



Ad Standards Community Panel
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AdStandards.com.au

Advertising Standards Bureau Limited
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Case Report

1	Case Number	0209/19
2	Advertiser	Roadshow Films
3	Product	Entertainment
4	Type of Advertisement / media	TV - Free to air
5	Date of Determination	10/07/2019
6	DETERMINATION	Dismissed

ISSUES RAISED

2.3 - Violence Causes alarm and distress

DESCRIPTION OF THE ADVERTISEMENT

This television advertisement has four versions and is promoting the movie 'Child's Play'.

THE COMPLAINT

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

They are far too graphic & really frightening. Extremely frightening & are not appropriate for free to air tv.

THE ADVERTISER'S RESPONSE

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

The complaint relates to television advertising for the theatrical release of CHILD'S



PLAY. The film release a classification rating of MA15+ for theatrical release.

The television spots contains no discriminatory material, strong or obscene language, nudity, no material contrary to health and safety standards – they do depict some violence and contain scary/ supernatural themes – all spots received an “A” CAD classification as a result of this.

THE DETERMINATION

The Ad Standards Community Panel (Panel) considered whether the series of versions collectively forming this advertisement breaches Section 2 of the AANA Code of Ethics (the Code).

The Panel noted the complainant’s concerns that the advertisement is far too graphic and frightening.

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

The Panel 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 Panel noted that there are four versions of this television advertisement promoting the movie “Childs Play”. He Panel noted that it is not possible to identify which version in the series was the subject of the complaint and as such proceeded to consider the content of all versions in adjudicating the complaint.

Version One is 15 seconds long and features:

- advertising on a phone and TV screen for the Buddi doll
- a woman giving a large wrapped gift to her son, he unwraps it to reveal a doll
- a woman looking at a doll, and then the woman’s face seen from the doll’s perspective
- a man screaming
- people running from a building screaming
- a woman being dragged along the floor - a car crashing into another car
- a young boy saying ‘Something’s wrong with Chucky.’
- a doll’s hand raising a knife into the air - red eyes glowing in the dark as the doll holding a knife struggles with someone

Version Two is 15 seconds long and features: - a boy lying in bed looking scared - a doll watching him from the shadows

- The boy saying “Mum, I need to tell you something. And I need you to believe me. I



think Chucky did something”

- A man falling from a roof wrapped in Christmas lights
- A doll’s hand picking up a knife
- The doll dragging the knife across the floor - people running from a building - a person being dragged across the floor - a woman saying “Chucky is a toy” - a spinning blade
- a woman crawling across the floor on her stomach - red eyes glowing in the dark as the doll holding a knife struggles with someone - the boy holding a knife and a saw - the boy saying “he’s trying to kill us”
- a car spinning out of control
- the doll with red eyes screaming - a knife being lifted in the air by the doll

Version Three is 15 seconds long and features: - a woman looking at a doll, and then the woman’s face seen from the doll’s perspective

- a man screaming ‘help’
- a man crawling tied up in Christmas lights - a knife being dragged across the floor by a doll
- a young boy saying ‘Something’s wrong with Chucky”
- a woman covering her face in fear
- a group of children holding weapons
- a woman saying “Chucky is a toy”
- a car stopping in front of the doll, reversing quickly while a passenger screams, and then another car crashing into it
- the boy screaming, “mum, no” - a scared woman, gagged who appears to be tied to a platform moving behind her.

Version Four is 30 seconds long and features:

- a boy watching an ad on his phone for a Buddi doll.
- a doll’s hand picking up a knife
- a woman looking at a doll, and then the woman’s face seen from the doll’s perspective
- a man screaming ‘help’
- a man crawling tied up in Christmas lights
- a woman covering her face in fear
- a young boy saying ‘Something’s wrong with Chucky. He could be anywhere”
- a knife being dragged across the floor by a doll
- a group of children holding weapons
- a woman saying “Chucky is a toy”
- a car stopping in front of the doll, reversing quickly while a passenger screams, and then another car crashing into it
- people running from a building screaming
- a woman being dragged along the floor
- two men smoking in the foreground as a body falls onto a car in the background - a woman gagged with a rope tied around her neck like a noose



- the boy screaming, “mum, no”
- a scared woman, gagged who appears to be tied to a platform moving behind her.

The Panel noted the complainant’s concerns that the advertisement is far too graphic and frightening for free to air television.

