

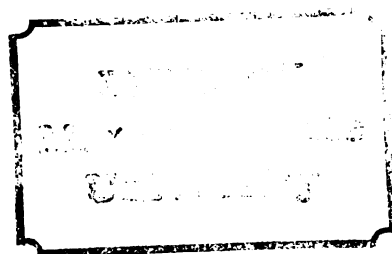
THE INFLUENCE OF RALPH NADER'S BOOK,
UNSAFE AT ANY SPEED, ON AUTOMOBILE PRINT ADVERTISING

Thesis for the Degree of M. A.
MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY
RICHARD LEES GRINGHUIS
1969

THESIS



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ABSTRACT

THE INFLUENCE OF RALPH NADER'S BOOK, UNSAFE AT ANY SPEED, ON AUTOMOBILE PRINT ADVERTISING

By

Richard Lees Gringhuis

The problem under discussion in this thesis is exactly what the title says. What influence did Ralph Nader's book have on automobile print advertising?

The data was gathered from articles in advertising trade publications, reports by and on the automotive industry, and actual advertisements in general consumer print media. Nader's criticisms from his book formed the base of this work.

The major finding of the study was that it does not appear that Ralph Nader's book had any direct influence on print advertising. Rather, its influence was on those groups (largely governmental) who had the power to bring about changes or reforms, even though the auto industry would not look favorably on them.

THE INFLUENCE OF RALPH NADER'S BOOK, UNSAFE
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PRINT ADVERTISING

By

Richard Lees Gringhuis

A THESIS

Submitted to
Michigan State University
in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree of

MASTER OF ARTS

Department of Advertising

1969

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

The author wishes to thank Professor John W. Crawford, Chairman, Department of Advertising, College of Communication Arts, Michigan State University, for his inspiration and help.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
ACKNOWLEDGMENT	ii
LIST OF TABLES	iv
LIST OF FIGURES	v
INTRODUCTION	1
Chapter	
I. THE CORVAIR SYNDROME	4
Design's Insidious Hazards.	7
The Right to See	8
The Vinyl Covered Killers	9
II. OUTRAGE AND APPROVAL	14
The Government Reacts	20
III. THE 1956 FORD "SAFETY" CAMPAIGN OR SAFETY DOES NOT NECESSARILY PAY	23
IV. IF IT IS SAFETY THEY WANT	29
V. A CAR IS A CAR EXCEPT WHEN IT IS A STATUS SYMBOL	109
The Consumer, The Manufacturer and Auto Safety.	114
A Big Car Is A Safe Car.	117
Some Findings	118
VI. THE AUTOMOTIVE SAFETY STANDARDS ACT	120
VII. CONCLUSION	122
APPENDIX	126
BIBLIOGRAPHY	129

LIST OF TABLES

Table	Page
1. Leading Causes of Injury Ranked by Two Methods	11

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure	Page
1. Ford Motor Company: A Positive View of Good Driving Habits, (Partial)	31
2. American Motors 1966 Classic Cross Country Station Wagon.	35
3. American Motors 1966 Rambler American. . .	37
4. Chrysler Corporation Dodge Charger. . . .	39
5. Chrysler Corporation Dodge Polara	41
6. Chrysler Corporation Plymouth Barracuda . .	43
7. Chrysler Corporation Plymouth Barracudas. .	46
8. Ford Motor Company, Mercury Cougar Dan Gurney Special	48
9. Ford Motor Company, Mercury Caliente Grande.	50
10. Chrysler Corporation Chrysler	52
11. Chrysler Corporation Imperial	55
12. Ford Motor Company, Ford Mustang	57
13. Ford Motor Company, Ford	59
14. Ford Motor Company, Mustang/Galaxie 500 Better Ideas Sale	61
15. Ford Motor Company, Thunderbird.	64
16. Ford Motor Company, Lincoln Continental . .	66
17. General Motors	68
18. General Motors Mark of Excellence	71
19. General Motors Mark of Excellence	73

Figure	Page
20. General Motors, Chevrolet Corvair . . .	75
21. General Motors, Chevrolet Impala . . .	78
22. General Motors, Chevrolet Chevelle SS 396	80
23. General Motors, Chevrolet Camaro . . .	83
24. General Motors, Pontiac Station Wagon (Executive Safari)	85
25. General Motors, Pontiac Catalina . . .	87
26. General Motors, Pontiac: Value As A Used Car	89
27. General Motors, Pontiac LeMans	92
28. General Motors, Pontiac GTO	94
29. General Motors, Pontiac Grand Prix. . .	96
30. General Motors, Buick Riviera	98
31. General Motors, Buick As a Safe Family Car	101
32. General Motors, Oldsmobile Toronado . .	103
33. General Motors, Cadillac	105

INTRODUCTION

Book titles and advertising headlines have several purposes in common. Both must serve as narrative hooks. Both must have punch. If controversy can be implied, so much the better to peak reader interest. Unsafe At Any Speed, by Ralph Nader, had them all.

Nader went to Washington in 1964 to begin his crusade against what he saw as the tragic, almost criminal, actions of the auto industry.

An article in the New York Times Magazine¹ characterized Nader as a man who had "chosen to make society's problems his problems and as a result he exists in a state of constant, barely controlled outrage."

The Times went on to say that he feels his career is one of opposition to those power centers that are infringing on the public interests. As a result Nader, only thirty-three years old, advanced through the Washington scene and found himself transformed from crackpot to celebrity.

¹Patrick Aderson, "Ralph Nader, Crusader; or, The Rise of a Self-Appointed Lobbyist," The New York Times Magazine, October 29, 1967, p. 25.

Nader's work stems from two basic fears. The first of these is that modern science and technology are used more often against the consumer than for him.

The second fear is the way in which corporations deal with the public and their employees. Nader found that when a lawyer or scientist goes to work for a corporation, he must essentially give up his right of free speech.

It was the first fear that prompted Nader to take on the automobile industry.

When Nader was attending Harvard Law School, he became interested in the subject of auto safety. While doing research on automotive technology, he became convinced that modern traffic laws placed all the blame on the driver and none on the driver's vehicle.

He found that it was futile to argue his convictions on the local level, and he made the decision to take his case to Washington. There he was hired as a consultant by Daniel P. Moynihan, then Assistant Secretary of Labor, to write a report on auto safety. Upon completing this report, Nader left the government, holed up in a furnished room, and wrote his book, Unsafe At Any Speed.

The climate for government action in the area of auto safety had been improving all the while, and Nader's book contributed further to this favorable climate. However, it usually takes an event of disastrous

proportions to marshal Congressional passage of consumer-protection legislation.

In Nader's case, the scales were tipped by General Motors' ill-advised use of a private detective to harass Nader. GM claimed they hired a detective to merely do a routine investigation of Nader. However, Vincent Gillen, the detective, testified he was hired to probe Nader's religion and sex life to find something that would silence him.

The attempt failed miserably. GM was publicly humiliated, the auto safety bill passed, and Nader instituted a \$26 million invasion of privacy suit which is currently awaiting trial.

Fortune reported one GM competitor as saying, "I get mad everytime I think about that stunt. They made the entire industry look bad and we're all going to pay for it."²

²Dan Cordtz, "The Face in the Mirror at General Motors," Fortune, August, 1966, p. 210.

CHAPTER I

THE CORVAIR SYNDROME

For over half a century the automobile has brought death, injury and the most inestimable sorrow and deprivation to millions of people. With Medea-like intensity, the mass trauma began rising sharply four years ago, reflecting new and unexpected ravages by the motor vehicle.³

The principal reason why the automobile has remained the only transportation vehicle to escape being called to meaningful public account is that the public has never been supplied the information nor offered the quality of competition to enable it to make effective demands through the marketplace (for a safe automobile). The consumer's expectations regarding automotive innovations have been deliberately held low and mostly oriented to very gradual annual style changes.⁴

This is, as Nader sees it, the basic "crime" of a monolithic industry. His book revolves around the thesis that the automobile industry has given safety a back seat to the stylists.

Nader chose the Chevrolet Corvair as a prime example of the laconic attitude of the industry toward safety.

³Ralph Nader, Unsafe At Any Speed (New York: Pocket Books, a division of Simon & Shuster, Inc.), 1966, p. 5.

⁴Ibid., p. viii.

"Previous to 1965 the (Corvair) was probably the . . . worst all around handling car available to the American public."⁵ The Corvair was not a simple engineering blunder, "but rather a tragedy which began with the (idea for) the Corvair."⁶ In other words, the basic engineering principle employed in the design of the rear-end of the Corvair was a mistake.

This mistake resulted in more than 100 suits alleging instability in the Corvair being filed around the country by October of 1965.

The Corvair employed a swing axle suspension system that was touted to improve riding qualities. However, this resulted in "a peculiar friskiness" in the car. With some 60 per cent of the car's weight centered over the rear,

. . . body lean becomes a considerable force acting to tuck both wheels under in a cornering attitude. This results in loss of adhesion because of lowered tire surface contact. The sudden breakaway which has been experienced by every Corvair driver comes when a slight irregularity in the (road) surface destroys the small amount of adhesion remaining.⁷

One way to compensate for this was through the addition of a stabilizer installed at the rear of the car, thus distributing some of the roll of the front wheels. But Chevrolet did not see fit to do this until the 1964 model year.

⁵Ibid., p. 14.

⁶Ibid., p. 15.

⁷Ibid., p. 10.

Meanwhile a small but thriving industry grew up around this need for stabilization of the rear-end of Corvair. It advertised stabilizer bars for the Corvair in special car buff magazines, which reach an admittedly limited audience.

Nader said, "The absence of any corrective action year after year can be explained by bureaucratic rigidities and the abject worship of that bitch goddess, cost reduction."⁸

When Corvair finally did add a stabilizer, one of the car magazines commented that they were glad to see this addition, and that the Corvairs of the preceding years had been one of the "nastiest" little cars ever built to drive.⁹

However, there were other factors contributing to the Corvair's instability. These factors resulted primarily from a communication breakdown between manufacturer and dealers. It involved tire pressures for the Corvair. The manufacturer said tire pressure in the front was to be fifteen pounds per square inch (psi) and twenty-four pounds psi in the rear. What the dealers were not told, evidently, was that these tire pressures were critical to the stability of the car. Consequently, according to Nader, dealers would sluff off these

⁸Ibid., p. 28.

⁹Ibid., p. 14.

pressures when customers asked and tell them it was all right to maintain equal pressure in all tires. The driver had no course but to accept the dealer's suggestion.

Design's Insidious Hazards

Nader dealt in his second chapter with "Disaster Deferred: Studies in Automotive Time Bombs." Here, he was primarily concerned with "design defects," which "occur on all vehicles of a make or model."¹⁰

These defects, claimed Nader, were "born of deliberate knowledge (and were) far less likely to be admitted by car makers. . . . And, of course, motorists were not warned of these hazards in owners' manuals."¹¹

Nader cited as an example the automatic shift pattern used until recently on many cars. The pattern was Park, Neutral, Drive, Low and Reverse (P N D L R).

"The design of automatic transmissions departed from long accepted principles of all types of mechanical controls . . . to place Neutral between the Reverse and Forward gears."¹²

The placing of Reverse at the end of the series resulted in many drivers thinking they were in Reverse and then proceeding to drive through the rear of the

¹⁰Ibid., p. 42.

¹¹Ibid., p. 43.

¹²Ibid., p. 45.

garage. The author has had a similar experience and can attest to the hazard of such a quadrant series.

Nader told of a GM automotive engineer who was asked why this hazardous pattern had not been changed and if they intended to drop it. Reportedly, "He replied, 'Never. We now have ten million cars running with it. The die is cast; the rest of you will have to adopt the pattern.'"¹³

The pattern was finally changed "after nearly a decade of unconscionable delay," and was brought about only after "run away accidents piled up and federal government intervention loomed on the horizon."¹⁴

The Right to See

Nader saw other hazards resulting from inferior designs that could have been, but had not been, corrected.

From instrument panels to windshields, the modern automobile is impressive evidence that manufacturers put appearance above safety. When it comes to vision, the car makers seem to value their concept of appearance over the right of the driver to see.¹⁵

Nader listed those things which most seriously hamper driver vision:

1. Distortions, waves, ghost images and poor surface polish on windshields and rear and side windows. "Most blatantly hazardous is the plastic 'rear window' employed on convertibles. . . ."¹⁶

¹³Ibid., p. 46. .

¹⁴Ibid.

¹⁵Ibid.

¹⁶Ibid., p. 47.

2. Windshield wiper blades and defrosters that do not clear sufficient area.
3. Rear view mirrors with waves, irregularities and of insufficient size.
4. Chromium ornamentation that can blind the driver by reflected glare.
5. Dash panel visibility often impaired by low-contrast markings, excessive shading and poor night illumination.
6. Veiling glare caused by dash boards using light colored paints.
7. "Front and rear turn signals, taillights, and brake lights not always visible throughout a full one hundred and eighty degrees at full effective brightness because they are often buried in bumpers, are shielded by fender or bumper extensions and/or are too small and have inadequate light distribution."¹⁷
8. Excessively thick windshield corner posts.
9. Tinted windshields that reduce the amount of light available to the driver without actually cutting glare.¹⁸

Across the entire range of vehicle-man interaction, the companies have shown little interest in systematic analysis of automotive features involving the physical and psychological response of the driver.¹⁹

The author has had personal experience with the problem of the plastic rear window in convertibles and can attest to the fact that after a time they become so badly scratched and discolored as to make seeing out of the interior rear-view mirror almost impossible.

The Vinyl Covered Killers

"The Second Collision: When Man Meets Car," dealt with specific aspects of interior design that can cause

¹⁷Ibid., pp. 48-49.

¹⁸Ibid., p. 51.

¹⁹Ibid.

injuries. According to Nader, the "second collision" occurred when the

. . . accident situation involved the impact of the vehicle with whatever it hit (the first collision), followed instantaneously by the impact of the occupants with the inside of the vehicle (the second collision). This second collision caused killing and maiming.²⁰

Here is a bar chart from the book showing the "Leading Causes of Injury Ranked by Number of Injuries for Leading Causes of Injury Distributed by Impact Type and Injury Score for Leading Causes of Injury with Contribution by Impact Type."²¹ It should be noted that seat belts were not present.

As you will note, the leading cause of injury under the first heading is the instrument panel followed by the steering assembly. Under the second heading, this order is simply reversed.

