



*The Great Pause*

*Coca-Cola*

By Kim Gehrig

Thanks for reaching out to me during this time. It is not only lovely to talk!... but also exciting to see a project that I think can capture the moment we are all collectively experiencing.

I feel we can make something intimate and personal, but also universal.



*A TRULY GLOBAL MOMENT.*







It is such a rare event that individuals across the world are experiencing the same thing at the same time.

The Coronavirus has affected most people across the globe in some way. Whether because of the health issues, financial concerns, or lockdown, this pandemic has touched the majority of lives.

Admittedly people of different socio-economic standings have experienced this pandemic to different degrees, but there has been a sense of a common experience spanning generations, cultures, and countries. We have all ‘felt’ something similar in this time. All people everywhere have been forced to reassess what is important – it feels like this moment to reassess is universal for every single person...



*ONE COKE.*



This universal experience made me think about the truth of Coca-Cola and that iconic Andy Warhol quote:

*A Coke is a Coke and no amount of money can get you a better Coke than the one the bum on the corner is drinking. All the Cokes are the same and all the Cokes are good. Liz Taylor knows it, the President knows it, the bum knows it, and you know it.*

I have always loved the democracy of Coca-Cola, and although this quote is from a very different time and a very different landscape, it speaks to the shared experience of this product. I think the democracy of the product allows us to have a uniting point of view in this time which the world has never seen.



*STAYING AT HOME.*





I never would have thought that in my lifetime I would be made to 'pause', let alone see the whole world stopping at the same time.

Unfortunately this has been because many people, many families, have suffered terribly during this time. It's been a frightening, unsettling, and disturbing time.

But also, for many it has been a time of great reflection, and in a strange way I have really cherished this time at home. Like so many others I have had time with my kids and husband that I would otherwise have been rushing past in my busy life. Taking them all for granted and watching my children grow up all too fast.





I have made apple pies with my 4 year old like my grandmother did for me. We have planted strawberries and tomatoes in the back garden which the kids pick and eat straight from the plant. We have sat around a table together without any urgency to get to the next thing. We have talked, cried, and laughed. And we have done it together, all day long, seven days a week. When does that happen?

I think my experience is probably very similar to many others. Although there are many traumas, stresses, and challenges to this time, it is helpful to focus on the more positive things.

*The time together. The simple human moments. Nature. A return to the very basic things that nourish us, fulfill us, make us happy.*





# *COMING BACK TO THE TABLE.*



As human beings, no matter what situation we find ourselves in, we always try to come together to eat. When everything else around us is uncertain, the meal is what we turn to.

Food is an accessible, humble comfort. So it's unsurprising that it's taken on a new importance in the last few months. But this also reflects a greater change in the rhythms of our lives. Food has become more central to our everyday lives because *we have time to prepare it.*





So many people have gone back to basics, like bread. Not all quarantine loaves have been perfect, but people who would not otherwise have done so have now learned to bake bread. And what's more, we don't care if we get it wrong. In fact, the very imperfections we witness everyday (if like me you're not very good at cooking) are now funny, not stressful. It's just for us and no one else.

With supermarket shelves running out and the uncertainties of the food production chain, people have been thinking more about how they use food. We're being much more resourceful now. We're not wasting anything.

*THE QUARANTINE MEAL.*



It feels like food and cooking has been a great nourisher in this collective moment.

Eating together is a basic human joy. It is a natural instinct to try and connect and commune. Sharing food is a universal experience.

Like me returning to my grandmother's apple pie... I am interested in what people around the globe have returned to in their cooking. Family recipes? Old school curries? Slow cooked meats? Baking? I would love to explore the truth behind their cooking in this film.



But I also don't want to romanticize it. For a single mum who has also been homeschooling it may have been eating a meal in front of the tv with her kids. Or, for someone trying to run a business from home, it may be the simple joy of a grilled cheese sandwich. Let's talk to all kinds of people and find the truths from this moment.





*THE IDEA - One Meal Around The Globe*



*The idea for this film is very simple.*

We will show one meal, but told through various families and individuals around the globe.

I think there is a beautiful simplicity in using one meal as the arc of this film. Telling the story of that meal through multiple families in different homes. Experiencing it in real time with the people on screen.

The arc of the film will be from food preparation, to cooking, to setting the table, to plating up, to sitting together, to eating, chatting, licking plates, and then maybe not even cleaning up.

