



Ad Standards Community Panel
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Advertising Standards Bureau Limited
ACN 084 452 666

Case Report

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| 1 | Case Number | 0014/18 |
| 2 | Advertiser | Pope |
| 3 | Product | House Goods Services |
| 4 | Type of Advertisement / media | TV - Free to air |
| 5 | Date of Determination | 07/02/2018 |
| 6 | DETERMINATION | Dismissed |

ISSUES RAISED

- 2.1 - Discrimination or Vilification Gender
- 2.3 - Violence Domestic Violence
- 2.6 - Health and Safety Bullying (non violent)

DESCRIPTION OF THE ADVERTISEMENT

There are three separate television advertisements in this series:

In the first Frank has finished vacuuming and goes to retract the cord, which breaks a vase and hits him on the foot. His wife says, 'that was clever Frank' and a voice over says at least Frank is clever in using a Pope product.

In the second Frank is attempting to start his lawn mower, he becomes frustrated and ends up pulling the cord completely off the mower. His wife says, 'that was clever Frank' and a voice over says at least Frank is clever in using a Pope product.

And in the third Frank installs a new mailbox including cementing in into the ground. His wife pulls into the driveway and Frank realises he has installed it backwards. His wife says, 'that was clever Frank' and a voice over says at least Frank is clever in using a Pope product.



THE COMPLAINT

A sample of comments which the complainant/s made regarding this advertisement included the following:

I object to this series of advertisements (while I am focusing on only one as an example, there are several which follow the same plot) because they are totally negative in their portrayal of men, are misandrist, demeaning of men by showing them as fools who cannot successfully do ordinary day to day tasks, are ill coordinated, and a danger to themselves and others.

Highly demeaning and critical of a male character by a female character. I can see this is meant to be a joke. But I note that was indeed the defense used in a number of recent claims of sexual harassment by women against prominent men. Needless to say that defense was seen to be demeaning to women and failed community standards.

Under Section 2.1 of the Code, I object to the way the advertisement depicts men, and male partners/husbands. If this advert was shown with the male making the same comments to a woman, it would never be approved and there would be a public outcry. Verbal sledging of men because they are men must be stopped immediately. Its not ok.

Sexist portrayal of men. Reverse the genders. It would not acceptable if women were demonised as fools, and it is not acceptable by doing it to men. I realise the advertisers will give some bullshit like "it's just a humorous way of promoting the product" What a fucking load of horse shit! If it was "humorous", then how about showing females as bumbling fools you gutless pieces of shit.

THE ADVERTISER'S RESPONSE

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

We were very surprised to see the complaint against the Pope TV ad.

Those responsible for the ad have been in the industry for many years, and have therefore become very sensitive and cautious about any concepts that may cause offence. These ads didn't ring any alarm bells from our agency, client, actors, production team or colleagues who saw them. The reaction from Frank's wife, which seems to be the basis of the complaint, is said with gentle sarcasm. During the shooting, we were very careful to ensure her line wasn't delivered with a belittling or scornful tone, or said with malice or aggression. We feel the woman's response in the ad is 'in the moment' and the sort of thing a partner would say to a partner, if one



witnessed the other make a silly gaffe.

Frank's mistakes too, were the sort that any of us could make. Our intention wasn't to make Frank, or all men for that matter, seem completely stupid or useless.

The ads were certainly not designed to demean men or women, or trivialise their roles in a relationship. We have nothing but the greatest respect for the family unit, in all the many forms that takes.

THE DETERMINATION

The Advertising Standards Board (the "Board") considered whether this advertisement breaches Section 2 of the AANA Code of Ethics (the "Code").

The Board noted the complainants' concerns that the advertisement is demeaning towards men.

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

The Board considered whether the advertisement complied with Section 2.1 of the Code which requires that 'advertisements shall not portray or depict material in a way which discriminates against or vilifies a person or section of the community on account of race, ethnicity, nationality, gender, age, sexual preference, religion, disability, mental illness or political belief.'

The Board noted the Practice Note for this section of the Code provides the following definitions:

"Discrimination – unfair or less favourable treatment

Vilification – humiliates, intimidates, incites hatred, contempt or ridicule"

The Board noted there are three versions of this television advertisement:

Version one – Frank has finished vacuuming and goes to retract the cord, which breaks a vase and hits him on the foot. His wife says, 'that was clever Frank' and a voice over says at least Frank is clever in using a Pope product.

Version two – Frank is attempting to start his lawn mower, he becomes frustrated and ends up pulling the cord completely off the mower. His wife says, 'that was clever Frank' and a voice over says at least Frank is clever in using a Pope product.



Version three – Frank installs a new mailbox including cementing in into the ground. His wife pulls into the driveway and Frank realises he has installed it backwards. His wife says, ‘that was clever Frank’ and a voice over says at least Frank is clever in using a Pope product.

The Board noted the complainants’ concerns that the advertisement is sexist towards men and suggests that men are incompetent at performing basic daily tasks.

The Board considered that the mistakes and accidents that Frank is seen having around the house are common occurrences that can happen to anyone and considered that most people would not think less of Frank because of the mistakes.

The Board considered that Frank’s behaviour was suggestive of one man, and could not be seen to be representative of all men.

The Board noted that the advertisements also point out that Frank is clever in his choice of garden equipment, and that the overall suggestion of the advertisements is not that Frank is stupid or incompetent.

The Board considered the advertisement did not show Frank receiving unfair or less favourable treatment because of his gender, and considered that while some of his behaviour is embarrassing the overall tone of the advertisement was not one which humiliates, intimidates, incites hatred, contempt or ridicule towards Frank or males in general.

The Board considered that this was not a depiction of material in a way which discriminates against or vilifies a person or section of the community on account of gender and determined that the advertisement did not breach Section 2.1 of the Code.

The Board considered Section 2.6 of the Code. Section 2.6 of the Code states: “Advertising or Marketing Communications shall not depict material contrary to Prevailing Community Standards on health and safety”.

The Board noted the complainants’ concerns that Frank was being bullied by his wife and that her tone is sarcastic and her comment derogative.

The Board noted that the issue of bullying falls under Section 2.6 of the Code and notes that the Practice Note states:

“the age of the people depicted in an advertisement, their relationship to each other and the nature of the communication are relevant in determining whether an advertisement constitutes bullying and is contrary to Prevailing Community Standards.”



The Board considered that the relationship between the two characters would appear to be husband and wife.

The Board considered the tone of Frank's wife when she makes the comment "that was clever Frank" and considered that it was not said in an aggressive or demeaning way. The Board considered the comment was delivered with a bemused fashion and was typical of banter which often exists between married couples.

The Board noted at the end of the advertisement the couple are seen happily together and considered that there was no suggestion of abuse or bullying in the relationship.

The Board considered that the advertisement did not depict material contrary to Prevailing Community Standards on health and safety. The Board determined that the advertisement did not breach Section 2.6 of the Code.

Finding that the advertisement did not breach the Code on other grounds, the Board dismissed the complaints.

