tsuba Ka/Chewbacca character has made inroads into a tranche of the population that peace activists and assorted human and animal rights groups have historically had a great deal of difficulty engaging: 20-something disaffected Caucasian males. According to Joy Silversmith of CAC (the Conservative Action Campaign, Denver, CO), who has been working with us on this matter, timing – *when* the monkey in the Braka Dju campaign first got its name – is key. Apparently, this occurred within hours of Sweetwater's first Braka Dju-related press conference. You remember the debacle, of course (this was the occasion on which you were pelted with rotten bananas – in hindsight, a harbinger of things to come – after pointing out the importance of coltan in the development of early diagnosis tools for testicular cancer). By the next day, an animated version of the Braka Dju gorilla had showed up on the web and within the week the sites where he appeared (primarily as a break-in hacked into legitimate business platforms, including, of course, the Sweetwater home site) were screening one-minute episodes of a series entitled "Fight the Power: Vote Tsuba Ka."

The first episode was called "Gotcha by da Balls" and was a takeoff on two widely recognized storylines from the now famous and highly offensive South Park animated series launched by Comedy Central: (1) the "Chin Ballitis" stream, in which the character Butters agrees to have prosthetic testicles attached to his chin by two Star Wars special effects mavens so that he and his friends can appear on the equally offensive Maury Povich tabloid TV talk show; (2) the "Chewbacca Defense" stream, a satire of the OJ Simpson murder trial, in which an

animated version of attorney-to-the-stars Johnny Cochran reprises the type of red-herring defense (“If the glove doesn’t fit, you must acquit”) that, most people believe, resulted in Simpson’s acquittal.

As far as Sweetwater is concerned, the allusions to South Park are a direct hit. The Chin Ballitis stream is clearly a reference to your press conference statement and, with all due respect, a reference also to the loose skin of your neck (our LA-based Physiognomy Division, which provides relooking advice for businesspeople, recommends that you have this “turkey wattle” [the term used by plastic surgeons] removed before your next encounter with the press; several of our top people have gone this way and report significant improvement in a several areas of their daily life). The Chewbacca Defense stream is equally a reference to the press conference, the inference being that Sweetwater is deploying wholly invented arguments to deflect attention from a crime it has committed: aiding and abetting in the death and displacement of hundreds of thousands of innocent civilians.

My assistant Violetta has compiled the following data, which will clarify the situation for you:

According to the *Urban Dictionary*, the term “Chewbacca Defense” is “a totally bullshit argument.” Specifically, it is “a term for any legal ... or propaganda strategy that seeks to overwhelm its audience with nonsensical arguments, as a way of confusing the audience and drowning out legitimate opposing arguments.”

Still according to the Dictionary, “the term Chewbacca Defense was first used in the South Park episode “Chef Aid”, which premiered on October 7, 1998 as the fourteenth episode of the second season. In the episode, Chef [a recurrent character on the show] discovers that Alanis Morissette’s hit song “Stinky Britches” is the same as a song he wrote years ago, before abandoning his musical aspirations. Chef contacts [Morissette’s] record company [Capitalist Records], seeking to have his name credited as the composer of “Stinky Britches.” Chef’s claim is substantiated by a twenty-year-old recording of Chef performing the song. The record company refuses, and furthermore hires Johnnie Cochran, who files a lawsuit against Chef for harassment.

In court, Cochran resorts to his “famous” Chewbacca Defense, which he “used during the Simpson trial,” according to another South Park character. Cochran begins by noting that although Chewbacca is from [the homeworld] Kashyyyk, he lives on [planet] Endor, and then proceeds to the heart of the defense: “Why would a Wookiee, an eight-foot tall Wookiee, want to live on Endor, with a bunch of two-foot tall Ewoks? [Wookiee and Ewok are species names.] That does NOT MAKE SENSE! But more important, you have to ask yourself: What does this have to do with this case? Nothing. Ladies and gentlemen, it has nothing to do with this case! It does NOT MAKE SENSE! Look at me. I’m a lawyer defending a major record company, and I’m talking about Chewbacca! Does that make sense? ... Ladies and gentlemen of the [jury], it does NOT MAKE SENSE! If Chewbacca lives on Endor, you must acquit!”

Cochran's use of this defense is so successful that the jury finds Chef guilty of “harassing a major record label” and sets his punishment as either a two million dollar fine to be paid within twenty-four hours or, failing that, four years in prison.

