



LIVE FREE

EAT SONIC

CAVAR

TREATMENT BY JODY HILL

HELLO

First off, thanks so much for thinking of me. What drew me to the campaign was the CIO, himself. I like that he's a "why not?" kind of guy. In a world where everything is safe and profit-driven, he's not afraid to try stuff out. **He doesn't care if his menu is unpredictable, because he knows that the joy of life is in the little adventures.**

I tend to feel the same way. I make stuff that feels funny to me and my friends, and I just kinda trust that someone else out there will connect to it, too. Why not? And, I guess, if I'm the only one who ever laughs at a particular joke... well, at least I went down laughing.

The CIO is a kindred spirit; he's a force for pure creativity. He's parading around as a slick business type, but when you look at the evidence, this dude is more of an artist than a corporate shill. I think that's so exciting to find, and it gives me just a little hope for humanity.

Plus... tater tot gatling gun.





SONIC IS **INSANE**



And proud to be. It's the kind of "live and let live" place that lets us all indulge in a little benign rebellion from time to time. Is it a little extra? Sure. But in a world that can be one big fat downer, give the people their joy! Sonic is a place of escape.

And it's in that spirit that you've created the Department of Research and Deliciousment. Hidden away in the desert like the Manhattan Project, the Sonic R+D facility is a whimsical world where dining dreams are born. The doors open up and inside is an immersive, creative world that you would never guess was there. It's functional and grounded in the physics of our real world... but it's fun-ified to the thousandth degree. It's a fast food Willy Wonka. It's a test lab, a playground, a corporate headquarters, and so much more!

Most importantly, it's a tangible illustration of the Sonic philosophy: if you're not having fun, you're not living free.

As we bring this world to life, we're going to stay conscious of the fact the everything contained within the R+D building should be whimsical... but also as practical as we can make it. It's got to be fun AND functional. It's all about celebrating the sense of adventure that makes Sonic different.



And our **perfect tour guide** into this **world** is none other than **SONIC'S CIO...**

THE CIO

The CIO is going to be the touchpoint for the brand for (hopefully) many seasons to come. It's not enough to find someone "good enough," we want to find a true original who can make this role into so much more than what we can see on the page.

Our perfect performer embodies the swagger of the Wolf of Wall Street, the faux-philosophy of Michael Scott, and the mad genius of Willy Wonka... with a dash of McConaughey's charisma. He's never arrogant; in his eyes, failure simply doesn't exist. As you say, he's not perfect, and he's sure as hell not bland.

Physically, this character has a James Dean/ Bob Redford/Glenn Powell All-American quality.

At first glance, his broad smile reads "down-home golden retriever," but the more we get to know him, the more we realize he's an artist and a dreamer with a rich inner life... which he can't resist making into his outer life.

I love what you had in your character bios about how he uses motivational "business speak"... but frequently messes up the quotes. That's such a hyper-specific character trait, and it tells you exactly how this guy sees himself. I think we could even bake that impulse into the character dialogue, in a throw-away, conversational way.

I also love the idea that in the delivery, you never quite know if he's in on the joke or not.

And, as always, I want someone who is DNA funny, who can put a twist on the lines that we never see coming. They should be wholly authentic and completely at home in their voice and their perspective. I want someone who can collaborate on the funny and make it feel as natural as breathing.



SONIC



A man with a mustache and blue gloves is sitting in the driver's seat of a car. He is looking out the window with a slight smile. The car is blue and the background is a bright, sunny outdoor setting.

*“Do **forty-four**
things every day
that **scare** you.”*

*"When all else fails,
fry, fry again."*

*"Candy is the answer.
Who cares what the
question is?"*

*"That's the tip
of the ice machine."*

*"You miss 100%
of the parking spots
you don't take."*

*"Rome wasn't built in time for a
totcho break. So, do as the Romans
don't."*

TIA

SABORITA

If you called Tia a sidekick, she'd kick you in the neck. Tia is, for sure, the main character of some other stories. She's the black cat energy to the CIO's retriever.

Tia is a little mysterious in the same way as Donna from Parks & Rec; she's always got something incredible going on, and she only tells her coworkers the bare minimum about it. But... that adventurous, spectacular life reveals itself in her drink creations. She's in the culture, and she has a keen sense for what is gonna tickle your tastebuds.