The steering assembly, according to Nader, was responsible for about 20 per cent of the "injuries . . . during the past decade."²² "For years the most common feature of crumpled automobiles has been a rearward displaced or arched steering column with broken spokes and bent wheel rims."²³

Nader found that the shock absorbing steering column lessening injuries was not a new idea but merely

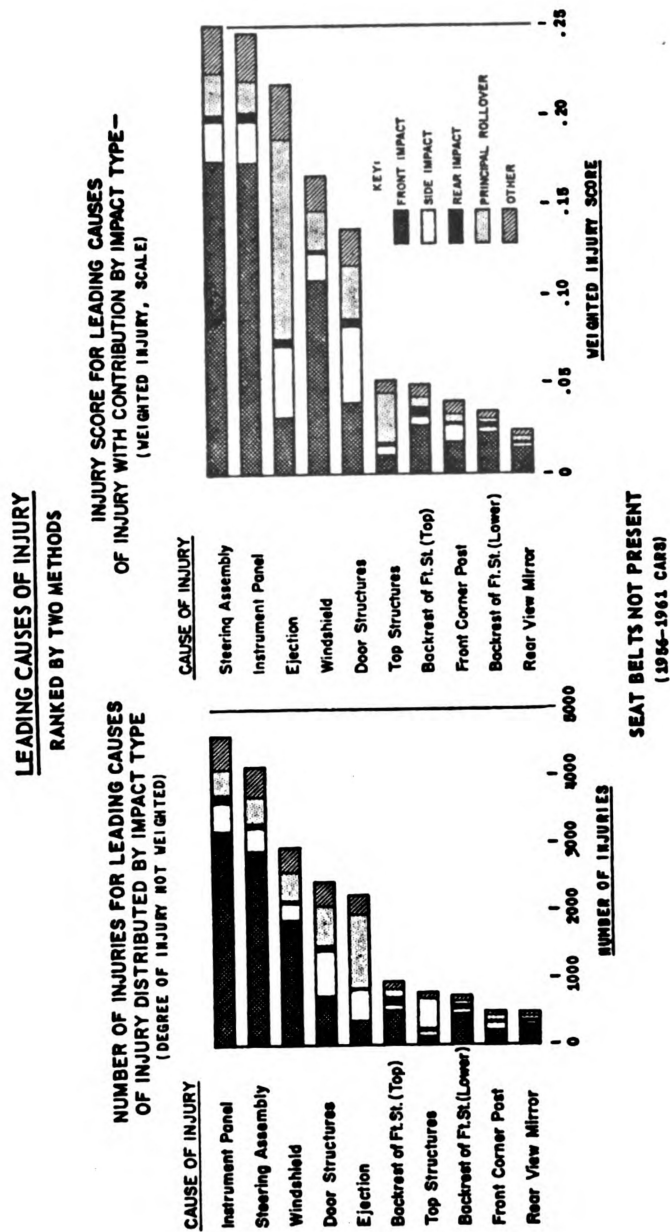
²⁰Ibid., p. 66.

²¹Ibid., p. 69.

²²Ibid., p. 68.

²³Ibid., p. 70.

TABLE 1.--Leading Causes of Injury Ranked by Two Methods.



Source: Ralph Nader, Unsafe At Any Speed, p.69.

one that had not received management approval. He quoted Harry Barr, GM vice-president for engineering, as saying that Chevrolet had conducted tests "which showed to its satisfaction that there was no problem . . ." with present steering column design.²⁴

Nader said that the instrument panel was second to the steering column in causing injury. "The stylist who has been given great leeway to determine panel shapes has devised a great variety of designs that have managed to provide spectacular dangers."²⁵ He noted in particular protruding, unpadded knobs, poor padding materials and sharp edges.

Nader said further that when auto companies were faced with proof of the danger, they began to offer padding at optional cost.

"The windshield ranks third in frequency and fourth in severity as a cause of injuries."²⁶ Nader said the use of laminated safety glass presents a hazard in that even though the head may penetrate without significant injury, it sustains great injury on being withdrawn since the glass closes around the neck and head "like a razor-sharp jaw."

The best way, according to Nader, to avoid this type of injury is to not hit the windshield at all. This necessitates passenger restraint devices.

²⁴Ibid., p. 71. ²⁵Ibid., pp. 76-77. ²⁶Ibid., p. 82.

Industry opposition to seat belts stemmed from the fact that

. . . the seat belt is a constant reminder . . . of the risk of accident . . . an item that alerts people to expect more safety in the cars they buy. GM has never viewed these as desirable expectations to elicit from customers.²⁷

The most serious contributing factor to injuries is the passenger compartment itself.

. . . when it comes to design and manufacture of such performances ('maintenance of the structural integrity of the outer shell which surrounds the restrained passenger') in collision, the automobile industry has either ignored the statistical evidence of the problem or is deliberately withholding knowledge of it.²⁸

"Nearly a third of all injury producing accidents involve either roof impact, caused by a car rolling over, or penetration of the side wall of the vehicle cabin."²⁹

"In the whole area of reinforced and strengthened body and chasis structures, the industry has steadfastly avoided testing, research and change for safety."³⁰

²⁷Ibid., p. 88.

²⁸Ibid., p. 98.

²⁹Ibid.

³⁰Ibid., p. 100.

CHAPTER II

OUTRAGE AND APPROVAL

If the amount of noise generated by critics of an author's work is any indication of the impact of that work, then Ralph Nader's book made a considerable impact. Industry was, for obvious reasons, unhappy. The government had mixed emotions. An article in the National Association of Claimant's Council of America Bar Association Journal by Nader was a harbinger of the bomb he was to drop a few months later. In this article, he criticized the auto industry in much the same manner as in his book. In response Ken Stonex, Executive Engineer of Automotive Safety Engineering at GM, wrote a four-page letter to the editor stating that Nader's article was

a masterpiece in propaganda of one quarter truth or less.

. . . Most of the items advanced as a cure-all are in the category of wishful thinking or inexact or incomplete engineering developments. GM has responsibility for all components, and this includes the decision as to whether to use them . . .

. . . The industry has a long history of developments which have contributed substantially to highway safety, and in these GM has played a leading part.³¹

³¹Letter of the National Association of Claimant's Council of America Bar Association dated July 9, 1963 by

Stonex maintains that it is not so much the car that is at fault as it is the driver and the highway. In a paper presented to the 17th National Conference on Standards in 1967, Stonex said

. . . I suggest that the automobile has already received appraisal as a reliable, durable, long-lived, useful and efficient tool. It has been improved over the past 60 odd years by countless small steps and many major ones. We will continue to improve it.

I suggest . . . that the variation of the environment in which the automobile operates offers many times the factors of possible improvement that I can anticipate in automobile design.³²

The irony of both Stonex's and Nader's arguments over auto versus highway design is that the improvement of one in no way impedes the improvement of the other.

Nation's Business seemed to agree with Stonex. It called Nader's book "Inaccurate at Any Speed," and accused him of using quotes out of context to make his points.³³

Ralph Isbrandt, vice-president of automotive engineering of the American Motors Corporation, was

Kennith A. Stonex, then Assistant Engineer in Charge, Technical Liason Section, General Motors Engineering Staff at General Motors Technical Center, Warren, Michigan.

³²Kennith A. Stonex, Safety in Automobile Transportation, A report to the 17th Conference on Standards, Cleveland, February 13 to 15, 1967.

³³"Why Cars are Getting Safer," Nation's Business, May, 1966, pp. 38-39, 76, 81-84, 86-87.

quoted as saying, "safety . . . isn't something that all of a sudden dawns on you after you've left the drawing board."

Roy Abernathy, president of AMC, said,

. . . to listen to some of the critics one would think the modern car was carelessly put together in a styling studio overnight and sprung on an innocent world. This is not true . . . I admire the great talent of the stylist but his primary task is to make the result of a team effort look as good as it actually is.

B. W. Bogen, vice-president and director of engineering at Chrysler, said, "the great majority of safety items on today's automobile were developed long before any laws were introduced requiring them."

Nation's Business estimated that the industry spends some \$500 million a year on safety. While this may at first seem a large amount, when it is broken down, however roughly, among all the producers of motor vehicles in the United States, the picture changes radically. Some estimates are as low or less than \$1 million per producer.

Roy Hausler, automotive safety engineer at Chrysler, said, "every step of the way we're going to put greater emphasis on the guy who helps himself by using a seat belt."

Exactly what Hausler means by every step of the way is unclear. However, he seems to be driving at the point that many motorists do not use the safety features that are already in cars, like safety belts.

Another of the many sore spots touched on by Nader was call-backs (when a manufacturer "calls back" a number of cars to correct a defect). Ford's president Arjay Miller said in a Business Week article, "call-backs are not at an all-time high, but publicity sure is . . ."

"When you make three million of something a year, human errors will creep in."³⁴

It does not appear to the author that Nader said errors would not creep in. What he did say was that the industry did not seem to do anything about correcting them, that it did not make a concerted effort to contact all owners affected.

Actually, as far as this writer can see, the question of auto safety goes back to the responsibility of the auto industry.

Henry Ford II warned of "economic disaster if forthcoming legislation doesn't consider the auto industry engineering, economic planning, production and time problems."

Many of the industry representatives have raised the specter of cost increases for added safety features. Business Week said ". . . industry spokesmen point out that prices did rise about \$60, per car when safety

³⁴"Detroit Strikes Back," Business Week, April 28, 1966, p. 40.

features that had been optional in 1965 were made standard in 1966."³⁵

Stonex, in a paper to the General Motors 26th Annual Safety Conference concluded that,

. . . the primary safety responsibility of General Motors as a car manufacturer is to provide a product that can be controlled on the highway precisely and started and stopped at will by a qualified driver. A concurrent responsibility is to provide extended reliability and durability (of a car so that) sudden failure in the traffic stream of a car under the recommended maintenance schedule is reduced to the vanishing point.³⁶

However, Fortune reported Fredric Donner, former president of General Motors, as making a rather unusual admission by saying that, "we have got a tradition at General Motors of maybe too much sticking with our business problems."³⁷

Perhaps this is where much of the problem lies. The corporation exists for one main purpose, like it or not, and that is to make money for the corporation. To make money, the product has to sell. To sell, it must appeal to the consumer. So far, the industry has found that model changes--changes in the sheet metal-- move the product. Now, perhaps, this has changed somewhat,

³⁵"Industries," Business Week, June 11, 1966, pp. 179-194.

³⁶Kennith A. Stonex, "Building Safety Into Our Products," Paper presented to the General Motors 26th Annual Safety Conference, (October 25, 1965), Chicago. Typewritten.

³⁷Cordtz, loc. cit.

not necessarily because the consumer has changed, but because of an awakening in the industry as a whole that it has a responsibility to the consumer beyond moving the goods. This responsibility exists regardless of the wishes of the consumer.

Some of this awakening in the auto industry has no doubt been a result of the consumer's reaction to auto safety as reflected in auto sales for model year preceding the Nader book and immediately following it.

The sales of the Corvair took an expected dip in the year following Nader's book. Production was down to 103,743 for model year 1966 from 373,066 for model year 1965. Even though Nader criticized only the Corvairs for model year 1960 to 1963, the consumer, once he is confronted with the possibility of taking his life in his hands, is not likely to forget quickly.

Total passenger car production was down to 8,606,660 for model year 1966 from 8,842,000 for model year 1965. Passenger car registration was down from 9,012,567 in model year 1965 to 6,239,307 for model year 1966, a drop of some 3,753,280 car registrations.

Ford experienced a drop in registration from 2,018,758 in model year 1965 to 1,380,279 in model year 1966. Chevrolet registration was down from 174,868 in 1965 to 390,472 in 1966.

Total passenger car registration had been on the rise since 1963 but dropped back in 1966 to below the 1962 high of 6,573,400.

Car production lagged behind registration in 1965, while in 1966 registrations fell so far that dealers found themselves overstocked well into the 1967 model year.³⁸

To attribute all this to Nader's book would be unwise. Certainly other considerations must be taken into account. Talk of tax increases, a cooling down of the economy, and the war in Viet Nam had their impact. However, the purchase of a 1966 vehicle could certainly be put off until the 1967 models came out with their added safety features.

We have examined only the first four chapters of Nader's book because these are the chapters that directly relate to the topic of this paper. Subsequent chapters go into other areas, such as tires, which do not concern us.

The Government Reacts

The government, as is its wont, immediately, convened a committee to investigate the charges against the auto industry.

³⁸"U. S. Passenger Car Production, 1965-1966, As Reported by The Automobile Manufacturers Association, Automotive Industries (March 15, 1967), p. 95.

John T. Conner, Secretary of Commerce, said in a statement before the Committee on Interstate and Foreign Commerce, "the American people have the right to expect their government to help assure public safety and health."

Lenore K. Sullivan, of the House of Representatives, commented,

. . . when you have to gamble . . . with the possibility of a 2- or 3- or 10-ton projectile hurtling in our general direction in the next land or across a level median strip, at 60 or more miles an hour may suddenly go out of control because of mechanical deficiencies in the structure of the vehicle, I think we're entitled to more protection.

Harold Katz, speaking for and with John P. Touhy, said, referring to head-on collisions,

. . . the collapsible steering wheel announced by General Motors for 1967 models is decidedly a step in the right direction but is quite inadequate when judged by either injury potential or the present state of medical and engineering competence.

The difference between death and survival is frequently in the design of the car itself.

The Ribicoff-Kennedy Senate subcommittee accused Detroit of "dragging (its) feet on safety." Ribicoff felt that, "the Federal Government should step in with some sort of national policy to stem the rise in accidents. The auto is the only thing in this country that moves which isn't regulated by the Federal Government."

These statements are but a small sampling of the lengthy testimony presented to the committee. Other Congressional members made similar statements. However,

one thing seemed clear from all this testimony--the legislators felt that government should have a role in auto safety. The Automotive Safety Act was the Government's answer to this role. It will be discussed in Chapter VI.

CHAPTER III

THE 1956 FORD "SAFETY" CAMPAIGN OR SAFETY DOES NOT NECESSARILY PAY

1956 marked the end of the Korean Conflict and a new surge in automobile purchasing. It also saw Ford take a new tack in automobile advertising. Previously, Ford, like other automobile manufacturers had emphasized changes in styling, luxury and new power. Suddenly, however, Ford advertised safety.

Ford's safety campaign was built around a concept they called (and still call) "Lifeguard Design." For the first time, an auto manufacturer was offering equipment billed as safety equipment.

Nash, in 1949, had offered seat belts, but not as safety equipment. Instead, they tied safety belts in with their reclining seats. For example, a billboard showed a grandmotherly type sleeping peacefully in her reclining seat, held securely in place by a seat belt. In 1950, Nash removed the seat belts. They claimed that some people did not even know they were in the car and others complained that they were hidden from sight, and usually from searching hands, under the seat.

Ford was hardly another Nash. They decided to promote safety. However, many of these safety items, such as padded instrument panels, sunvisors and safety belts, were optional.

The campaign was dropped the following year. It has often been cited as proof that people are not really that interested in safety vis-a-vis design, luxury, etc. It is also claimed that Ford lost considerable market that year. Ford said, in a report entitled "Summary of Survey Research Data Bearing on Ford's 1956 model Safety Advertising Program,"³⁹ that is not true at all.

The styling acceptance of the 1956 model Chevrolet was greater than the styling acceptance of the 1956 model Ford, reversing the situation that had existed in the 1953, 1954, and 1955 model years. In addition, Chevrolet was just getting full consumer acceptance of its new V-8 engine, offered for the first time in Chevrolet history at the beginning of the 1955 model year.

To combat this competition, Ford Motor Company relied primarily on the development and promotion of special safety features in its cars. . . . Through a massive advertising effort, 55% of all car owners became aware of these features and identified them with the Ford car. One-third of all car owners formed the opinion that compared to Chevrolet and Plymouth the Ford was the safest one to drive.⁴⁰

The report went on to say that:

³⁹"Summary of Survey Research Data Bearing on Ford's 1956 Model Safety Advertising Program," Current Opinion Concerning Automobile Safety, March, 1956. Typewritten from the Marketing Research Office, Ford Motor Company, Section V.

