

RUSTY LUCAS
P.O. Box 422
SANDUSKY, OHIO 44871

August 13, 2004

General Mills, Inc.
P.O. Box 9452
Minneapolis, MN 55440

Dear General Mills:

Do you believe in Friday the 13th? I don't, so I am not afraid of writing a letter to you on this day. I will even go out and mail it today even if I see a black cat or break my mirror or even have to walk under a ladder -- I think they may be doing some remodeling work at the post office, so this is not as far fetched of a coincidence as you might think.

I have a question that has been bothering me for some time now about your advertising. I may be wrong or crazy, but didn't Sonny the Cocoa Puffs® bird used to wear a striped shirt in all of your commercials? It seems to me that I have seen Sonny wearing nothing at all in a recent Cocoa Puffs® commercial and I must admit that I was a bit disturbed by it. How is it that Sonny can now just go completely naked on television without any FCC regulation?

I know that there are various cartoon character animals that don't wear clothes. I understand that real live animals don't wear clothes and that the cartoon characters don't have any privates specifically showing. But even so, I am afraid that this is sending a particular message to our children. One that I do not particularly agree with. I don't believe that my daughter should just go walking around without a shirt on and I don't want my son to waltz around in public without any pants on. But you see, children often like to emulate their cartoon heroes.

My nephew is always pretending that he is Spiderman. With those pretend fantasies come many mock web slinging motions. He knows that he cannot climb the side of a building (not that he hasn't tried) and he is aware that he cannot swing from his web ropes that he pretends shoot out of his hands. But it still is amazing to see how deliberate he is in doing everything just like Spiderman. If Spidey wrapped webbing around live animals and ate them as food, I assure you that my nephew would try to do the same.


Perhaps I am being a little too presumptive here, but I have to imagine that there are a lot of kids out there who really look up to Sonny and his undying desire and work ethic to get Cocoa Puffs®. Can you imagine what would happen to our society if all children began to go bare chested in solidarity with the Cuckoo for Cocoa Puffs® bird? That would create the beginning of the end of our society.

Think about all of the people who go shirtless in today's world. Surfers. White trash rednecks. Overweight middle aged men who mow their lawns in socks and sandals. Is this what we want our children to grow up and become? I certainly do not! But what other option is there for a person who doesn't wear a shirt?

Please just consider giving Sonny his shirt back. Maybe you can do it in a way that promotes your cereal and increases your marketability. Sonny can go into some lunch counter sandwich shop and request a bowl of Cocoa Puffs®. When the counter maid sees him without a shirt, she can point to the sign that says "No shirt, no dessert" and tell Sonny that he can't have any Cocoa Puffs® unless he puts a shirt on. Sonny can go into one of his gyrating psychedelic fits and end up with a tie dyed shirt. Then in his annoying cartoonish voice he can proclaim to all kids everywhere that they need to keep their shirts on if they want to enjoy Cocoa Puffs® cereal to its fullest.

I think this would be a great direction to take your marketing, but I fear that you have already reinvented Sonny as a shirtless surfer bird dude. If that is the case, then I am really worried about the future of our society.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Rusty Lucas". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.

Rusty Lucas

p.s. Do you have any baseball caps that feature a clothed Sonny going cuckoo for Cocoa Puffs®? I would like a free one if you have any to offer. I thought about looking for one on eBay because I figured that if Sonny is now going nude, any memorabilia featuring a clothed Sonny would soon become a valuable collector's item and you can always find good collector's items there. But they charge outrageous prices on eBay because there is always someone who is trying to make a buck. Doesn't a life long supporter of General Mills cereal deserve to have a free Sonny baseball cap?