



Intro

Back in my twenties, my friends and I were driving down the freeway when we saw a hitchhiker on the side of the road up ahead.

As we got closer, we realised that he wasn't just some random guy, but the ruckman for the Bombers and footballing legend John Barnes.

Excited and somewhat confused, we pulled over to discover that his team bus had driven off on him as a joke, so we offered him a lift back to his club and got to spend the next hour or so hanging out with (and chewing the ear off) an athlete we loved.

As a sports fan myself, I can totally relate to our fans' emotional journey in this film. I get their shock and excitement as they open the door to our stars, their desperation as they try to find a pack of Smith's so they can watch the game with a player they worship, followed by heartbreak when they come up short or elated disbelief when they come up trumps.

And as an absolute sucker for Smith's (Salt & Vinegar Crinkle Cut Chips are my go-to), I'm in no doubt that if one of these players knocked on my door then they'd be coming in for sure.

Tone

The Lays commercial with Thierry Henry you sent through is bang on for the kind of tone I want to create.

This is, first and foremost, a commercial but with an observational doco/reality television style. So we'll see the crew trying to keep up with our talent while they knock on a cross-section of fans' doors, capturing their initial surprise, confusion, or indifference, followed by hope, fear, relief or disappointment as they search for Smith's. It's fun, funny, family-friendly entertainment that feels authentic rather than fake and cringe.

Talent

I've been lucky enough to shoot with A-list actors, non-actors, massive music stars, and world-class athletes. My approach is always the same when it comes to getting honest performances out of them. Spend a bit of time with them before the shoot to explain the concept, build a rapport, address any concerns, and always be honest so you can build that trust from the outset. Then keep everything light and fun on set, creating an environment where our talent can be themselves, commit to the premise, and shine.

Rather than put zingers in the players' mouths, ask them to 'act', or 'be funny', I'll take the essence of a line and brief them on that, then get them to say it how they would, so it feels genuine.

Unlike the Lays commercial with Henry, we have three talents from different sports who appeal to a range of fan bases across Australia but aren't international megastars. While Hall-of-Famer Cameron Smith has transcended rugby league and become something of a national treasure, Aussie rules footballers Isaac Smith and Bella Smith are less well-known by the country at large and more so by fans of their sport and clubs.

For audiences watching at home who don't recognise our talents by their face, we'll have their name, sport, club, and honours appear as supers on the screen, so they get why our fans are losing their shit. Talking of the fans...

Fans

This campaign will live and die by the real emotional reactions of our fans to seeing our stars, interacting with them on the doorstep, and then watching them either walk away or step into their house. It's for that reason that we don't just need fans, we need fanatics.

We need to cast people who think Isaac, Cam, and Bella are megastars, so we'll trawl through the social media accounts of our players, their clubs, and even hit up the club's cheer squads to find people that live and breathe the sport and genuinely love our stars.

For Bella, I'm thinking younger people, most likely AFLW fans. Perhaps a young girl, with a friend or two over, and their dad who's also invested.

For Cameron, we can go with someone who looks like they're in the NRL heartland. A woman named Tracey with crossed-out Premiership tattoos (that will make sense to Storm fans) or a young guy who opens the door with a PlayStation controller in hand.

For Isaac, we'll go to Hawthorn, where he's royalty and speaks to a married couple of die-hard cheer squad fans. I don't want to find just a Hawthorn fan, I want to find someone

with Isaac's number tattooed on his calf muscle. Someone who had to actually watch Geelong games (that SUCKS if you're a Hawks fan) because he played that great season with the Cats in '22.

It might also be fun to have a woman in her 80s who has no interest in sports and closes the door on Cameron Smith when he introduces himself or subvert our audience's expectations and make her the most hardcore fan of all.

Fortunately, I've got a street casting agency, so we can easily find real, idiosyncratic people with a range of ages, genders, ethnicities, and body shapes that reflect the diversity of our audience.

