

MEDIA STATEMENT

To: News Editors
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Prophets make your fines disappear – or do they?

New advertising campaign parodies the bogus practices of some faith-based imposters

The Road Traffic Infringement Agency (RTIA) may well have provoked the ire of some cultural and faith based groups, with the release of an advertising campaign that, at face value, seems to mock the practices and beliefs of these organizations.

RTIA, the adjudication and traffic fines collections agency, through this campaign, takes a humorous stab at the widely reported shenanigans of bogus prophets and traditional healers, to drive home the key message of South Africans having to settle their outstanding traffic fines.

In the campaign, ordinary citizens are depicted consulting mediums for supernatural intervention in an attempt to erase their traffic fines – a clear stab at the ‘miracles’ promised by some prophets (of doom).

Says Japh Chuwe, CEO of RTIA: “When the advert was first presented to me, I was immediately grabbed by the satirical approach, which I find funny and a welcome ice-breaker.”

“I am aware of the recent tensions around bogus prophets who have been accused of taking advantage of vulnerable people,” says Chuwe”

The Cultural, Religious, Linguistic Commission (CRL Commission) recently called for the regulation of religious organisations. This follows incidents of prophets feeding their congregants grass, flowers, live snakes, petroleum and spraying them with aerosol insecticide among other things. The proposed regulation has been met with disapproval in other circles, many calling it a way to ‘capture’ freedom of religion.

Continues Chuwe: “It is obviously a very serious matter and we by no means undermine it, however we appreciate the satirical approach by our creative agency and we believe South Africans will get a chance to laugh at themselves.”

Taelo Lesegonyane, creative Brand Strategist at Blueprint South Africa, the agency behind the advert, says he does not believe people will be offended by it.

“Faith and religion are a very slippery slope for any creative and one often has to look for the invisible line between funny and offensive. However, we cannot deny that there are many bogus figures who have been taking advantage of vulnerable people and the advert finds its relevance of message there.

“Ultimately, our aim is to encourage South Africans to comply with provisions of the Road Traffic Act and not live with the risks associated with outstanding traffic fines.”

Monde Mkalipi, Senior Manager of Media and Marketing at RTIA, says that the agency took all precautions to mix education with entertainment, without offending anyone.

The advert is currently on air in various media outlets.

Ends

Enquiries may be directed to RTIA’s Monde Mkalipi on 0825753976