



**ADVERTISING  
STANDARDS  
BUREAU**

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# Case Report

<b>1</b>	<b>Case Number</b>	<b>0188/14</b>
<b>2</b>	<b>Advertiser</b>	<b>Bethesda</b>
<b>3</b>	<b>Product</b>	<b>Entertainment</b>
<b>4</b>	<b>Type of Advertisement / media</b>	<b>Outdoor</b>
<b>5</b>	<b>Date of Determination</b>	<b>11/06/2014</b>
<b>6</b>	<b>DETERMINATION</b>	<b>Dismissed</b>

## ISSUES RAISED

- 2.3 - Violence Causes alarm and distress
- 2.3 - Violence Violence

## DESCRIPTION OF THE ADVERTISEMENT

A figure wearing black clothing and helmet is flanked on each side by two silhouetted figures wearing the same helmet. The background is red. The central figure is holding a large gun and the text reads, "20.05.14 This is how games should be made. Wolfenstein. The New Order".

## THE COMPLAINT

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

*This advert is spooky / chilling even for an adult to look at. I do not think it is suitable for outdoor advertising. Walking or taking a bus on e.g. Oxford St I sometimes pass this advert on every single Ad-Shell. The games consoles are mentioned only in small letters at the bottom of the poster so it is not even immediately apparent what the advert is actually for, making it even more unsettling.*

*School age children will see this waiting for bus , walking by tram and in car. It depicts violent act / war / Nazi type - it looks frightening and is offensive to others, including Jewish culture also. Although the actual game is about Nazi resistance the actual ad does not depict this.*

## **THE ADVERTISER'S RESPONSE**

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

*In response to the complaints received under Complaint Reference Number 0188/14, please be advised that:*

- *The advertisement in question promoted a fantasy video game Wolfenstein: The New Order, which was released on 20th May 2014. The stationary outdoor ad campaign which is the focus of the complaints was placed through JC Decaux and will finish on 2nd June 2014. JC Decaux placed all advertisements on 'alcohol' networks which avoid schools and churches. This creative treatment will not run again in Australia on outdoor.*
- *The advertisement was approved by JC Decaux who are responsible for approving all artwork before it goes up on buses and OOH placements and their procedures are based on the Australian Association of National Advertisers (AANA) guidelines.*
- *The artwork depicts a fantasy game not based on reality and was in no way intended to offend anyone. The correct approval channels were followed and we apologise if the advertisement was found to be offensive in any way.*
- *We will take into account the concerns raised in the complaints in future marketing campaigns and be extra vigilant to any potential offense that our artwork may cause to viewers.*

*We appreciate your consideration of our response to the complaints and will be happy to answer any further questions you may have.*

## **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 complainants' concerns that the advertisement features images that are frightening and a depiction that is violent and war like.

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 the advertisement is an outdoor advertisement for a video game Wolfenstein.

The image includes a figure wearing black clothing and helmet flanked on each side by two silhouetted figures wearing the same helmet. The background is red. The central figure is holding a large gun and the text reads, "20.05.14 This is how games should be made.

Wolfenstein. The New Order".

The Board noted that it had previously dismissed an outdoor advertisement for Sussex Media (ref: 0483/12) that featured a dominant central character with head covering and illuminated eyes. In this matter the Board considered that "the image is presented in the context of a computer game and that the text further enforces that: "Game out 20th September!" In the

Board's view most members of the community would not consider the content of this advertisement to be powerfully violent imagery. The Board also considered that the advertisement would be seen by young children and that it could be considered by them to be threatening or scary, but noted that young children would be unlikely to see the images without parental supervision and that the violence is relatively mild."

Similar to the matter above, the Board noted in this case that the characters have been derived from the game itself and that although they are carrying weapons, the weapons are not being pointed at anyone or anything.

The Board noted that young children may consider the imagery frightening but that it would be unlikely that they would view the advertisement without the presence of an adult. The Board noted that the game involves Nazi resistance themes and considered that the theme would be disturbing to some members of the community. The Board considered that the advertisement depicts characters who are likely to be recognisable as Nazi's because of the helmet and that this would be upsetting to some members of the community. However, the Board considered that the image is relevant to the product and does not make any clear suggestion of violence towards sections of the community and that an image suggestive of a Nazi is not of itself a breach of the Code. The Board noted that the images in the advertisement are relevant to the product being advertised being a M rated game about Nazi resistance.

The Board noted that the depiction of characters from the game is not a depiction that is portrays violence that is unjustifiable in the context of the product being sold and that it did not breach section 2.3 of the Code.

Based on the above 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 complaints.