While Tia doesn't feel the need to perform in the same way our CIO does, she's just as motivated to shake up the status quo. Tia understands that the drinks are Sonic's most iconic asset, and she commands the respect that her department deserves. She's worldly, she's knowledgeable, and she has a palette that would be wasted on a traditional sommelier.

In relation to the CIO, Tia is his perfect counterpoint. Their strengths fill in each other's deficits. While he's the face of the operation, she's the woman behind the curtain making stuff happen. She's the only person who renders him speechless. When she's at work, he's listening in awe.



C/



SONIC



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ADDITIONAL CAST

The “normie” family that our CIO rescues from burger oblivion should feel ultra-grounded. I don’t think they’re JCPenny catalog, picture-perfect. I also don’t think they’re Tim and Eric character-y where they become the butt of the joke. **They should just feel very middle American, well-adjusted, and unaffected. I want a certain purity and openness to their expressions as they take in all the wonder around them.** No Disney kid overacting. Just surprising, grounded, human performances.

I like the idea that the other Sonic R+D workers are also a little creative. They’ve got unique hairstyles or unexpected accessories. Even when wearing versions of the Sonic uniform, you can see a ton of individuality peeking through. **These are people who cannot help but express themselves creatively.**





LOOK & FEEL

In the bland, safe burger world the visuals are going to be - no surprise - a little bland. The colors are a little dingy. The camera angles are a little uninspired. We might add a subtle grain to it, so that our Sonic world looks hyper-crisp in contrast.

When our characters enter the Department of Research and Deliciousment, I think we want to give ourselves a "Pure Imagination" beat. The camera takes on a slightly surreal, dreamy, floaty, steadicam look. It's all very seamless and elegant as the viewer's eye tracks through the space. We pay respect to the scale of the facility and we get hints of Easter eggs as our featured family moves through the bustling space... but we also want to play with the depth of it.

I know that being mindful of our various layers can add a degree of wonder to the entire visual experience. There will be multiplanar movement and detail throughout the entire space. This is key to giving us a sense of scope. We'll have crosses in the foreground, action in the mid-range, and Easter eggs in the background. To the viewer, it gives the effect that your eyes almost can't process everything - which makes it feel huge.



*IT'S LIKE DOROTHY
STEPPING INTO
TECHNICOLOR OZ.
IT'S REVERENT AND
IMMERSIVE.*

We use the momentum of that Steadicam shot to pull us into our various departments. In these sections, I'd still like to see a lot of smooth camera movement, but I think we can be a bit more rhythmic and energetic with it. Maybe, with the right track, we can even cut to the beat of the music, giving the whole piece a slightly more magical, perfect quality.

In this facility, the palette is crisp and vibrant. There's an emphasis on the primary colors, but I think we can break out that full spectrum. Red runs the gamut from pink to oxblood. Yellow from the faintest sugar cookie color to the boldest mustard. And blue... from one Sonic branded blue to the other! By exploding this palette a bit further, it gives us a bit more range to play with depth and shadow. It's exactly the kind of thing a creative headquarters would do with such a traditional color scheme.





THE PRODUCTION DESIGN

One of the truly revolutionary choices that George Lucas made in *Star Wars* was that he decided to make space stuff look used and run down. On the back of glossy, mid-century futurism, those “rust buckets” looked a thousand times more believable. That little bit of distressing allowed the audience to suspend their disbelief a bit more fully into this world Lucas created.

Before you worry about my use of rust in a food spot... I’m not saying we should use rust! I am saying that we want to make everything look as tactile and practical as possible. Clean? Yes. Clever? Yes. But make it feel real, grounded, and frequently used. The Original Willy Wonka does this well. Everything looks inviting to eat, but it’s not hyper-glossy or pristine. There are some spills. You see the seams a bit.