We will use action cuts and clever editing to seamlessly move from household to household across the globe.

Each household will be preparing their quarantine meal in their own way. The dishes will vary from country to country, but they are all true to what people have been doing. It could be roast chicken, or a curry, a pie, or dumplings. We will juxtapose the different homes and the different cooking processes, table settings, and ways of eating. But my instinct is that even though the dishes may be wildly different, the moments and the emotions across the households will be the same.





# *THE ROLE OF COKE.*





The most important thing to navigate in this film is getting the role of Coke right.

If we get it wrong we could be accused of 'branding a pandemic'. I think this may become the new equivalent of brands 'virtue signalling'.

But I do think we can get it right.

I think we need to acknowledge the challenges of this period, and then through this commercial let Coke be the brand who helps people acknowledge the positives of this period.

Coke is undeniably optimistic and uplifting. With a sensitive hand let's celebrate the good things in an otherwise tough time. We must find meaningful moments in this tragedy. Let's help people feel optimistic about this time.

We have all had a loss of connection with the outside world, but this film needs to show the positive in the connection within the home and within ourselves. Right now, each of us is searching for levity in a crisis. And we're finding it in our relationships. Our small victories. Hearty food. Daily treats.

It would be disingenuous to present Coke as a solution or some kind of grand return to normalcy. That would be promising something we can't deliver.

But Coke is reassuringly consistent. It has the same flavour whether you're having it with gourmet food, takeout, or a frozen meal. We have an intuitive connection with it. And right now, it's part of reconnecting and reappraising the small things in life. A refreshing accompaniment to a moment of levity.

*Presenting Coke as a humble comfort is the ultimate payoff.*



# *TONE.*





*Emotional, sensorial, and ultimately optimistic.*

This film is about finding the silver lining. And in order to show our audience that silver lining, we need to acknowledge that not all is well.

Tonally, this film has to tread a fine line that separates heartfelt optimism and saccharine indulgence. We need to be sensitive and not ignore how hard this time is. Ironically, if we gloss over the current struggles, there's nothing to be optimistic about.



We can draw this line at *truthfulness*. The situations in this film need to feel warm, but not idealised.

If we're not careful, we could present a perfect Norman Rockwell version of life in lockdown. Or a condescending montage of all the wholesome activities lockdown has finally allowed everyone to do. That's not right.

Instead, we should aim for a detailed, deeply-felt look at the new rhythms of domestic life. Embracing imperfections – the colourful messiness of family life at home.

*A COKE KNOCKED OVER.*





One image I keep thinking about as a visual principle is:

*A can of Coke getting knocked over.*

That's life. It's the kind of detail that feels right for this film. It's messy. Right now, everyone in the world is muddling their way towards having a good time in their own clumsy ways.

In this film, Coke is a metaphor for bottling the goodness in a difficult situation.

# *THE PRODUCT.*



Alongside the Coke being knocked over... I would love to show Coca-Cola in a very real way in this film.

Yes, I want to shoot it beautifully, but the more naturalistic it is within the personal settings, the better. I would like to see it lining different fridges, handed out from person to person ahead of the meal, around the kitchen during cooking, and then ultimately, on the table being drunk with quarantine meals.

Like I mentioned before, the imperfection of a can of Coke being knocked over is reflective of the messiness of mealtimes as a family.

We must not be heavy-handed. It cannot feel forced or contrived. This is more about the Coca-Cola attitude in this moment than product porn. We need to be light with our product placement. Perhaps it is not present in every single meal but appears effortlessly in some.

I love the idea of all the different styles of packaging from all the different countries being featured in one film.



*CASTING AS RESEARCH.*





I would love this film to be as authentic as possible.

We find incredible faces and talk to them about their quarantine experiences and what they have been cooking. We will then film these honest experiences in the most beautiful ways.

The casting is what will make this film. I'd like to show individuals, couples, families of various ages from around the globe, all united by this common experience. Each household will have their own way of doing things, and that will be the joy in this film.

One family may take a whole day making a curry. A young couple may throw together a stir fry in minutes. A person who lives alone may take their time crafting a pie for one.

Perhaps we are also really honest, and we show one family who is sick of cooking and have ordered Chinese. A 'noncontact' delivery dropped at the front door. A moment of levity. Regardless of the type of meal, every morsel is savoured, as is the moment of sitting together and eating.

