

IKEA Director's Treatment



Life's really just a series of small, but important decisions we make along the way.

And Ikea, that champion of seamlessly functional design wants to remind us of that. So this film in its own way, is a cautionary tale. A real life situations gone ever so slightly awry. Why did it go wrong? Because every one of the well meaning but hapless victims in each story failed to realize a basic, unequivocal truth – life's most basic and good decisions happen around an equally sound, trustworthy dining table. And if your table's not from Ikea – well, good luck. And to prove the point, your friends, while sitting around their Ikea table just voted to have Gunther move in. Yes, that Gunther. Same guy that sits in your room. At night. And watches you sleep.

APPROACH

This spot excels because it has a touch of dark comedy: it's an otherwise simple life-moment that went off track and careened our unwitting characters into unfavorable situations. And really, I see no reason to play these any other way. Because the very best comedy embraces the absurd, ironic and slightly warped circumstances we all suffer. So let's go ahead and anchor our performances and filmmaking in real life. And then simply let our story unfold in the most unforced way. And in the process, reveal the eccentric, unexpected twist of fortune the spot conveys in our heroes experience. We should light and shoot this so it has a nice touch of cinematic realism - without looking overtly 'commercial'. The camera shouldn't feel intrusive or lead the action in an obvious way. But instead, help these scenes feel like CINEMA – so our audience feels that they are watching character-driven, comedic drama as if from a good indie movie. And when all's said and done, appreciate the importance of having a good table from Ikea – since it could be all that stands between you and a seriously questionable new roommate.

OUR CAST

What I enjoy about these characters is, they're us. The good people of life – trying to simply make things work out. So why not build a cast from folks every bit as flawed and as vulnerable as we are? I think some talented performers who can bring their own honest, idiosyncratic well meaning illogic and wrong-headed decision-making would yield dead-on, painfully funny comedy. Because honestly, who hasn't jumped on the new roommate bandwagon at least once in their life. And a week later seen them on America's Most Wanted?

Okay, maybe that's a bit severe – but you get my point. Your ideas are all first cousin to situations and circumstances we can relate to. So let's not play these like thinly veiled comedy skits staged for a commercial. And instead, allow the sincerity of the performances to draw the audience in. Make them feel at home. And then, surprise them with comedy that springs from situations which make us just a bit queasy. Like that new roommate in the dark. Watching you sleep.

I was thinking things could play out like this...

THE ROOMMATES

We open on a bedroom in the middle of the night. A man sleeps alone, peacefully in his bed, snug under his duvet. From outside, we hear the pitter-patter of rain and the faint drone of traffic in the distance. From the dressing and decorations in the room, we can guess that this man is a single guy in his late twenties. Everything is cozy and nocturnal - just as it should be.

However, as the camera pans around, it reveals a lanky-haired strange man in his forties, moving slowly back and forth in a rocking chair. The stranger stares intently at the man in the bed, his eyes shining in the darkness. The rocking chair creaks almost imperceptibly as the weird stranger begins to hum a familiar nursery rhyme, totally out of tune.

It's the freakiest version of 'Twinkle Twinkle Little Star' that you've ever heard. As he hums it, he strokes a stuffed ferret that sits on his lap, like an inanimate pet. Even the ferret is terrifying as it has been taxidermied with a fixed permanent snarl. The sizeable collection of rings on his fingers, clink and clank as he strokes the ferret.

As the stranger comes to the end of the first verse, he begins to laugh demonically. The young man in the bed suddenly sits bolt upright to find this crazy person in his bedroom. The young man yelps in abject terror and stares at the stranger, overwhelmed with fear.

The stranger stares back. Neither of them blinks.

After a moment of terror-filled silence, in a sinister raspy voice, the stranger says "heIIllloooo". With all the courage that he can muster, the man in bed replies "Gunther.....?" We cut back to a close up of the man in the bed. We suspect he may have wet himself. Or worse.

We cut to a flashback. Four roommates sitting around a kitchen table. They are evidently discussing something important. The young man from the bedroom is noticeably absent from the scene, even though there is an empty place setting for him. After a moment we hear one of the housemates say... "So who agrees with Gunther moving in...?" They all raise their hands in agreement.

Super: 78% of all important decisions are taken around a table. Take your seat back at the table.

SUMMARY

What a ruthlessly fun idea – that cleverly plays on the fact that you spend a lot of quality time with your furniture. Why not make sure it's sound and reliable – compared to so many of your life decisions which aren't? I believe with some thoughtful production design, relatable performances and a stuffed ferret, we can inspire people to visit their Ikea very soon. Thanks for the great work, and let's talk again soon.