The Brand

The moment we currently have in the script where they run out of chips and then go find more feels a little staged. Instead, let's open with a big, bold close-up of our empty Smith's bag and then reveal our sports stars and crew already approaching and knocking on a front door in a way that feels alive and active.

We'll also keep the product present through the spot by giving the athletes a prop - the empty bag of Smith's - then see everyone munching on an assortment of bags together at the end.

Approach

We'll bring these fans to our locations under the pretence that they're involved in an unspecified game or competition for cash, memberships, or memorabilia (that we can actually give them at the end) and that if someone knocks on the door at a certain time then they've won. This means they'll be excited to open the door and get a shock when they find the likes of Cameron Smith standing on the other side.

We'll instruct our players to approach the doors in the right order, starting with their biggest and most interested fans first. That fan might answer the door holding a PlayStation controller or their kid, suggesting they were in the middle of something else and have been interrupted - adding another layer of authenticity.

The player will then reveal the real challenge and the stakes: if you've got Smith's in the house, then I'll come in and watch the game with you, but if you don't then I won't. We'll follow the fans as they rush back into the house and frantically search for a pack of Smith's they don't know where we've planted or whether we have at all, adding to the dramatic tension.

For the final scene of our fans watching a game with a player, we'll shoot two different endings - one with rugby on the television and the other with Aussie rules.

Look

In keeping with our obs doc/reality television aesthetic, we'll be chasing the action rather than being ahead of it. Shooting with two teams, multiple handheld and off-the-shoulder cameras (no tripods!), and zoom lenses to create that messy, chaotic but authentic look.

Finding the fun and capturing our talent, the fans, and even our crew in a way that doesn't feel planned, blocked, staged, or storyboarded, but as if the action is spontaneously unfolding right in front of our eyes.

Let's also shoot from day into evening and capture the natural shift in light as the sun sets. This will make it feel like more of a journey for the audience and recreate the typical build-up to game night.

'No Smith's, No Game' Digital Video Script

EXT. SUBURBAN CUL DE SAC, DAY

We open on a big, bold close-up of an empty pack of Smith's, then pan up to CAMERON SMITH's sad face as he speaks to camera.

CAMERON: You can't watch the footy without Smith's. Luckily, I've got the perfect team here to find more.

We pull out wide and see BELLA SMITH and ISAAC SMITH standing beside him.

SUPERS of their name, sport, club, and honours appear next to them on screen as they wave coolly to the camera and approach a front door.

The kerfuffle of a camera crew around them.

We enter our montage sequence. The doors open onto various homeowners. Some surprised, others confused, and a few starstruck.

HOMEOWNER: [in disbelief] Whaaaat!?

CAMERON: We need some Smith's for tonight's game. If you've got some, you can watch it with us.

(ALT 1) HOMEOWNER: [slightly confused] Wait, you, or the chips?

(ALT 1) CAMERON: What do you think?

As the challenge and opportunity sinks in, our homeowners race off to scour their homes for Smith's and we cut between them.

(ALT 2) A little girl who is obviously Bella's #1 fan is starstruck at the door as mum runs off to find chips. She stays there the whole time, eyes transfixed on Bella.

(ALT 3) An old lady stares at Cameron, utterly clueless.

(ALT 3) CAMERON: Cameron Smith? Hooker for the Melbourne Storm? Rugby League?

(ALT 4) A grumpy old man just shuts the door in Cameron's face.

PANTRY GIRL: [searching her pantry] I swear I had some.

CLEVER MUM: [grabbing ISAAC] What about him? Does he count?

(ALT 5) Clever mum holds a salt shaker and a bottle of vinegar in her hand.

(ALT 5) CLEVER MUM: I have salt and vinegar.

BELLA: [yelling from the door] No Smith's? I'm walking.

PANTRY GIRL: [searching beneath the sink] Where are they?!

