

Affiliated with UNITE HERE INTERNATIONAL UNION

July 10, 2012

Mr. David A. Peacock
 President
 Anheuser-Busch Cos.
 St. Louis, MO 63118

RE: Anheuser-Busch InBev Irresponsibly Sponsoring the Ultimate Fighting Championship

Dear Mr. Peacock,

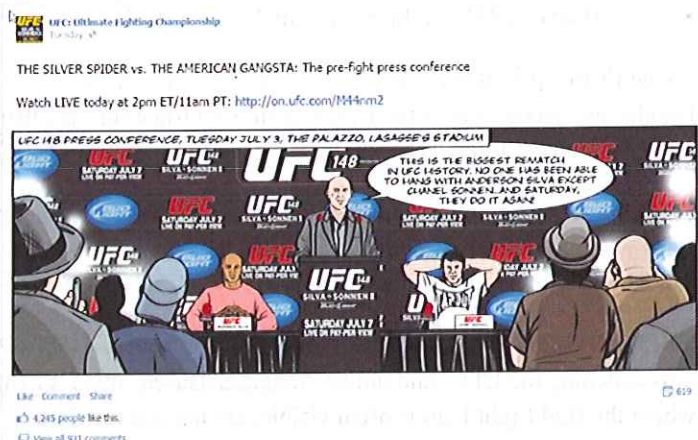
We are writing to express our concern with Anheuser-Busch InBev's on-going sponsorship of the Ultimate Fighting Championship (UFC), the world's largest promoter of mixed-martial arts events. We and other organizations have previously raised concerns about socially irresponsible and offensive remarks made by UFC fighters and its president Dana White that are violent, homophobic, misogynistic and otherwise socially irresponsible. We are alarmed that the UFC not only tolerates this behavior, but markets itself and therefore its sponsors, including Anheuser-Busch beer, to underage youth. *The marketing to underage youth combined with such socially irresponsible behavior is deeply problematic. We demand that Anheuser-Busch InBev, the world's largest beer-maker, take immediate action and sever its sponsorship of the UFC.*

UFC Markets Fight Event through Comic Strip Facebook Campaign with Bud Light logo in the background. The UFC is using a comic strip social marketing campaign through Facebook to promote the July 7, 2012 fight in Las Vegas between UFC Middleweights Anderson Silva and Chael Sonnen.

According to the UFC's promotional materials, Silva and Sonnen are "two of the most colorful characters in the [UFC]. But that has been taken to a whole new level in a special comic strip which will countdown" to the main event "between the two bitter rivals."¹

Starting on June 24, 2012 a new page was added to the comic strip on the UFC's Facebook page. An early page depicts the pre-fight press conference with the two fighters and prominently features the Bud Light logo.

UFC Fighters Portrayed as Superheroes Despite Socially Irresponsible Behavior. While the UFC comic strip may portray the two fighters as superheroes, the two fighters have



behaved in socially irresponsible ways that include violent and sexist comments. These fighters are not appropriate role models for children.

Prior to the fight, Silva said of Sonnen:

"Chael Sonnen's going to get his ass kicked like he's never gotten his ass kicked before. What I'm going to do inside the octagon is something that's going to change the image of the sport. I'm going to beat his ass like he's never been beaten before. I'm going to make sure that every one of his teeth are broken, his arms are broken, (and) his legs are broke. He's not going to be able to walk out of the octagon by himself. I can guarantee that.

"... I'm going to beat him maybe the way his parents should have beat him to teach him some manners. Because he's disrespectful, he's a criminal, and I'm going to beat him up like he's never been beat before. He can say whatever he wants, but I'm not playing anymore." *USA Today*, June 26, 2012



After an Oct. 8 win at UFC 136, Sonnen had directed a comment at Silva and Silva's wife. Sonnen said:

"You tell Anderson Silva I'm coming over and kicking down his back door and patting his little lady on the (butt), and I'm telling her to make me a steak, medium-rare, just how I like it."ⁱⁱ

Sonnen's irresponsible behavior does not end there. In January 2011, Sonnen pled guilty to one count of money laundering. According to the U.S. Attorney's Office for the District of Oregon, the fighter was involved in a mortgage-related fraud. The fighter received two years' probation and a \$10,000 fine.ⁱⁱⁱ

Sonnen also appeared in an online video giving advice to young people on fighting. In the video Sonnen said, "If he slaps you, punch him. If he punches you, kick him. If he kicks you, stab him. If he stabs you, shoot him. If he shoots you, you go kill his family."^{iv}

The UFC Openly Markets Itself to Underage Youth. UFC's President Dana White has made it clear he wants kids watching the UFC^v and unlike Anheuser-Busch InBev's own website, the UFC's website and Facebook page, where the Bud Light logo is often visible, are not age restricted.

