

Going where no other will



By [Brendan Seery](#)

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One of the most powerful attributes of advertising - because it is rooted in popular culture and speaks to our everyday lives - is its ability to really make you think and to feel.

I have always admired the TV ads for All Life Insurance, the company which offers life insurance to people with HIV and those suffering from diabetes – the sort of risks which make most other insurance companies run away, screaming in terror.

All Life has always used real people in its ads... and that's what make them so appealing. But it is the latest one, which is airing over the month of December, which around the world is a time to commemorate those who died in the Aids epidemic and those who live with HIV, which really hits home on an emotional level.

Two long-time HIV people living with the condition, Barbara Kingsley and David Patient (pictured in the article), give open, simple and honest comments to the camera about living with the disease.

Kingsley has been HIV-positive for 16 years and she urges people to get tested and to know their status.

She speaks emotionally, but with an amazing optimism, about how she began to feel better almost as soon as she started taking antiretroviral medication. She was soon running again... and went on to do the Comrades Marathon. Now if that is not inspirational, then I don't know what is.

Patient described being diagnosed with HIV in 1983, at a time when there had been only 300 to 400 Aids-related deaths around the world. He describes going through the loss of dignity and stigma because of the way society treats those with HIV/Aids.

And that's where All Life "scored major points", he says. "They treated me as if I was a regular human being with a normal life expectancy and, you know, we're willing to back you..."

The ad is not only heart-warming and does a better job of bringing HIV/Aids into the mainstream and reducing the stigma around it than many government campaigns. It is also a positive message in a time of much negativity.

But, ultimately, it gets my Orchid this week because it is really good marketing: All Life has positioned itself as the insurance company which will go where no other will. But it has done it with dignity and I am sure it will get many calls from people who feel there is someone who is on their side and who will not judge or condemn or isolate them.

Well done to All Life... again.



Screengrab from the ad.

Nothing much shocks or surprises me – years as a reporter and editor have ensured I have a very thick skin – but I must say I was bit taken aback to discover, especially in this month of awareness of violence against women, to see sexism and sleaze are alive and well in this country.

I was watching what looked like an innocuous ad on e.tv for a site called Thanda.mobi. A somewhat porky and homely-looking dude was smiling while he punched in something on his smartphone. Suddenly, in instant response, a large and rather luscious pair of breasts swam into view in the middle of the screen. And they were there for some considerable time until it became obvious they were accompanied by a face.

Later, as the dude slobbered even more, a number of other nubile women descended on him. Just like lap dancers... with all the sincerity that comes with that particular offering.

Turns out Thanda.mobi is a dating site and even a slob, apparently, can pick up chicks.

An Onion for sexist advertising. And a second one for misleading advertising Thanda.mobi.

If you deliver on what you promise for that due, change your name to Miracle.mobi...

What do you think? Email me: orchidsandonions4@gmail.com

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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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