A wise guy holds out a regular potato chip.

WISE GUY: If I give you this chip, technically it'll become Smith's chip.

CAMERON: Phoar...gotta ask the refs on that one.

We cut back to CLEVER MUM trying to plead her case with ISAAC in hand.

CLEVER MUM: [pleading] C'mawn...

BELLA: Smith's or nothing!

A front door opens slowly - it's some Blues supporters. They look at Maroon-singlet-wearing CAMERON rather sheepishly.

CAMERON: Look, if you've got Smith's I'll let it slide.

(ALT 6) AFL people answer the door.

(ALT 6) AFL PEOPLE: Why are you here?

(ALT 6) CAMERON: I'm just here for the chips.

(ALT 7) Cameron, Bella, and Isaac stand outside a front door, still waiting.

(ALT 7) CAMERON: I don't think they're coming.

(ALT 7) They all nod and walk off.

(ALT 8) A door opens further along and a kind mum steps outside.

(ALT 8) KIND MUM: My son loves you!

(ALT 8) CAMERON: But does he love Smith's?

Cut back to PANTRY GIRL, finally with Smith's in hand. She races back to the door and our Smiths nod in acceptance.

(ALT 9) One of our homeowners searches the kitchen for the Smith's she's sure she had. Pantry. Under the sink. Finally!

Just when they think it's over, a homeowner finds a snack-sized packet in a lunch box and brings out the tiny bag.

(ALT 2) Bella leans into the little girl's ear.

(ALT 2) BELLA: Hi.

(ALT 2) The girl just melts.

INT. LIVING ROOM, DAY

Our Smiths and PANTRY GIRL enjoy the broadcast of the Footy while munching on some Smith's chips.

SUPER: NO SMITH'S. NO GAME.

Cutdowns

Our 15” cutdowns and 6” teasers for the socials are just as important as the 60”/30” film and will be treated as such. These will be more conventional in the way the action is structured and the lines delivered, so we’ll spend a bit more time preparing with the athletes to make sure the dialogue feels natural and confident rather than hokey.

Locations

We want this to look and feel like authentic football country right down to the smallest detail. I’m thinking a mix of everyday single-storey and weatherboard properties. Houses on stilts in Brisbane or townhouses in unflashy, middle of the road residential areas in the suburbs of Sydney and Melbourne where sport is life for these people.

Wardrobe

Like I said, let’s dress and style our talent in cool, contemporary clothes they feel comfortable and confident wearing. This starts by sourcing a few images from their Instagram, sharing these with a stylist and the wardrobe department, then coming back to the talent with a few options and building a look that is unique to them.

For each of our talents, we’ll subtly weave the colour palettes of their former teams into their clothes, subtly triggering a subconscious association in our audience. For Isaac, this might be a bit of brown and yellow, Bella some red and white, and Cam hints of maroon and purple.

Music

This won’t be like your typically serious sports music, with the action cut to an emotive anthem that builds towards a dramatic climax. Instead, we’ll opt for some library rock music that complements the action and dialogue and helps to establish the frenetic rhythm and fun tone we’re after.

Edit

The edit will be a pacy, entertaining montage of action and reaction. We’ll establish the problem of the empty Smith’s bag. Then our talent will knock on the door of a surprised fan and reveal the challenge. As the star waits at the door, we’ll watch a montage of fans scour the house with increasing desperation, then return to the front door either with or without the bag and watch the star walk away or head inside.

Just like a rugby or footy highlights show, we'll cut out the boring bits or moments that shatter the illusion, such as our fan mentioning this isn't their kitchen as they frantically search for the Smith's.

We'll also use simple supers, inspired by the font and colour of the Smith logo, to identify the players, their sport, club, and honours.

Thanks

Thanks for thinking of me for this one and taking the time to consider my take. It's always exciting to pitch on something you're genuinely passionate about and know inside out, but in this case it's two things: sport and chips.

Cheers,