There are also UFC-licensed products which likely appeal to and attract underage youth such as UFC trading cards and UFC fighter action figures, the latter sold by major retailers like Toys R Us and Walmart.^{vi} The UFC, in a partnership, launched UFC gyms in 2009. White has made it clear the UFC gyms have been marketed to children. "We have kids' classes, and it's a place you can work out with your kids," he said.^{vii}

There is also a UFC commercial promoting an April 2012 bout on FX that features UFC light-heavyweight champion Jon Jones' interaction with a young fan wearing a UFC t-shirt. After winning a fight, Jones embraces the young boy who is in the crowd as the fighter leaves the arena. Bud Light's logo is visible on the corner men's towels before and after the bout.^{viii} In May 2012, Jones was arrested on charges related to a drunk driving accident. Jones pled guilty and is expected to receive a one-year conditional discharge and a fine up to \$1,500 under a plea agreement.^{ix}

The UFC and outside sources have demonstrated that MMA and UFC fans include underage youth. According to ESPN Sports Poll early last year, 30 million Americans 12 and older are avid UFC fans, with 42 percent in the 12 to 34 age bracket. Of those who said they are avid MMA fans, about one-third are males 18 to 24 and one-fifth are 25

to 34.^x In 2010, UFC President Dana White described the core UFC customer to *SportsBusiness Daily*. He said, "It started out as what you'd expect, the 18- to 34-year-old male. We nailed that demo....More and more kids are getting into it. So many kids are taking MMA now, it is getting interesting."^{xi}

Anheuser-Busch InBev's Code of Commercial Communications Rightly Restricts the Company from Marketing to Underage Youth. Anheuser-Busch InBev's own Code of Commercial Communications clearly states: "As responsible brewers, we want to ensure that our beer commercial communications are directed only to those above the legal drinking age and are carried out in a socially responsible manner." This code also applies to all forms of brand marketing or commercial communications including digital and non-digital media for all Anheuser-Busch products that carry a beer trade name. The code also applies to all those involved in the marketing of Anheuser-Busch InBev brands including promotions and sponsorship teams.

The UFC clearly markets to underage youth as well as other age demographics. The Bud Light logo appears in UFC promotional materials that are likely viewed by underage youth. The restrictions on youth marketing in Anheuser-Busch InBev's Code of Commercial Communications are ineffective since the UFC markets to underage youth and the Bud Light logo is prominent in that marketing.

Anheuser-Busch InBev Should Sponsor Responsibly. After entering a sponsorship agreement with the UFC in 2008, Anheuser-Busch's vice president of global media and sports marketing Tony Ponturo said: "Putting Bud Light in the middle of the cage says what we thought about the sport. I'm very comfortable with what the UFC is doing."^{xii} Mr. Ponturo retired later that year. It is time Anheuser-Busch sponsor responsibly and retire the UFC sponsorship.

For more information regarding the socially irresponsible behavior of UFC President Dana White and some of its fighters please see the attachment detailing numerous incidents and visit www.unfitforhchildren.org.

We ask that you contact us within ten (10) days of receiving this letter to discuss these pressing issues and concerns further. For more information, please contact Maya Holmes at (702) 386-5249 or send an email to mholmes@culinaryunion226.org.

Sincerely,

Bruce Lee Livingston

Bruce Lee Livingston
Executive Director, CEO
Alcohol Justice

Maya Holmes

Maya Holmes
Research Director
Culinary Workers Union, Local 226

Cc: *Federal Trade Commission, Bureau of Consumer Protection, Division of Advertising Practices
The Center on Alcohol Marketing and Youth, Bloomberg Public School of Health, John Hopkins University
National Center on Domestic and Sexual Violence
Shareholders of Anheuser-Busch InBev*

For more information regarding the socially irresponsible behavior of UFC President Dana White and some of its fighters please see the list below detailing numerous incidents and visit www.unfitforchildren.org.

