



CASE REPORT

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| 1. Complaint reference number | 109/07 |
| 2. Advertiser | Jim Beam Brands (The Girlfriend) |
| 3. Product | Alcohol |
| 4. Type of advertisement | TV |
| 5. Nature of complaint | Portrayal of sex/sexuality/nudity – section 2.3 |
| 6. Date of determination | Tuesday, 10 April 2007 |
| 7. DETERMINATION | Dismissed |

DESCRIPTION OF THE ADVERTISEMENT

This television advertisement features an exotic foreign young woman speaking to the camera in heavily-accented broken English, telling us "I like guys who have a little bit of fat and hairy back. I like guys who watch lots of football and go out with the boys. This is good thing. No if I don't get flowers, I'm not like oh poor me I don't get flowers. So silly. I know they sometimes go to the strip tease but this is not big deal. I'm not jealous type. He can do whatever he wants, I mean, I don't care". A male voiceover describes "THE GIRLFRIEND. JIM BEAM. THE BOURBON."

THE COMPLAINT

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

I can't believe that in this day and age, women can be so misrepresented on television. And that a major brand like Jim Beam would think anyone could find this acceptable. This is really offensive to me and I would suspect every women in Australia. It has to be one of the most degrading ads I've ever seen. Is there any way to make women look more stupid????...Not to mention that whilst she is making the entire female gender look pathetic, she is gratuitously sitting in her underwear.

This ad leaves out women, by emphasising the things that most women do not like. Very few women would be OK about their man watching striptease. The suggestion at the end that her boyfriend can do whatever he likes suggests that she has no respect for herself. It is a destructive image for young women who like rugby, because they are being urged to let their man do whatever he wants and, if they were as cool as this woman, then they would. The bourbon at the end implies he can also drink as much as he likes. It goes against the Code for depiction for men and women.

THE ADVERTISER'S RESPONSE

Comments which the advertiser made in response to the complaint/s regarding this advertisement included the following:

These commercials are intended to be a humorous campaign which claims Jim Beam is the highest quality, the best and 'The Ultimate' bourbon, or, as the catchphrase puts it 'The Bourbon'. Each has been pre-vetted and approved against the ABAC code and with CAD.

In each case, we liken Jim Beam to other 'ultimate' or incredible things, the kind of things which our audience could only imagine in their wildest dreams. This is common to most humorous advertising, we over-exaggerate and fantasize in order to illustrate our point.

Specifically, in 'The Girlfriend' TVC we create the ultimate girlfriend who is quite ridiculously relaxed about the things everyone knows women are certainly not relaxed about at all. This is what makes the commercial funny, and fairly obviously non-sensical. We developed the character's mock accent to play-up the silliness of the film.

Prior to airing this TVC we researched it amongst both men and women (in Australia and NZ) aged between 20 and 35 to make sure our audience shares a similar view, and the outcome is positive. Qualitative research showed that whilst it is aimed predominantly at men, women take it with a 'pinch of salt' and ride along with the joke. We actually found women are similarly entertained, and they take it for granted that a brand like Jim Beam would make a joke like this.

It's interesting to note that the day after this TVC aired, a daytime chat show on CH9 'The Catchup' chose to feature 'The Girlfriend' TVC for comment. The Catchup is a panel commentary programme, typically watched by housewives and mums during the day and the panel is made up of four female presenters who in many ways represent "women's views" on various topics. The panel played 'The Girlfriend' TVC, laughed a little and joked about how they might re-make it in similar fashion for 'The Husband'. The panel clearly saw the silly side of the commercial and in our opinion this is further illustration that the general public accept this commercial as a parody, and this includes the female audience.

The complainant states our ad leaves out women, shows women have no respect for themselves and is a destructive image. My assessment is this individual has not interpreted the TVC as a parody, and as a consequence responds differently to what I believe is the majority. Jim Beam have exercised appropriate diligence to ensure the majority will not be offended, and that 'The Girlfriend' TVC will generally be accepted within the bounds of common advertising language. Therefore it is our opinion 'The Girlfriend' does not discriminate against or vilify women any more than other commercials in this genre and aimed at this audience.

THE DETERMINATION

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

The board viewed the advertisement and considered whether it breached Section 2.1 of the Code dealing with discrimination and vilification.

The Board viewed the advertisement and considered the complainant's comments that the advertisement contained a destructive image. The Board agreed that the advertisement was a parody not to be taken seriously. The Board also agreed that the label at the end, "the Perfect Girlfriend", while deliberately chauvanist, did not of itself discriminate or vilify women generally.

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