Spaghetti Mobile | Director's Treatment
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COOLNESS IS ALL ABOUT ATTITUDE.

It doesn't matter what you're made of, you either have it or you don't. Mr Strings has it, there's no doubt about that. But more than that, he has a car made of Cheestrings Spaghetti.

Do you have a car made of Cheestrings Spaghetti? No. Do I? No. Does anyone we've ever heard of? You can see where this is going...

So this is one unique Spaghetti Mobile, and the film for me is all about creating a mood of genuine filmic tension and intrigue. Everywhere he goes in the mobile, Mr Strings gets admiring glances and attention, and I think we need to play this in a very straight, realistic way. We'll treat him like a heroic movie star, and the ad as a cinematic trailer. It's slick and sophisticated. Mr Strings is aspirational. The film language is super high end.

This will bring out the comedy through contrast. The contrast between how seriously we treat Mr Strings and the Spaghetti mobile filmically, and what it actually is, which is completely absurd. So the more cool, the more convincing we play it, the funnier it gets.

FOR THE FIRST PART OF THE FILM,

I think we need to imagine all these people are checking out Mr Strings himself. That's where his attitude plays a big part. He radiates coolness. He's James Bond, crossed with Ryan Gosling' in Drive. *Check him out.*

Then we reveal that actually, they're checking out the car. And he's cool with that too. For him, a car made of Cheestrings Spaghetti is the most natural thing in the world. When I talk about realism here I don't mean observational or documentary realism, I mean film real. So everything we see needs to be totally credible in a filmic way. The performances, the setting, the mood. It's atmospheric, intriguing, gripping.

The film should have both an overall tone of cinema and drama, and also be full of cool and beautifully realised details. There's something in there for everyone - a flat out surreal joke for kids, and a more layered reference to films and the cultural currency of coolness for an adult viewer.

Imagine the city at night. Vibrant, electric. Neon colours. Lights glimmer off the surface of the cheese. Classic car beauty photography. Camera moves are smooth and slick. Depth of field makes every image rich and stylish. Mr Strings has his eyes coolly fixed on the road ahead, maybe his cheese hair blowing a little in the breeze and a smile playing on his lips as he steps on the gas.
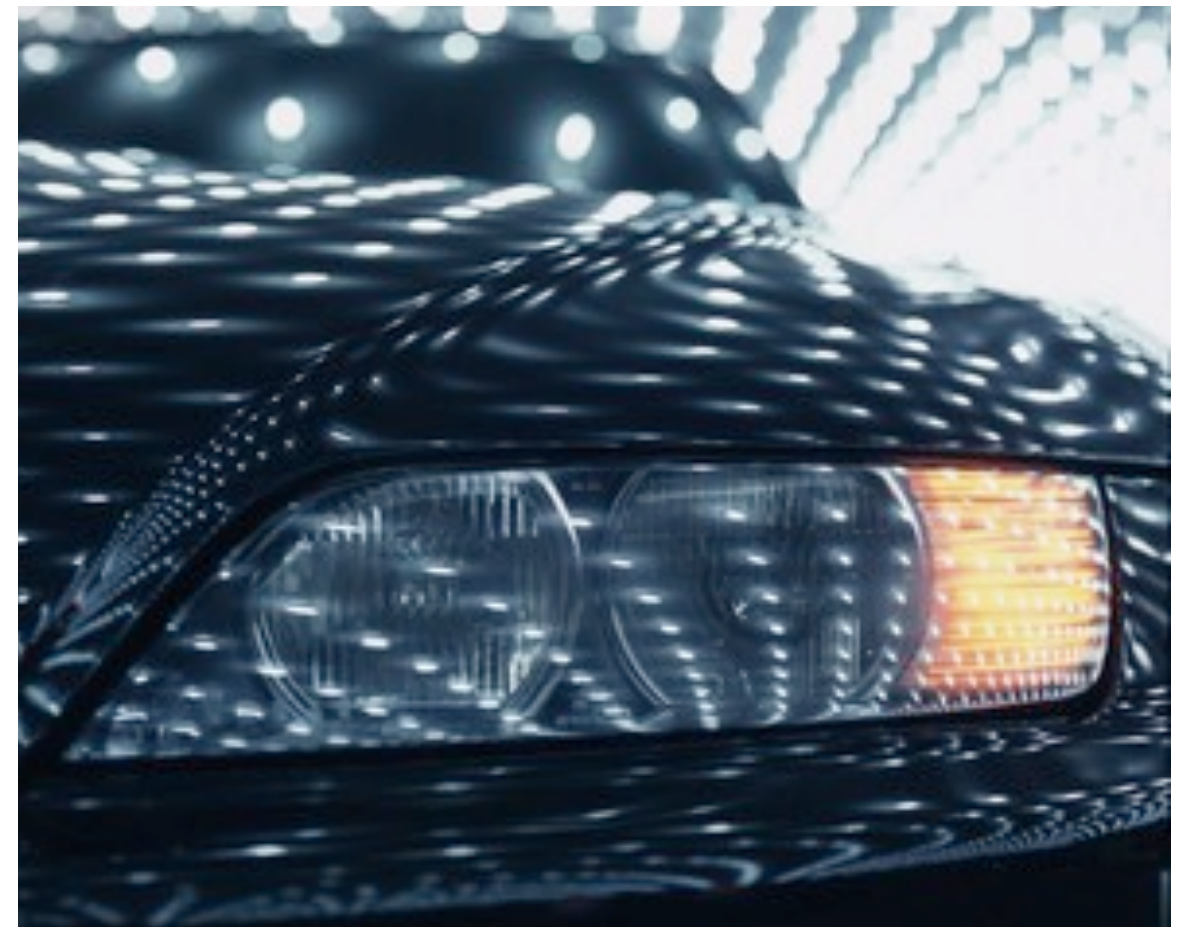
Around him we see reactions of people. These have to feel convincing and some times they can even get slightly out of proportion. Maybe there's a guy painting graffiti and he just makes a mess out of it because he can't take his eyes from the car, or maybe the cops are about to get the graffiti guy but they let him loose as they get distracted by the Cheestring car passing by. Cut in amongst these reactions and the beauty shots of the cheese car we see little atmospheric details, half in shadow.

