

Warburtons

## Introduction

Let's face it, life a competition. And more often than not, your first and most consistent competitor (or mortal enemy) can be found sleeping in the next bedroom!

Siblings compete, they're natural rivals. They compete for toys, attention, love, the last slice of pizza, in short, they compete for pretty much everything. Usually this is a healthy thing - usually - as a little healthy competition builds character and help's you define your place within the family, and the world. If nothing else it will certainly toughen you up to the point were you can just about handle anything the other kids are likely to dish out. Besides, as anyone who actually has a brother or sister knows, sometimes you just have to tease them or what's the point?

Families are the emotional heart of Warburton's, whose products are specifically designed with them in mind. Nurturing growth and inner motivation are key brand concepts that fit seamless into our spot, with Sam's determination to "rise to a better" version of himself (okay maybe with a side order of revenge, but nevertheless).

Family life is at the centre of this campaign, taking the classic story of sibling rivalry and giving it a wholesome, Warburton twist. Think Home Alone, think The Goonies, think Weird Science, think of your favourite hollywood story of fraternal clashes and then glaze it with 21st centuries good taste. This isn't just about setting up the 'cliche' or 'the typical'. It's about exposing, cleverly, the nuances of brotherly competition by picking up on the unexpected and focusing on the small details of life that will make our audiences smile.

## Tone

Tonally the film is a warm and sentimental snapshot of sibling rivalry seen from Sam's very frustrated 'little brother' perspective. It's a classic story based in the real world but with a fresh and authentic modern angle that is both comical and relatable.

In the opening we see an 'Anderson-esque' depiction of Sam, writing a personal letter to Mr Jonathan Warburton about his irritating older brother, Aaron. Sam may not fully grasp the inner workings of the adult world and the responsibilities associated, but he doesn't appear to have a problem expressing his own version of them and what, for an eight year old boy, the future holds. For Sam, Half and Half equals strength and strength equals power and guess what? Power equals PAYBACK, which for most eight year olds is the holy grail/sole reason for picked-on little brothers to grow up.

As the scenes between Sam and Aaron are essentially flashbacks we have a little more scope for exaggeration. Also, as all of our information is one-sided we can assume that Sam is splattering his version with big dollop of embellishment. These 'memories' only serve as versions of the truth from a little brother, who at the age of eight can sometimes have a tendency to cross reality with make-believe, giving the viewer a not-so impartial account of what has actually occurred.

Luckily, all this does is make the writing scene even more 'belly laugh' funny. Sat in his room, plotting his Machiavellian revenge on his brother is more adorable than anything else, and this is what makes the audience laugh and of course relate to.

This is a funny, positive story that utilises the hyper-real comedy of fraternal warring and connects it with the audience in very wholesome and honest way.

## **Casting & Performance**

Ultimately the success of this film lies within the casting of the brothers. Performance is definitely key, especially with Sam. His tone and mannerisms need to be subtle and underplayed so that the audience warms to him. We want him to be a little dry and eccentric but not over-the-top quirky. His performance needs to be believable so viewer grasps how genuinely frustrated he is with his brother and the incessant teasing.

For Aaron we need to tread a fine line, carefully ensuring that he comes off as typical 'older brother' and not a bully. He isn't actually spitefully and vindictive he's just basically exerting his birth line privileges, and giving Sam a hard time.

To achieve this, it's best not to overwork or rehearse the actions. The direction for the boys should be minimal and precise, allowing them to relax and just have fun with it. It's important that their acting feels real and relatable and not too 'cartoon' like with exaggerated expressions. Essentially, they just need to be themselves. We also have the option to cast real brothers which could really help get this dynamic right.

### **Sam**

Sam is our pint-sized protagonist, he's sensitive, witty and imaginative and very similar to Kevin McCallister in Home Alone, or Mickey Walsh in The Goonies. His life revolves around packed lunches, climbing trees, and getting revenge of Aaron, you know, normal boy things. Sam has a bit of a dose of 'small man' syndrome, as do most children with older brothers who really, they're all desperate to emulate. Sam is full of energy but he has physical limitations. His is a bit 'weedy' but resilient, with pre-adolescent muscles which add to his 'little brother' grievances. But he is totally loveable, emotive and has a charm that the viewer instantly warms too. He's industrious and works hard (twice as hard) to achieve his goals, and demonstrates an inner confidence that foreshadows that Sam won't be a push over for long.

