

You're competing against the war in Bosnia, Hugh Grant's Hollywood antics or Mike Tyson's release from jail.

Art director Walter Campbell and copywriter Tom Carty of London agency Abbott Mead Vickers/BBDO are the creative team behind what was arguably the most interesting commercial of the past years, the "Unexpected" spot for Dunlop (featured as a storyboard in "Lürzer's Archive", 4/93). They are also the team behind what is surely the most interesting commercial of this year, "Twister" for the Volvo 850 (you'll find a storyboard of the spot in the last issue of "Lürzer's Archive"), which won a Gold Lion in Cannes and two Berlin Bricks at the Breaking Walls Awards. Hermann Vaske put a number of questions to the team, also on the subject of their cooperation with Tony Kaye and his input as director of the two seminal spots. Being a tried and trusted creative team, they also responded to the questions as a team.

L.A.: Director Martin Scorsese, cameraman Michael Ballhaus, and actor Robert De Niro are a legendary dream team of film. Are you, together with Tony Kaye, already a legendary dream team of advertising?

Walter Campbell/Tom Carty: Yes, but the problem is Tony always wants to be Robert De Niro! But, seriously, dream teams can't really exist - for example: Ridley Scott working with Bill Bernbach or Dave Trott and David Lynch? Well, maybe. But it's just an interesting thing to talk about over a cup of tea.

L.A.: "Twister," "Stuntman," and "Photographer" are an extraordinary series of commercials. How was the concept born?

Walter Campbell/Tom Carty: We felt it was a very interesting brief: make



Tom Carty and Walter Campbell.

Photograph: Malcolm Venville

Volvos more exciting. For 20 years now, Volvos have been single-mindedly sold on their safety, reliability and durability (if three things can be single-minded). In a way the brief was to go against that, but we felt it was important not to throw away that heritage. We test-drove the 850 and thought it was really good to drive. We then thought about the most exciting things we could do with the car and the kind of people that would actually drive them. We got

into this area of a documentary style approach, something really believable, but it needed a twist because documentaries are not new to advertising - so we climaxed the films with an amazing visual idea, marrying the person and the car to the core of what they actually do. The safer you are, the more dangerous you can be. **L.A.:** What are your comments on Tony Brignull's remarks on the casting of the "Stuntman" commercial?



Stills from the "Photographer" spot, one in a series of commercials for Volvo, presenting Volvo drivers with rather dangerous jobs.



Excerpts from the Volvo "Twister" spot, which depicts, in breathtaking images, ...

(Note: A while ago, a polemical article appeared in British advertising weekly "Campaign," criticising Tony Kaye's work on a number of counts. The author of the article was Tony Brignull, one of the "grand old men" of British advertising. Among other things, he lighted into Tony Kaye, who is Jewish, for casting a disproportionate number of "Jewish-looking" people in his commercials. Regarding the actor playing the stuntman in the Volvo spot Brignull dropped the remark "...no prizes for guessing which religion...")

Walter Campbell/Tom Carty: Tony Kaye is responsible for a tiny percentage of commercials on TV & cinema. Tony casts Jewish people in a tiny percentage of his commercials.

This small percentage could never be described as ramming his religion down people's throats. Tony Kaye casts people on their performance and character - not their color or religion.

L.A.: Were the Volvo commercials planned as a global concept?

Walter Campbell/Tom Carty: The brief wasn't to do pan-worldwide ads, although in the back of our minds, we thought it would be good to do something that felt epic, something that would work on a worldwide level.

L.A.: How were the spots received in the US?

Walter Campbell/Tom Carty: The ads haven't run in the USA yet, but we've heard some advertising agencies over there like them.

L.A.: You did one of the best post-production jobs in the history of advertising on Dunlop. How did you go about the post-production?

Walter Campbell/Tom Carty: With Dunlop, everything apart from the colorising was done in camera, from the explosions to the type on the tyre.

L.A.: What made you pick "Venus in Furs" by Velvet Underground for the spot's soundtrack?

Walter Campbell/Tom Carty: We always wanted to use a great piece of music for Dunlop. Tony had ideas, we had ideas, but Peter Goddard, the editor, suggested "Venus in Furs," and as soon as we put it with the film it worked, it worked brilliantly. In fact, a lot of people think we had the track before we had the idea.



... the hazardous everyday life of a meteorologist doing research on tornados.



L.A.: What was the best thing you saw on television in '95?

Walter Campbell/Tom Carty: Eric Cantona's kung fu kick.



market sector. But when you do a car commercial you're not competing against other car commercials. You're competing against the war in Bosnia, Hugh Grant's Hollywood antics or Mike Tyson's release from jail. People don't want to watch adverts until you make them worth watching.

L.A.: What cars do you drive?

Tom Carty: A Volvo 850 (with Dunlop tyres).

Walter Campbell: A Renault Espace (with Dunlop tyres).

L.A.: After all you have accomplished, are there still goals in advertising for you?

Walter Campbell/Tom Carty: Of course there are still goals in advertising or we wouldn't be here.



Stills from the "Stuntman" spot.



L.A.: What are Mr. Abbott and the BBDO network saying about your creativity?

Walter Campbell/Tom Carty: The BBDO network think the work is stylish - David Abbott wants us to try harder.

L.A.: Why are you creative?

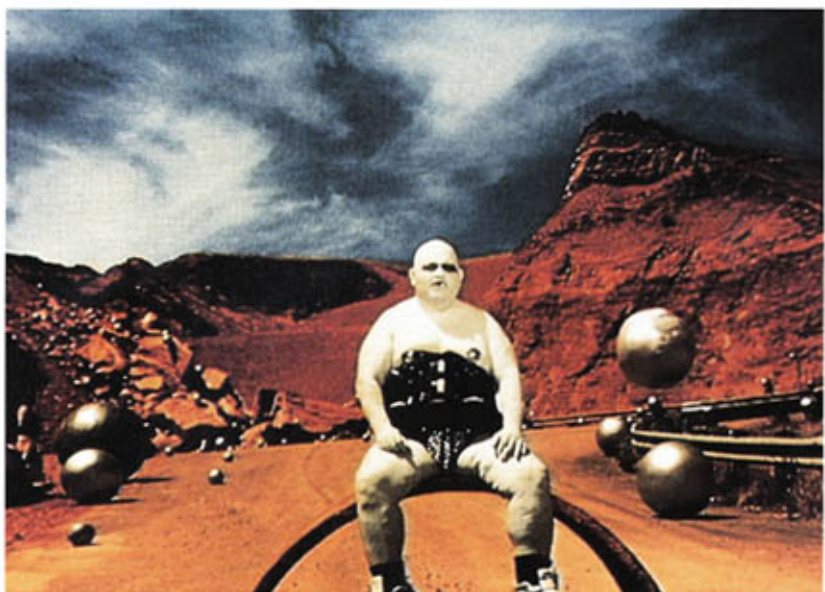
Walter Campbell/Tom Carty: Because it's more fun than not being creative.

L.A.: And where do you get your stimulus from?

Walter Campbell/Tom Carty: Everywhere, especially Eric Cantona.

L.A.: What attributes must a good commercial have?

Walter Campbell/Tom Carty: It must stop you, it must cut through, and it must be entertaining. There are a lot of clients that think their competition is whoever else is in their particular



And here are some images from the already legendary "Unexpected" commercial for Dunlop tyres.