



INSTA NIKE

NIKE

**DIRECTOR'S NOTES
MIKE SEYMOUR**



**PROD CO.
FILMS**



AUTHENTICITY

It's something that's often over-promised and under-delivered.

Which is surprising, given that one way to guarantee authenticity is to simply use a real person doing what they do best.

If you want real...be real. So let's do that. What's the idea here, stripped back and at its simplest?

One guy. One skateboard. Insane talent. Cutting edge cinematography and world class vfx to capture it.

Not overtly trying to sell anything. No more explanation necessary. Stripped back to the core – simple but strong. This is raw and explicit because it dares to be. It just... is.



APPROACH

There are four points of difference in my approach:

First, my core speciality as a Director is the combination of cutting edge visual techniques with a credible performance from a central character.

We'll make this a visual stunner, but wrapped around an emotional core – we need to relate to the lead talent, making it accessible and personal to viewers. Real emphasis is put on the casting and performance elements so there's an immediate, strong connection with the audience.

This combination of technique and personality is the sweet spot for me.

Secondly, I'd like to build up the drama and tease the audience, not giving the game away from the outset. I'd like to capture highly unusual angles, elements and moments from the action and weave them together with a strong narrative thread. This runs from A to Z throughout the action as we build clearly defined sequences – much of the pace and structure will emerge as the pieces are crafted together in an accelerating edit, and when cut against the music/fx track.

Next up, we need to select the talent and build our set tailored towards his speciality moves. Not vice versa. The moves are fully awesome, but believable as opposed to fantasy-land and faked.

Finally, we explore radical camera/post production combinations to lock us into key moments with maximum emotional/visceral impact when set to a killer soundtrack.

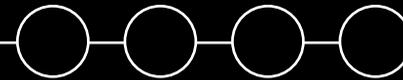


PRODUCT PLACEMENT

This has to be REAL, no fake advertising vibe here, we all know that the target audience have bullsh*t detectors the size of Kanye West's ego.

And as soon as you start to sell them anything they'll be bolting for the door – so therefore this becomes a variable based on instinct and trust. Yes it's Nike, it's a sneaker, but it's waaay short of being forced down our throat.

We may open on the swoosh on the cap, and close on the logo to bookend the film, and although we see the hero Nike sneakers throughout, it's mixed with unbranded apparel (the shirt, the trousers) so it's not a wall-to-wall gig, subtlety is the call and it's all organically part of the action.



We need to hit all the right buttons in the right order for people to really relate to this on an emotional level, and go “Yeah, that's me” and know instinctively what the ad is for - but the images are powerful and aspirational enough for the target audience to cut through any pre-conceived barriers, and magnetic enough for them to be drawn into this world.

And open to shares, likes, faves and virality across all SM platforms.

That's the job.





LOOK



*A full breakdown of the shotlist follows later, here's an overview.

This is how we roll.

This campaign is a visual feast. As graphic as possible, it's pure eye-candy. Every frame is lush, rich and composed for maximum visual depth and beauty. The lighting is crisp, slightly frontal, fashion-style. Super-high definition - 6k whenever possible - we want to separate every droplet of water and particle of dust.

Almost all material is shot at high speed on a Phantom, much of it speed ramped, and most of it up close to the skater in action. We'll need a strong visual separation between our hero and his respective backgrounds, working in a deep studio/ warehouse environment. The images have a crisp, crunchy vitality.

Shapes are pulled out of the background to offset the action - there's a sharp focal falloff and shallow depth of field between the foreground plane and the successive layers behind our hero, a crispness that locks the eye firmly into the action - and the sneakers, but in a cool, effortless way.

Overall, the campaign's got the highest production values.

I want this to be the best looking ad campaign across any platform, TV, Instagram, you name it - period, with a rich visual appeal featuring a dynamic, authentic talent.

Let's take a closer look at him.

