



CASE REPORT

1. Complaint reference number	189/07
2. Advertiser	Bob Jane Corporation
3. Product	Housegoods/services
4. Type of advertisement	TV
5. Nature of complaint	Discrimination or vilification Gender - section 2.1
6. Date of determination	Tuesday, 10 July 2007
7. DETERMINATION	Dismissed

DESCRIPTION OF THE ADVERTISEMENT

This television advertisement commences with two young males entering an underground carpark and approaching a red car, against which two young women wearing black sexy clothing are leaning. One male turns to his mate, the owner of the car, and asks "Wow - are they yours?" to which the other replies proudly "Yep - they sure are". As the girls move sexily against the car, the first male asks "Where did you find them?" and receives the reply "Picked them up Bob Jane T-Marts" - at which the camera focuses on the mag wheels of the car. The owner continues, kneeling to pat the tyres "Picked them up as a special package deal - got a good price that way." A male voiceover announces special deals available now at Bob Jane. The two men stand back to admire the wheels, seen reflected in the owner's sunglasses, as the owner's mate says "Man, they are stunning!" and the owner agrees "Yep - thank you Bob!". The girls in the background look peeved that the males are discussing the wheels, not them.

THE COMPLAINT

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

The ad is sexist and offensive because it depicts the women as prostitutes.

The impression is given that the men are discussing the women as though they were property and assessing their merits based on looks. This is offensive. When the ad reveals the men are actually talking about the tyres, the women are portrayed (sic) as disappointed or "put out" that the men weren't talking about them. This implies that women want to be spoken of in terms of property and their value determined based on looks. The women I know want none of these things and find this ad offensive and sexist. I believe it sends a sexist and confusing message to young people (both male and female).

...implying that women are akin to a pair of wheels so far as being possessions.

Portraying of women as sex objects is unacceptable under all circumstances.

The insinuation that women can be owned is offensive. The behaviour of the women is offensive - they are presented as objects waiting to be consumed...it is very clear they are not seen as human by the men in the ad.

The ad demeans women as less than human, by joking about buying them, and also suggests that women like being treated this way.

THE ADVERTISER'S RESPONSE

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

included the following:

I'd like to advise that the commercial is intended to show, in a light-hearted manner, how obsessed some men can be about the appearance of their cars.

In this case, the Rodney Jane Racing and Auscar wheels add so much to the appearance of the car that the men are blind to anything else around them, when the audience would normally expect the stereotype male portrayed in the ad as being attracted to the women.

The ad features the women looking disappointed or 'put out' that the men weren't referring to them in the earlier conversation. The look of disappointment is intended to convey that the women are tired of the fact that all these type of men ever think about is their cars.

This becomes a humorous reversal of the stereotype attitude of some males towards women as objects and emphasises the superiority of the women in the situation presented.

I hope the above provides an adequate and honest explanation on the rationale behind the advertisement and you will consider the complaint with this in mind.

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 this advertisement and considered that it attempts to be a humorous play on the stereotypical male ogling attractive women, or of stereotypical males ignoring women in favour of their cars. While the Board considered that the advertisement made both the men and women in the advertisement appear unintelligent, the advertisement clearly indicates very early in the advertisement that the focus of the mens' attention are the tyres purchased from the advertiser. The Board considered this advertisement to be along similar lines as other advertisements for a particular hardware advertiser and most likely to be considered humorous or harmless by most members of the community.

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