



## CASE REPORT

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|-------------------------------|---|
| 1. Complaint reference number | 368/08  |
| 2. Advertiser                 | Thrifty Link Hardware   |
| 3. Product                    | Housegoods/services   |
| 4. Type of advertisement      | TV  |
| 5. Nature of complaint        | Violence Other – section 2.2<br>Health and safety – section 2.6 |
| 6. Date of determination      | Wednesday, 8 October 2008                                       |
| 7. DETERMINATION              | Dismissed   |

## DESCRIPTION OF THE ADVERTISEMENT

This television advertisement features Red Symons with a baby "mini-Red" in a cot, wearing a suit and glasses similar to Red. A voice over relates "It's nice to remember all the things your Dad has done for you with the Thrifty Link Make Dad Happy sale." Red is seen to change the baby's nappy wearing a gas mask and using kitchen tongs. Red is then seen with the child a little older, and Red throws him a ball which knocks the child's glasses off, at which Red says "Sorry". Red is then seen pushing the child on a swing, so hard that the swing returns empty. Red then reads the child bedtime stories from "Tales from the Graveyard" in a scary manner.

## THE COMPLAINT

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

*I watched an advert on channel 9 this morning with the comedian Red. It was an advert for Thrifty Link Hardware. In it a child had a ball thrown in his face which knocked his glasses off. He was then pushed off a swing. Then he was read bed time stories that were supposed to frighten the life out of him. I feel this is saying it is alright to bully and frighten a child and find it very offensive and definitely not funny.*

*National identity - Red Symons is shown with a young male child about 7 years old, 'playing' with hardware equipment in a Mitre 10 store. With each hardware item being looked at, the child was on the receiving end of this being used/thrown at him.*

## THE ADVERTISER'S RESPONSE

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

*The complainants cite "violence" as the reason for their complaints. We are of the firm belief that the TVCs in question do not present or portray violence in any way. We are also of the belief that the TVCs do not have any other issues that fall within the scope of Section 2 of the Advertiser Code of Ethics.*

*Rather, the TVCs show our hero character, Red Symons and his incompetent attempts to parent his child as a humorous example of what-not-to-do and are not intended to be taken seriously or literally. These TVCs draw their humour in part from Red Symons' popular public persona of a grumpy misanthrope. The slapstick comedy moments are accompanied by cartoon-style sound effects to indicate that these are not real accidents. The TVCs were intended to be humorous, and we regret that the complainants did not find them so.*

*It is also important to note the production of these TVCs was fully compliant with all child*

*protection regulations and that the children who appeared were not hurt or upset in any way.*

## **THE DETERMINATION**

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

The Board considered the application of Sections 2.2 and 2.6, relating to violence and health and safety. The Board carefully viewed the advertisement and considered that there was an implication of nastiness, but the presentation, including sounds and the well-known character used, gave it a slapstick character which did not constitute violence or contravene prevailing community standard of violence, health or safety. The Board therefore found no breach of either Sections 2.2 or 2.6.

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