



Case Report

1	Case Number	0173/17
2	Advertiser	ABC Tissue Products Pty Ltd
3	Product	House Goods Services
4	Type of Advertisement / media	TV - Free to air
5	Date of Determination	26/04/2017
6	DETERMINATION	Dismissed

ISSUES RAISED

2.3 - Violence Violence

DESCRIPTION OF THE ADVERTISEMENT

This television advertisement features a house owner who has just ‘employed’ Tuffy as the new help around the house.

She is seen putting “Tuffy” through his paces to demonstrate how absorbent and strong “he” is.

That is, a man holding new Tuffy paper towels follows her around cleaning up her mess. We see them first in the kitchen then the dining room and then finally outside by a pool - in other words all “around the house”. She pushes him into the pool when describing that he is stronger when wet. He is then seen dripping wet, holding the product and smiling.

THE COMPLAINT

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

Domestic violence is a serious issue in our community. This ad shows a woman very forcefully and aggressively pushing a person, who may be her partner into a swimming pool. This behaviour clearly sits within the definition of family violence and is inappropriate in contemporary society.

THE ADVERTISER’S RESPONSE

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

2.1 Advertising or Marketing Communications shall not portray people or depict material in a way which discriminates against or vilifies a person or section of the community on account of race, ethnicity, nationality, gender, age, sexual preference, religion, disability, mental illness or political belief.

This TVC does not seek to “portray people or depict material in a way which discriminates against or vilifies a person...on account.... of gender, age” or indeed any other grounds.

The advertisement shows both a female and a male in important roles in the context of lighthearted advertising for a new paper towel.

The female home owner is playful and proudly demonstrating her new help around the house. She wants us all to try Tuffy.

Tuffy, the person is clearly intended to be a fun embodiment of Tuffy, the paper towel - they even wear/packaged in the same colours.

Our male hero is seen to be a happy and willing “help around the house” right through his big smile at the end shot.

Far from discriminating or vilifying anyone, the TVC seeks to engage viewers with its humour whilst communicating the unique qualities of a new paper towel.

Issue raised 2.3

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.

This TVC does not “present or portray violence” and certainly does not “sit within the definition of family violence” as the complaint suggests.

Far from “very forcefully and aggressively pushing a person, who may be her partner into a swimming pool” the TVC shows the home owner playfully nudging Tuffy into the pool as a demonstration of the products “stronger when wet” claim. We see Tuffy smiling to the camera at the end of the TVC as confirmation that he is okay and not harmed in any way.

In this sense the action is entirely justifiable in the context of the product or service advertised.

The Tuffy character is clearly not her partner as the complaint suggests - he is introduced as the “new help around the house” as a living metaphor for the Tuffy product.

The TVC is light hearted and humorous throughout and in no way does the advertiser seek to condone or promote domestic violence.

THE DETERMINATION

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

The Board noted the complainant's concerns that the advertisement depicts a woman acting aggressively towards a man which is an act of violence and is not appropriate.

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

The Board considered whether the advertisement was 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 Board noted that this television advertisement depicts a woman introducing a man named Tuffy who is her new help around the home.

The Board noted the complainant's concerns that the woman is shown to push Tuffy in to a swimming pool which is an act of domestic violence.

The Board noted that when the woman pushes Tuffy in the pool she is talking about the absorbent nature of the paper towels he is holding and considered that the overall impression of the scene is a humorous display of the product's capability rather than a depiction of violence. The Board that we see Tuffy in a later scene, dripping wet, and considered that he does not appear to be harmed or upset about being pushed in the pool.

The Board noted that domestic violence is of serious community concern but considered that consistent with previous determinations in cases 0017/11, 0041/14 and 0386/15, the advertisement depicts a light-hearted scene played out between a man and a woman which most people would interpret as horseplay rather than an aggressive act of violence.

The Board 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 Board dismissed the complaint.