



# NHTSA

NATIONAL HIGHWAY TRAFFIC SAFETY ADMINISTRATION

## Speed Prevention Enforcement Campaign Concept Testing

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March 2025



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# Research Design

# Purpose & Methodology

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## Purpose

Evaluate advertising concepts designed to influence 18- to 44-year-old men to realize the posted speed limit is the law and driving even a few miles above the speed limit can be life-changing by positioning the far-ranging legal consequences of speeding as very real outcomes.

## Research Objectives

1. Evaluate concepts.
2. Identify the most compelling elements.
3. Diagnose potential areas of improvement.
4. Evaluate effectiveness in influencing behavior to wear a seat belt every time while driving.
5. Evaluate effectiveness at communicating the message.

## Methodology

### Focus Groups (8 groups)

- 75-minute groups
- n=48 participants (6 per group)

### Qualification Criteria

- National audience
- Male
- 18 to 44 years old
- Holds a valid driver's license
- Drives at least once a week
- Exceeds the posted speed limit by at least 10+ mph on local roads or 15+ mph on highways on a regular basis



# Concepts Tested & Discussion Flow

## Reminders

Concept L



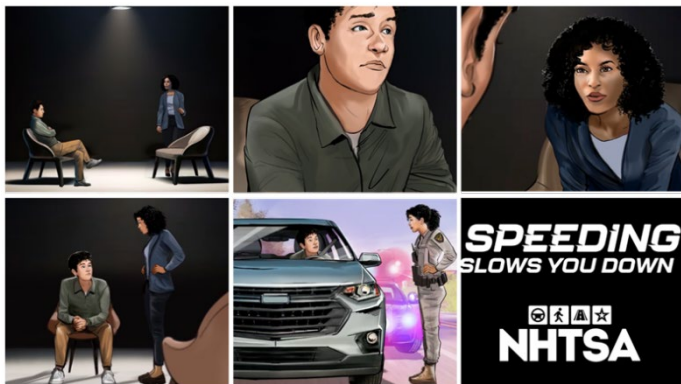
## The Lucky Ones

Concept M



## Intense Conversations

Concept O



## Warm-Up/Initial Discussion

## Evaluation of Individual Concepts

Main Message	Effective Elements	Potential Improvements
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## Comparison of Concepts

Memorable Elements	Most Influential	Best Communicates Enforcement
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## Wrap-Up & Close






# **Key Findings**

# Concept Comparison

## Scores and Grades

*Reminders* performs best on influencing behavior and communicating the message. Meanwhile, *The Lucky Ones* receives the most A and B grades. While *Reminders* garnered the fewest A and B grades, it also had fewer D and F grades than either of the other concepts.

Concept Assessment	Influences Behavior	Communicates Message	Graded the Concept A/B
 <i>Reminders</i> (Concept L)	40% (19/48)	56% (27/48)	38% (18/48)
 <i>The Lucky Ones</i> (Concept M)	33% (16/48)	33% (16/48)	50% (24/48)
 <i>Intense Conversations</i> (Concept O)	27% (13/48)	10% (5/48)	44% (21/48)

NOTE: Blue highlights highest score among concepts; gray highlights lowest score among concepts.



# Recommendation



# Recommendation



*Reminders*

Based on a strong performance on both evaluation questions, we recommend moving forward with *Reminders*. While it received fewer A and B grades than other concepts, it was also less polarizing, receiving the fewest D and F grades of any concept.

## Improvements—*Reminders*

1. Remove the statement that "even 5 miles over the limit is 5 miles too many" since that diminishes credibility with the target audience.
2. Underscore in final production the residential setting (e.g., cars parked on the side of the road, narrow lanes, windy streets and low visibility).
3. Include more visuals and imagery regarding the alternatives to a ticket that could be dangerous. There are more and less dramatic ways of pulling this off: one option would be to simply show vulnerable community members (e.g., a jogger or a dog walker), while a more dramatic option would be to include flashes of potential alternatives in which, instead of getting a ticket, the speeder crashes into one of these community members.
  - a. Norming research identified that the dog walker character is a highly effective ambassador of the community. Once *Dog Walker* has been shot, consider including the same character and dog in the final production of *Reminders*.

The background of the slide is a blurred photograph of a city street, likely taken from an elevated position. The street is filled with cars, and buildings are visible in the distance. A semi-transparent blue overlay covers the entire image, creating a uniform blue tint. The text is centered in the upper half of the image.

# **Appendix: Concept Evaluations**



# Reminders

(Concept L)

Influences Behavior	Communicates Message	Graded the Concept A/B:
1 <sup>st</sup> (40%)	1 <sup>st</sup> (56%)	38% (n=18)

## Effective Elements

- The message is clear and readily understood.
- It includes an effective blend of enforcement and norming consequences by positioning a ticket as a preventative measure against worse norming outcomes.
- The mention of the dog and jogger suggests that speeding can harm other vulnerable community members.



