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# Harley Davidson

The holidays are coming, and if you happen to be a Harley owner, or are shopping for one, then consider yourself lucky. Because everything you could ever want or need can be found inside a Harley Davidson store. If you want to one-up your shopping companions, check the items off the gift list you've put together for family and friends, or just get a bunch of cool stuff for yourself — it's all there, it's all Harley, and it's all... awesome.

That's the basic message we're setting out to deliver, and I think you've done a great job with the scripts you've put together for this campaign. They're well conceived. They're written in a wonderfully dry and ironic style. And they allow us to feature a wide range of product in ways that will feel organic to the characters and storytelling.

My goal is to help you bring them all to life by taking an approach that combines great casting and performances, with a look that grounds these moments in a cinematic reality. That's what I think will serve the scripts best, and what follows are some thoughts on how I would like make that happen.

## The Look & Tone

Part of this campaign's strength is that it speaks directly to people who are already passionate about the brand. They love Harley Davidson. It's part of their lifestyle, and we want to offer them as much eye candy as we can while making sure that it appears as bold and beautifully filmed as possible.

If we're filming the bikes, we want to light them in ways that will offer the sheet metal and chrome a liquid quality that features their distinctive power and style. For the other products like caps, jackets, hoodies, branded audio products, etc., we'll search for ways of making them look their absolute best — while integrating them into the stories in ways that feel organic to the action.

As far as the store is concerned, a lot will depend on the extent that it will be dressed and art directed for the holidays. For the most part, the videos don't require that we capture broad, sweeping views of the store's entirety. Instead we can isolate areas to see a few of the bikes, a check-out stand, or a variety of shelves where someone is grabbing a bunch of merchandise. Based on those specific areas of the store that need to be filmed, we can plan the shoot in a way that allows us to work with a minimal amount of holiday set dressing. If we have more props to work with, we can scale things up (or down) accordingly.

That can be supported by shooting with shallow depth of field, while using a camera that feels slightly observational. The lighting will be designed to focus on the specific areas and products we want to feature, while allowing the backgrounds to fall off. And to make the best use of our time, we can also schedule our shoot so that we are dressing one area while shooting in another.

In terms of the tone of the comedy, I think the scripts demand to be treated in a way that is dry, understated, and fairly restrained. There's nothing to be gained by pushing the comedy to a point that it feels overly broad or over-the-top. It's not slapstick or dependent on big gags. We're simply capturing some moments that find comedy in the reality of human behavior. Keeping things within that realistic range is what will serve the comedy best, and that's what I would strive to bring to these stories.

## The Casting

We'll be searching for slightly aspirational people who fit the brand identity. Since we want to speak to both a traditional audience of people who are already Harley enthusiasts, while reaching out to a younger clientele, we'll make sure to find actors who fit both demographics.

Looks aside, it's also important to find actors who understand and can deliver the comic tone we're after. The performances need to remain fairly understated. We never want to feel as if these people are trying to reach for laughs. The key is to allow the situations to speak for themselves, and to play the moments sort of close to the (leather) vest. The more subtle the deliveries and the more believable the performances are, the better and funnier the stories will be.

For stories like these, I also think it would be a good idea to look for people who have some experience in improv. Luckily, since we're planning to cast in Chicago, we'll have access to a nice mix of talent from the comedy clubs and improv groups like Second City. This will also enable us to work with experienced non-union talent who can deliver the tone of comedy we're after. And to fill things out, we can bring in some store employees to use as extras. That will allow us to make these moments feel like they are happening right in the midst of a busy holiday shopping season by bringing just the right amount of hustle and bustle to the surroundings, without ever distracting from the bikes, the merchandize, and our principal talent.

## The Spots

*ONE UP* is easy to love, and in order to make the most of the comedy, it's important to cast a great ensemble of women who can deliver just the right level of cattiness and condescension — with a smile.

As each line is delivered, and each woman is one-upped by the other, we want to be able to feel those daggers being turned while using the camera to immerse viewers in the thinly veiled tension gradually growing between them. There is no hiding what they

really mean when they say *That's nice... That's great... Cute... or I love it...!* And we want that to come across in the performances.

