

COMPLAINT NUMBER	18/215
COMPLAINANT	A Conroy
ADVERTISER	MediaWorks
ADVERTISEMENT	The Edge Television
DATE OF MEETING	11 July 2018
OUTCOME	No Grounds to Proceed

Advertisement: The television advertisement for The Edge Safehouse on The Edge TV showed a masked man kidnapping the Edge breakfast hosts. In each case the kidnapper placed a brown paper bag over the person's head. Dom was out jogging, Meg was in a supermarket car park and Randell was doing tai chi on a rugby field. The voice over says the hosts and a safe with \$10,000 cash are in a house somewhere in New Zealand. At the end of the advertisement the hosts are sitting inside a vehicle with their hands tied behind their backs. The words "The Edge SAFEHOUSE Fed by Burger King" then appeared on the screen along with a banner and voice over that said "Play now at www.theedge.co.nz."

The Chair ruled there were no grounds for the complaint to proceed.

Complainant, A Conroy, said: The complaint is in reference to the "Safe House" completion advertisement being played on The Edge TV. It last played at approx. 9.10am 15.6. 2018. It is advertising a cash competition by The Edge TV and is sponsored by Burger King.

Please accept this email as a formal complaint to the Advertising Standards Authority.

My complaint is as follows:

The Edge are running a competition for a "safe house completion". The advertising video opens with a vulnerable looking young woman being abducted from a public place. A bag is shoved over her head, she is incapacitated, she is then dragged off. The impact is very disturbing. It mirrors the crime abduction, rape and possible murder. Approx 1 in 3 New Zealanders have been subject to sexual violence.

Next 2 males are grabbed the same way but with less violence. The 3 are then shown bound and gagged in a van. The advertising makes a joke of serious violent offending.

It minimises and trivialises the impact and harm of such violent crimes. To a point it normalises the crime. It could work as a "how to" instruction video. It has no relevance to the competition it is promoting. It is extremely socially irresponsible for The Edge TV to broadcast this advertisement.

The relevant provisions were Code of Ethics - Basic Principle 4, Rule 4, Rule 5, Rule 6, Rule 7.

The Chair acknowledged the complainant's serious concerns the advertisement makes a joke of serious violent offending and it could be traumatic for people who have experienced similar events.

The Chair also acknowledged the distress the advertisement has caused the complainant.

The Chair said the kidnapping scenario was in questionable taste. She said this scenario was part of a promotion encouraging listeners to find the "kidnapped" radio hosts and \$10,000 cash.

The Chair took into account the advertisement played on The Edge TV, an environment where it was likely most viewers would be aware of the promotion and recognise the radio hosts. This means the scenario presented in the advertisement would be unlikely to normalise the idea of kidnapping or cause serious or widespread offence, and most people would be aware it was a promotional stunt.

The Chair noted the Commercial Approvals Board classification for this advertisement is GXC, General Except Children's Programmes. This means it may be broadcast at any time, except during programmes which are intended specifically for children under the age of 13. The Chair said the target audience for The Edge radio station is people aged between 18 and 39.

Therefore, while she acknowledged the Complainant's concerns about the advertisement and its impact on some viewers, the Chair said it did not reach the threshold to cause serious or widespread offence, or breach the due sense of responsibility required to consumers and to society. As such, she said there was no apparent breach of the Code of Ethics.

Accordingly, the Chair ruled that there were no grounds for the complaint to proceed.

Chair's Ruling: Complaint No Grounds to Proceed

APPEAL INFORMATION

According to the procedures of the Advertising Standards Complaints Board, all decisions are able to be appealed by any party to the complaint. Information on our Appeal process is on our website www.asa.co.nz. Appeals must be made in writing via email or letter within 14 days of receipt of this decision.