

Turning tables on men

 By [Brendan Seery](#)

23 Jun 2020

The world is such a fractured place at the moment and so divided that brands would be well advised to think carefully about all their communication.

At the same time, they should also be warned that jumping on a popular bandwagon could backfire and do more harm than good.

This week, as the outrage around this country's appalling record on gender-based violence (GBV) was spooling up – and even as President Cyril Ramaphosa was about to make yet another speech about tackling the issue – I saw, for the first time, a striking video put together last year by *Cosmo Man* and which is again circulating virally.

It features outrageous comedian “Coconut Kelz” effectively turning the tables and putting men in the places women find themselves in every day.

So, she is the one chasing and catcalling a very embarrassed Kagiso Rabada – who looks lost to boot – as he walks by as she works on a building site.

Then she runs her fingers down the semi-exposed chest of a co-worker, suggesting to him that showing so much skin might not be appropriate for a board meeting.

We also see her getting a male staffer to organise a birthday present and his thanks – a little squeeze of his cheek.

More ominously, she sends a guy an unsolicited drink in a bar and tries to pick him up with the line “pretty drink for a pretty guy...”.

The harassment continues to the taxi ride home, when she tells the guy in the back that, if she were his girlfriend, she wouldn't let a “snack” like him go out alone.

What makes the entire video so stunning is the fact that it turns the stereotypes on their heads, because everyone knows women seldom behave like this. But men always do...

The whole point about the GBV plague is that it is exactly this sort of behaviour – often viewed as “harmless” by some men, who will go on to accuse critics of “not having a sense of humour” – which places women as second-class citizens, those who have no rights and who can, therefore, be abused at will. That is a culture which allows rape to happen and which allowed murder to happen, too.

The video is a good example of a brand taking a principled stand on an issue and while taking a seemingly light-hearted look, leaves the viewer with the obvious sense of injustice.

Now, I realise that *Cosmopolitan* magazine and *Cosmo Man* closed when Associated Magazines folded earlier this year, so in a sense this is a posthumous Orchid ... but I see *Cosmo* still has a presence online via its YouTube channel. So if anyone is out there and listening, well done!



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The Onion for pig-headed thoughtlessness, though, goes to La Boucher Wines, which, according to *Business Insider*, is associated with Eddie “Kwagga” Boucher, a former pro rugby player who retired in 2012.

Trying to capitalise on the worldwide angst of “Black Lives Matter”, La Boucher posted an “All Wines Matter” attempt at humour on social media.

Given that more and more black people are becoming interested in wine – and therefore are a critical target market for your product – this is a bit like commercial suicide. But, mainly, it shows that you are insensitive.

Better saying nothing at all.

La Boucher quickly took down the post when social media exploded with rage, saying:

“ We apologise for any messages on our page that might have hurt or offended anybody. Please know that it is never our intention to hurt or offend. We immediately removed the content once we noted that it was negatively perceived.— La Boucher Wines (@LaBoucher) [June 14, 2020](#) ”

Onion to La Boucher.

ABOUT BRENDAN SEERY

Brendan Seery has been in the news business for most of his life, covering coups, wars, famines - and some funny stories - across Africa. Brendan Seery's *Orchids and Onions* column ran each week in the *Saturday Star* in Johannesburg and the *Weekend Argus* in Cape Town.

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