⁴⁰Ibid., p. 1.

1. Ford Motor Company penetration in the 1956 model year was unchanged from 1955.
2. General Motors Corporation market went up 0.5 penetration point as the net result of a 2.8 gain for Chevrolet, a 2.7 point decline for Buick-Olds-Pontiac and a .04 gain for Cadillac Division.
3. The Ford car itself declined only .02 point of market share in spite of a 2.8 gain for Chevrolet, and a 0.8 gain for luxury car makes and a .16 gain in share of market going to foreign car makes as they began the major inroad into the US car market.⁴¹

From this, the paper concludes,

. . . far from being a failure, 1956 Ford safety advertising program was a success by every means of measurement. This finding is confirmed by the fact that in 1957, when the Ford car regained its styling advantage over Chevrolet, it obtained 25.5 percent of the market--outselling the Chevrolet car by more than one percentage point for the model year.⁴²

But what of the other automobile manufacturers?

Did they merely let Ford advertise safety while they ignored it and concentrated on styling, luxury, and horsepower? Hardly.

They gave safety a sort of token recognition in their advertising and then dealt with styling, luxury, horsepower, etc. Here, then, was a powerful combination. They pointed out that their cars were, like the Ford, safe to drive, but that they also had the other desired qualities.

General Motors ran a series of ads that year entitled "The Key to Greater Safety." These ads stated,

⁴¹Ibid., p. 2.

⁴²Ibid.

. . . your security on the highway is a continuing concern with the men who design and build General Motors cars. . . . They live constantly with the job of bettering automotive safety. . . . So you get the benefit of stronger materials, greater visibility, better brakes and countless other (safety) features . . .

The ads showed photographs of General Motors testing equipment.

Chevrolet promoted "Horsepower that ranges clear up to 225 explodes into action to zoom you out ahead with extra seconds of safety."

Pontiac billed itself as the one with "The Greatest Go--And the Greatest Safety . . ."

Chrysler Corporation proclaimed "you'll see new safety too (on Chrysler cars)."

Studebaker-Packard introduced their new "Torsion-Level Suspension," which made possible a smoother, safer ride.

Mr. John W. Crawford, chairman of the Michigan State University Department of Advertising, told the author that in 1956 he was hired by a Chicago advertising agency to go to the automobile show and see what people were interested in.

He said that he stood and watched people kick tires and ogle the styling, but he heard little or nothing about Ford's safety features until he was leaving. In the lobby were a group of white-coated researchers, complete with clip-boards, asking people what

they thought was the most important thing about the new cars. Mr. Crawford said that you could see the wheels turn in their heads and they would then say something like, "Oh yeah, the new safety features."⁴³

Mr. Crawford suspected, and the author agrees, that they were saying this because they thought it was what they should say and what the researchers wanted to hear.

This seems to indicate that safety was perhaps not of primary concern to potential purchasers.

And the question of primary concern, this writer feels, is a critical one. If safety is not of primary concern, something else obviously is. If this is true, then the other automobile manufacturers who were aiming at the primary concerns of potential purchasers were hitting consumers with more potent messages. So it seems that Ford's primary error was one of misplaced emphasis rather than the commonly held view that the public is not interested in safety.

The question that confronts us now is, was the Ford conclusion valid based on the information they presented? The author maintains that it is highly questionable. Like it or not, Ford experienced a decline in share of market while Chevrolet experienced a considerable gain, relative to Ford.

⁴³Personal interview with John W. Crawford, Chairman, Department of Advertising, College of Communication Arts, Michigan State University, June, 1967.

The author does not feel that Ford was valid in comparing the Ford car to the Buick-Oldsmobile-Pontiac-Cadillac divisions of General Motors. In 1956, Ford was comparable to the Chevrolet, in terms of price and prestige. Therefore, comparing the Ford car to the others is like comparing peaches and pears--they are similar but not alike.

As will be discussed later in this paper, car purchases are closely tied to prestige and styling. Therefore, when Ford lost its styling advantage, they lost a big selling advantage. Also, Chevrolet had their new V-8 which appealed to persons wanting more powerful automobiles.

The author submits that much of Ford's "success" in the 1956 model year was based on people's past association or familiarity with Ford, rather than the appeal of the safety features.

This is not to dismiss any interest in safety features by potential purchasers, rather it is merely to point out that there were other more interesting features, such as styling and horsepower, to be considered.

Essentially, Ford maintained the status quo until 1957 when the safety campaign was dropped and Ford regained its styling advantage over Chevrolet.

CHAPTER IV

IF IT IS SAFETY THEY WANT . . .

The automobile industry had made rebuttals to their critics and presented their arguments to the government, but how were they going to deal with the public--the people who purchase their products?

An article in the July 8, 1966 Printer's Ink entitled "Safety and Auto Ads: Controversy Breeds Change" said:

The effectiveness of Detroit's advertising style is beyond question--it sells cars, at an ever increasing rate, and that is the name of the game. Or was. For now the auto safety fanatics are challenging Detroit's advertising techniques. They charge that it glorifies speed and power, encourages reckless driving and is at least in part responsible for the nation's 49,500 annual traffic death toll.

. . . (Attacks like Ralph Nader's book) will probably result in a 'toning down' of auto advertising, especially in the enthusiast publication, (Road & Track, Car & Driver, etc.).

Indeed, there is likely to be a toning down of all '67 auto advertising this fall when the new model campaigns start. This industry's response to the auto safety critics has been to cooperate. There is going to be so much cooperation the critics will literally be smothered in it.

Thus, safety is likely to be a major theme in '67 auto advertising. . . . As one auto

executive told Printers Ink: 'We are in business to stay in business. If it's safety they want, it's safety they'll get.' Before too long it might be difficult for the average American auto buyer to tell whether Detroit is selling safety or selling automobiles.⁴⁴

Advertising Age commented that,

. . . the influence of the Washington hearings
. . . will be felt in automobile advertising.

The advertising result will be noticeable more in what is not said than in what is said. One agency executive said . . . that his copywriters already are changing a word here and a phrase there to tone down the ads for next fall.⁴⁵

Looking back to 1965 and the introduction of the new 1966 models we will see that at least in one case, quite a bit was being said.

Ford ran a twelve page special section in Time entitled "A Positive View of Good Driving Habits . . . With Expert Tips on Developing Your Personal Safety Program."

The section, shown in part on the following page, began with a letter from Henry Ford II exhorting the public to remember that,

. . . this is not a job for one person, one company, or any single group. . . . It must be a cooperative effort.

Ford Motor Company gladly accepts its share of the total responsibility. You will

⁴⁴Kenneth Ford, "Safety and Auto Ads: Controversy Breeds Change," Printer's Ink, July 8, 1966, pp. 9-14.

⁴⁵"Hearing on Auto Safety Brings Quick Action," Advertising Age, July 26, 1965, p. 8.

FIGURE 1.--Ford Motor Company: A Positive View of Good Driving
Habits, (Partial).

driving safety: is it hardware—skill— or a state of mind?

Driving safety has three sides. In the course of this special section we have tried to give you a quick look at them.

There are the tangles—what could be called the nuts-and-bolts. The hardware. These are the features that have been built into the car for greater safety. A number of the standard protective items found on every Ford-built car are described and illustrated on the center pages. Many other optional safety features are available. Your Ford or Lincoln-Mercury dealer will be pleased to demonstrate them.

But there are even more important sides. It is a matter of knowing and respecting the rules of the road, the rights of others, the capabilities of the car and following the basic rules of driving safety.

You see this state of mind reflected in the comments of the driving experts who have been interviewed for these articles. You see it at Ford Motor Company where there is no letup in the search for ways to increase traffic safety. As an example, the Ford Automotive Safety Center, described on the previous page, is the first facility of its kind in the industry, dedicated to advance the research and development that will lead to greater safety for all motorists.

We urge you to cultivate a safety state of mind. It is a matter of developing the skills of driving and of *thinking* safety—and turning your thoughts into positive action. Make safety your personal business every time you drive.



***a positive
view of good
driving habits***
*...with expert tips
on developing
your personal
safety program*



find this reflected in the design and features of our cars and in our continuing safety research activities. . . .

The reader was then given sage advice from various persons concerned with auto and driving safety such as an article by a woman school bus driver, another by Amos Neyhar, "the man who trains driving instructors," and a piece on the "Best Teenage Driver" and one on the national truck roadeo champion and a statement by a highway patrol officer.

The rest of this section is devoted to the introduction of Ford's new cars and a brief piece on the Ford Automotive Safety Center.

Obviously Ford was out to make a point, namely that driving safety was a combination of hardware, skill, and state of mind. Ford even went so far as to proclaim the new models as "the safest cars in Ford Motor Company history." (The author wonders how the purchasers of 1965 Fords felt about that.) This also obviously puts the burden of safety on the drivers' skill and state of mind. Ford has implied that now the car is safe, the rest is up to the driver.

We will now turn to other advertisers who were perhaps not quite as extravagant as Ford in promoting the safety of their automobiles. These ads will be discussed in terms of their major theme and the context of safety references. Also, we shall see if safety

took any dominance over the "traditional" appeals of styling, status and power.

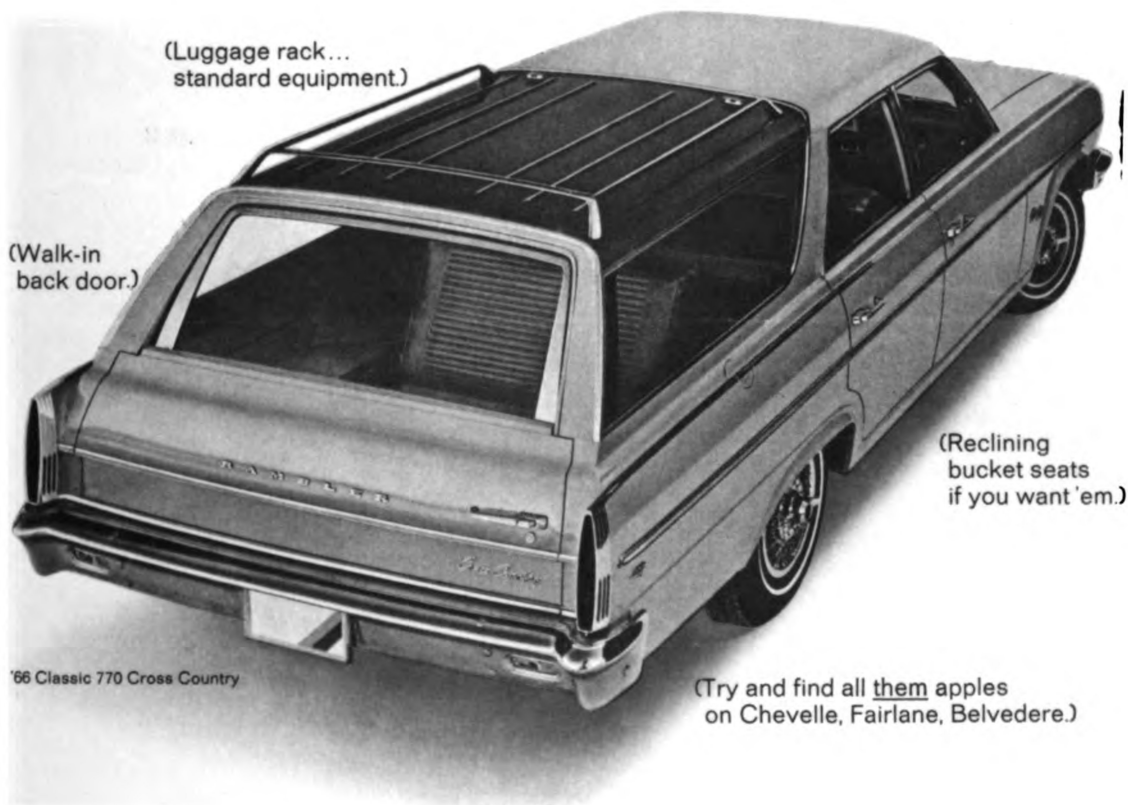
In 1966, American Motors introduced the line "American Motors . . . Where Quality is Built In, Not Added On." The accent was on quality at a reasonable price. The only reference to safety in this ad is the "Double-Safety braking system" as standard equipment. Safety is implied by the catchline which leads the reader to feel that this is a carefully crafted car and that since the car is made this carefully, it is safe (Figures 2 and 3).

The Dodge Charger was new in 1966. So was the "Dodge Rebellion" campaign. This ad emphasizes the newness of the car, its modern styling, and its evidently reasonable price. No direct references are made to power or speed but this tends to be implied by the name of the car, the girl with the bomb and the list of standard equipment: V-8, tachometer, racing style steering wheel, bucket seats (Figures 4 and 5).

The Plymouth Barracuda emphasizes performance and sportiness. No direct references are made to safety. An oblique reference is made to safety through mentioning optional front-wheel disc brakes something car enthusiasts have recognized for some time as a desirable feature (Figure 6).

FIGURE 2.--American Motors 1966 Classic Cross
Country Station Wagon.

Zoomiest, roomiest Rambler wagon ever.



Ready to be surprised? See what we've built into this glamorous new '66 Classic. Plus surprises you won't find in any other wagon in this class.

1. Your choice of two 6's...three V-8's. Up to 270 h.p. (Surprise! Even our smallest Six is bigger than the standard 6 on Fairlane, Chevelle, Coronet.) **2.** Surpris-

ing comfort. Coil innerspring seats built in front and back. You'll never guess who matches that. (No kidding, it's Cadillac.) **3.** Surprise room. More mom-room, dad-room, kid-room, cargo-room. (Note: Want even more passenger room? Add seat #3.)

Down. It gives you loads of cargo space. Up—extra people space.) **4.** Rich, durable

fabrics. Lustrous, scuff-resistant vinyls. Door-to-door carpeting—yes, even in our station wagons. **5.** Safety package. You'll find one on every "Big 3" car in '66. But leave it to American Motors—and Cadillac—to include a vital safety feature the "Big 3" leave out: a Double-Safety braking system as standard equipment. **6.** Back door.

Side-hinged to swing out for convenient loading...easy entrance and exit. (Step right in and make yourself comfortable.) **7.** Luggage rack. We confess. This one is built on. But only by American Motors. **Surprise yourself. See the '66 Rambler Classic Wagon at your friendly Giant-Killer...your American Motors/Rambler Dealer.**

American Motors...where quality is built in, not added on.

FIGURE 3.--American Motors 1966 Rambler American.

Rambler's roguish new flip-top.^(The Scrappy American) More go for the dough than any other car in its class.[†] (Big new standard engine! Out-horses Corvair, Falcon, Valiant! Yes, and you too, Mustang!)



"Does this Rambler really come with rally stripes?"

"No, but with the new engine
it drives that way."

