



Case Report

1	Case Number	0292/16
2	Advertiser	Clean Queens
3	Product	Professional Service
4	Type of Advertisement / media	Transport
5	Date of Determination	13/07/2016
6	DETERMINATION	Dismissed

ISSUES RAISED

- 2.2 - Objectification Exploitative and degrading - women
- 2.4 - Sex/sexuality/nudity S/S/N - general

DESCRIPTION OF THE ADVERTISEMENT

This transport advertisement features the advertiser's name, Clean Queens, and a cartoon-style image of a woman wearing a tight white uniform and blue gloves. The text reads, "Forensic, Squalor and anything unusual. 1300 734 725 www.cleanqueens.com.au". The image appears on the rear and side panels of a white van.

THE COMPLAINT

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

The image of the woman depicted as the "clean queen" is grossly eroticized and highly unnecessarily pornographic for a public place, or suitable to what is being advertised. The woman pictured has a "uniform" that appears to be painted on over her breasts, which are even further emphasised by her cartoon sized waist. This is an absolutely blatant use of sex to sell a product that has absolutely nothing related to the product in its pornographic depiction of a women.

THE ADVERTISER'S RESPONSE

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

Clean Queens Pty Ltd (“Clean Queens”) is a commercial cleaning company specialising in forensic and squalor cleaning.

The images the subject of the complaint are a cartoon representation of a young woman cleaning, or preparing to clean, appearing on three panels of the company vehicle of Clean Queens (“images”), registration CQUEEN. The vehicle has displayed the same or similar images since about 2005 without complaint. On each of the three panels the cartoon Clean Queen appears in a different pose. The complainant specifically refers to having observed the advertisement “every morning on my drive to work”. Although it is not specified, it would appear likely then that the complaint refers to the depiction of the character on the right hand drivers’ side of the vehicle that would be more visible to those traveling past the vehicle on the road whilst it is parked on the street.

On the right hand side panel, the cartoon Clean Queen character is depicted in a white uniform-like dress with blue gloves and wearing a gold crown. She is spraying bubbles into the air from a bottle of cleaning product held in her right hand. Her face has one eye closed in the manner of a wink. There does not appear to be anything that is eroticised in the depiction, grossly or otherwise. As the complainant rightly points out she has a “cartoon sized waist”, which may make her breasts appear larger than they otherwise would, in the same way that her cartoonish neck makes her head and hair appear larger. Her features are exaggerated in a way that is common in cartoons. In the panel on the left hand passenger side of the vehicle, the Clean Queen is wearing the same white dress, appears to have just put on her blue cleaning gloves and is staring wide-eyed with an otherwise blank facial expression. On the rear panel of the vehicle, the Clean Queen appears similarly in a smaller depiction and is simply holding a feather duster in her right hand.

The images of the Clean Queen draw on cartoon depictions of the fictional domestic goddess from television comedy shows of the late 60’s and early 70’s such as Bewitched and I Dream of Jeannie. Each of those productions commences with a cartoon representation of the character in the series bearing a likeness to the Clean Queen in the subject images. In each television series the female lead is a character of magical powers that subverts the dominant role of women in the immediate past, perceived to be limited to household duties such as cleaning by her male partner in domesticity, with humorous effect. As such, the images are not only of relevance to the product provided by Clean Queens but are also a subtly humorous commentary on any gender stereotypes that may have been associated with cleaning work in that past time. The image has nothing to do with pornography and to suggest that it does is to completely misunderstand the term.

Reviewing the images with respect to section 2 of the AANA Code of Ethics (“Code”):

- 1. The images do not portray people or depict material that discriminates against or vilifies a person or section of the community as referred to in section 2.1 of the Code and nor does the complainant suggest that it does.*
- 2. Being a cartoon representation of a fully clothed young woman preparing to and commencing to clean with ordinary items that would be used in poses that depict such an action without sexual suggestion or innuendo, it is arguable as to whether or not sexual appeal is employed at all in the images. If sexual appeal is employed then it cannot be said to have been done so in a manner that is exploitative and degrading of any individual or group*

of people as referred to in section 2.2 of the Code specified by the Bureau as an issue raised by the complaint.

