



Case Report

1	Case Number	0212/13
2	Advertiser	Universal Sony Pictures Home Entertainment
3	Product	Entertainment
4	Type of Advertisement / media	Poster
5	Date of Determination	10/07/2013
6	DETERMINATION	Dismissed

ISSUES RAISED

2.5 - Language Inappropriate language

DESCRIPTION OF THE ADVERTISEMENT

One-sheet promotional poster for "Mrs Brown's Boys Season 3" DVD and Blu-ray Disc release, featuring a large image of a smiling Mrs Brown character wearing intimate (but comedic) apparel, accompanied by a speech bubble which reads "BUY MY FECKIN' DVD!". The speech bubble is white with black text.

THE COMPLAINT

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

"Buy my Feckin DVD" is what the poster reads. I know this is the slogan for the TV show "Mrs Browns Boys", but as my 7 year old read it and asked me what "Feckin" meant then continued to try to make sense of the ad with the word whilst my other three children listened in, I think this is not only offensive advertising but certainly inappropriate language to have in a public space.

THE ADVERTISER'S RESPONSE

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

Complaint Ref 0212/13 : “Mrs Brown’s Boys Season 3” (“the Programme”) Poster Advertisement

We write with reference to the above complaint and to the Advertisement to which it relates, a copy of which is included with this letter for your reference.

We note in the complainant’s concern and objection to the inclusion of the word “feckin’” in the Advertisement. In creating any of our advertising for the Programme (and indeed all titles we bring to the home entertainment market in Australia) we always strive to create engaging consumer communications which effectively capture the tone, themes and characters of the programme we are promoting, always in line with the provisions of the AANA Code of Ethics. The Advertisement was no exception.

We firmly believe that the inclusion of “feckin’” in the Advertisement was appropriate for the circumstances and medium in which it was presented. This word itself is not generally considered an expletive; rather it is a common-use Irish vernacular exclamation which has since been popularised in other sitcom programmes such as Father Ted. In the same vein, the use in the Advertisement is reflective of the cheeky (although admittedly sometimes irreverent) manner which has made Mrs Brown an increasingly popular personality in the Australian market, evidenced by the commercial successes achieved during the terrestrial broadcast, the previous DVD releases of “Mrs Brown’s Boys” and the forthcoming live stage tour to take place in every major Australian capital city in 2014.

The usage in the Advertisement was a light-hearted call-to-action from the obviously delighted Mrs Brown character herself, “spoken” without any malice, violence or threat which could not, in our opinion, give rise to the usage being construed as obscene or offensive to any audience. While we are sorry for any offence which may have been caused to the complainant, on this occasion we believe that the Advertisement is consistent with the Code and with the prevailing community standards.

Furthermore, we work closely with our media partners to ensure appropriate placement of our outdoor print advertising, particularly if it relates to content which may not be appropriate for viewing by all public audiences. We will continue to monitor our outdoor advertising activities to ensure this sensitivity is maintained.

The Advertisement is no longer in circulation and the initial launch campaign for the Programme has since completed on Sunday 23 June 2013. Universal Sony Pictures has no intention of re-issuing the Advertisement in its current form.

We thank the Advertising Standards Board for bringing this matter to our attention and if we can provide any further information regarding the Advertisement please do not hesitate to contact us.

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 complainant’s concern that the advertisement features offensive and inappropriate language.

The Board viewed the advertisements and noted the advertiser’s response.

The Board considered whether the advertisement was in breach of Section 2.5 of the Code. Section 2.5 of the Code states: “Advertising or Marketing Communications shall only use language which is appropriate in the circumstances and strong or obscene language shall be

avoided”.

The Board noted the advertisement features an image of Mrs Brown from the television series, Mrs Brown’s Boys, as well as the phrase, “Buy my feckin’ DVD”.

The Board noted the complainant’s concerns that “feckin’” is an inappropriate word for children to see. The Board noted that “feckin’” and “fucking” are very similar and a minority of the Board considered that the similarity of the word to a word considered offensive by most members of the community amounts to a depiction of language which is offensive and not appropriate for an outdoor advertisement which can be seen by children.

The Board considered the context of the material in promoting the purchase of the DVD of the television series. The Board noted that the word “feckin’” is not used in an aggressive or violent manner but rather in the tone associated with the comical antics of the main character, Mrs Brown.

Following considerable discussion the majority of the Board noted that the word “feckin’” is commonly used in Irish vernacular as a form of exclamation and considered that in the context of this advertisement for a TV show featuring an Irish character of that show using ‘her’ catchphrase its use is not inappropriate or offensive. The Board noted that the advertisement is an outdoor poster and can be viewed by children however the Board considered that the word is not an actual swear word and is easily explained as an Irish word which is relevant to the show being advertised.

The Board considered that the advertisement did not feature any language which would be considered inappropriate, strong or obscene.

The Board determined that the advertisement did not breach Section 2.5 of the Code.

Finding that the advertisement did not breach the Code on other grounds, the Board dismissed the complaint.