Through great casting, I am really excited how truly global this can be. I would love to deliberately keep various languages in the soundtrack as we hear our various households cooking. Let's embrace the small bits of dialogue and make them the sonic texture of the film. We could subtitle, or not. But hearing the sounds of the world and a mix of languages will be really powerful.

And because casting will be such a key component to executing the authentic emotional spirit of this film, we will use our global resources to ensure we are able to get the diversity in families and cultures we want to portray.

Shooting in the following cities around the globe, we are confident in our ability to represent families of these ethnicities:

London: Caucasian, Indian, African, Arab

Lisbon: Portuguese, Caucasian, Spanish

Kiev: Ukrainian, Russian, European

Shanghai: Chinese Hans, Japanese, Korean, Malaysian Chinese, Singaporean Chinese

Orlando: Caucasian, Hispanic, Cuban, Dominican, African American

Mexico City: Hispanic, Hattian









*A FILM THAT TAKES ITS TIME.*



I would love this film to revel in the ‘pause’ we have all been given. Although we want this to be dense in terms of content, I would like the film to have space to linger and enjoy it from time to time so it doesn’t feel like a bombardment. But rather taking in a heck of a lot of imagery whilst cleverly allowing it to breath at the same time.

I would love for our film to reflect how we are now taking our time more. Let’s revel in the details – from a kid helping roll out pastry, to taking the time to actually finely chop an onion. Not rushing to get things done, but doing things properly because we can.

We are all hanging out in the kitchen more than normal, so every meal feels a bit more like a special occasion now. A bit like at Thanksgiving, the moment when we bring the bird out of the oven, everyone takes a moment to delight in it. Space to delight in every meal is what we have now.





This is a film that shows us taking out time, so it should take its time in telling that story. This means lingering on some shots longer than others. Enjoying a subtle expression. Showing the beauty in an ECU of a vegetable being sliced open.

We don't need to cut and cut and cut throughout the whole film. Maybe instead of a punishingly fast montage, we can just sit and enjoy as these 60 seconds play out at a gentle pace. Enveloping the audience in a warm, sensory experience.

This should be the commercial equivalent of putting your phone away, sitting down, and sharing a meal with your family.





*DELICIOUSNESS.*





There's a reason why Coke has such nostalgic and comforting value. Simply put, it's delicious. Everybody loves the taste.

Everything in this commercial should certainly look mouth-wateringly tasty. This film is not about the perfect lasagna, it is about people returning to cooking. Successes and failures, everything should inspire your taste buds.

We want to make the audience anticipate this meal, following the food from preparation to serving to eating. Catching glimpses of Coke along the way. Then – in the warm afterglow of the meal – attaching this sensation to a sip of Coke.

There is a sense of nostalgia to a Coca-Cola. We reach for one as a comfort and uplift in this time.





*VISUAL LANGUAGE.*



The families and their food need to be beautifully observed. The camerawork should be purposeful, but human and imperfect. Sensorial and appetising.

I see this as a film of close ups and wides. I want to get up close on the process of making food and the dishes themselves. And then wide to set the scenes showing the contexts of these global families. I don't really see a role for many mid shots.

I think we can actually be quite formal in our approach to the visual style. I quite like the restrictions 'the table' places on you. It is interesting to think about how 'the table' has been portrayed in art history. I'd like us to explore that in our locations and framing.

I will create a clear guide for all of our countries to work with - framing, lighting and composition, and selection of each of the shots. There will be a great sense of diversity in what we see, but a rigour in how we see it.





*SCRIPT.*

## *Doors Closing*

We open on a series of front doors closing.

We see this from the inside looking out of different of homes from around the world. Various door jams and architectural styles frame the diverse streets they look onto. Some are suburban streets, others gritty and urban, and others look onto dirt roads. All kinds of front doors from around the world are represented.

In the first of these shots we see a lot of the outside world through the doorframe as the door is just beginning to come back towards us.

We then action cut to the next front door and we see less of the outside world, the door closing more towards us. Then to the next door and the next... one continuous smooth movement of doors shutting, seeing less and less of the different outside worlds from all around the globe as the doors creak towards us and close.

We then hear an almighty thud as the last door slams shut.

### **VO: The day the world stopped...**

Cut to see one of our cast standing, looking at the shut door in front of them, still for a moment.

