

## **Blue and Black Viral Dress Used in Abuse Campaign**

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**(<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SLv0ZRPssTI>)**

[Introductory music plays with Transition Logo]

**Christi Paul:** [To camera] Blue and black or white and gold... the dress is going viral again, but in a [Emphasis] completely different way. It's the focus of a new ad campaign that brings attention to domestic violence. Editorial Producer Nadia Bilchik, uh, joins us now because she spoke to the creator, and the people behind this ad. [To Nadia] [Astonished] I did not know it was the people of The Salvation Army!

**Nadia Bilchik:** Correct! So Karen Holmes, who is the Public Relations Officer for The Salvation Army, gets a call on Thursday afternoon from an ad agency she's never heard of, and they say to her: "We've got an ad that you may be interested in." She takes the look at this ad – this image –

**Christi Paul:** Sure

**Nadia Bilchik:** - and she says, "It's so in-keeping with our campaigns to combat sexual abuse...domestic violence...sex trafficking, which is so prolific in South Africa." She says, "I absolutely love it!" They say: "Right, you've got forty five minutes to give us your logo, it's going to print tonight." Well the –

**CHRISTI PAUL:** [Amazed.] Wow!

**NADIA BILCHIK:** - next morning it was in the Cape Times and she said she got calls from all over the world because the picture went completely viral.

**CHRISTI PAUL:** Well <Stuttering> and there it is!

**NADIA BILCHIK:** [Emphasis] And there it is. 'Cause you can really see it brings about the discussion about domestic violence, about abuse, and she said sex trafficking. Then I spoke to the creator of the ad who had contacted her, so let's hear from Wihan.

[Transition Sound]

**WIHAN MEERHOLZ:** The fact that us over here in South Africa have actually created the movement, that we have actually been a part of a global network – a social network – in the online community...being able to...just do something that just feels so important and so right. We believe in being able to do projects like these for South Africans. We've done work for South Africans against drunken driving, the Environment Wild Trust, and our Salvation Army where we wanted to give back. And especially the creative juice from the team that just came to life so beautifully. To be able to do something different – something for greater good.

**CHRISTI PAUL:** And you notice the black and blue there, obviously in the ad, is on her –

**NADIA BILCHIK:** Correct!

**CHRISTI PAUL:** - the vivid bruises on her body, that is the black and blue they speak of. Um, but, this is going viral, y'know, all over the place, not just in South Africa. What did this ad campaign cost?

**NADIA BILCHIK:** Christi, [Emphasis] absolutely nothing. It cost the Salvation Army nothing, and the advertising agency only used volunteers. So the girl in the picture is, in fact, a woman who works for the agency –

**CHRISTI PAUL:** [Softly] Wow.

**NADIA BILCHIK:** - they even got the makeup artist to donate the makeup, they got people to donate their time. Because the agency was so intrigued when that picture came out – is this black and blue or is this white and gold? –

**CHRISTI PAUL:** Right.

**NADIA BILCHIK:** - They said, “all this buzz about a seemingly meaningless conversation, what if we could create this buzz about something meaningful?” –

**CHRISTI PAUL:** [Softly] Wow.

**NADIA BILCHIK:** - And so they created this remarkable ad, which up until this morning, had millions and millions and millions of hits on social media, and just continues to be looked at. But they Photoshopped the dress on, so they couldn't find the dress, so the girl is wearing a white dress, they Photoshopped her in terms of that, and just had a whole lot of people come together and really, you speak about the discussion – I know you were speaking about “No More”, but the discussion about [Emphasis] Domestic Violence –

**CHRISTI PAUL:** Right.

**NADIA BILCHIK:** - About Abuse. In fact, The Salvation Army have a shelter in South Africa, and they're hoping that this ad will result in that kind of conversation and donations. And, Karen Holmes said to me: “If that picture just results in the awareness of one woman, -

**CHRISTI PAUL:** Yeah. It's -

**NADIA BILCHIK:** - or one situation, you never know what the ramifications are.”

**CHRISTI PAUL:** Right, and it's done it's job. And you're right, no more. “No More” Week starts, uh tomorrow, on March 8<sup>th</sup>, to bring awareness to Domestic Violence. Thank you so much, Nadia.

**NADIA BILCHIK:** Thank you.

**CHRISTI PAUL:** We appreciate it. They made that dress something substantial, didn't they?

[Interview Ends]