



CASE REPORT

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| 1. Complaint reference number | 375/07 |
| 2. Advertiser | Fosters Australia Asia & Pacific (Pure Blonde - Utopia) |
| 3. Product | Alcohol |
| 4. Type of advertisement | TV |
| 5. Nature of complaint | Violence Other – section 2.2
Other - Portrayal of people (occupation) |
| 6. Date of determination | Monday, 19 November 2007 |
| 7. DETERMINATION | Dismissed |

DESCRIPTION OF THE ADVERTISEMENT

This television advertisement opens on an idyllic country setting where a variety of baby animals are playing, butterflies are holding a net and filtering leaves under a waterfall, and a community of fair-skinned blond men and women work alongside a waterhole preparing Pure Blonde for distribution. Suddenly the peaceful serenity is broken by the sound of a semi-trailer backing into the scene, reverse warning system beeping, the horn blowing and the radio blaring loud rock music. The slovenly driver, wearing a sweat-stained singlet, jumps down from the cabin squashing a butterfly underfoot, hoists his trousers up over his beer gut, then takes a seat to watch the blonds load crates of beer onto his truck. When the load is completed, the driver slams the truck door shut, and grabbing a dove from the air, uses its beak to open a bottle of the beer, which he hands to one of the blond men. As he drives the semi-trailer away, his wheels churn up the meadow, splattering the blonds with mud. As the trailer recedes, the blonds wave goodbye and text appears on screen "From a place much more pure than yours." The scene concludes with a small faun coughing and a bottle of Pure Blonde on screen.

THE COMPLAINT

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

Firstly, I object to the way in which truck drivers are represented. The truck driver's boorish behavior is a disgrace, and quite unlike the behavior of the vast majority of truck drivers I know. People in this occupation get enough negative stereotypes that they do not need this added. Secondly, I am appalled at the blatant disregard for nature and the environment which is represented through this advertisement. At the beginning I was drawn in by the beautiful setting, however by the end my eyes were glued to the screen to see what horrible thing would happen next. I object mostly to the breaking of the dove's neck. This is because the dove is an animal symbolic of peace, something that I think should be valued and respected. This act was certainly not necessary.

THE ADVERTISER'S RESPONSE

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

The ad is set in a utopia that is exaggerated beyond belief, from the doves holding up a spider web to filter the beer to the perfect blond utopians that live there. The truck driver represents a visitor from the 'real world' and as such he is supposed to provide a dramatic contrast to our blonde utopians.

Whilst our truckie clumsily enters this utopia and leaves a mark (his truck splatters mud on our

utopians) his demeanour throughout is affable and fundamentally likeable. The truckie's behaviour is also symbolic of the way our own society does not necessarily treat 'mother earth' with the respect she deserves, although sometimes, as is the case with our truckie, it's not always conscious or deliberate destruction.

It's very important to note here that the dove's neck was not broken in the advertisement – the dove, in fact, is very clearly seen to fly away unharmed. No animals were harmed in the filming of the production and the dove's animal handler was on set at all times. The actor was also trained in the correct way to safely handle the animal. Once again it is very important to remember the world represented in the TVC is depicted as a make believe fantastical utopia, which clearly should not be taken literally.

Based on the above, we believe that the Pure Blonde television advertisement upholds both the ABAC and AANA Code of Ethics for alcohol beverage advertising in Australia. The advertisement was also pre-vetted and approved.

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 about the stereotypical depiction of truck drivers and the cruelty to animals depicted in the advertisement.

The Board noted that the advertisement is clearly an exaggerated and over the top depiction of a fantasy world of purity. In relation to the representation of the truck driver the Board considered that the depiction was a stereotypical depiction of an overweight, beer swilling and insensitive truckie. The Board considered that this depiction was extremely exaggerated and unrealistic and would be seen as such by most people in the context of the truck driver's arrival in the middle of the fantasy world. The Board considered that this depiction would be likely to be seen as humorous rather than as a vilification or negative statement about truck drivers generally and that it did not breach section 2.1 of the Code.

The Board also considered the image of the crushed butterfly and the use of the dove to open the beer bottle in the context of the exaggerated fantasy world. The Board noted that the dove is depicted flying away apparently unharmed following the incident with the truck driver. The Board considered that most people would see these images as intended to shock following the peaceful images of the fantasy world, and as unrealistic and at the end of the advertisement humorous. The Board considered that the violence depicted was not realistic and was not inappropriate in the context of the advertisement.

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