



Intro

Sharing is caring.

That is unless someone wants to swap meals at a restaurant, split takeout orders, or decline popcorn at the concession stand only to then dig their hands into yours once the movie has started.

And it's not just food.

What about those people who don't check the weather report then ask to squeeze under your umbrella when it rains while you get wet, forget to bring their portable charger then ask to use yours when you're only on 3%, or who can't be bothered to download a film for a short-haul flight then ask for one of your earphones and expose you to that hum of the engine you were trying to block out.

Okay, let's face it. Sharing is a pain. Particularly when it comes to Christmas.

Whether it's having a stand-off with a stranger over the last tree at the store, fighting your family members over a game controller, or losing your favorite armchair to your neighbor, we've all been there. Forced to endure awkward conversations with people we'd never normally hang out with in our own home.

Fortunately, Walkers have come up with a solution: sharer bags.

Paprika Max, Giant Wotsits, and Chilli Sensations. Take your pick.

These three funny, relatable vignettes, each serving a different crisp, really capture that sense of polite frustration through gritted teeth that characterize the British Christmas experience and ground these films in reality. What follows are my thoughts about how to build on the great work you've done so far by pushing the situations, the storytelling, and the comedy even further.

Tone

I've said it before and I'll say it again. These films are all about relatable humor. Audiences see themselves in these characters and their stressful Christmas experiences in these scenes.

But they're also about enjoyment. The satisfaction that comes with opening a bag of Walkers, taking out a crisp, crunching down on it, and letting that amazing taste fill your mouth. Not in a schmaltzy, saccharin (can't think of another adjective beginning with 's'), commercial-y (it's a word) kind of way, but in a way that our audience relates to and believes.

Just like that *Plenty* spot from a few years ago that I mentioned on the call, we want to bring together an eclectic group of comedy characters but have them play these hysterical situations completely straight and be all the funnier for it.

Approach

For me, this is a characterful slice-of-life comedy rather than a series of telegraphed jokes, setups, and punchlines. Because if we tee up these scenarios then the audience will see the pay-off a mile away and it will feel hammy and fake. Instead, we need to trust in the material and hone in on the details.

A perfect example of this is the scene of the embarrassed mum gripping the Christmas tree while her teenage daughter watches on, enjoying the awkward exchange and a sharing bag of Walkers like she is eating popcorn while watching a movie at the cinema. It's a naughty, knowing little moment of schadenfreude, but one that anybody who has been a teenager or brought one up will get.

What's important here is that we're flexible with the structure. So rather than repeatedly setting up a crisis and then resolving it between our tested situations, perhaps we move from one tableau to another and make it feel less structured and predictable.

A large part of that unpredictability and comedy will come from bringing together a diverse group of people made up of family, friends, and neighbors, rather than moving between different families and homes, as this also reflects the reality of modern life and Christmas. Being crowded out in your usually empty kitchen, having to wait in a queue for your own bathroom, or having to watch a film you hate on a television you bought.

Our challenge is to find those relatable, Christmassy moments where our three different sharing bags can diffuse the tension and frustration to create moments of genuine joy and happiness, but also push the comedy so that perhaps in that final scene between the

mum and tall stranger we have a tussle for the crisps or she pretends to give them to him and pulls back at the last minute.

The opening scenario with the Christmas tree captures the relatable stress of the holiday season. Forget the cooking, housework, and entertaining, we all know how important getting that last tree is for our mum, getting home is for our dad, and getting to sit back and watch her parents struggle is for their daughter.

What I think the animatic didn't quite capture in the control scene is the funny reveal of a kid you expect to be playing the video game being forced to watch on as his aunties do battle over the controller. I think if we focus more on the kid and his reaction then we can land the comedy.

I love the sheer audacity of the armchair scene, but I wonder if having the neighbor squeeze into an armchair that is clearly just for one person feels a little too broad. Instead, perhaps we could earn the unexpectedness of the comedy a little more by having the keen neighbor sitting down next to the father on a couch and failing to read that he is tired and just wants to be left alone in peace in quiet. To make this even more believable, perhaps we could have people sitting on the other furniture, so the neighbor has limited options of where they can sit.

I think we could lose the shot of the son holding the hand of his boyfriend and replace it with them linking arms which gets across the same message but does so in a more efficient way and condenses the storytelling.

I also like the idea of interspersing the physical comedy with short awkward verbal exchanges - a couple of words here and there - that elevate the performance and add an extra layer of tension to the situation.

Look and Feel

To achieve the relatable comedy we're after, let's avoid anything too stylized and heavy-handed or saturated with a lot of color contrast. Instead, let's ground the aesthetic in a believable, filmic reality that complements the performance of our actors.

