

*CBS Mornings*

08/05/25

7:17:21 a.m. [TEASE]

10 seconds

[ON-SCREEN HEADLINE: Ahead; Sydney Sweeney Ad Fallout]

NATE BURLESON: Alright, ahead, how an ad with Sydney Sweeney shows how hard it is for companies to navigate the intersection between marketing and politics.

(...)

7:30:51 a.m.

3 minutes and 15 seconds

[ON-SCREEN HEADLINE: Sydney Sweeney Ad Fallout]

VLADIMIR DUTHIERS: Alright, a well-known clothing retailer is the latest example of an American company getting caught up in a cultural politics [sic] after trying to boost sales with a very provocative ad. It started after this American Eagle ad starring actress Sydney Sweeney. Some complained it sent an offensive message. Now, the President of the United States has gotten involved and Jo Ling Kent looks at the controversy sparked by just five words.

AMERICAN EAGLE AD NARRATOR: Sydney Sweeney has great jeans.

SYDNEY SWEENEY: You see what I did there.

JO LING KENT: That play on words, genes and jeans kick-started a cultural firestorm with American Eagle and Sydney Sweeney at the center.

SWEENEY: Jeans are passed down from parents to offspring often determining traits like hair color, personality and even eye color. My jeans are blue.

KENT: Critics have accused of playing up eugenics that Sweeney's white skin color, blond hair, and blue eyes were greater than other genes.

TIKTOK USER "DEWWWDROPZZZ": I went and saw it. That's Nazi propaganda. Wow.

TIKTOK USER "MIDWESTERNGOTHIC": Sydney Sweeney America ads are weird, like fascist weird.

KENT: Others have called the negative reaction overblown and support for the ad now extends to the White House —

VICE PRESIDENT JD VANCE [on *Ruthless Podcast*, 08/01/25]: Yeah, my political advice to

the Democrats is continue to tell everybody who thinks Sydney Sweeney is attractive is a Nazi, that — that appears to be their actual strategy.

KENT: — that includes President Trump, calling it “the ‘HOTTEST’ ad out there” and praising Sweeney’s reported political leanings.

PRESIDENT DONALD TRUMP: If Sydney Sweeney is a registered Republican, I think her ad is fantastic.

KENT: American Eagle responded to the backlash Friday writing, “‘Sydney Sweeney Has Great Jeans’ is and always was about the jeans. Her jeans. Her story. We’ll continue to celebrate how everyone wears their AE jeans with confidence, their way. Great jeans look good on everyone.” Yesterday after President Trump’s endorsement, the company’s stock price jumped 23 percent.

GILLIAN FOLLETT: It’s not really about the jeans anymore at this point. It’s about —

KENT: Gulian Follette is an influencer and marketing reporter for Ad age.

FOLLETTE: If they’re hoping to create buzz, they did that. But I don’t know if it’s necessarily what their target demographic wants to see from them.

SWEENEY: Amazing.

KENT: For *CBS Mornings*, I’m Jo Ling Kent in Los Angeles.

DUTHIERS: So Sydney Sweeney —

GAYLE KING: I know American Eagle is doing the hulla — at their office.

DUTHIERS: Of course they are.

KING: I honestly didn’t see the ad that way.

DUTHIERS: Neither did I.

KING: I did too.

DUTHIERS: I thought of it more like that old Brooke Shields/Calvin Klein ad —

KING: Nothing comes between —

DUTHIERS: — between me and my —

KING: — yeah.

DUTHIERS: — my Calvins. It was a provocative ad. And, look, you guys know I worked for 20 years in finance. You saw that stock price —

KING: Yeah.

DUTHIERS: That's the bottom line.

BURLESON: Yes. That's the bottom line.

DUTHIERS: They put out an ad. People responded negatively, positively, they don't care, they're making money.

BURLESON: But when you get politicized, it gets a little muddy.

KING: Yeah, yeah. They politicized it, I think —

BURLESON: Yeah.

KING: — because most people — I'm telling you. When she said I've got genes, because we've said that, 'oh, I've got great genes.'

BURLESON: No doubt.

KING: I never even thought about the other stuff.

DUTHIERS: Neither did I.

BURLESON: Whether I have denim on or not, I feel like I got great genes too.

KING: There you.

DUTHIERS: And you do.

BURLESON: I'm dark-skin, tall, and athletic, got good hair. I got great genes.

DUTHIERS: I have got none of those things, but — [LAUGHTER]

BURLESON: Eh, come on! See, always.

KING: Denim on denim on denim. You go, Sydney Sweeney.

DUTHIERS: That's right. That's right.