DAVID OGILVY

An Autobiography

An Autobiography

David Ogilvy

John Wiley & Sons, Inc.

New York • Chichester • Weinheim • Brisbane • Singapore • Toronto

This text is printed on acid-free paper.

First published in Great Britain by Hamish Hamilton Limited, 1978.

Copyright © 1997 by David Ogilvy.
Published by John Wiley & Sons, Inc.

All rights reserved. Published simultaneously in Canada.

Reproduction or translation of any part of this work beyond that permitted by Section 107 or 108 of the 1976 United States Copyright Act without the permission of the copyright owner is unlawful. Requests for permission or further information should be addressed to the Permissions Department, John Wiley & Sons, Inc.

This publication is designed to provide accurate and authoritative information in regard to the subject matter covered. It is sold with the understanding that the publisher is not engaged in rendering legal, accounting, or other professional services. If legal advice or other expert assistance is required, the services of a competent professional person should be sought.

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data:

Ogilvy, David, 1911–
An autobiography / David Ogilvy.
p. cm.
Rev. ed. of : Blood, brains & beer.
Includes index.
ISBN 0-471-18002-5 (cloth : alk. paper)
1. Ogilvy, David, 1911– . 2. Advertising—Biography.
I. Ogilvy, David, 1911– Blood, brains & beer. II. Title.
HF5810.034A3 1997
659.1'092—dc21 96-45350
[B]

Printed in the United States of America

10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1

Preface

It has been seventeen years since I wrote this autobiography. I am now 85 and less interested in myself than I was when I was 50. I have no taste for bringing my story up to the minute. However, in response to my publisher's wish for new material, I have supplied lists of my favorite obscure words, my favorite flowers, my favorite recipes—and my favorite friends.

Here are some of the things I would have gone into had I the inclination, or the gall, to inflict another seventeen years on readers.

- *My love affair with India.* I served as chairman of Ogilvy & Mather in India for a number of years in the 1980s. I spent many months in India visiting our five Indian offices and came to feel the greatest admiration and affection for my partners there, and for their courageous country.
- I also became temporary chairman of Ogilvy & Mather in Germany and nearly every week for a

year or so took the train back and forth between Touffou, my house in France, and my office in Frankfurt. My German partners, to their great credit, worked me hard and I enjoyed every minute of it. Well, almost every minute.

- *How to get a standing ovation.* I set forth from Touffou several times a year to make speeches—to trade associations, client gatherings, covenings of our company's hotshots, and so on. In Los Angeles I spoke at a lunch gathering of a thousand people in the advertising trade. On arrival at the podium I reached out my arms and made a slight gesture upwards. The entire audience rose to its feet and cheered.

  That made me feel good so I did the same thing with other audiences. It always worked. It puzzles me that I continue to be in demand as a speaker because I never say anything new. I keep on beating the drums for advertising that *sells,* and flogging those who think that advertising is entertainment. I will go to my grave believing that advertisers want results, and the advertising business may go to its grave believing otherwise.

- *The hostile takeover.* In 1989, my beloved company was bought on the public market by WPP, a British firm run by the remarkable Martin Sorrell. It was an unhappy experience, particularly since it never

试读结束：需要全本请在线购买： www.ertongbook.com

could have happened had I only resisted selling our company to the public 25 years earlier. Once the battle was lost, however, I swallowed my pride, and at Martin Sorrell's request, served three years as non-executive chairman of WPP. As a result of the purchase, it had become the largest firm of its kind in the world.

Nowadays I note that the business press never fails, when mentioning Ogilvy & Mather, to refer to it as "a unit of WPP." Why do they have to keep rubbing it in?

- *My life at Touffou.* I like to garden. I am sustained by the companionship of my wife Herta. I dote on my grandchildren. Technically they are not *my* grandchildren as their mothers are my stepdaughters. But they are the light of my life.

I carry on a lively correspondence, by fax and by mail. (When I first came here the volume of my correspondence was so great that it raised the official status of the post office in Bonnes, automatically qualifying the postmaster for a handsome salary increase.)

