



CASE REPORT

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| 1. Complaint reference number | 309/07 |
| 2. Advertiser | Lever Rexona (Lynx Effect - dinner party) |
| 3. Product | Toiletries |
| 4. Type of advertisement | TV |
| 5. Nature of complaint | Portrayal of sex/sexuality/nudity – section 2.3 |
| 6. Date of determination | Tuesday, 11 September 2007 |
| 7. DETERMINATION | Dismissed |

DESCRIPTION OF THE ADVERTISEMENT

This television advertisement opens on a young couple in their new apartment, hosting a dinner party, to which they have invited the male's parents. After being introduced, the man's father asks to use the bathroom. In the bathroom the father notices a can of Lynx which he picks up out of curiosity, then sprays some and smells it. He returns to the living room where the boyfriend is chatting with his mother and girlfriend. The father smiles at the girlfriend who, smelling the deodorant on his person, is suddenly overcome with lust saying "Bom Chicka Wah Wah". She starts dancing around the dad and rips off his clothes, leaving the father standing in his underwear, as the room goes quiet with embarrassment. A voiceover depicts the father thinking "God bless America". A can of Lynx appears on a solid black background with the voiceover "We've improved the formula". The lid of the can twists down and some fragrance starts to spray and a male voice over concludes "New Lynx, Now with added Bom Chicka Wah Wah."

THE COMPLAINT

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

For a young woman to be hitting on her boyfriend's father and ripping his clothes off in the presence of the whole family is just ludicrous and offensive. It is not funny or attractive nor would any woman behave in this manner in such a situation. (sic)

I find this add really insulting to women! It implies that as soon as we smell the Lynx, we start stripping in front of some random guy and trying to get into his pants! It's quite sexist and stereotypical and portrays a kind of female that really doesn't exist except on TV. (sic)

I found the ad...unpleasant, inappropriate and distasteful. No woman would do this and if it is meant to be funny it is just not funny it is ugly. I have no interest in seeing a father left standing in white singlet and Y fronts... and it is an insult to the woman's intelligence to behave in this manner.

THE ADVERTISER'S RESPONSE

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

I would like to give a brief overview of this campaign to give some context. I think it is important to note that 'Bom Chicka Wah Wah' is an expression, invented by Lynx, to describe the reaction that women have to the smell of the Lynx product, much like previous commercials communicating the Lynx Effect that have aired on Australian television in past years. This newly invented phrase from Lynx is a new expression to creatively communicate the new Lynx Effect.

On no view does the Lynx Bom Chicka Wah Wah 'Dinner Party' Commercial portray people or depict material in a way which discriminates against or vilifies a person or section of the community. Bom Chicka Wah Wah is a new way of communicating the Lynx effect that has been used in past commercials stretching back to the later 1990s.

The Lynx Bom Chicka Wah Wah Commercial does not degrade individuals or sections of the community, and cannot be considered sexist, inappropriate or crude in anyway. Women are never portrayed in powerless or compromised positions. If anything, women are usually depicted as having the upper hand. The tone of the Lynx Bom Chicka Wah Wah Commercial, and campaign is one of humour, playfulness and very tongue in cheek.

We submit that the treatment of sex, sexuality and nudity is entirely appropriate with respect to the programme time zones and intended audience, with an adult setting and storyline.

The complaint claims that this particular commercial (Dinner Party) is inappropriate and distasteful. The consumer has acknowledged that this is meant to be 'funny' tongue in cheek advertising. I would like to point out that no overt treatment of sex, sexuality and nudity is included in the Lynx Bom Chicka Wah Wah Commercial. It is not the woman that ends up in her underwear but the man (father of her boyfriend), so clearly as previously stated the woman has the upper hand in this particular scenario.

The relevant audience in the Lynx Television Commercial is a young adult male audience who we believe will understand the humour intended. The CAD rating given was a W (Care with placement) rating. The airing of the Lynx Bom Chicka Wah Wah Commercial is only shown in programmes which have a W or higher classification, within appropriate programme time zoning and in which the target audience were young adult males.

As a general comment, Lynx is a brand with a history of fun, tongue-in-cheek, playful advertising. Lynx also has a proud history of award winning commercials which both entertain and surprise its consumers. This particular campaign has been a very successful international campaign, and well received in number of other countries, and can be found on popular social network sites. Unilever believes that the Lynx Bom Chicka Wah Wah Commercial continues this tradition of tongue in cheek entertainment. Unilever always acts in accordance with national advertising laws and standards and does not ever aim to offend consumers or in any way promote discrimination or inappropriate behaviour.

Unilever believes that its intended young adult male audience understands the playful and tongue in cheek nature of the Lynx Bom Chicka Wah Wah Commercial and readily understands its distinction between fact and fiction.

In summary, we believe that the context of our ad is well within prevailing community standards and that the Lynx Bom Chicka Wah Wah Commercial complies with Section 2 of the Code.

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 complainants' concern that the advertisement demeaned women. The woman's reaction was over the top and exaggerated and the Board considered that as a result the advertisement had humorous rather than sexual overtones. The Board considered that the woman was depicted as being in control of the situation and that there was no suggestion of her being discriminated against or demeaned. The Board determined that the advertisement did not discriminate against or vilify women.

The Board also noted that the father-in-law is stripped by the woman. The Board considered that this did not demean or vilify the man in particular as he appeared pleased by the unexpected turn of events.

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