



FIRST TIMES

LAPHROAIG

MIKE MATTHEWS

I N T R O D U C T I O N

The heart of these films is the 'first time' experience that each pair will share together. I want to capture the anticipation, the excitement as they wonder what on earth they have let themselves in for. It will be a film of two halves. We begin with a packshot in the Laphroaig space. We, the viewer, know upfront what we are about to experience. And then in stark contrast to my other films, we shoot documentary style as we meet our 4 pairs for the first time, in an informal setting – like a café/bar or a lounge, as we see the two people getting ready or waiting.

We quickly intercut between the groups. We get them to talk about 'do you remember the first time we did x, y or z' moments, or they're trying to guess what's about to happen. While chatting, they could be getting ready, simply sat on a sofa waiting, or we are so close, that we don't really know where they are. We may even position the camera far away on a long lens and shoot observationally, as we dip in to their conversation. We assume all these people will

be 20 somethings, but it would be great if we can get a pair in their 60s interacting in exactly the same way.

This is playful chitchat - a brief moment to set up our pairs as best friends who have shared first-time experiences together. And of those experiences, one will have loved it; the other - less so. In fact, ideally, they will have hated it! We do like polarizing opinions.

As we're in the mood for 'first times', we break down the 4th wall and hear the voice of the director asking these questions. I love the idea of passing them an envelope from a disembodied hand off camera. Up to this point they have no idea what they're about to share together. And once they read the word 'Laphroaig' they may still have no idea. We hard cut on the best reaction for comedy, all cued by fantastic New York style jazz, timed to perfection. We film long lens as one pair walk down a lonely corridor and open the door to an adjoining mystery room.

We then cut to a new location. A more familiar Laphroaig setting. A warehouse style location - exposed brick and stripped-back art direction. A scene that resembles a bar with two stalls, a counter, two glasses and an unlabeled bottle. Each pair enters the bar, they react, take a seat and we let the scene react as they work out what they're tasting - and react as they experience the liquor for the first time. We hard cut through quickly, to get to the reactions.

They won't even necessarily know that they're drinking whisky, even after they start tasting it. But we will be looking for dividing opinions. That's where the fun begins. We will invite them to talk about how this reminds them of other first times. Where does this drink transport them? And then of course, we leave them chatting and laughing and making us laugh, as we cut to the pack shot and call to action as the film ends.



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S H O O T I N G S T Y L E

The film will be book ended by the two beautiful static packshots with graphic text. It all begins hand held, single-camera, documentary style as we observe our 4 pairs waiting patiently, all intercut. This will look more fly on the wall. Plus we will hear the voice of the director off camera chatting to these people.

Once into tasting, I want to capture the intimacy of each pair's friendship – so rather than creating a super stylized setting like in Father's Day, I would rather we film each pair in a closer, more friendly way like we did in the 200 Year Anniversary film, with the man and woman in the bar chatting casually on 2 cameras with a loose head. This will feel warmer and less stylized.

We will have those incredible fixed wide shots to celebrate the space as always, essential for the graphic text - but there will also be the big close-up. We want those facial tics, those reactions. These will not only help create flavour and nuance within the film, they will also be invaluable for the 15 second Hollywood teaser.



C A S T I N G

We are looking for 4 pairs of genuine best friends. 3 sets of male pairs. 1 female pair. We will seek out the funniest most compelling pairs and attempt to find a wide range of ages and diversification.

There will be lots of laughs, a bit of cringe, friends finishing off the other's sentences because they know each other so well. They will talk to someone off camera, they will try not to let the other give away their embarrassing secrets. We will soon establish how close these friends are.

But most importantly, we need to know that they are sharing this experience for the very first time. Whatever the heck it is that they're about to do...

We want funny. We want characters. We want to share their love for one another – and we want to laugh our socks off because they couldn't be more different in certain situations.

These people are strong, to the point. They are distinctive. The pairs will all feel individual. They will be selected to make us laugh, make us relate, make us think of our own best mates. My casting team have found fantastic people for Laphroaig over the past two years and I feel confident we would continue to seek out those brilliantly compelling personalities. As always with Laphroaig, we are seeking out those wordsmiths, those charismatic raconteurs who offer tasting notes beyond the familiar. Poets, comedians, public speakers. These are people who can give us amazing copy, without it ever feeling scripted or phony. But the most essential thing is we get two people who are genuinely best friends who can let us into their world.

These characters will all be American. Of course, these people could be found in the US, but equally, we could choose pairs of Americans living in the UK who are genuinely best friends, if we choose to shoot in London.





LOCATION & ART DIRECTION

We should find a location that is multi-purpose. Firstly, we need a warehouse style space with exposed brick wall and tall ceilings, to offer us the familiar Laphroaig visual trope. Two Hipster-heavy industrial stools, a small beautiful polished wooden bar, two simple tumbler glasses, a label-free bottle. But this film will look different to previous films because it needs to have a few genuine extra real spaces in which we can capture the initial moments. This should feel equally photogenic on camera, but it should look in contrast to the drinking location. Therefore, something with soft fabrics, a hit of colour, a hint of the outdoors, maybe some plants, a corridor even. And each pair should be in a different space so that we can intercut all 4 groups together. For logistics and budget, it would be fantastic to shoot this in London and it will have to be in the same building as the tasting location.



POST PRODUCTION

This film will have two distinct feelings. The first 20-30 seconds will feel loose and documentary in style, awash with natural light and a hand-held flow - before we transition to a new location with a subtly different grade, still with natural light, but it will feel more controlled and experiential for the remaining 60 seconds.

As always with Laphroaig, the edit is all about the music, the timing, the graphic text, those all-important pauses, and of course the comedy. The brilliance of these films is their unscripted spontaneity and this must be key in these films as we celebrate two best friends sharing a very unique and memorable experience together, for the very first time.



A photograph of two men in a bar setting, smiling and holding drinks. The man on the left is wearing a dark red shirt and holding a glass of whiskey. The man on the right is wearing a dark blue shirt and holding a glass of whiskey with a cinnamon stick. The background features a decorative wall with a geometric pattern and warm lighting.

C O N C L U S I O N

I'm very proud of the work I have made for Laphroaig and I would love the opportunity to get stuck into another cracking script.

Thanks so much for your time.

Mike

fatlemon.