

FANS ACCUSE SINGER OF SELLING OUT TO BURGER KING OVER CHICKEN AD BUFFOONERY



Burger King, the fast food chain has been accused of racial stereotyping in its latest ad campaign that shows super-celebrities like Jay Leno, Salma Hayek, David Beckham and Mary J. Blige, eating in Burger King Restaurants. The chain had felt that these big names would revive their fortunes, which was fast losing ground, in the face of stiff competition from rivals. Burger King's Senior Vice President of North America Marketing, Alex Macedo said, "The big challenge is how do you really grab people's attention?" "And most of all, how do you get them to taste the product? We chose celebrities to get people's attention faster and to show the diversity that we have with our brand." The ads are an attempt to sway people into believing that these people are just like us, sharing similar tastes, and that's why they enjoy eating burgers and drinking milk-shakes in the Burger King restaurants. In the ad, the part where the rapper Mary Blige, jumps atop a restaurant table and sings: "Crispy chicken, fresh lettuce, three cheeses, ranch dressing, wrapped up in a tasty flour tortilla", has caused outrage and been roundly criticized by many. By having a black woman sing about chicken, critics point out, the ad is trespassing into stereotype territory. A certain Madame Noire has admonished Blige for agreeing to do the ad, she said, "You know what desperate execs do when they need to make money? They hurriedly throw together clichéd, often stereotypical, advertising campaigns. And that's where you came in, Mary. Having a black woman sing about chicken was no mistake. They're trying to reach the 'urban' (aka black) demographic. And God knows black folk, won't buy anything unless there's a song, and preferably a dance, attached to it. "You are the Queen of Hip Hop Soul, not a court jester for the so-called King of Burgers." Blige said that the ad she agreed to and the ad that was seen on the internet were not the same. She said, "I agreed to be a part of a fun and creative campaign that was supposed to feature a dream sequence. Unfortunately, that's not what was happening in that clip." Mary also says, "I understand my fans being upset by what they saw. But, if you're a Mary fan, you have to know I would never allow an unfinished spot like the one you saw go out." Burger King accepted that Mary was right and that the ad was released ahead of time "before all of the licensing and final approvals were obtained." The fast food giant added, "We would like to apologize to Mary J. and all of her fans for airing an ad that was not final." The ad can longer be seen on YouTube, as post the backlash, Burger King has decided to pull it off. They have cited licensing reasons for their decision, but the unexpected backlash could have hastened that decision.