



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

Case Report

1	Case Number	0079/19
2	Advertiser	Universal Pictures
3	Product	Entertainment
4	Type of Advertisement / media	TV - Free to air
5	Date of Determination	03/04/2019
6	DETERMINATION	Dismissed

ISSUES RAISED

- 2.3 - Violence Causes alarm and distress
- 2.3 - Violence Causes alarm and distress to Children
- 2.3 - Violence Violence

DESCRIPTION OF THE ADVERTISEMENT

Television advertisement which features scenes from the upcoming movie 'Greta'.

THE COMPLAINT

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

It is much too scary for children and shouldn't be shown on television early in the evening. The ad shows or implied acts of violence towards women, or at least drink spiking and the deprivation of liberty. The character Greta looks quite scary with a mask on the lower part of her face. These concepts are confronting for an adult, let alone a child.

THE ADVERTISER'S RESPONSE

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





The below response is in relation to the complaints received regarding the UNIVERSAL PICTURES advertising for Greta, specifically in regards to the TVC advertisements depicting violence which causes alarm and distress to Children.

Universal Pictures International Australasia adhere to the AANA Advertiser Code of Ethics.

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

Greta is an aspirational thriller film which contains numerous scenes which could be scary in nature and suspenseful. It would therefore be reasonable to justify that our advertising materials have been produced within the context of the product being advertised.

Universal Pictures strive to advertise films of this content in a manner that remains appropriate for all consumers.

All advertising content from Universal Pictures is broadcast on FTA TV once rated by the Commercials Advice Board which is industry compliant with the advertising standards code of conduct.

To ensure due diligence, prior to activity going live IMD (on behalf of Universal Pictures) liaises with CAD to obtain approval on the Greta TVC spots.

Universal Pictures produced a number of TV spots for the Greta TV campaign and each spot was classified by CAD - the TV spot in question received a J rating (attached are the key number/material instructions which were provided to the TV networks)

In this instance, we obtained CAD clearance to display the advertisement according to the guidelines provided for a J rating.

The following approval was obtained by Universal Pictures from CAD:

Parental Guidance/Warning “J” Definition: Parental Guidance Recommended/Care in placement May be broadcast at any time of day, except during P and C programs or adjacent to P or C periods. Exercise care when placing in programs principally directed to children

The above CAD guidelines were adhered to and the spot was cleared for broadcast at any time of day except in P or C rated programming.



Universal Pictures and MediaCom exercised care with the planning and selection of the TV schedule and focused on programming that reaches our intended 16+ audience group.

Please also note that all advertising materials for this film have displayed the CTC (Check the Classification) logo for the required duration.

We apologise for any distress caused and would like to reassure all parties involved that we have adhered to all required standards and the industry code of conduct in relation to the advertising materials and placements for this film.

Please also note that all TVC spots aren't on air anymore & this campaign is finished.

Please let us know if you require any further substantiation.

THE DETERMINATION

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

The Panel noted the complainant's concern that the advertisement features frightening scenes that are inappropriate for the timeslot of a family television program in which it aired.

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

The Panel considered whether the advertisement's two versions were in breach of Section 2.3 of the Code. Section 2.3 states: "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 complainant's concern that the advertisement contained scenes of violence and scary scenes that are frightening for children. The Panel noted that the complainant saw the advertisement in evening viewing times.

The Panel acknowledged that it can be challenging to select scenes for advertisements for films with a high degree of violence or menace that comply with the terms of the Code. The Panel noted that advertisers are free to select any scenes from films for use in advertisements, however noted that advertisers must take care to ensure that such scenes are justifiable in the context of the product and that justifiable includes consideration of the audience.

The Panel noted that this television advertisement features scenes from the upcoming movie 'Greta'. The Panel noted the advertisement includes a series of short scenes



including:

- a scene with a young woman being grabbed around the throat from behind
- a scene with an older woman coming up behind a young woman and wrapping a scarf around her face
- a close up scene showing a hand being tied
- a dark scene with something under a sheet moving

The Panel noted that this advertisement was for a film classified MA15+ and noted that the advertisement had received a J rating from CAD meaning that it “may be broadcast at any time of day, except during P and C programs or adjacent to P or C periods. Exercise care when placing in programs principally directed to children.”

The Panel noted the advertiser’s response that the advertisements were played at a time appropriate to the J rating. The Panel noted the complainant had viewed it during ‘Married at First Sight’. The Panel considered that ‘Married at First Sight’ is a program that was rated either PG or M during the time the complainant viewed the advertisement.

The Panel noted that the first half of the advertisement is light, however the advertisement takes a darker tone in the second half. The Panel noted the advertiser response that the film being advertised is an aspirational thriller which contains numerous scenes which could be scary in nature and suspenseful.

The Panel considered the Practice Note for the Code which provides: “a strong suggestion of menace presents violence in an unacceptable manner and breaches this section of the Code.”

The Panel considered whether the advertisement showed violence, and noted that there are two particular scene showing a woman being grabbed that depict violence. The Panel considered that these scenes were fleeting and considered that the level of violence was mild and not inappropriate given the parental guidance recommended classification of the advertisement.

The Panel considered that the advertisement is suspenseful rather than graphic but considered that the music and sound-effects of the advertisement created a level of menace in the second half of the advertisement. The Panel noted that some scenes in conjunction with the audio background may be frightening for children.

The Panel noted that the advertisement is menacing and features several scenes of people in distress, however the Panel considered that the sense of menace was not excessive for the parental guidance classification of the advertisement.

The Panel considered that the advertisement was for a thriller film and therefore suspenseful themes were relevant to the product.



The Panel considered that there is some violence in the advertisement, however considered that this depiction is justifiable in the context of advertising a thriller film in which the main character is endangered. The Panel considered that the themes of menace and dark overtones in the advertisement are mild, and justifiable in the context of a thriller film.

The Panel considered that the advertisement did not breach Section 2.3 of the Code.

Finding that the advertisement did not breach the Code on other grounds, the Panel dismissed the complaint.

