

Case Report

1. Case Number :	0180-24
2. Advertiser :	Paramount Pictures Australia
3. Product :	Entertainment
4. Type of Advertisement/Media :	TV - Free to Air
5. Date of Decision:	24-Jul-2024
6. Decision:	Dismissed

ISSUES RAISED

AANA Code of Ethics\2.3 Violence

DESCRIPTION OF ADVERTISEMENT

There are three versions of this television advertisement which feature scenes from the movie 'Quiet Place: Day One'. The scenes include:

- A woman watching streaks of fire across the sky, before one lands near her
- A woman stumbling through a street filled with smoke as another person yells for help, and a shadowy figure runs across the background
- A woman on a bus as the windows implode and she shields herself from the glass
- A car flying over the heads of a crowd and exploding on landing
- An explosion on a bridge causing it to collapse
- Creatures falling through a glass ceiling.



THE COMPLAINT

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

Horror/thriller movie advertised during a family event, State of Origin. Children are often encouraged to watch with their parents and parents are often going to be up and about at half time. Totally irresponsible to show during the game that channel 9 knows children under 8 would be watching.

Movie advertisement

During a sport event (the ICC T20 Cricket World cup), Prime have been advertising a movie called the Quiet Place, which contains scary scenes for young children and will likely carry an MA15+ rating in cinemas. My kids are watching the cricket, but we have to tell them not to eat h the ads. We complained to Prime days ago and nothing has been done. Advertising such movies during a G rated sport program for families is not ok.

Kids watching origin when multiple ads for a horror movie come on during the break

The movie 'A Quiet Place' was advertised several times through the State of Origin Game 2. This movie contained horror themes, scary and frightening images of terrified people, alien disfigured creatures that were attacking people and creating horror to the characters. This movie is NOT a family movie and therefore should NOT be advertised during a heavy family viewing show.

The ad for A Quiet Place: Day One movie is inappropriate, terrifying, supernatural/apocalyptic horror themed played during the coverage of The State Of Origin on 26th July 2024, where many Australian children will be watching with their families. It is shocking this is advertised when children and adolescents may view it. A huge error in judgement.

The ad was played during a sports program which has many children watching (state of origin). The ad had content that was not suitable for children to watch and may have been frightening. It was not a suitable time for this type of ad.

THE ADVERTISER'S RESPONSE

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

In response to all complaints raised regarding advertising for our recent film release, A Quiet Place: Day One, please see comments from our Media Agency responsible for buying and placing our advertisements:

"I write regarding recent complaints to the Advertising Standards Bureau regarding TV spot placements for the advertising campaign for Paramount Picture's film A Quiet Place: Day One (AQP:D1).

“As the agency responsible for planning and booking all media placement for this campaign we can confirm the below details relating to complaints made against Channel Nine and Amazon Prime Video:

“1. In the instance of [free to air placements], TVC Key numbers PPQP30A, PPQP30B and PPQP30H were CAD Approved ‘H,’ ‘PG’ style (Clear ads approval numbers: HAR7LEPA, HAR7WEPA and HAR9BEPA respectively) which allowed the TVC to be run within the State of Origin telecast and 9Now on June 5 (PPQP30A, PPQP30B) and June 26 (PPQP30H).

“2. In the instance of the Amazon Prime Video T20 stream, we also adopted a similar placement strategy based on the CAD approved ‘PG style’ film TVCs (key numbers PPQP30A and PPQP30B.)”

We have provided and ‘Expected classification’ letter (applied to TVCs with ‘check the classification’ logo), stating that “The following film title by Paramount Pictures has been granted an Advertising Exemption: A Quiet Place: Day One - subject to “M” conditions (recommended for Mature Audiences)”. See final official classification here (M): <https://www.classification.gov.au/titles/quiet-place-day-one>

For further context, please note we take the approvals and advice from ClearAds seriously. The key numbers in question received the approval code, ‘H’ which refers to a “PG style commercial” and we highlight, for example, that this code is distinctly different to the code, ‘M’ and does not have specific directions or limitations around placement within sports. Further, we note that the only broadcast FTA placements were within the halftime break of the State of Origin on June 5 and June 26 (between 8:45pm and 9:30pm), we did not run any other Broadcast FTA ads during the entire campaign.

THE DECISION

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 is for a film with themes and images that are inappropriate for children to see, and it was played at an inappropriate time.

The Panel viewed the advertisement and noted the advertiser’s response.

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 soundtrack of the advertisement is suspenseful and eerie, and includes sounds such as a woman gasping, heavy breathing, whistling wind and loud noises.

The Panel noted that the imagery of the advertisement contains depictions of a person being held with a hand across their mouth, streaks of fire in the sky, explosions, and monsters crashing through a glass ceiling and chasing people. The Panel considered that the theme of the advertisement is menacing and that the advertisement did contain violence.

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

The Panel noted that the advertisement was promoting a horror/thriller film titled Scream which is rated M.

The Panel considered that although the advertisement contains distressing images, such as those referred to above, it uses quickly changing scenes which breaks up the sense of suspense. The Panel considered the advertisement does not contain blood or gore.

The Panel noted that this advertisement was broadcast on free-to-air TV and received a H rating (similar to PG) which meant that it could be placed in any timeslot except for children’s programming. The Panel noted that the advertisement was only played during the halftime break of State of Origin after 8:30pm. The Panel considered that the State of Origin did attract a child audience, however these would mostly be supervised children watching with their families.

Overall, the Panel considered that the tone of this advertisement was suspenseful and frightening, and contained a moderate level of menace. The Panel considered that the level of violence was not excessive in the context of an advertisement for a horror movie with an audience of adults and supervised 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.