



Ad Standards Community Panel
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Ad Standards Limited
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Case Report

1. Case Number :	0371-20
2. Advertiser :	Ubisoft
3. Product :	Toys and Games
4. Type of Advertisement/Media :	TV - Free to Air
5. Date of Determination	16-Dec-2020
6. DETERMINATION :	Dismissed

ISSUES RAISED

AANA Code of Ethics\2.3 Violence

DESCRIPTION OF ADVERTISEMENT

This television advertisement is for the video game Assassins Creed Valhalla.

It begins with the main character on a Viking ship with his clan before they approach land. There is a short combat scene as they approach a house. The combat scene does not feature any blood or graphic detail. The main character frees a Village person that a member of their clan has held. The trailer ends with the main character and his clan walking further into England's countryside.

THE COMPLAINT

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

Brutal & violent scenes from the Assassins Creed Game shown in the ad which is totally inappropriate & disturbing for young children. State of Origin supposed to be for family viewing. This ad is not. The level of violence shown was extreme, unnecessary and disturbing to adults viewing, but even more so for children.



THE ADVERTISER'S RESPONSE

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

The advertisement under complaint is a 60 second trailer for the video game titled Assassin's Creed Valhalla, where players play as a fictional Viking warrior, Eivor, as they lead their clan of Norseman to find settlement in England.

This advertisement is part of a wider digital advertising campaign with Nine across a variety of inventory nationally. This included digital display on their website targeting Males ages 18-39, along with a 'Gamer' audience segment. The TV spot was run across 9Now. The 30 second cut of the advertisement under complaint was run targeting the Male 18-39 & Gamer audience mentioned above. The 60 second version was used solely during the three NRL State of Origin games on November 4th , 11th and 18th. Our intention of this creative was to continue to reach our target audience in a setting that is traditionally popular for this age bracket (NRL/State of Origin, late weeknight timing). Nine ensured that this creative was set up to be served after 8pm and only to people 18+ (in addition to the MA15+ rating clearly indicated on the ad).

As stated in the advertisement description, the advertisement features Eivor in a piece-to-camera explaining how he and his Viking clan plan to enter and raid England. The advertisement is dark and moody in it's setting, however the script portrays a tongue in cheek explanation of a historical time of Viking raids. The Assassin's Creed series, including Assassin's Creed Valhalla, does feature violence and killing, however this is always justified by the historical context of each game – this time set in England's Dark Ages depicting Vikings.

The intention of the advertisement is to convey the game's key features:

- *Raiding play – meaning players will be able to travel and discover new countries as a Viking and fight for settlement as true Vikings did*
- *Set in Ninth Century AD. – the setting is very clear with use of Vikings and Kingdoms. The game depicts a historically accurate setting and includes a combination of history and Norse mythology.*
- *Action Adventure Mature Game – indicted by the MA15+ rating and use of weapons in the creative*

In respect to violence specifically, while the creative does feature weapons and fighting, the creative does not show any blood, adult content or obvious weapon to person contact (dirt can be seen flying as one person is kicked while the other is hit in the foot), lessening the impact. The trailer shows no graphic detail nor any violence that isn't justified by the historical setting of the game and therefore we believe it complies with the guidelines (section 2 – 2.3 Advertising shall not present or portray violence unless it is justifiable in the context of the product or service advertised).

Additionally, the creative does not feature any:

- *Discrimination or vilification*



- *Exploitative and degrading content*
- *Sex, sexuality and nudity*
- *Adult Language*
- *Health and Safety concerns.*

Lastly, Computer and Video Games are classified by the Australian Classification Board, an official Australian Government agency. Assassin's Creed Valhalla has been classified MA15+ and is intended for audiences of 15 years of age and over, which has been cleared labelled on all advertising material including the advertisement under complaint.

THE DETERMINATION

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

The Panel noted the complainant's concern that the advertisement showed brutal & violent scenes which is totally inappropriate and that the level of violence shown was extreme, unnecessary and disturbing to children and adults viewing.

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

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 the Code includes: "Depiction of violence to promote a violent game may be acceptable provided it is relevant to the product advertised."

Does the advertisement contain violence?

The Panel noted that the advertisement features a character speaking to camera about his plans to take over England. The Panel noted that the advertisement is one minute long and follows the character as he leaves a boat and comes to shore.

The Panel considered that the advertisement is highly stylised and does not contain any imagery of blood or gore, and that the whole advertisement is shown in muted colours. The Panel considered that the advertisement does contain imagery of weapons and a building on fire, however noted that there is only one fighting scene, a one four second scene showing the main character fighting two others.

The Panel considered that the actual violence in the advertisement would be considered by most members of the community to be moderate.

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



The Panel noted that the advertisement aired after 8pm during State of Origin and noted that the audience would be broad and would include children.

The Panel noted that the advertised product is a video game which features game play and scenes similar to that played in the advertisement. The Panel considered that the scenes in the advertisement were directly relevant to the product being advertised.

Section 2.3 conclusion

In the Panel's view the moderate level of violence portrayed in the advertisement was justifiable in the context of the product 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.