

# Nuggets of wisdom win the day



By [Brendan Seery](#)

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*Thumbs up for Chicken Licken: local humour that also makes a good sales pitch; Nissan's ad that mangles word order is jarring..*

Years ago, at the end of a weekend course at which I qualified as a road running race referee and course certifier (true story), we sat around chatting over a few beers to Lars Nayler, well-known athlete and official from the SA Road Running Association.

As many are from the Eastern Cape (I understand he grew up in Bedford), Lars was a great raconteur and soon the conversation wandered around to the bits of advice, the nuggets of wisdom passed along to you by older folk.

Lars, with a straight face, said that when he was 19 he was taken aside by his female relatives and told, in solemn tones: Stay away from the girls at the Eastern Province Building Society... they are maneaters... He wouldn't say whether he had tested that claim.

Nuggets of wisdom – which stay with you, but which you tend to ignore with the arrogance of youth, only to recognise your mistake through painful experience – can shape your life. If you hear your mother's voice somewhere, telling you to “always wear clean underwear, because you never know when you might be hit by a car”, then you know what I mean.

That's why the latest campaign for Chicken Licken, the fast food franchise, resonates with me.

There are three Nuggets of Wisdom (naturally all plugging their chicken nuggets). First: Don't borrow from a loan shark. Second: Don't tell your family you've won the Lotto. Third: Don't get a tattoo on your neck.

In the first, we see all the horrific ways the gangster loan sharks come looking for their money – connecting you to a battery, threatening to chuck you down a lift shaft... and you still have to sell your house to settle up.

In the second, your family all come calling, slap you on the back and say “please” (bonus points if you know the song) and spend your money like there's no tomorrow.

Finally, having a tattoo on your neck means your girlfriend's parents slam the door in your face, the border police want to do a cavity search and people cower away from you on public transport.

In all cases, the nugget of wisdom is: Don't do it. But the more sensible nugget of wisdom is: Go and get the special Chicken Licken nugget deal.

It's funny, it makes a good sales pitch and, most of all, it continues in the Chicken Licken vein of doing local humour. So, another Orchid to Chicken Licken and its agency, Joe Public. Keep them coming, people...

The Onion this week will be looked upon by many as pedantry.

But if you're a marketer and you use English you should do it properly.

The people who don't (among many culprits) and whose ad irritated me recently are Nissan. In their cliché-loaded ad for the new Navara (yes, it does go ploughing through a river at full speed, like every other bakkie), they ask the question: “When last did you feel this alive?”

There is only one possible answer: When I saw somebody mangling English language word order. It should be (pay attention, you at the back): When did you last feel this alive. The word order in the Navara ad would be correct... in Afrikaans. This is right up there with another Afrikaans word order arrangement which has crept into English in this country: Next week Monday, instead of on Monday next week.

I have nothing against Afrikaans and I am as angered by English colonialism as the next person, but we do as much damage to English as the Americans do. And up with that, I will not put...

## 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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