



**ADVERTISING
STANDARDS
BUREAU**

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Case Report

1	Case Number	0462/12
2	Advertiser	Target Australia Pty Ltd
3	Product	Entertainment
4	Type of Advertisement / media	Print
5	Date of Determination	12/12/2012
6	DETERMINATION	Dismissed

ISSUES RAISED

2.3 - Violence Graphic Depictions

DESCRIPTION OF THE ADVERTISEMENT

The catalogue for Target dated 10 October 2012 features images of Saw DVDs for sale. These DVD covers feature images of bloodied body parts.

THE COMPLAINT

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

The Saw movies are rated MA+ The covers for the DVD's are pictures of dismembered human parts as befitting the nature of the Saw movies. While I have no objection to the movies themselves, I do not believe that pictures of a severed human foot, a severed human head and severed human fingers have a place in a Target catalogue that also has advertisements for children's movies and is clearly a marketing catalogue aimed at all ages. Target should have showed more responsibility and discretion.

THE ADVERTISER'S RESPONSE

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

We refer to your letter dated 22 November, regarding a complaint received in relation to an advertisement appearing in Target's "be connected" catalogue on 10 October 2012.

Target does not consider the advertisement to breach any part of Section 2 of the AANA Advertiser Code of Ethics (the Code) or the AANA Code for Advertising and Marketing Communications to Children (the Children's Code).

Target submits that the advertisement does not fall within the definition of an Advertising or Marketing Communication to Children as set out in section 1 of the Children's Code. The advertisement is not primarily directed to children aged 14 years or younger and is not an advertisement for a product which is targeted toward or has principal appeal for children.

The relevant sections of the Code provide as follows:

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 complaint states "The Saw movies are rated MA+ The covers for the DVD's are pictures of dismembered human parts as befitting the nature of the Saw movies. While I have no objection to the movies themselves, I do not believe that pictures of a severed human foot, a severed human head and severed human fingers have a place in a Target catalogue that also has advertisements for children's movies and is clearly a marketing catalogue aimed at all ages. Target should have showed more responsibility and discretion."

The target market for Target's catalogues are (predominantly female) adults aged between 25 to 54 years

The offending advertisement is for a range of M and MA+ rated DVDs advertised in the lead up to Halloween. The advertisement includes pictures of the front covers of the DVDs Saw, Saw II, Saw III and Saw IV amongst a collection of other M and MA+ rated DVDs offered for sale by Target. Target has not sought to sensationalise the DVDs and has re-produced images of the front covers of the DVDs with their clearly legible Australian Classification Board's rating against a plain white background. We submit that reproduction of the cover is justifiable in the context of advertising the product as being for purchase in Target stores.

The other DVDs advertised for sale on the same page are directed towards the same adult target market with the call to action "Get the kids ready for this Halloween". These depict the covers of a number of G and PG rated DVDs.

We respectfully disagree with the complainant. Target is of the view that parents and adult guardians are the most appropriate people to determine what their children see, play and read and our advertising was directed with this in mind. While we are mindful that children may look at our general catalogues, they are not directed to children or designed to be marketed to children. Their target market is the primary shopping decision maker within the household.

We consider that the advertisement is appropriate for and reflective of our target market and would not offend the sensibilities of the general public within the context of an advertisement for DVDs. However, while we do not believe that the advertisement constitutes a breach of the Code or the Children's Code, Target does take into consideration feedback that it

receives in relation to its advertising and the views expressed in the complaint received by the Advertising Standards Bureau will be communicated to the catalogue production team at Target.

Target is committed to upholding the standards of the Code in its advertising and appreciates your review of our response to these complaints.

THE DETERMINATION

The Advertising Standards Board (“Board”) considered whether this advertisement breaches Section 2 of the Advertiser Code of Ethics (the “Code”).

The Board noted the complainant’s concerns that the advertisement features violent imagery not suitable for viewing by children.

The Board viewed the advertisement and noted the advertiser’s response.

The Board considered whether the advertisement was in breach of Section 2.3 of the Code. Section 2.3 of the Code 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 Board noted the advertisement is featured in the Target catalogue and concerns the images of the DVD covers for the Saw movies.

The Board noted that these DVD covers do depict violent images but noted that the images are relatively small and part of a full page spread of DVD covers.

The Board noted that the placement of the Saw DVD covers in close proximity to the children’s DVDs was unfortunate particularly as part of a Christmas promotion which would be more engaging for children. However the Board considered that the wording of the advertisement – “Get the kids ready for this Halloween....Something to scare the adults too” is aimed at adults looking for gifts for their children as well as themselves.

The Board noted that children could view the catalogue and see the images however the Board considered that the combination of the size and the context of the advertisements for the Saw DVDs made the violent nature of the images less impactful and not inappropriate.

The Board considered that the advertisement does present or portray violence in a manner which is justifiable in the context of the product advertised and that it is not inappropriate for viewing by a broad audience including children.

The Board determined that the advertisement did not breach Section 2.3 of the Code.

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

