

Advertising Standards Authority

Broadcast Advertising Adjudications

24 November 2004



ADVERTISER: Britvic Soft Drinks Ltd
AGENCY: Clemmow Hornby Inge
Date: 24 November 2004
Media: Television
No. of Complaints: 4

COMPLAINT:

An advertisement for Tango showed a man wrapped in a carpet packed with oranges balanced on top of a pyramid of concrete construction pipes. The pyramid was held together by a rope, which was attached to a goat. As the goat moved away, the pyramid collapsed. The man fell between the concrete pipes and tumbled uncontrollably fast down a steep hill. At the bottom he crashed into a tree. Two of the pipes smashed into him, one after the other. The man then emerged from the carpet, drenched in juice, unharmed and smiling. The voice-over said "You know when you've been Tango'd"

The Authority received four complaints from viewers who were concerned that the advertisement trivialised and condoned a harmful situation and could encourage children to play with potentially lethal construction materials such as concrete pipes. Two viewers had lost an 11 year old member of their family in an accident involving concrete pipework. Another told us that the construction industry was actively campaigning to discourage children from playing with construction materials.

ADJUDICATION: Complaints upheld

Given the potential for serious harm resulting from emulation we directed that the advertisement be withdrawn pending the outcome of its investigation.

The Broadcast Advertising Clearance Centre (BACC) strongly disagreed that the commercial could encourage dangerous play and lead to accidents. It believed that the advertisement was surreal, featuring a goat in a field and a man wrapped in a carpet stuffed with oranges alongside some large lengths of concrete pipes accompanied by a spoof commentary. It said the commercial was not set on a building site or in any realistic setting that would suggest that the stunt was able to be copied or would normalise or condone the behaviour. It felt that, as with the preceding advertisements in the campaign, the treatment was fantastic and only the very young would not appreciate this point. It said that, with this in mind, it had awarded the commercial an ex-kids restriction to keep it away from children's programmes.

The advertiser and advertising agency expressed genuine concern if the advertisement had caused any offence. They said they believed the Tango advertisements brought a great deal of enjoyment to the majority of viewers, were not able to be copied, and were always intended as pure fantasy and entertainment.

They felt that the unfortunate circumstances regarding the family who complained could not have been foreseen. However, having been made aware of them, they felt it was right that the family was respected. The advertiser said that it acted swiftly and responsibly on hearing of the nature of the complaints by publicly stating that the advertisement would not be shown again and immediately removing it from its websites.

The Authority noted the advertisement shared its bizarre style with previous Tango advertisements and acknowledged that viewers would be familiar with that style. However, we believed Tango Pipes was different in the following respects: previous advertisements included scenes that would be far more difficult to copy; they required equipment that was not readily available or accessible and children were unlikely to perceive the scenarios as at all realistic. The new advertisement, although unlikely to be copied exactly as shown, showed the man rolling down a hill; an activity familiar to children and one they could easily copy. That could in itself result in serious injury regardless of whether pipes or similar objects were used. Pipework of the type used in the advertisement could often be found near roadworks and building sites and the advertisement was capable of giving older children, who were more likely to be playing unsupervised, the impression that such material was fun to play with.

We judged that the advertisement contained scenes that would be of particular appeal to children; the man appeared to be having fun and his actions were presented as cool, heroic and could easily appeal to a child's sense of mischief, experimentation and adventure. Many children enjoy rolling down hills, playing in pipes and barrels and on building sites. The advertisement gave no sense of consequence because the man appeared completely unharmed when he emerged from the carpet. Both the nature of the advertising and the product itself were likely to appeal to children and there was, in our view, a serious and realistic risk of harm. We therefore found the advertisement to be in breach of Rules 6.7 (Health and Safety) and 7.3.2 (Children - physical harm) of the CAP (broadcast) TV Code.

The advertisement should not be shown again.