Ultimately a “Chef Aid” benefit concert is organized to raise money for Chef to hire Johnnie Cochran for his own lawsuit against the record company. The concert (a parody of Live Aid*)

* Karen and Skip had originally recommended a Live Aid-like plan to counter some of the bad publicity Sweetwater is facing (something along the lines of Gorilla Aid), but it seems Braka Dju had seen this coming and, with the Tsuba Ka campaign, has forced us to nix the plan. As polls in seven industrialized countries indicate that gorillas rank higher than human beings in the public’s awareness of the DRC conflict, we are in the process of developing alternative, monkey-centered PR proposals for your review. At the same time, we cannot

features his old showbiz friends — Elton John, Meat Loaf, Ozzy Osbourne (who kills [the character] Kenny by biting his head off), and others ... At the concert Johnnie Cochran experiences a change of heart ... and offers to represent Chef for free. He again successfully uses the Chewbacca defense, this time to defeat the record company and make them acknowledge Chef's authorship of their song. In the second use of the Chewbacca Defense, he ends by suddenly producing a stuffed monkey and shouting "Here, look at the monkey. Look at the silly monkey!", causing a juror's head to explode."

According to both our Internet and legal analysts, Braka Dju has hit a home run here. At this point, "Chewbacca Defense" has become a by-word on websites dealing with legal and, increasingly, political issues (see the Slashdot site – <http://slashdot.org> – and its various subculture offshoots; in fact, it seems there may be an under-under ground link here: below the Tsuba Ka gorilla in the Braka Dju image is a series of slashes and dots, morse code for "KKK" [Koltan Kills Kids]).

Thus, Koltan Kills Kids has managed to infiltrate multiple demographics simultaneously: the usual suspects (peacenicks, tree-huggers, vegetarians and the like); baby boomers *and* their children (a stunningly successful cross-generational appeal that seems to have given rise to a line of all-organic Tsuba Ka stuffed monkey toys just in time for the holidays); an otherwise un-reachable white male audience (couch potatoes); net freaks, computer nerds, assorted bloggers and pundits; and, worst of all, lawyers.

A final demographic of which you must be made aware has our analysts extremely concerned. Their concern stems from the fact that the process involved seems to be completely unrelated to Braka Dju. Others, as yet unidentified (one group or several, linked or not – this is still thoroughly unclear) have attached themselves to the campaign against Sweetwater, taking it in directions that we do not think Braka Dju had itself envisaged. In other words, this thing has taken on a life of its own. It is spawning networks whose nodes may or may not have any formal link to one another. As we know from the fight on terrorism, this is the toughest nut of them all to crack.

These networks do seem to have one, common starting point: a campaign poster created by Braka Dju (we are still hunting down the artist(s), but at this point have little hope of succeeding). This is the second of the two images I attach here. It shows, from left to right:

(1) A planet over which a snake is slithering** – most likely earth, on which Sweetwater may be the snake – shortly to be hit (and likely destroyed) by a coltan meteorite that has apparently given birth to headless beings (art historian Rosalind Krugge interprets these as a cross between Edvard Munch's "The Scream," the bright yellow Homer Simpson version of same, and some kind of bacterium, suggesting a terrible disease or mutation);

(2) A small African child on whose forehead a bar code has been pasted (according to Krugge, "an image of commodification");

afford to ignore the "children" aspect of the Braka Dju campaign, which, after all, is named "Koltan Kills *Kids*." Possibly a school or two could be built, as well as a few dispensaries, as an initial form of counter-action.

** Research on snake anatomy (Violetta found a useful South African web site – www.icon.co.za/~mvdmerwe – on the subject) pointed us in the direction of answers about the snake in the poster. Apparently, the snake is Congolese. It was photographed in 1959, in Congo, by a Belgian helicopter pilot, one Col. Remy Van Lierde. According to a second web site, on which the original picture can be viewed (<http://www.geocities.com/CapeCanaveral/Launchpad/6873/crypto.html>), "the snake [Van Lierde] saw measured approximately 40 to 50 feet in length [and was] dark brown/green with a white belly. It had triangle shaped jaws and a head about 3 ft x 2 ft. Experts have analyzed [photos Van Lierde took of the reptile] and have verified them as authentic. They also have verified the size of the creature by matching ground features to the snake. As the helicopter flew in lower the snake raised up 10 feet and looked as if it would strike at the helicopter if [it] flew any closer."

(3) CIA surveillance footage of an anti-coltan march in Paris (the sign brandished by the protestor at center, which equates coltan with blood, refers to “multinational” companies in general but, sources inside the Paris movement tell us this is a coded allusion to Sweetwater);

(4) The money shot: a Photoshop image showing a gagged and one-armed dreadlocked African, visibly in pain, holding what appears to be a corpse – his own body – wrapped in a Congolese flag, and wearing an Obama victory shirt (clearly, Krugge tells us, a claim of worldwide support for the Braka Dju campaign – the only good news, here, is that the Obama people swear they have nothing to do with this and that they have had no contact with Braka Dju).