This also means looking for locations that feel familiar to people throughout the country, such as a Christmas tree stall on a high street or a cozy middle-class home where everyone comes together, rather than moving between several houses.

And given that we're assimilating different products with different looks into a single campaign, I don't think we should lean too heavily towards the aesthetic of a specific brand.

What we're aiming for here is something that looks and feels reminiscent of your brilliant Snack Stash | Too Good To Share (Sorry Kids) | Walkers Crisps spot (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=07eGF79SHgs>) from a few years ago.

Product

Our characters may be the heroes of these stories, but the real hero is our product. It might not be in every shot, but it will be in as many as possible without looking or feeling ubiquitous or unnatural. And when the sharing bags do appear we'll capture the packaging and the contents clearly, and in the best light as our characters indulge and enjoy them.

While we can show our characters excitedly grabbing the sharing bags or enjoying them, one thing we do need to be wary of is overconsumption or the suggestion of it. The best way to avoid this is to have our characters offer them out to others.

Sound and Music

I love the idea of using an unexpected track that has nothing to do with Christmas rather than a festive classic. Not only will this separate our spot from others in a very crowded Christmas market, but it will surprise our audience by running counter to what they're seeing with an ironic juxtaposition that brings out the comedy. As well as feeling ironic, the track also needs to be iconic. An instantly recognizable but relatively inexpensive hit that people know but have perhaps forgotten over time.

I'll work with a music supervisor and frequent collaborator of mine to come up with some suggestions for a track that my editor, Scott Kramer, and I will cut to work with the snippets of voiceover that link our scenes and perhaps even some lines of dialogue within them.

Casting and Performance

I'm obsessed with casting and like to be thorough, seeing as many actors as possible. This means casting the net wide and encouraging the casting director to go beyond the usual commercial suspects and find talented fresh faces that aren't in everything.

What we're looking for here are real, relatable actors with regular bodies and interesting faces, rather than cookie-cutter models with stick-thin figures or washboard abs.

In terms of performance, we need this diverse cast to look and feel comfortable around each other, as if they have known each other for a while. This will make the situations feel real and the comedy that much funnier.

Talking of funny, we don't want actors trying to be funny. It should be in their bones. Their performances and facial expressions should be understated and effortless, rather than anything big or broad. A forced smile or an eye roll that shows them trying to be polite through gritted teeth.

And when it comes to eating the crisps, let's have people eating them and enjoying them. Not in a fake, cheesy way, but perhaps have them lick the dust off their fingers as they savor the taste and we dial up the comedy.

Characters

Mum

A small, feisty, highly strung woman who wants everything to be just right and is prepared to do whatever she must to achieve it.

Dad

A tall, slender, somewhat overworked guy who would rather be watching the television with his feet up than being lumbered with shopping bags or a seemingly endless stream of washing up.

Teenage Daughter

An apathetic teenager, dressed in the latest fashion. She's at that age where she kind of despises her parents and takes pleasure in watching their struggles and missteps.

Aunties

Two non-identical sisters who didn't get on as children and don't get on as adults, instantly regress into sibling rivalry when any form of game or competition is suggested.

Nephew

A skinny, boyish kid who just wants to play on his new games console at Christmas (and avoid as many people as possible).

Neighbor

An older guy who lives on his own and is somewhat starved for conversation. He's well-intentioned but lacks the social skills to pick up on Dad's need for some alone time.

Older Son

A handsome, athletic lawyer who lives alone in a rented apartment in the city. He knows what Christmas is like at home and has held out for as long as possible before turning up.

Older Son's Partner

A fellow lawyer who met the older son at their office. He's usually confident and gregarious but is shy and anxious about meeting the family.

Locations

Christmas Tree Stall

A makeshift stall with dozens of evergreen conifers, such as spruces, firs, and pines - enclosed in temporary metal fencing on a bustling high street.

Nephew's Room

His bookshelves are lined with novels, comics, and manga while sci-fi movie posters adorn the walls above his unmade bed - a haven for late-night gaming and movies. This gaming setup doesn't just include a console and television but a powerful computer that dominates one corner.

Living Room

A good-sized living room that exudes warmth and festivity. A well-decorated Christmas tree, adorned with ornaments and twinkling lights, serves as the centerpiece around which family members and friends gather on cozy sofas and armchairs. The coffee table is lined with holiday-themed decorations and a neatly wrapped stack of gifts.

Front Door

A solid oak front door to the side of a semi-detached house on a typical suburban street. A hand-crafted holiday wreath hangs above the knocker.

Outro

Thanks for sending these scripts through and giving me the chance to embrace my inner sharing Grinch. There's something instantly relatable and funny about these reluctant Christmas compromises and the ideas I've suggested intend to push that comedy even further. I look forward to you sharing (seriously) your thoughts and getting into the Christmas spirit with you all.