

NEWS RELEASE

For Immediate Release:
Monday, April 23, 2001

For More Information Contact:
Gary Ruskin (503) 295-6916

Commercial Alert Criticizes Alcatel Over Gehrig Ad

Commercial Alert criticized French telecommunications company Alcatel for “dragging our heroes through the commercial muck” by using Lou Gehrig’s famous farewell speech in their advertisements.

The company already has released an ad using a doctored version of Martin Luther King Jr.’s “I Have A Dream” speech. Now, according to USA Today, it plans to release an ad enlisting Lou Gehrig, the former New York Yankee great. The ad will include a doctored clip of Gehrig's famous 1939 farewell speech at Yankee Stadium, in which he declared, while dying of an incurable disease, that he was the "luckiest man on the face of the Earth"

“Alcatel is demonstrating that it is not worthy to invoke the names of genuine heroes such as Martin Luther King Jr. and Lou Gehrig,” said Gary Ruskin, Executive Director of Commercial Alert. “If Alcatel thinks it brings credit upon itself by ripping off dead heroes and reducing them to the level of Joe Isuzu and the Taco Bell Chihuahua, it needs to think a little harder.”

Alcatel faced widespread criticism recently for its ads using Martin Luther King Jr. and his famous "I Have a Dream" speech. "To advertisers like Alcatel, nothing is sacred besides the dollar," Ruskin said. "They'll stoop to any depth, despoil any hero just to make a buck."

Ralph Nader founded Commercial Alert in 1998 to keep the commercial culture within its proper sphere, and to prevent it from exploiting children and subverting the higher values of family, community, environmental integrity and democracy. Commercial Alert's website is at <http://www.commercialalert.org>.