'66 Rambler American

Read the 7 ways our scrappy new 440 takes on every '66 car in its fighting weight and size—and outclasses, outperforms, out-everythings them all. **1.** Big new standard Six. 199 cubes of power, torque, and thrust. (Packs 128 horses. Not even Corvair, Falcon, Valiant, Mustang harness that many.) A new '232'

is available, too.* Drop it in if you're sport enough. **2.** Shift-Command.* Flashy new dual transmission puts the stick on the floor. You control gear selection—or it shifts automatically. **3.** Reclining bucket seats.* Can you be sporty and comfortable? Try these! (Our secret coil inner-springs.) **4.** Power top. How about this.

It's standard equipment on the sassy new American convertible. (With Corvair, Valiant, Dart, you pay extra for the power.) **5.** Double-Safety braking system. We're the only U.S. manufacturer—except Cadillac—who includes it standard with the new "safety package." (We wonder when the rest of the "Big 3" cars will include it

in theirs.) **6.** Sporty interiors. Sleek new sun-loving vinyls in 7 lively colors. **7.** Slim, trim beauty. Sculptured hood. Non-rusting, solid aluminum grille. And how about those classy new wire wheel covers! See the new '66 Rambler American 440 at your friendly Giant-Killer...your American Motors/Rambler Dealer.

American Motors...where quality is built in, not added on.



FIGURE 4.--Chrysler Corporation Dodge Charger.

... new leader of the Dodge Rebellion.

Today, the star of the Auto Show becomes your fabulous road car. Last year you'd have paid a king's ransom for a car that looked like this. Last year you'd have paid extra for the things Charger's got. V8, tach, racing-style steering wheel, Charger's kind all around. And last year you couldn't get Charger's kind of full-sized fastback action no matter what you paid. But that was last year. This is the one car that made it from the drawing

This is the one car that made it from the drawing

Today, the star of the Auto Show becomes your fabulous road car.

Last year you'd have paid a king's ransom for a car that looked like this. Last year you'd have paid extra for the things Charger's got. V6, tach, racing-style steering wheel, bucket seats all around. And last year you couldn't get Charger's kind of full-sized fastback action no matter what you paid. But that was last year. This is the one car that made it from the drawing board to your driveway with all the excitement left — all the go, com, all the new features and extras that usually get lost in the shuffle. So there you are. Our big secret is out. Charger. By Dodge. Proof that a sports car can be luxurious. And good-looking. And comfortable. Charger. It had to happen. See it soon. The Dodge Rebellion wants you.

The Dodge Rebellion wants you.



Charger is designed to carry four in more comfort than the most expensive limousines can carry six. But try to find a limousine with Charger's quick, nimble handling. Just try.

This is where you'll discover what Charger is really for. The clock is optional. The tachometer (right next to the speedometer where it belongs) is standard equipment.

These disappearing headlights are standard equipment. Their neat appearance, up or down, is something special. Retraction is automatic.



What's better than bucket seats up front? Bucket seats all around. What's better than buckets all around? Buckets in back that fold flat to give you more space than you ever expected in a car like this.

Take a good look at the best "last look" on the road. But don't be misled by Charger's smooth line. Under that polished, curvy exterior, you'll find a car that has to be the fastest quick-change artist on the road. Changes character instantly—at the flick of a wrist. On the left, Charger shows off its sporting side.

1

**Dodge
Charger**



FIGURE 5.--Chrysler Corporation Dodge Polara.



If you're not content to string along with the herd, take a long look at the big Dodge Polara above. Your first thought may be, "Nice . . . but out of my class." Don't you believe it. For that's what the Dodge Rebellion is all about. Giving you more go, show, spice for the same price

you've always paid. Check the price tags on smaller cars. By the time you add a few of the things Polara's got standard—383 cu. in. V8, foam-padded seats, carpets—you can end up paying Polara's price and still be a long way from Polara's class. (Yes, even an outside mirror is standard.)

So, march right down to your Dodge Dealer's. The Dodge Rebellion wants you.

'66 Dodge Polara

DODGE DIVISION  **CHRYSLER**
MOTORS CORPORATION

**Demand more "big" in your big car.
Swing with Dodge Polara.**

JOIN THE DODGE REBELLION



FIGURE 6.--Chrysler Corporation Plymouth Barracuda.

Plymouth Barracuda



**What's a high-performance
fastback doing with a
7-foot-long utility space?**

Making sport of utility.

After all the applause for Barracuda's sporty fastback styling, there was only one way to go . . . and Barracuda went.

It went with an optional Formula 'S' performance pack. One that gives you a 273-cu.-in. Commando V-8, a tachometer, wide-rim wheels, special Blue Streak tires, heavy-duty shocks, springs and sway bar, and simulated bolt-on wheel covers. And a new option for '66: front-wheel disc brakes.

And you get all this new power and still get room for five, with individual bucket seats up front. Or, you can put two in front and flip down the rear seat to get a fully carpeted 7-foot-long cargo space. A fastback feature you get only in Barracuda. Why don't you take some action . . . and get some?



Charter Membership in Plymouth National Barracuda Club open to all owners.
See Plymouth in action on NCAA and AFL Football and The Bob Hope Show, NBC-TV.



PLYMOUTH DIVISION



CHRYSLER
MOTORS CORPORATION

Let yourself go... *Plymouth*

VIP FURY BELVEDERE VALIANT BARRACUDA

In 1967 Plymouth started its ". . . win you over this year," campaign. The Barracudas had been completely restyled and was featured with young people in "mod" dress. The stress was on the European styling and two new models of the Barracuda. Again there were no references to safety (Figure 7).

Mercury introduced the Cougar in 1967. Cougar advertising copy makes no direct reference to power or speed. However, the tie-in with Dan Gurney and image creating phrases like, "concealed headlamps that open cat-like at night," imply something more than just transportation. The only reference to safety is the last item which groups them all under "Ford Motor Company Lifeguard Design safety features" (Figure 8).

"Mercury, The Man's Car," heralded the 1967 Mercury. The appeal is masculine. To the male it means power, toughness. To the female it means security, dependability. Safety is only implied (Figure 9).

The 1967 Chrysler aims at the prestige image, yet puts equal stress on the fact that you can own a Chrysler for only a "few dollars a month more than most popular smaller cars comparably equipped." This is not a new theme for Chrysler. Chrysler ads make no direct reference to safety (Figure 10).

FIGURE 7.--Chrysler Corporation Plymouth Barracuda.

Plymouth is out to win  over this year.

The wild new Barracudas are here! Featuring America's lowest priced sports car. From \$2449*.



The '67 Barracuda



The '67 Sports Barracuda



The '67 Barracuda Convertible

Hardtop, Convertible, Fastback, Swift-looking, slick-going automobiles all with designs on your heart, all priced to fit your budget. Look 'em over. Read about them. Then go see them live at your Plymouth Dealers.

These are the sporty new 'Cudas that give you the excitement of European road races but carry prices as American as Saturday afternoon football.

These are the cars that live with quickness. The cars that bite into corners, truck

true and respond promptly. Tight on it! If you want to go the full stormer route, straightaway. Sure-footed in the turns. All the way up to a booming 353 cu. in. V-8

The automobiles that offer enough— which will be ready in plenty of time for you. Stormer or luxury car, Barracuda. Serving as personal as you want to make it.

A lot of the great things are standard. Expect to be disappointed.

Make your own. Suggested retail price, for standard changes, state and local taxes, if any and optional equipment, is shown in the chart below.

*Sportseat with flip-down center arm, and bumper guards (extra).

'67 Plymouth Barracuda

PLYMOUTH DIVISION  CHRYSLER MOTORS CORPORATION

FIGURE 8.--Ford Motor Company, Mercury Cougar Dan
Gurney Special.

Mercury Cougar Dan Gurney Special



Sale-priced now! Mercury's better idea in personal sports cars.



It's Motor Trend Magazine's "Car of the Year"...with special extras inspired by racing champ Dan Gurney. Plus the unique set of persuasions that put Cougar in a league by itself to start with. Drive something special. Mercury Cougar Dan Gurney Special.

Specially equipped with:

- Turbine wheel covers
- F70-14 wide-oval nylon cord whitewall tires
- Chromed engine dress-up kit
- Dan Gurney signature decal
- Cougar 289 cu. in. V-8

Plus these fine Cougar features:

- Concealed headlamps that open, cat-like, at night
- Sequential rear turn signals
- Foam-padded front buckets
- Simulated wood-grain steering wheel
- Choice of 16 colors
- Pleated vinyl upholstery
- Wall-to-wall carpeting
- Sound insulation package
- Ford Motor Company Lifeguard Design safety features



FIGURE 9.--Ford Motor Company, Mercury Caliente Grande.



MERCURY CALIENTE

A Man's Car is a woman's best friend.



Caliente Grandé interior has blue Gossamer nylon or Chambrey nylon in black or parchment. Both framed with crinkle vinyl.

Mercury knows how a woman is about upholstery and decor.

So we fingered a lot of fabrics before we ran across the Gossamer for the optional Grandé interior of this Caliente 4-door. It has 3-way stretch, feels soft as silk, but wears like jeans. All this, over nearly two easy-sitting inches of foam.

Mercury also took special pains with Caliente's appointments. The vinyl inserts on doors and dash have the hand-rubbed look of choice walnut. Knobs, handles, dial frames are beautifully simple.

Elsewhere in the Caliente, a man has had the last word. The engine choice ranges up to a surging 390 V-8 that thrives on regular gas. Our optional Select-Shift Merc-O-Matic lets a man run it through the gears manually, even if his wife prefers an automatic.

Mercury believes that better ideas make a better Man's Car. And that these ideas ought to include a lot of comfort for women.

If the battle of the sexes starts again, don't blame us. Or your Mercury dealer.



Mercury, the Man's Car.

.

FIGURE 10.--Chrysler Corporation Chrysler.

Ever try to stop a landslide?

That's as hard as keeping people from buying Chryslers.

There must be a reason.

Reasons is more like it.

A fresh, proud Take Charge look.

An optional 440 cubic inch V-8. The biggest in the price class. So are the brakes.

A new 3-in-1 front seat for some models. Room for three when you need it. Converts to individually adjustable seats for two.



And the passenger side reclines.

As for price, four Chrysler Newport models (all full-size) are now priced just a few dollars a month more than the most popular smaller cars, comparably equipped.

Moving up is catching on. Small wonder.

**Take Charge . . . move up to a
CHRYSLER**



Illustrated above: the Newport Custom 2 Door Hardtop in Scarch Red. Tune in Bob Hope Wednesdays and AFL Football weekly . . . NBC TV.

CHRYSLER DIVISION



CHRYSLER
MOTORS CORPORATION

Chrysler Imperial emphasizes engineering excellence. No references are made to safety. The idea of excellence in engineering is reinforced by the reproduction of the five year/50,000 mile warranty in the ad. This also has safety connotations. A car that offers a warranty like that and has the reputation of the Imperial must be a safe car (Figure 11).

Ford Motor Company reverted to its 1956 "Lifeguard Design." All safety items are grouped under this heading rather than enumerated.

The Mustang on page 58 primarily relied on visual appeal. Copy stressed new style and options. Safety features are not mentioned save under the heading of Lifeguard Design (Figure 12).

Note, however, that Ford maintained the basic "quiet man" theme of 1965 as well. The example shown on page 60 (Figure 13) ties all three together. The emphasis is on strength and durability as well as a quiet ride, luxury and distinctiveness. Safety is implied through the image of the strong car. Late in 1967 Ford started their "'68 Ideas at '67 Prices," campaign. This series began about the time when dealers were having sales to get ready for the new models (Figure 14).

In 1968, all automobiles will have the safety equipment required by the new auto safety bill. Ford's

FIGURE 11.--Chrysler Corporation Imperial.

**There are three American luxury cars.
Significantly, only Imperial carries the assurance
of a 5-year/50,000-mile warranty.***



Imperial engineers have always been known for their ingenuity. Which is why we aren't the least bit reluctant to back their achievements in engine and drive train components for 5 years or 50,000 miles.

Imperial's completely new 440 cubic inch V8 is a prime example. It now provides a 10% increase in performance with only a 1% increase in weight.

What's the secret? A thimbleful of elemental tin which strengthens the alloy of the engine block.

For this discovery, our engineers earned scientific recognition around the world.



3 front seats in 1

The pursuit of uncommon excellence extends throughout the Imperial.

In 4-door models the front seat is actually 3 in one. A 5-foot sectional sofa that converts to twin armchairs, side by side. And when the passenger's seatback is reclined to any angle within

a 22½° arc, the front seat becomes armchair plus chaise lounge.

Judge for yourself

The 1966 Imperial offers many such ingenious luxuries throughout.

Discover them firsthand in our dealer's showroom. Or write for our full-color, 20-page catalog. Imperial Division, Office No. 5A-2, P.O. Box 1658, Detroit, Michigan 48253.

THE INCOMPARABLE IMPERIAL

**Finest of the fine cars built by
Chrysler Corporation**

***Here's how Imperial's 5-year/50,000-mile engine and drive train warranty protects you:** Chrysler Corporation warrants, for 5 years or 50,000 miles, whichever comes first, against defects in materials and workmanship and will replace or repair at a Chrysler Motors Corporation Authorized Dealer's place of business, without charge for required parts and labor, the engine block, head and internal parts, intake manifold, water pump, transmission case and internal parts, torque converter, drive shaft, universal joints, rear axle and differential, and rear wheel bearings of its 1966 Imperial automobiles, provided the owner has the engine oil changed every 3 months or 4,000 miles, whichever comes first, the oil filter replaced every second oil change and the carburetor air filter cleaned every 6 months and replaced every 2 years, and every 6 months furnishes to such a dealer evidence of performance of the required service, and requests the dealer to certify (1) receipt of such evidence and (2) the car's then current mileage.

FIGURE 12.--Ford Motor Company, Ford Mustang.



There are three all-new ways to answer the call of Mustang. Start with the hardtop, fastback or convertible. All longer, wider, sportier. (Standard features galore include bucket seats, floor-mounted shift, Ford Motor Company Lifeguard-Design safety features.) You take



over from there with options like new Tilt-Away steering wheel, front power disc brakes, SelectShift automatic transmission that also works manually, V-8's up to 390 cu. in., Stereo-Sonic Tape System. Mustang's call may be loud and clear but the cost is only a whisper. Listening?



'67 MUSTANG

Bred first...to be first



FIGURE 13.--Ford Motor Company, Ford.

The FORD quiet story- proved year after year.



1965: A quiet, strong Ford rode quieter than a \$17,000 Rolls-Royce. An amazing claim, but Ford proved it electronically.



1966: A quiet, strong Ford rode quieter than Jaguar, Mercedes-Benz, and Citroën. Ford's Quiet Man proved it all over Europe.



1967: A quiet, strong Ford again proved its strength—leaped off a 40-meter Olympic Ski Jump, soared 50 feet to a bone-jarring

landing, still drove away quietly (NOTE: Our Ski Jump Ford was a showroom model with nothing added but a skidplate to protect the oil pan.)



Quieter because it's stronger—stronger because it's better built.

FIGURE 14.--Ford Motor Company, Mustang/Galaxie
500 Better Ideas Sale.

Ford's better ideas for sale—

Your Ford Dealer has ideas for sale right now that other cars won't have until next year—if then. Ideas like: SelectShift Cruise-O-Matic transmission, the automatic that works as a manual, too, even on 6-cylinder cars. Tilt-Away steering wheel swings aside, adjusts 9 ways. Convenience Control Panel warns if fuel is low or door's ajar. Lots more. Get these exclusives on hot-selling '67s like the Mustang Sports Sprint!