### **Aaron**

Aaron has a 'big kid' complex very similar to Buzz from Home Alone. Or at least Sam thinks so. Sam's "version" of the events portray Aaron as cunning, manipulative, and a real pain. He's shown as the immature 'jock type', who takes time out day, to victimise his little brother for fun. However, despite all the references, nobody apart from the audience actually sees Aaron do any of these things. As in Home Alone with the 'wet/sticky bandits', the only times these 'crimes' are committed are inside Sam's head. Even their Mum, who tends to mill around in the background of the scenes, doesn't see what's happening. Of course, this doesn't mean that they haven't happened, or that Aaron isn't pulling the wool over their Mums eyes, but it does hint towards another perspective of his character.

### **Mum**

Mum is a kind, loving, 'doesn't have time to blow dry her hair or put her make-up on' Mum. It's not that she is scruffy, it's just she has two boys running around the house and a long list of things to get through. She has a face that we are naturally drawn to, similar to

someone we might already know. She's empathetic and approachable with a 'second level' beauty and a good figure. Essentially she needs to be likeable and relatable.

## **The Story**

We open up on Sam alone in his bedroom writing a letter to Jonathan Warburton. Sam is imaginative and creative, with a room that is littered with hand-made charts and child-like mechanical drawings Could have home-made muscle chart on the wall. The room looks lived in but not messy, with toy figures, posters and pen pots for planning. You can instantly tell the Sam's mum still gives it a good tidy she could even knock on the door and ask if he wants anything.

Dear Jonathan Warburton.

We cut to Sam taking a loaf of Half and Half out of the kitchen cupboard which is crammed full of every variety of Half and Half. A child written note with skulls and cross bones reads: "Sam's stuff" and then in capitals DON'T TOUCH.

I eat your Half & Half bread every day. I think it's well tasty.

We cut to Sam's mum making him a BIG sandwich. His eyes are glued and he's hovering, annoyingly over her. She cuts it in half with a knife but no sooner than she does this, Sam grabs the sandwich and tries to run off. She coughs authoritatively and stops him in his tracks. Sam, realising his mistake, slowly comes back and she passes him a plate to put the sandwich on, and then he's off again...

But that's not why I eat it.

Next, we see Sam in his bedroom, wearing his full-on sports kit, socks and all, and posing in a full length mirror. With one hand he is holding his Half and Half sandwich, whilst his other arm is trying to flex in the mirror. His muscle is as deflated as his expression.

You see, I've had enough of my brother bossing me about.

We cut to Sam downstairs in the hallway fixing his tie for school, when Aaron runs past and ruffles his hair as their Mum looks for her keys - completely unaware of what has just happened.

Do that. Wear this. Don't touch that - all because he's bigger than me.

We cut to the garage which is full of the familiar family 'odds and sods', boxes, basket ball hoops, old toys. In the corner we see poor little Sam holding a suspended punch bag as Aaron pummels it and nearly knocks Sam off balance.

Next, we see Sam dressed in his Mums shoes and oversized "wedding hat" parading with a big sulky face, up and down the room as Aaron laughs on and encourages him, spinning his finger as if asking him to do a twirl.

Then, we cut to Aaron acting like some kind of military commander, like Chet from 'Weird Science', telling Sam not to "under any circumstances" touch his new drum set. However, Aaron is so wrapped up in his own authority he doesn't realise that Sam has inched

himself closer and closer to the drum set, he takes a big swing at the symbols and then runs like hell with Aaron closely following on his tail.

But the fool doesn't know your secret. Your Half & Half's got wholegrain hidden in it.

Sam is sat at the breakfast table with all his condiments arranged perfectly around him and a loaf of Half and Half protectively within his reach. Sam is holding his Half and Half sandwich as Aaron walks up to the breakfast table and plonks himself down - Sam doesn't take his eyes off of him.

So I'm gonna sit tight, play the long game Mr Warburton.

Sam takes a bite of his sandwich as he continues to eyeball Aaron. This comically fierce

look catches Aaron's attention, which causes him to almost double take. And one day...I'll be big enough to have him.

Aaron looks down at the Half and Half loaf. Sam places a protective hand on it, while still directing his burning glare towards his big brother.