I enjoy the frequent visits of friends and former colleagues, many of them now retired or moved on to other enterprises. And from time to time, the present Board of Directors of Ogilvy & Mather gathers here in Touffou for two or three days of meetings. A captive audience if

ever there was one, and I take full advantage of it, sounding off at length in my role as the company's holy spook.

Touffou itself, a 14th-century castle (more about that in the last chapter), has become a lively tourist attraction under French laws governing historic sites. At first I didn't care to see tourists traipsing around the place. But a couple of years ago my stepdaughter Minouche and her husband Douglas put in proper parking space, a refreshment stand, and a gift shop. So I took to counting the customers every afternoon. It helps with the upkeep.

David Ogilvy

December 1996

Contents

Preface *vii*

1 Sweet Master 1

2 I Become a Chef in Paris 39

3 New York and Hollywood 57

4 Secret Service 79

5 A Very Large Rural Monastery 97

6 Fame and Fortune 117

7 The Light at the End of the Tunnel 143

8 A Forest Full of Surprises 157

Favorite Words 171

Favorite Recipes 173

Favorite Flowers 183

List of Clients 185

Index *188*

1

Sweet Master

My grandfather was born on June 23. So was my father. And so was I. In 1911. Our home was in Horsley, a village in Surrey about thirty miles southwest of London. In those days Surrey was still a paradise of plovers' eggs, cowslip wine, charcoal burners, gypsies in caravans, thatched haystacks, and governess carts. There was also a witch called Dame Feathers who lived in a chalk-pit. Our next-door neighbor was Sir Henry Roscoe the chemist, and his niece Beatrix Potter was a frequent visitor to our house. Her England is the England I remember.

In the eyes of Nancy Niggins, my nanny, I could do no wrong. When my elder brother and sisters complained that I was intolerable, she defended me—"Sweet Master, he's *hungry.*" When I swallowed the castor oil instead of spewing it on her bed, she saluted me—"Sweet Master is braver than Lord Roberts."

The undernurse was heard to snarl, "Wait until I get hold of you!" This turned out to be no idle threat. When

I was three, England declared war on Germany, my father was ruined, and his servants were sacked—Brett the gardener, Bashford the chauffeur, Florence Cherry the housemaid, Lucy Skull the cook who specialized in meringues, and, worst of all, Nancy Niggins. She was my surrogate mother, and her departure was a trauma from which I have not recovered. The only survivor of this holocaust was the aforesaid undernurse. She lost no time in making my life miserable. Her strategy was to attack my self-confidence by convincing me that I was a runt, a weakling, a milksop, and a mollycoddle. When my sister Mary wrestled me to the ground, this termagant held me up to derision, making no allowance for the fact that Mary was four years older than I.

We had to move in with my mother's mother in London. This plunged my father into a permanent sulk. Grandmother was rumored to be half Jewish. She said *serviette* when she should have said table napkin, mirror when she should have said looking glass. She pronounced venison, medicine and vegetable in three syllables. Rebecca West, who was her niece, has described her as looking like a cross between a bloodhound and a woman policeman.* But I loved her gusto. She had long since banished my errant grandfather, and I saw him only on expeditions to Madame Tussaud's waxworks:

* In *The Fountain Overflows.*

Every night when the clock strikes one
They all come together with a rum-tum-tum,
Murderers, clergymen, thieves, and Lords,
Ever so jolly in Madame Tussaud's.

This grandfather, Arthur Fairfield, was an Irishman from County Kerry. He had been a civil servant, but was forced to resign when Joe Chamberlain caught him conniving with our cousins in Kerry for improvements to the Dingle harbor. His brother, Edward Fairfield, an undersecretary at the Colonial Office, was accused of authorizing the Jameson Raid which triggered the Boer War, but he died of a heart attack the night before he was to be questioned by the commission of inquiry. *The Times* wrote a generous obituary, exonerating him of blame, but my cantankerous grandfather would have none of it. He telegraphed to the editor: HOW DARE YOU IMPLY THAT ANYONE COULD FOR ONE MOMENT HAVE THOUGHT THAT MY BROTHER WAS IN ANY WAY CONNECTED WITH THAT PIRATICAL ENTERPRISE?