Mustang Sports Sprints, hardtop and convertible, come with special equipment at a special low price:

- Sporty hood vents with recessed turn indicators
- Whitewalls
- Full wheel covers
- Bright rocker panel moldings
- Chrome air cleaner
- Vinyl-covered shift lever—if you choose SelectShift
- Plus Mustang's long list of standard features

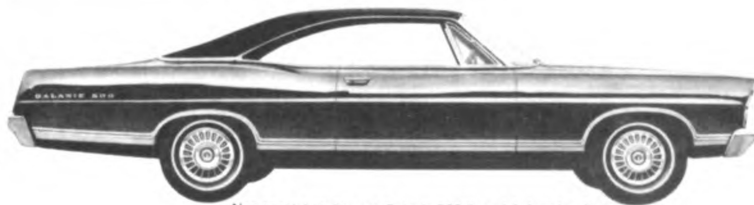
**No wonder Mustang resale value is so high . . .
no wonder it outsells all its imitators combined!**



1968 ideas at 1967 prices!

NOW! Special Savings on SelectAire Conditioner!

Here's an air-conditioning unit that isn't just "hung on." It's handsomely built into the instrument panel. So it saves space . . . and looks as good as it keeps you feeling. You can get SelectAire right now at a special low price on a Mustang Sports Sprint or special Ford Galaxie models.



Also special savings on Galaxie 500 2- and 4-door hardtops.

SEE YOUR FORD DEALER TODAY!



theme implied that the 1967's had all these features but they did not cost extra. They would not cost "extra" in 1968 either, but the sticker price of the car will probably have gone up because of them. This theme also implied that Ford is modern and forward looking--a desirable image.

A 1966 Ford Thunderbird ad shows what we assume to be an airline pilot looking at new new "Safety-Convenience Panel." The ad does not mention safety directly. The "pilot" though, does imply safety. Pilots fly modern airplanes which have numerous safety devices. Few planes crash. Therefore, the Thunderbird must be a safe car since a pilot is driving one (Figure 15).

The Lincoln Continental makes no reference to safety in any way. It relies completely on the image of being an auto for the elite. As will be shown later, this image in itself carries certain safety connotations (Figure 16).

A 1966 corporate ad for General Motors showed various testing procedures at the GM proving grounds. This is not a new idea for GM, and an earlier example is described in Chapter III. What the ad is striving for is to help build an image in the public's mind that all GM cars are thoroughly tested before being offered on the market and are therefore very safe cars, very reliable cars (Figure 17).

FIGURE 15.--Ford Motor Company, Thunderbird.

*The Thunderbird Touch:
An overhead Safety Convenience Panel*



1966 Thunderbird Town Landau with new formal roofline

Look! Thunderbird for 1966 has a unique Safety-Convenience Panel, mounted overhead on Town Hardtop and Landau models. Tap a switch and the Emergency Flasher System sets four exterior lights blinking. Other lights remind you to fasten seat belts, tell you when fuel is low,

or doors ajar. Other personal Thunderbird touches for 1966 include the optional AM Radio/Stereo-sonic Tape system to give you over 70 minutes of music on an easy-to-load tape cartridge. Completely automatic! Four speakers! New, too, are: an automatic Highway Pilot speed con-

trol option; more powerful standard V-8—plus a 428 cubic inch optional V-8. And all the craftsmanship that has made this car a classic in its own time.

Thunderbird



UNIQUE IN ALL THE WORLD

FIGURE 16.--Ford Motor Company, Lincoln Continental.



Lincoln Continental
reflects your way of life.



Shown above, the Continental coupé, broadening your invitation to ownership. Also available, the sedan and America's only four-door convertible. For 1966, a new 462 cu. in. engine and a completely new transmission. New luxury options include automatic temperature control system, stereo tape/AM radio, and many others.

Lincoln Continental distinguishes you among fine car owners. It is the luxury motorcar that stands apart from all other cars. As an expression of individuality, good taste, accomplishment. As the reflection of a way of life. Come take a closer look: drive it, experience it, and discover for yourself how close you may be to owning a Continental.

 LINCOLN *Continental*

America's most distinguished motorcar.

FIGURE 17.--General Motors.

Cadillac takes on the CULVER Track.



Buick turns down a road of grit.



Chevrolet tackles the cement blocks.



Pontiac vs. the water trough.



Oldsmobile in the midst of a J turn.



You can ask a lot from General Motors cars— General Motors does.

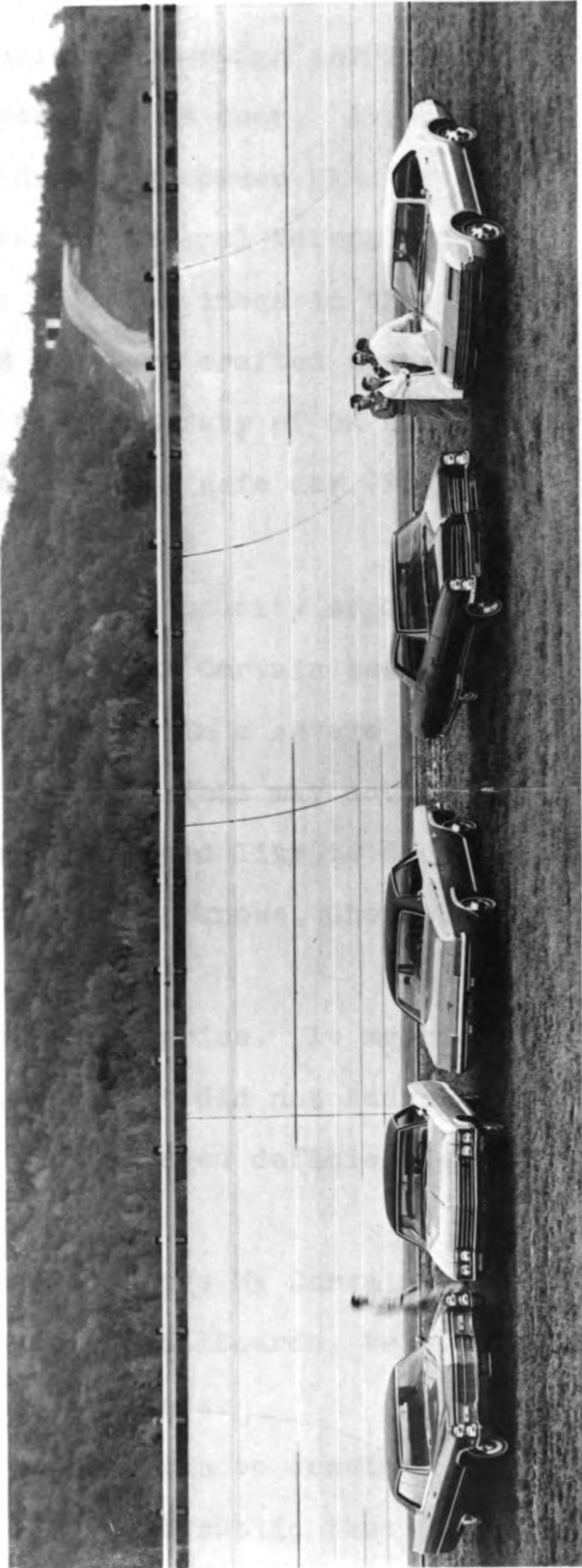
The 1966 Chevrolets, Pontiacs, Oldsmobiles, Buicks and Cadillacs—proved all around.

You ask a lot from a car — and GM engineers ask even more.

And that's why they go to such lengths to make a good thing even better. Testing and re-testing for safety and surety GM cars respond to and how well they hold up. How they ride. How they take a corner. How they hold their own in wind. Testing through salt baths and mud baths and

over cobblestone blocks and raw dirt trails and hard and fast test tracks.

The results are new cars that are ready for you now at your General Motors dealers'—engineered for all-around durability, all-around reliability, all-around safety. Ready, willing and able to prove that they're worth more now and, chances are, worth more to you at trade-in.



Left to right, 1966 Cadillac Sedan de Ville, Buick Electra 225, Chevrolet Caprice, Pontiac Bonneville, and Oldsmobile Toronado

In 1967 GM began promoting the "GM Mark of Excellence." This is an institutional campaign involving a metal tag on the interior post of the door. According to the copy, this tag, "means the uncommon kind of quality you've come to expect of General Motors . . ."

The campaign seeks to build an image in the consumer's mind that all GM cars are crafted by experts. It is an oblique reference to the safety of GM cars: if a car is built by craftsmen, it is a safe car (Figures 18 and 19).

It is interesting to note the paucity of Corvair advertising in 1965, 1966 and 1967. Corvair seemed to follow the pattern of most products in a severe sales slump--cut the advertising budget. This may actually be due to a rumor that Chevrolet would like to drop the Corvair line. As far as this author knows, Chevrolet has made no concrete announcements.

Corvair advertising stressed price. It mentioned all the 1967 GM safety features, but did not address itself to any of the specifically alleged deficiencies cited by Nader (Figure 20).

In 1967 Corvair began an "I Love My Corvair" campaign. This campaign made use of billboards, television, radio testimonials and bumper stickers.

The purpose of this campaign was to convince what Chevrolet believed to be a skeptical public that Corvair

FIGURE 18.--General Motors Mark of Excellence.

An extra

you don't pay

extra for.



Which surprises most people. Particularly when they see that the cars that have it are the same cars that have such things as front wheel drive, hidden windshield wipers, factory-waxed finish and automatic level control as standard equipment, too. But then, isn't that what you expect from GM? A little more quality and car for the money?

Look to the General Motors mark of excellence

Chevrolet • Pontiac • Oldsmobile • Buick • Cadillac

FIGURE 19.--General Motors Mark of Excellence.



This is our mark of excellence.
You'll see it when you open the door
of any '67 GM car. And hear it
when you close the door.

That's one of the things our mark means—the uncommon kind of quality you've come to expect from General Motors. And when you look at our '67 cars, you'll see that our mark means more than just quality, too. In style, comfort, safety and convenience,

the new Chevrolets, Pontiacs, Oldsmobiles, Buicks and Cadillacs are the finest ever built by General Motors. Look for the mark. You'll find it on every new GM car. More important, you'll find it where it has always been. In every GM car.

Look to the General Motors mark of excellence

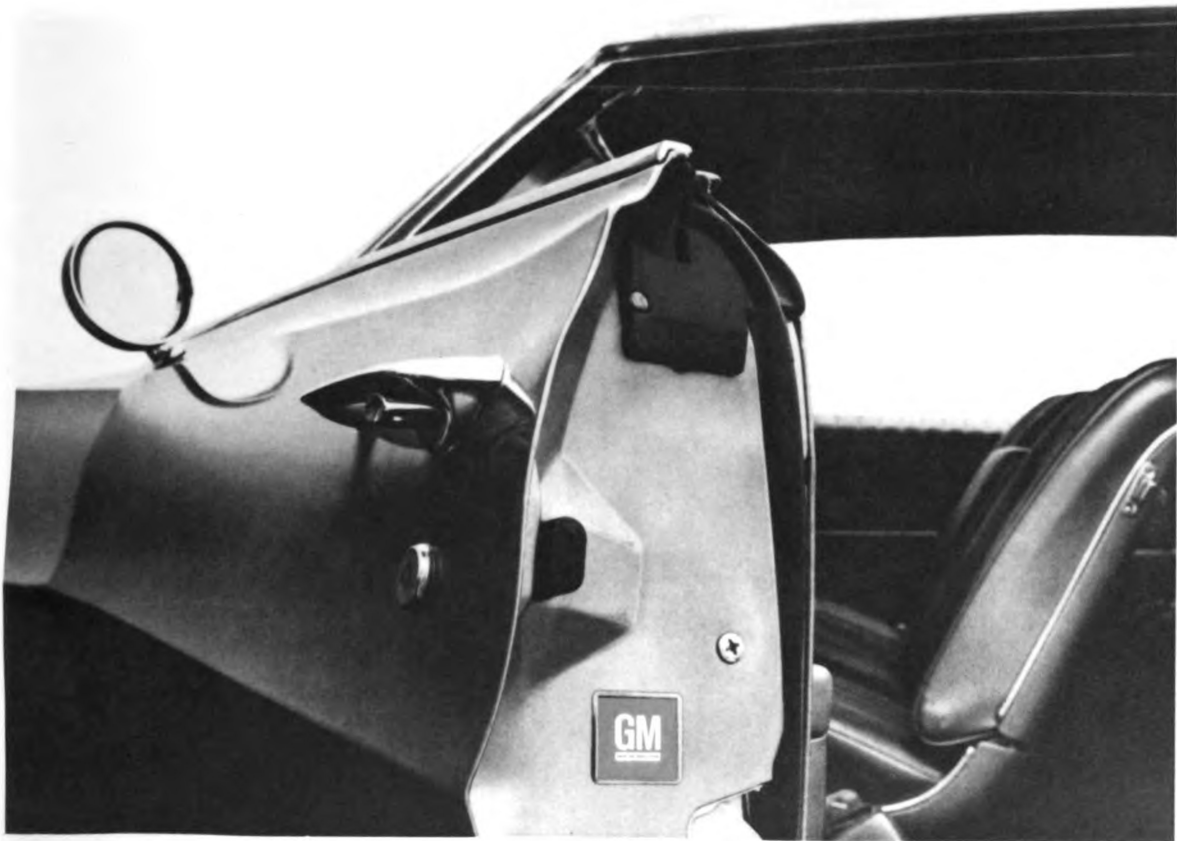


FIGURE 20.--General Motors, Chevrolet Corvair.

To you drivers who really love driving,
this could be the most welcome
new car of the year

'67 Corvair

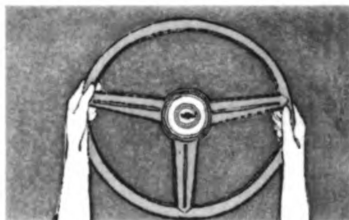
The rear-engine road car



Corvair 500 Sport Coupe, America's lowest priced hardtop—\$2128*



New dual master cylinder brakes—Separate hydraulic systems, one for front brakes and one for rear brakes, mean that one set keeps working even if the other doesn't (an unlikely event). Red light on instrument panel warns of any pressure imbalance between the two systems.



New oval steering wheel—This easy-to-grip wheel sits atop the GM-developed energy-absorbing steering column—one of many new standard safety features. Others include 4-way hazard warning flasher and a lane-change feature incorporated in direction signal control.

*Manufacturer's suggested list price for Corvair 500 Sport Coupe (model 10137). To this price add white-wall tires \$28.20, and wheel covers \$21.10, which are illustrated on Madeira Maroon Corvair in foreground. All prices include Federal Excise Tax and suggested dealer delivery and handling charge (transportation charges, accessories, other optional equipment, state and local taxes additional).

Here it is—with its steering as crisp and precise as ever, its independent suspension as poised and flat-riding as ever, its styling as clean and sweet as ever. Plus new safety and convenience features that'll add to your delight in driving it. We who build Corvair wouldn't have it any other way. And we know you drivers who really love driving wouldn't, either.



was a good automobile and that people who owned them were satisfied. The best advertisement is a satisfied customer.

