



CASE REPORT

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| 1. Complaint reference number | 72/07 |
| 2. Advertiser | Ford Motor Co Aust Pty Ltd (Ranger) |
| 3. Product | Vehicles |
| 4. Type of advertisement | TV |
| 5. Nature of complaint | Other - Causes alarm and distress to children |
| 6. Date of determination | Tuesday, 13 March 2007 |
| 7. DETERMINATION | Dismissed |

DESCRIPTION OF THE ADVERTISEMENT

This television advertisement is themed to portray characters reminiscent of Greek mythological heroes of legend. A Ford Ranger is driving through a quarry when huge boulders start raining on the vehicle. The driver sees a one-eyed Cyclops monster hurling the boulders and manoeuvres the truck to catch the boulders in its tray before driving between the Cyclops legs, causing it to lose balance and fall. The vehicle is then seen towing a boat on a trailer and arriving at a sea shore. A Neptune-style figure holding a trident arises from the sea and proceeds to whip up the waves to engulf the vehicle, which effortlessly ploughs through the water hazard. The driver gives a thumbs-up sign to neptune as the latter hurls his trident after the vehicle. A male voice over concludes "The new Ford Ranger. Legendary touch."

THE COMPLAINT

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

...depicts a large monster like creature heaving a huge rock down onto the ford Ranger and drives as it passes under a bridge. I find it horrific that an advertising agency would use such a gimmick when not that long ago a person driving a motor vehicle was seriously injured by vandals trwowing rocks onto his car. There has (sic) been numerous offences like this one by rock throwing vandals. I find it highly offensive that the advertisement passed censorship and who ever designed such a thing where are their principles and consideration for the victims of these criminal offences.

THE ADVERTISER'S RESPONSE

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

The Ford Ranger television commercial uses the mythological creature 'Cyclops' to convey toughness, strength and to be an imposing challenger for the new Ford Ranger. He is a comical character and is used to portray the vehicle as being "legendary tough". 'Cyclops' throws the rock towards Ranger in attempt not to be defeated. This is obviously a fictitious scenario. Further, the Ranger TVC does not depict rocks being thrown onto the Ranger vehicle as it passes under a bridge as alleged in the complaint. The rocks which Cyclops is throwing are thrown with Cyclops standing on the ground and there is no bridge depicted in the Ranger TVC at all. Incidents where people throw rocks onto passing vehicles from bridges are obviously dangerous and can have tragic consequences but there is simply no connection whatsoever between that type of activity and the fantasy scenario depicted in the Ranger TVC.

'Cyclops' is an animated character who has been created in a style reminiscent of the special effects produced in the 1950s and 1960s in feature films such as "Jason and the Argonauts". This

effect is designed to be both tongue in cheek and nostalgic, harking back to the days of the Saturday matinee.

In reference to Clause 2 of the FCAI Code of Practice for Motor Vehicle Advertising, the Ford Ranger television does not portray unsafe driving:

- *The driving in the commercial conforms to the relevant road safety regulations.*
- *The vehicle was driven within the legal speed limits at all times.*
- *Special permission/permits were not required for any filming of the commercial.*

Given the light-hearted tone of this commercial, we do not believe the new Ford Ranger television commercial contravenes the provisions of the AANA Advertiser Code of Ethics or the FCAI Code of Practice for Motor Vehicle Advertising.

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 “FCAI Code”).

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

The Board then analysed specific sections of the FCAI Code and their application to the advertisement.

The Board noted that the advertisement creates a fantasy situation where an animated creature is depicted throwing rocks at a car, and that the fantasy did not relate to the driving practices depicted.

The Board considered that there were no depictions of unsafe driving in the advertisement (clause 2 (a) of the FCAI Code) and that the depictions within the advertisement of the car being driven did not include any driving that would breach any law.

Persons driving at excessive speeds (clause 2(b) of the FCAI Code) or driving practices, within the definition of the FCAI Code, that would breach a law (clause 2(c)).

The Board determined that the advertisement did not breach the FCAI Code in any way.

The Board then considered whether the advertisement breached the AANA Advertiser Code of Ethics (the Code), the Board noted that under Section 2.7 of the Code advertisements for motor vehicles must comply with the FCAI Code and Section 2.6 of the Code does not apply with respect to driving practices.

The Board then considered whether the images of the creature throwing the rocks at the car was in breach of Section 2.6 of the Code. The Board concluded that the advertisement was clearly animated fantasy and therefore did not depict real scenes that were in contravention of community standards on health and safety.

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