

Animal welfare board notice to Vodafone over pug ad

The Animal Welfare Board of India (AWBI) has accused telecom service provider Vodafone of indulging in cruelty to animals and issued a legal notice to the company and to Bangalore-based Nirvana Films, makers of an advertisement that shows a pug running after a school bus.

In its notice sent April 25, [Chennai](#) headquartered AWBI said: 'The pet dog was made to run, gallop and chase the school van for a long time on a public road. Thereby, the dog was made to undergo severe pain and suffering due to the exhaustion caused by chasing (the bus).'

AWBI lawyer S.R. Sundaram said: 'The final film should strictly follow the script submitted at the time of pre-shoot permission for the animal performances. It is also directed that the performing animals should not be subjected to any cruelty, failing which the AWBI will initiate legal proceedings under the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act, 1960.'

Nirvana Film's counsel Balshankar Menon had March 29 submitted an application seeking the AWBI's approval of the advertisement, saying that the male pug called Rocky was Vodafone's brand icon.

Menon said the film was shot in South Africa and Nirvana submitted a 'post-shoot fitness certificate duly signed by the veterinary doctor' while applying for the no-objection certificate.

AWBI has, however, told Nirvana Films and Vodafone that it has been 'illegally' telecasting the advertisement for the last two weeks as AWBI's Film Screening Committee has found the portion of the advertisement in which the pug runs behind the bus objectionable.

The AWBI has ordered Nirvana Films and Vodafone to remove that part of the advertisement.

The legal notice states: 'The third sequence in the ad film titled 'Vodafone Customer Service', which depicts and picturises the pug holding the grey striped school tie in its mouth and speedily chasing behind the school van is objected to by the Film Screening Committee, which has taken a decision to direct you to delete and remove portion/sequence of picturisation in your ad film....

'Accordingly, you are hereby instructed and informed to delete/remove the above said objectionable portion/sequence forthwith and send the revised VCD for consideration by the Film Screening Committee of the AWBI.

'It has been brought to the notice of the Film Screening Committee that your ad film has been already telecast and continuously being telecasted for the past two weeks and such a telecast is illegal, and flagrant violation since the above said ad film is yet to be accorded permission/approval/clearance,' it added.

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