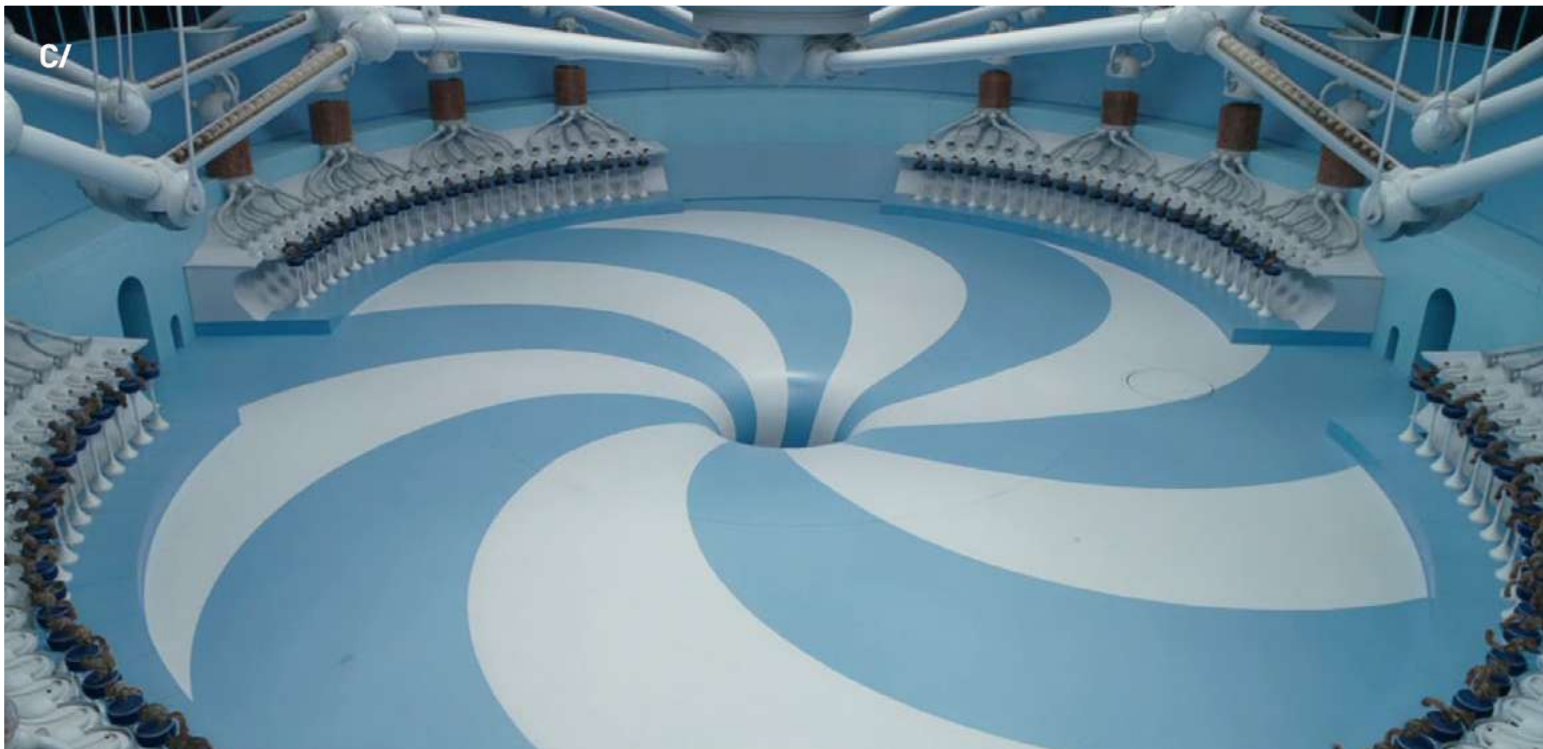
SO THAT'S THE MIX:

***FUNCTIONAL, PLAYFUL, A
LITTLE GOOFY, DELICIOUS,
AND BEAUTIFUL.***

*IT'S NEVER COLD, STERILE, PLASTIC, OR
ARTIFICIAL.*

Essentially, this is not an Apple store; **it's a garage where tinkerers build robots and Rube Goldberg machines... if those things were delicious. That's the vibe.**

That's not to say there aren't beautiful elements - particularly in the public-facing spaces. That shark water waterfall is a purely decorative feature. It exists because it makes the people who work here happy. It's a little bit of art to bring some extra color to their day.



THE VFX

When we get into the logistics of creating this world, we will do as many practical props and sets as we can. I've worked with big sets before and I have also done a fair amount of visual effects. For me, the in-camera option is going to really help us stay in the realm of believable functionality. Practical is going to feel more "real-but-whimsical," and green screen is naturally going to slip a bit more into fantasy.

Of course, we're keeping some options open to add on to the sets and do general enhancements in post. **We still want to get the intended scale and awe into the world, so that we are properly setting this campaign up for all the iterations to come.**





SONIC
DEPARTMENT OF RESEARCH
AND DELICIOUSMENT

THE PRODUCT



Obviously, we're going to have to rethink what we mean by "food styling" on this campaign. Things like the Shark Water fountain should look appealing... but on a practical level we understand that this is not exactly how it's going to be presented at the drive-ins. Same with the pebble ice cave. Our main focus is not about stirring that visceral, mouth-watering reaction from our viewers... **it's about creating a fantastical world where all this stuff is available to sample in exciting, unexpected ways.**

When we see our characters are **ACTUALLY** eating or drinking a product - like they would get at the restaurant - we're going to go in with our standard, full-on, food porn approach.

