



**Ad Standards** Community Panel  
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**AdStandards.com.au**

Advertising Standards Bureau Limited  
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# Case Report

1	<b>Case Number</b>	<b>0198/18</b>
2	<b>Advertiser</b>	<b>Paramount Pictures Australia</b>
3	<b>Product</b>	<b>Entertainment</b>
4	<b>Type of Advertisement / media</b>	<b>TV - Free to air</b>
5	<b>Date of Determination</b>	<b>24/04/2018</b>
6	<b>DETERMINATION</b>	<b>Dismissed</b>

## ISSUES RAISED

2.3 - Violence Causes alarm and distress to Children

## DESCRIPTION OF THE ADVERTISEMENT

This television advertisement is for the film ‘A Quiet Place’. The advertisement features fleeting scenes including: a young boy knocking over an oil lamp and setting fire to a rug which is put out by a man; a man putting his finger to his lips; a young boy running through a cornfield at night; a man jogging across a field; a woman in a bathtub when a hand comes up behind her; the woman in the bathtub screaming. Scenes are interspersed with text on screen, reading “if they hear you; they hunt you; “a terrifying thriller”; “an absolute stunner”; Rotten Tomatoes logo; A Quiet Place.

## THE COMPLAINT

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

*Firstly the timing of the ad was very poor because children are still awake at 8pm. Young children are usually up until 8.30pm or so. This ad showed extreme fear by men and women and a bathroom scene where a woman is in the bathroom and a monster/dead persons hand appears behind her. It really only takes something small like this for a child to witness and take on the fear of the person in the ad. This ad*



*needs to be screened later in the evening. My seven year old saw it and is now terrified of going into our bathroom.*

*Preview/Ad for the movie 'A Quiet Place'. M rated movie, very scary preview being shown when kids are watching TV during The Project.*

*Inappropriate advertising time slot for a horror movie during the Commonwealth games whilst children are watching.*

*May scare young tv viewers especially with today's climate of unseen threats as it shows people almost been burnt badly as well as people in distress.*

*This tv ad has scared my 10 year old autistic son as well as my 3, 7 and 10 year old nieces while watching the commonwealth games at 10:28 am this morning Saturday 7 April 18.*

*I am extremely disappointed that it was advertised during the school holidays at lunch time during Commonwealth Games coverage. My children were distressed and were scared going to bed that night after seeing it. In particular, it was the part in the movie preview where the lady is sitting (naked) in the bath and a scary figure comes into the bathroom. So scary for a child!!! Those type of advertisements should be strictly for late night slots only. Once children see these type of things, it cannot be unseen and the effects can be long lasting. I expect that these things should be considered when advertisements are selected.*

*I'm sick of this add (and other scary movie trailers) coming on at times my kids are still awake and watching tv. This one comes on constantly and frightens them. I know it's only rated PG13 but for young kids it's frightening especially when it comes on before they are going to bed.*

## **THE ADVERTISER'S RESPONSE**

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

*I am writing in regards to some recent complaints to the Advertising Standards Bureau regarding TV spot placement for the advertising campaign for the Paramount Pictures film "A Quiet Place".*

*As the person responsible for planning and booking all media related to this campaign, I can confirm that all TV spots were booked and placed to target a People 18-39 audience demographic. Furthermore, I can confirm TV networks in all markets ran all TV spots to comply with the approved Free TV Australia CAD classification.*



*The bulk of the paid TV advertising campaign has now aired with only a few spots remaining in the coming week.*

*Please feel free to reach out to me if you have any additional queries related to this matter.*

## **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 complainants’ concerns that the advertisement features scenes that are frightening to children.

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

The Panel noted that there were two versions of this television advertisement which featured similar scenes from the movie A Quiet Place. The Panel noted that the advertisement received a J rating by FreeTV. The FreeTV Code of Practice states that a J commercial is a subsection of the Parental Guidance classification, and may contain careful presentations of adult themes or concepts which are mild in impact and remain suitable for children to watch with supervision. The Code also states that J commercials may be aired at any time of day, exception during preschool/children’s programs, and that care should be taken when placing in programs principally directed to children ([http://www.freetv.com.au/media/CAD/Placement\\_Codes.pdf](http://www.freetv.com.au/media/CAD/Placement_Codes.pdf)).

The Panel considered whether the advertisement breached 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 complainants’ concerns that the advertisement contained scenes of violence which are distressing to children.

The Panel noted that this television advertisement features a scene of a hand coming up behind a woman in a bathtub and her subsequent screaming. The Panel noted that several complainants specifically referenced this scene as frightening their children.

The Panel considered whether the advertisement showed violence or horror themes, and noted that although there is no specific violence in the advertisement there is a sense of menace and horror themes. The Panel considered that the advertisement was for a supernatural horror film and therefore horror themes were relevant to the



product. The Panel considered that the level of the horror themes was mild and not inappropriate given the parental guidance recommended classification of the advertisement.

The Panel noted the advertiser's response that the advertisement placements were targeted towards a people 18-29 audience demographic. The Panel considered that the advertiser should ask for the advertisement to be placed in a later timeslot if the target is 18-29.

The Panel considered that there is a strong sense of danger in the advertisement, and noted that a scene with a hand reaching for a woman in a bathtub could be frightening for children.

The Panel noted the Practice Note to Section 2.3 of the Code which states that "The Board has also found that a strong suggestion of menace presents violence in an unacceptable manner and breaches this section of the Code."

The Panel noted that the advertisement is fairly menacing and features several scenes of people in distress, however the Panel considered that the sense of menace was not too excessive for the parental guidance classification of the advertisement.

The Panel also noted that there is no specific violence in the advertisement that breaches the Code of Ethics and the horror themes in the advertisement are mild, which is consistent with the parental guidance recommended classification of the advertisement.

The Panel considered 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 complaints.

