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Sweetshop's Louis Sutherland & One Percent Collective's Pat Shepherd | The Making of 'Mike & Mandy'

Patrick Shepherd, Chief Doer of Things, One Percent Collective: <https://www.onepercentcollective.org/>

Louis Sutherland, Director, Sweetshop: <https://www.thesweetshop.tv/director/louis-sutherland/>

WATCH THE FILM [HERE](#).

When One Percent Collective came to Sweetshop looking for ideas for their next brand video, Director Louis Sutherland and his talented production team pulled out all the stops. Read this behind the scenes interview with Louis and One Percent Collective's Pat Shepherd, here.

Pat, tell us a bit about One Percent Collective? What did you want to achieve with the video?

PS: We aim to do things differently in the charitable sector and creativity is really what drives us. As a small charity with a tiny marketing budget, we really needed to get our name out there and to get people thinking about what 1% really means to them. In order to supercharge the number of donors in the Collective, we needed something really special to get attention and this video is just absolute gold for achieving that. We also think saving the world should be a fun and positive thing, using a little humour to inspire positive change in this world is a great way to inspire people to act.

Louis, what did you first think when you read the brief from One Percent Collective?

LS: I've spent the last few years making commercials in between my films, so I loved the opportunity to write and make some work for a caring cause with a pretty open brief. The whole process was refreshing. Having heard about the One Percent Collective team, I knew they would come into the project full of trust too, and if they liked the idea, they'd let me make it. I wanted to make something fun, that didn't take itself too seriously, and was maybe a bit more irreverent than what you typically see.

Pat, what did you think when you first read Louis' script and treatment?

PS: I straight away knew this was the script for us, playing on the 1% idea with these two loveable characters in the fun and quirky style is right in line with the way we talk to our donors and supporters. I knew it would grab our audience.

Louis, how did you come up with the characters of Mike & Mandy and how did you cast?

LS: The concept came about when I was overseas in the US visiting a group of friends. They're a cool mishmash of people: a birth doula, graphic designer, and my US producer. Kicking around ideas, I asked them, "What's interesting about this whole One Percent thing?" After a few completely un-shootable ideas, the notion of, "Everyone is raised with the aim of putting 100% into everything they do. Imagine a story about someone who was happy giving just 1% in life." That idea floated to the top, and Mike and Mandy was born.

I then called another mate, Naz Nazli, a creative / copywriter based in London. We'd worked together in the past and had planned to write something a bit different, so this fit the bill. Naz was key as he really looked after putting everything into the key messaging. While we in the US bounced ideas around what a 1% life could look like, Naz worked across the campaign aims and structure with me as we passed the script back and forth over timelines. It worked out to be a nice balance of crazy vs. craft, and of course, like any collaboration, the lines blurred as to who did what while it all came together.

So Mike and Mandy grew into this nice, albeit little bit odd, love story. It was a lot of fun not having loads of people looking over our shoulders, and the One Percent team and Pat Shepard kept loving what we were offering up through the development process.

Casting was more of a challenge, even more so than usual, because actors are at a premium in New Zealand at the moment. For many commercials are their bread and butter, so being asked to put their face on a campaign for love and very little money was a bit to ask. The Reel World team pulled out all the stops in getting people in the room, but ultimately, I didn't feel we had seen the right mix of heart and humour to carry our story. I suddenly found myself stalking my Facebook friends at the 11th hour. Ultimately, the lead role of Mike went to Guy Capper who ended up being perfect for the role, as was Natasha playing Mandy. It's never easy going buck-naked on set, but they not only braved this but gave performances that filled the film with a tactile warmth.

What was the shoot day like for each of you?

PS: I'm a morning person so being on set at 6.30am and seeing the crew getting straight into things was a blast. I cracked up at times as many of the crew thought I was the stills photographer rather than the client. I really did just want to blend in and leave the crew to create their magic, even jumping into a banana suit as an extra at one point.

Everyone loves Sweetshop and especially Louis. They are just a top-notch production company and the quality of the team is so clear. Everyone knew what part they were playing, and it allowed Louis, with his calm persona, to create that visual gold on screen and make tweaks on the fly. He's an inspiration to watch. It's also been incredible being treated like a regular client by Sweetshop, even though it was a pro-bono shoot that they are doing out of the kindness of their hearts, they still work with me and keep me informed on all steps, like the absolute true professionals they are.

