



CASE REPORT

1. Complaint reference number	150/05
2. Advertiser	Goodman Fielder Limited (Country Cup)
3. Product	Food
4. Type of advertisement	TV
5. Nature of complaint	Violence Other – section 2.2
6. Date of determination	Tuesday, 14 June 2005
7. DETERMINATION	Dismissed

DESCRIPTION OF THE ADVERTISEMENT

The first scene in this advertisement depicts a young woman sitting on a park bench drinking from a cup of Country Cup soup. The woman explains that eating the Country Cup soup is the best part of her day and that it gives her “time out to escape the daily grind”. As the camera pulls back we hear a lady scream and a masked thief run across the scene carrying the lady’s handbag. The advertisement cuts back to the woman sitting on the park bench. She places a police officer’s cap on her head, excuses herself from the audience and proceeds to chase after the masked bandit. She tackles him to the ground, picks him up, reverses her police officer’s cap and head butts the thief. She then throws him to the ground and then kicks the thief in the groin as hard as she can. The attack is accompanied by stylised sounds - for example, the head butt is accompanied by a metal clang and the kick to the groin is accompanied by the sound of breaking glass.

THE COMPLAINT

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

“... If the gender roles were reversed there would be outrage. I am outraged.”

“...1. In Brisbane in recent years there have been many instances of people being assaulted and then kicked to death on our footpaths. This ad promotes kicking a person on the ground. 2. If it was a male security guard kicking a female robber there would be an outcry immediately. This is clearly another example of blatant sexist advertising and promotes that it is ok for a woman to kick a man. ...”

“... I feel that the ad shows unnecessary violence and the fact that this is shown during children’s tea-time really is quite extraordinary.”

“... The advertisement trivialises physical violence, is an affront to genuine law enforcement and is grossly unsuitable in this time slot or at any time.”

THE ADVERTISER’S RESPONSE

Comments which the advertiser made in response to the complaint/s regarding this advertisement included the following:

“... The advertisement and Goodman Fielder neither promote nor condone violence, and CAD was of the view that the obvious humour and almost slapstick nature of the scene, took the focus off the force used to apprehend the mugger ...

1) ... force portrayed is obviously not real, and is clearly farcical, not to be taken seriously by the viewer. The performances are slapstick in nature and obviously humorous.

2) The sound effects associated with the apprehension ... again reinforces the unreal nature of the

scene and its humour. The exaggerated groaning of the victim and the scene of the female officer continuing to eat her soup on top of the bound mugger ... evidences the light-hearted nature of the whole commercial.

3) ... it is our belief that the display of this cartoon-like scene removes any reasonable possibility that the advertisement would be seen as a serious exercise of violence ... ”

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 that the advertiser had deliberately adopted a cartoon-like approach in using sound effects that were not consistent with a realistic, violent attack. The Board considered that the use of the sound effects clearly indicated to viewers that the advertisement was not meant to be taken literally.

The Board found that the depiction did not contravene the provisions of the Code relating to the portrayal of violence.

Further finding that the advertisement did not breach the Code on any other grounds, the Board dismissed the complaint.