The soft pretzels will steam when we pull apart those fluffy, crispy bread ribbons. The drinks will seem to glow from within; the pebble ice catching the light in a way that practically sparkles. The ice cream will do that perfect curl that makes you immediately want to bite it off.

The burgers... will be blurred out. What can I say. It's a good joke.

No one will have any doubt that this is a Sonic spot, and by the end, they'll have no doubt about who you are as a company. It's showing off the menu in a big, boisterous way, and it's my job to make sure all those playful, off-the-way products get the love they deserve.

MUSIC & SOUND

As we talked about on the phone, our music for this campaign is going to live somewhere nextdoor to what we do on Righteous Gemstones. Classic American with some swagger, but a little bit self-aware... with a dash of quirk.

My buddy, Devoe Yates, is the music supervisor on Gemstones, and I'd be happy to recruit him to our cause. He has an incredible talent for finding songs that everybody should know, but nobody does. His sub-specialty is finding songs that haven't been cool in a long time and making them cool again. He's great at his job, and I've got no doubt he'll have some excellent tracks in mind for this.

As we build the soundscape for this facility, I think we can build up a mix of authentic, mouth-watering foody sounds and representational, fantastical, cartoony sounds. If you think of that Wonka Mobile that spits bubble foam and makes the most insane SPLAT-SQUISH-HONK sounds it's convincingly real... but they've pushed it to the silliest degree that is still believable.



THE EDIT

When I think of an edit like this, I think it should feel like going on a really great theme park ride. **It's propulsive and directional. You get to glide along on this magical adventure. It's easy for the eye to track where it's supposed to be looking, because one shot transitions elegantly into the next with a perfect awareness of the viewer's eyeline.** It brings you closer when you're dying to experience something in more detail and still does justice to the scale of the facility.

Think of Kevin arriving at the toy store in Home Alone 2. It's that same sense of awe and whimsy. We want to capture that same feeling of being transported.



THE

SCRIPT

I know we're all still working through the scripts together, but the launch spot is really starting to take shape. I feel like I'm getting a clear vision of how you want this all to play out, and I'm excited to continue shaping these characters as we dial in on our chosen performers.

- In the spirit of collaboration, I've pitched a few additional visual gags we could explore. Of course, these are just thought-starters for our continued discussions.
- A ball pit filled with wrapped peppermints. Workers jump into it every time to just retrieve two or three mints for each order.
- A bounce house where they POP the popcorn chicken - i.e. bounce it around a little.
- A renaissance-esque sculptor who carefully carves every piece of pebble ice.
- THE MOTHERBLEEEEEEPING CANDY PALACE - it's truly just an insane room of wall-to-wall candy. Stuff is made out of candy... maybe you break off, like, a chair leg of nerds and then crumble it right into a drink.
- A maraschino cherry tree indoor orchard/atrium.
- Okay... I don't know what this room is, but I'm picturing, like, society women sipping cherry limeades. Maybe it's like a tea room kind of place. One of them, uncertain, whispers to her dining partner, "I heard it's just Sprite..." and the other woman immediately smacks the cup out of her friend's hand, "How dare you!"
- A very serious group of "Mad Men" type analysts whose only duty is to seriously discuss if the "Wacky Pack" is wacky enough. Maybe there's an actual kid in there who is like shrugging and chomping on a burger, "Pretty wacky... maybe even a little silly?" There's an uproar. The mad men start destroying the room. "SILLY!?! We've completely missed the mark!"

INT. VAN - DAY

Open on a dashboard that has two bobblehead dolls of The Two Guys (Sonic's old spokespeople). A fuzzy Sonic logo hangs off the rearview mirror. We see a man's aviator sunglasses peering forward in the rearview mirror.

EXT. VAN IN SUBURBIA - DAY

A souped up muscle-car-style minivan drives past sign after sign of similar boring fast food places: "Same Ole Burger," "Never Changing Burger," "This Will Do I Guess."

CIO (V.O.) In this life, we don't get to control much. But one thing we do have is the freedom to choose what we eat.

