London agency denies rip-off of Guru Adrian

While Australia's advertising creative departments constantly cope with accusations of creative inferiority to the US and the UK, it's refreshing to come across a clear example that turns the cliche around.

Australian artist, David Art Wales, who has gained recognition for his Guru Adrian designs is waging war on one of London's largest advertising agencies Lowe Howard-Spink, who he claims has "ripped him off blind."

Lowe Howard-Spink launched a campaign for KP Crunchies, in late July throughout the UK which features a print design remarkably similar to the cartoon character Guru Adrian.

Wales' character made its debut in *Countdown* magazine in 1983, and was more recently featured in English magazine *The Face* in 1987. The cartoon is based around Guru Adrian, a "300-year-old boy who lives in a cave and discovered the secrets of eternal youth at age seven."

The KP Crunchies print campaign features a similar looking character named "Chairman Kevin Pringle," who is described as "a 307-year-old boy who spent the first years of his life trying to find his true self."

Wales said, "The colour comparison is extraordinary, — everything, the colour, the layout and even the gags are the same. I don't understand why they would do something like this — but here you have the English blatantly ripping off a poor bloody artist."

Carol Potter, account director at Lowe Howard-Spink was short of comments on the accusations made by Wales, but after discussing legal jargon, did venture, "it really is a mystery where creative designs come from, isn't it?"

Wales' solicitors have taken up the matter, which if successful, could see the rip-off solving some of his financial concerns.

He even admits to being flattered by the campaign, "In one way it's the best ad I could ever get — to be ripped off by one of Britain's most progressive agencies — perhaps now I'll get some work in Australia."

Separated at birth? Guru Adrian's Fun Page (left) and a recent ad