



CASE REPORT

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| 1. Complaint reference number | 233/06 |
| 2. Advertiser | Ford Motor Co Aust Pty Ltd (Fiesta) |
| 3. Product | Vehicles |
| 4. Type of advertisement | TV |
| 5. Nature of complaint | Portrayal of sex/sexuality/nudity – section 2.3 |
| 6. Date of determination | Tuesday, 11 July 2006 |
| 7. DETERMINATION | Dismissed |

DESCRIPTION OF THE ADVERTISEMENT

This television advertisement opens on a high tech German engineering design room, showing a male engineer working on a clay model of a new vehicle, concentrating as he carves and shapes the model. A female engineer approaches from behind as the music “Unchained Melody” begins to play in the background and the scenario begins to resemble the famous scene from the movie “Ghost”. The female puts her arms around the man and her hands join his, with clay oozing between their fingers as they shape the model. The couple start to appear sexually stimulated until the camera pans back and reveals the new clay model of the vehicle. A voiceover announces “Germany’s new Ford Fiesta. German engineering just got sexier”.

THE COMPLAINT

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

Not only was the advertisement offensive, stupid, and a slice of the prevailing lazy-ness (sic) of the advertising trade, it was totally uninformative. What was the purpose of it? If it was to indicate that male and female Ford workers have simulated sex when they work on the assembly lines, then one wonders about the Ford manufacturers knowledge of the birds and the bees.

THE ADVERTISER’S RESPONSE

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

From the research conducted, consumers found the advertisement enjoyable with an entertaining storyline. The launch of the new Ford Fiesta is built around the notion of “German engineering just got sexier” based on its product attributes of sleek Euro design and German heritage.

The television commercial is obviously highly embellished and is a parody of a scene from the movie “Ghost”. The advertisement is intended to be humorous, fun and light-hearted, and in our view is inoffensive.

THE DETERMINATION

The Advertising Standards Board (“Board”) first considered this advertisement under the Federal Chamber of Automotive Industries’ Advertising for Motor Vehicles Voluntary Code of Practice (the “FAI Code”).

To come within the FAI Code, the material being considered must be an ‘advertisement’ for a ‘motor vehicle’. The Board considered that the advertisement for the Ford Fiesta satisfied these criteria.

The Board then analysed specific sections of the FCAI Code and their application to the advertisement. The Board identified that clause 2(a) was relevant in the circumstances.

In order to breach clause 2(a) of the FCAI Code, the advertisement must portray:

“unsafe driving, including reckless and menacing driving that would breach any Commonwealth law... if such driving were to occur on a road or road related area...”

The Board noted that the depictions within the advertisement of the car being driven did not depict any unsafe driving or any driving that would breach any law.

The Board concluded that the advertisement did not portray any unsafe driving in breach of clause 2 (a) of the FCAI Code. The Board considered that the advertisement did not breach the FCAI Code in any way.

The Board then considered whether this advertisement breaches section 2 of the Advertiser Code of Ethics (the “Code”).

The Board considered that the advertisement was a humorous parody of a famous scene from the 1980s movie “Ghost”. The Board noted that advertisers are free to use whatever concepts they choose in advertising their products, subject to compliance with the Code of Ethics.

The Board noted the sexual innuendo in the advertisement. The Board considered that the sexual tone was lightened by the fact that the scene parodied an emotionally charged scene from ‘Ghost’ and that the advertisement was not inappropriate.

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