



Case Report

1	Case Number	0291/13
2	Advertiser	Big W
3	Product	Clothing
4	Type of Advertisement / media	TV
5	Date of Determination	28/08/2013
6	DETERMINATION	Dismissed

ISSUES RAISED

2.4 - Sex/sexuality/nudity S/S/N - general

DESCRIPTION OF THE ADVERTISEMENT

The advertisement features Eric Stonestreet, the current brand ambassador for Big W, approaching women in store and in a fantasy nightclub scene where he points out that their clothing is from Emerson, before waking up and realising he is in a Big W store talking to a mannequin.

THE COMPLAINT

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

I understand the gentleman in the ad is the spokesperson for big W but I do not feel it is appropriate for it 40 something year old man to be promoting the girls wear in this ad. The girls in the ads look to be teenagers or at most in their early twenties, the clothing also appears to be aimed at this age group. As the ad depicts the older gentleman imagining himself pressed up against a young girl in a club, I find it inappropriate for a man of that age to be doing this action (or a man of any age really) it is derogatory and I felt it sexualised the young girls in the ad! To put it plainly it just looks wrong. After watching it several times I couldn't help but feel uncomfortable afterwards.

I find this ad indecent in its approach to women. The man is sleazy and predatory. The women are portrayed as objects for a man to approach and be indecent towards. The ad also suggests women find hoarse whispering of cheap clothing a 'turn on'.

THE ADVERTISER'S RESPONSE

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

Big W takes its advertising obligations very seriously and believes that the complaint should be dismissed for the reasons stated below.

Eric Stonestreet, Big W's brand ambassador, is a comedic actor well known to a broad section of Big W's customer base, particularly the 25 year old female and older target audience to whom the 'Emerson' brand is directed.

In the 'dream sequence' the subject of the advertisement, Eric imagines himself in a nightclub as the centre of attention for Emerson dressed females. On 'awakening' his reality could not be farther from the truth with the 'light-hearted' consequences for Eric.

There was no intention on Big W's part to depict the 'girls' in the manner referred to in the complaint.

Big W appreciates the ASB's careful consideration of a complaint and will accept that this complaint should be dismissed.

THE DETERMINATION

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

The Board noted the complainants' concerns that the advertisement features an older man behaving in an inappropriate sexual manner towards young women, and that the young women themselves are sexualised.

The Board viewed the advertisement and noted the advertiser's response.

The Board considered whether the advertisement was in breach of Section 2.4 of the Code. Section 2.4 of the Code states: "Advertising or Marketing Communications shall treat sex, sexuality and nudity with sensitivity to the relevant audience".

The Board noted the advertisement features Eric Stonestreet, the current brand ambassador for Big W where he approaches women in store and in a fantasy nightclub scene and points out that their clothing is from Emerson, before waking up and realising he is in a Big W store talking to a mannequin.

The Board noted the complainants' concerns that the behaviour of Eric is predatory and

inappropriate. The Board noted that whilst Eric is shown to approach various women and say “Emerson” to them he does not press himself up against any of the women and whilst he does rest his head on one woman’s shoulder she does not appear threatened or concerned and is smiling. The Board noted that Eric is a well-known actor in the comedy series, Modern Family, where he plays a gay man, and considered that his actions in the advertisement are more likely to be considered amusing than predatory or inappropriate by most members of the community.

The Board noted the complainant’s concerns that the advertisement sexualises women and considered that all the women in the advertisement are wearing appropriate clothing and are behaving in a manner which is consistent with browsing at the shops or dancing with friends in a nightclub. The Board considered that the advertisement was not sexualised and that the women are presented in a manner which is not sexy or sexualised.

The Board considered that the advertisement did treat the issue of sex, sexuality and nudity with sensitivity to the relevant audience and determined that the advertisement did not breach Section 2.4 of the Code.

Further finding that the advertisement did not breach the Code on any grounds, the Board dismissed the complaint.