3. The images do not present or portray violence as referred to in section 2.3 of the Code and nor does the complaint allege such.

4. Given that the images depict a fully clothed cartoon character in an activity without sexual suggestion or innuendo with no nudity, images of genitalia or nipples, the images do not appear to treat sex, sexuality or nudity at all as referred to in section 2.4 of the Code and specified by the Bureau as an issue that the complaint raises. To the extent that the images do treat sex, sexuality or nudity at all, which is denied, it must be said that they do so with sensitivity.

5. There is no language used in the images as referred to in section 2.5 of the Code. The text accompanying the images is merely the company name, a brief description of purpose and contact details.

6. The images do not depict material that is contrary to health and safety as referred to in section 2.6 of the Code and given that the images allude to cartoon representations from television comedies of the late 60's and 70's, they cannot be said to depict material that could be construed to be contrary to prevailing community standards.

In relation to the AANA Code for Advertising and Marketing Communications to Children, as stated above, Clean Queens is a commercial cleaning company specialising in forensic and squalor and as such the product is for adults and not for children. Having regard also to the theme, visuals and language used in the images and referred to above, whilst the images are of a cartoon character and appear on a vehicle able to be seen by adults and children alike, it cannot be said that the images are advertising or marketing communications directed primarily to children, or at all. Given the nature of the product offered by Clean Queens the AANA Food and Beverage Marketing and Communications Code has no application. Clean Queens is not a licensed wagering operator and so the provisions of the AANA Wagering Advertising and Marketing Communications Code likewise have no application.

As requested by the Bureau, a description of the images appears above. Being images on a vehicle there is no script apart from the text accompanying the images referred to above, which merely states the company name, what it does and contact details for the company. As such, there is also no CAD reference number or rating. There are no details of any relevant advertising agency or media buyer to provide. A digital copy of the images is provided accompanying this response. Our comprehensive response in relation to the complaint addressing all aspects of relevant codes identified by the Bureau appears above.

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 complainant’s concerns that the advertisement uses an image that is eroticised and pornographic in its depiction of women and that this is unrelated to the product.

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

The Board considered whether the advertisement was in breach of Section 2.2 of the Code. Section 2.2 of the Code states: "Advertising or marketing communications should not employ sexual appeal in a manner which is exploitative and degrading of any individual or group of people."

The Board noted that the practice note for Section 2.2 provides: "Not all images of people who are scantily clad will be unacceptable under this section. This section restricts the use of such images only if they are exploitative and degrading."

The Board noted that in order to breach this Section of the Code the images would need to be using sexual appeal in a manner that is considered both exploitative and degrading.

The Board noted the AANA Practice Note which provides guidance on the meaning of the terms exploitative and degrading:

Exploitative - purposefully debase or abuse a person for the enjoyment of others, lacking in moral, artistic or other values.

Degrading – lowering in character or quality a person or group of people.

The Board noted the advertiser's response that the image has a 'cartoon sized waist', which may make her breasts appear larger than they otherwise would, in the same way that her cartoonish neck makes her head and hair appear larger.

The Board noted that the image is a cartoon and the woman's features are exaggerated in a way that is common in cartoons. The Board considered that the image does focus on the woman's body, but considered that she is not posed in an erotic, pornographic or exploitative way.

The Board noted that the image is fully clothed in a uniform and that the woman is wearing a crown and jewels, and considered this relevant to the image of the queen, which is relevant to the product.

The Board considered that the advertisement did not employ sexual appeal in a manner which is exploitative and degrading to any individual or group of people.

The Board determined that the advertisement did not breach Section 2.2 of the Code.

The Board then 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 that the image shows the woman is wearing a uniform and that her bosom is accentuated however, noted that her breasts are not visible and she is completely covered by her uniform. The Board considered that the woman's clothing and her pose are not sexualised and there is no nudity and the image, which appears on the advertiser's van, was not inappropriate for a broad audience which would include children.

The Board considered that the advertisement did treat the issue of sex, sexuality and nudity with sensitivity to the relevant audience.

The Board determined that the advertisement did not breach Section 2.4 of the Code.

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