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This story is when I began to uncover an interest in writing that had been buried since early high school. From this point forward, I began work to learn how to write, and write well. For back story information, it was in April of 1985 when Coca-Cola launched a campaign to change from cane sugar to high fructose corn syrup as a sweetener, thus bringing about a revolt in the grocery store aisles, particularly in the Deep South. Here is a great link: [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/New\\_Coke](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/New_Coke)

### Changing Coke Is Part Of A Marketing Scam

The other night, during one of our regular Trivial Pursuit battles, the hostess asked me if I wanted a Coke. My immediate response was, "New Coke or Old Coke?" She answered me with a beckoning finger and led me to their storage room where I was shown stacks of cases of "Old Coke." I had visions of an underground of black marketers who profited by hoarding and then selling at exorbitant prices the "Real Thing." Where young things would sell their innocence for a taste of Old Coke. Where "Coke" at parties would really mean, "Coca-Cola."

Then, a thought hit me like a ton of empty aluminum cans. The whole world has been subjected to one of the sharpest marketing scams created since the packaging of Jimmy Carter. All of the petitions to "Bring Back Coke" and all of the threats to turn to Pepsi were foreseen by Coca-Cola. In fact, Coke *counted* on people screaming for their daily fix. This whole change in taste has been nothing more than a shell game in which the shyster makes us look one way while moving the pea the other direction.

What could be more beautiful? Coke has a slowly declining market share before the switch. Take away the old taste. Give them something that is so sweet that you can swill it around in your mouth without it burning (something hard to do with Old Coke), all the while telling everybody how improved the new taste is. Wait for people to run out of their carefully rationed reserves. Do nothing to quiet public requests for the old taste. The, finally, grudgingly, put the old taste back on the market, and recapture a larger share than before the change.

Mark my word! I am willing to make the following predictions:

1. Protests will continue to build, through events such as special public demonstrations, interviews, letters, petitions.
2. Coca-Cola will at first do nothing other than give a bland response, if any at all, to these requests.
3. Other soft drink manufacturers, after they catch on to what I have already seen, will cancel all ads claiming that their taste was "Too good to change," or any other reference to the Coke change.
4. Coke market share will drop initially.
5. There might even be legal battles for the right to produce the old drink.

6. Finally, Coca-Cola will come public with an announcement that “Due to public demand, Coca-Cola has decided to stop producing the new flavor and will return to what the American public has been demanding: “The Real, Real Thing.”
7. The switch back to the old taste will take place no later than the middle or end of July. (Keep in mind that they made this switch before the hot season, when people want soft drinks more than ever. What could be better timing than to give people what they want in the dog days of August?)

Yes, I will start drinking Coke again when they make the change back to the old taste, even though I had been tapering off some before the switch to the new flavor. You just gotta admire guys who lay it on the line like they have.

P.S. If my predictions aren't right, then I will have the same batting average as most stock market analysts.

Mike Sledge

Author's note: Coca-Cola reintroduced the old flavor on July 10, 1985.