



Case Report

1	Case Number	0253/17
2	Advertiser	The Salvation Army
3	Product	Community Awareness
4	Type of Advertisement / media	TV - Free to air
5	Date of Determination	07/06/2017
6	DETERMINATION	Dismissed

ISSUES RAISED

2.3 - Violence Causes alarm and distress to Children

DESCRIPTION OF THE ADVERTISEMENT

This television advertisement tells the story of a mother who due to domestic violence flees home with her children and sleeps in her car in a Salvation Army car park. In the morning a Salvation Army worker finds the family and provides them with assistance. The family are then seen with a Salvation Army officer and the worker inside where it is warmer and are provided with some food. The audience is asked to make a donation to the Red Shield Appeal to give hope to people experiencing situations like this.

THE COMPLAINT

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

Inappropriate time 6:40pm -8pm Pixars Planes , aimed at kids to show an ad for Salvation Army with the content showing a mother suffering from domestic abuse and kids sleeping in the car.

Great ad wrong placement. My child was in tears.

THE ADVERTISER'S RESPONSE

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

The Salvation Army's Red Shield Appeal TVC depicts a true story of a woman assisted by The Salvation Army after fleeing a domestic violence situation which resulted in her and her children living in their car. The domestic violence is only inferred through a bruise on the mother's face and a bandage on her wrist. There is no reference to an act of violence in visuals used or in the dialogue of the advertisement. In the development of this TVC, attention was paid to ensure that while the indication of violence was clear as this was a reflection of the true story that it wasn't presented in an overtly graphic manner that would disturb people who saw the advertisement.

In addition to the care taken to ensure that this story was represented is consistent to the true story but in a way that would not disturb, OMD (media buyer working on behalf of The Salvation Army Australia Southern Territory) does not purchase space in children's television programs. The instance that precipitated this complaint relates to a CSA placement given to the organisation by the television network in addition to space purchased. Due to the nature of CSA placement, the organisation does not have control over where the TVC runs and in such cases and it is assumed that the rating applied to the TVC would be the guide for the television network. CSA placement is critically important to the Red Shield Appeal campaign as it allows us to reach more people to seek donations which fund the work of The Salvation Army. With a limited media buy budget, The Salvation Army is very grateful to the CSA response to fundraising TVC campaigns.

All advertising created by The Salvation Army is consistent with organisational values which strongly align with the AANA Code of Ethics. The following comments address section two of the AANA Code of Ethics:

- This TVC does not portray people or depict material in a way that discriminates against or vilifies a person or section of the community on account of race, ethnicity, nationality, gender, race, age, sexual preference, religion, disability, mental illness or political belief*
- This TVC does not employ sexual appeal in any manner*
- This TVC alludes to violence existing in the domestic situation prior. This reference is made through the mother character having a bruise on her face and a bandage on her wrist. There is no physical act of violence or abuse shown nor is it referred to in the dialogue of the TVC. The suggestion of a violent home situation is justifiable in this context as this TVC represents a true story and family domestic violence is the leading cause of women's homelessness*
- There is no reference to sex, sexuality or nudity in this TVC*
- The language used is appropriate and there is no language that would be described as strong or obscene*
- This TVC is not counter to Prevailing Community Standards on health and safety. Although it could be argued that a family living in a car is not advisable, this situation is not the focus of the advertisement.*

As part of The Salvation Army's TV campaign for the Red Shield Appeal we seek CSA support from relevant TV networks to assist us with reach at this key time of year. In this instance it appears that the network may have scheduled CSA activity in a potentially inappropriate time slot without the organisation's prior knowledge. OMD briefs all relevant

networks to avoid children's programming for Salvation Army TVCs. Since receiving this complaint, OMD have been in contact with the relevant network to re-affirm that while the rating may be appropriate no activity should run in children's programming. In addition to this measure, the current media buy is now being cross-checked again to ensure no children's programming is included.

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 concerns that the advertisement depicts a mother suffering from domestic abuse sleeping in her car with her children which is inappropriate for children to see. 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 that this television advertisement depicts a mother and her children sleeping in a car before being taken in by the Salvation Army. The Board noted the complainant's concern that the advertisement was aired during Pixar's Planes movie and is aimed at children. The Board noted that while the advertisement had been rated G by CAD and had been aired during a movie aimed at children the Board considered that this does not mean that the content of the advertisement is automatically aimed at children. The Board noted that the advertisement opens on the voice of the mother portrayed in the advertisement as she talks about not expecting her children to ever hear the sound of rain on the roof of the car before a different female voice talks about giving hope by donating to the Salvation Army. The Board noted that the language used by the female voiceovers is factual and considered that there is no suggestion that the intended audience is children; rather the tone of the advertisement is aimed at seeking financial donations from members of the community. The Board noted that the advertisement does depict two young children but considered that these children do not appear to be distressed and by the end of the advertisement are shown smiling and happy. The Board noted that the mother has a bruise on her face but considered that we do not see how she got this bruise and in the Board's view while adults would understand the underlying message that the woman has suffered domestic abuse it is unlikely that young children would pick up on this message. The Board acknowledged that some members of the community could find the content of the advertisement to be upsetting due to their own personal circumstances or experiences but considered that in the context of a community awareness advertisement seeking financial donations the actual content of the advertisement was not graphic and the suggestion of domestic violence was subtle enough to be unlikely to cause alarm and distress to most viewers including children. Consistent with previous determinations for similar advertisements (0580/16, 0049/17) the Board considered that the advertisement depicted a suggestion of violence in a manner which was justifiable in the context of the product or service advertised. The Board determined that the advertisement did breach Section 2.3 of the Code. Finding that the advertisement did not breach the Code on other grounds, the Board dismissed the complaint.

