



# **UNDER ARMOUR**

## **Intro**

As athletes, creatives, and human beings, we can't help but compare ourselves with our competition, our colleagues, and one another. But the reality is that we each have our own stories. Our own path to fulfilling that potential and becoming who we are.

My story starts on a Hindu ashram founded by Alice Coltrane, with a single mother who wanted me to take a different path from that of my hustler father. But as peaceful and loving as this environment was, I still needed an outlet for my teenage energy and rage.

So ice hockey became my religion, giving me the mental fortitude and an appreciation of teamwork that encouraged me to put my selfish tendencies to one side and see the world in a new light, helping me listen to my heart and become a more empathetic and vulnerable artist.

Like the rest of us, Tom Brady has his own narrative. Born out of a humble, selfless spirit that has helped to shape his remarkable life and career and constantly search for new ways to master himself. This spot is a celebration of that spirit. One that looks beyond the man himself, and focuses on his example, inspiring the next generation of athletes to not just be themselves, but see themselves in one another.

## **Approach**

Like the best characters, Tom is a contradiction. A normal, down-to-earth guy with incredible talent. I'm not talking about his arm here. I'm talking about his vision. His ability to see everyone and help his teammates see each other. Bringing sixty people together into a single mind. But talent is nothing without hard work and preparation. It's nothing without mental, as well as physical toughness. Leadership, as well as competitiveness.

This isn't just a positive message to send to our young athletes, but to our nation. And one that will resonate with professional athletes and amateurs alike.

Growing up on an ashram, one of the biggest things we were taught was that 'All is One'. That we are stronger when we act as one. This zen-like approach not only chimes with

Tom Brady's TB12 fitness program, which blends eastern religious culture with western football culture, but his unique ability to bring a group of players together into a single organism.

Building on this idea, what if we made the young athletes we follow in this spot feel like they're one person getting ready for the game ahead. Of course, they'll look different, but their actions will be aligned. So one might be at his house, helping his little brother tie his shoelaces. Another helping his mother to clean up. One might be helping his teacher gather up books. While another is preparing for football. We'll reach the game and see a player give away an interception, only to be encouraged by their teammates. Then have these same teammates celebrate as one when they score a touchdown.

We can have Tom and Morgan Freeman in the house or have one (or both) appearing as angel-like coaches in two or three of these situations. They won't be seen by our athletes, but their presence will be felt. This suggests that our athletes embody the spirit of Tom, celebrating what these icons bring to our society, but also gives them the agency to channel this spirit, whether that's through the work and preparation they do off the field, their humility, or by bringing people together.

## **Tone**

In the same way that Tom's approach balances East and West, we'll look to balance poignant emotional moments that feel sincere and grounded, with a cool, stylish tone that is esoteric and doesn't take itself too seriously. A Yin and Yang approach that captures the meditative magic of our message, but does so with the heart, energy, fierceness, and elegance of someone like Ray Lewis.

This balance of Yin and Yang is no more present than in our partnership of Tom and Morgan, with Tom's sincere, yet authentic letter complimented by Morgan's joke at the end, giving the piece a self-awareness and levity.

## **Look and Camera**

This film is a visual illustration of the idea that "we are all one", so we'll make our young athletes the heroes and capture the energy that is generated when they all come together.

The look we're going for is ultra cinematic with a poppy touch to keep it fresh. Stunning, super sharp images that are gloriously shot, with crisp details in blacks. As well as using a couple of high-speed shots, we'll combine natural light with sourced and practical light to inject the aesthetic with some stylistic flair.

In terms of camera movement, we'll track from left to right in most shots, and push in and pan right for some. But whether we're moving right, tilting up, or down, we'll always be heading into the action.

This dynamic movement will enliven our well-designed transitions, with match cuts and wipes giving the film a natural look and seamless feel while visually communicating that sense of connection and the idea that we are all one. To the average viewer, this will seem like a continuous one-shot reminiscent of Birdman, but instead these creative transitions will link the different locations and diverse stories of our characters.

Tom and Morgan will be depicted as angel-like coaches in a way that looks ethereal yet realistic, and never feels cheesy. Ultimately, Tom and Morgan are passing their soulful knowledge onto the next generation. Not by being seen or heard (although this could be an option) by our young athletes, but through the presence of their humble spirits being felt by them.

We want well-thought-out, visually ambitious transitions that seamlessly connect our characters' lives, so we'll need time and space to consider our options and light them accordingly. That said, we can subtly alter and refine this visual approach depending on Tom and Morgan's availability to create something more personal and intimate. So if we only have four hours with our talent then we can pre-light our locations and have a series of cameras already set up, allowing us to efficiently transport them between sets and keeping the cameras rolling the whole time.

## Script

*We're in a comfy family living room with the best football player of all time, Tom Brady, sitting in a chair next to the best narrator of all time, Morgan Freeman. Morgan Freeman puts on his glasses and unfurls the letter in his hand then starts reading. We tilt the camera up towards the ceiling and into...*

**MORGAN FREEMAN: This letter is for you.**

*...a bedroom as a teenage boy wakes up his younger brother for school. Tom Brady lays out his clothes on a chair? We push in on one of the shoes...*

**MORGAN FREEMAN: The one people might be calling "the next Tom Brady".**

*...which is on the foot of a different little boy, sitting on the bottom step of a staircase, as his older brother ties his shoelaces. Tom Brady puts on his other shoe? The older brother wipes a bit of dirt from the shoe with his sleeve and we transition into...*