Gradually we'll up the ante on the gifts being purchased until we reach the topper of them all by revealing our final woman sitting on a new 2018 bike. For this moment, we'll want to hold off the reveal as long as possible by cutting to a wider shot at just the right moment to punctuate the end of her line. To push things a little further, we can also take a beat to capture the reactions of the others — who are doing their best to pretend that they are still the best of friends who would never dream of talking badly about the others behind their backs.

*SALAD SPINNER* is another spot that depends on just the right attitude and delivery of the lines. As I mentioned during the call, I would like to search for someone to play this part who can bring a quality reminiscent of the way Jim Gaffigan or Bill Burr can play two parts of a conversation.

When our guy shifts between his own voice and his wife's, he should really get into this two-sided dialogue — and not just vocally, but also in the way he shifts his physicality. Those little nuances and slightly feminine gestures and expressions delivered from a 50-55 year old Harley guy, can breath real life into the comedy. To make sure we get that, we'll want to cast a great improv actor, and then cover off as many variations as we can, so that you'll have all you need to work with in the edit — and more.

*GIFTS* depends on creating a build in which we see a guy dumping an absolute mountain of merchandise on the check-out counter. Creating an intentional misdirect, will lead the viewer to naturally believe that this a super generous guy is shopping for all his family and friends — which is exactly what the Harley Associate thinks when he or she gets an eye-full of all this stuff.

After the guy drops all the merchandise on the counter, we might take a beat for the Associate to react before delivering the full line. Something simple like an understated, *Wow...* would give us a few seconds to see a montage of all the different items this guy has scooped up. Then, after the slightest pause the Associate can complete the thought by saying, *Someone's family is going to be pretty happy this year...*

Cutting to the customer's reaction — we instantly realize the truth. The original expression he had on his face sort of melts away. *Family...?* When he realizes what he's done, his eyes widen, maybe he holds a finger up to indicate he's not quite done, and quickly turns to head back into the store. Or, maybe once the thought registers he says, *Uh... Hold up*, before spinning on his heels to head back down the aisles.

*LIST SCROLL* is fairly simple and straightforward, and like the other spots, depends on keeping the moments and the lines dry and understated. This guy has a more than lengthy holiday gift list on his phone. And once he starts scrolling, we literally never

reach the end of it. In support of the comedy, I really like the idea of having a little sound cue to help push the idea of the scrolling. Hearing that rhythmic clicking coming from his phone as the items fly by can give us a sense of just how many things are on that list. Our Associate is trying his best to take this all in, but gradually he starts react. After hearing it clicking on and on as he continues to scroll down, we could even take things to the limit by having the clicking sound continue after cutting away to the tag, so that it's still clicking all the way through to the end.

*SHOPPER* centers around a younger woman in the 25 - 30 age range, and for her we might want to search for someone with a look similar to that of Jessi Combs. She's pretty — but instead of being soft or overly girlish, she has kind of a feminine biker edge to her.

After that, this really comes down to executing a story similar to the way *Gifts* played out. But in this case, instead of seeing her dump all the items on the counter, we'll travel with her through the aisles as she's grabbing them and checking people off her list. Shooting with shallow depth of field, and incorporating some foreground elements into the scenes will help keep the moments visually interesting while focusing the eye on the products.

We can also push the humor a bit by pairing some unexpected gifts to the people mentioned when she selects them. In other words, maybe it might be funnier for her to choose a teddy bear for Dad, and a leather jacket for Grandma. It's just a thought, and after shooting the moments as scripted, we might want to play around with the combinations, just to see what we can come up with.

*REACTION* is perhaps the simplest of the spots, and for this I think the comedy really depends on finding the right Youtube video. The bigger and crazier the women's reaction, the longer it plays out, and the more we can milk it, the better. Once we've taken that in, and our customer tells the Associate that this is the kind of reaction he wants from his wife, we simply want to capture a reaction from the Associate that is totally taken for granted. It should feel like he gets this kind of request all the time, and responds in a way that is as routine as the Youtube video is hysterical.

## Finally

The spots are all great. They offer an exciting opportunity to deliver comedy without ever needing to reach for laughs. What's most important at this point is that we cast them well and work in a way that will enable us to capture the maximum amount of coverage, and the right tone of understated comedy, while offering viewers a wonderland of gift ideas that will make any and all Harley enthusiasts' holiday wishes come true.

Thanks again for sending them my way, and I look forward to speaking with you further.