No amount of speed is worth it. The important thing is getting there. *It's better, better be late than sorry—or, you know, dead.*



**Reminders** depicts the hassle of getting a ticket as a gift and a better alternative to the deadly outcomes of speeding. Participants resonate with its mention of vulnerable community members (i.e., joggers and dogs).

# Reminders

(Concept L)

Influences Behavior	Communicates Message	Graded the Concept A/B:
1 <sup>st</sup> (40%)	1 <sup>st</sup> (56%)	38% (n=18)



**Reminders** can be strengthened by making script revisions, underscoring the residential aspects of the setting and incorporating more imagery around the potential consequences.

## Opportunities for Improvement

- Remove the statement that "even 5 miles over the limit is 5 miles too many" since that diminishes credibility with the target audience.
- Underscore in final production the residential setting (e.g., cars parked on the side of the road, narrow lanes, windy streets and low visibility).
- Include more visuals and imagery regarding the alternatives to a ticket that could be dangerous. There are more and less dramatic ways of pulling this off: one option would be to simply show vulnerable community members (e.g., a jogger or a dog walker), while a more dramatic option would be to include flashes of potential alternatives in which, instead of getting a ticket, the speeder crashes into one of these community members.
  - Norming research identified that the dog walker character is a highly effective ambassador of the community. Once **Dog Walker** has been shot, consider including the same character and dog in the final production of **Reminders**.



*It's more impactful if you see that you could crash and kill yourself, or that you could kill somebody else. Like, **show me something that's going to be emotionally impactful.***



# The Lucky Ones

(Concept M)

Influences Behavior	Communicates Message	Graded the Concept A/B:
2 <sup>nd</sup> (33%)	2 <sup>nd</sup> (33%)	50% (n=24)



**The Lucky Ones** positions the legal consequences of speeding—a ticket, a day in court, increased insurance rates—as a lucky alternative to the norming consequences of speeding. Participants find the concept memorable, and some say it would effectively influence their behavior.

## Effective Elements

- The premise is counterintuitive and, therefore, memorable for some participants.
- The message is clear and well understood.
- The mention of a broader range of legal consequences than just a ticket, which can be informative for less experienced drivers.



*It postulated **speeding as gambling**—I never thought of it that way before. Even if you're going a little bit over the limit, there's an element of added risk. Sometimes the risk is getting pulled over by a cop and sometimes **the risk could be taking the life of another driver** or totaling somebody's vehicle. It was a unique way of presenting speeding.*

# The Lucky Ones

(Concept M)

Influences Behavior	Communicates Message	Graded the Concept A/B:
2 <sup>nd</sup> (33%)	2 <sup>nd</sup> (33%)	50% (n=24)



**The Lucky Ones'** presentation of a ticket as lucky prompts some negative reactions, with participants describing it as "cheesy" and some noting that the tone comes off as sarcastic. Additionally, some participants noted that the ad could resonate poorly with individuals or communities who have had negative interactions with law enforcement.

## Opportunities for Improvement

- Some react negatively—even strongly negative—to the idea of a ticket as lucky, with some describing it as "cheesy" or "corny" and indicating this would prompt a laugh and an eye roll—but would not change behavior.
- Similarly, the tone of the advertisement is polarizing. Some find the counterintuitive approach appealing, while others find that it's too sarcastic and feel that it trivializes the issue.
  - In some cases, the "here's to" language comes across as a toast, potentially encouraging the behavior.
- Some participants react negatively to the way law enforcement is portrayed. One participant notes that, given high-profile cases in which law enforcement interactions have ended in tragedy, the statement that getting pulled over is "lucky" does not resonate. Others note that the spot seemed to be aimed as much at improving perceptions of law enforcement as at decreasing speeding.

*It came off a little bit cheesy and **not the most realistic**. It pushes the message that all **speeding will end in a catastrophic accident**, and I don't really think that's realistic or true. I don't know that it is very stimulating for behavior change.*



# Intense Conversations

(Concept O)

