



CASE REPORT

1. Complaint reference number	157/00
2. Advertiser	Holden Ltd (Astra)
3. Product	Vehicles
4. Type of advertisement	TV
5. Nature of complaint	Discrimination or vilification Other – section 2.1 Health and safety – section 2.6
6. Date of determination	Tuesday, 13 June 2000
7. DETERMINATION	Dismissed

DESCRIPTION OF THE ADVERTISEMENT

The television advertisement portrays a macabre room lit by candles and a shaft of light. A clairvoyant says, ‘Choose’, and a young woman selects a card, ‘The Emperor’. A burst of wind gusts through the room. Rubbing her temples, the clairvoyant says, ‘I see a man’, and, reflected in her eye, the young woman imagines a cloaked man. A card marked ‘The Chariot’ is selected and the clairvoyant says, ‘He comes for you.’ Set in a forest lit by flaming beacons, shots of a (Holden Astra) car and the man driving it are interspersed with shots imagined by the young woman - those of the man wearing a cloak and riding a rearing, galloping horse. Another card is selected and the clairvoyant says, ‘I see obsession. Obsession.’ The car stops in the forest beside the two women, the man and young woman acknowledge each other and the man drives away. The clairvoyant says to the disappointed young woman, as a card marked ‘The Lovers’ is selected, ‘Don’t worry. He’ll be back soon. It’s a boy thing.’

THE COMPLAINT

Comments which the complainants made regarding this advertisement included the following:

‘This is another case of marketing management using what I believe to be dangerous material to promote their product.’

‘..... I believe your advertising constitutes a de facto acceptance and encouragement of the abhorrent activities inherent in the practice of both witchcraft and the occult..’

‘It concerns me that increasingly advertisers are using occult imagery to sell their products. Many Christians (and Christianity is still the major religion in this country) are offended by this.’

‘Calling the actions of a grown man a “boy” thing, I believe is a way of denigrating masculinity and masculine ways.’

THE DETERMINATION

The Advertising Standards Board (‘the Board’) considered whether this advertisement breached Section 2 of the Advertiser Code of Ethics (‘the Code’).

The Board, while appreciating the complainants’ personal points of view, determined that the material within the advertisement did not contravene prevailing community standards and that the advertisement did not breach the Code on any ground. The Board, accordingly, dismissed the complaint.