An image like a painting of a person looking towards a shut door. At first we think that it could be a still. But then they move...

### **VO: Was the day we found where to go.**

The person then turns slowly and looks past camera and into the house that was behind them. Their face lightens. The camera pulls back to reveal their home. On the edge of frame, we see who that person lives with – it could be their family member or partner creeping into shot.



## ***Cooking Section***

We then cut to another household somewhere else in the world, very different to the one before. We walk with that person into the kitchen, and they wash their hands.

When they look up, we see that they notice something. We cut wider to reveal that it is an odd-looking kitchen utensil hanging from a rail.

### **VO: Lost together...**

We the cut between various people of different nationalities reaching for things in their kitchens. Grabbing pots and pans and utensils. Dusting off pasta rollers and oddly shaped baking tins. Opening the fridge and reaching to the very back for an unused paste. In fridge door we glimpse a few cans of Coke.

### **VO: We discovered ourselves again.**

We see a portrait of one of our cast framed by a sieve. Then another person framed by the fridge door. And another framed by two wooden spoons, held up ready to use. All skin tones are represented here.

### **VO: And we realized that the things that matter deserve time...**

We cut between people of different ages and backgrounds from all over the world starting to cook. Kids start to measure out flour with their parents - it takes the patience of a saint to get the perfect measure with a 4 year old. They then pass the bowl out of the shot which is then collected in the next shot in another kitchen somewhere else around the world. This young couple is separating eggs delicately. Cut to see an older couple tenderising meat. A twenty-something couple picks vegetables from their makeshift kitchen garden and carefully washes the dirt from them.





**VO: and a pinch of salt.**

We see various hands from around the world adding a small pinch of salt to their dishes in close up, one after another after another. A flurry of different skin tones and ages of hands, all cut together on the gesture of throwing a pinch of salt.

**VO: That it's OK to get emotional.**

We then start to see some successes and a few failures in various kitchens.

A series of breads rising – a sourdough, a baguette, and a naan. Then a sponge cake flops.

A steak sears on the BBQ while onions accidentally burn on the stove.

**VO: Even when we're not chopping onions.**

Hard cut to someone crying, hands grappling at the kitchen counter as they are looking out the kitchen window.

We slowly cut between a series of faces, all looking out the kitchen window.

Varied emotions on their faces, all in thought, contemplating this moment.





## ***Gathering at the Table/ Eating Section***

### **VO : Coming to our senses...**

We see toddlers getting out placemats from bottom drawers.

Normally-moody teenagers laying out tablecloths with genuine smiles on their faces.

We see a flurry of people from around the globe setting their tables.

People in their tracksuits or comfy clothes grabbing some Cokes and a few glasses.

Individuals who live on their own taking the time to lay a beautiful table setting for one.

### **VO :...we followed them to the table.**

We cut back into our various kitchens to see dishes just about ready.

Rich sauces and vibrant curries bubbling deliciously.

Pies and cakes browning gently in the oven.

Homemade dumplings steaming into plumpness.

Cheese melting onto toast, bubbling with flavour.

Cardboard boxes opening to reveal delicious Chinese takeout.

Chickens are crisping up.

Woks are sizzling.

BBQ's are smoking.

Everything we see, we think we can smell.





**VO : Where a sour day, also has a sweet side.**

The various households from around the world begin to gather around the table.

We see a truly diverse range of households who gather for a meal in very different ways.

Some in more formal settings. Others outside.

Some serve their meal on the floor.

A single mum gathers her brood for a meal in front of the TV.

There are different vibes in each of the scenes.

Some chaotic as they start to serve up and eat.

Someone even knocks over a Coke.

We linger as the bubbling drink flows out onto the counter.

In another family a fresh bottle of coke is opened.

This family is calm and considered.

But whatever the vibe, they are all united by the quiet joy that is obvious on all of their faces. They are happy for this moment.

We see them serve everything from a spicy dahl to a seared salmon.

In one household a person picks up a bottle coke and pours.

Cut to see a glass being filled in another completely different scene somewhere else in the world.

**VO : Where everyone is heard...**

We cut between tables around the globe and catch snippets of the conversations that it inspires. I'd love to hear all kinds of languages here. A joke, a compliment, a complaint.

**VO : even if their mouths are full.**

A kid tells a long-winded story with their mouth full.

It's truly charming.

