



Ad Standards Community Panel
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AdStandards.com.au

Advertising Standards Bureau Limited
ACN 084 452 666

Case Report

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| 1 | Case Number | 0232/18 |
| 2 | Advertiser | Unilever Australasia |
| 3 | Product | Toiletries |
| 4 | Type of Advertisement / media | TV - Free to air |
| 5 | Date of Determination | 09/05/2018 |
| 6 | DETERMINATION | Dismissed |

ISSUES RAISED

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

2.5 - Language Inappropriate language

DESCRIPTION OF THE ADVERTISEMENT

This television advertisement has three versions. Version 1 shows a man falling down a grassy hill. Version 2 shows a man attempt to give a high five but not being noticed. Version 3 shows a boy crawling through commuters legs to get onto a train. All relate to the Lynx Gold body spray, and feature a music backdrop.

THE COMPLAINT

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

It sounds like lyrics are repeatedly saying 'suck my balls' during the song. My concern is young children repeating this especially since it is in a music format.

THE ADVERTISER'S RESPONSE

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





*LYNX Australia Television Commercials
Complaint Reference No. 0232/18*

1. The Complaint

Ad Standards has received the following complaint (Complaint) regarding a television commercial promoting Lynx branded deodorant and body wash:

AD DESCRIPTION: Dancing people with music playing using deodorant.

REASON FOR CONCERN: It sounds like lyrics are repeatedly saying 'suck my balls' during the song. My concern is young children repeating this especially since it is in a music format.

Unilever apologises for any offence that may have occurred as a result of the backing track in its

Lynx television commercials being misinterpreted. Unilever is committed to breaking down

gender stereotypes and increasing gender equality.

Unilever confirms the words "suck my balls" do not appear in the backing track lyrics and

respectfully submits that those words cannot be readily or ordinarily heard when viewing the

television commercials in the usual manner.

If Ad Standards disagrees, Unilever will take immediate action to withdraw the television

commercials from the market. While the commercial and backing track were approved by all

relevant regulatory authorities, Unilever will continue to strengthen its internal review processes

to limit the potential for harmful misinterpretation of its commercials.

2. The television commercials

Unilever is currently broadcasting three (3) Lynx branded television commercials which use the

background music the subject of the Complaint:

(1) Epic Slide:

(2) High Five:

(3) Rush Hour:

Description

Each of the three (3) television commercials depict young men unbelievably, humorously or

innovatively overcoming awkward or embarrassing situations.



One young man slips and rolls down a grassy knoll while holding some drinks for friends, but miraculously manages not to spill them. His friends celebrate his amazing poise and truly remarkable dexterity.

Another young man goes to give a friend a celebratory “high five”, which is not reciprocated, so the young man turns his “hanging” high five into an amusing mime act. A group of young women commend and applaud his seamless transition.

Another young man is jammed in peak hour pedestrian traffic waiting for his train, so he sheds his bag and puffer jacket and crawls through the legs of his fellow pedestrians to sneak onto the train. Genius.

The words “You Spray”, “You Gold”, “Smell Fresh All Day” and “Lynx Find Your Magic” appear throughout each of the television commercials.

Classification

Commercials Advice (CAD) reviewed, approved and classified each of the television commercials as “G”:

- (1) Epic Slide: CAD Number G5K9XTC;*
- (2) High Five: CAD Number G5K9ZTCF;*
- (3) Rush Hour: CAD Number G5K9VTCF.*

No concern was raised about the background track in the television commercials, which is evident from the “G” classification.

3. The Code

Section 2.5

Unilever submits that the highly inappropriate and explicit words “suck my balls” cannot be readily or ordinarily heard in any of the television commercials.

The backing track was created and produced specifically for the television commercials. The

lyrics are gibberish and not intended to convey any meaning:

Bam Sima Bamwa Sima Sima Ala



*Bam Sima Bamwa Sima Sima Ala
Bam Sima Bamwa Sima Sima Ala
Bam Sima
Bam Sima
Bam Sima Bamwa Sima Sima Ala
Bam Sima Bamwa Sima Sima Ala
Bam Sima Bamwa Sima Sima Ala*

The words “suck my balls” do not appear in the lyrics.

The producer of the track (being Diederik van Middelkoop, Creative Director at Amp Amsterdam)

has issued a formal letter stating:

“I am the producer of the track especially created for the AXE Gold campaign by agency

72andsunny, for the spots entitled ‘Epic Slide’, ‘Rush Hour’ and ‘High Five’.

This is to officially state that the lyrics do not say ‘suck my balls’ anywhere in the track we

have produced for the Pure Gold campaign.”

A copy of the letter is contained at Annexure A.

Unilever is committed to breaking down gender stereotypes and increasing gender equality. The

words “suck my balls” are repugnant and entirely unacceptable and Unilever would never

knowingly use those words in any advertising material.

Unilever submits the words “suck my balls” cannot readily or ordinarily be heard when watching

the television commercials in full and in the usual manner.

The television commercials passed through Unilever’s stringent internal review processes and

the words “suck my balls” were never heard by any of the numerous reviewers. In addition, the

television commercials were approved and classified by Commercials Advice, with each receiving “G” classification (which certainly would not have been the case if the alleged words

were readily and ordinarily audible).

Some viewers watching the television commercials digitally or on smart televisions may have

access to video scrubbing functions, allowing them to easily navigate to and replay



sections of the videos. If a viewer altered their viewing experience in this way, repeatedly listening from around the six (6) second mark, the viewer may misinterpret the nonsensical lyrics as saying “suck my balls”. However, this is not how Unilever intended the television commercials to be experienced.

If Ad Standards determines the words “suck my balls” are audible or inferred in the television commercials (which was not in any way Unilever’s intention), Unilever will take immediate action to withdraw the commercials from the market.

Section 2.1

The television commercials do not portray people or depict material in a manner that discriminates against or vilifies a person or section of the community on account of race, ethnicity, nationality, gender, age, sexual preference, religion, disability, mental illness or political belief.

Section 2.2

No aspect of the television commercials employ sexual appeal in an exploitative or degrading manner.

Section 2.3

No aspect of the television commercials portray or present violence.

Section 2.4

Unilever submits that the television commercials do not show any sex, sexuality or nudity. Unilever’s response to the allegation that the lyrics convey the words “suck my balls” is set out above.

Section 2.6

The television commercials do not depict material contrary to prevailing community standards on health and safety.

4. Conclusion



Unilever submits the television commercials comply with the Code.

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’ concern that the advertisement contains inappropriate language.

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

The Panel 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 (including appropriate for the relevant audience and medium). Strong or obscene language shall be avoided”.

The Panel noted there are three television advertisements for Lynx Pure Gold and feature background music.

The Panel noted the complainant’s concern that the lyrics in the music sound like ‘suck my balls’.

The Panel noted the advertiser’s response that background track for the advertisement was produced specifically for the campaign and the Lyrics are gibberish.

The Panel noted the advertiser’s response that the wording of the advertisement is ‘Bam Sima, Bam Sima, Bam Sima Bamawa Sima Sima Ala.’

The Panel considered that it is clear that the lyrics to the background track are gibberish and do not contain an offensive meaning.

The Panel considered that the interpretation of the lyrics as ‘suck my balls’ is one unlikely to be shared by the majority of the community and determined that the advertisement did not use language which was inappropriate in the circumstances and did not use strong or obscene language and did not breach Section 2.5 of the Code.

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