PROD CO. FILMS
MIKE SEYMOUR



TALENT

Sure, he's one of the top 50 skateboard pros in the world, that's a given.

Here's how he looks. He's got unruly, long dark (close to black) hair, in a super cool way. 18 - 20-years-old, Caucasian/south American mix, maybe Italian blood. He's genuine, rakish, visually compelling, with an X factor when we see him. For the audience, it could be them, someone they know, someone they fully relate to in a cool, non-threatening way. No model, no celeb, just the real deal die-hard skater – we'll keep the tat count low on the dial.

You know what it's like at casting. Nothing much happens then someone walks into the room and sets it on fire. You're like – that's the guy – and you know it in a heartbeat. The rest of the casting session is just spent reaffirming your instinct.

While A-grade skateboarding skills are a mandatory, if there's ever a choice between personality and performance I'd sooner use a body double for the stunts and nail the visual/ emotional aspect of his 'performance', especially when he looks down the barrel at the end of the spot.

Throughout the ad he's just doing his thing, fully locked into the stunts. He's in the moment, locked into the power of Now.

The skater: Black shirt. Black drainpipes in latest cuts. Both get soaking wet. His ride: White wheels. Black trucks. Black deck.





You can break street skateboarding down to three distinct areas: flips, grinds and stationaries. All can be extremely visual. We'll dip into all three in a broad street-skate style. Almost every one emphasizes the shoe, featuring it, yet in a subtle way as inherent to the action.

Let's see what our guy's got – he'll need to have the chops to pull off some serious, jaw-dropping moves and here's the thing - we'll build the set around his ability/specifications. So talent first, check his sweet spots, then set-build accordingly.

And we need to know exactly what they are, what velocity he's travelling at, how he takes off and lands them – at times down to the square inch. He needs to almost defy gravity. We observe him as an incredible and accomplished athlete, bordering on wtf? moments as he seems to float, be suspended, land on a knife edge, grind towards us in perfect balance like a skate god - the whole nine yards.

TRICKS



Pre-production detail will elevate this gig so it becomes a precision outing – in this way we choreograph the on-set position of the cameras at any given second in any given stunt so we're capturing the most dynamic footage we can get.

To this end, I need to spend a couple of days with the talent once chosen (and this should also be part of the selection criteria) to understand their style to a high degree of precision. We've got some serious rigs on set that are hosing off film at super-high speeds while themselves moving extremely rapidly. You see where I'm going with this.

Need inspiration? Check these out:





LOCATION



Our space could have had any number of previous lives – a factory, a foundry, a warehouse – a big warehouse - with a super high ceiling. Firstly for space and potential character elements (we may use a brick wall backdrop as a texture) but mainly because of light.

Shooting at super-high speeds needs bucket loads of light, and the space is going to heat up quicker than a Death Valley at noon in July. Generating heat has some added benefits however, notably in the perspiration/ sheen of the hero skater. Let's work with it.

Additionally, we'll need some headroom from the top shot which is likely a drone with a vertically mounted Red Dragon shooting 6k. We'll be able to rack in big time without losing resolution.

Finally, there will inevitably be rogue elements in the 'black' set that we can paint/grade accordingly in post-production – this applies in particular to the brightness levels on the floor.





STREET ELEMENTS



Here I'd like to stick closely to a really minimal feel. The action takes place in a 'darkened' studio, and we need to keep the eye locked into the shoes, the talent and the stunts.

Apart from the features that demonstrate our hero talent's skills the best – stairs/hand rails/edges to grind/angled mortar features, there are a couple of pure white cones (of the traffic variety) and the suggestion of steel lampposts which are grey-on-black in the set, always as background elements, or deliberately placed as hard graphic cuts.

At all times we strip this back to basics and keep it free and uncluttered – we'll need every inch of space to work with.