### ***Eating/Post-Eating Section***

We then cut wide to see each of our families sitting together.

**VO : Where gratitude's shown more than ever.**

One of the cast sneakily licks their plate, hoping no one else will see.

**VO : With licked fingers too!**

They are all the same in that no one is rushing off.  
No one thinking about the dishes yet.

**VO : Yes, we are all forever changed.**

We enjoy a moment with our families just 'being'.

**VO: So from now on,**

Another person finishes the final piece of pie.

**VO: we are not going to leave anything on our plates.**

A kid takes the last piece of broccoli.





**VO: Because we've learned to savor the shared moments that were always there.**

Close ups of people's faces from around the world enjoying the moment and being present.

One family starts to dance stupidly around the messy table. Why not?

Another is telling jokes; the laughter is uncontrollable.

Others just sit, quietly enjoying each other.

A father puts his hand on a teenager's shoulder.

A mother kisses her kid, not caring how much sauce there is on their face.

We see the first person think that they should get up from the table...

**VO: And they never tasted this good. Coca-Cola. The taste of sharing.**

...and then they sit down again, realizing they don't need to be anywhere else.

**End Line: Coca-Cola. THE TASTE OF SHARING.**



*VO.*



I do believe that in the years to come, when this is all over, there is going to be a curious nostalgia for this period of time. It's certainly something we'll tell our grandkids about. Like the Homefront during the Second World War. Carrying on. Slowing down. Spending time with our loved ones.

Using the voiceover we could even give this film the quality of a fable. Making it sound as if it were being narrated from another time – like a dream. Warm optimism from a more certain future.

I think we are getting closer on the VO, but we should keep writing and re writing to really land the tone, and importantly, the delivery...



# *MUSIC.*







Once we've treated our audience to the sensorial experience of food and domestic life, we need to find the right track to really give our audience goosebumps. We don't want to tell them what to think – we want to bring them into these homes.

I'd like to work with Pete Raeburn, the music supervisor behind some of my best work. He helped me find 'Get Ur Freak On' for Sport England and 'Praise You' for Viva La Vulva. He'll help us find the right track to really solidify this film in the public imagination.

