



Case Report

1	Case Number	0536/17
2	Advertiser	Reckitt Benckiser (Aust) Pty Ltd
3	Product	House Goods Services
4	Type of Advertisement / media	TV - Free to air
5	Date of Determination	06/12/2017
6	DETERMINATION	Dismissed

ISSUES RAISED

2.2 - Objectification Exploitative and degrading

DESCRIPTION OF THE ADVERTISEMENT

The copy depicts Georgie, a young tennis player, she claims she gets confidence by wearing whites on the tennis court. At the initial part of the TVC she is seen on the tennis court practising. She is then shown soaking her uniform with Vanish White Gold to restore whiteness and then showing the end result. At the end of the advertisement she is playing a game of tennis.

THE COMPLAINT

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

A shot of her shoes up her legs to her short skirt. Sexualised, inappropriate, unnecessary.

THE ADVERTISER'S RESPONSE

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

Thank you for bringing to our attention the complaints you received regarding our Vanish White Gold advertising. Reckitt Benckiser (RB) is committed to responsible advertising and we have carefully reviewed the complaint against all requirements of Section 2 of the AANA

Code of Ethics. We submit that the TVC does not portray women or young girls in a way which discriminates against or vilifies them.

Relevant Audience

The CAD Placement Code for this TVC is G. This means that it is classified as General in placement. It may be broadcast at any time except during P and C (Children's) programs or adjacent to P or C periods. Our media agency confirmed that no spots are placed in children's programming.

2.1 - Discrimination or vilification

We submit that the TVC does not portray or depict material in a way which discriminates against or vilifies women.

In the final frames (of which the complaint is centred), she is depicted serving during a tennis competition, wearing her white uniform which she washed in an earlier scene. This serving scene follows the same camera work as professional tennis tournaments where the camera is focused on the ball as the player goes to serve. We do not consider that these frames sexualise, discriminate or vilify women.

The TVC presents Georgie as a young, fictional, confident tennis player. She is not portrayed negatively, nor is she humiliated or treated with any ridicule thus portrayed in line with community standards with what is typically expected at a tennis practice or competition.

2.2 - Exploitative and degrading

We submit that the TVC does not degrade or exploit anyone, including women. The overall TVC tone is positive. All the actors are depicted in clothing appropriate to the context of the tennis court. The CAD Placement Code is for a General Audience.

We submit that these images do not degrade anyone.

2.3 - Violence

The TVC does not contain any violence.

2.4 - Sex, sexuality and nudity

The TVC does not contain any sex, sexuality or nudity.

2.5 - Language

We submit that the TVC does not contain any inappropriate, strong or obscene language. We submit that the language used is appropriate both to the topic and the CAD Placement classification.

We submit that the language used is not obscene or sexualised.

2.6 - Health and safety

The TVC does not show any material that contradicts the prevailing community standards of health or safety.

2.7 – Distinguishable as Advertising

It would be clear to the audience that this TVC is recognised as advertising and commercial in nature.

In light of the above, we strongly urge the Board to dismiss the complaint and look forward to receiving the Board's determination in due course.

THE DETERMINATION

The Advertising Standards Board (the "Board") considered whether this advertisement breaches Section 2 of the AANA Code of Ethics (the "Code").

The Board noted the complainant's concerns that the advertisement features an image of a young girl which is sexualised and inappropriate.

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

The Board considered whether the advertisement was in breach of Section 2.2 of the Code. Section 2.2 of the Code states: "Advertising or marketing communications should not employ sexual appeal:

- (a) where images of Minors, or people who appear to be Minors, are used; or
- (b) in a manner which is exploitative and degrading of any individual or group of people."

The Board noted the AANA Practice Note which provides guidance on the use of Minors in advertising and states that:

"In advertisements where images of Minors, or people who appear to be Minors, are used, sexual appeal is not acceptable and will always be regarded as exploitative and degrading."

The Board noted that the complaint concerns the depiction of a minor and that the Board must consider whether the minor is depicted in a manner that suggests sexual appeal, and if the Board finds that is the case then the Board must find that there is a breach of the Code.

The Board noted the television advertisement features a young girl – Georgie - practicing tennis skills. She is the voiceover and explains that "wearing white makes her feel like she owns the court." The following scene shows Georgie washing her tennis outfit in a tub in the kitchen with the product name mentioned and visible. The girl refers to how her Dad suggests that she use Vanish Gold. The final scene shows her playing an actual game of tennis on indoor courts.

The Board noted the complainant's concerns that the advertisement shows the girl from her shoes and upwards along her legs to her short skirt which is sexualised.

The Board noted that the young girl is dressed in typical tennis attire and that style and length of the skirt is the type of outfit commonly worn on the tennis court.

The Board considered that it is reasonable for an advertiser to show the product being used and noted that in this case the daughter is washing her own clothes and mentions that it is her father who has advised the use of this product. The Board noted that this is a positive depiction of a father assisting his daughter with laundry.

The Board noted the final scene of the girl playing tennis and noted the camera does move

from the ground upwards along her legs and then to her upper body as the girl serves the ball. The Board considered that the camera moves quickly and noted that the type of camera work is similar to that used during tennis competitions aired on television.

The Board considered that camera does not linger on her legs and that her skirt is not inappropriately short particularly for the sport that she is playing and the overall tone is not of a sexual nature but is clearly in the context of a focus on how white her tennis outfit is. The Board considered that this depiction of a young woman is a depiction of a minor, but that the depiction is not sexual in nature or suggestive of sexual appeal. The Board considered that the advertisement does not use sexual appeal in relation to a minor.

Finding that the advertisement did not breach section 2.2 of the Code or breach the Code on other grounds, the Board dismissed the complaint.