

UK Oscar ad gets a 'paddywhack'

By [Delene Bertasso](#)

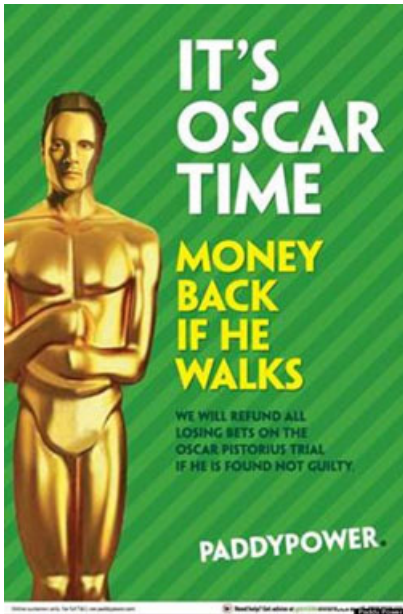
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The widely publicised and high profile Oscar Pistorius trial has even made waves in the United Kingdom.

On the day before the Oscars this year, Paddy Power, an Irish bookmaker, placed an advertisement in the *Sun* newspaper stating, "It's Oscar time. Money back if he walks. We will refund all losing bets on the Oscar Pistorius trial if he is found not guilty."

The advertisement was accompanied by a photograph of an Academy Award statue with Pistorius' face superimposed on it. The UK Advertising Standards Authority (the body entrusted to ensure that adverts meet certain acceptable criteria) received a record of 5,525 complaints against the advertisement.

The thrust of the complaints was that the advertisement was offensive and trivialised domestic violence towards women.



The advertisement was also said to take undue commercial advantage of a trial involving incredibly sensitive issues. The ASA in the UK ruled that the advertisement caused widespread offense and brought advertising into disrepute. Paddy Power was ordered to immediately withdraw the advertisement.

And in SA?

The Code of Advertising Practice in South Africa states that an advertisement may not offend against good taste or decency or be offensive to public or sectoral values and sensitivities, unless the advertisement is reasonable and justifiable in an open and democratic society based on human dignity, quality and freedom.

In terms of our Code of Advertising Practice, I suspect, that Paddy Power would have also received a solid "paddywhack", due to the offensive nature of the advertisement.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Delene Bertasso is a senior associate at Adams & Adams, the exclusive legal advisor to the Loerie Awards and sponsor of the Loeries Young Creatives Category and Loeries Student Portfolio Day. The firm was recently awarded the Business Day BASA Award for the "Sponsorship In-Kind Category" for its sponsorship of multi-faceted creative platform Design Indaba.

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