

Checkers pranks commuters over holiday weekend, Curro Holdings faces backlash

 By [Brendan Seery](#)

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The chaotic traffic that was being reported over the Easter weekend made me glad we decided to have a quiet time at home.



The intense traffic makes every journey slower, as does the proliferation of roadblocks carried out by traffic cops and the SA Police.

Layton Beard, of the Automobile Association (AA), pointed out cynically, but accurately, that these traffic campaigns take place over just five weeks every year: during Easter and the end-of-year holidays.

For the other 47 weeks, the high-density and high-visibility (particularly when we're talking about government apparatchiks) campaigns are suspiciously absent.

No one likes being stopped by the cops when you're on holiday, so it was quite a brave move on the part of Checkers to rope in comedian Jason Goliath and the Oudtshoorn traffic cops to pull a bit of a "Leon Schuster" on the convoys heading through the area.

Under the theme "you've been egg-ed", the cops would pull over motorists and make some cheesy quip about your licence being "egg-spined". Then, just ahead of an explosion of rage from said motorists, the cops or Goliath would hand over a bag of Easter eggs from Checkers.

In all cases, frowns turned into smiles.

(Well, they wouldn't show us the outbursts, would they?)

Goliath, obviously possessing some inside information, also managed to prank fellow comedian Casper De Vries and the group Die Heuwels Fantasties, who were on their way to a gig.

The videos ran across social media over the weekend and provided a bit of light-hearted relief from the grim news of accident death tolls, which seem to be standard fare over our holidays, efforts of sundry politicians notwithstanding.



SA celebs pranked in Checkers' *You've been egg-ed* Easter video with Jason Goliath

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But it was also a reminder of the Easter goodies on offer at Checkers, if you hadn't already gotten yours. It also further cemented the brand as one you could laugh along with. And, as far as relationships go, that's not a bad thing.

Orchids to Checkers, their agency 99c, Brainwave Productions and Goliath, who looked like he was having a ball.

Curro gets taught a lesson

"Dear, oh, dear," is about all you can say about the total lapse of management oversight at Curro Holdings, South Africa's largest private school group after photos of a career day at its primary school showed a black child posing as a cashier with white children posing as veterinarians or in other, similarly high-powered jobs.



When you're trying to market your offering as something that can appeal to people of all race groups, you cannot pretend race does not exist – and you have to be especially sensitive to images or words that can be misinterpreted.

Whether this case was intentional or not – I don't believe it was but many hurt people on social media certainly do – the damage to Curro's reputation has been immense.



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The company apologised and said it would investigate what happened. But let's hope you don't try to throw some junior social media or PR person under the bus. The blame for this must go right to the top of whoever is responsible for marketing.

If that person saw this and signed off, then that is a shocking indictment of the people Curro appoints and how it protects its reputation.

Even worse, if this was allowed to be published without oversight, it shows huge ignorance of what a brand is and how it can be damaged.

You have to control the message. If you don't, ordinary people – and your competitors – will have a field day.

As expected, Curro gets an Onion for this incompetence.

But there are plenty of other brands who need to be paying attention – and learning.

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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