



CASE REPORT

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| 1. Complaint reference number | 95/00 |
| 2. Advertiser | Sony Computer Entertainment Aust Pty Ltd (Army Men - Air Attack and 3D) |
| 3. Product | Toys & Games |
| 4. Type of advertisement | TV |
| 5. Nature of complaint | Discrimination or vilification Other – section 2.1
Violence Other – section 2.2
Language – use of language – section 2.5 |
| 6. Date of determination | Tuesday, 11 April 2000 |
| 7. DETERMINATION | Dismissed |

DESCRIPTION OF THE ADVERTISEMENTS

There are two ‘Army Men’ television advertisements, each concluding with the voiceover words, ‘Real combat. Plastic men.’

1. ‘Army Men – Air Attack’: The advertisement portrays the interior of a house where the ballet, ‘Swan Lake’, is being broadcast on television. A toy soldier says, ‘Captain, I need air support here.’ Toy helicopters fly through the house and are ordered by a soldier to ‘Turn that off’. The helicopters fire and the television screen explodes. Another soldier, in a helicopter, says, ‘Now that’s ballet’.

2. ‘Army Men – 3D’: The advertisement portrays a toy man, with his toy female passenger, driving a toy sports car, registered MR SEXY, through the interior of a house until they reach a child’s bedroom. The car skids and crashes into toys. The driver gulps as he sees a toy soldier aim and fire at them. The car with its passengers explodes. The soldier says, ‘Damn yuppies’.

THE COMPLAINT

Comments which the complainants made regarding these advertisements included the following:

‘In recent times we have had military massacres of civilians in Bosnia, Kosovo and East Timor. In our own society we already have gun battles on the street between different ethnic groups, gunmen attack police and ambulances and thugs throw rocks into the windshields of trucks. How can our society afford the promotion of violence as a source of satisfaction? It is a very short step from this to six year olds shooting each other in school.’

‘This not only encourages violence and desensitization (sic) to killing but also hatred and intolerance of whole groups of people.’

THE DETERMINATION

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

The Board was of the view that the expression ‘damn’ did not offend prevailing community standards and that the portrayal, in this clearly fictitious context, of ballet dancers and yuppies as targets did not constitute discrimination or vilification. The Board determined that the advertisements did not breach the Code on these or any other grounds and, accordingly, dismissed the complaint.