WATER ELEMENTS



Following the key frame of your mood board, I'd also like to run a scenario past you where we soak/flood the space, as I love the inherent attributes of an industrial environment with light and reflections to work with, at super-low angles – plus the way the water can react when set into motion, when hit, how it explodes on landing, when energy/vibration is sent through it, when it's airborne and so on. So a rain tower plus a floor-based feature (a hydrant) that pumps water vertically up into the space are the go.

Water adds magic. It soaks our hero's clothes. His hair. The air. And reacts in a multitude of ways that lend themselves to visual technique to enhance the action.

When shooting the talent, we should detail this like a hair commercial.





HAIR IN MOTION



In shot 1, I'd like to see the logo on the hat, then have our guy take the hat off. We never see it again.

This is because his hair can be a dynamic element to exaggerate the slow motion, define our amount of gravity at that particular frame rate and section of stunt, and frame the talent's face.

In this regard there are a couple of shots we'd approach like we're shooting a hair ad – tons of front light - with different passes in the grade and rotoscoping to matt highlighted hair in.

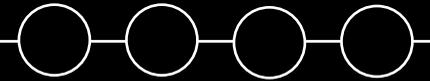
This gives a 'graphic', separated feel, and when wet it has weight and drag that reacts dynamically. No slow motion hair flicking shots a la Pantene/Timotei I promise.

Therefore light is bounced to deliver that liquid metal look of 'tenting' the talent. The light doesn't make our skater squint, but still attains the full punch and richness on the shine of the hair to bring it to life. As well as the board, the wheels, the shoes/laces, clothes etc)

All of this is shooting ultra-slo-mo with super-primers, hosing off these closer shots so we're locked in to every detail, ultimately adding to our guy's personality.



AUDIO



So it's going to be the next big hit, right?

This is contemporary top 10 that's globally cool right now. Something like this DJ Snake track You Know You Like It may be a great starting point, and lend itself to speed ramps and slo-mo:

CLICK TO LISTEN

In this category, the soundtrack and use of music is a critical choice – audio is 50% of the audio/visual experience. A cool track with the potential of some world-class audio sculpture/ fx work is going to blow the roof off. I'd like to discuss this with you further.

Each of the scenes have specific audio elements inherent in them, and this is the instrumentation and the atmosphere that are the raw ingredients of the build.

I'm not afraid of moments of silence in the mix to gain maximum impact when they slam back in.

The acid test? Listen to the combined soundtrack with digital stereo headphones with your eyes shut. In the dark. And if it doesn't make the hairs on the back of your neck stand up with the experience, it's not good enough.



SHOT LIST



The following is dependent upon talent capability/director feedback and is a basic shotlist with one central 'trick' to give an overall feel of how I would capture it – there would be others that are again, talent dependent.

Once we know the talent's chops for what his specialty tricks are, we pre-viz the shoot shot for shot in Maya, working out all camera angles, moves and dynamics prior to the day. It's critical the sneakers ping out at all times, yet are meshed organically into the action



SHOT LIST

From an elevated position we see the Nike logo on top of a cap, lit with a slash of light that pings out the contours of the swoosh. Long lens, shallow focus, rack focus in post.

Shot of hero sneakers in action as they move forward to (as if running with the board about to jump on and skate). We capture each footfall at super high speed with wide angle on the Phantom, the shoe coming into frame/filling frame. Light dust sprinkled on floor is kicked up with each footfall.

Alternative shot from underneath through reinforced glass plate of footfall with Nike logo on sole, leaving imprint on dust/dirt.

Superslo-mo. Impact of white skateboard wheel landing on ground, the bearings turning as it does, then coming to a stop – this is the moment the skater's weight hits the board surface.

Super slo-mo. Optional shot of the board flexing as it takes the weight of the rider, shot from tracking Phantom underneath the deck. Both these shots have potential for scale-up model builds.

Optional same with hard-rigged camera under deck. We're still teasing the audience, not yet revealing the rider or the arena. We'll continue for a couple of shots then bang into it. revealing the rider or the arena. We'll continue for a couple of shots then bang into it.

