



## CASE REPORT

1. Complaint reference number	79/08
2. Advertiser	Reckitt Benckiser Aust Pty Ltd (Napisan Oxy Action)
3. Product	Housegoods/services
4. Type of advertisement	TV
5. Nature of complaint	Discrimination or vilification Gender - section 2.1
6. Date of determination	Wednesday, 12 March 2008
7. DETERMINATION	Dismissed

## DESCRIPTION OF THE ADVERTISEMENT

This television advertisement depicts a young mother racing to get her children off to school, but dismayed at finding a stain on her son's shirt. A flashback is shown of the effort the mother has put into the laundry, and finding it wasted because there is still a stain on the shirt. A female voiceover explains "This wouldn't have happened if you'd used Napisan Oxy Action Max - just one lid in every load is all you need to remove light stains. Napisan is your insurance against stains. Stain insure every wash. Trust pink. Forget stains." The mother is then seen waving goodbye to the children as they run off to school.

## THE COMPLAINT

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

*I object to this Ad for several reasons. 1/ Has the Advertiser actually considered that women do not like to be shown doing these mundane jobs. Its like going to the toilet, everyone does it, but you wouldn't actually show someone doing it on T.V. 2/ We are taught that these jobs are typically female pursuits and a man simply wouldn't lower himself to do something to help his family, as this may be seen as a woosy thing to do. It is unsettling that a female sterotype can be exploited in this fashion over and over again. It's easy to sterotype a male.... most rapists, terrorists, child molesters, gun toting maniacs are male. But we realise that not all males are these things and we hardly would show a man sexually assaulting a woman in the back of a car, in order to promote the motor vehicle?. Sorry to sound obtuse, but that is the reality of this situation. Just because women may do jobs around a house, doesn't mean that all women do it. 3/ The other part of the Ad that I find extremely distasteful, is the fear tactics employed. It is implied that this particular women would be in someway, less of a woman if she allowed her precious child to go out the door with a stain on their clothing. In the real world, a practical person would get another shirt (That's if they bothered at all). The relief on her face when she sees her son walking out the door (with a clean shirt) is a major insult to all women in this country. We are not all "desperate housewives", only here for the purposes of cleaning, breeding and cooking. It amazes and astounds me, that companies of this calibre spend (and waste) money on Ads that don't promote the product, and only serve to vex the heck out of people. Its 2008, not 1958. Last time I noticed, women attend university, have reasonable employment, and don't take crap from others. Child raising and housework are not the sole domain of one individual. In fact, if you conducted your reaserch properly, you would find that most men in a relationship contribute much more, instead of also being confined to the BBQ, Lawn mower and Garbage disposal. This Ad would be more believable in Muslim community, where females are confined to these tasks. Funny of what a woman can do, when not restricted by the mandates of religion. In future, try just advertsing the product and leave the "Betty Crocker" look a like on the cutting room floor, where it should have stayed in the first place.*

## THE ADVERTISER'S RESPONSE

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

*We have carefully reviewed the complaint concerning the Napisan Oxyaction Max StainInsure television commercial (Complaint) and respond as follows:*

*1. We take complaints about our advertising seriously, particularly where, as in the present case, the complainant makes a claim of “discrimination or vilification gender”. We do not allow for the communication of ideas or messages involving discrimination against or vilification of a person on account of gender in our advertising.*

*2. Our Napisan Oxyaction Max StainInsure television commercial (Napisan TVC) depicts a mother getting her child ready for school and noticing a stain on the child’s shirt. It then shows a rewind sequence of the mother going through the laundry steps, including folding, sorting and ironing, until it comes to the point of washing. Then the Napisan TVC shows that a different result could have been achieved from all that effort, by use of the Napisan Oxyaction Max StainInsure product (Napisan Product) in the wash.*

*3. The Complainant states that “It is implied that this particular women (sic) would be in someway, less of a woman if she allowed her precious child to go out the door with a stain on their clothing.” We vigorously dispute this. We believe that the Napisan TVC shows the frustration, which many people have experienced, of finding a stain on clothes after going to the effort of washing them. We do not believe that it is unreasonable to expect removal of stains after washing clothes. The Napisan TVC promotes the stain removing capability of the Napisan Product by highlighting the effort that goes into laundry work and illustrating the improved result, in terms of stain removal, by use of the Napisan Product. Neither the fact that the parent in the Napisan TVC is a woman, nor the depiction of the woman, renders the Napisan TVC discriminatory or vilifying in our view.*

*4. We appreciate that men do domestic work too and we portray men in this role in our advertising. We have even received praise from a viewer about this portrayal in respect of an Easy Off Bam TVC we broadcast in 2005. We attach a copy of a de-identified contact summary of comments made to our staff about this TVC.*

*5. We had no intention of portraying a woman negatively or in a discriminatory fashion in the Napisan TVC and we deny that we have done so, either overtly or subtly. The overall impact of the advertisement must be assessed in determining whether it breaches section 2 of the AANA Advertiser Code of Ethics. Also, the view of average members of the community must be considered. We believe that an average person viewing the Napisan TVC is more than likely to understand the key message to be that the Napisan Product removes stains in the wash and, impliedly, saves time and effort in rewashing clothes that still bear stains after washing.*

*6. We do not believe that an average person would understand the Napisan TVC as conveying an implied or express insult to women or as otherwise being discriminatory or vilifying, based on gender. We do not accept that this interpretation is reasonable, logical or open on the facts.*

*We request that the Complaint be dismissed.*

## **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 depicted an activity which the complainant considered “typically female pursuits and a man simply wouldn't lower himself to do something to help his family” and reviewed the complaint under Section 2.1 of the Code.

The Board viewed the advertisement and considered that the scenario depicted was not derogatory to woman, nor did it suggest that men would not consider undertaking such tasks. The Board further noted the scenario was one with which most people could relate to, or were familiar with, regardless of their gender. The Board determined that the advertisement did not therefore breach Section 2.1 of the Code.

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