



**In my opinion...**

**DEAN SAYS:**

**To be  
perfectly  
honest...**

I'm on a crusade. I suppose I had better tell you that right up front. I am fed up, irritated, angry, incensed, disturbed, offended, and almost to the point of being downright mean about this. About what? Honesty, that's what! And particularly honesty in marketing and advertising. What pushed me over the edge?

Last night while watching the new Perry Mason solve yet another convoluted murder mystery—you do understand that the new Perry Mason is really the old Raymond Burr, as opposed to the old Perry Mason which is the young Raymond Burr, don't you?—when the rotund master of courtroom theatrics was interrupted by a commercial spot announcement for a throat lozenge.

The commercial pictured a man in a telephone booth trying to talk on the phone while rubbing his throat. "Let me call you back," he says. A thunder-throated announcer intones, "Sore throat pain?" (Cut to a close up of a leather-bound book lying on a table.) "*Physicians Desk Reference* lists Sucrets®."

I just about jumped right out of my easy chair.

"*Physicians Desk Reference* lists

Sucrets," I yelled back at the screen. "Of course it lists Sucrets, for crying out loud! The stupid book is a list of prescription and nonprescription medicines."

I was thoroughly incensed at the cleverness of the commercial. How many people, I wondered, would be fooled? How many unsuspecting victims of sore throat pain would assume that the esteemed *Physicians Desk Reference* was endorsing this product?

A push of the "rewind" button on the VCR let me roll through the offending commercial again. And then I noticed it. Tiny type superimposed in the lower left corner of the screen. What did it say? I hit "rewind" again and then the "pause" button. With the image frozen on the screen I could read the words, "Information on medicines supplied by the manufacturer." Ah, I thought, the disclaimer.

See it's all right to stretch the truth by implication, IF one provides a disclaimer. Or is it?

Now before some 30-year user of this product takes me to task for attacking an elixir that has soothed many a sore throat, let me hasten to point out that I have nothing against the product. My beef is with the subtle bending of the truth in order to achieve another marketing coup.

No, I have no more against this product itself, than I have against the local fire or burglary contractor who, after several years of working out of the

back of his or her truck, with a trusty answering machine plugged into the home telephone to take calls while he or she is on the job, finally gets far enough ahead to open a small office, install a Digital Alarm Communicator Receiver, plunk his or her Aunt Susiebelle in front of the display and take out an ad in the yellow pages that announces: "Central Station Fire and Burglary Alarms." From such roots some of you have sprung.

Am I calling this contractor incompetent? No. Am I suggesting that he or she should be prevented from getting ahead? No. Am I trying to suggest that only "big" companies are capable of meeting the signaling needs of valued customers? **Of course not.**

What I'm doing, plain and simple, is calling the contractor a liar! (Was that a gasp I heard from your lips?) **Yes, a liar.**

To represent a nonlisted receiving station as a "central station" is to stretch the truth of a time-honored understanding among users and Authorities Having Jurisdiction. Is it illegal? Probably not, as long as "listing" is not stated or implied. Is it ethical? Not in my judgment. Does it help build a credible image of the signaling industry? No, it does not.

One of the main reasons for *TM-WSR* is to give Wayne and me a vehicle by which we may preach the gospel (good news) of standards-complying signaling systems. Any person or any business practice that builds a barrier which will prevent customers from buying systems that have been designed and installed in accordance with the appropriate national standards, and will be maintained and tested in accordance with those standards, becomes my enemy.

Hopefully you agree that we need to maintain a high ethical standard within the signaling industry. This ethical standard should not only reflect "truth in advertising," but should encompass all business practices: from bidding a job, all the way to how a manager treats his or her employees. Such a standard will certainly help bolster the image of the signaling profession.

I sincerely believe that the several signaling trade associations should de-

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**Dean Says...**

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termine to drum out of their fellowship individuals and companies that have staked their reputations on "shady deals."

Honesty and integrity. As a boy, raised by parents with deep religious convictions who sincerely made their faith a vital part of their lives, when faced with a decision, I was challenged to ask myself, "What would Jesus do?"

Sadly, I have not always done what He would do, but I know without a shadow of a doubt that I would have been far better off if I had. □

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