Completely outside Braka Dju’s ambit, the poster has engendered a worldwide phenomenon that has caused havoc in the computer and telecommunications industries. The phenomenon in question is a computer game that can only be described as perverse. It belongs to a category that virtual reality specialists refer to as “ubiquitous games” (or, more generally, ubicomp [for “ubiquitous computing”]) – defined by our in-house IT crew as “games that are characterized by a porous interface between metaspace and cyberspace.” In the more interesting ubicomp games, much of the action takes place in the real world (as opposed to on a computer screen): while leading their everyday lives, players participate in a parallel gaming universe in which places, objects and people they encounter have a hidden, or double meaning.

Here again, Violetta has done useful research for us. Jane McGonigal (Resident Game Designer at the Institute for the Future), she tells us, has written a good article on the subject, in which the following is explained:

Ubiquitous gaming asks players to take up two core mechanics: first, searching for and experimenting with the hidden affordances of everyday objects and places; and second, exhaustively seeking to activate everything in their immediate environment. This activation is, in fact, mutual. Game structures activate the world by transforming everyday objects and places into interactive platforms and also activate players by making them more responsive to potential calls for interaction. This is because the act of exposing previously unperceived affordances creates a more meaningful relationship between the actor and the object or the space in the world.***

The ubicomp game engendered by the Braka Dju poster is called “Third World War.” It features a hydra-like female protagonist called Daku Rani who can take on as many forms as players involved. Daku Rani can be good or evil, depending on the player’s inclinations. She moves through space collecting firepower, battle plans and tactical advantages, and rallying people to her cause, in a conflict that, as the game’s name suggests, involves the whole world. While the entire planet is concerned, in the game’s storyboard set-up, the starting place of the war is Eastern Congo. Specifically, it is Sweetwater-DRC’s Goma offices. As in early games such as “Barcode Battler” (a low tech game developed as early as 1991) and “Botfighters” (2001), “everyday objects can be (mis)used (or put to alternate ends) to gather tools for effective (play) destruction.”****

In “Third World War,” the ultimate goal (depending, again, on the player’s inclination) is either to blow up Planet Earth or to save it from destruction. Here, the creators of the game have clearly taken their cue from the left-most image in the Braka Dju poster. A secondary goal (yet again a matter of player inclination) involves either murdering or saving a protagonist known as Le Lion, who possesses a cache of esoteric knowledge that

*** Jane McGonigal, *Space Time Play – Computer Games, Architecture and Urbanism : The Next Level*, F. von Borries, S.P. Walz and M. Böttger eds., Basel, Boston, Berlin : Birhuuser, 2007 (p. 236).

**** Madeleine Notbright, *When Death Is Worth It: A Gamer’s Manual*, Washington, DC: Arcadia, 2007 (p. 123).

must be accessed to move upward into the more complex echelons of the game (which few people, if any, have been known to reach so far). Among the items in the cache is Sweetwater-DRC's business plan for 2009-2013. Rumor has it that we are talking, here, about the actual business plan and that, when changes were made to the plan following the collapse of Lehman Brothers earlier this year, the data in the cache was changed as well. In other words, Sweetwater security may have been breached or you may have a mole at headquarters. For "Third World War" gamers, the gagged, two-headed figure on the right of the Braka Dju poster would appear to represent Le Lion – to be killed on top (facing North) or liberated on the bottom (facing South).

As in the early games mentioned above, and as in more sophisticated present-day games, tools to fight in "Third World War" can be acquired in metaspace – the real world. In "Barcode Battler," the trick was to use barcodes obtained from the packaging of ordinary goods to accrue points. Afficionados of the game knew which barcodes were more effective than others; as this had nothing to do with the actual cost of barcoded goods (Campbell's tomato soup barcoads were more point-rich than Lindt chocolate barcoads, for example), the game ended up attracting a crowd known for its vocal attacks on capitalist value systems. The "Third World War" people have revived the old "Barcoad Battler" move: barcoads from items you can buy in any corner store contain tools for engaging in the war; this return to an old-school gaming device (Battler was the inspiration for the Pokemon craze) was probably inspired by the top middle image in the Braka Dju poster.

Much more effective, however, as sources for weapons, plans and tactical advantages to do battle in "Third World War" are everyday objects that are said to "contain blood." At the top of the list are items whose manufacture calls for coltan. To access the "blood points" contained in such items, the coltan within them must be removed and destroyed. This, of course, is highly problematic, as the two most common, coltan-dependant everyday objects with which people across the world come in contact are cell phones and computers. The fact that most cars today contain computers of some kind or other further complicates things.

