



CASE REPORT

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| 1. Complaint reference number | 97/02 |
| 2. Advertiser | Kolotex Aust Pty Ltd (Voodoo) |
| 3. Product | Clothing |
| 4. Type of advertisement | Outdoor |
| 5. Nature of complaint | Discrimination or vilification Other – section 2.1 Portrayal of sex/sexuality/nudity – section 2.3 |
| 6. Date of determination | Monday, 22 April 2002 |
| 7. DETERMINATION | Dismissed |

DESCRIPTION OF THE ADVERTISEMENT

This outdoor advertisement features an image of a gloved and stiletto-booted woman wearing (Voodoo) tights under a short Dalmatian-patterned dress, walking behind two crouching men, naked except for dog-style collars, the leashes of which are held by the woman. Accompanying text reads: 'Voodoo Winter Hosiery.'

THE COMPLAINT

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

"I found the image of a woman walking along with two naked men on dog leashes on their hands and knees very offensive...sexist and derogatory..."

"It depicts men as animals and honestly puts the fight for gender equality back fifty years."

"This ad is suggestive that men are dogs, are not worthy of wearing clothing and need to be tied to a woman who has the power. It also suggests that a woman can have more than one man. Both of these points contravene the social morays that are part of today's society and involves discrimination of men as a lesser sex rather than as an equal."

"The buttocks of the males are high, thereby depicting their anuses and scrotums to be in the clear view of the person holding the leashes. The advert is in my opinion unacceptable...I am very concerned that people, such as children, who lack the ability to interpret messages analytically, may be led to believe that such images portray a socially acceptable interpersonal relationship."

"The pose is overtly sexual in an offensive way as it is demeaning to all parties in the ad, suggestive of bondage (the dog collars), bestiality (the woman is wearing a fur coat), prostitution and domination. It is also demeaning to everyone who sees it."

"This is a moral issue that degrades human value and worth, it brings humans down to the level of animals. For some of the elderly it may bring back memories of war and mistreatment as prisoners of war/slavery. This may also encourage the imagination of some in this direction/treatment of others."

"If the advertisement was reversed and a male was 'walking' two females with a leash, I doubt that the advertisement would even be considered acceptable."

"I strongly object to this ad's being placed in the public view where my children were forced to view it today...It is clearly degrading to men to be depicted as some kind of sex slave."

"Whether some may consider this demeaning to men or women is irrelevant. I personally as an adult woman am fine with it...But I do know it has an impact on children. They are the issue."

“Why do we seem to have one set of standards for women’s representation and another for men?”

“How low is the IQ of someone who can find no better way of advertising a product...this sort of crap is just beyond ignorance...”

“My family finds this work totally unacceptable because it explicitly projects the image of young people engaged in bestiality...Why am I explaining to my children that this is a perverted, degraded and total reversal of the expression of sexual love and fidelity that a male and female human can achieve, tell me, why would you condone these pathetic expressions of ‘advertising,’ human degradation?”

“I genuinely feel distressed by seeing this...Such images one might expect in pornographic literature but should not be in the general viewing space.”

“I am greatly concerned of the possible impact this sign could have on impressionable persons. In my view, the sign is suggestive of a gross violation of dignity and of human rights and should not be seen in my country, Australia.”

...two naked coloured men crouching down like animals with their backsides in the air and leashes around their necks which are held by a white woman.”

“These ads are deeply offensive on grounds of both race and gender.”

“The ad dehumanises people...the symbolism in the ad alludes to the sexual domination and exploitation of one human by another...the size and locations of these billboards makes adult material difficult for young children to avoid...”

“This kind of ultra feminism sends the totally wrong message to families where kids and young women think this is acceptable to treat men as ‘pets’ ... it’s emasculating and derogatory and heel grinding.”

“I have two daughters aged 4 and 7 and I must ask them to close their eyes every time we pass it. I believe we should have the right to preserve the innocence of our children and not have this type of thing forced upon us.”

“This advertisement is highly offensive, demeaning the relationship between men and women, and depicting men in a humiliating position.”

“I would like to express my disgust...It is degrading to men in particular and humans in general...What the hell are the advertising people trying to convey in this ad?”

“I would expect that signs that are degrading to men would be removed as those degrading to women are.”

“This image has the potential to create a backlash from some men and may lead to abusive attitudes towards women.”

“...this level of blatant sexual exploitation of both genders to make money is crude and ignorant.”

“No gender should be subject to such demeaning ideas ...” “...disgusting and very degrading...” “I believe the ad sexist...” “...extremely offensive and degrading (to men) ...” “...offensive and demeaning...” “...degrading, demeaning and inappropriate...” “...sick ...” “...filth...” “...too sexy and vulgar...” “...completely unacceptable...” “...affront to civilized society...” “...unacceptable...”

THE DETERMINATION

The Advertising Standards Board (‘the Board’) considered whether this advertisement breaches Section 2 of the Advertiser Code of Ethics (‘the Code’).

The Board considered that while some people clearly had different perceptions of the advertisement, it represented a satirical comment on a patriarchal world.

It determined that, as such, the content of the advertisement did not contravene the Code in relation to either the portrayal of people or the portrayal of sex, sexuality and/or nudity.

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