



Case Report

1	Case Number	0158/12
2	Advertiser	BMW Group Australia Ltd
3	Product	Vehicles
4	Type of Advertisement / media	Pay TV
5	Date of Determination	09/05/2012
6	DETERMINATION	Dismissed

ISSUES RAISED

- 2.5 - Language inappropriate language
- 2.1 - Discrimination or Vilification Religion

DESCRIPTION OF THE ADVERTISEMENT

The text, "Saturday In Istanbul" appear on screen next to a mini balancing on the edge of a draw bridge. The driver and passenger quickly begin to search through the vehicle to throw out items and balance back the vehicle. After throwing out a number of items, an older gentleman hands back a wallet, potentially putting the occupants in mortal danger! Throughout the advertisement the following text appears on screen: "OMG. OMFG. WTF. LMFAO".

THE COMPLAINT

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

The ad showed sub titles with acronyms only - the first one being WTF. I have had clarification as to what WTF commonly refers to. The offensive sub titles continued including the letter F which I assume means a particular word which I will not put in print. I have tried unsuccessfully at present to contact the advertiser to have carination on the acronyms shown on their commercial. I am very very offended that this type of advertising is even allowed. Is this seen to be common language used by everyone these days? Our society standards are slipping so far to even let this be aired on TV let alone an 8pm time slot. I was watching TV with my husband & two teenage children. We have raised our children that swearing is unacceptable and we do not use that type of language in our house & do not want to see it in advertising.

THE ADVERTISER'S RESPONSE

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

The TVC in question, "Saturday in Istanbul" comes from a suite of TVCs made for the launch campaign of the new MINI Coupe and Roadster. The theme of the launch campaign is "Another Day, Another Adventure", which is brought to life through placing people around the globe in everyday situations which become anything but.

The TVC's each feature foreign language throughout, providing the requirement of subtitles for the viewer to truly understand the situation and add to the light hearted nature of the campaign.

As there is no voice in the particular TVC in question, acronyms have been used to further convey the contextually relevant distress and surprise of the situation the characters find themselves in.

The complaint specifically cites these acronyms as the reason for concern, however we do not share this view for a number of reasons; these acronyms are now extremely well known to the wider public, being generated from a digital language of shortening phrases down to acronyms for short message services. In such common use are these acronyms that they have taken on their own meaning and own identity and have well and truly become common parlance, typical of the MINI target audience and wider public being used in everyday communications across multiple channels.

So commonplace have they become that an international band now even uses the acronym "LMFAO" as its name and can be seen promoted across all forms of publicly consumed media including FTA and STV.

As such, due to the extremely common usage of these acronyms within the wider community making them common vernacular, the contextually relevant environment and circumstances to infer distress and surprise, coupled with TVC only airing with shows holding a PG rating as determined by CAD in accordance with the classification criteria of the Commercial Television Code of Practice, we do not believe Section 2.5 of the AANA Code of Ethics relating to strong or obscene language has been contravened.

THE DETERMINATION

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

The Board noted the complainant's concern that the advertisement uses inappropriate language in written form.

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

The Board considered whether the advertisement was in breach of Section 2.5 of the Code. Section 2.5 of the Code states: “Advertising or Marketing Communications shall only use language which is appropriate in the circumstances and strong or obscene language shall be avoided.”

The Board noted that the advertisement features two men in a vehicle that is teetering on the edge of a docking pier. As they remove items from the car to try and restore balance, subtitles appear the include OMG, OMFG, WTF and LMFAO.

The Board considered that the advertisement is portrayed in a light hearted and humorous way, and the acronyms are used in a manner that is consistent with modern Australian vernacular and is displayed in subtitle rather than spoken word. The Board noted that the acronyms are used to infer distress and surprise, and that each acronym is appropriate to the situation that the men find themselves in.

The Board noted that the advertisement could be seen by children but considered that, despite being able to be viewed by children, most members of the community would consider that the language inferred in the advertisement was not inappropriate and was not strong or obscene.

The Board determined that the advertisement did not breach Section 2.5 of the Code.

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