Detail of hero shoe on the deck, super slo mo, laces spinning in air, bouncing off shoe.

Overhead tracking shot, vertically down as we start to reveal the space, from drone/crane.

Optional rack in at post with twist on shot.

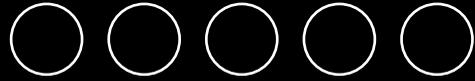
Super slo mo. Side tracking shot with skater now revealed as he builds up speed and approaches a 7-stair/rail set-up. A couple of cones in foreground.

Water explodes up into the space from a fire hydrant (practical) – from here on in it's all high speed shutter with every single water particle separated – all shot deep, with controlled focus pulls through several planes in post production. CGI water / fx as required.

Super-slo mo. He launches up into the air, flicking the board up with the inward heel of the sneaker. It's like he's floating in the air as he leaps.



SHOT LIST CONTINUED



The camera is right there an inch in front of the exact place on the steel rail where the board lands, we see the impact, the flex of the deck, and we track rapidly backwards and out as the skater grinds down the rail towards us, the board as he comes.

Optional shot coverage of the same, this time with the camera tracking with the hero sneaker as it controls the flow/movement/direction of the board.



The landing. A Spike rig shot tracks with the wheel/sneaker as the board leaves the rail and floats down through the air, tracking with the spinning wheel/ sneaker as it descends then impacts upon the floor – shot from the high speed robotic arm which is dolly-mounted.



Match cut to rapid backwards tracking shot at ½ inch above floor level just on wetdown floor as board/rider lands/approaches.



Cut to skater looking at camera, we track with him – we see his eyes. He breaks into a broad grin, natural, effortless, unforced.

ADDITIONAL MOMENTS



Sweat ECUs/ hand grabs (on board)
ECUs / eye ECUs



Coverage with handheld Phantom moves.



Post production lens flares.



Scale model builds (oversized wheels/inside trucks rotating shot 1k fps)



Water on floor vibrating to soundtrack



CGI additional elements – spray, dust, focus pulls, water droplets, clean ups etc. as appropriate.

END LOGO

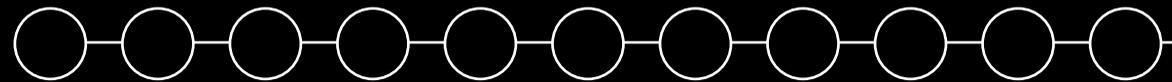


One alternative I'd like to explore for the end logo is the Tiger Rig. The camera begins to spin around our hero skater as he comes to a stop, like it's fixed at the end of a centrifuge, always looking inwards at the talent/set. We place him next to the hydrant, which is spraying water into the air.

A rig is set up for the high-speed camera - where an arm extended outwards from a central point has the camera mounted on the end. This circles around a platform that has a diameter of around 8 meters, and rotates at a speed of roughly 1 second per 360 degree rotation. It's insane. The central pivot is painted out in post.

The rotating camera shoots at a super high shutter rate. This is an incredibly beautiful way to show quick action in a flowing, liquid type of way and emphasises the grace and beauty of the action, while capturing each individual droplet of the water in the air.

Finally, we could build the CGI swoosh hero logo into these water droplets as we turn (so the Nike swoosh logo is built out of water) It's only ever clean at one increment of the rotation, and we spin around it 360 degrees then hard cut to black.





THANKS

And that's about it.

What an opportunity for a standout campaign. Hyper-real. Bold. Dark. Edgy. Exciting. Inspirational. Cool. Graphic.

What can I bring specifically to this project? A wealth of experience and my trademark explosive visual style meshed with precision casting and performance.

Once we cast the right skater, build that space, that vibe, then the trick is to nail that energy, that electricity that runs through the veins of the talent, then capture that on the screen where it hums and fizzes with a life all of its own.

That's the gig.

Thanks,

Mike Seymour

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