



Ad Standards Community Panel
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AdStandards.com.au

Advertising Standards Bureau Limited
ACN 084 452 666

Case Report

1	Case Number	0080/19
2	Advertiser	Universal Pictures
3	Product	Entertainment
4	Type of Advertisement / media	App
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

DESCRIPTION OF THE ADVERTISEMENT

Advertisement which played in an app and featured scenes from upcoming movie 'Greta'.

THE COMPLAINT

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

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 digital APP advertisement 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.

Universal Pictures and MediaCom exercised care with the planning and selection of the schedule and focused on programming that reaches our intended 18+ audience group.

The target audience that we were using was F 18-35 interested in Thriller/Drama. The parent/mother who lodged the complaint obviously fell within this target audience, and I assume her daughter was using her mother's device to access the My Angela app. For this campaign, we did not have negative targets/blacklists in place. Moving forward I will reiterate to the media agency that it is mandatory to negative target children's app and children's content for any film that is not a children's/family film.

We apologise for any distress caused & please note that all spots aren't online anymore & this campaign is finished.

Please let us know if you require any further substantiation.

Thank you

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 and concepts that are inappropriate for the children's game app 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's child viewed the advertisement while playing a game on her mother's phone.

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 advertised.

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 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 scenes 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 in the context of advertising a thriller film in which the main character is endangered.

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 considered that the advertisement was for a thriller film and therefore suspenseful themes were relevant to the product. 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 and was justifiable in the context of a thriller film.

The Panel noted that this advertisement was for a film classified MA15+. The Panel noted that the advertisement had appeared in the app "My Talking Angela". The Panel noted the advertiser's response that the advertisement was targeted towards women aged 18-35.

The Panel noted it had considered a similar advertisement for a film in case 0362/17 in which:

"The Board noted the complainant's concern that the advertisement was aired on YouTube and they had no choice but to watch it. The Board noted that YouTube has an age-restriction policy which allows certain content to be aired to adults who have signed in using their Google account. The Board noted the advertiser's response that they had taken care to target users aged over 18 and considered that while the complainant does not like to see horror movie trailers, the advertiser is legally allowed to promote this product and as the complainant has identified that they are an adult, in the Board's view the advertisement has not been aired inappropriately."

The Panel considered that the game app in this case was targeted towards children, however noted that it had a G rating. The Panel considered that the parent whose phone was being used by the child was likely in the 18-35 age bracket targeted by the advertiser. The Panel noted the advertiser's response that in future they will not target children's apps in an effort to avoid a similar circumstance in the future.

The Panel considered that the advertisement did depict mild violence and a sense of menace, however considered that this was justifiable in the context of a thriller film in which the main character is endangered. The Panel determined 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.

