

Grim Reaper – the Truth

The greatest television fear campaign of Australia's media history, the Grim Reaper campaign, it turns out was designed by a man who has never received credit for his work.

The Grim Reaper campaign of 1987 was created and designed by Dr Christopher Reynolds and not, as thought and promoted, by Siimon Reynolds, who was an account manager for Grey Advertising and held the flip boards for the proposed ads for Dr Christopher Reynolds when made his presentation for the tender offered by the NACAIDS Committee. Dr Christopher Reynolds' proposal was to win the tender. While Dr Christopher Reynolds moved on to work for Network Communications on BHP projects, the flip-chart boy at the NACAIDS presentation was left to take the credit for Christopher's work as media confused the two names.

The truth is that Dr Christopher Reynolds created the Grim Reaper AIDS concept and campaign and not Siimon Reynolds as previously reportedly the media. Siimon Reynolds. Siimon Reynolds knew nothing about AIDS and had no research abilities or primary data, or even a background in the political and social phenomenon of the AIDS disease. There was plenty of research available, especially in the US about the dangers of the disease, but people chose to ignore it because of the social stigma attached to the gay communities across the world. The disease had, it was shown to have arisen from an African country and involved the transmission of the disease from green monkeys. It was because people in Australia refused to acknowledge the extent of the pending epidemic that Dr Christopher Reynolds, out of frustration of public ignorance, created the Grim Reaper concept for the NACAIDS campaign. Siimon Reynolds was told of the Grim Reaper concept and the campaign based on creating fear, and was asked by his boss to develop up the story board for the ads. Siimon Reynolds could not have told the NACAIDS Committee what the acronym "AIDS" stood for.

The "Grim Reaper commercial" was a 1987 [[Australia]]n [[television commercial]] aimed at raising public awareness on the dangers of [[AIDS]]. Created as part of a \$3 million campaign by the National Advisory Committee on AIDS (NACAIDS), the advertisement depicted the [[Grim Reaper]] [[bowling]] in a bowling alley and knocking over men, women, and child "pins" which represented AIDS victims. The commercial first screened on 5 April 1987 and was highly controversial, one reason being that the Grim Reaper became identified with gay men Grim Reaper" Demonization of Gay Men | Nevertheless, the commercial was regarded as highly successful in educating the Australian public about the issue. The commercial was created by Simon Reynolds, based upon the concept developed by Dr Christopher Reynolds.

The commercial became controversial for offending some members of the gay community. Australian AIDS pioneer Ron Penny regretted the fact this occurred:

The downside was that the Grim Reaper became identified with gay men rather than as the Reaper. That was what we had unintentionally produced - [the belief] by some that the Reaper was people with HIV infection, rather than the Reaper harvesting the dead.

I think there's never been anything on television or any media that has ever matched it in terms of impact, but no advertising can be without some downside, and that was never intended. But it at least made people aware and probably did change sexual practices of heterosexuals.

The commercials were also controversial because Dr Christopher Reynolds had designed the concept and the commercial around the actual statistics and occurrence of the disease. The commercial concept was distorted to have the Grim Reaper bowling down families but this was not part of the concept as AIDS was not understood to be a threat to families at that time. The campaign was designed to be a fear campaign because Australian people and the media would not take the dangers of the AIDS disease seriously based upon the US frightening statistics and possibility of the spread of the disease. Dr Christopher Reynolds had written a Report for the NSW Department of Youth and Community Services of the potential dangers on the AIDS disease. This Report and other information Dr Christopher Reynolds had from the US Congress were used to support the creation, and the need, for the Grim Reaper fear campaign.