**MORGAN FREEMAN: First of all, don't bother trying to be "the next Tom Brady".**

*...another teenage boy standing next to his mum, drying the dishes that she is washing in the sink. Tom Brady empties the dishes into the bin? We track right into...*

**MORGAN FREEMAN: You're defined by your own skills...**

*...a teenage boy spotting his teammate as he does a bench press in the weights room. Tom Brady is picking up another weight? And we continue tracking into...*

**MORGAN FREEMAN: Your focus...**

*...a teenage boy noticing his teammate drifting off while his coach is giving them instructions. He gives him a nudge, helping him refocus on...*

**MORGAN FREEMAN: Your hunger to win...**

*...we whip pan to an old video of Tom Brady playing on the television and then back to two different teenage boys stretching with his TB12 bands after practice, whilst taking notes on the video. Tom Brady watches with a nostalgic smile? We move in on the hand pushing against the band and into...*

**MORGAN FREEMAN: Your weaknesses and your strength in overcoming them.**

*...a teenage boy clasping his teammates' hand and lifting him up off the ground, having just lost a turnover. Tom Brady gives him an encouraging tap on the side of the helmet? We track right into...*

**MORGAN FREEMAN: If you're the next anybody. You're the next you.**

*...the changing room as a teenage boy stands in front of the mirror. He removes his helmet and takes in his reflection.*

**MORGAN FREEMAN: Who I am now is because of who I was in my 30s.**

*We cut from a 40-year-old man, resembling the teenage boy, to his 30-year-old self, looking in the mirror.*

**MORGAN FREEMAN: And who I was in my 30s was because of who I was in my twenties.**

*Then from his 30-year-old self to his 20-year-old self, looking in the mirror. Then track right to find ourselves...*

**MORGAN FREEMAN: So here's my advice: This life isn't easy, and you should know it just gets harder.**

*...back on the field as a wide receiver throws a tantrum, tossing his helmet/kicking the water bottle. Tom Brady picks up the helmet and places it on the bench as...*

**MORGAN FREEMAN: Every peak you scale becomes your new ground zero.**

*...a center presses the ball on the ground with two teams assembled in formation on either side of a scrimmage, awaiting the hike. The center snaps it back and...*

**MORGAN FREEMAN: You have to always keep fighting and clawing to power forward. It's an endless cycle of training, competing, and recovering.**

*...both sets of players clash, pushing against one another with all their might. We break through the chaos and head to the end zone handheld as if we're the wide receiver making our way towards the touchline where Tom Brady is waiting? As we get closer the camera pulls out into a wide so we see...*

**MORGAN FREEMAN: If anyone calls you the G.O.A.T., kindly correct them. Remind them that you're just lucky to have the greatest linemen, receivers, teammates, coaches, teachers, and mentors of all time.**

*...the ball flying through the air and being caught by the wide receiver. The team and their coaches celebrate. The crowd goes wild. And Tom Brady can't help but smile?*

**MORGAN FREEMAN: Never forget the ones who believed in you when you started. They have a special kind of faith and foresight most people don't. And one last thing: if you ever want to dedicate a letter to someone they might be calling the next you, and you need to pick a narrator. Pick the best, the most handsome. I chose Morgan Freeman.**

*Tom pulls a face as he glances up to the heavens.*

**TOM BRADY: I never said handsome.**

**MORGAN FREEMAN: I know, you forgot.**

**SUPER: To the best Tom Brady ever, thank you. Under Armour**

## **Casting/Performance**

I love casting, and if we do it right, then the basis of our actor's performance will already be there when we start filming. I've had a range of experience casting and working with non-professional teenage actors and can't wait to work with these talented, young high-school and college athletes to find nuanced, authentic performances.

We're looking for a diverse group of grounded, soulful people that have a unique, idiosyncratic way of moving through the world and who are open to the discovery process. For auditions, I'll ask each of them about the most vulnerable moments in their lives. This process helps us to see who can tell a good story, who is engaging, and who makes us curious to learn more about them. And we'll help our chosen performers by giving each of

them a simple, but detailed backstory of their character and spend time discussing this with them before we get to set.

This preparation will give them the confidence to experiment once on set, with subtle, specific non-verbal actions and reactions that make their performances feel rich, varied, textured, and, most importantly, real. And it's these unspoken exchanges - a gesture here and a glance there - that will create a sense of history between the characters, helping the audience to invest in them and their emotional journeys.

## **Sound and Music**

We could opt for a grand, jazzy orchestra, blending an old-school big band sound with something more contemporary that also fits with our high-school/college context and gradually builds with our narrative. Kamashi Washington - Street Fighter Mas (from 50 seconds in) is a good reference for this kind of style.

Alternatively, we could create a more understated, atmospheric soundscape that works around, rather than alongside, the narration.

But rather than pre-determine the music, let's wait until we get into the edit and see what fits with our visuals before landing on a specific sound.

## **Outro**

Just like Tom, I'm humbled. Humbled by the opportunity to share my thoughts and feelings on this important, era-defining campaign.

Rarely, do two of the greatest contemporary figures from their respective industries come together to communicate such a positive, inspiring message. And even rarer that it has the potential to entertain and connect with the audience on an emotional level.

As with so many other young men, sport helped me to find and define my identity at an important time in my life. To learn right from wrong, and build myself up from the inside out. It taught me how to work with others. Overcome failure. And gave me the confidence to try new things. It's the reason I am who I am and do what I do.

That's the power of sport. And the power of role models like Tom Brady. To encourage. To inspire. To help us find each other and, in the process, find ourselves. That to me is what this campaign is all about and I can't wait to spread that message with a spot that's as iconic as the man at the heart of it.

Talk soon