Ubicomp games are meant to be, can be and are played anywhere and everywhere in the world. Unlike related but different types of games, according to McGonigal, they "engage players by the hundreds or thousands at minimum, more typically by the tens of thousands and, in the most successful games [which appears to be the case with "Third World War"], by the hundreds of thousands at a time."***** Given how easy it is to access cell phones, computers and cars almost everywhere, including the most remote parts of countries like DRC, this is alarming to say the very least. In early days, the damage was fairly contained. At this point, however, we are fast approaching a potentially catastrophic tipping point. So many people in so many places are playing "Third World War" that, in the past month and a half, we have witnessed destruction on a massive scale.

At first, manufacturers of objects containing coltan were delighted: the assumption was that the need to replace stolen and destroyed phones, vehicles and lap and desktops would result in orders that would counterbalance sales losses due to the global economic slump. It was also assumed in some quarters that the price of coltan would shoot up as a result. Initially, these predictions proved accurate. But as the damage has become more and more widespread (by way of example: in the French village of Ludon-Médoc [*circa* 3500 inhabitants], 2023 cell phones, 798 computers and 1203 cars were destroyed by gamers in the Fall trimester of 2006 alone), insurance companies have ceased reimbursing consumers whose coltan-containing valuables have been vandalized. As a result, not only have sales not picked up; consumers have also started to look into alternatives, with an increasing number of people biking to work and visiting neighbors and family rather than calling, skyping or e-mailing them. Paper and pen sales are up. Most alarming, cell, computer and car manufacturers are staring to invest in alternative materials and technologies research, with an eye toward moving away from coltan use altogether.

Analysts disagree as to the long term effects of what is shaping up to be a major crisis. Paul Tuparl d'Uncon (The Mining Institute, La Joya, CA) argues that the movement will peter out. Hugh Montague out at Langley

***** *Space Time Play*, pp, 236-237.

disagrees; as he sees it, there is much worse to come. He predicts “blood tool” attacks on increasingly larger targets – a move, notably, from SUVs to small aircraft and eventually, as “Third World War” gains adepts among commercial ground and flight crews and military personnel, onward to civilian and military carriers. According to a confidential memo leaked to our Palm Springs office by an un-named Pentagon official, increased security is being recommended for Cape Canaveral. The French seem to be gearing up for a similar arrangement at their Ariane launch pad in Guyana.

The darkest scenario comes to us from Isaak Judah (U.K. Le Guin Professor of Futurology at the Institute of Higher Consciousness, Kiev, Russia). Judah has been tracking “Third World War” gamer strategies and compiling statistics on the game’s spread for two years now. He heads up a team of fifteen, including mathematicians, sociologists, epidemiologists, a viral marketing specialist and, of course, an IT crew. His take is that the movement is growing so fast and that so many people are becoming caught up in it that “it has effectively migrated from the virtual world wholly into the everyday space of human interaction.” As he sees it, the likeliest outcome is a situation in which so many coltan-based manufactured goods are destroyed that: (A) as noted by others (see above) major manufacturers in a range of fields will focus on developing alternatives to coltan and (B) as a result, the coltan market will collapse entirely. This, however, he states, will only be the tip of the iceberg. Having come to this point, the developers and gamers of “Third World War” – and, likely, collectives like Braka Dju – emboldened by the success of their actions, will (C) turn their attention to other “blood point” materials (other rare and highly strategic metals as well as better-known targets such as oil, diamonds, uranium and the like), (D) potentially causing the collapse of entire commodity markets and (E) ultimately, destabilizing capitalism itself. He believes that it is unlikely the movement can be stopped.

On the basis of the foregoing, and following extensive consultation with a crisis cell put in place at our request by the World Bank, we recommend that Sweetwater promptly sell all of its DRC coltan holdings and invest the proceeds in clean air technologies. Appalling as it is, barring large-scale military action (for which our friends at Blackriver, Inc. are prepared to offer you a turnkey package, but which we are not convinced has a reasonable chance of success) it does appear that investment in these technologies is the only reasonable option at this time.

I will get back to you early next week with detailed proposals for the smooth execution of this proposed exit strategy. In the meantime, we strongly recommend that you avoid any interaction with the press and that you enforce a Sweetwater-wide gag order in all matters relating to Braka Dju’s “Koltan Kills Kids” campaign.

Please don’t hesitate to call me if you have any questions.

Sincerely,

Stephen Kalichnik, CEO