

'I want to get cancer' ad criticism partly upheld

A NUMBER of the controversial 'I want to get cancer' ads can no longer be shown after they sparked dozens of complaints.

The Advertising Standards Authority for Ireland received 92 complaints regarding the Irish Cancer Society's campaign across print, TV and radio last month, which have been partially upheld.

On posters, the words 'I want to get cancer' were printed in large type, with a smaller message below such as: 'And wring its bloody neck.'

They also used 'get' to mean 'understand', so one poster showed a scientist in a lab coat and had the slogan: 'I want to get cancer before it gets you.'

By Sarah Burns

According to the ASAI, the common theme of the complaints was that the wording 'I want to get cancer' was offensive, insensitive, disrespectful and upsetting to cancer survivors, sufferers, bereaved families and those who may currently be undergoing tests or waiting on results.

The ASAI ruled that segments of the TV ad had not been clear as to what individuals meant by wanting to 'get cancer' and were therefore 'likely to cause distress to consumers'.

A spokesman for the ASAI told the Irish Daily Mail: 'The ads cannot be shown in the current

format again.' The ASAI's Complaints Committee said advertisers should take great care when developing advertising for such sensitive topics.

The Irish Cancer Society said that it was exploring avenues for appeal.

A statement from the charity yesterday said: 'The Irish Cancer Society is reviewing the ASAI ruling in respect of its recent "I want to get cancer" campaign and is currently exploring options for appeal.'

Other complaints queried the source of the statistics referenced such as, 'By 2020, one in two of us will be getting cancer in our lifetime'. These complaints were not upheld.

Dr Mark Dooley



MORAL MATTERS

How I learned treachery is never forgiven

MUCH to my embarrassment, my father often recalls a story from my childhood. One day, a man approached him and asked: 'How is your son Julius?' 'Julius?' inquired my bemused father, to which the man replied: 'Yes, how is little Julius?' It seems that this individual had witnessed me impersonating Caesar and came away from the encounter believing that my name was, indeed, Julius.

I suppose it says something about my skill as a mimic that, at the age of five, I could convince a man that I was Julius Caesar. I do remember holding my sceptre and 'globus cruciger', the orb which ancient royals carried on ceremonial occasions. I also remember the man in question peering at me as I gave some pompous address to the people of Rome.

Surely, he must have seen my performance for what it was: the play-acting of a child obsessed with ancient intrigues? Obviously not, for this man knew me only as 'Julius' and, without a hint of humour, addressed me as such until my father put him straight. I, of course, was much too proud to reveal my true identity.

If the man knew me as Julius, who was I to protest? After all, Caesar was my greatest passion and if I were to be mistaken as the great Roman, then I should happily live with it. Needless to say, once my father clarified that I was not Julius but Mark, I steadfastly avoided that man.

For a fleeting second, I thought I might pose as Caesar's most famous ally, Mark Antony. I considered approaching the man to say: 'Sorry you mistook me for Julius, when, in fact, I am Mark Antony. It is, of course, a very easy mistake to make.'

Good sense managed to constrain me before I made matters far worse.

For all my pretentious precocity, I should have known that Julius Caesar was never emperor of Rome. He was a tyrant who sought to control the Roman senate and have himself declared 'dictator perpetuo', or dictator without end. That he succeeded in this merely precipitated his murder in the senate by those who feared he was attempting a coup d'état.

That murder, on the Ides of

March in 44BC, was immortalised by Shakespeare in his powerful tragedy Julius Caesar. It is a tale of deceit and treachery, one that encourages sympathy for the dead dictator. Indeed, it is none other than Mark Antony who, with his famous speech beginning: 'Friends, Romans, countrymen, lend me your ears', that wins Caesar his posthumous glory.

As I pranced around in my imperial garb, I had no idea of the subtleties of this timeless drama. All I knew was that Julius Caesar was a figure whose mighty spectre cast a shadow across subsequent human history. That was enough to encourage me to don his mantle and set about establishing my own little empire.

However, as the years passed, I began to appreciate the enduring relevance of Julius Caesar, both as a person and as someone whose gruesome end is a template for our time.

Even though he was a power-hungry despot, the events surrounding Caesar's assassination were always destined to turn the tide in his favour.

THE sheer skulduggery of his murderers, the disloyalty of 'friends' such as Brutus compared to the nobility of Mark Antony, had only one consequence: Caesar achieved in death what he failed to accomplish in life.

His assassins believed that, in order to save Roman democracy, they simply had to act. That is certainly true and, were it not for the manner of the murder, history would have judged them kindly. But now, apart from Brutus, they are all but forgotten, while Caesar has been immortalised.

There is a lesson in all of this for those who would stab their leaders in the back. To fatally wound a leader, while feigning loyalty or friendship, is the quickest way to earn the enmity of the public.

Even if the leader is unpopular, and you claim to be acting in the 'public good', to strike without regard for their dignity will always be perceived as betrayal.

In the end, treachery is never forgiven and only serves to win sympathy for the vanquished.

Someone will always rise up and repeat those memorable words: 'Friends, Romans, countrymen, lend me your ears.'

And that is why, when I thought about it, I was happy to drop Julius to be known simply as Mark.

—mark.dooley@dailymail.ie—

Thomson
Discover your smile

PLATINUM
Holidays in premium hotels. Prime locations, great dining scenes and standout facilities.

Prices from €419pp

BOOK NOW & SAVE UP TO
€379
PER PERSON

ONLINE: thomsonholidays.ie | CALL: 1850 45 35 45 | IN-STORE: Falcon Travel Shop or Travel Agent

WELCOME TO THE WORLD OF TUI

Prices are based on 2 people sharing, are correct at time of print and are subject to availability and change. Terms and conditions apply. Thomson is fully bonded and licensed by CAR (TO 021)