

Ne(k)romancers feed on corporate gluttony

 By [Peter Mann](#)

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What crazy, self-aggrandising, corporate-exploited BS has happened to Nek Nominations, the latest craze sweeping social media.

For those who, like me, live under a social media rock, Nek Nominations started as a challenge to get one of your mates to do something totally irresponsible involving the abuse of alcohol. Given modern youths' propensity to binge drink by funnelling, etc - there is even a charming tradition that on your birthday you have to drink the same number of shots as your age - it is small surprise that a couple of Irish kids died whilst responding to this challenge.

Enter, stage left, a South African who decided to turn it around. He accepted the challenge but, instead of consuming copious amounts of alcohol, he went out and lovingly filmed himself giving food to a homeless man at a traffic light. (Huh?)

What did he give him - a hamburger a coke and a chocolate. For this act of deep, caring he has become an international social media hero - and scores of others are being challenged to match his act of selflessness.

Forgive me for being cynical. I once gave a homeless man an apple. I was driving my then adolescent daughter to school and, regularly, we passed the man on the corner of Oxford and Riviera. We used to notice him because on the cold winter mornings he would collect all the newspaper bills, set them alight and then sit on them to keep warm - making him look like one of those self-immolated Buddhist monks.

Go forth and multiply - and not in a nice way

Jessica, driven by her strong social conscience, urged me to give him the apple from her school lunch. I offered it out the window...he told me to ... you know, go forth ... and that I was a white ... and you can guess this one too! That ended that!

The ne(k)romancer who handed the homeless man the junk food, did not do him any good. Did he have any real care or compassion for the man.? Did he even know his name? Has he done anything more for him?

I doubt it. It was shameless self-aggrandisement. The man was simply the object of his route to "fame". He is likely not even going to go back to give him another high-fat meal! We have no idea of the way his gift was received.

SAB story

But what he did pales into insignificance compared to what SA Breweries did. There is a video on YouTube - SA

BREWERIES #CHANGEONETHING - which is professionally filmed, music-backed and shows two of their staff members loading a bakkie of groceries to deliver to a charity so that "thanks to SA Breweries the children of Rays of Hope have groceries for another month". We do not get to meet the children or the charity and we are not told whether this is a charity that SAB regularly contributes to, why they chose them, or whether having used them once for their vainglorious self-promotion, they actually care about them, at all.

This is the problem. We are all in favour of people helping others. There are many people who do so quietly, out of conviction, expecting nothing back. What a contrast to those who use the less fortunate shamelessly without real care or concern.

But what SA Breweries did gets worse. In their promo video, which probably cost more to make than the cost of the food they gave away, they treat us to responsible drinking messages...

So the people who make the product that might well have caused the man to be homeless in the first instance - and which certainly spurred the start of the Nek Nominations alcohol abuse "game" - are now trying to help the indigent and preach responsible drinking to us.

It's self-serving. It's cynical. It's rubbish - and it turns me off them. What about you?

ABOUT PETER MANN

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