

Making heroes possible

 By [Brendan Seery](#)

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Game changer: Thumbs up for beast; Trump shoots himself in the foot...

As someone who used to work for a Durban newspaper (albeit in its Johannesburg bureau), it always used to peeve me about how the rest of the country was so dismissive about what people did in banana country.

I've since discovered that the bias is also evident in the marketing and advertising industries, where both the clevers and the creatives in Joburg and Cape Town look down their noses at their counterparts in KwaZulu-Natal.

Yet, because a lot of fast-moving consumer goods (FMCG) companies are headquartered in the province, a lot of the advertising produced there is effective – it has to be, because in the world of FMCG, there's no way to hide.

Your clients will know, from how the stock moves, whether your work is good or not. And they will know quickly, too.

So, it was interesting to see equipment maker Husqvarna producing what is said to be its first brand video ad and using Durban agencies and production houses to do it. And featuring one of the province's big heroes, Sharks and Springbok legend Tendai "Beast" Mtawarira.



Tendai “Beast” Mtawarira

Husqvarna has made Beast its brand ambassador – and the fit is a good one, especially if you’re wanting to send your clients the message that your products are tough and don’t give up.

So, we see Beast telling us, simply, the story of his life and how, from a very young age, his thoughts had been only of rugby.

People, he tells us, thought he was crazy.

But that didn’t deter him and he made his own, highly successful life.

As his story unfolds, we see Beast doing some of his punishing physical routines and, if we look closely, can see some Husqvarna devices in the background.

The punchline is that Husqvarna is “designed to make heroes possible”. It’s a simple line, the commercial is simple, but well conceived and executed.

So, an Orchid to go with all the bananas to the Husqvarna team led by Jenna Robinson and to Durban’s Studio 031

agency's creative director Maria Bronzin, as well as Lee Jackson, who did the filming.

Donald Trump is the gag which keeps on giving. He knows very little about a lot of things – but even his idiocy (or more correctly, that of his marketing team) reached new levels this month.

An election campaign poster, put together by the Trump Make America Great Again Campaign, urged Americans to “Support our troops”. It featured macho men soldiers walking along as fighter jets flew over them.

Only problem – the planes were Russian MiG-29s and the soldiers were Russian models hired for stock photography. In addition, one of them was carrying an AK-74 assault rifle.

Not that Trump and his people care about getting an Onion from me but they will anyway. And the lesson for anyone involved in marketing: if you're going to use stock photography, make absolutely sure it's correct.

But even more amazing was a similar style patriotic tweet put out from the official US Army Twitter account, which is run by someone with the rank of Sergeant-Major but who, in his Twitter bio, describes himself as an avid gamer.

That is no doubt true, because the Tweet his social media team put together belongs in the airyfairy world of cyberspace and not the real one of combat.

Also gloriously gung-ho, it says: I will never quit. It features a steely-eyed soldier with helicopters flying over his head looking, clearly, to place himself in harm's way.

Problem: the soldier is from the British Army, as anyone half familiar with the military world would know – his uniform is different from that of the US Army and so is his rifles.

In addition, eagle-eyed South Africans spotted the fact that the photo of the helicopters was one of a display of South African Air Force choppers a while ago.

Talk about shooting yourself in the foot...

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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