- On March 3rd, Brandon C. Saling, who is a convicted sex offender and wears tattoos linked to Neo-Nazi culture, was allowed to compete in a televised event held by Strikeforce, a professional MMA promotion also owned by Zuffa.^{xiii} Saling is listed in Ohio's sex offender registry for the offense of "gross sexual imposition."^{xiv} Yet, Saling was allowed to compete before thousands of fans at the Nationwide Arena in Columbus, Ohio, in an event that was broadcast on the Showtime network.^{xv}
- In an expletive-filled video rant posted on YouTube.com, UFC president Dana White used an anti-gay slur, saying, "Whoever gave you that quote is a [expletive] and a [expletive] faggot and a [expletive] liar and everything else." He also uttered the "F" word a total of 34 times, the "S" word 4 times, and referred to a female sports journalist as a "fucking moron" and a "fucking dumb bitch."^{xvi}
- Dana White has denigrated people who are mentally disabled by using terms such as "retard" and "retarded" in public. White also has used the terms "douchebag," "bitch" and "jackass" to describe journalists and others associated with the sport of mixed martial arts.^{xvii}
- Recently, UFC athletes have made a number of derogatory remarks about Latinos. In a video, UFC heavyweight Brock Lesnar said of his opponent, Cain Velasquez, a Mexican-American, "When I get done whooping your ass, I'm gonna go drink a Corona and eat a burrito just for your Hispanic heritage, alright." Through Twitter, UFC middleweight Chael Sonnen reportedly told his opponent's Brazilian manager to, "pray to whatever Demon effigy you prance and dance in front of with your piglet tribe of savages that I decide not to crucify you."^{xviii} Sonnen denied that he made this and other comments, and wrote in an e-mail to *Willamette Week*, a newspaper in Portland, Ore., that, "I don't have a Twitter account."^{xix}
- At a public press conference in December, UFC fighter Rashad Evans taunted his opponent by threatening to act like former Pennsylvania State University assistant football coach Jerry Sandusky, who faces more than 50 counts of child sexual-abuse. Evans said, "I'm gonna put those hands on you worse than that dude did them other kids at Penn State."^{xx}
- Last year, UFC fighter Quinton "Rampage" Jackson repeatedly urged fans in Japan, who did not appear to understand English, to say, "I am a faggot," "I suck dick," and "I have big tits," among other offensive comments.^{xxi} Even after LGBT organizations and members of the media last fall called attention to these slurs,^{xxii} the UFC still allowed Jackson to compete in a televised UFC event in Tokyo, Japan.^{xxiii}
- In a video recently posted on YouTube, UFC fighter Alistair Overeem unfastened the bras of multiple women while holding a drink in one hand.^{xxiv} The women in the video wore animal masks to cover their faces. Overeem was recently charged with misdemeanor battery for allegedly shoving a woman in the face at a Las Vegas casino. In March, Overeem was sentenced to 50 hours of community service and to undergo anger management counseling.^{xxv}
- In December 2011, UFC fighter Miguel Torres was briefly released by the UFC after he posted the following comment on his Twitter account: "If a rape van was called a surprise van more women wouldn't mind going for rides in them."^{xxvi} Torres was reinstated by the UFC less than a month later after he apologized for the rape tweet and made donations to several rape crisis centers.^{xxvii}

- In November 2011, UFC light heavyweight fighter Forrest Griffin joked about rape on Twitter. "Rape is the new missionary," Griffin tweeted. After a woman objected to the tweet, Griffin tweeted back, "Keep it to yourself nobody cares," according to the *Huffington Post*.^{xxviii} Griffin apologized for the rape tweet and made a donation to a rape crisis center.^{xxix}
- UFC fighter Chael Sonnen appeared in an online video giving advice to young people on fighting. "If he slaps you, punch him. If he punches you, kick him. If he kicks you, stab him. If he stabs you, shoot him. If he shoots you, you go kill his family."^{xxx}
- In February 2011, UFC fighter Michael Bisping screamed, "faggot motherfucker," at his opponent Jorge Rivera.^{xxxi} UFC president Dana White then posted footage of Bisping making the homophobic slur on his video blog.^{xxxii} This video is still publicly available on UFC's video channel on YouTube.
- Joe Rogan, who does commentary for televised UFC events, last year referred to an MMA blogger as a part of the female anatomy. According to sportswriter Kevin Iole of *Yahoo! Sports*, Rogan then wrote on a blog, "Never did I imagine that so many people would get their panties in a bunch about the use of the word [expletive] to describe a female blogger."^{xxxiii}

ⁱ <http://www.ufc.com/news/Comic-Strip-Countdown-UFC-148-0626>

ⁱⁱ http://espn.go.com/mma/story/_/id/8127809/anderson-silva-chael-sonnen-nearly-trade-blows-promoting-ufc-148

ⁱⁱⁱ http://espn.go.com/mma/story/_/id/8127809/anderson-silva-chael-sonnen-nearly-trade-blows-promoting-ufc-148

^{iv} Video at: <http://www.cagepotato.com/video-of-the-day-chael-sonnen-gives-some-kids-disturbing-advice-on-how-to-compete/>

^v Kevin Cook, "Playboy Interview: Dana White," *Playboy*, September 2008.

^{vi} Jon Show, "UFC feeling scrappy as footprint expands," *SportsBusiness Daily*, 10/29/09.

