



Ad Standards Community Panel
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Ad Standards Limited
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Case Report

1. Case Number :	0338-21
2. Advertiser :	Betta Games
3. Product :	Entertainment
4. Type of Advertisement/Media :	Internet - Social - Facebook
5. Date of Determination	8-Dec-2021
6. DETERMINATION :	Upheld – Modified or Discontinued

ISSUES RAISED

AANA Code of Ethics\2.3 Violence

DESCRIPTION OF ADVERTISEMENT

This Facebook advertisement for an app is a video which shows a woman carrying a baby in a body wrap using a dustpan and broom. A man walks in holding a bottle of wine and trips over the dustpan, falling to the floor. The woman goes to help the man and he pushes her away. He then stands over her with the broom in a threatening manner. The next scene shows the woman with her baby and a suitcase, leaving the building. The remainder of the advertisement shows gameplay from the advertised app.

THE COMPLAINT

Comments which the complainant/s made regarding this advertisement included the following:

The advertisement and the app itself promotes domestic violence and abuse.

THE ADVERTISER'S RESPONSE

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

We are sorry for the inconvenience the ad was caused.



As a mobile game developer, publisher and most importantly an advertiser, we want to get the best matchable users and we always try the best to follow regulations and policy of all our partners, platforms and marketing areas.

To ensure the ads will fulfill all the regulations and policy, we make more efforts, including but no less than the following:

- 1. Self check first and no inappropriate creatives will show out*
- 2. Ads network review. We cooperate with the top advertising networks, such as Facebook, and they have the most strict creatives review flow. If they found the creatives do not comply with the rules, the ads will be rejected.*
- 3. All ads will be delivered to the right people. When we create the campaign we choose the right audience, when we publish the game, we also choose the users of the right age.*
- 4. The game involved in the ad is a game combining with storyline which is full of drama and we sometimes make creatives from the storylines.*

Thanks very much for your suggestions. We will pay more attention to our ads.

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 complainant's concern that the advertisement promotes domestic violence and abuse.

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

Section 2.3: Advertising shall not present or portray violence unless it is justifiable in the context of the product or service advertised

The Panel noted the Practice Note for this section of the Code which states "*Although the depiction of violence in an advertisement may be relevant to the story being told in the advertisement, any violence must also be justifiable in the context of the product being advertised, or else will be in breach of this section of the Code*".

Does the advertisement contain violence?

The Panel noted that the scene of concern was in the first half of a longer advertisement with the remainder showing gameplay of the app. The Panel considered that the facial expression and body language of the man in the advertisement was aggressive and the advertisement clearly depicted the man pushing the woman and then holding a broom over her in a threatening manner as she protects her child against her chest.

The Panel considered that the advertisement did contain violence and a high level of menace.



Is the violence portrayed justifiable in the context of the product or service advertised?

The Panel noted that the storyline of the advertisement is that a woman has left an abusive household and is now renovating a mansion to live in, with players completing tasks to earn the ability to make choices on the home.

The Panel considered that the violence and menace depicted in the advertisement was not mild and that such behaviour would be inappropriate in any circumstance.

The Panel considered that there is no justification for depictions or suggestions of domestic violence in advertising for a game, and noted that there is a heightened level of concern relating to depictions of violence against women in light of increased family violence during the COVID-19 pandemic.

The Panel considered that the advertisement clearly depicted a man harming a woman in an aggressive manner, and that this act was not appropriate in the context of advertising an app game.

Section 2.3 Conclusion

The Panel determined that the advertisement did present or portray violence which was not justifiable in the context of the product or service advertised and did breach Section 2.3 of the Code.

Conclusion

Finding that the advertisement did breach Section 2.3 of the Code, the Panel upheld the complaint.

THE ADVERTISER'S RESPONSE TO DETERMINATION

We have removed the advertisement involved in case 0338-21. We fully respect your regulations of the Code. And we will continue to provide the best game experience to our audience and users.

