

Extraordinary Filmmaker Brings Sean Swarner's Story to Life for Grape-Nuts Campaign

Multi-Award winning director and cinematographer Jonathan Bensimon proves once again why he is regarded as one of Canada's top talents.

LOS ANGELES, CA, USA, March 10, 2015 /EINPresswire.com/ -- When Post's Grape-Nuts and advertising agency Grey Canada decided to embark on "The Odds" commercial campaign featuring cancer survivor Sean Swarner last year, Canadian director and cinematographer Jonathan Bensimon is the talent they chose to tie the Grape-Nuts brand and Swarner's story together on screen.

Using his talents as both a director and cinematographer, Bensimon has become known as one of the industry's most powerful storytellers, so when it came time to tell Swarner's inspirational story, he was the obvious choice.

Creative director at Grey Canada, the agency that received the 2013 ADCC Award for Agency of the Year, James Ansley says, "Jonathan took our Grape-Nuts script - then just an idea on a page - and breathed life into it. When he did, it became bigger, bolder and more beautiful than I ever dreamt possible."

Swarner, 40, is a two-time cancer survivor. At 13 he was diagnosed with Stage IV Hodgkin's lymphoma, then Askin's sarcoma at 16, both times being told he only had two weeks to live. Not only did Swarner live, but he became the first cancer survivor to reach the top of the highest mountains in Asia, Africa, Europe, South America, North America, Australia, and Antarctica; what's more, he's done this with only one lung.

In "The Odds" Bensimon moves the viewer through the life and feats of this incredible man with a fantastically lit quiet stride. The perfect fit for Grape-Nuts, Bensimon's understated approach and incorporation of light humor allows Swarner's true strength to shine through without distraction.

"Working with Sean and telling his story is what made shooting the Grape-Nuts projects so fulfilling," says Bensimon. "We created a virtual world where we see key points of his life coming at him as he moves past them and leaves us on an impassioned note."

Leading a lengthy list of successful campaigns for internationally recognized brands including Hershey's, Keurig, Hitachi, Listerine, Tylenol, Nissan, Bud Light, Pizza Hut, Honda, Honey Bunches of Oats, Walmart and more, Jonathan Bensimon has done over 70 commercials as a cinematographer & director.

"As a director and cinematographer, my style will vary slightly from project to project to fit the story, but the mood is always cinematic... there is always a great deal of focus on composition, lighting and colour, it's not always executed the same way, but the attention that goes into it is consistent," explains Bensimon.

The winner of a Bronze Telly Award in 2010, Bensimon portrayed Tokyo like few had seen before in his film "Tokyo/Glow." In a city known and always portrayed by its massive sprawl of urban lights and nameless faces blended into the scape, Bensimon wrote and directed a story that animated the journey of a crosswalk sign figure, one whose search is not meaningless, but in the end, for love.

Inspired by the actual figure present in crosswalk signs across Tokyo, Bensimon explains, "The crosswalk sign, rather than being a stick figure like every other crosswalk sign in the world this one had a suite and a fedora. I wanted to bring him to life and see him journey through the city."

In "Tokyo/Glow" this meandering figure in the fedora hat travels through a crowded slew of lights and people, only to end up at the door of a women's restroom sign, where he takes pause, captivated by the skirted figure.

"I try to tell stories through my use of light and framing. I have a particular signature to my work, and I get called to apply that style to a variety of projects," explains Bensimon. "Being a director/cinematographer allows me to see things in a very unique way, it makes my preparation very intense and makes me develop a special relationship with the actors and the crew because I constantly look at things from multiple angles."

The scope of Bensimon's vision as a director and cinematographer allows him to excel with ease on projects ranging from the playful nature of "Tokyo/Glow" to the touching true story of Sean Swarner.

Serving as yet another example of how his quirky artistic vision spells success, Jonathan Bensimon's film "Let Go of the Future," made in collaboration with the band Dove and Gun, screened at the 2013 Cannes Film Festival. According to Bensimon, the band was "looking to create something unique and memorable," based around their song "Let Go of the Future."

Bensimon explains, "We used a couple at a breakfast table, the character of the guy needed to be someone who is being manipulated, so rather than use an actual actor we used a puppet. And the song would do the speaking, so rather than having the characters talk about why this

relationship should end we created a metaphor-- a game of Russian roulette."

Through his juxtaposition of dramatic lighting and a Muppet-like puppet that is difficult to take seriously, Bensimon creates a light-hearted portrayal of the dark and paralyzing challenges of breaking up with a lover.

Earlier on in his career, when Bensimon had just begun directing, the young creative genius was tapped to create the PSA "Time to Deliver" for the 2006 International AIDS Conference. Driving home the organization's message to stop the spread of AIDS, "Time to Deliver" garnered the Gold Mobius Award for Best of Show and a Gold Award at the World Media Festival.

Last year, Bensimon directed another multi-award winning PSA for Mother's Demand Action entitled "No More Silence." The PSA made it onto the Cannes Film Festival's Short List in addition to receiving the Silver Award from Advertising and Design Club of Canada, the Bronze Award at the 2014 Marketing Awards, as well as several awards at the Applied Arts Advertising and Interactive Awards.

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