^{vii} Terry Lefton, "White discusses UFC's global ambitions," *SportsBusiness Daily*, 6/14/10.

^{viii} Video at: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DmfrUjG4wwg>

^{ix} "Updated: UFC champ Jon Jones release statement; DWI sentencing delayed," www.pressconnects.com, 7/3/12.

^x Bill King, "Battle-tested UFC set for next fight," *SportsBusiness Daily*, 5/23/11.

^{xi} Terry Lefton, "White discusses UFC's global ambitions," *SportsBusiness Daily*, 6/14/10.

^{xii} Jon Show, "Tapped out or still ready to scrap," *SportsBusiness Daily*, 11/3/08.

^{xiii} King, David, "Strikeforce Fighter Sports Racist Tattoo: Fan Reaction," March 4, 2012, *Yahoo! Sports*,

<http://sports.yahoo.com/mma/news?slug=yen-11051404&print=1>

^{xiv} <http://www.icrimewatch.net/offenderdetails.php?OfndrID=1544492&AgencyID=55149>

^{xv} <http://www.ufc.com/news/SF-March-Three-Prelims>

^{xvi} Video: <http://www.blinkx.com/watch-video/ufc-president-dana-white-notorious-rant/FYZcYppmYJ5wwYruuKpvpw>

^{xvii} See the website, <http://www.UnfitForChildren.org>

^{xviii} Cole, Michelle, "Republicans don't know why Chael Sonnen dropped out of Oregon House District 37 race," June 16, 2010,

http://www.oregonlive.com/politics/index.ssf/2010/06/republicans_say_they_dont_know.html

^{xix} *Willamette Week* Editorial Staff, "Chael Sonnen: Tough guy loses to tough facts," June 16, 2010, http://www.wweek.com/portland/article-12112-chael_sonnen.html

^{xx} Gross, Josh, "Evans' Sandusky comment hits low note," Dec. 7, 2011, *ESPN.com*, http://espn.go.com/blog/mma/post/_/id/6893/evans-hits-low-note-with-sandusky-comment

^{xxi} <http://www.worldstarhiphop.com/videos/video.php?v=wshh2zhS44X4iE40BITU>

^{xxii} Broverman, Neil, "Pressure on Anheuser-Busch to End Support for Homophobic UFC," Oct. 14, 2011, *Advocate.com*,

http://www.advocate.com/News/Daily_News/2011/10/14/Pressure_on_AnheuserBusch_to_End_Support_for_Homophobic_UFC/

^{xxiii} <http://www.ufc.com/event/ufc-144#/fight>

^{xxiv} YouTube video, <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7SfW7UiWCGg>

^{xxv} Hill, Adam, "UFC's Overeem avoids jail time on battery charge," March 27, 2012, *Las Vegas Review-Journal*,

<http://www.lvrj.com/sports/ufc-s-overeem-avoids-jail-time-on-battery-charge-144411665.html>

^{xxvi} McNeil, Franklin, "UFC fires Miguel Torres for tweet," Dec. 9, 2011, *ESPN.com*, http://espn.go.com/mma/story/_/id/7334939/ufc-releases-miguel-torres-rape-van-twitter-post

^{xxvii} Okamoto, Brett, "UFC reinstates Miguel Torres," Dec. 28, 2011, *ESPN.com*, http://espn.go.com/mma/story/_/id/7398358/miguel-torres-reinstated-ufc-inappropriate-tweet-related-release

^{xxviii} The Huffington Post, "Forrest Griffin Rape Jokes: MMA Fighter Sparks Controversy on Twitter," Nov. 9, 2011, http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2011/11/09/forrest-griffin-rape-jokes-twitter_n_1084471.html

^{xxix} Hendricks, Maggie, "Griffin apologizes for rape tweet, makes donation to rape crisis center," Nov. 11, 2011, *Yahoo! Sports*, <http://sports.yahoo.com/mma/blog/cagewriter/post/griffin-apologizes-for-rape-tweet-makes-donation-to-rape-crisis-center?urn=mma.wp9282>

^{xxx} Video: <http://www.cagepotato.com/video-of-the-day-chael-sonnen-gives-some-kids-disturbing-advice-on-how-to-compete/>

^{xxxi} Video: <http://www.towleroad.com/2011/02/bisping.html>

^{xxxii} YouTube video: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dbvKTpvsh3k>

^{xxxiii} Iole, Kevin, "UFC cannot condone sexual harassment," June 3, 2011, *Yahoo! Sports*, [http://sports.yahoo.com/mma/news?slug=ki-
iole_ufc_sexual_harrassment_060311](http://sports.yahoo.com/mma/news?slug=ki-iole_ufc_sexual_harrassment_060311)