

QUICKBOOKS / DEATH WISH COFFEE
Director's Treatment



You won't get any argument from me that...

...coffee is without a doubt, what's made my career possible. Much less even, conceivable. But not everyone agrees with me. Oh, there's consensus that coffee is the only dreamable solution to the problem of waking up. Every morning. But which coffee? And what if against reasoned argument for personal preference a single brew emerged that all but guaranteed Viking like valor, confidence and the absolute courage to face any challenge? Well, then you'd have Death Wish coffee. Quickbooks Small Business winner. And the unrivaled star, of this commercial.

DEATH WISH: STORM'S A BREWIN'

The camera rakes low and fast against a brackish, dark Sea. Then pulls back - reveals a Viking ship. The ocean is a cauldron of boiling madness. Trying to tear this Viking ship apart.

A frenzied wind fills the sails. A row of torches fastened across the ship's railing flicker and fight the wind, illuminating the boat against the black skies.

A hard cut slams us face-to-face with a tall, muscular Viking. His beard is braided, his hair pulled back tight. Wind whips him, tears at his armor. He is a commanding, fearless presence - Bjorn.

BJORN: Forward-men! The day of reckoning is upon us! My brothers, I pray you the question; what is life if not to die in the glorious agony of battle!?

Bjorn's speech is everything. It's Henry The V's Agincourt battle cry, but 700 years earlier. It is passionate and powerful. And it fills his men's hearts with pride and unflinching commitment. They will follow Bjorn, anywhere. Even to death.

The ship heaves side-to-side as Bjorn steadies himself.

We cut to the other men on this ship, his brothers, his comrades – they roar their approval in a deafening, triumphant cry. We see the men, one by one – Kanut The Red, a fearsome, ginger bearded warrior, pumping his tremendous battle-axe above his head.

Wind rips against the chest plate of Erik, a Scandinavian god of a man, his beautiful hair woven tightly, his eyes defiant and proud.

We see Baldr – a small, delicate man. Not at all what we expect of a Son Of Odin. Baldr is the village fishmonger, an easily frightened man, here by conscription, not honor. A flare of lightning punctuates the night. Baldr gives a small yell, and rows for his life.

Water crashes up the ship's hull, spilling over Baldr, almost drowning him. Even the seas color looks vengeful – black, with striations of dark caramel and sooty grey. Its sound is terrifying.

BJORN: This morning we awoke but men, but tonight we drink in the halls of Valhalla! At the table of Odin!

The men lean into their oars, those standing smash their swords into their shields, defying the God's themselves. The sound of the water is deafening.

BJORN: The dawn approaches! Row with all your might! Awaken yourselves and welcome death!

The men are into full warrior frenzy now, crashing their swords into their shields, yelling and whooping. Dagrún, an older warrior, his beard twisted into a triple braid, shouts encouragement to his brothers, waves his heavy sword to the heavens, beckoning Odin.

The men yell back, rowing hard and mightily, ready to stare down death. Suddenly, a shadow crosses the ship. The men stop yelling and shouting. All of a sudden, the ship pitches forward unexpectedly at a sharp, downward angle. In an instant, the men turn into five-year-old girls, yelling and scrambling everywhere.

What could it be? The Krakken – risen from the deep?

As the ship continues to precipitously pitch forward – the men scream...

The camera pulls back – and we see the Mighty Ship, except it's tiny. Especially compared to the real life coffee cup it's being poured out of. That brackish, terrifying sea? Death Wish Coffee. Going down the gullet of a guy in construction overalls.

Cut to a beauty shot of a bag of Death Wish and a branded mug of coffee slams down next to it.

SUPER/VO: Death Wish Coffee.

Possibly the world's strongest coffee.

www.deathwishcoffee.com. Fade to QuickBooks End Frame.

VO: Congratulations, Death Wish Coffee Company, winner of QuickBooks' Small Business Big Game.

NOTES

Bravery is powerful, alluring, inspiring. And that's what we'll witness here. An epic journey, men of a long ago time pitting themselves against the unforeseen. Everything we witness is stamped with heroism and the valor of warriorship. The commitment and honor we witness should swell

the viewer's hearts with a similar pride. And then the reveal becomes an unexpected, subversive (and perhaps comical) turn of events. Turns out Valhalla is a coffee cup. And their mighty ship isn't so mighty. But we're not mocking anyone. And we never abandon the metaphor we're using to storytell. We're simply rowing full speed into the pomposity of the genre. And viewer's expectations. And poaching it by turning an epic Odyssey of brave men, into falling over the edge of a coffee cup. If we want to button the ending with a touch more comedy, we can include a beat where we see them transform from hulking, fearless Vikings, into whining terrified men acting like little girls.

TONE

This will be funny. It can't help but be. But I also think it should be entirely believable. And human to a fault. This should rouse the viewer with contagious, inspiring energy. Should capture people's imagination and attention. Inflammate a bit of passion. At the same time, we're not trying to fool anyone. People are smart, they know this is an ad. And we're nodding to that by putting a good, strong shoulder behind the story and pushing vigorously. Until we stop pushing. And let the whole spot sail unexpectedly into the reveal with enough nuance, wit and intelligence that it's smart and funny, without feeling obvious or 'comedic'.

THE FX

The water / coffee is a key consideration. Obviously, we have to mind the rules of the Universe we've created – otherwise the viewer won't appreciate the cleverness of the lead up. So our sea, has to be coffee. But we'll backlight it and create some beautiful touches of deeper, shaded caramel tones throughout. When it splashes against the ship's hulls or men's faces, it won't be crystal clear water – but if we show the sea as angry, tossed and virulent, we can borrow a little poetic license visually when we show the water's 'muddied', or shaded hues.

EDITORIAL

Without a doubt this is epic, inspired and audacious – until the end. When the reveal let's the air out the balloon. But we can adjust how comedic or dry we want the ending to be. I would suggest we cover the ending as you've written it – and then shoot that one quick scene I've written in here, which is a lightly comedic shot of these previously unshakeable Vikings, suddenly screaming like little girls. So let's cover both endings – the epic until the end, serious one. And, one where we see their cowardice writ large and funny – made even more ridiculous by what it turns out, they're facing. We'll go to edit with both, and see what yields the strongest film.

CASTING

The men we see can never feel like actors. We want to dial historically and emotionally into who they are, as people. So let's make our story that much more dimensional and honest by creating a range of characters. Bjorn – tall, imposing, commanding. Erik, the young upstart full of impatient vigor and arrogance. Kanut and Dagrún - older warriors who've been to many battles and know what's to come. To a man, each has a story. And by looking at them we know who they were, in the village they come from. I think it also grounds this whole world with a truer humanity if we cast one or two comedic characters. For example, Baldr is a fishmonger, terrified of his own shadow. It's not that he's a cartoon, but there were men like that on the ship. And if we use one or two characters like him, it makes the setting and world that much more honest and human. And then, if we want to play the ending a bit more comedically, we have those guys to soften the epic bravado with comical levity.

I'd be honored to go into battle with you on behalf of Intuit. Thank you for reaching out.