



Ad Standards Community Panel
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Case Report

1. Case Number :	0011-22
2. Advertiser :	Rockstar Games
3. Product :	Toys and Games
4. Type of Advertisement/Media :	TV - On Demand
5. Date of Determination	2-Feb-2022
6. DETERMINATION :	Dismissed

ISSUES RAISED

AANA Code of Ethics\2.3 Violence

DESCRIPTION OF ADVERTISEMENT

There are three versions of this TV on Demand advertisement featuring a promotion for the game 'Grand Theft Auto'.

THE COMPLAINT

Comments which the complainant/s made regarding this advertisement included the following:

There was gun violence and criminal activity which is the premise of the game. Having an R rated ad playing during sport is inappropriate, especially watching in the morning with children. This is lazy media buying targeting a known overlap between sport and gaming and not seeing the implications of advertising to minors with no option to fast forward or skip.

THE ADVERTISER'S RESPONSE

Comments which the advertiser made in response to the complainant/s regarding this advertisement include the following:

The advertiser has requested that its response not be published.



THE DETERMINATION

The Ad Standards Community Panel (the Panel) considered whether this advertisement breaches Section 2 of the AANA Code of Ethics (the Code).

The Panel noted the complainant's concerns that the advertisement features gun violence and criminal activity and is inappropriate for viewing by children.

The Panel viewed the advertisement and noted the advertiser's response.

Section 2.3 Advertising or Marketing Communications shall not present or portray violence unless it is justifiable in the context of the product or service advertised.

The Panel noted the Practice Note for this section of the Code which states:

"In considering whether the violence or menace depicted in an advertisement is justifiable, the Community Panel may have regard to the audience of the advertisement. Graphic depictions of violence or a strong suggestion of menace have been found to present violence in an unacceptable manner especially when visible to a broad audience which includes children. For example, advertising for violent or horror movies, tv shows or video games should take care not to include images that give the impression that a character has just committed violence against someone (for example, a weapon with dripping blood), was the victim of violence (for example, freshly severed limbs) or is about to commit violence against someone (for example, gun aimed directly at a person or the viewer) where there is a broad audience which includes children."

Does the advertisement contain violence?

The Panel noted that the advertisement depicts multiple scenes which are representative of the story and game play of the video game. The Panel noted this included imagery of guns being fired, cars exploding and a person falling from a building.

The Panel considered that the advertisement did contain violence.

The Panel noted that scenes showing people breaking into a building while wearing face coverings may depict unlawful behaviour, however are not violent and do not fall within the provisions of the Code.

Is the violence portrayed justifiable in the context of the product or service advertised?

The Panel noted that the product being advertised was a video game, and that the scenes depicted in the advertisement were relevant.



The Panel considered that the violence in the advertisement was more suggestive than graphic. For example, while guns were fired they were not pointing at people. The Panel considered that although some viewers may find the footage distasteful, the fleeting images and relevance to the product meant that the overall impact of the violence was mild.

The Panel noted that some members of the community would prefer video games with an R18+ rating not be advertised at times when people under 18 can see them, however noted that such games are legally able to be advertised and the content of the advertisement itself was not explicit or inappropriate for a broad audience.

The Panel acknowledged the advertiser's response that they had targeted the advertisement towards the sport due to the demographic of adult males being 84% of the audience.

Overall, the Panel considered that the level of violence in the advertisement was mild and justifiable in the context of advertising the video game.

Section 2.3 conclusion

In the Panel's view the advertisement did portray violence that was justifiable in the context of the product being advertised and did not breach Section 2.3 of the Code.

Conclusion

Finding that the advertisement did not breach any other section of the Code the Panel dismissed the complaint.