

## Advertisements: Lies in Plain Sight

Advertising is the most well-funded, cosmopolitan, and aggressive form of lying there is.

Every letter printed and every pixel digitally displayed has been carefully chosen in order to have the maximum effect on your mind. The truth is, companies need money, and they are not above employing deceitful word tactics to get your dollar. Persistent advertising strategies have been

outlined by both Jeffrey Shrank's "The

Language of Advertising Claims" and Jib

Fowles' "Advertising's Fifteen Basic

Appeals." These authors suggest that

advertisements catch us through emotional

appeals or word tricks, both methods being

deceitful. Advertisements need to catch our

attention first, then persuade us that this

product is superior to all other products. The

following ads suggest that concealable

weapons may have an impact on survival

chances, that certain guns are avant-garde

**CITY SLICKER™**  
**COIN PURSE**

When you can't take a gun or knife,  
the City Slicker™ may just save your life!  
Great Protection in Crowded Areas & While Vacationing Abroad

MSRP  
**\$24.99**  
Style M63

**CAN BE WORN**

- Tucked in waistband
- In pocket
- In jacket
- In handbag

Carry all of your  
coins & heavy  
items with  
comfort &  
security in a  
glove-leather  
change sack.

MADE IN  
THE USA

*We didn't invent concealment, we just perfected it!*

**De F Santis**  
**GUNHIDE**

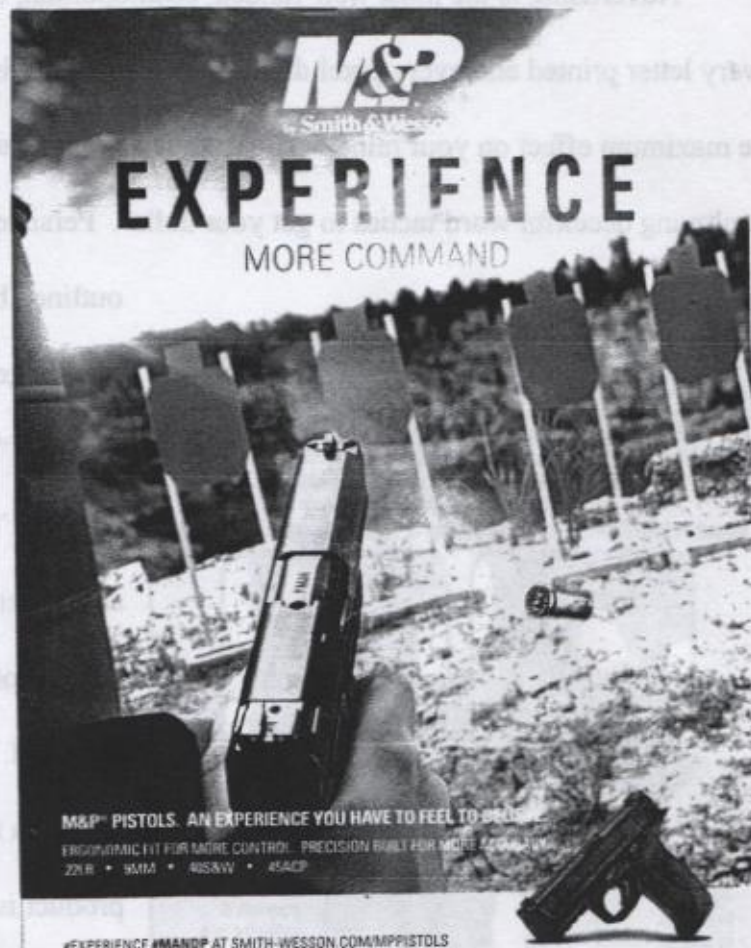
**800-GUNHIDE 631-841-6300**  
Dept# GW45  
431 Bayview Avenue  
Amityville, NY 11701  
[www.desantisholster.com](http://www.desantisholster.com)

pieces of high technology, and that certain safes may be completely child-proof.

In the first advertisement by De Santis Gunhide, a coin purse with a long wrist strap is depicted in three images in the center of the vertical advertisement. The first image shows the product being grabbed by the strap, but still hidden in the waistline of a woman's pair of jeans, the second displays the product in the middle of unholstering, and the third shows the product in the woman's combat-ready stance with the coin purse being menacingly suspended in the air.