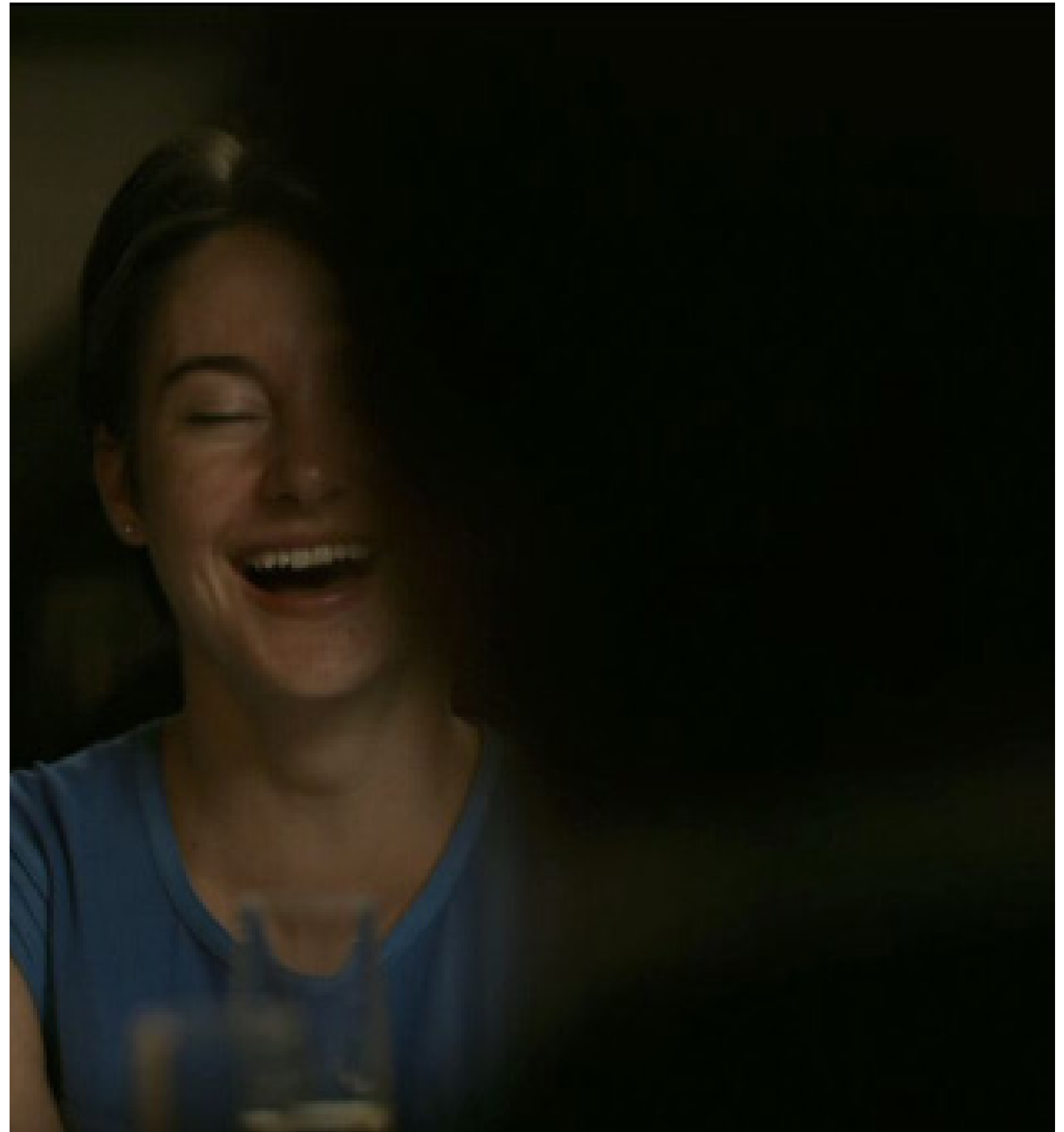
*APPEARANCE.*



It is important for me that everything in this film is authentic to lockdown.

Uncut hair, roots growing out. Comfortable, unmatched clothing. No manicures.

I don't want anyone dressing or over-styled for a 'shoot'. We must show the truth of this period, not an 'advertising' one.



*POST-LOCKDOWN ENDING.*



I keep thinking about the door closing at the beginning of the spot.

I wonder if we could do something very simple for our post-lockdown ending like having our households open their front doors, perhaps even step outside.

I think it is good to keep this simple and evocative. I don't think it is tonally right or realistic to get people hugging and gathering outside again. That feels wrong. I think the very simple and poignant ending of the doors opening and the ability to simply step out will be more powerful.





*GLOBAL DIRECTION.*



I am excited to direct across the globe on this one.

I storyboard heavily in my work, and I usually work with a team of global collaborators. So I would love to direct an international commercial. This is a really striking way to approach this film rather than trying to fake an international feeling in a single country.

I think this project is a balance of controlled remote shooting and also putting the brief out there to capture even more footage with 2nd Unit teams and self-shooters.

I will appoint one overarching DOP, and together, we will act as a unifying influence.

We will set up key locations around the world to shoot two households each day, which I will remote direct with my DP from the US. I have worked for many years with our international partners, so they know my style of prep and on-set direction. We will work closely together with our chosen local teams, establishing our core crew in each location: DOP, PD, Stylist (most of whom I already have worked with and know), to run through the shot list and the details I want them to capture. We'll make sure each team shoots on the same format and lenses, then allow them to have the freedom to add their own nuances and details. Our second unit teams will allow us to capture an additional 2-3 families per day in each of our selected cities. Additionally, we will work with 10 independent self-shooters dotted throughout the world who will be able to capture even more families in the most authentic settings.





I'd like to look at London. I lived there for 20 years and I know the city and crew there very well. It's an incredibly strong multicultural city offering many different cultures.

Latin America and Mexico are also options, and of course, very important markets for Coke.

I'd like to look at somewhere in heartland America, Georgia or Florida.

Shanghai or Malaysia could be good Asian partners.

Somesuch has well-established connections in Europe with our London office, and we have partners in Portugal, Prague, and Ukraine.

One thing I wanted to touch on a little bit more here is remote shooting. While I will not be physically in the room, my voice will be. And at the end of the day, what I say, how I say it, and how I approach each family and my crew will be how we get the best out of them. That's what will make this a truly great experience for everyone. We're breaking new ground, and in a world where travel is less of a commodity and where we care about the planet, I truly believe this could be the future of global shooting . . .





**SOMESUCH**