



CASE REPORT

1. Complaint reference number	334/06
2. Advertiser	Castrol Lubricants (Edge)
3. Product	Housegoods/services
4. Type of advertisement	TV
5. Nature of complaint	Discrimination or vilification Gender - section 2.1 Violence Other – section 2.2
6. Date of determination	Tuesday, 12 September 2006
7. DETERMINATION	Dismissed

DESCRIPTION OF THE ADVERTISEMENT

This television advertisement depicts a man travelling with various young women who abuse his car by sticking chewing gum in the cigarette tray, smoking in the car, slamming the door and putting handprints on his windows, adjusting his rear view mirror to check their faces, changing his music station and putting booted feet on the dashboard – all through which he fights to restrain his annoyance. As he drives alone on a country road he pulls up alongside a young woman whose car appears to have broken down and appears to contemplate giving her a lift until he sees her hands are covered in grease and oil. Obviously remembering his previous experiences with females in his car, he decides to drive off, leaving her in a cloud of dust. Later, stopped at traffic lights, a car stops alongside and the female driver forces her male passenger out, throwing a messy fast food item after him. She looks towards “our” driver and smiles as both well-kept cars race off at the lights.

THE COMPLAINT

Comments which the complainant/s made regarding this advertisement included the following:

The ad is female sexist. If it were a man making aggressive gestures and a woman who was thrown onto the road there would have been uproar from feminists.

While the woman is not actually shown hitting the man, she is shown exhibiting road rage behaviour and the man is shown as though he has received a very violent blow, such as to knock him out of his vehicle. We are given to believe that the woman, through her superior car, domineering violence, and use of Edge, is more powerful and better because of those three factors.

The ad validates road rage...This ad would surely reinforce road-rage behaviour in those prone to it. It also promotes a hateful attitude towards men.

THE ADVERTISER’S RESPONSE

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

The whole essence of the TVC is about treating cars with respect and the premise is built upon a series of “tongue-in-cheek” scenarios in which women do not treat the male lead’s car with respect.

The punchline at the end of the TVC is that it’s not only men who love their cars and are prepared to end relationships because of this, but this just as equally applies to women who love cars.

The TVC portrays scenarios featuring both a male driver’s female passengers who treat his car with disrespect and a female driver whose male passenger treats her car with disrespect.

We do not believe that the scenario depicted encourages violence of any sort; we acknowledge that his exit from the vehicle is highly exaggerated and stylised but in the context of the TVC we do not believe it to be inappropriate.

The female driver stops at the lights, the male passenger lands on the footpath not on the road and has the time to stand up and brush himself off before the lights turn green. There is no interaction between the female driver and her passenger once he's out of the car as they both ignore each other. The female driver adjusts her seat belt and then both drivers wait until the light turns green before driving off. As we do not support illegal street drag racing, when filming the end scene both cars take off carefully and within 60kph speed limit.

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 concern that the advertisement condoned road rage and was violent towards men.

The Board considered that the advertisement did not portray any images of road rage. The Board noted the scenes of the advertisement in which a woman pushes a man out of the car – with the man appearing unhurt, not in danger and bemused- , and that in which a man drives away from a woman whose car has broken down, with the woman clearly not in danger, accompanied by a companion and again looking bemused at the man's behaviour.

The Board considered these images in the context of the entire advertisement which consisted of a series of instances in which women behaved in a way that the man found unacceptable in his car. The overall theme and feel of the advertisement was that of humour and in that context the Board considered that the scenes depicted were not inappropriately violent, did not encourage violent behaviour and were not discriminatory to either men or women.

Further finding that the advertisement did not breach the Code on any other grounds, the Board dismissed the complaint.