

Looking good, family...

 By [Brendan Seery](#)

25 May 2021

People's cars: VW's advert continues the brand's fine tradition; This is your typical South African story; race and language are irrelevant...



Many a newlywed - man or woman - has suddenly come face to face with the other side of romance and love; that if you settle down with someone (married or not) they come with baggage. And that baggage is called family.

It can be overwhelming or frustrating and can even bust up a couple, but in the end, deep down, no matter how wacky family is (and they are), it is really the most important thing. As befits the bedrock of society.

That's the message from Volkswagen's latest ad, for its Tiguan SUV – and which continues the brand's fine tradition of managing to home in perfectly on a basic human truth and live up to their name as being 'people's cars'.

So, we see what is clearly a newly together young couple, off to see his extended family for his mother's birthday. Right at the start when mama insists on taking the front seat, we know this is going to be a baptism of fire for the family newbie.

When she arrives at the man's family's house (clearly they are doing well), she's met with a cacophony of noise from screaming, running kids and then a frenetic kaleidoscope of family odds and ends, from the busybody aunties to the party-

animal uncle. Then the young woman flees to the Tiguana for a break – and finds her father-in-law sitting there.

He laughs and assures her that, crazy though the family may be, he wouldn't change them for the world.

"Yes, Baba," she responds before heading back in with him to acceptance from all around.

The ad closes with a shot of the Tiguana and the tagline 'Family has never looked this good'.

As another in a long line of great, family orientated commercials, this one wins an Orchid for VW as well as Egg Films and director Zwelethu Radebe.

VW made quite a thing about the fact that the ad was shot entirely in the isiZulu. So what? Even without the subtitles, this is your typical South African story. Race and language are irrelevant. It's still going to sell Tiguans.

By contrast with the well-grounded and humorous VW ad – which still doubles as an appealing sales pitch - Momentum's latest ad is just plain silly.

It is not only a highly unlikely story, but it doesn't fit in at all with its own punchline.

It tracks the story of an unusual child, born so much bigger than everyone else that he dwarfs all others – whether in a crib in hospital, at school or at home. The problem is that in order to make him seem truly giant-like, the computer-generated imagery has just gone too far. I understand tall and big people but when you look at the scale, he must be nearly three metres in height.

Of course, it's all very sad with the cliched lost little boy isolated by everyone else. Except, of course, the girl who realises he is special. She drops him off a little gift and – this is very important – doesn't actually say anything to him.

Yet, years later, she just happens to be driving past a dreadful accident where someone is pinned down. She spies the gentle giant who suddenly becomes the Incredible Hulk and uses his strength to come to the rescue.

That's got more cheese in it than 30 Del Forno's pizza franchises but, leaving that aside, the punchline is plain stupid because it is illogical.

It says: 'With the right advice, your momentum is unstoppable'. What advice? At no point in the clumsy story is anyone sitting down with him giving him advice. He uses his strength because he is emotionally driven to do so. So his momentum is

instinctive and not based on advice.

In other words, you'd be better off going it on your own when it comes to investing - that's at least one possible interpretation. And If I get accused of not understanding the ad, let me remind Momentum's marketing people: if you have to explain any ad, it doesn't work. This simply doesn't work, any way you look at it.

An incredibly hulking Onion for you, Momentum.

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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