When Wall Street Journal reporter Serena Ng decides to clean house, she doesn't kid around. After she caught the folks running Jessica Alba's (dis)Honest Company lying through their veneers about the ingredients in its "natural" products — see: my "Waterspot Gate" [1] piece — she wasn't done.

Ms. Ng just dug up another ethically challenged [2] "I-Am-Mother-Nature" imitator, which was doing the exact same thing. This time it's Hain Celestial's turn. The company's "Earth's Best" brand turned out to be anything but.

The fake chemistry con was the same — intentionally leading people to believe that their overpriced junk did not contain the detergent sodium lauryl sulfate (SLS), which is supposedly irritating, and they used the same oily shell game by claiming that its wonderful product was simply sodium coco sulfate (SCS), not SLS.

The problem is that there is no such chemical as SCS. What they are calling SCS is actually a complex mixture of detergents, which not only contains SLS, but it is the most prevalent detergent in there, as demonstrated by the graphic below.
The chemical composition of coconut oil. The major component is lauric acid, which, in a two-step manufacturing process, becomes SLS.

So, it's SOSDD (Hah! fooled you into think obscene language was coming): Same Old Suds Different Detergent.

Hain Celestial may need better scientists, but it already has some damn fine liars. Here are some of the company's most egregious statements, followed by my translation:

- Earth’s Best “does not add” SLS to its products

That must mean that there isn't any, right? So, if I add water to an empty swimming pool, then it's still dry?

- The company was changing its labels to increase transparency.

Am I the only one who wants to hurl every time I hear the word "transparency"? No- they are changing labels because they were:
Earth’s Best sells a wide range of baby products. Its biggest business is baby food, which isn’t involved in the SLS issue.

So they say...

- [Regarding] some of its Jason shampoos (another one of Hain's brands) and body washes. Their containers say they have no SLS.

Awesome! This company has both human and inanimate objects that lie.

- [Jason's website says] “it is plant-derived, meets our high standard for gentleness, and creates a luxurious sudsy lather during use.”

One can only imagine what their low standard would feel like. Plant derived? Gentle?

- “There may be some amount of sodium lauryl sulfate” [in Jason’s products]

There may be some alcohol in a bottle of Jack Daniels.

- [the company’s website said] it would be more accurate to remove the no-SLS claims from the brand’s packaging.

Man, nothing gets past these guys.

OK, this is giving me a stomach ache, so I'm going to stop. Besides, after having the pleasure of riding on the Grand Central-Times Square shuttle twice today (biohazard suit recommended) I need a nice gentle bath, and I have just the perfect thing for it!