

Kreepy Krauly cleans up

 By [Brendan Seery](#)

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Orchid: Spoof showcases product perfectly behind humour; Woolworths' ostrich-like marketing behaviour earns it a non-GMO Onion...

Two of the elements which make a great advertisement are humour and topicality. Often, it's the fact that something is fresh and in the news, but given a clever little twist, which makes it funny.

And, these days, it is not often that I burst out laughing at something I see – I've always been a bit of a thick-skinned cynic and the times through which we are thumping at the moment hardly encourage smiles, never mind anything more expressive.

I couldn't contain myself when I saw, on social media, the spoof video on the iconic movie everyone is talking about at the moment, *My Octopus Teacher*.

For those who haven't seen the original, it's the story of a creative, sensitive oke (from Cape Town, of course), who just so happens to hit a bit of a roadblock in his life and as a way from running away, he takes to swimming in the freezing Atlantic Ocean just off the rocks from his little beach bungalow in Cape Town. (Leaving aside, of course, the fact that most

problems, never mind middle-aged white man ones, could be alleviated with a little mega-million property on the Cape Town Atlantic Seaboard...)

In his sojourns into the kelp forests below the churning waves, the hero encounters an octopus and a sort of engaging, cross-species friendship ensues, with the mere human learning about himself, the world and the Meaning Of Life (Yes, in capital letters) from the seafood menu item.

I watched about half of it on Netflix one night before falling asleep which was, I must be fair, more because I was exhausted than that the movie was boring. Many have been touched by it.

But – and this thought popped into my head immediately I saw the spoof – this was “Only in South Africa, Boet!” The funny video has another Capetonian (and the accent, is, shoo, like, really spot-on) hitting a personal hurdle and discovering, in his suburban pool, a creature which can provide the answers to his Meaningless Life.

That creature is a Kreepy Krauly pool cleaner which is, in the way the video was shot, eerily like a sea dweller, or even an octopus.

All the elements touched on in the film are covered in the spoof video, with the most memorable highlighting the “voracious appetite” of the Kreepy for pool litter and debris.

I seldom pass on videos I see on social media, but I could not resist this one and I shared it on social media. Which shows how powerful the whole thing is as a piece of viral content.

“ *My Kreepy Teacher. Written and Directed by [@GlenBidermanPam](#). ECD [@mikesharman](#). pic.twitter.com/hepvUDpA5B— Glen Biderman-Pam (@GlenBidermanPam) [September 20, 2020](#)* ”

I was quite stunned then, to find out that the video was actually a commercial piece put together by Retroviral agency on behalf of Kreepy Krauly, one of its long-standing clients.

Looking at it again, you can see all the positive elements of the cleaner – a world-first South African product – showcased behind the humour.

It's great advertising because its topical and has humour. But really, the ideas people behind it – Mike Sharman and Glen Biderman-Pam – really deserve the creative Orchids, along with their whole team.

More amazing is that the concept went from idea to viral in 96 hours. And pulled in millions of views. It makes one proud of SA advertising again.

If you don't have a thick skin, then stay off social media – and especially Twitter, which can be a toxic place at times. However, if you want to use the medium to market yourself, then remember your behaviour can be seen by many, many people.

For example, John Steenhuisen, interim leader of the Democratic Alliance, likes to use Twitter to push himself and his party.

Yet, he cannot take what he gives out to his political opponents and has blocked most who have the temerity to argue with him or criticise him. Not a good look for a man, or party, which wants to be seen as liberal.

But the Onion for bad marketing doesn't go to Steenhuisen, it goes to Woolworths, who act in much the same way as the DA man.

And while they may not have to take the barbs and criticisms handed out by activists, it doesn't look good when they block

or mute them on Twitter – because plenty of other users of the platform can see exactly what has been done and will come to the same conclusion: I wonder what they have to hide (when it comes to food labelling and other sensitive issues)?

So, Woolworths you get an Onion – not genetically modified, I can guarantee – for your ostrich-like marketing behaviour.

Just because you bury your head in the sand to ignore your accusers, doesn't mean they, and others, can't see you.

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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