

Bloomingdale's Obnoxious Date Rape Ad Reveals Jezebel's Influence on Media

You may have seen the ad by now. A sharp couple dressed in black and white are pictured in party attire. The blonde is wearing a short skirt and a happy-go-lucky look on her face; her date's eyes locked on her with lustful intent.

The caption on the ad, which is part of Bloomie's holiday catalogue, reads: *Spike your best friend's eggnog when they are not looking.*

Sick, and more than deserving of the backlash the retailing giant is getting.

Jennifer Storm tweeted: "Hey Bloomingdales, it's over. I'm sorry, it's not me, it's you and your #rape ad." Another tweeted: "Nothing gets me in the Christmas spirit more than ads condoning rape culture!" Still another, "Nice, #Bloomingdales is Bill Cosby writing your ad copy now?" And more, "Did an entire marketing team miss the rape message in this catalog or did they not care? #NotBuyingIt #Bloomingdales."

The ad copy was bold, the backlash strong, and the apology weak:

"In reflection of your feedback, the copy we used in our recent catalog was inappropriate and in poor taste," the company said in a statement published on Facebook. "Bloomingdale's sincerely apologizes for this error in judgment."

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For all the hoopla over Starbucks' red cups, though, fewer seem troubled by one of the leading retailers in America promoting date rape in its advertisements. This is not the first time a major brand has "gone there." Earlier this year, Bud Light was forced to apologize for manufacturing beer bottles that carried the label, "The perfect beer for removing 'no' from your vocabulary for the night."

Date rape is no laughing matter. About 1 in 5 women have been raped in their lifetimes, according to a report for the Centers of Disease Control and Prevention—and 44 percent have experienced some kind of sexual violence in their lifetimes. Some say the truth is actually closer to 1 in 4 women—and most of the victims know their rapists personally. Only 12 percent of rape victims were assaulted by strangers.

The accusations of Bill Cosby brought discussions of date rape—date rape drugs—back into the public square. So did news in July that former Runaways bassist Jackie Fuchs was 16 years old when Kim Fowley, the band's manager and producer, allegedly drugged and raped her.

This issue has hit close to my home. At my daughter's high school, five people—some of who she knew—were arrested in a beating and gang rape of their "friend." The main perpetrator was sentenced to 30 years in prison. But 97 percent of rapists are never arrested, tried and judged.

With articles such as "How to Rape a Woman and Get Away With It" circulating on the website and new date rape drugs making their way to market, Bloomingdale's advertisement was more than disgusting; it was irresponsible. The lame apology is not enough.

But there is a root behind this and it goes beyond the lust of the flesh. The prince of the power of the air—that enemy who comes to steal, kill and destroy—is flexing its muscles unashamedly in the media. The spirit of Jezebel, a seducing

spirit that leads people into immorality, is rearing its ugly head in clothing catalogues. And sites like are promoting how to get away with rape while prime time shows from Shonda Rhimes show us how to get away with murder. Anything for a dollar, right?

I wish I had the answer to end rape. I don't, but I know that major brand names promoting date rape only justifies the act in the eyes of lustful men who lack self-control and common decency. I don't expect the Babylonian system that's promoting date rape for dollars to do more than offer a lame excuse. And so we pray and make our voices heard. Is a stupid red cup really more important than a young woman's heart?