



# Case Report

<b>1</b>	<b>Case Number</b>	<b>0132/10</b>
<b>2</b>	<b>Advertiser</b>	<b>Unilever Australasia</b>
<b>3</b>	<b>Product</b>	<b>Toiletries</b>
<b>4</b>	<b>Type of Advertisement / media</b>	<b>TV</b>
<b>5</b>	<b>Date of Determination</b>	<b>14/04/2010</b>
<b>6</b>	<b>DETERMINATION</b>	<b>Dismissed</b>

## ISSUES RAISED

2.1 - Discrimination or Vilification Gender

## DESCRIPTION OF THE ADVERTISEMENT

The advertisement tells the story of a man who is going out with a young woman. At the beginning of the advertisement the young man sprays his body with Lynx Twist body spray (the fragrance that changes). Later the young man and woman are shown in a cafe style environment where the woman appears bored and disinterested. When the woman looks away a robot cuts his hair, shaves his face and dresses him. The woman then smiles at the man in an approving manner. When they are walking to her house and later in the house, the robot dresses and styles the young man again with song in the background suggesting romance was blossoming.

## THE COMPLAINT

A sample of comments which the complainant/s made regarding this advertisement included the following:

*It ends with the catchphrase 'women get bored easily'. Apart from the overt implication that a woman will sleep with a man depending only on his appearance (and is therefore shallow) in the 30-second or so time slot of the ad the woman 'gets bored' four times. This implies that women are frivolous that they have the attention span of children and is patronising and patriarchal.*

*This advertisement is a disgusting portrayal of women as sex objects it is not even subtle discrimination it's just blatantly stereotyping all women as having inferior intelligence to men. In this advertisement the sole purpose of the man attempting interaction with the women is not to have a positive relationship but simply to have sex the woman in portrayed merely as a toy the man has to play right to get what he wants. I do not understand how this was even able to get on the air last time I checked it was the 21st century and Australia had*

*signed the UN's international declaration of human rights and this advertisement is directly going against this in every way. Men and women should be regarded as equal and television is a strong influence on today's society but what is more concerning is the next generation how are we meant to explain to them that no women aren't actually like that that's just what the television says. Lynx is a fairly reputable brand and I would consider the target age for this advertisement ranging from young adolescent males to males in their early thirties this is disturbing! How are we supposed to have a sophisticated and functioning society when the next generation of men are being told their superior to women not only degrading women but degrading our future society?! How are we to call ourselves a developed country when such trash is allowed on our televisions!? I request this advertisement be removed (the whole idea of it is just too wrong to even consider modification!) for the sake of not only the reputation of women within society but Australia's representation in the developed world. I object to this ad as it depicts women as whimsical irrational and in general promiscuous - I don't think that saying women change their mind alot is representative of women today or in fact even mildly true.... Not to mention not in the slightest funny.*

*It is suggestively giving the impression to a young target market that woman are all the same and superficial. It gives the impression that if a guy is not 'cool' and looks good the hot girl won't want him. It gives an unrealistic expectation that young men if not boys have to live up to.and makes females appear shallow and just plain dumb especially with the comment at the end 'women get bored'. Basically I find this ad to be sexist and suggestive that women are all the same and we "get bored easily"- because apparently women are the main culprits of having a lack of commitment.*

*It is blatantly sexist and sexual in a timeslot of 6pm which many children would be watching. Women are portrayed as fickle without much substance which is unacceptable.*

*I find the advertisement to promote discriminatory anti-social sentiment towards women.*

*With such a sweeping statement as ""women get bored easily "" women are depicted as fickle air-headed and by association unintelligent because of their inability to focus on one thing for long. The association that they are fickle and thus change their affections and loyalties also suggests that they unstable easily swayed by appearance and can be coaxed into relationships by mere facade. Despite Unilever's ""tongue-in-cheek"" justification for such stereotypical generalisations I hardly find this advertisement funny or cheeky in any way. Since when did promoting negative representations of women in the media even if it's meant to be ""funny"" become acceptable? This matter should be treated in the same way we treat racial discrimination. It is discriminatory to even ""joke"" about someone's ethnicity in a negative manner so why should discrimination on the grounds of gender be any different? The footage and dialogue of this advertisement are degrading to women and undermine the social value of equality of the sexes. The portrayal of women as people who ""get bored easily"" (with the implication that men don't) and are easily swayed by something as shallow as deodorant scent is highly offensive to women in society who fight to be seen as equal to men. This advertisement implies that men are a higher class of person and that women need to be fooled into submission through a product that keeps their interest (despite their boredom).*

## **THE ADVERTISER'S RESPONSE**

Comments which the advertiser made in response to the complainant/s regarding this advertisement include the following:

## *Overview*

*Lynx is a brand with a history of fun, tongue-in-cheek, playful advertising. Lynx also has a proud history of award winning commercials which both entertain and surprise its consumers. We submit that the TVC continues this tradition of tongue in cheek entertainment and that the intended young adult male audience understands the playful and hyperbolic nature of the TVC and its distinction between fact and fiction.*