As far as this writer knows, the campaign died a quiet death. As to why, the author can only guess that it was due in part to the fact that people thought Chevrolet was trying to smoke-screen the truth about the Corvair, and also due to the fact that people driving old, "junk" cars were putting the bumper stickers on them. While this may have been humorous, it is not the most effective means of correcting a bad image for Corvair.

This Chevrolet ad promotes the "Dream Ride." Major emphasis is placed on ride, the solidness of the car and the comfort. The picture of the child sleeping comfortably clutching a doll leads the reader to think in terms of security. If the child is secure, then the car must be safe. The ad has a pervasive sense of security. Safety is only mentioned, in a direct way, by a tag line listing "8 new standard features for your added safety. . ." and finally admonishes the reader to "always buckle up" (Figure 21).

The Chevrolet Chevelle stresses sportiness. The Chevelle SS (Super Sport) emphasizes power more directly than does the Malibu. The only reference to safety is the last line of the copy for the Malibu, "buckle yourself into one at your Chevrolet dealer's" (Figure 22).

FIGURE 21.--General Motors, Chevrolet Impala.

What makes Chevrolet Jet-smoother?
A thick coil spring at every wheel.
Soft double-acting shock absorbers.
Over 700 shock and sound stoppers
spotted throughout the car.
Anti-squat control, so the back end
doesn't slump down on starts.
Anti-dive control, so the front end
doesn't plop down on stops.
V8's balanced for smoothness.
A solid, comfortable Body by Fisher.
Foam-cushioned seats.
Gobs of leg room.
Peace. And quiet. zzzzzzzzzz
You get it at your Chevrolet dealer's.



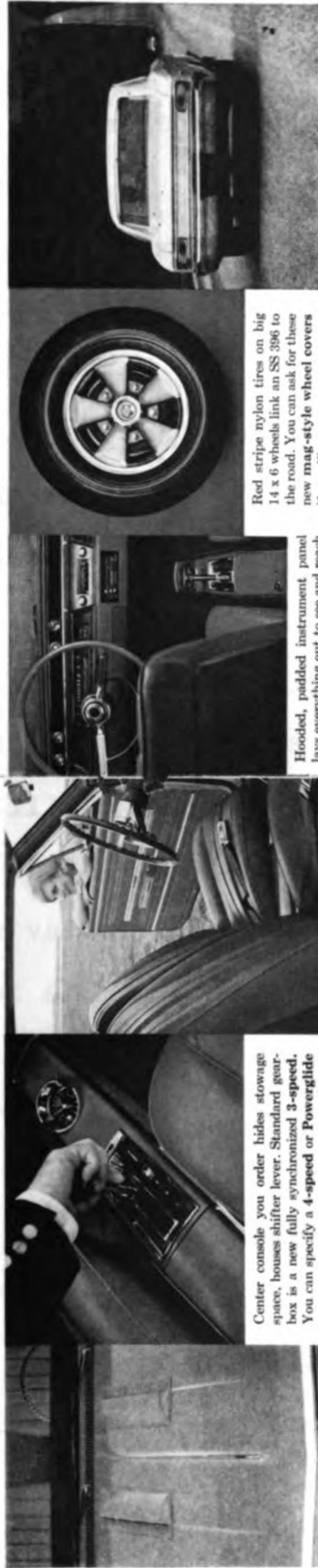
Chevrolet Division of General Motors, Detroit, Michigan

'66 Impala, Jet-smoother the Chevrolet Way
Chevrolet Division of General Motors, Detroit, Michigan



FIGURE 22.--General Motors, Chevrolet Chevelle SS 396.

New Chevelle SS 396: a Turbo-Jet V8 surrounded by everything you could ask for.



Center console you order hides storage space, houses shifter lever. Standard gear-box is a new fully synchronized 3-speed. You can specify a 4-speed or Powerglide instead. Check comes with console. Tell us to install full instrumentation and you get a tachometer, too.



An SS 396 is also a vinyl interior, full carpeting and all the niceties. You add bucket seats if you want.

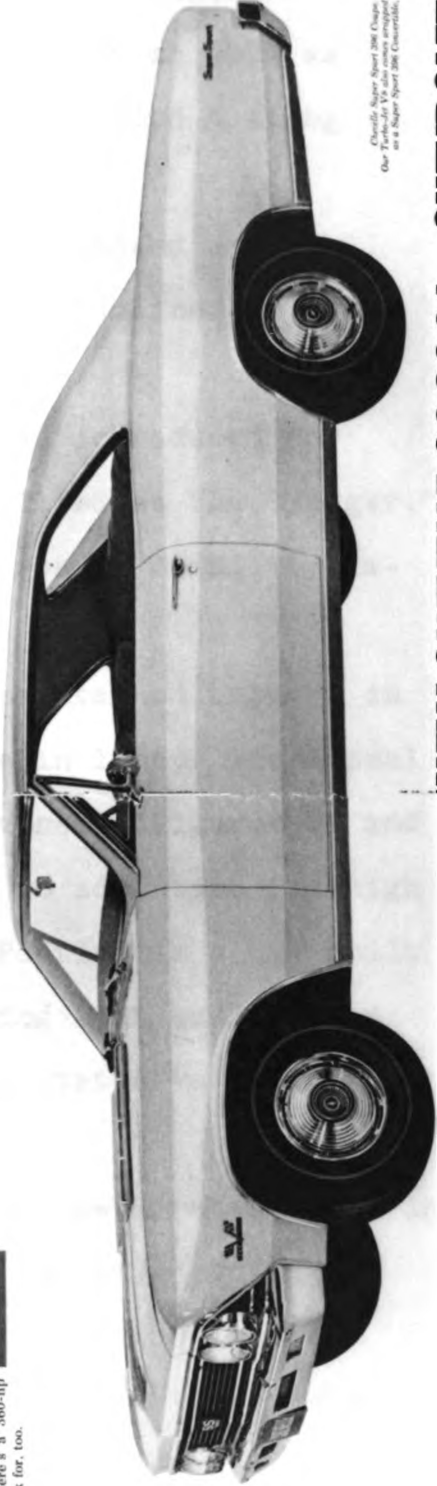
Hooded, padded instrument panel lays everything out to see and reach easily. For more specifics, you order full instrumentation: tachometer, ammeter, water-temperature and oil-pressure gauges.

Red stripe nylon tires on big 14 x 6 wheels link an SS 396 to the road. You can ask for these new mag-style wheel covers if you like.

Special suspension (springs, shocks, stabilizer bar) and 3.31:1 rear axle are stock SS 396. You can order higher special-purpose ratios: 3.55, 3.73 or 4.10:1 (the last with Positraction only).



Under a Super Sport's aircoop-styled hood is a Turbo-Jet V8; 306 cu. in., 325 hp. Rocker covers, air cleaner, oil-filler and breather caps are chromed. There's a 360-hp version you can ask for, too.



Chevelle Super Sport 306 Coupe. Our Turbo-Jet V8 also comes equipped as a Super Sport 306 Convertible.

NEW CHEVELLE SS 396 by CHEVROLET

Chevrolet Division of General Motors, Detroit, Michigan

1967 also saw the introduction of Chevrolet's Camaro. Since it was a new car introduction, the emphasis was on new styling and features as well as price, since it was competing with the Ford Mustang (Figure 23).

Later Camaro ads mention the standard safety items as part of the copy. Emphasis remained on style and price.

A new descriptive headline was introduced for the Camaro late in 1967. It was billed as the "Hugger." The idea was that it "hugged" the road. Stability implied safety.

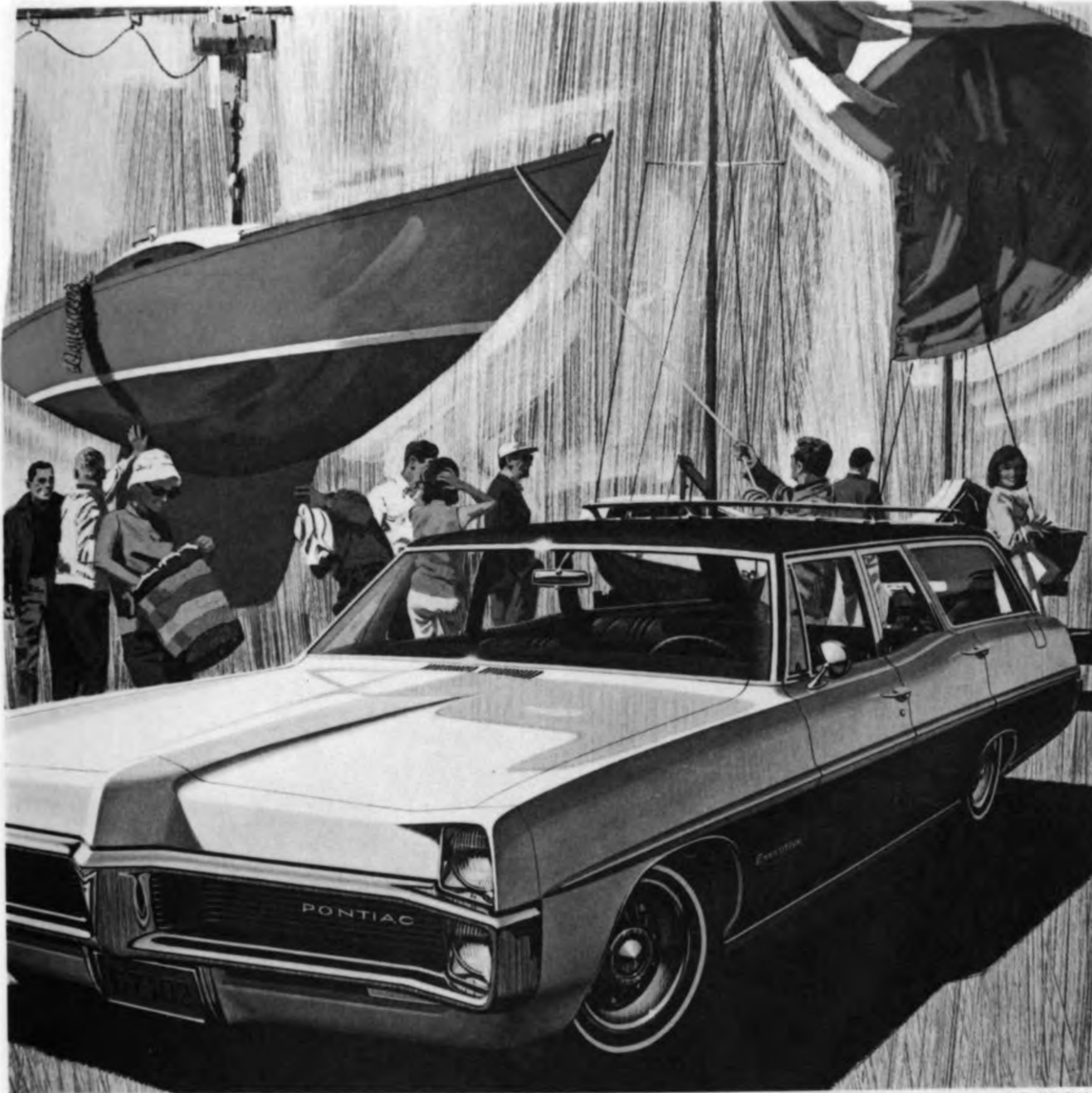
The full size 1967 Pontiac maintained artwork in lieu of photographs as it had done in 1966. The appeal was still to luxury and distinctiveness (Figures 24 and 25).

In late 1967, Pontiac began to advertise its high resale value. The idea was that Pontiac is a car built to last and hold its value, implying high quality and durability as well as appealing to status values (Figure 26).

Pontiac also introduced their new Firebird late in 1967. Advertising emphasizes the new styling and a youthful image. Safety was not promoted. Power and speed were implied by the "gutsy" copy for Firebirds with larger engines and distinctive striping.

FIGURE 23.--General Motors, Chevrolet Camaro.

FIGURE 24.--General Motors, Pontiac Station Wagon
(Executive Safari).



Pontiac Motor Division

It looks like a lot more people will be driving station wagons this year.

That tastefully sculpted Executive Safari you see up there is bound to change a lot of thinking about station wagons. Along with its equally new Tempest Safari cousin, it was designed to prove that a wagon can look as good at the opera as it does out at Lake Winnebago. Together, they bring to eight the number of Pontiac wagons designed for everything from seeing America first to delivering Junior and seven friends to PS 32.

Our new 400 cubic inch V-8 is Executive's standard moving

force (our revolutionary Overhead Cam 6 powers the Tempest series) and a flock of new options like a stereo tape player are available to help make getting there more than half the fun.

To get you there safely, we've added new safety features like folding seat back latches, a four-way hazard warning flasher, and General Motors' new energy absorbing steering column. Your Pontiac dealer has the whole story. Just tell him you want to get out of town. In style.

Pontiac 67/Ride the Wide-Track Winning Streak



FIGURE 25.--General Motors, Pontiac Catalina.



What does it take to make a great car deal?

A great car, naturally.

At the risk of scaring off some economy-minded folk, we made Pontiac Catalina with every bit of high-priced styling our designers could muster. Then we turned around and priced it as if it were just a plain, ordinary family sedan.

But a plain, ordinary look? It just wouldn't fit. Not with Catalina's standard 400 cubic-inch V-8 and exclusive features like disappearing windshield wipers.

Which is why you'll find walnut-grain styling on the dash, extra-plush carpeting on the floor and caressable Morrokide upholstery on the big, wide seats. And why we enveloped the whole thing in General Motors safety features with the added security of our own Wide-Track.

So when you take a Catalina home, don't go around letting people know how little you paid for it. Catalina won't.

Wide-Track Pontiac Catalina

FIGURE 26.--General Motors, Pontiac: Value As a
Used Car.



Pontiac Motor Division

**In a couple of years,
some other guy will want it just as much as you do now.**

To entertain disposing of a piece of gleaming machinery like a new Pontiac even before the factory smell wears off must certainly grieve the heart. But think about it.

For that's one of the things that make Pontiac Catalina such a great buy.

When it comes to resale value, Pontiac's years-ahead styling and features like disappearing windshield wipers keep Catalina among the highest in the medium-price class -including the top models of

the low-priced three. This despite the fact that Catalina sells for the same kind of money as the low-priced three. For proof check N.A.D.A. Used Car Guide figures.

Of course while you keep the car you'll rejoice in the use of a responsive 400 cubic-inch V-8, a longer smooth-riding wheelbase, and interiors as only Pontiac can make them.

In fact, you'll rejoice so much, you may decide to keep the next owner waiting for years and years.



Wide-Track Pontiac

The Pontiac LeMans puts its main emphasis on the new Overhead Cam Six (OHC-6) engine. The accompanying pictures imply power through the "tiger" theme. The girl in the car has overtones of sex. The only reference to safety is a sentence "and we've added a host of safety items this year, like front and rear seat belts (Be sure to use them)" (Figure 27).

The 1966 Pontiac GTO maintained its Tiger theme. The major emphasis is on power and handling. The tiger implies virility and power. Note, that while power pervades the ad, it is not directly mentioned (Figure 28).

