

Sexual Assault Prevention and Awareness Center  
University of Michigan  
715 N. University Avenue, Suite 202  
Ann Arbor, MI 48104

Turner Classic Movies  
C/O Viewer Relations  
1050 Techwood Dr. N.W.  
Atlanta, GA 30318

To Whom It May Concern:

Each year the University of Michigan's Sexual Assault Prevention and Awareness Center (SAPAC) holds a campaign on sexism in advertising to educate the campus community on the cultural impact of sexist and misogynistic imagery. This year, SAPAC volunteers chose the ad for the film *Jezebel* from Turner Classic Movies, as seen in *TIME* Magazine's May 8, 2006 issue, as one of the most sexist ads of 2007.

I, \_\_\_\_\_ find your advertising strategy to be particularly offensive because of the ways in which you:

- Use sex-role stereotypes to portray women as submissive and subordinate. By calling the character that Bette Davis plays, Julie Marsden, a "Hussy," Turner Classic Movies makes a derogatory comment on female sexuality, implying that a "good girl" versus a "hussy" wouldn't act like Julie Marsden.

Bette Davis as Julie Marsden is celebrated for her strength and conviction. She doesn't allow a patriarchal society to place her in a subservient role: rather, she challenges it. The movie *Jezebel* is an endearing love story with a strong and empowered female character – yet Turner Classic Movies reduces her to a "Little Hussy." Turner Classic Movies allows for the audience to assume that all strong and independent women are therefore hussies.

Furthermore, by stating that when one's "Fiancée is a little fussy, that's demanding," Turner Classic Movies perpetuates the idea that strong vocal women are disturbing the so-called natural order of things. This message not only continues to propagate the sexist stereotype that woman should be submissive and subordinate to male authority, but even more importantly, this idea of submission also contributes to what many scholars call a "rape culture."

Rape culture is a term used to describe a culture where rape and other forms of sexual violence is normalized and excused by the media. While it is not say that your advertisement is going to cause a person to immediately go out and rape someone, it is believed that images such as Turner Classic Movies' ad in *TIME* helps create a culture where calling a strong and independent woman a "Little Hussy" is "Classic". By doing this, TCM allows the objectification of strong women into mere objects to be deemed acceptable. Once a person is considered an object rather than a human being, violence against that person can be seen as excusable.

I am writing to ask that Turner Classic Movies be more conscientious about the images that are chosen to represent the company. The advertisement in question, and others like it, is offensive and degrading to women. It is quite possible to advertise your television channel without the use of sexist imagery. In the future, please be aware of the effects of this type of advertisement; we can work together to change the prevalence of sexism in advertising.

Sincerely,

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_