

Case Report

1. Case Number :	0023-23
2. Advertiser :	Universal Pictures
3. Product :	Entertainment
4. Type of Advertisement/Media :	TV - Free to Air
5. Date of Determination	22-Feb-2023
6. DETERMINATION :	Dismissed

ISSUES RAISED

AANA Code of Ethics\2.3 Violence

DESCRIPTION OF ADVERTISEMENT

There are two versions of this television advertisement promoting the movie "M3GAN".

The first version includes:

- A robot girl (M3GAN) telling a human girl that they're going to be best friends and doing activities together such as reading, playing and dancing.
- A boy pushing a human girl against a tree. She cries out for M3gan who tells the boy he should run, before chasing after him on all-fours.
- A covered body on a trolley is wheeled towards a coroner's van.
- M3gan fires a nail gun into a human hand.

The second version includes:

- A human girl and M3gan playing and interacting with each other.
- A boy pushing a human girl against a tree. She cries out for M3gan who tells the boy he should run, before chasing after him on all-fours.
- The boy falling onto a road in front of a moving vehicle.



THE COMPLAINT

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

It's violent and unnecessary to show during a commercial. I don't need to see it.

This movie seems terrifying just by the ads and my children and I do not like to see these ads at all. They are disturbing and we would never choose to see the movie but we really don't want to see the ads for it. It causes us to change the channel. Such a horror movie should not be advertised when children are still watching tv.

THE ADVERTISER'S RESPONSE

Comments which the advertiser made in response to the complainant/s regarding this advertisement include the following:

Advertiser did not provide a response.

THE DETERMINATION

The Ad Standards Community Panel (Panel) considered whether the versions collectively forming this advertisement breach Section 2 of the AANA Code of Ethics (the Code).

The Panel noted the complainants' concern that the advertisement depicts violence and menace and is inappropriate for broadcast when children can view it.

The Panel viewed the advertisement and noted the advertiser did not respond.

Section 2.3 Advertising or Marketing Communications shall not present or portray violence unless it is justifiable in the context of the product or service advertised.

The Panel noted the Practice Note for this section of the Code which states "*Graphic depictions of violence or a strong suggestion of menace have been found to present violence in an unacceptable manner especially when visible to a broad audience which includes children. For example, advertising for violent or horror movies, tv shows or video games should take care not to include images that give the impression that a character has just committed violence against someone (for example, a weapon with dripping blood), was the victim of violence (for example, freshly severed limbs) or is about to commit violence against someone (for example, gun aimed directly at a person or the viewer) where there is a broad audience which includes children*".

Does the advertisement contain violence?

The Panel noted that the majority of the advertisement had a menacing theme with little physical violence, however noted a scene at the end of one version of the

advertisement depicting the title character firing a nail gun and an older woman shown with the nail in her hand, screaming, and that this was a depiction of violence.

The Panel noted scenes suggested that the title character had chased a boy to the point that he ran onto a road and was hit by a car, however noted that while this was heavily implied, the boy was not shown actually being hit by a vehicle.

The Panel considered that the advertisement did contain an overall feeling of threat and menace.

Is the violence portrayed justifiable in the context of the product or service advertised?

The Panel noted that the advertisement was promoting a movie titled 'M3GAN' which is rated M.

The Panel noted that the advertised product is a horror movie that contains violent scenes and graphic imagery, and noted that the majority of the scenes shown in the advertisement did not include violence or graphic images.

The Panel noted the depiction of the title character firing a nail gun and an older woman shown with the nail in her hand, screaming, and noted that this scene is fleeting, at the end of the advertisement, and poorly lit.

The Panel noted that the music in the advertisement and the sense of fear and growing alarm of the actors is suspenseful and does suggest a degree of menace, however the Panel considered that this suggestion is directly related to the horror nature of the movie being promoted.

Overall, the Panel's considered that while the tone of this advertisement was suspenseful it was not graphic. The Panel considered that the level of violence was not excessive in the context of an advertisement for a horror movie shown to a broad audience including children.

Section 2.3 conclusion

In the Panel's view the advertisement did portray violence that was justifiable in the context of the product being advertised and did not breach Section 2.3 of the Code.

Conclusion

Finding that the advertisement did not breach the Code on other grounds, the Panel dismissed the complaints.