The Pontiac Grand Prix follows the Cadillac theme of luxury and distinctiveness. The use of a drawing instead of a photograph gives an upper class image. No direct reference is made to safety (Figure 29).

Buick introduced the "Tuned Car" concept in 1967. The term is one used by engineers to refer to the entire car as being "tuned," or, in other words, everything fits like it should, where it should.

The ad makes no direct reference to speed or power but speed and power may be implied by the list of optional engine sizes (Figure 30).

The second Buick ad is a direct appeal to safety. It attempts to blanket the entire Buick line. If Buick could handle the safety question with these special ads, they would not have to concentrate on it in the other

FIGURE 27.--General Motors, Pontiac LeMans.

We're so much in the habit of one-upping everybody else that once in a while we even one-up ourselves. Like this year. After designing that delectable 1966 Le Mans down there, we designed an extraordinary new 165-hp overhead cam six (like the ones in many European sports machines) and made it standard in all Tempests and Le Mans. You can

even order a 207-hp version in a sports package which includes special suspension, distinctive emblems, and sports striping. Or one of our 250 or 285-hp V-8s. And we've added a host of safety items this year, like front and rear seat belts. (Be sure to use them.) With sweet inducements like these, how can you resist buying a Le Mans? You can't.

Does anything this sleek and luxurious really need a revolutionary new overhead cam six? No. We just like it better that way.



Pontiac Motor Division • General Motors Corporation

Wide-Track Pontiac/66

FIGURE 28.--General Motors, Pontiac GTO.

What does it take to make a new improved GTO? Pontiac.

Who else could but Pontiac? After all, little things like 335 or 360 hp, stick-like-glue handling and fantastically plush interiors just don't come from anybody. Or drive a GTO. Best way in the world to tell a real tiger from a would-be. The tiger scores again!

Wide-Track Pontiac/'66

Pontiac Motor Division • General Motors • Detroit, Michigan



FIGURE 29.--General Motors, Pontiac Grand Prix.

Has success
spoiled
the Grand Prix?

Obviously not.

Ever notice how it is? A car gets one stuff of success and it starts coming on fat and lazy, dull as dust? Meet the exception. It's all little reasons, really. Like deep bucket seats (on bench), carpeting, console and all the other niceties being standard equipment. And a big 380-cubic inch engine that puts out 333 hp. Not to mention styling that makes any other car look positively drab. We could go on but you get the idea: the only thing going to be spoiled about Grand Prix this Year will be the people inside. The tiger starts again.

**Wide-Track
Pontiac/66**

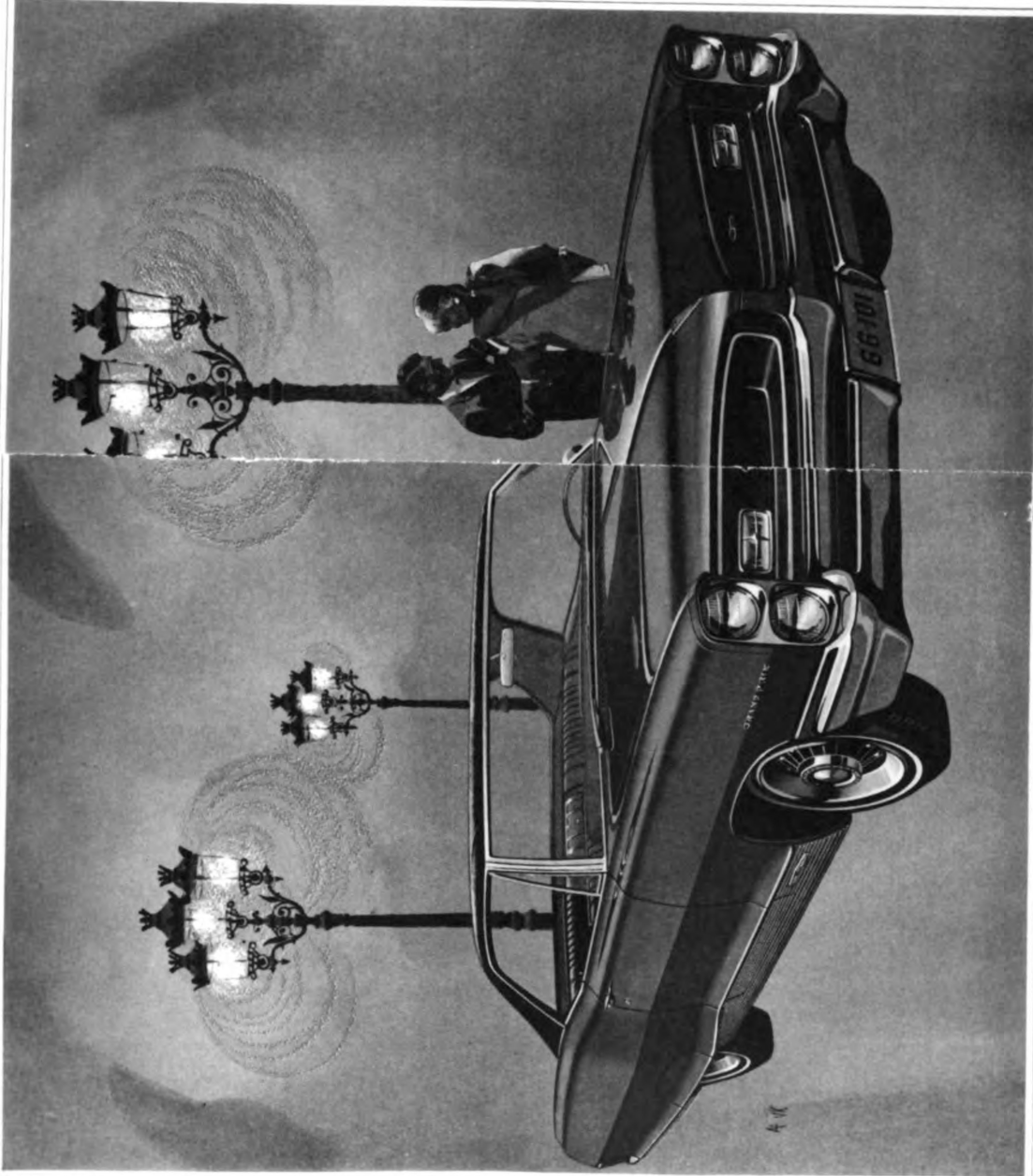


FIGURE 30.--General Motors, Buick Riviera.



'67 proves again that it takes Buick to top Buick. A lot of people thought Riviera was perfect last year, with its trend-setting look and new ventilation system. But now Riviera is—yes—improved. And this is how:



With hazard flashers at all corners, and the GM-developed energy absorbing steering column. The day-night vinyl-coated inside mirror. The new braking system, with dual master cylinders and a warning light.



And Riviera now connects a 430-cubic-inch, 360-horsepower V-8 to Super Turbine automatic, and to the kind of ride and handling that live up to Riviera's looks—clean and smooth and married to the road.



And because bucket seats and a center console and sun are available, you can make the '67 Riviera even more personal. Now the question is: How soon can you make it to your Buick dealer's?

BUICK '67

THE TUNED CAR



ads for specific Buicks that are intended to sell cars, not just safety (Figure 31).

In 1966, Oldsmobile introduced their "Step out in front . . ." campaign. This Toronado ad makes no direct references to safety. The appeal is essentially one of status and uniqueness. It must be remembered, however, that the Toronado was a radically new concept in automobiles with its front wheel drive. It is generally thought that front wheel drive is safer because one has more control over the car since the car is being pulled, rather than pushed. Other Oldsmobile ads followed the same theme and made no direct references to safety (Figure 32).

Cadillac maintains its theme of luxury, excellence and distinctiveness. The ad points to new performance, variable ratio power steering, improved handling and new responsiveness. No direct references are made to safety (Figure 33).

The foregoing ads seem to bear out the Advertising Age prediction that, "the advertising result will be noticeable more in what is not said than in what is said."⁴⁶

The accent in these ads has been on styling and distinctiveness and/or economy. Power and speed have

⁴⁶"Hearing on Auto Safety Brings Quick Action," Advertising Age, July 26, 1965, p. 8.

FIGURE 31.--General Motors, Buick As a Safe Family
Car.

Wherever Barbara Clark goes, Andy Clark goes. Does Ray Clark worry?



Barbara and Ray Clark both long ago developed a reflex action: when they had to stop the car quickly, they automatically threw an arm across the passenger seat. (You do it too, right?)

This was because they always expected little Andrew's seat to flop forward. But for 1967 Buick puts a latch on the front seat of every coupe, so the seat can't flop forward on sudden stops.

What's more, Buick has put a dual master cylinder brake system in every Buick. And seat belts in every Buick, front and rear seats.

So now why should Ray Clark worry? His wife is driving a Buick, isn't she? A big, sturdy, dependable Buick. With a padded dash and

padded visors and all kinds of things you'd expect in a Buick.

With all the things Buick puts in every Buick, should Ray Clark worry about putting his wife in one?

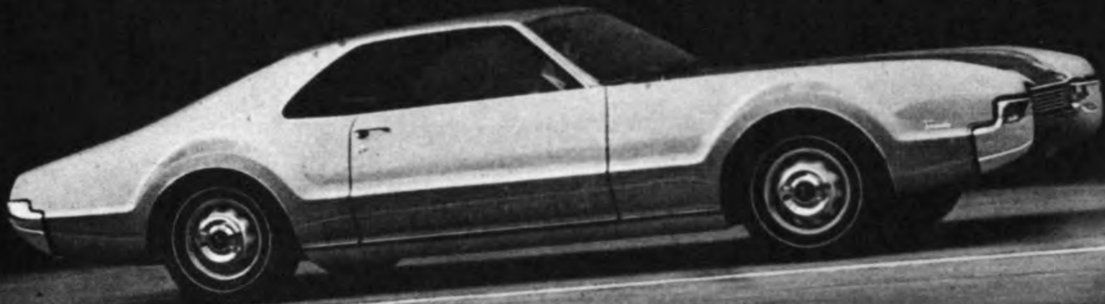
1967 Buick.



NOVEMBER 1966

FIGURE 32.--General Motors, Oldsmobile Toronado.

*STEP
OUT FRONT
IN '66... in a Rocket Action Olds!*



Ho-hum driving is out...Toronado's in!

Sleek projectile shape is in. Warmed-over style is out. Road-hugging front wheel drive, definitely in. Flat floors, full-view side windows, concealed headlamps, draft-free ventilation system, full-size room for six are all in. 425-cube Toronado Rocket V-8 is way out—front! Fact is, every good thing we could think of is in. With one exception . . . You! LOOK TO OLDS FOR THE NEW!

Oldsmobile Division • General Motors Corp.

FIGURE 33.--General Motors, Cadillac.



You select the position of your Cadillac's steering wheel

Cadillac's Tilt and Telescope Steering Wheel offers you complete customizing of the distance between you and the steering wheel. Two simple controls allow you to adjust the wheel up or down, in or out to most any combination of positions to make your driving more comfortable. A simple turn of the steering wheel hub allows you to position the steering wheel in or out through a full three inch range. ■ Raise the small lever

on the left of the steering column, and you can tilt the steering wheel up or down. You can easily customize the wheel for more arm or leg room, unobstructed vision and maximum comfort, even while driving. It's a convenience that tailors a Cadillac to *any* driver—short, tall, stout or slender. ■ *Tilt and Telescope Steering Wheel by the Saginaw Steering Gear Division, General Motors Corporation, Saginaw, Michigan.*

been implied, rather than stated, through lists of options and high-power standard engines.

The same is true with safety equipment--more is implied than stated. In general, there has been a toning down of automobile advertising with less emphasis on power, more on luxury and distinctiveness.

Though this thesis specifically addresses itself to automobile print advertising, the writer feels it would be relevant to mention some efforts in automobile advertising in other media and in related advertising such as that for tires and gasoline.

According to an article in the August 1966 issue of Sponsor, GM had a one hour no-commercial documentary entitled "Destination Safety." The article stated that "Destination Safety" was being offered via Campbell-Ewald with an 'objective view' of measures to improve safety--better roads, more skilled drivers and stricter law enforcement." Evidently no mention was made of improved auto design.

Uni-Royal is advertising "Tiger Paws." These tires are advertised in cartoon style with a tiger whose body looks like a car and eyes are windshield and wipers. Safety is implied through the idea that "Tiger Paws" can go where other cars can not. The tiger implies mastery over the road and other "run-of-the-mill" tires and drivers who buy them.

Mobil Oil ran the "We Want You To Live" campaign in 1967. This campaign included newspapers, billboard, in-station display and so on.

Uni-Royal is also advertising the "Rain Tire," a tire that smooths out roads and really grips. There is also the \$75.00 tire which if it saves your life once, it's worth it.

CHAPTER V

A CAR IS A CAR EXCEPT WHEN IT IS A STATUS SYMBOL

So far, we have looked only at the automobile industry, its advertising and the government, but virtually ignored another crucial factor--the consumer.

Why is it that the automobile advertisers have, in some cases merely soft pedalled safety and others have not mentioned it at all? To provide some sort of answer to this question we should try to determine how the consumer feels about safety and his automobile.

The answer to this question will also provide the answer to a second question: is automobile advertising still accomplishing its objectives and dealing adequately with the question of advertising of safety equipment in automobiles?

At first glance, the objective of automobile advertising seems fairly obvious--to sell cars. But is it?

Automobile advertisers do want to sell cars, that is why they make them. Also, however, they want to sell more of their own makes to more people than

their competition. They also want to keep the customers they have initially acquired and attract new customers. They also want to keep present purchasers satisfied with the make of car they bought, which means keeping them happy via advertising for the car they own already. How can advertisers accomplish these multiple objectives?

Of prime importance in accomplishing these advertising objectives is an understanding of the customer and his motivations. A dialogue written by Edward C. Bursk, a marketing educator, entitled "Buying An Automobile," gives some insight into the factors influencing at least a certain portion of automobile purchasers. It shows how people react to various appeals. We will then discuss these appeals and the reactions to them.

Man: What do you call that little midget in the window?

Salesman: That's a Bentlinger Bantam, so called because, though it's little, it has a lot of get-up-and-go . . . Are you interested in a small car, or a foreign car?

Wife: Well, not particularly, but it does look a little unusual, doesn't it?

Man: And I guess it's economical too

Salesman: Yes, it is economical on gas and oil, but I think the most attractive feature is, well the fact that it looks distinguished, different . . .

Wife: Our 17-year-old son is more interested in the sporty kind.

Salesman: My, you have a son that old? I'll bet he does a lot of dating, doesn't he?

Man: Too much, much too much, ought to do more studying.

Wife: Now John.

Salesman: I think I know how you both feel, though my problem--and pride--is a 15-year-old girl. And I must admit she does like the boys who come for her in a nice-looking car. As a matter of fact, I've learned a lot about cars from just listening to how she feels.

Wife: Does she like these little foreign cars?

Salesman: Oh, yes. She says most of the boys have either the conventional, unimaginative cars their families own, or one of those beaten-down and souped-up old wrecks,--and it makes her feel grown up and important to be called for in something like one of those Bentlingers.