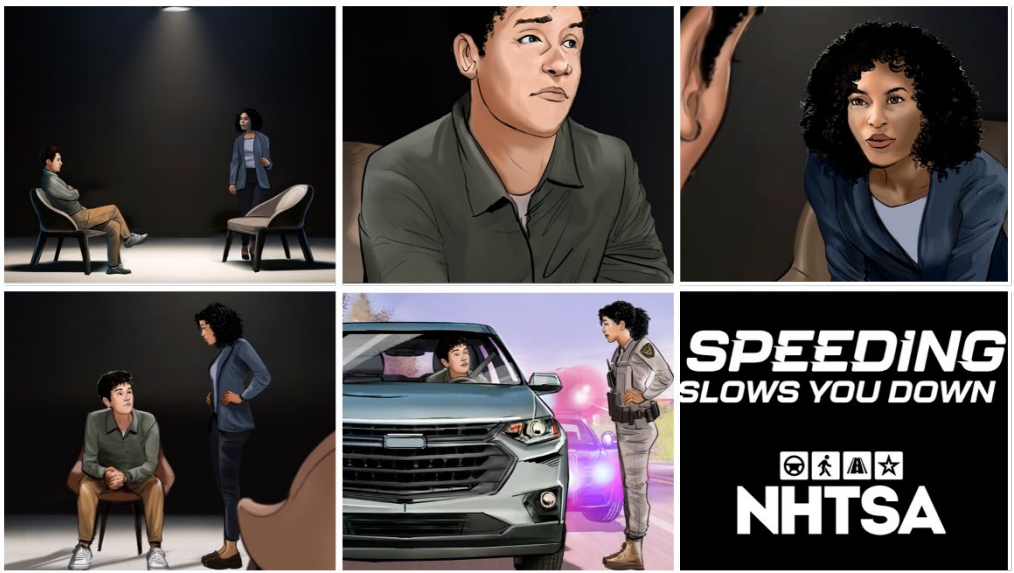
Influences Behavior	Communicates Message	Graded the Concept A/B:
3 <sup>rd</sup> (27%)	3 <sup>rd</sup> (10%)	44% (n=21)

## Effective Elements

- It takes a different approach. The opening effectively draws in the viewer with the out-of-context conversation between the speeder and the law enforcement officer.
- The serious tone of discussion can be effective in capturing attention and making the viewer want to learn more.
- This version of the same concept is much more readily understood than the social norming campaign version due to the clearer transition from the conversation room to the pullover setting.



*I found it offensive. It's the **interrogation aspect** of it—especially in this political age and climate... [if the setting were different], I wouldn't be as offended.*

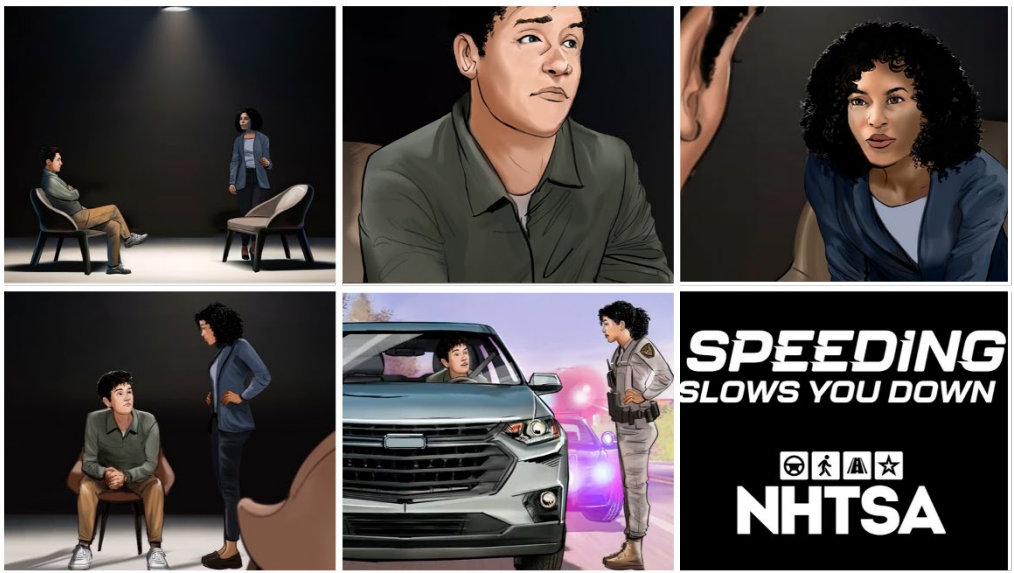


**Intense Conversations** shows the danger of speeding by portraying the conversation between a speeder and a law enforcement officer. The concept gains the viewer's interest by first showing the conversation out of context before switching to the traffic stop setting.

# Intense Conversations

(Concept O)

Influences Behavior	Communicates Message	Graded the Concept A/B:
3 <sup>rd</sup> (27%)	3 <sup>rd</sup> (10%)	44% (n=21)



**Intense Conversations** did not effectively influence behavior, and some reacted negatively to what they perceived as an interrogation scene. Additionally, while better understood than its social norming Campaign alternative, some still found the concept confusing.

## Opportunities for Improvement

- For some, the opening setting resembles an interrogation room. These participants feel that the ad could, in the current social climate, land negatively.
- While this ad is more readily understood than its social norming campaign equivalent, many participants still reported being confused by the shift between the opening conversation and the traffic stop setting.
- The ad doesn't sufficiently communicate the consequences of speeding to shift behavior.
  - Part of the challenge comes from the set-up for the twist. The concept spends so much time on the front end that it doesn't allow for enough focus on showing the behavior and consequence.

“It's more impactful if you see that you could crash and kill yourself, or that you could kill somebody else. Like, **show me something that's going to be emotionally impactful.**”