EXT. "THIS WILL DO I GUESS" - PARKING LOT - DAY

The van skids into a perfect parallel parking job in the parking lot of a generic burger joint.

INT. "THIS WILL DO I GUESS" - DAY

The CIO (38), a ruggedly handsome man, walks into the generic burger joint. He's wearing a blue suit and aviators. The generic burger joint is full of people eating the same generic burgers.

CIO (To a family in a booth): So the real question is, why aren't you choosing more fun?

The family looks confused.

CIO (CONT'D): Come with me.

INT. VAN - DAY

The family is now sitting comfortably in the back of his van. HUSBAND and WIFE (45), TEENAGE DAUGHTER (14), TEENAGE SON (12). The Teenage Son raises his hand.

CIO (Before Teenage Son can ask his question): Glad you asked. I'm a simple man with an aversion to the letters O and K, on a mission to get you to live a little.

EXT. ROAD - DAY

The van roars down an open road in a desert landscape with a big office building campus at the end of it. There's a big SONIC DEPT. OF RESEARCH and DELICIOUSMENT sign on the main building. The campus looks out of place like it's been randomly dropped into Death Valley.

CIO (V.O.): And I run this place.

INT. LOBBY - DAY

Glass doors with official looking seals of the SONIC DEPT. OF RESEARCH AND DELICIOUSMENT etched into them open to reveal a procession of Carhops on roller skates. The Carhops are holding trays of food. The line of Carhops parts in the middle as they move in sync to reveal a large modern office lobby that's colored in shades of blue.





The lobby is a grand entryway into a bustling, energetic, inventive company - all within the realm of possibilities but there's an elevated silly fun to everything in here. It's a hub of fun with food gadgetry and wondrous entrances for all of Sonic's areas of expertise. The CIO turns to the family.

SUPER: CHIEF INGENUITY OFFICER

CIO: Welcome to the...

A small alarm goes off interrupting the CIO. The Dad sheepishly hands over a shitty burger smuggled in his pocket to a security guard.

CIO (CONT'D): Are you going to be a problem man?

The entire lobby stands still for a beat to acknowledge the infraction, then buzzes back into action. The employees are a mix of people dressed in business casual and Sonic uniforms from past to present, darting about their day.

CIO (CONT'D): As I was saying. Welcome to the Sonic Department of Research and Deliciousment.

INT. LOBBY - WE MOVE THROUGH THE LOBBY WITH A SERIES OF SHOTS

CIO (O.S.)

Where the world's foremost experts on making life less boring are finding new ways to get you excited for your next meal.

- SONIC SLUSH FOUNTAIN. A corporate art centerpiece. A huge, clear Sonic cup overflows with blue slush and life-sized gummy sharks.

- BURGER WING. Employees clock in wearing hard hats with big spatulas slung over their shoulders like shovels.

- SHAKES WING. An employee grabs huge pieces of candy from a coal mining-type cart and loads it into a blue pneumatic tube in the shape of a Sonic straw that sucks it all up.

CUT TO:

INT. DRINKS WING - DAY

The family walks inside the drinks wing. Light streams through massive windows into a wonderland of every possible flavor and drink ingredient. It's a cross between a wizard's workshop, a library, and an artist's studio. There are endless shelves filled with colorful candies, fruits, and syrups.

CIO: Meet my right hand, Tia.

