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In Chicago, big stink over lawyer's ad

There's not much clever to say about divorce

By Diego Vasquez
Jun 18, 2007

It was only a few years ago that lawyers were given the right to advertise, and with the dreariness of the lawyer ads that do air, the TV viewing public is paying the price.

The typical ad: an aging partner touting his firm in front of a bookcase, or, worse, a guy poking his finger into the camera vowing to collect on injuries from this or that insurance company. "We mean business," he says.

Then Corri Fetman came along with the idea of going a little cheeky.

Up went her ad, a billboard, with this message: "Life's short. Get a divorce."

What a ruckus. The story was picked up everywhere, from CNN to "Good Morning America," and the outcry was such from various offended parties that the ad was ordered down, after just a week.

"Law firm advertising is behind the times, in my opinion," says Fetman, of the Chicago law firm Fetman, Garland & Associates. "The purpose behind advertising is to get your name out there. People may not have an immediate need, but they sure are going to remember you if your ad is memorable, and we accomplished that."

The ad went up May 1 near her firm's offices in the Gold Coast neighborhood, featuring a scantily clad man and woman standing at either side of the catchphrase.

"The goal was to send a message with a progressive advertising campaign that would deal with a serious topic in a lighthearted way," Fetman tells Media Life.

Not everyone took it that way, no surprise, arguing that it trivializes divorce, and a Chicago alderman, Burton Natarus, forced the sign's removal on the grounds that it did not have the proper permit.

On the positive side, there was a flood of requests for "Life's short. Get divorced" T-shirts



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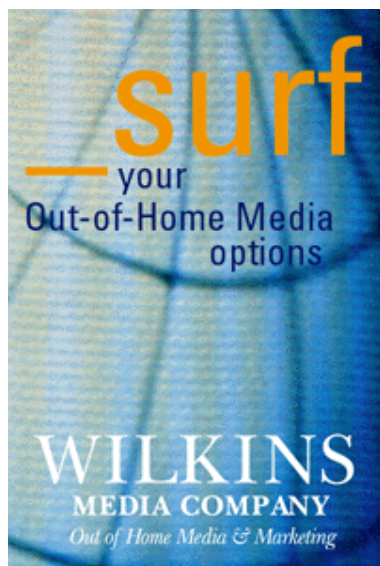
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and Fetman began selling them on LifeShortGetADivorce.com. Earlier this month, Fetman sent two double-sided mobile billboards out onto the streets of Chicago with her by-now familiar message.

Fetman says more will come.

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Diego Vasquez is a staff writer for Media Life.



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