

Mochachos on fire

 By [Brendan Seery](#)

30 Mar 2021

Off the wall: Blazing burger desert concept turns up the heat; Advert is so hot you expect an appearance from Satan himself...

I wonder how many of the redneck “Doomsday Preppers” in the States have emerged from their underground holes or desert compounds after coronavirus struck the world.

The motif of the apocalypse has become a popular one in American culture, accelerating in its appeal as the events of the real world have got as close to fiction as anyone dreamed they would.

It was probably the Planet of the Apes movie which really brought a bleak vision of the future into the mainstream, thanks to the idea of Mad (mutually assured destruction) of the US and USSR in a global nuclear holocaust. And the idea of a battered, abandoned, world where everything reverts to a desert is just as strong today.

And that was the first impression I got from watching the latest ad for fast-food brand Mochachos conceptualised by ad agency Comedia.

We are transported to a bleak desert landscape next to the depopulated towns of the dry American West, alongside the interstate highways. The place you'd expect to see tumbleweeds a-blowin' down the main street. It is so hot you expect a guest appearance from Satan himself and everyone is trying their best to avoid, or take advantage of, the heat. The a dude comes a-pushin' his muscle car, which has clearly given up the ghost because it has overheated.

All manner of odd characters look on in a piece of mini-theatre which draws you in, wondering what is going to happen, who is going to freak out. But the dude has a bag of Mochachos' takeaways – which are hot by their very nature – and the message is clear: things are about to get a whole lot hotter. And that's probably why the characters have little, or no, clothing on.

What I really like is the way the production has captured precisely that feeling of forlorn waste and ennui which permeates every desert apocalypse flick. You'd expect Mad Max to enter, stage left...

And there is an interesting Australian connection (they made Mad Max in Aus) after all... and that's because, Comedia creative brain Gordon Timm tells me, he and his team were inspired by an Aus TV ad in the Outback for Bonds Underwear. But they took the concept to a whole new level.

Dirk van Niekerk of Black Eight TV in Cape Town brought it all together into one slick, but quirky production. So, Orchids to him, to Comedia and to Mochachos for being brand brave enough to do something off the wall like this.

Interestingly, colleague Andy Rice likened the ad to a rerun of the famous "Boet en Swaer" ads for Castrol from years ago.

I can't see that, I'm afraid. Funnily enough, though, the voiceover at the end of the Mochachos ad is in fact one Norman Anstey – "Ja Boet" himself!

Am I the only one who thinks prices of everything started soaring during the lockdowns? What you see on the labels in supermarkets doesn't seem to gel at all with our inflation figures, which are just under 3%. A lot of us are cynical about giant supermarket chains, even though that's where we do the bulk of our shopping.

So, I'll admit I did initially think Checkers was milking the publicity cow ahead of Human Rights Day when they ran a series of print ads last week. Quoting from our constitution, one proclaimed "everyone has the right to a basic education", while the other said: "Everyone has the right to access to sufficient food."

Yeah, yeah, yeah, I thought, more propaganda...and then I read the body copy.

In the case of the right to education, Checkers recognised that a third of girls miss school because they can't afford sanitary pads.

So, they created a special pack of eight, which they sold for just R8.

In the case of food, the supermarket chain said it had lowered the price of brown bread to R5 and kept it there for five years, subsidising 266 million loaves of bread.

Checkers gets an Orchid.

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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