



Ad Standards Community Panel
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AdStandards.com.au

Advertising Standards Bureau Limited
ACN 084 452 666

Case Report

1	Case Number	0095/19
2	Advertiser	Paramount Pictures Australia
3	Product	Entertainment
4	Type of Advertisement / media	TV - Free to air
5	Date of Determination	03/04/2019
6	DETERMINATION	Dismissed

ISSUES RAISED

- 2.3 - Violence Causes alarm and distress
- 2.3 - Violence Causes alarm and distress to Children
- 2.3 - Violence Violence

DESCRIPTION OF THE ADVERTISEMENT

This television advertisement is for the film for Pet Sematary, a new movie based on Stephen King's original novel. The advertisement features scenes from the film, including several scenes depicting characters wearing animal masks.

THE COMPLAINT

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

The ad was aired (prior to 8:30pm) during "Chris and Julia's Sunday Night Takeaway" TV program.

The TV program is rated PG, however the movie is rated MA15+, therefore my children (aged 11 and 13) who were watching the TV program, were frightened by the ad. It's inappropriate for such an ad to air prior to 8:30pm, during TV programs where there is a high possibility of young viewers. Ads for movies shown at this time should match the classification of the TV program.



Advertising a horror movie at 7.30pm when young children are awake and scenes contained disturbing content which is frightening.

The advertisement was shown prior to 7pm, at a time when young children are still viewing programs, families are seated for dinner or spending time with each other. The advertisement showed the trailer for the movie Pet Sematary which is a horror/thriller and would likely be classified as a MA15+. The ad raises questions of horror themes that people, including children should not be exposed to unless they choose to watch the movie.

It was on at 6.19pm - it is a horror that is rated R in the US. This is urgent and these horror ads should be pulled off immediately as they are frightening to children and even the music gets stuck in your head - very creepy stuff even for me!

I'm an 18 year old woman and can not watch television without being confronted by the terrifying images of the movie trailer Pet Cemetery

THE ADVERTISER'S RESPONSE

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

This TVC was booked and placed to target a People 18-49 audience demographic. Furthermore, I confirm that all TV networks in all markets aired these spots to comply with the Free TV Australia CAD classification.

The paid TV campaign ends of Saturday 7 April.

In selecting and placing content as part of our TV advertising schedule, Paramount Pictures made a concerted effort to seek the advice of CAD / Free TV Australia in editing out scenes that would be deemed inappropriate for a J classification. This process took 12 days to resolve and resulted in us opting to stay out of any PG / J timeslots until we had finessed this enough to satisfy classification guidelines. Our intention during this time was to work with our creative team to minimise the impression of horror / suggestions of menace so that we would have a safe version of the TV spot to play in earlier timeslots (in line with the adult targeting applied to our People 18-49 TV buy).

- Removed all screams*
- Reduced the intensity of the music*
- Edited scenes to be less frantic*
- Edited the scene of the figure crawling up the dumbwaiter to be fleeting enough and ambiguous enough to no longer be certain that it's an undead child*



Please feel free to reach out with any additional queries relating to this matter.

THE DETERMINATION

The Ad Standards Community Panel (Panel) considered whether this advertisement breaches Section 2 of the Advertiser Code of Ethics (the Code).

The Panel noted the complainants' concerns that the advertisement features frightening scenes that are inappropriate for the timeslot in which it aired.

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

The Panel considered whether the advertisement was in breach of Section 2.3 of the Code. Section 2.3 states: "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 complainants' concerns that the advertisement contained frightening scenes that are inappropriate for an early evening timeslot, and that scared their children. The Panel noted that the complainants' saw the advertisement in evening viewing times.

The Panel noted that this television advertisement features scenes from the upcoming movie 'Pet Sematary'. The Panel noted the advertisement includes a series of short scenes including a procession of people wearing animal masks and bloody footprints on a staircase.

The Panel noted that this advertisement was for a film classified MA15+ and noted that the advertisement had received a J rating from CAD meaning that it "may be broadcast at any time of day, except during P and C programs or adjacent to P or C periods. Exercise care when placing in programs principally directed to children." The Panel noted the advertiser's response that the advertisements were played at a time appropriate to the J rating.

The Panel considered that the advertisement did not contain any violent acts or graphic scenes and that there was no images of gore or wounds. The Panel considered that the music and sound-effects of the advertisement created a level of menace in the advertisement.

The Panel considered that the Practice Note for the Code provides: "a strong suggestion of menace presents violence in an unacceptable manner and breaches this section of the Code."

The Panel considered that the advertisement is suspenseful rather than graphic but



noted that some scenes in conjunction with the audio background may be frightening for children.

The Panel considered that the advertisement was for a horror film and therefore horror themes were relevant to the product.

The Panel considered that there is no specific violence in the advertisement and the horror themes in the advertisement are mild, and justifiable in the context of advertising a horror movie.

The Panel considered that the advertisement did not breach Section 2.3 of the Code.

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

