



Ad Standards Community Panel
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Case Report

1. Case Number :	0340-21
2. Advertiser :	Sony Pictures Releasing Pty Ltd
3. Product :	Entertainment
4. Type of Advertisement/Media :	Transport
5. Date of Determination	8-Dec-2021
6. DETERMINATION :	Dismissed

ISSUES RAISED

AANA Code of Ethics\2.3 Violence

DESCRIPTION OF ADVERTISEMENT

This transport advertisement is for the film Venom and features characters from the film including the title character depicted with sharp teeth.

THE COMPLAINT

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

Firstly thank you for taking the time to review my complaint, which is not aimed at you or even the local metro bus service who drives around with this advertising but rather at corporations who reviews what may and may not be advertised on the metro busses. My objection is to the standard of horrific images permitted to be transported all over the city and suburbs to be seen through the eyes of many children. Although we as adults have had our senses hardened through "entertainment" through the years and barely notice images that would have had corporations fined not that many years ago, the mind of a child is still in a developing state of growth and such imagery can/may and will have profound consequences if permitted to be allowed to continue "shown about town". I have had to comfort my own children's state of mind after seeing this vile and frightening poster, which is the Venom film billboard on the side of metro busses. Ad Standards' Executive Director said updates to the AANA Code of Ethics and Practice note effective from February 2021 will give clearer guidance to



advertisers, ensuring more explicit obligations are in place across a range of issues, and yet quality control has still not met the standards of decency. It is our hope that immediate action will be taken as soon as possible in order to prevent any further mental trauma and that standards will swiftly improve.

THE ADVERTISER'S RESPONSE

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

Advertiser did not provide a response.

THE DETERMINATION

The Ad Standards Community Panel (Panel) considered whether the versions collectively forming this advertisement breach Section 2 of the AANA Code of Ethics (the Code).

The Panel noted the complainant's concern that the advertisement contains scary imagery that is inappropriate for children to see.

The Panel viewed the advertisement and the noted the advertiser did not respond.

Section 2.3 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 the Practice Note for this section of the Code which states "*Graphic depictions of violence or a strong suggestion of menace have been found to present violence in an unacceptable manner especially when visible to a broad audience which includes children. For example, advertising for violent or horror movies, tv shows or video games should take care not to include images that give the impression that a character has just committed violence against someone (for example, a weapon with dripping blood), was the victim of violence (for example, freshly severed limbs) or is about to commit violence against someone (for example, gun aimed directly at a person or the viewer) where there is a broad audience which includes children*".

The Panel noted that this advertisement was displayed on a bus and would have a broad audience that would include children.

Does the advertisement contain violence?

The Panel noted that the image could be alarming to some members of the community due to the scary look of the creatures. The Panel considered that the advertisement did not depict blood, gore, or any material of a graphic nature and there was no direct threat to any person in the image or implication of a violent act.



The Panel considered that while some people may find the image to be alarming, it did not contain a strong threat or suggestion of menace.

However, the Panel considered the theme of the advertisement is mildly menacing and considered that the advertisement overall may be considered to imply violence.

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

The Panel noted that the advertisement was promoting a film titled 'Venom: Let There Be Carnage' which is rated M.

The Panel considered that although the advertisement contains imagery of the title characters who have long sharp teeth, there is no violent imagery or imagery which contains blood or gore.

The Panel considered that it is not unreasonable for the advertiser to use imagery of the title characters in advertising for the film.

Overall, the Panel considered that the mild the level of menace was not excessive in the context of an advertisement for the film.

Section 2.3 conclusion

In the Panel's view the advertisement did portray violence that was justifiable in the context of the product being advertised and did not breach Section 2.3 of the Code.

Conclusion

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