



Ad Standards Community Panel  
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Advertising Standards Bureau Limited  
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# Case Report

1	Case Number	0182/18
2	Advertiser	Universal Pictures
3	Product	Entertainment
4	Type of Advertisement / media	TV - Free to air
5	Date of Determination	24/04/2018
6	DETERMINATION	Dismissed

## ISSUES RAISED

2.4 - Sex/sexuality/nudity S/S/N - general

## DESCRIPTION OF THE ADVERTISEMENT

The TV advertisement features scenes from the upcoming movie blockers. The scenes include parents talking about their children going to Prom and discovering that they have made a 'sex pact'.

## THE COMPLAINT

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

*This ad has sexual content and is shown before 8pm and during the breaks of family programs such as MKR and Bondi Rescue.*

*It shows sexual gestures and inuendos and states several times the word sex or virginity.*

*This ad has bothered my nine year old twice now and I am rushing to change the channel I do not believe children under 15 should be viewing sexualized content on tv during prime time*

*It was talking about an in school teenager planning to have 'sex' for the first time. It said the word sex at least twice and showed the teenage girl saying she was 'going to*



*have sex for the first time'. Inappropriate for the time of the evening.*

## **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 BLOCKERS, specifically in regards to the TVC advertisements depicting sex/nudity/violence which has caused offence to some viewers.*

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

*Section 2.4 of the Code states "Advertising or Marketing Communications shall not present or portray sex/nudity unless it is justifiable in the context of the product or service advertised."*

*Blockers is a comedy film which contains sexual references. 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 BLOCKERS TVC spots.*

*Universal Pictures produced a number of TV spots for the BLOCKERS TV campaign and each spot was classified by CAD - the TV spots in question received a J rating (attached).*

*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 skews 18+.*

*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.*

## **THE DETERMINATION**

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

The Panel noted the complainants’ concerns that the advertisement was too sexualised.

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

The Panel considered whether the advertisement was in breach of Section 2.4 of the Code. Section 2.4 of the Code states: “Advertising or Marketing Communications shall treat sex, sexuality and nudity with sensitivity to the relevant audience”.

The Panel noted that there are two versions of this television advertisement which featured similar scenes from the movie Blockers. The Panel noted that all versions of the advertisement received a J rating by CAD (parental guidance recommended and not in children’s programs) and was aired at a time appropriate to the rating ([http://www.freetv.com.au/media/CAD/Placement\\_Codes.pdf](http://www.freetv.com.au/media/CAD/Placement_Codes.pdf)).

This television advertisement includes a variety of scenes for the upcoming movie Blockers including a man mistaking his daughters electric toothbrush base for a vibrator, a group of teenage girls messaging about a sex pact, a teenage girl talking about having sex that night with a boy and a man throwing a teenage boy against a wall.

The Panel noted the complainants’ concerns that the advertisement used the word sex or virginity several times, and such sexualised content should not be shown during prime time TV when children are watching.



The Panel considered that while some members of the community would not be comfortable with the depiction of a man placing his daughter's underwear in his mouth however noted that he did so unknowingly and appeared disgusted when he was informed that they were his daughter's.

The Panel noted that although there were scenes in the advertisement that referenced sex and discussions about sex, there was no suggestion of strong sexual activity or nudity in the advertisement. The Panel noted that the teenagers in the advertisement were attending Prom which is the equivalent of a Year 12 Formal in Australia, and would therefore be over the age of consent for sexual interactions.

The Panel considered that it was reasonable for an advertiser to include movie scenes in the advertisement for the movie, and that any sexual references in these scenes were relevant to the product being advertised.

The Panel considered that the advertisement was not inappropriately sexualised and that the advertisement did treat the issue of sex, sexuality and nudity with sensitivity to the relevant audience and did not breach Section 2.4 of the Code.

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

