



Ad Standards Community Panel
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Case Report

1. Case Number :	0019-22
2. Advertiser :	Paramount Pictures Australia
3. Product :	Entertainment
4. Type of Advertisement/Media :	TV - On Demand
5. Date of Determination	23-Feb-2022
6. DETERMINATION :	Dismissed

ISSUES RAISED

AANA Code of Ethics\2.3 Violence

DESCRIPTION OF ADVERTISEMENT

This TV On Demand advertisement is for the film Scream.

THE COMPLAINT

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

Do I really have to explain why, as a Mother of a young child, I object to her seeing the ad for "Scream", with graphic images of a murderous stalker just before bedtime?!?! Who on earth thought family viewing is the correct time slot to advertise a horror/slasher film????? My 9yo is having nightmares because we were not quick enough to cover her eyes and hit the mute button during the ad break for tennis? Very very very poor judgement.

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 complainant's 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 TV On Demand which does not require classification and can be broadcast at any time. The Panel further noted that TV On Demand is a subscription service and noted that the complainant advised that they were watching a sports program and a PG rated documentary. The Panel considered that while both 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 complaint.