



CASE REPORT

1. Complaint reference number	379/06
2. Advertiser	Lever Rexona (Rexona – Riskville)
3. Product	Toiletries
4. Type of advertisement	TV
5. Nature of complaint	Health and safety – section 2.6
6. Date of determination	Tuesday, 10 October 2006
7. DETERMINATION	Dismissed

DESCRIPTION OF THE ADVERTISEMENT

This television advertisement depicts men engaged in various “risky” activities beginning with hanging from a helicopter. On seeing this, another man uses his bare fist to smash the glass on a bathroom mirror door to get at his Rexona deodorant, and jumps from a high window onto the roof of a passing bus, where other men are also sitting. A motor cyclist is seen riding his bike upright on one wheel, and a police car skids and swerves as the police officer driving stops at a coffee stand. As the police car moves away it collides with a cyclist who is thrown from his bike. Another man leaps through a glass storefront window to hail a taxi and when one doesn’t stop, he jumps onto the rear of the moving vehicle. Various scenes show vehicles in chaos on the road, ending with a delivery courier riding his bike through a glass window to deliver a parcel. Another man with his clothing in flames shakes hands with a colleague as the men on the helicopter hover nearby. A man then falls through a glass skylight into a conference room and is handed a coffee. A male voiceover announces “Rexona Men. Extreme Protection. For men who take risks. Rexona. It won’t let you down”.

THE COMPLAINT

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

This add (sic) is no different to the Coca Cola add with the man surfing the bus. The impression it gives susceptible viewers is that it is alright to treat vehicles and other road users with little or no respect as long as you use a good deodorant. Obviously these adds are not regulated prior to being aired but someone must show some responsibility.

THE ADVERTISER’S RESPONSE

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

· Our media buying is against a male target, and as such the programming is amongst live sporting matches such as the “AFL Grand Final” and shows targeting more mature viewers, such as “The Footy Show” and “The Simpsons”. In this environment, the humour and content of the advertisement is consistent with the programming that surrounds it.

· I believe that the Riskville TVC is indeed very different from the Coca Cola ad due to the fact that our entire TVC, and not just a part of it, is set in a fictitious world called Stunt City, where performing stunts is an everyday occurrence. All the stunts in the TVC were performed by trained professionals and the creative execution of the various scenes in no way emulates reality. The entire TVC is a hyperbole with over 14 stunts performed in 45 seconds and combined with the humorous nature of the stunts, no reasonable person is likely to act adversely as the consequence of watching the TVC.

· Furthermore, the TVC creatively illustrates exaggerated behavior in a tongue-in-cheek manner with a humorous effect.

· It might be interesting to note that the Riskville TVC was shot at The Rocks in Sydney and has been part of various highly successfully international campaigns in numerous countries, including the UK.

In closing, the TVC does not encourage viewers to disobey road safety rules or attempt to perform stunts themselves, as the TVC is unquestionably a hyperbole that in no way emulates reality.

THE DETERMINATION

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

The Board viewed the advertisement and considered whether the acts depicted in the advertisement showed material contrary to prevailing community standards on health and safety.

The Board noted that the advertisement showed numerous depictions of various dangerous stunts executed on an ‘everyday city morning’. However the Board determined that the over-the-top nature of the stunts, provided the advertisement with a tongue-in-cheek flavour that the Board felt would leave the viewer in no doubt about the advertisement’s imaginary nature. The Board agreed that the humorous ‘alternative reality’ was particularly strengthened by the shots of businessmen hanging from a helicopter carrying briefcases apparently on their way to work, and of an office worker stopping in the street to shake hands casually with an associate while set alight on fire.

The Board considered whether the advertisement was likely to encourage viewers to take dangerous risks as a result of viewing the advertisement. The Board noted that it had previously considered and upheld complaints about other advertisements that showed dangerous acts, but the Board agreed that these previous advertisements had contained footage of more realistic scenes. In this case, the Board considered the unrealistic, slapstick nature of the advertisement and concluded that the advertisement was unlikely to encourage dangerous behaviour because the scenes that advertisement depicted were considered by the Board to be ‘pure fantasy’.

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