

Lesbians at the dinner table? Who cares? We're more worried about our taxpayer cash being squandered

 By [Brendan Seery](#)

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I just wonder if South Africans are not more liberal and "let and let live" than a lot of people - and advertising agencies - give them credit for.

That thought came to mind this week when I was chuckling over the new TV ad for Debonairs Pizza and its "Awesome Foursome" pizza, which is a mega pizza with four slices with different toppings.



Debonairs Pizza launches 'Awesome Foursome'

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I can understand that Famous Brands, owner of the Debonairs brand, and ad agency FCB Joburg were probably aiming to raise eyebrows with the piece...and they may have done so ten years ago. Now... I wonder.

The tone of the ad is that the Awesome Foursome offering helps to "Celebrate Different" and to convey that, it looks at the "diversity" of our country.

In this case, we see a normal suburban family, where the daughter is coming home for dinner and lets Mom and Dad know she is bringing someone.

Father's long-suffering worry lines get exercised again as he envisages a host of less than salubrious characters sitting at his daughter's side at the dinner table: A "gang banger" with gold teeth; a body builder capable of flicking his nipples under his shirt; a long-haired bad love song singer...

Mom says not to worry, he's a doctor. Dad starts paying attention.

The doorbell rings, and Mom observes through the curtains that "he's got a nice car, too..."

When the door opens, the companion (whose hand is being lovingly held by the daughter) is... a woman.

Instead of shock, Dad is delighted – "A doctor?" he remarks with barely concealed glee.

Then all four sit down to celebrate their differences, with the different pizza offering.



Screengrab from the ad.

The ad is slightly unexpected because lesbian and gay characters are still not mainstream in South African marketing, let alone in prime time spots for a major fast food brand.

But, it is not that shocking.

Why do I say that? Because my wife watched the ad for the first time and what made her sit up and take notice was the pizza itself.

“Hey, that’s a good idea,” was her comment.

And whether or not there were lesbians front and centre either never really worried her or she didn’t notice.

That doesn’t make the ad bad, though, because the way the product is showcased – and the product concept itself (nice one, Debonairs) – is executed very well. I can imagine calls to Debonairs outlets spiking around the times this ad is aired.

So it gets an Orchid for Debonairs and for FCB Joburg.

I don't think it will shake the earth in terms of comments or complaints, which means we are becoming much more accepting as a society and we already "Celebrate Different" – or at least tolerate it. And that's not a bad thing.

I see Comrade Ace Magashule, newly elected ANC secretary-general, has been busy furthering the aims of Radical Economic Transformation by throwing buckets of taxpayer cash at the Gupta newspaper, The New Age.

It's obviously expensive to keep up the assault on White Monopoly Capital, so Ace's Free State institutions last week dumped a dozen ads in one edition of the newspaper which has a circulation so miniscule that the proprietors refuse to have it audited independently.

Apart from casting taxpayer bread upon Gupta waters as the Comradely thing to do, one wonders if they may have been another motive...

It has already been widely reported that Magashule's sons have been involved in business with the Guptas and have even visited Dubai. So, it was interesting to see one of the reporters' bylines in that particular "Free State government edition" of The New Age was one Refilwe Magashule.

Funny old world, isn't it?

But, Comrade Ace, you get an Onion for bad media spend, regardless of your political or family motives. Putting advertising money where there is little or no audience is just idiotic and that's why you get the Radically Untransformed Onion.

I hope the Auditor-General is reading this...

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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