Driving to a dinner party in a hansom cab, he accused the driver of going a long way round, shouting such insults through the aperture in the roof that the man pulled up and forced Grandfather to get out and fight. When I was no more than five, he lectured me on the villainies of Mr. Gladstone, a kinsman of my father, alleging that the Gladstone fortune derived from the slave trade. He was also fond of haranguing me on the Armenian atrocities.

试读结束：需要全本请在线购买： www.ertongbook.com

Life with Grandmother was spoiled not only by my nurse, but also by the Zeppelin raids. They happened at night, but I also remember the first daylight raid on July 17, 1917—I could see the bombers, like a swarm of bees high above.

One day when I was six, my mother's sister Zöe Fairfield took me to a garden party at the headquarters of the Student Christian Movement, which she managed.* An African bishop spent the afternoon playing bowls with me. No grown-up had ever been so nice before; obviously black people were a superior race. During our communal bath that evening, I instructed my sisters to pinch me, and to keep pinching until I was black. They were able to turn my right leg a beautiful brown, and a few days later they had finished the left leg, but by that time the right one had returned to pink.

I was the original Nosey Parker. At the age of eight I formed the habit of asking my father's friends how much they were worth; most of them were so taken aback that they told me. And I devoted one day during every school holiday to reading my eldest sister's love letters. This genius for espionage was to come in useful during the Hitler war.

* If my aunt had been a man, she would have become an archbishop. Dr. James Parkes, the religious historian, writes that "the contribution she made to the developing ecumenism of British Christianity was immeasurable" (*Voyage of Discoveries,* Gollancz).

I always preferred the company of grown-ups, the older the more interesting. My particular friend was Canon Wilson, who had been a friend of Charles Stuart Calverly at Cambridge in 1852. He knew all Calverly's poems by heart, and laboriously taught them to me:

> *The auld wife sat at her ivied door*
> *(Butter and eggs and a pound of cheese)*
> *A thing she had frequently done before;*
> *And her spectacles lay on her apron'd knees.*

My father was kind, patient, gentle, straightforward, unselfish, affectionate, athletic, and strong as an ox. He sneezed louder than anyone I have ever known, ate spoonfuls of hot Colman's mustard without any apparent sign of distress, and climbed trees as fast as a chimpanzee. He did his best to make me as strong and brainy as himself. When I was six, he required that I should drink a tumbler of raw blood every day. When that brought no result, he tried beer. To strengthen my mental faculties, he ordered that I should eat calves' brains three times a week. Blood, brains, and beer: a noble experiment.

He admired all his children without reservation. When a schoolmaster dared to write something critical on my report card, my father said, "The man is an ass." Soon after I started my first job in advertising, I wrote to tell him that my salary had been doubled; next time I went to visit him, he was waiting at the door of his cottage,

chanting "See the Conquering Hero Comes." But he was not blind to my shortcomings. When I was fourteen I made the mistake of sending him an overblown poem I had composed:

The glory of the sunset is roaring in the West
Day is going, night coming, and they meet breast to breast
And linger in one blazing kiss of fire and cloud
Both mistress of the world, both radiant and proud.

How, he wanted to know, could Day, which disappeared in the West, come face to face with Night, which came from the East? When I was twenty-three, I sent him a copy of a fifty-page report I had written on the marketing operations of Allied Ironfounders. His only reaction was to point out the spelling mistakes. When I asked him to take me on one of his fishing expeditions in the Jura, he refused—"You are too impatient to fish, you would drive me mad." When a rich cousin invited me to shoot pheasants on his estate, I asked my father to lend me a pair of his guns. "No," he replied, "shooting is a rich man's sport and you are not a rich man." When I was at Oxford, he urged me to stop buying an evening paper on the grounds that I could not afford the penny it cost.