The Panel noted that all four versions of the advertisement had been given an ‘A’ rating by ClearAds meaning that the advertisement “May be broadcast between 8.30pm and 5.00am on any day. In addition to the time restrictions, a Commercial classified “A” must NOT be shown: Before 9.30 pm during Sports Programs and Films classified G or PG which commence before 8.30 pm and continue after 8.30 pm (unless it is a Film which is neither promoted to Children nor likely to attract a substantial Child audience).”

(http://www.freetv.com.au/media/CAD/Placement_Codes.pdf)

The Panel considered whether the level of violence in the advertisement is justifiable in the context of advertising a horror movie at these times.

The Panel considered the first version of the advertisement.

The Panel noted that the scenes were fleeting and that there was no blood or gore in this version of the advertisement. The Panel considered that most scenes in this version of the advertisement would be considered suspenseful, rather than violent. The Panel considered the music, sound effects and dialogue added to the suspenseful tone of Version One.

The Panel noted the scene in this version of the advertisement where the doll’s hand can be seen lifting a knife and considered that this action was threatening and suggestive of future violence, however there was no blood or intended victim shown in this scene. The Panel considered this scene was threatening rather than violent.

The Panel noted the scene in this version of the advertisement where a person is dragged quickly backwards across the floor. The Panel considered that this scene is fleeting and that while it may be frightening the person is not shown being hurt. The Panel considered that this scene could be considered violent.

The Panel noted the scene in this version of the advertisement which depicts a car accident. The Panel considered that this image was fleeting and that no-one was seen to be hurt. The Panel considered that this scene added to the suspenseful and action-packed tone of this version of the advertisement.

The Panel noted the final scene in this version of the advertisement where the doll with glowing red eyes is seen struggling with someone in the dark. The Panel considered that this scene would constitute violence. The Panel noted that the final



scene was fleeting and dark, and it was impossible to see who the doll was struggling with, or if anyone was being hurt.

Overall, in the Panel's considered that the tone of this version of the advertisement was menacing and frightening, and that the advertisement did contain violence. The Panel considered that this violence was fleeting and not graphic in nature and the level of menace was not excessive in the context of an advertisement for a horror movie. In the Panel's view the violence portrayed in Version One of the advertisement was justifiable in the context of the product advertised and did not breach Section 2.3 of the Code.

The Panel considered the second version of the advertisement.

The Panel noted that the scenes were fleeting and that there was no blood or gore in this version of the advertisement. The Panel considered that most scenes in this version of the advertisement would be considered suspenseful, rather than violent. The Panel considered the music, sound effects and dialogue added to the suspenseful tone of the advertisement.

The Panel noted the scenes in this version of the advertisement where the doll's hand can be seen lifting a knife and dragging the knife across the floor and considered that this action was threatening and suggestive of future violence, however there was no blood or intended victim shown in these scenes. The Panel considered this scene was threatening rather than violent.

The Panel noted the scene in this version of the advertisement where a person is dragged quickly backwards across the floor. The Panel considered that this scene is fleeting and that while it may be frightening the person is not shown being hurt. The Panel considered that this scene could be considered violent.

The Panel noted the scene in this version of the advertisement where the doll with glowing red eyes is seen struggling with someone in the dark. The Panel considered that this scene would constitute violence. The Panel noted that the final scene was fleeting and dark, and it was impossible to see who the doll was struggling with, or if anyone was being hurt.

The Panel noted the scene in this version of the advertisement which depicts a car spinning out of control. The Panel considered that this image was fleeting and that no one was seen to be hurt. The Panel considered that this scene added to the suspenseful and action-packed tone of this version of the advertisement.

The Panel noted the scene in this version of the advertisement where the young boy is seen to be holding a large knife and a saw and considered that he was posed in a manner suggesting he was ready to defend himself, rather than about to attack



somebody and that this did not constitute violence.

The Panel noted the dialogue in this version of the advertisement where the boy says 'he's trying to kill us', the Panel considered that this dialogue did not appear to belong to any particular scene but did suggest that the doll was attempting to harm the boy, and that this was suggestive of violence.

