



CASE REPORT

1. Complaint reference number	195/09
2. Advertiser	Unilever - Lynx (Primal Instinct)
3. Product	Toiletries
4. Type of advertisement	TV
5. Nature of complaint	Discrimination or vilification Gender - section 2.1
6. Date of determination	Thursday, 14 May 2009
7. DETERMINATION	Dismissed

DESCRIPTION OF THE ADVERTISEMENT

This television advertisement for Lynx Primal Instinct deodorant for men takes place while a song talking about “looking good in leather” plays in the background. A number of claymation cartoon figures populate a prehistoric environment. One young man, who initially looked very untidy (wild hair, dishevelled clothing), discovers and uses Lynx Primal Instinct deodorant. He straightens his hair, tidies and adorns his clothing with sabre-tooth tiger teeth before mounting a woolly mammoth and riding it to a settlement of people. At this settlement, his new appearance and demeanour greatly appeals to the women who gather around him in appreciation. A graphic of a piece of leather with the words “Unleash the man leather” appears on the screen. The deodorant container then appears with the words “New Lynx Instinct now in a shower gel” on the screen.

THE COMPLAINT

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

Primal Instinct: This add also treats women as subordinate creatures, appearing only as sexual objects for the pleasure of your male lynx-coated character reiterates and encourages the prevalence of sexism within our culture.

Played to young men, i fear this form of advertisement may encourage anti social and degrading behavior towards women.

Played to young men, i fear these ads may send the message that they will only be truly valued through their appearance and their ability to satisfy men.

THE ADVERTISER’S RESPONSE

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

- The tone of the advert is clearly tongue-in-cheek.

- Lynx is about male fantasy and we expect that viewers both male and female will understand that the attraction represented is exaggerated in line with the brand's well known tongue in cheek tone.

- The fantasy element of this is made even clearer by the fact that this advert is claymation with cartoon characters not real women.

The advertisement received a 'W' rating and CAD approval number ws WPZG3TSF.

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 is objectifying of women, suggesting they are subordinate creatures, and considered the application of Section 2.1 of the Code, relating to discrimination and vilification on the basis of gender, and Section 2.3, relating to the treatment of sex, sexuality and nudity.

The Board noted the animated nature of the advertisement made it clearly unrealistic. The Board considered the depiction of the female characters being attracted to the male character after he uses the product was intended to be a humorous fantasy and was clearly linked to 'caveman' scenario. The Board considered the depiction did not treat sexuality inappropriately to the relevant audience and found no breach of Section 2.3 of the Code. The Board also considered the depiction of the female characters was not objectifying of women and that the advertisement was not discriminatory or vilifying of women generally under Section 2.1.

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