



**Ad Standards** Community Panel  
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**AdStandards.com.au**

Ad Standards Limited  
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## Case Report

<b>1. Case Number :</b>	<b>0018-22</b>
<b>2. Advertiser :</b>	<b>Paramount Pictures Australia</b>
<b>3. Product :</b>	<b>Entertainment</b>
<b>4. Type of Advertisement/Media :</b>	<b>TV - Pay</b>
<b>5. Date of Determination</b>	<b>23-Feb-2022</b>
<b>6. DETERMINATION :</b>	<b>Dismissed</b>

### ISSUES RAISED

AANA Code of Ethics\2.3 Violence

### DESCRIPTION OF ADVERTISEMENT

This Pay TV advertisement is for the film Scream.

### THE COMPLAINT

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

*Scary content including Monster stabbing people. Not right when I'm sitting with my young boys watching test cricket. Too scary for kids. Should be on at night or on restricted rated show.*

*The advertising shows a person in a mask stabbing a person in the back at a time where my young children were watching the cricket. It is completely inappropriate content to be shown at a time when children are known to be watching sporting coverage.*

*The movie is not suitable for children or minors, yet the advertising placement is during a program (BBL) intended for families and children. This includes running during the BBL game that started at 1:40pm. It is advertising a horror movie during family/childrens programming.*



*Horror movies should not be advertised during day times. Children should not see this.*

*Its a really violent ad that has no place on day time television.*

#### **THE ADVERTISER'S RESPONSE**

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

*I write regarding recent complaints to Ad Standards regarding TV spot placement on Digital Streaming platforms for the advertising campaign for Paramount Picture's film 'Scream'.*

*As the Group Director responsible for planning and booking all media placement for this campaign, I have confirmed with Finecast (who placed activity on 9Now) and Foxtel Media (who placed activity on Kayo) that they spots were booked with age targeting restrictions applied with intended viewers being those 18+ logged into their Kayo and 9Now accounts.*

#### **THE DETERMINATION**

The Ad Standards Community Panel (Panel) considered whether the versions collectively forming this advertisement breach Section 2 of the AANA Code of Ethics (the Code).

The Panel noted the complainants' concern that the advertisement is for a film with themes and images that are inappropriate for children to see, and it was played in an inappropriate program at an inappropriate time.

The Panel viewed the advertisement and the noted 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 "*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*".



The Panel noted that this advertisement was broadcast on Pay TV which does not require classification and can be broadcast at any time. The Panel further noted that Pay TV is a subscription service and noted that the complainants indicated that they were watching sports programs. The Panel considered that while sports programs do have an audience that would include children, the predominant audience would be adults.

### **Does the advertisement contain violence?**

The Panel noted that the soundtrack of the advertisement is suspenseful and eerie, and includes spooky sounds such as a lock turning, a twig breaking, and a door creaking. The Panel further noted that the advertisement does include people screaming.

The Panel noted that the imagery of the advertisement does contain depictions of blood, a person being dragged, and stabbing motions, though the Panel noted that viewers do not see a person being stabbed. The Panel considered the theme of the advertisement is menacing and considered that the advertisement did contain violence.

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

The Panel noted that the advertisement was promoting a horror/thriller film titled Scream which is rated MA.

The Panel considered that although the advertisement contains distressing images, such as a bloody knife, a person being dragged and jump-scare scenes, the advertisement uses quickly changing scenes which breaks up the sense of suspense. The Panel considered that there is no focus on blood or gore, noting that blood does appear in the advertisement.

The Panel noted that the advertised product is a horror/thriller film that contains violent action sequences and graphic imagery, and noted that the scenes shown are scenes from the film. The Panel noted that the sounds/music in the advertisement is spooky and does suggest a degree of menace.

Overall, the Panel considered that the tone of this advertisement was suspenseful and frightening, and contained a moderate level of violence. The Panel considered that the level of violence was not excessive in the context of an advertisement for a horror movie with a predominately adult audience.

### **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 the Code on other grounds, the Panel dismissed the complaints.