



Ad Standards Community Panel
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Case Report

1. Case Number :	0335-19
2. Advertiser :	Roadshow Films
3. Product :	Entertainment
4. Type of Advertisement/Media :	Internet - Social - Other
5. Date of Determination	23-Oct-2019
6. DETERMINATION :	Dismissed

ISSUES RAISED

AANA Code of Ethics\2.3 Violence

DESCRIPTION OF ADVERTISEMENT

This YouTube advertisement is for the film IT 2 and depicts a clown with blood dripping from it's mouth, before jumping and showing the clown with mouth wide and sharp teeth, about to eat something.

THE COMPLAINT

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

Me personally is not okay to watch any horror movies, especially jump scare ones. My heart couldn't handle it since jump scares will shock me harder than to others. I don't see why i'll need to suffer a heart attack when I'm just having my own time watching animation on youtube. The ad pops up suddenly while i was concentrating on the plot of the anime, just imagine you are focusing on something on your screen and suddenly a freaky clown face pops up out of no where then a jump scare right after that. I just don't see why I need to experience this while trying to relax during my free time.



THE ADVERTISER'S RESPONSE

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

The online creative contains no discriminatory material, strong or obscene language, nudity, no material contrary to health and safety standards - it does however contain scary/ supernatural themes which is relevant to the film being advertised. It is also worth noting that our YouTube campaign was targeting P18-29 - please note that all activity on YouTube only is P18+ only.

THE DETERMINATION

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

The Panel noted the complainant's concern that the advertisement contains a jump scare and is alarming.

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 the Practice Note for the Code states:

"The Community Panel has also found that a strong suggestion of menace presents violence in an unacceptable manner and breaches this section of the Code."

The Panel acknowledged that some members of the community would prefer for this type of product not to be advertised, however considered that this product is legally able to be advertised provided that imagery is justifiable in the context of the product.

The Panel noted that it had previously upheld an advertisement for this film in case 0301-19, in which:

"The majority of the Panel considered that in this case, while children may be unaware of the film series or the character, the advertisement depicting a face with yellow eyes, stained and damaged teeth within an unsettling smile and a clear image of blood dripping from its mouth, was excessively menacing. The majority considered that the image selected to represent the main character from the horror movie had a strong implication that the clown had eaten someone, based on the depiction of blood dripping from its mouth.



The majority of the Panel noted that the series of television advertisements for this film had been dismissed in case 0289-19. In considering complaints about the single image of the main character used in this Billboard advertisement, the majority considered that the direct gaze of the eyes and the menacing image of the character was more impactful due to the static nature of a billboard. The majority considered that in the context of this horror movie promotion, the static billboard image has less context than a television advertisement, and there is no opportunity for less threatening imagery to balance the sinister and frightening nature of the depicted face of the central character.

The majority of the Panel acknowledged that some level of violence and menace is justifiable in the context of advertising a horror movie, however considered that the level of menace in this advertisement exceeded the amount which most members of the community would consider to be appropriate.”

In the current case, the Panel considered that the advertisement was broadcast before videos on YouTube, and noted the advertiser’s response that the advertisement was targeted towards people aged 18-29. The Panel noted YouTube material can be restricted to 18+ noting that youtube states ‘When a video is age-restricted, a warning screen displays before the video plays. Only users 18 years of age or older can then proceed to view the material. In order to reduce the chances of users accidentally stumbling across these videos, they are not shown in certain sections of YouTube.’ Noting the advertiser’s response that the advertisement had been limited to this audience the Panel considered that the audience for this advertisement would be predominately adult.

The Panel noted that the entire duration of the advertisement was six seconds. The Panel noted the advertisement featured a clown bleeding from the mouth, and then a sudden change to the clown’s mouth opening as if to eat someone, with sharp teeth. The Panel considered that this was a depiction of strong menace.

However, the Panel considered that the fleeting depiction of a jump-scare was justifiable in the context of an advertisement for a horror movie broadcast on YouTube to an 18+ audience. The Panel noted that some members of the community may prefer this type of pop up or jump scare advertising was not permitted however the Panel considered that this 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.