Man: Did you say it's economical?

Salesman: Oh, yes, and not just gas and oil. (The salesman goes on to talk about maintenance, repairs.)

Man: But you don't have any model on which you can put the top down, do you?

Salesman: No, the Bentlinger people have found that that adds too much expense to the initial price and maintenance, but they give you the same values with this roof panel: and don't forget how easy this is to park, particularly for the ladies.

Wife: But I don't drive. John, and of course, Johnnie, take care of all that.⁴⁷

The one thing that the reader is almost immediately aware of after reading this dialogue, is that a car is more than just mere transportation and that the purchase of a car is not based entirely on rational thinking.

⁴⁷Edward C. Bursk, "Buying An Automobile," Marketing Management and Administrative Action, edited by Stewart Henderson Britt (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Co., 1963), p. 49.

In our society, the car is part of a complex system of social and personal values. The individual who purchases a car does so with an eye to the fact that this car is a representation of himself to others. It also reinforces his concept of what is self.

The ideal-self is formed in part by the values of the groups with which a person associates. Thus, the type of car he will purchase is also a function of social standing and the values of the groups with which one associates. The individual takes on the values of his groups, which are an indication of his social prestige, in order to maintain his membership and identity. The car, in many ways, is an expression of these values and of the ideal-self.

Another factor which we must consider, is that, in our society, the male is seen as the rational being, while the female is seen as basically emotional.

Looking back at the dialogue, we can pick out these characteristics in the way the salesman delivers his pitch and in the reactions of the customer.

The wife thinks it looks strange. She asks if the salesman's daughter likes little cars, and then says she does not drive herself. The salesman replies by asking if she does not want her husband and son to be proud. For the wife the car serves as more of a social or prestige function. She probably would say she does not

understand the mechanical aspects of the car. But she does know if Mrs. Jones will like it, if her son will make an impression driving it, or the bridge group will be envious.

The salesman takes the potential draw-back of the car (the way it looks), and turns it to an advantage--distinctiveness.

The salesman assures the couple that the car is socially acceptable. He provides the man with a rational reason for purchasing the car, namely that it is economical.

The salesman has shown that this car is not only distinctive, but a good buy. He has made the vehicle fit both the perceived values of self and the values of the social group.

Youth is an important segment of the market for auto manufacturers to cultivate. However, youth is not necessarily interested in the same model or options that interest the older purchaser. But the older car purchaser is interested in the image of youth. Youth today is a commodity. Everyone wants to be young, except possibly the young themselves. Thus, the auto manufacturer also has to appeal to the desire for youth as well as to the young. This fact probably accounts for the proliferation of models and the variety of options such as racing stripes, red-line tires and so on.

How does this relate to the consumer and auto safety? It would seem to indicate that auto safety is not of primary concern, that the consumer is more interested in how the automobile will fulfill his self image and other values. A study done by the Bureau of Advertising of the American Newspaper Publishers Association (October, 1966) entitled "The Big City New Car Driver: His Attitudes Toward: His Automobile, His Driving and Safety," tends to bear this out.

The Consumer, The Manufacturer
and Auto Safety

This study by the Bureau of Advertising Research reports that,

. . . as many as a fifth of those sampled reported that either they or a member of their immediate family have been at some time involved in a serious accident, though half of these accidents were over five years ago. . . . Thus, substantial proportions of the driving population have had either direct experience with accidents or know of an accident that comes quite close to home.

In discussing the serious accident, blame is not put on the automobile, but rather on the other driver (in 47% of the cases). An additional 14% actually put the blame for the accident on themselves. But only 10% blame the engineering of the automobile, and this is partly balanced by another 5% who offer the information that the engineering of the car actually saved them.

Under the heading of, "The Variety of Safety Concerns," the study reported that,

. . . one driver in three is concerned with safety enough to mention it on a spontaneous basis in reply to one or more of the open-ended questions in the survey, before any direct

questions about safety were introduced. Interestingly, more of these talked about safety as it relates to the highway (25%) rather than about the safety of the automobile itself (11%).

Thus it appears that whatever the level of awareness or concern people have with automotive safety, they are not raising basic criticisms of automobile design, i.e., they are not assigning blame to the product on any large, general scale.⁴⁸

In relation to the question of awareness of the safety issue, the study states that,

. . . about four out of five people feel that people are 'talking more about cars this year,' and the majority of these say that safety is the subject under discussion. Among those reporting 'more talk' this year, 82% of the men and 67% of the women suggest that safety is what is being talked about.

Concerning awareness of the safety issue, the study states that,

. . . even though the indirect measures of concern with automobile safety indicate that people have not absorbed the message so as to make it very meaningful to themselves on an immediate, or emotional level, there is no doubt that they have at least intellectually been made aware of the issue and are willing to assign responsibilities. . . .⁴⁹

This seems probable. People are generally ready to assign responsibilities on the barest of information, and since they have heard something about cars not being safe, they assign responsibility to the auto makers.

⁴⁸ American Newspaper Publishers Association, The Big City Driver: His Attitudes Towards: His Automobile, His Driving Safety, prepared by the Bureau of Advertising of the American Newspaper Publishers Association (October, 1966), pp. 6-7.

⁴⁹ Ibid., p. 8.

The study bears this out, ". . . the automobile manufacturers are assigned primary responsibility for safety improvement by almost half of the people (47%)."⁵⁰

The study goes on to say,

. . . another indication of the probability that automobile safety has not become a highly emotional issue is provided by the fact that on only a third of the men, and less than a fifth of the women say they 'always' read stories in the news about automobiles and automobile safety. Most of the rest say they 'occasionally read' them. A true measure of actual reading would not only depend on interest and on frequency of such stories, but rather indicates the intensity of interest. The results seem to indicate a widespread interest, but not one intense enough to lead people to 'always' read such stories.⁵¹

One indication of attitudes toward safety is in the percentage of people who wear their seat belts regularly. The study said,

. . . among the 70% (of cars) with seat belts . . . only half say they use them 'very frequently,' and one out of five . . . uses them 'almost never.' . . . Good brakes and good tires dominate the list of features that men would consider as making a safe car, while the newer issues that have been the subject of discussion lately are raised less often.⁵²

The author submits that one reason these other items are raised less often is that most of them are of a technical nature and the public does not feel qualified to discuss them as they would tires and brakes with which they have daily experience.

⁵⁰Ibid.

⁵¹Ibid.

⁵²Ibid., p. 10.

This study also brought out the fact that people want safety features but very few are willing to pay extra for them. This is not unusual, but it may point up why manufacturers are hesitant about adding some features since they will boost the cost per unit for the customer.

A Big Car Is A Safe Car

In Chapter IV it was noted that luxury cars such as Cadillac, Imperial, Continental and some of the top of the line autos like the Pontiac Grand Prix and Buick Riviera, did not make any references to safety. The Bureau of Advertising Research Study gives the probable reason:

Safety is frequently an aspect of one's prestige and the big car image. Traditionally large and more prestigious cars are better able to trade on their solid image for an equally solid image in the safety field.⁵³

The question "Which Make is the Safest Car?" brought out the following:

Makes Named:

Cadillac	32%
Chrysler	10
Ford	10
Imperial	6
Buick	6

⁵³Ibid., p. 13.

All foreign cars	7%
All other makes	23

These responses were based on 29 per cent of the sample of men who named a make of car other than the make driven most.⁵⁴

That Ford is included in this list may be due to their effective "Quiet Man" campaign and their tie-in with Rolls-Royce. These factors created the impression that Ford is a safe car simply because of its proximity to Rolls-Royce and foreign nobility. This is a good example of the "halo" effect where favorable qualities of one thing carry over to associated things, in this case the desirable qualities of Rolls-Royce carried over to Ford.

Some Findings

The author did a very small and haphazard bit of research along the same lines as the study discussed above. This study consisted of nothing more than merely button-holing people haphazardly and asking them a series of questions which were recorded on a master sheet. The number of people in the study were a mere twenty, hardly enough on which to make any valid statements. Their responses did, however, support the findings of the Bureau of Advertising Research. These people were not

⁵⁴Ibid., p. 37.

interested in having to pay for new safety features; they assigned primary responsibility to the auto manufacturers; they thought luxury cars were safe while foreign cars were dashing, sporty, impractical and unsafe except for Rolls-Royce, Jaguar, and Mercedes Benz.

Generally most of them were more concerned with "the nut that holds the wheel" than with the car itself. All the subjects thought there had been increased talk about auto safety recently. However, most of them did not know who started it all.

When given a choice of eight foils as to who Ralph Nader was, they responded variously that he was a radio announcer; worked for an automotive company or was involved with the government or a newspaper. Poor Ralph.

The author's findings indicate that people seem aware that auto safety is drawing more attention; that they do not want to pay for it; that big cars are safe cars; that it is generally the driver who is at fault; and that they do not know who started it all.

A sample questionnaire is shown in Appendix I.

CHAPTER VI

THE AUTOMOTIVE SAFETY STANDARDS ACT

The Automotive Safety Standards Act passed by Congress is going to have (and has had) an impact on the automobile industry. Will it have an impact on automobile print advertising?

The author does not feel it necessary to set forth the provisions of the act in this paper, since they deal with technical aspects of automotive design. The act says nothing about how a car must look outside, save that there be no dangerous projections beyond the body. It sets out standard transmission shift patterns, brake systems, windshield requirements and passenger restraint devices. It also gives acceptable limits for reflective surfaces.

The author believes that the act's major impact on advertising will be that since safety features are standard, there will be little or no advantage in mentioning them unless a new safety feature has been developed and added.

The act will, if anything, reinforce Printer's Ink's supposition that safety's impact on advertising will be

more noticeable in what is not said than in what is said.

This then leads the writer to believe that emphasis in automotive advertising will be more on luxury and style with less obvious emphasis on power and speed with little or no mention of safety. In other words, automotive advertising will continue pretty much along the lines it always has. The change will be more a matter of degree than of type.

It is interesting to note how one car buff magazine, Road & Track, reacted to the Safety Standards Act.

The time has finally arrived--it is overdue--when the Federal Government has formed an agency that has in turn issued the first, fledgling sample of legislation to come. It would be nicer if all the manufacturers had attitudes about their products that would render legislation unnecessary, but to hope for that would be similar to hoping for the end of wars. These manufacturers have been quite content to offer anything the public would buy, regardless of whether or not the public knew what was good for itself. The result has been that our domestic makers have lavished funds on the alteration of sheet metal from year to year, offering cars with vastly oversized engines and bodies and tragically undersized brakes, suspension, steering and tires. And the public has gone giddily on, buying them without knowing any better.⁶⁸

⁶⁸ Ron Wakefield, "An Analysis of the Safety Standards: Hesitant First Steps Toward a Larger Goal," Road & Track, July, 1967.

CHAPTER VII

CONCLUSION

From the foregoing discussion of automobile print advertising and from various statements made in advertising publications, the author submits that it is necessary to conclude that Ralph Nader had little or no direct effect on automobile print advertising. This author realizes that it is really quite impossible to isolate Nader's influence per se. But it is my opinion that Nader served as a catalyst for the reactions that did follow.

His book brought the question of safety to the attention of the public. But, perhaps more important, it brought the problem to the attention of that body which could do something about it, the government. And it is the government that has the power to force change in a given sector of the private economy, should this be deemed necessary in the public interest and safety.

The fact that little reference to safety in advertising was made immediately after the publication of Nader's book is probably due largely to the fact that advertising plans had been finalized. Advertisers had

to content themselves with adding tag lines or waiting until the new model year when there might be something to really talk about.

When advertisers did have the chance to talk about safety in their advertising, the fact they did so at all was, in the author's mind, for two reasons. One was to refute the safety critics and soothe the public. The other was to build a framework which would assist the auto manufacturers in dealing with the government. In other words, the manufacturers wanted to show the government that they were interested in auto safety and, really, had always been. This would mean that legislation was not only unnecessary, but also unfair and restrictive.

So it seems that we can not really talk about Ralph Nader's influence without also considering the influence of the government, other auto safety critics, and the legislation that resulted.

If we take all these diverse elements together, the author feels that it is then fair to say that the controversy over auto safety as a whole has had some impact on automobile advertising. Also, that this impact made itself felt in advertising more by what was not said, than by what was.

The discussion of consumer interest in safety seemed to indicate that safety was not of primary

concern. This idea of primacy should be stressed. It means that the public is not uninterested in safety, only less interested. That this is the case is probably due in a large part to the apparent fact that the auto is tied in with a number of personality variables such as power and status. Also, as a study cited earlier pointed out, people want safety features but are not willing to pay for them.

From this, the author believes that safety equipment on automobiles and the interest generated in safety will continue to be of less interest than the styling and comfort of an automobile.

The discussion of automobile print advertising late in 1967 seemed to show that while ads were still slightly toned down, safety equipment received hardly any mention. Since there have been no more Nader-type bombshells and since there has been less press coverage of government actions, public reactions and so on, public interest will wane further.

Any major safety changes that are made will probably receive a brief flurry of interest during the new model introduction and then lapse again into the background.

It is this author's conclusion that there was indeed an impact made by Ralph Nader. However, the impact was primarily on small groups in the public sector who

were already concerned with auto safety, and on the government which was prompted, finally, to make at least some gesture on behalf of automobile safety. There was no appreciable impact, however, made on automobile print advertising.

APPENDIX

SAMPLE QUESTIONNAIRE USED IN SURVEY

1. Age:_____ 2. Sex: M F 3. Married: Yes No
4. Where do you work?_____
(If a student or housewife, go to question Number 7)
5. What is your job?_____
6. Is your salary around:
(a) 4,000-6,000
(b) 7,000-10,000
(c) 11,000-14,000
(d) 15,000 or above
7. Do you own a car? Yes No
(If no, skip to number 11)
8. What make:_____
9. What year:_____
(If a 1967 go to question 10, if not go to question 11)
10. Did you think about trading in 1966? Yes No
(If yes) Why did you wait?_____

11. Do you own more than one car? Yes No
(If yes, go to next question)
12. What year and make:_____
13. (If either car is older than 1965) Do you plan to
acquire a new car? Yes No
(If yes, go to next question)
14. For what model and make?_____
(If don't know skip to question 16)
15. Why:_____

Complete the following sentences in your own words:

16. When I buy a car I look for _____

17. If I could buy any car I wanted, it would be a _____ because _____

Answer the following questions with the statement most closely approximating your feelings, for example: The Tigers will win the pennant: Agree Disagree Don't know

18. I would rather spend \$60 on a radio for my car than on all that safety stuff:

Agree Disagree Don't Know

19. It is more important that my wife (or husband if married, or girlfriend or boyfriend if not married) wear their seat belts than it is that I do.

Agree Disagree Don't Know

20. All that safety equipment is an unnecessary expense for the car buyer:

Agree Disagree Don't Know

21. Only people that don't know how to drive, really drive a car have to worry about safety equipment.

Agree Disagree Don't Know

22. Ralph Nader is a:

- (a) Newspaper columnist
- (b) Auto Company executive
- (c) Congressman
- (d) Radio Announcer
- (e) Writer/lawyer
- (f) Television director
- (g) Civil Rights Leader
- (h) None of these

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