



CASE REPORT

1. Complaint reference number 207/07
2. Advertiser Strike Bowling Bar
3. Product Leisure & Sport
4. Type of advertisement Transport
5. Nature of complaint Discrimination or vilification Gender - section 2.1
Violence Other – section 2.2
6. Date of determination Tuesday, 10 July 2007
7. DETERMINATION Dismissed

DESCRIPTION OF THE ADVERTISEMENT

This transport advertisement in black and pink colouring features the rear view of a woman from the waist down, wearing a short dress, mesh stockings, and high heel shoes. She is standing facing a tenpin bowling lane and holds a bowling ball in her left hand and a cocktail glass in her right hand. Text alongside reads "Smashing Pins! Score every night until late" and details of the centre's facilities.

THE COMPLAINT

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

It is widely known among youth (but almost certainly not those even 30) today that 'smashing' is recent slag (sic) used by boys to describe having sex with a female; never the other way round. eg. "Man I want to smash that chick.!" or used to describe conquests. This is a highly offensive slang expression implying sexual violence and domination and is highly derogatory to women even threatening if used with such a tone. "Smashing Pins" is obviously referring to sex with the woman in the image using this terrible expression, the "pins" referring to the womans skinny legs. Just in case there was any doubt the second line says "score every night of the week" everyone knows what "scoring" means but not everyone knows about "smashing".

THE ADVERTISER'S RESPONSE

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

The advertisement in question is designed and intended to appeal to the 18-35 year old market and hence this is with whom we are expecting the ad to resonate or form meaning. The creative image was conceived internally by Kristy Charman, Strike's Marketing Manager and the model in the photograph is a friend of Kristy's. Both of these women are, in my opinion, independent, aware and intelligent professionals and would not have proposed, developed or indeed taken part in a communication that was designed to draw the parallels to what it is accused, especially insinuations of inspiring violence towards women.

Strike's head office is made up of 20 individuals all falling into our targeted 18-35 market, and not one of these individuals were in any way aware that 'smashing' now allegedly means violently having sex with women. I think it is important to note that this image has also been used nationally for a number of campaigns for 18 months without a single complaint or reported concern regarding this terminology or the complainants 'new' definition.

We do not deny that the ad intended to provoke a sophisticated and good looking feel with a touch of double entendre humour. The image is of a woman with "thin legs", in the words of the

complainant, holding a bowling ball in one hand and cocktail in the other. These two elements represent the core of Strike's product offering of 'bowling in a licensed premises', which by definition excludes anyone below the age of 18. It is important to note, the woman in the image is clearly standing on a bowling lane, bowling ball in hand with tenpin bowling pins on the screens in the background, linking these well known bowling slogans to the image. The headline of the ad 'Smashing Pins' means nothing more than the two meanings described in any dictionary as: 1. Serving to smash: a smashing blow to the head or smashing ten-pins with a bowling ball -MS example 2. Informal Extraordinarily impressive or fine; wonderful: a smashing success or smashing pins, informal for fine legs-MS example

The headline of the ad is intended to communicate that Strike is a cool, good looking, sophisticated and social place where you can bowl, have a drink and either take or meet people. That the image and words purport to mean what the complainant accuses it of, could only be known to a esoteric group that do not fall into our target or the general population and the alleged miscommunication is clearly an unintended purpose and unfortunate consequence.

In conclusion we would like to apologise if we unwittingly caused offence but we had absolutely no intention whatsoever of purveying the meaning the complainant has assumed and subsequently contained in the complaint.

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 that the message of the advertisement was to have fun bowling. The Board acknowledged that the references to 'pins' and 'scoring' in the context of this advertisement did have a double meaning. However the Board considered that the overall feel and message of the advertisement was humorous and unlikely to offend. The Board considered that the view of the woman's legs, and the double entendres were not inappropriate or sexual and were in no way demeaning to or vilifying of women.

The Board noted the complainant's interpretation of the meaning of the word 'smashing'. The Board noted the advertisers response which was that it had not heard of this term. The Board agreed that most members of the community would not associate the use of the term 'smashing' to describe having violent sex with a woman. On this basis the Board determined that there was no violence depicted or suggested in the advertisement and that the advertisement did not breach section 2.2 of the Code.

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