We end with Sam signing his name at the bottom of his letter.

Thanks for helping, Sam Saunders.

Cut to packshot, a range of Half & Half products on the kitchen counter.

VO Half white flour & half wholegrain flour. Warburtons half & half.

From our family to yours.

## **The comedy**

What's great about this script is the constant contrast between the writing visual and the flashbacks. The sweet thing about Sam is that he is so painfully genuine in his letter writing that he becomes even more loveable and funny, then this coupled with teasing scenes just keeps building and building the tension up until the point of explosion!

Other than what is set out in the scripts there are so many scenarios that we could explore. For example,

Aaron could be shown putting a bowl on top of Sam's head, with grimace as we see more and more hair fall to the floor and then see poor little Sam with the same butchered hair for the rest of the spot.

Or we see Sam lying down behind a home made bike jump as Aaron rides towards him, on his bike, and tries to 'jump' Sam... there is terror in Sam eyes.

Or in his own make-shift laboratory, we could see Aaron mixing a concoction of kitchen ingredients (orange, milk, ketchup) and trying to get his brother to taste it for his school 'science project'

Or, covering Sam with shaving foam whilst he is asleep/putting toothpaste on his pillow...

...drawing a moustache on his face and love hearts on his cheek that we see him trying to scrub off in the bathroom mirror with Aaron giggling behind him...

Or we see Aaron putting a plastic cup of water on top of a door frame, and then him patiently waiting out-of-sight, until Sam opens the door, looking like he is dressed for something special and then is saturated.

...or Aaron chases Sam up the stairs and tries to grab his legs as he runs... Look

The overall look of the spot will be filmic to emphasise the cinematic angle, a 'family film', full of fun of laughter. We'll create a realistic lighting design that will help the viewer engage with the action whilst ensuring that it doesn't become too documentary-looking. The photography, costume design and art department will be areas that will need to be crafted with an eye for realism and authenticity, using a colour scheme that will benefit the film's flair. This is also something we will think of again in post, taking into consideration the idea that the film must always feel fresh and modern.

I think the photography should be simple, with mostly locked off shots using some interesting and sometimes unexpected compositions. The action will be observational but not in a hand-held way. It observes by pushing in on the objects that the viewer is looking at or sliding past a wall to give the viewer the feeling that we, the audience are peering around the corner. This technique will work amazingly well with this script. The camera is observing our main characters, but, at the same time, the composition is interesting. The lighting is perfect and the action simple.

## **Location**

The location is suburbia, familiar and relatable. The house is maintained but not overly manicured, if we decide to do some exterior shots, there could be some toys strewn across the lawn, maybe the grass is a couple of inches too long? etc. For the interior, it is modern and stylish but not unique. There are the typical trappings of family life, picture frames, coat pegs maybe even school bags that we see Mum pick up, slightly de-focussed in the background.

It needs to feel like a happy home, and of a relatively comfortable income, but not grand. They probably go on holiday once, or twice a year and have the usual modern contraptions, HD flat

screen, a nice family car parked outside. The boy's are very well cared for but not spoilt and their bedrooms should also reflect this.

## **Pace and Editing**

The key here is to get through the action quickly so that we arrive at the comedy faster. For the most part, the comedy will be in the juxtaposition of the letter writing visual and the flashbacks, and then finding the perfect moments to move between the scenes and therefore achieve the most impact. The best way would be to build and build the tension

towards the middle where we almost reach boiling point and Sam is about to explode. Then he calms down, as does the pace, and he remembers his plan.

It's important that the edit always reflects Sam's state of mind, as he calms, his voice becomes more calculated and poised and the rhythm begins to slow. The decline in pace will also allow the viewer space to breathe, giving the final ironic stare more impact

## **Music**

I think playfulness is one of the key feelings the music in this film needs to convey, something cheeky and subtle. There is an adventurous spirit in the story that needs to be driven forward by the music, something that has a bit of momentum and compliments the edit.

## **At the end of the day**

Boys will be boys and brothers will always be brothers - the concept is timeless. I have really enjoyed writing this pitch, I think it's a great idea. It's an amazing opportunity to create a film that gets people talking, laughing and hopefully even sharing with their friends on youtube.

For me the creative process is an on-going one, so if you would like to discuss this further please contact me.

**The End.**

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**AJCollective**

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