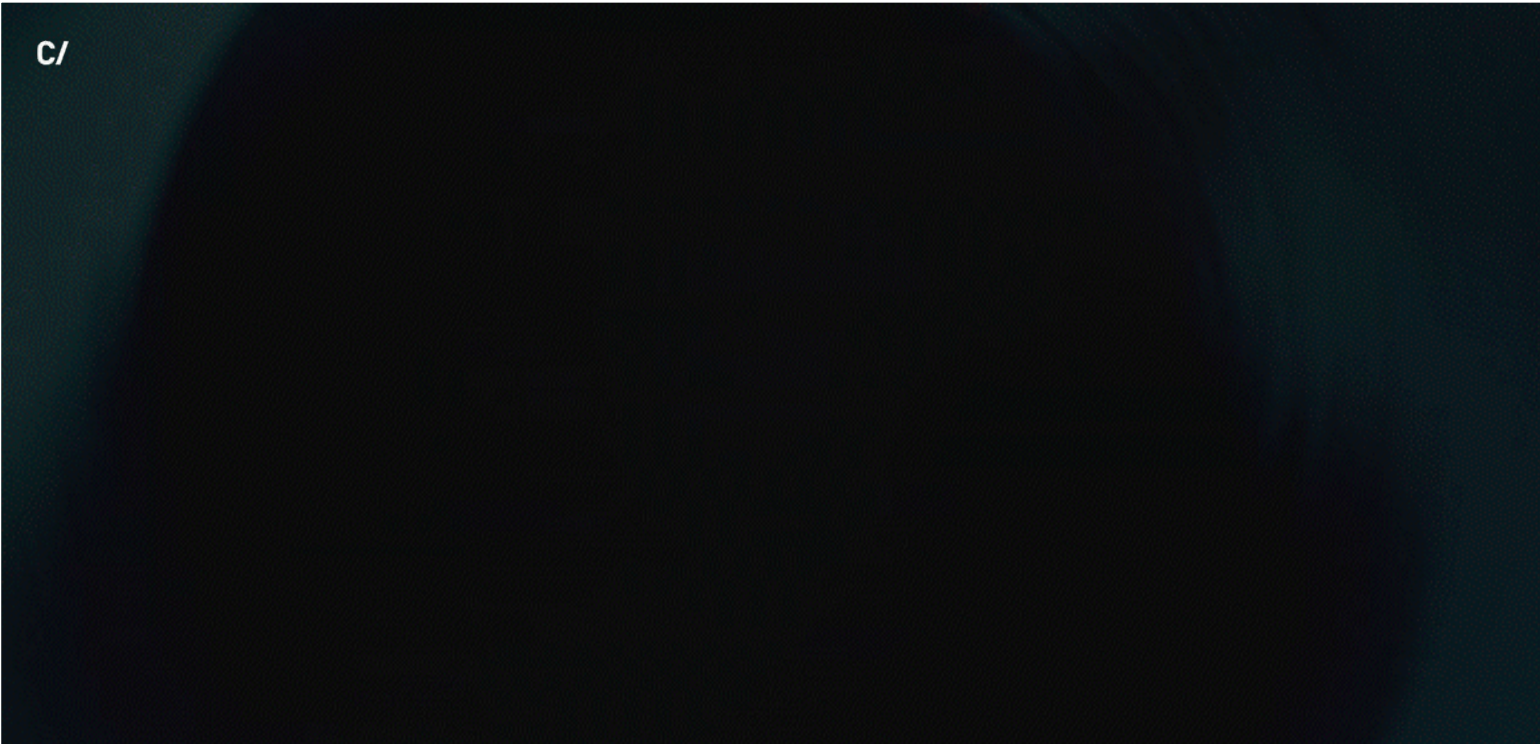
TIA (28), an attractive Hispanic female, greets the group.

SUPER: CHIEF FLAVORISTA

CIO (CONT'D): Think of your perfect drink combo. Guess what? She's already thought of it.

WIFE: Like...a blue coconut slush with li-





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TIA (finishing the Wife's sentence): Lime, cherry, and Nerds.

Tia grabs a drinks off a cart that's passing by and hands one to the Wife who takes a sip.

BOTH TIA AND WIFE (whispering): It's perfect.

CUT TO:

INT. SONIC DEPT. OF R&D WINGS - DAY

A montage of the family members inside different areas of the Dept. of Research and Deliciousment, now as participants not just observers.

CIO (V.O.): Our menu doesn't have everything. But it definitely has everything you want. And didn't know you wanted.

BEGIN MONTAGE

- ICE WING. The Daughter shivers inside an Arctic room, holds out a cup catching Sonic ice being chipped by employees with ice picks rappelling on a glacier wall above her.

- TOTS WING TESTING IN PROGRESS. The Teenage Boy sits in a recliner as an employee shoots tater tots from a tot gatling gun into his open mouth.

- TOP SECRET BURGER WING. The Dad runs out with an armful of burgers laughing hysterically while employees chase him. The burgers are blurred out.