This ad is selling a sort of coin purse sling, intended to be filled with heavy coins and swung around to dissuade or damage oncoming assailants. To the left and right of the focal point of the advertisement are recommendations as to where to wear the coin purse and a description of what the product does. The heading of this advertisement tries to sell this product as a viable weapon option if "you can't take a gun or knife."

Furthermore, the company suggest that "the City Slicker may just save your life!" This is an example of Schrank's weasel claim as the company decided to use the word "may" rather than "will," meaning that this product does not guarantee any sort of



**M&P**  
Smith & Wesson

# EXPERIENCE

MORE COMMAND

M&P® PISTOLS. AN EXPERIENCE YOU HAVE TO FEEL TO BELIEVE.  
ERGONOMIC FIT FOR MORE CONTROL. PRECISION BUILT FOR MORE ACCURACY.  
22LR • 9MM • 40S&W • 45ACP

#EXPERIENCE #MANDP AT SMITH-WESSON.COM/MPPISTOLS



protection. In addition, this phrase also preys on humanity's need to feel safe, an emotional appeal analyzed by Fowles.

The second advertisement is for the M&P line of pistols by Smith & Wesson. Weapons of any sort are sold because of our need to feel safe, a sort of paranoia or safe-thinking that most gun owners share. In the advertisement, there is a gun range set on a desert cliff overlooking a deep blue body of water. Four human shaped targets are placed immediately in front of a smoking Smith & Wesson hand gun with spent shell casing flying from the gun. The gun is the focal point of this picture and the background is blurred, suggesting that the shooter is looking at the gun more than the targets. The heading of this advertisement, "Experience more command," is an unfinished claim according to Shrank. This sentence does not specify what the user will have more command over, but assures the consumer of the imminent and unspecified amount of "command" upon use. In addition, the bottom of the advertisement has two of Shrank's the water is wet claims. "Ergonomic fit for more control" and "Precision built for more accuracy"

are not new features to the handgun market.

Most handguns are made to be ergonomic and built for accuracy.

The final misleading advertisement is for the Rapid Safe by Hornady Security. The center of this advertisement shows the black safe in action, rapidly opening with a handgun ready to be grabbed. There is an arm wearing a bracelet which has triggered the safe's

**NEW RAPID SAFE**  
Fast, touch-free entry | Child-resistant design

**KEY FOR**  
The new Rapid Safe has a built-in key for easy access and the ability to store keys in a secure location.

**ACCESS CARD**  
The new Rapid Safe has a built-in access card reader for easy access and the ability to store cards in a secure location.

**SAFE, SECURE AND ALWAYS RAPID.**  
Protect your valuables with the new Rapid Safe. The patented touch-free RFID technology allows you to open the safe with your hand. Simply place the RFID bracelet over the safe's handle and the safe opens. No keys, no cards, no fumbling. A professional is also available.

**Hornady Security**  
800.228.2282 | HORNADY.COM

touch-free entry feature. The arm is also conveniently placed to grab the handgun from the safe which appears to have opened at a limb-severing speed according to the blur lines. The background has a red flash which flares out from the safe, effectively drawing attention to the safe. The second heading of the advertisement features a "Child-resistant design," a weasel phrase which does not ensure that the safe will actually refuse access to small children. In addition, the "fast, touch-free entry" feature of the safe almost seems to enable children access to the inside of the gun safe, since the code does not need to be known to access the safe. Underneath the picture of the safe is a brief description of the safe's features. The first line says that Rapid Safe is "safe, secure and always Rapid." The actual product name is linked with the features of the safe, suggesting that Rapid Safe is always safe and secure, a Shrank's unique and different claim. The second line reads "Protection when you need it most." This is another emotional appeal to humanity's need to feel safe.

In conclusion, advertisements must compete with each other. Many companies are making the same product, so they must find ways to attract more customers than the other company. Gaining the upperhand over competition by lying or by being misleading about certain product features is the nature of the advertising game. Whether it is weaponized coin purses, "precision built" handguns, or "child-resistant" safes, advertisement programs will use whatever feature available to sell their product. In our world of free and plentiful information, research the product before the purchase to mitigate disappointment.



### Works Cited

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