



Ad Standards Community Panel
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AdStandards.com.au

Advertising Standards Bureau Limited
ACN 084 452 666

Case Report

1	Case Number	0278/18
2	Advertiser	Sony Computer Entertainment Aust Pty Ltd
3	Product	Entertainment
4	Type of Advertisement / media	TV - Free to air
5	Date of Determination	20/06/2018
6	DETERMINATION	Dismissed

ISSUES RAISED

- 2.3 - Violence Causes alarm and distress to Children
- 2.3 - Violence Violence

DESCRIPTION OF THE ADVERTISEMENT

This television advertisement is in animated format and begins with a close up shot of an axe. The next scene is of an adult male and a young boy looking at a dragon in the distance. This is followed by a panning shot of the man and child as they stand among a group of creatures with swords. The next scene shows the man walking a group of floating humanoid creatures in white robes. There is then a scene of the man and child walking towards a round door in a cliff face, with stone statues on either side. This is followed by the child standing on a grassy cliff looking over mountains. There is then a scene with the man using his shield to fight creatures with glowing orange swords. The next scene shows the man using an axe to fight creatures. The final scene shows the PS4 game in its case.

THE COMPLAINT

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

This advertisement is played at a time when families are watching free to air sport. I





think it is incredibly upsetting and scary for young children to see such acts of violence, mythical creatures such as ghost/alien looking beasts when they are wanting simply be watching sport. It is an ad that should be played during television shows aimed at adults only or not played at all. With the afl wanting to encourage more children to watch and be a part of the sport, advertising like this does not make it easy to continue watching as a family.

THE ADVERTISER'S RESPONSE

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

Re: Complaint reference number: 0278/18

I refer to your letter dated 4 June 2018 concerning the above referenced complaint made in relation to an advertisement for the videogame "God of War" which was broadcast in Australia during May 2018.

Our response is set out below, together with the information requested in your letter.

Section 2 of the AANA Advertiser Code of Ethics

I refer to Section 2.3 of the AANA Code of Ethics which says that Advertising or Marketing Communications shall not present or portray violence unless it is justifiable in the context of the product or service advertised.

The product advertised in the TVC is a videogame that has been classified as being suitable for audiences aged 18 years or over, in accordance with the Australian Classification Scheme. Any footage from the game included in the TVC has been carefully selected to ensure that, whilst an accurate representation is provided to the consumer, any violence depicted is justifiable within the context of the product being advertised.

Please do not hesitate to contact me if you require further information.

THE DETERMINATION

The Ad Standards Community Panel (the "Panel") considered whether this advertisement breaches Section 2 of the Advertiser Code of Ethics (the "Code").

The Panel noted the complainant's concerns that the advertisement depicts violence and is not appropriate for advertising on television where children could view it.

The Panel viewed the advertisement and noted the 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 this television advertisement features images taken from a video game, including a man and monsters fighting one another.

The Panel noted that although the overall tone of the advertisement is suggestive of violence the actual content does not show the consequences of any violent action, such as blood or gore. The Panel noted that there are only two scenes showing the impact of physical strikes, and these scenes were mild in impact with no lingering visuals of the vanquished characters. The Panel considered that there is no gratuitous violence depicted in the advertisement.

The Panel noted that at the end of the advertisement we see an image of a PS4, games console and the PS4 logo and considered that the graphics and voiceover make it clear that the material shown is reflective of a contemporary video game.

The Panel considered that there is a child in the advertisement, however noted that he does not appear scared but rather empowered and willing.

The Panel noted that the complainant viewed the advertisement during the AFL , and noted that although children may watch the AFL it is not a program that is principally directed to children.

The Panel noted it had previously considered a similar complaint in case 0475/15 where:

“The Board noted that this television advertisement features footage of the computer game, “Fallout 4” which includes a man walking through deserted streets holding a machine gun which he uses to fire at giant cockroaches and armed mutants. The Board noted that the game has a post-apocalyptic theme and considered that the footage of the man roaming the deserted streets and protecting himself with a weapon is consistent with this theme. The Board noted the soundtrack of the advertisement and expressed concern that the use of laid-back music to accompany scenes of violence could imply that shooting to kill is acceptable. Following considerable discussion however the Board noted that the post-apocalyptic theme is not realistic and the creatures the man fires at are not human. The Board noted that recent global events have made the community more sensitive to violent actions but considered that in this instance the visuals of the advertisement are clearly in the context of gaming footage and in a fantasy situation.”



The Panel noted the current advertisement has been rated 'J' by FreeTV. The Panel noted that 'J' rated advertisements are described in the Free TV Placement Code (http://www.freetv.com.au/content_common/pg-cad-placement-codes.seo) as "May be broadcast at any time of day, except during P and C programs or adjacent to P or C periods. Exercise care when placing in programs principally directed to children."

Consistent with the previous determination, the Panel considered that the advertisement had a clear fantasy element and the violence shown in the advertisement was mild in impact and directly relevant to the themes and content of the MA 15+ videogame.

The Panel considered that the advertisement did present or portray violence in a manner which is justifiable in the context of the product advertised.

The Panel determined 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 complaint.