END MONTAGE

CUT TO:

INT. LOBBY - RAISED PLATFORM - DAY

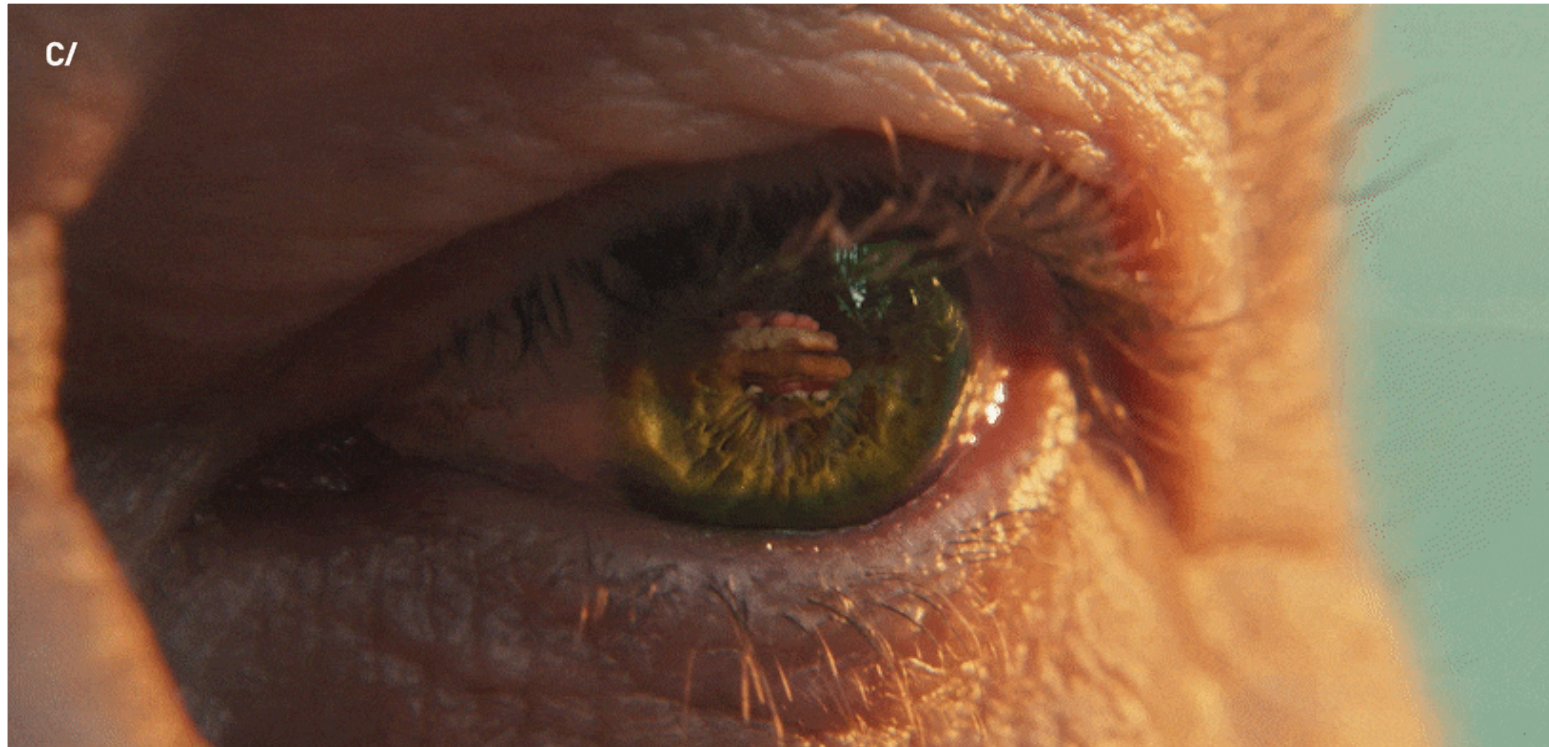
Our CIO walks across a raised platform above the whole lobby with the family following him. The family members all hold different types of Sonic food and drinks. They've been around the whole facility. They look happy.

CIO: Why? Because we believe that if you're not having fun, you're not living free. And if you're not living free, then you aren't really living.

The CIO looks up to reveal that the roof of the lobby is fully open with a plane just finishing a message written in the sky.

CIO (V.O.): So ask yourself. Are you?

SUPER (written in the sky): LIVE FREE. EAT SONIC.



C/



SONIC



JODY HILL



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THANKS

Thanks for taking a look at these ideas. It's such a rare treat to make a campaign that is so focused on character and story. I think that impulse is correct; if we set this world up with care and thought, it can only benefit the stories we want to tell in the future. Like any good pilot episode, we're sprinkling breadcrumbs (or tater tot crumbs?) and giving our audience trails to follow for later episodes.

Look forward to going big with you guys! Hit me up with any questions.

Thanks, again, for thinking of me.
Jody

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