



Ad Standards Community Panel
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AdStandards.com.au

Advertising Standards Bureau Limited
ACN 084 452 666

Case Report

1	Case Number	0376/18
2	Advertiser	Roadshow Films
3	Product	Entertainment
4	Type of Advertisement / media	Billboard
5	Date of Determination	12/09/2018
6	DETERMINATION	Dismissed

ISSUES RAISED

2.3 - Violence Violence

DESCRIPTION OF THE ADVERTISEMENT

This billboard advertisement features two female puppets and the text "See the happytime murders - good time for you".

THE COMPLAINT

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

Says twice murders and also states « good for you » . It has two muppets pictures which most relate to kids programs. Depicts and desensitises children and community to murder! Just as Australia attempts to resolve violence and crime. Ridiculous USA movie title and advertising.

THE ADVERTISER'S RESPONSE

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



The complaint relates to a bus shelter advertisement for the film HAPPYTIME MURDERS. The film has received a classification rating from the Classification Board of MA 15+ with the consumer advice of "Strong crude sexual humour and coarse language".

The outdoor creative contains no discriminatory material, strong or obscene language, nudity, no material contrary to health and safety standards and does not depict violence or contains scary/ supernatural themes. The word "Murder" could possibly be perceived as being strong or obscene, however this is not the intention and the word is part of the movies title and relevant to the film being advertised and accordingly unavoidable.

The creative could be seen to be exploitative or degrading towards puppets however this is relevant to the storyline of the movie (in the movie puppets co-inhabit a world where they exist alongside humans as lower class citizens with fewer rights, no opportunities for work etc). The movie is a comedy and the two female characters shown in the posters work on the streets providing a "good time" for other puppets. The words good time are not in relation to Murder in any way.

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 depicts and desensitises people to murder.

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

The Panel noted that the advertisement featured two female puppets and the text "see the happytime murders – good time for you".

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 the complainant's concern that the use of the word murder and the descriptions 'happytime' and 'good time' and the link to puppets which would be attractive to children depicts and desensitises people to murder.

The Panel noted the advertiser's response that the word 'murder' is part of the films title and is unavoidable in advertising the film.

The Panel considered that the advertisement is for a movie directed at adults and



considered that the advertisement itself was not directed at children.

The Panel considered that the advertisement did not depict blood, gore, or any material of a graphic nature.

The Panel considered that the name of the movie being advertised was 'Happytime Murders' and that it was appropriate for the advertiser to use the name of the movie when promoting it.

The Panel acknowledged that the use of puppets would be attractive to children and that the connection with 'good time' and 'murders' may be in poor taste, however noted that the issue of taste is not covered by the Code.

The Panel considered that the word 'murder' in itself did not constitute violence, and in the Panel's view the advertisement did not portray violence, and did not breach Section 2.3 of the Code.

Finding that the advertisement did not breach any other section of the Code the Panel dismissed the complaint.

