

Popular Cleanser Great Cleaner, Terrible Sound Effect

“*Old Dutch*, the cleanser that polishes as it cleans.”

--- Russ Young

Lincoln, Me. (DG)—

In order to be successful, radio relied completely on sound. Whether it was words, music, or funny noises, they were all vital. Since radio commercials during the golden age were heard only on radio and nowhere else, they also needed the services of sound.

If you have read other articles I have written either on this website or my own website (www.dg125.com), you should know when I open an article with something that makes you want to exclaim “**duh!**”--- there is usually an exception to the rule. Guess what, gang? There is an exception for the use of sound on radio. Silence on radio, that’s disastrous!

While other radio sponsors relied on sound, there was a product that believed “**Silence Is Golden**” for its success. The quiet product in question was *Old Dutch*, the cleanser with the famous “**Old Dutch Girl**” chasing that nasty dirt with her stick.

It all took place on an *Old Dutch Cleanser* commercial heard on a 1939 broadcast of the *BACHELOR’S CHILDREN* serial program on the **Mutual Network*** ■. The commercial began with announcer Russ Young describing how *Old Dutch* cleaned sinks, pots, and pans better than any other cleanser. The reason why was “**Seismotite**,” an ingredient that cleaned and polished the surface it touched without scratching. To prove *Old Dutch* didn’t scratch, a real live “**Coin Test**” was conducted at that moment for the listeners to hear--- and **DIDN’T** hear!

To prove the honesty of the test, Young informed the listeners that housewives were selected to witness what was going on. First, 2 pieces of glass were placed on a table. When this was done, some *Old Dutch Cleanser* was sprinkled on one piece of glass, and the infamous other cleanser was sprinkled on the other piece of glass. When both cleansers were applied, a coin was needed to perform the test. Now comes the moment of truth. The coin was placed on the glass with the other cleanser and moved slowly in a circular motion on the glass. For the few seconds it was done, the listeners heard a



nauseating scratchy sound. It wasn't static from the radio, but the sound of the other cleanser scratching the surface of the glass. Now it was **Old Dutch's** turn. The coin was cleaned off and moved to the glass with **Old Dutch**. It was moved the same way as before. Instead of that disgusting scratchy sound, the listeners heard nothing but silence. If there was any noise during this phase of the test, it was the radio's fault!

You might be wondering what does the Coin Test prove? The noise heard from the other cleanser meant that product had disgusting grit. It scratched the surface while it was being cleaned. Granted, the surface was clean, but the surface was ruined. Over time, this could get very ugly! The noise not heard from **Old Dutch** meant its amazing **Seismotite** combined cleaning and polishing for a smooth and clean surface without scratching.

The result of the Coin Test ended in a split decision. For sound effects, the other cleanser won easily, but for cleaning and polishing without scratching, it was **Old Dutch** hands down. Since the housewife cared more about cleaning than hearing sound effects, her choice was to use **Old Dutch** for cleaning sinks, pots, pans, and other surfaces of the house when a cleanser was used.

Old Dutch may not be fondly remembered for its sound effects during the history of radio's golden age, but sound effects doesn't necessarily promise clean and polished surfaces. That was why housewives preferred to use quiet **Old Dutch Cleanser** than any other cleaning product of the era.

*Editor's Note: It's a good bet a similar *Old Dutch* Coin Test commercial was also heard on *BACHELOR'S CHILDREN* over the stations of the Columbia Network. The program was on the air on both Mutual and Columbia at the time.