

Vodafone denies cruelty to mascot pug

A spokesman of mobile telephony major Vodafone Friday denied charges of cruelty to its mascot pug. The charges had been levelled by the Animal Welfare Board of India (AWBI).

'It is clear from the filming that the dog could not have been subjected to any cruelty during the filming,' a Vodafone spokesman told IANS.

In its notice sent to Vodafone April 25, 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).'

Officials in Nirvana Films, which had made the ad for Vodafone, said: 'The AWBI is unaware of modern techniques of filmmaking. No single shot of a television commercial lasts more than 15 seconds at the most. Therefore, to suggest that the dog suffered due to exhaustion by chasing a bus is taking things a bit too far.'

R. Kumar, an established television commercial maker here, told IANS the truth could be established if the original canned shots were to be analysed scientifically.

'On the basis of experience, I can say that most filmmakers do not take a shot lasting more than 10 seconds - be it a television commercial, or a feature film. Breathers available to man and beast between shots last minimum 10 minutes.

'The truth can be established beyond doubt by submission of canned shots for analysis. Techniques of carbon dating and forensics can find out the periodicity of the shots, the time taken between the breaks thereby clearly judge whether the animal in question was exhausted or not.'

The pug, Rocky - the mascot of Vodafone and its earlier avatar Hutch - was certified fit by a veterinary doctor after the filming was completed several weeks ago in South Africa, Nirvana Films' counsel B. Menon said.

'We have sought time from AWBI to explain the issue in person and are hopeful for an early meeting for resolution of this matter,' a Vodafone spokesman added.

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