

Akshay, Amitabh and ACs



The 10th edition of the IPL is more than half-way through and, as ever, this year too this column gets down to analyse the core aspect of the IPL season: TV commercials.

But before we get down to discuss the IPL season ads, just a small disclaimer. We will not mention any brand name here. This is not because this column is too classy for such plugs (actually, we wouldn't mind running banner ads in place of headlines), but we are more worried that we might rub some big-ticket advertiser on the wrong side by explicitly naming its rival. News journalism is now at a stage where if the advertisers ask us shove carrots into our nose, we oblige them by putting carrots into our ears too and also thank the advertisers for the sensitivity they showed in not asking us to put the carrots in any other bodily orifice.

Now that we are done with disclaiming, on to the business-end of the column:

We start off with the TV ad for a tile company. It features the National Award winning actor Akshay Kumar. One look at this commercial, you will immediately realise that it was shot by technicians and creative talents from totally another planet. Because it doesn't make any sense to any normal earthling.

Lemme try and describe the whole ad, which we have to remind you here, is for a mosaic tile brand: Akshay Kumar's deep voice (the one he generally uses to convey heavy emotion, but one that usually delivers: agony of constipation) is heard in the background as a military vehicle swerves up on what seems like a hilly highway on a dusky evening. Suddenly, Akshay is thrown down from the vehicle and hits the ground. Nobody knows why. Popular guess is it must have been due to military liquor. Anyway, cut, next shot: We now have Akshay, in a trendy blazer, walking down in mincing steps (attempting to convey dapper elegance, but we feel that he has to see the doctor as he is close to suffering knock-knees), again mouthing some dialogues. And then what happens will surprise you: The ad ends.

Yes, that's it. We have watched the commercial at least twenty-odd times, and every time it has left us with the same wonder and amazement that someone actually got paid to make this ad. We also strongly suspect that Akshay Kumar got the National Award for acting not for Rustom but for the act of bravery in agreeing to do such an ad.

Another commercial that caught our eye was one for an air-conditioner. It has Amitabh 'Baritone' Bachchan and the AC's USP is it is wifi-enabled. Thanks to this nifty feature, you can now -- surely you were waiting all these years for this -- operate your AC from anywhere.

But it beats us as to why would anybody want to operate their AC from elsewhere when the most commonsensical thing to do is to remain in the room where their AC is.

A wifi-enabled AC is like telling you that this column is fat-free and contains no artificial sugar: Sounds great, but utterly pointless.

The science guys who deal with ACs are over-thinking as is also clearly evident from the ad for another brand of AC. Here, the husband sets the AC temperature at 23 degrees (C) while the wife switches to 24 degrees (C). The disagreement over this leads to a spat of sorts. But luckily the AC has a feature that solves the whole problem: It trips the electric line and burns down the entire house.

Okay, we wished that it did so, but what the AC apparently offers is: temperature control in decimals.

After temperature in decimals, I am sure our AC science folks are already busy working on ACs that come with built-in logarithmic tables.

AC guys, you must do what your product is expected to: just chill. Learn from the mobile phone folks. They have clearly figured out why at all any one would need a mobile phone: To take selfies in any kind of emergency. Or at least that is the message we get from all the various mobile phone ads aired during the IPL breaks.

One mobile brand says its camera is good enough to take selfies in low-light. Another boasts of two selfie cameras -- one for you, the second for group selfies. Yet one more mobile has a selfie camera that -- techno wizards must have come up with this -- Ranvir Singh likes.

Anyway, you have to be happy that AC engineers are not handling mobile phones. Else, you will be soon able to take your selfies when you are actually not around with mobile phone cameras of, we don't know, 20.35 mega pixels.

On the other hand, what we fear is, as we speak, there may be AC guys thinking up ACs that allow for clicking selfies.