*CAD provided the 30 seconds version of the TVC with a "W" (General/Care in Placement) rating whereby the TVC may be broadcast at any time except during P and C programs or adjacent to P or C periods. The 15 seconds version was provided with a "G" (General) rating whereby the TVC may be broadcast at any time except during P and C (Children's) programs or adjacent to P or C periods.*

*Unilever has taken great care to ensure that the TVCs have been placed in W (30 sec) and G (15 sec) rated programming. The TV media buying is targeted at the young adult male audience and as such the spot placements are amongst programming that is targeted at its intended audience such as "Band of Brothers", "The Simpsons", "The Sopranos" and "Burn Notice". The humour and content of the TVC is consistent within the context of this programming.*

## *Compliance with AANA Code of Ethics*

*3.1 Section 2.1: Advertising or Marketing Communications shall not portray people or depict material in a way which discriminates against or vilifies a person or section of the community on account of[ ... ] sex [ ... ].*

*The TVC tells the story of a man who is going out with a young woman. At the beginning of the TVC the young man sprays his body with Lynx Twist body spray. Later the TVC shows the young man and woman in a cafe style environment. When the woman looks away a robot cut's his hair, shaves his face and dresses him. The woman smiles at the man. When they are walking to her house and later in the house, the robot dresses and styles the young man again. We submit that the TVC does not portray people in a way that discriminates against or vilifies a person or section of the community on account of sex. In particular, the TVC is not sexist or sexual and women are not portrayed as fickle without much substance as submitted by a complainant. The TVC does not degrade or discriminate against women, in particular it does not imply that a woman will sleep with a man depending only on his appearance. The young woman is shown as the dominant person in the story leading the man through the TVC. It is the young woman and not the man who makes an active decision whether to leave or stay with the man throughout the story. The TVC shows in playful way that the young woman wants to have an entertaining time on her night out. The young man is able to entertain her due to his ability to change his appearance within seconds. In this particular TVC hyperbole is used to communicate the message to the intended audience that Lynx Twist is the fragrance that changes. Because the young man has used Lynx Twist he is able to change quickly and to adapt to new situations with the help of a robot. The TVC is created in a way that both entertains and surprises the consumer and is in no way discriminating against women. The statement "Women get bored easily" at the end of the TVC is used in the context described above. The fact that the woman in the TVC is shown as person who wants to be entertained and not be bored on her night out does not indicate or imply that women are frivolous or have the attention span of children as submitted by a complainant. The complaint that women are shown as the main culprits of having a lack of commitment are based on a misunderstanding of the TVC's main premise. The statement that "Women get bored easily" is used as an obviously funny and tongue in cheek reference to the hyperbolic story in which the*

*man keeps changing to impress the woman and cannot be understood as a serious generalisation of women.*

*The TVC does not discriminate against women and cannot be considered sexist or patronising as submitted by the complainants.*

*3.2 Section 2.3 Advertisements shall treat sex, sexuality and nudity with sensibility to the relevant audience and, where appropriate, to the relevant programme time zone.*

*We submit that the TVC does not contain any overt or ambiguous treatment of sex, sexuality and nudity and at no point does the TVC show any open references to sex, sexuality or nudity. The TVC ends in the woman's house and finishes with both the man and woman fully dressed and without showing any form of intimacy between them. The TVC is entirely appropriate with respect to the programme time zones and intended audience. The relevant audience in the Lynx Fever TVC is a young adult male audience who we believe will understand the humour intended.*

#### *Approvals*

*Unilever is a responsible advertiser and has numerous internal review processes, including review by Unilever's Legal Department, and corporate relations to critique all advertisements to ensure compliance with legal and ethical considerations.*

#### *Conclusion*

*We submit that the TVC does not portray women in a discriminating or vilifying way as the tone of the TVC is one of humour and playfulness and the statement "Women get bored easily" is made tongue in cheek.*

*In summary, we submit that the context of the TVC is well within prevailing community standards and that the TVC complies with section 2.1 of the Code.*

## **THE DETERMINATION**

The Advertising Standards Board ("Board") considered whether this advertisement breaches Section 2 of the Advertiser Code of Ethics (the "Code").

The Board considered whether the advertisement was in breach of section 2.1 of the Code. Section 2.1 of the Code states:

"Advertising or Marketing Communications shall not portray people or depict material in a way which discriminates against or vilifies a person or section of the community on account of race, ethnicity, nationality, sex, age, sexual preference, religion, disability or political belief".

The Board noted the complainants' concern that the advertisement's depiction of a woman was degrading and undermines the social value of equality of the sexes.

The Board viewed the advertisement and noted the advertiser comments.

The Board considered that while this may be considered a stereotypical depiction the advertisement was humorous and the statement "women get bored easily" is made tongue in cheek, there is no negative connotation of the woman's role in this advertisement. The Board considered that the advertisement portrays women as getting bored easily and that this is not

a negative connotation in the advertisement as it is for the man to make himself more interesting to keep her attention.

The Board considered that the advertisement did not discriminate against or vilify women, was not considered sexist or patronising and did not breach section 2.1 of the Code.

Finding that the advertisement did not breach the Code on other grounds, the Board dismissed the complaint.