

## Directing Duo **Gentlemen** Signs with **Über Content**

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The directing duo known as Gentlemen (Brett Snider and Billy Federighi) has signed with Über Content for exclusive US spot representation. Gentlemen

If life is one big contest, it is likely to be won by Gentlemen...statistically speaking, that is. Since making their foray into spot-making less than a year ago, Brett Snider and Billy Federighi (pict. l. to r.) have entered and been named winners in ad contests for Converse and Doritos, and been counted among shots magazine's most promising new directors.

Don't get the pair wrong - the road to commercial directing has been paved with some early disappointments. After meeting at Columbia College Hollywood in 2005, Snider and Federighi appeared destined for separate lives: Snider behind the counter at Kinko's and Federighi as a set P.A. for production companies such as VILLAINS and Smuggler. The young men were not contented, however, and when the two decided to try their hand at directing, something clicked. "We directed a music video for a band called Liars - the band found out after the fact, of course," Snider recalls. "They loved it and used it and we were on our way, or so we thought." Executives in the music video industry saw the video, and that's about as far as it went. "Maybe if there was a channel dedicated to music videos, we'd have persisted, but there hasn't been anything like that since MTV in the 80s," Snider laughs.

As Gentlemen, the guys turned to spots, helming a spec for Converse. With a budget of \$300 ("It's all up there on the screen," says Federighi), they wrote, directed, and edited the 16mm piece. "The Original" won the brand's worldwide contest and ran nationally.

Apparently, first place and national exposure does not guarantee representation and a steady stream of spot work. "Fortunately, the Doritos opportunity came up," says Federighi. "We did two spots and got into the top five."

Winning a trip to Miami, and seeing another spot, Doritos "Mousetrap", air on TV, bolstered the duo's confidence, and things were starting to happen. Through mutual acquaintances, their work came to the attention of Chicago agencies DDB Needham and Leo Burnett. Chris Rossiter of Leo was impressed and set up a screening for the agency creative and production teams.

Seizing this opportunity and realizing they would need to stand out to parlay the screening into actual work, the guys constructed a wooden 2-foot by 2-foot diorama depicting themselves as centaurs perched atop snow-capped mountains. A recorded track related their long and arduous journey from the hinterland to Chitown.

The stunt and the work made an impression and Leo Burnett came through with an opportunity: the agency gave Gentlemen a 50K budget to realize an animatic for Kelloggs as a test, a "live-a-matic," as Snider calls it. Gentlemen hit a home run with the project, and "Toothosaur" became a national commercial.

While shooting the live-a-matic, Gentlemen researched and met with production companies; Über Content came up on more than one occasion, recommended to the team by people at Burnett and other agencies. When another Kelloggs spot was offered to Gentlemen, they talked to nine companies, but Über was their top choice. "From the get-go, we knew they were something special," says Federighi. "Phyllis and Preston don't sit back and wait for things to happen - they are as driven as we are."

Now signed with the company, Gentlemen have been awarded another Kelloggs spot, and are shooting three Kentucky Lottery spots through Northlich/Cincinnati.

"Preston and I have a very close relationship with an Executive Producer at Burnett in Chicago, who sung Brett and Billy's praises, both creatively and personally," says Über Content's Phyllis Koenig, who presides over the company with Partner/Executive Producer Preston Lee. "They have been bitten by the filmmaking bug and come at it with a passion, determination, and originality. I'm very excited to be involved in their artistic growth."

Adds Lee, "Both Brett and Billy come to each conversation, each meeting, and each project with a totally fresh perspective. They are hungry to work on good creative and have an illegal amount of enthusiasm."

The directors' moniker is an appropriate one. "We are impeccably tailored gentlemen and we bring that to the set," Federighi explains, "and we like to send flowers to clients, which is gentlemanly, isn't it?"

Based in Hollywood, Über is a multi-content production company established in January of 2006.

Now representing nine directors with diverse talents, Über Content has quickly become the new company to watch. Gentlemen rounds out a company roster comprised of Jordan Brady, Todd Field, Jeffrey Fleisig, Stewart Hendler, Jason Kohn, Dave Laden, Sean Mullens, and Marc Schölermann.