LS: Shoots are always different as there are shifting dynamics and demands that I'm constantly fielding. There's something special about getting everybody on board for a good cause though. Everyone just pitches in which creates a lovely energy throughout the set. Whenever there was space that needed filling, someone leapt into it. Melissa from Sweetshop's accounts department played our mother giving birth, Pat took on the role of a banana, and our 1st AD Shorty played an old fella having a heart attack in a gym. Everyone put their hand up to help, even more so than usual.

From a production point of view, it was great having Pat on board. He was fully trusting, and I didn't have to discuss things too much. This allowed us to charge forward. Instead of sweating about what we've just done, we could focus on what we were doing, and that freed up the creative flow and allowed us to move efficiently and quickly.

What did you want to make the audience feel with the video?

LS: For me, just presenting the audience with the need for donations wasn't enough, as we all become numb or desensitized to those types of campaigns. But my hope was that if people smiled while still pondering the bigger question, we could be effective in a humorous and oddly refreshing way. This film serves as not just a way of giving support, it's also a great way of introducing One Percent Collective. Ideally this is a way to grow the brand and help it become an organization that will be remembered fondly by the viewers. I hope instead of people feeling burdened by the ask, they'll feel empowered that just by doing a little they can participate in a whole lot of good.

PS: The humor comes through the video. When you get to the last scene with Mike and Mandy sitting around the organ I love the collectiveness. In a way, it's almost a metaphor for the donor and the charity and the beautiful connections in this world.

What were the trickiest components during the creation of this campaign and how did you overcome them?

LS: Casting was the toughest. That's not unusual for any production, but it felt more acute here. We all didn't want to make a broad comedy spot. Mike couldn't be too odd looking, and we agreed we didn't want someone to feel one-note or a sad-sack loser. It can be a slippery slope to go this way and can take away the integrity of your character and therefore story. We wanted Mike to be more of a forgotten second cousin type.

But, we had bugger all auditions come in for the main role. That was hard given our expectations of the quality of actor we were looking for. As I said, I started sweating it and ended up hassling some mates on Facebook. Guy eventually came in as a favour, and he'd already heard about One Percent Collective so he was keen to help. A fresh face and not on anyone's books he nailed the pitch of performance first take. Guy's a full-on super intellectual artist and when I put him in scenes without initial direction, I ended up making a small tweak here and there to get what we needed. When matched up with the talented Natasha, the pair were just absolute gold together!

Why do you think the 'donate now' ads and content out there don't cut through the noise anymore?

LS: As I mentioned, people have become desensitized. In every age group, people don't watch TV anymore, and if they do, it's mainly through the Internet. People do care about those in need, but because there's so much information, they don't know what causes to care about, and which are worth participating in. They're flooded by lots of different messaging and not all of it's true. That's quite a challenge to cut through.

Here we had a unique opportunity. By intellectualizing this film and by making the story more meaningful on different levels, we found a spark in the human language of comedy. Hopefully it makes it all that more memorable and fulfilling for the viewers.

1% Credit List

Client: Patrick Shepherd, Chief Do-er One Percent Collective

Production Company: Sweetshop (Global)

Copywriters: Naz Nazli & Louis Sutherland

Director: Louis Sutherland

Creative Consultants: Breigh Kenley & Jordan Pinkston

Producer: Tony Whyman

MD: Fiona King

EP: Ben Dailey

DOP: Andrew Stroud

Offline Editor: Nathan Hickey

Colourist: Pete Ritchie

Post Production Online: Blockhead

Sound Mix: Dan Nathan - Liquid Studio

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ABOUT SWEETSHOP

CRAFT IS AT OUR CORE

Creative story development takes art, craft and heart. We nurture our Directors, taking the time to understand what they want to say and how they want to say it. And because of this, our carefully selected roster is fiercely proud of the content they make and how they make it. They're humanity obsessed. Their work gives you that fierce little lump in your throat. It's unapologetically funny. It makes you gasp with surprise. We continuously evolve our creative talent, while managing our more established directors, to ensure unmatched access to fresh and exciting creative solutions.

OUR GLOBAL NETWORK

We call ourselves a global boutique production company, because that's just what we are. 27 Directors across seven fully-serviced offices, on four continents: Los Angeles, London, Shanghai, Bangkok, Auckland, Sydney and Melbourne. Each office is customised for its local needs, while also functioning seamlessly as a global team.

WE ARE OUR PEOPLE

We think you'll like working with us. We'll provide you with a uniquely experienced, agile and collaborative working environment. We're passionate from start to finish. We'll always work hard and push the boundaries to pull off the best possible production.

WE CARE

We're decent humans and we care. We work ethically to support communities locally and internationally. And we really mean it. From the way we operate our business and productions, to the causes we align ourselves with.

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