

BROWN FACE LEAVE POPCHIPS ASHEN FACED AS RACIAL ALLEGATIONS BLOOM



Ashton Kutcher, features in a Pop Chips Commercial, playing different characters from an Indian film producer, to a soft spoken biker, to hippie and a flaming diva. The commercial features a fictional "World Wide Lovers" dating service and the characters portrayed, delightfully and with panache, by Kutcher, are looking for love through it. The four characters are, Darl, a Diva, slightly homophobic, Nigel, hippie, Swordfish, a sweet biker and Raj, a happy-go-lucky Indian film producer. Their search for love is paired with a particular flavour of Popchips. What has generated considerable controversy is that in one of the videos, his portrayal of Raj, a person from India, seems to represent racial stereotypes. What viewers have found offensive is that the character Kutcher plays wears "brownface" in it. The detractors are criticizing it for the brown makeup and the clichéd behavior the character spots. Ashton sports a funny looking moustache and attempts a parody of popular Indian film dances. Kutcher continually shakes his head as he speaks and affects a strong accent in the scene. Writer and self-described tech geek Anil Dash, has sought explanations from Kutcher, Pop Chips and others involved in the video's making regarding the portrayal of the Indian. "Aside from an obligatory 'We apologize if anyone was offended,' I'm curious about all the people who had to have given approval earlier," he tweeted. In his blog he wrote, "I think the people behind this Popchips ad are not racist. I think they just made a racist ad, because they're so steeped in our culture's racism that they didn't even realize they were doing it." However, following a call to the founder of Popchips, Keith Belling, he seemed to have calmed down and tweeted that "the founder of Popchips was thoughtful, sincere and contrite. I'm optimistic about their response." PR agency Alison Brod PR, didn't concede any transgression and said, "The new Popchips worldwide dating video and ad campaign was created to provoke a few laughs and was never intended to stereotype or offend anyone. At Popchips we embrace all types of shapes, flavors and colors, and appreciate all snackers, no matter their race or ethnicity. We hope people can enjoy this in the spirit it was intended." The \$1.5 million campaign is being developed by Mr. Kutcher, Popchips and an advertising agency named Zambesi. Alison Brod Public Relations is handling the public relations duties. Following the criticism the ad has been pulled offline.

<https://blog.granted.com/>