From my father I inherited two things—smoking a pipe and a scatological sense of humor. I was devoted to him, but we never had a conversation of any intimacy, even after I grew up. He was a classical scholar, and he

taught himself to speak Gaelic as well as English. He sang Gaelic songs with overwhelming pathos, and played the bagpipes—not reels and marches, but pibroch, those intricate variations which are the highest form of bagpipe music. He had played rugby football for Cambridge University. He was a crack shot with a rifle and spent his bachelor vacations stalking chamoix in the Pyrenees and stags in Scotland; our house was festooned with trophies. But by the time I knew him his self-confidence had been eroded by years of financial anxiety. He saw himself as a failure, and it gnawed at his vitals. He had been wrapped up in his mother; their favorite game was to see whether he could dance reels faster than she could play them on the piano. He did not marry until he was thirty-five and then chose the wrong wife. My mother was a medical student of nineteen, with brown eyes, freckles, an eighteen-inch waist, a splendid bust, and a convoluted mind. She was to bear him five children, but I never saw any sign that she loved him. My father bored her to distraction. He took her nagging with too much patience and continued to treat her with dogged devotion for forty-two years. When she died, he died a fortnight later. I had promised to scatter his ashes in the deer forest where he had been happiest, but when the time came I funked that grisly rite.

My mother always resented the fact that her marriage to my father had prevented her becoming a doctor, and never found any other interest to occupy her restless mind.

She was blind to all forms of art. She read continuously, starting every book on the last page and working her way back to the beginning. She detested dishes which contained onion or any other flavor. She had no talent for pleasure, but was never dull. Her favorite bed-time story was a serial about a family which suffered the embarrassment of having a grandmother who was a pig, by name Betsy Bumpher. The plot revolved around the problems which arose when Grandma Bumpher came to visit. Where, for example, should she sleep? If she were put in the pigsty, her feelings might be hurt, but if she were given a bedroom . . . . It did not dawn on me until recently that Betsy Bumpher was her mother.

It was typical of my mother that, when I was thirteen, she gave me the following advice: "Never allow a surgeon to operate on your piles. It hurts like billy-o, and the piles always come back." After I grew up she told me, "You have inherited my love of gardening, but your taste is utterly vulgar. You have no interest in the plants themselves, all you want is to make a *show*." One day when we were on a long walk, she said, "I have very little money, but I am leaving every penny to your sisters. This will help them leave their husbands if they are minded to do so." She gave me a bum steer only once. When I was sixteen, we were standing in a dense crowd outside the Duomo in Florence, waiting for the flight of the mechanical pigeon which signals the arrival of the Holy Ghost. Suddenly I spied a girl, the most beautiful I had ever seen, and started

elbowing my way through the crowd in her direction. "Don't be a juggins," said my mother, "you will see dozens as pretty as her before you leave Italy." I made the mistake of believing her. She used her nose the way other people use their eyes. When she wanted to know if her children were clean, she *sniffed* us. When dishes were handed to her at dinner, she picked them up and smelled them. (I have inherited her nose, and I have a good palate. During a recent tour of the Arthur D. Little tasting lab in Boston, I was handed two glasses of brandy and challenged to identify them. This gave me no difficulty: one was Martell and the other Christian Brothers. At a dinner party on his plantation in Maryland, Arthur Houghton bet me that I could not identify the wine. I tasted it and wondered why Arthur, the arch-connoisseur, had such awful stuff in his cellar. It could only be because it had been produced in the neighborhood. "Maryland?" Right again. Arthur planted an orchard of peach trees, only to see them devoured by deer. Every fifty yards around the perimeter of the orchard he hung tin cans and filled them with tiger manure from the Washington zoo. The smell terrified the deer and the peach trees were saved. When he tried *lion* manure, the deer ignored it. They hadn't smelled tigers or lions for tens of thousands of years, but they knew that they could outrun lions.)

My father sent me to a London kindergarten dressed in a kilt. This struck the English boys as effeminate, and one of them tormented me until I punched him in the

试读结束：需要全本请在线购买： www.ertongbook.com