Overall, in the Panel's considered that the tone of this version of the advertisement was menacing and frightening, and that the advertisement did contain violence. The Panel considered that this violence was fleeting and not graphic in nature and the level of menace was not excessive in the context of an advertisement for a horror movie. In the Panel's view the violence portrayed in Version Two of the advertisement was justifiable in the context of the product advertised and did not breach Section 2.3 of the Code.

The Panel considered the third version of the advertisement.

The Panel noted that the scenes were fleeting and that there was no blood or gore in this version of the advertisement. The Panel considered that most scenes in this version of the advertisement would be considered suspenseful, rather than violent. The Panel considered the music, sound effects and dialogue added to the suspenseful tone of this version of the advertisement.

The Panel noted the scene in this version of the advertisement where the doll's hand can be seen dragging the knife across the floor and considered that this action was threatening and suggestive of future violence, however there was no blood or intended victim shown in this scene. The Panel considered this scene was threatening rather than violent.

The Panel noted the scene in this version of the advertisement with a group of children holding weapons saw and considered that they were posed in a manner suggesting they were ready to defend themselves, rather than about to attack somebody and that this did not constitute violence.

The Panel noted the scene in this version of the advertisement which depicts a car accident. The Panel considered that this image was fleeting and that no-one was seen to be hurt. The Panel considered that this scene added to the suspenseful and action-packed tone of the advertisement.

The Panel noted the scene in this version of the advertisement where a gagged woman appeared to be tied to a platform moving behind her. The Panel considered that the woman appeared frightened and that the platform raising behind her was threatening. The Panel considered that most members of the community would consider an image of a bound and gagged woman who appeared as though she was



about to come to harm was a depiction which would constitute violence.

Overall, in the Panel's considered that the tone of this version of the advertisement was menacing and frightening, and that this version of the advertisement did contain violence. The Panel considered that this violence was fleeting and not graphic in nature and whilst suspense was heightened, no actual harm or injury was shown and the level of menace was not excessive in the context of an advertisement for a horror movie. In the Panel's view the violence portrayed in Version Three of the advertisement was justifiable in the context of the product advertised and did not breach Section 2.3 of the Code.

The Panel considered the fourth version of the advertisement.

The Panel noted the scenes in this version of the advertisement where the doll's hand can be seen lifting a knife and dragging the knife across the floor and considered that this action was threatening and suggestive of future violence, however there was no blood or intended victim shown in these scenes. The Panel considered this scene was threatening rather than violent.

The Panel noted the scene in this version of the advertisement with a group of children holding weapons saw and considered that they were posed in a manner suggesting they were ready to defend themselves, rather than about to attack somebody and that this did not constitute violence.

The Panel noted the scene in this version of the advertisement which depicts a car accident. The Panel considered that this image was fleeting and that no-one was seen to be hurt. The Panel considered that this scene added to the suspenseful and action-packed tone of the advertisement.

The Panel noted the scene in this version of the advertisement where a person is dragged quickly backwards across the floor. The Panel considered that this scene is fleeting and that while it may be frightening the person is not shown being hurt. The Panel considered that this scene could be considered violent.

The Panel noted the scene where a body is seen to fall onto a car behind two men. The Panel considered that the scene is fleeting but the body is clearly identifiable as such as it hits the car. The Panel considered that a body falling onto a car with force to damage it did constitute violence. The Panel noted the scene where a gagged woman has a rope tied around her neck like a noose. The Panel considered that the woman appeared frightened but did not appear to be hanging. The Panel considered that the depiction of someone in fear of hanging was an extremely menacing image which would constitute violence.

The Panel noted the scene in this version of the advertisement where a gagged



woman appeared to be tied to a platform moving behind her. The Panel considered that the woman appeared frightened and that the platform raising behind her was threatening. The Panel considered that most members of the community would consider an image of a bound and gagged woman who appeared as though she was about to come to harm was a depiction which would constitute violence.

Overall, in the Panel's considered that the tone of this version of the advertisement was menacing and frightening, and that this version of the advertisement did contain violence. The Panel considered that this violence was fleeting and not graphic in nature and whilst suspense was heightened, no actual harm or injury was shown and the level of menace was not excessive in the context of an advertisement for a horror movie. In the Panel's view the violence portrayed in Version Four of the advertisement was justifiable in the context of the product advertised and did not breach Section 2.3 of the Code.

Finding that each version contained a level of violence that was justifiable in the context of the product or service advertised, the Panel determined that the Advertisement as a whole 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 complaint.

