

**Editorial Comment in response to the article posted in the Milwaukee
Magazine – March 2007 Issue**
[Suddenly Evil by Terrence Falk and Matthew Hrodey](#)

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Ahrens: Tobacco company targets girls
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In the "bizarro" world of cigarette advertising, we don't expect tobacco companies to name their products by their real qualities.

Cigarettes aren't called "Coffin Nails" or "Death Sticks." Instead they are "Lucky Strikes" or "Virginia Slims."

But even by the standards of the cigarette advertiser's world where addiction is construed as freedom, the new advertising strategy of Camel cigarette targeting girls and young women is especially loathsome.

R.J. Reynolds' new cigarette, Camel No. 9, is branded as a product that is "light and luscious." These particular words are not picked at random but are the result of millions of dollars of research.

Why "light?" Because girls fear being overweight and want to be thin. Packaged in a sleek fuchsia or black package outlined with a thin red line, the product is designed to appeal to girls who view smoking as a sign of maturity.

Why "luscious?" To have the smoker believe that the cigarette will, as in the dictionary definition of the word, "arouse sexual desire."

Through the repeated use of these words, the tobacco giant intends to convince girls that smoking Camel No. 9 will make them thin and sexually attractive.

Tobacco companies like R.J. Reynolds have the money to make sure that their messages are received by the target audience. So far, the company has announced a \$90 million campaign to "launch" its product.

That's about \$2 million for Wisconsin alone. And the target?

The tobacco company says that they are targeting current women smokers. That's nonsense.

Tragically, most smokers are "loyal" to their brand. The industry knows very well that in Wisconsin every year about 20,000 of their customers overcome their

addiction each year and another 8,000 die from it.

If they don't attract and addict new customers at the rate of about 100 each day in Wisconsin alone, they will eventually lose their extremely profitable business.

They also know that adults don't start smoking - only kids do.

Last year, more than 1,100 women in Wisconsin died from lung cancer. About 7,000 died from other smoking-related illness such as heart disease and emphysema.

The long-term costs of Camel No. 9 will be borne by the smokers, their families and society as a whole. R.J. Reynolds will walk away with literally billions of dollars and bear none of the burden of its actions.

The good news is that we are just starting to turn the corner on smoking-related disease. The number of women smoking and the amount that they smoke is slowly decreasing.

For the first time in decades, last year lung cancer deaths among women did not increase.

But R.J. Reynolds is fighting back. They want Camel No. 9 to increase cigarette smoking among young girls in the same way that the Joe Camel campaign increased smoking among youth in the '80s.

But we don't have to allow them to succeed. We know that the most effective antidote to early tobacco use is expensive cigarettes. Gov. Jim Doyle has proposed an increase in the cigarette tax of \$1.25. This best medicine is available and its time that we use it.

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