

Face to Face with... Jonathan Hopkins

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[Jonathan Hopkins](#) has always had a passion for comedy so when the opportunity recently came along to helm the latest pop promo parody for Yeo Valley, he simply couldn't refuse. Mimicking bygone boy bands and picking up where last year's hip-hop hay stackers left off, the video aired during the X Factor at the weekend and began trending on Twitter within seconds. Here, the [Pulse Films](#) director talks about young ambitions to be a fighter pilot, his route into commercials and learning first hand from his filmmaking heroes.

Why did you get involved with the Yeo Valley follow up?

Firstly, I've always found boy bands unacceptably cheesy so I jumped at the opportunity to create a spoof. Secondly, it was a great challenge to try and match the success of the previous Yeo Valley rap advert. Finally, I wanted to work with [BBH](#) again. I feel I get to really express myself creatively on their projects.

Did you have to watch many Take That videos as part of the research?

Yes, but not only Take That videos. We watched Boyzone, JLS, Blue, The Wanted, Backstreet Boys... the list goes on.

What was the shoot like? Was it a fun atmosphere to reflect the humour on camera?

The shoot was long and tough but ultimately an upbeat and enjoyable experience for all involved. I'm a firm believer in maintaining a relaxed and happy atmosphere on set. When that happens the jovial mood tends to rub off on the actors and their performances.

How did you get into commercials?

In 2007 I made a short film called Goodbye Mr. Snuggles which won a few awards and was selected for the [Saatchi & Saatchi] New Directors' Showcase in Cannes. Following that I founded my production company Between The Eyes which is where I began directing music videos and my first couple of commercials. For almost two years now Pulse Films have been representing me and I've been extremely busy. That's because I have such a driven and enthusiastic team supporting me.

What did you want to be when you were younger? Was it always advertising/directing that you wanted to do?

When I was very young I wanted to be a fighter pilot. However, I have always been obsessed with TV, films and comic books. When I was seventeen I acted in the Edinburgh Festival and started making short comedy sketches on video cameras. From that moment on I realised I had found the perfect outlet for my creative energy. Since then I dedicated myself entirely to a career in filmmaking and never looked back.

Humour and light-heartedness feature a lot on your reel, is it also an interest outside of directing?

Very much so. I adore going to see live comedy and have performed some improv before. I also write a lot of scripts and my heightened style of humour features very heavily.

Would we ever see you directing, say, a PSA for drink driving or a spot for Amnesty International?

Perhaps, but it would totally depend on the nature of the script. I would never want to rule myself out of anything.

Have you done any other music videos and if not would you like to do more/serious ones?

I started off my directing career making music videos but gave up because I was earning no money from them. I don't want to become a music video director again but would always consider doing one-offs for bands I love. What excites me more is the idea of making unashamed comedy music videos like the ones on Saturday Night Live. E.g. I'm On A Boat.

You assisted on the set of Harry Potter and Charlie and the Chocolate Factory. Tell us about that and did your film education in NY help?

My time on those films was invaluable. I learnt a hell of a lot about the huge scale and hard work involved in studio movie making. Plus I got to meet and closely observe Alfonso Cuaron and Tim Burton (two of my heroes) as they worked. My film education in NY helped in the sense that I understood the basics of what was happening around me but when you are an assistant or runner on a Warner Bros feature, you are but a small cog in a big machine.

Where did you watch the new Yeo Valley spot roll out and what was the reaction like?

I watched it with my girlfriend and Dad at my folks' home in Oxfordshire. They had seen it before but can't get enough of it. I only wished I could've been a fly on the wall in lounges around the country to watch the reactions of people who were seeing it for the first time!

Are there any future projects in the pipeline you can tell us about?

I am hopefully directing an exciting French McDonald's campaign before Christmas for BETC Paris. Other than that I'm very busy developing my own TV and feature film ideas.