AS I MENTIONED,

this should have the feel of a feature film trailer. We'll build the audience's curiosity using details and tight shots. We see glimpses of Mr Strings, the interior of the car - an old school stick shift, the radio. Intercut with POV of the city at night. Classic cinematic imagery. Lights reflected in glass. Maybe even catching the shape of the car in a shop window.

It's about attention to detail and clever camerawork. Finding interesting and evocative angles that sell the tone without showing too much information. When we see Mr Strings we'll use heroic low angles.

For the ending we need a shift in tone. We go from our very stylised, smooth moving camera to something more static and wide as we reveal the car. It's almost awkward. The car doesn't even fill the frame. This change of language will really help the comedy of the moment by emphasising the contrast between our set up and what's really happening.

Lighting wise I would play with colors, tones and intensities to get that saturated film look that looks amazing at night and really evocative of movies. Highlights and shadows are not just aesthetic tools but narrative tools as well, drawing our attention to certain elements. As we move through the city the balance of lights will change. It's like we're really immersed in the night.

It's very stylish, but effortless.
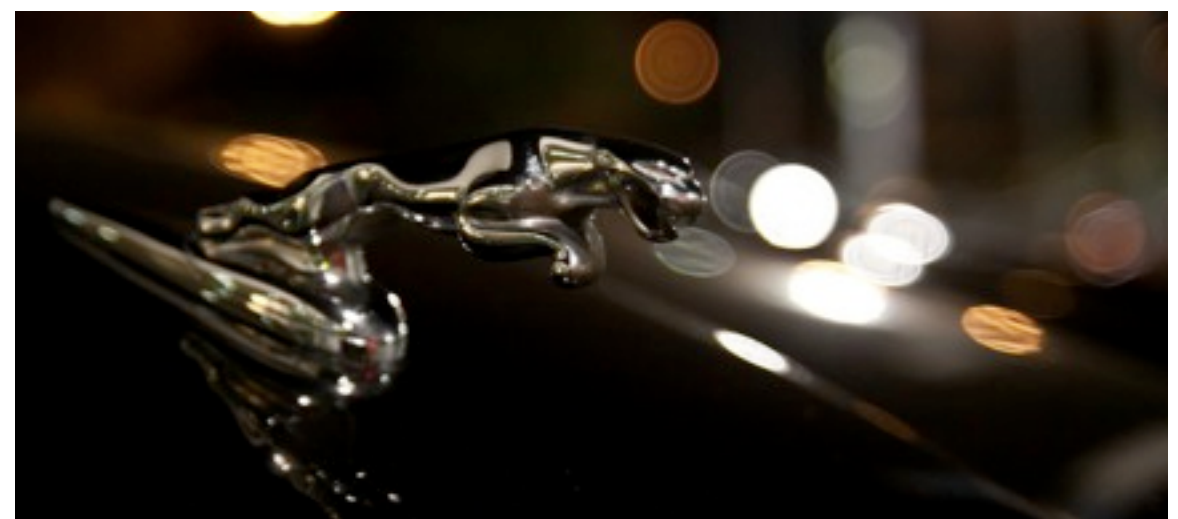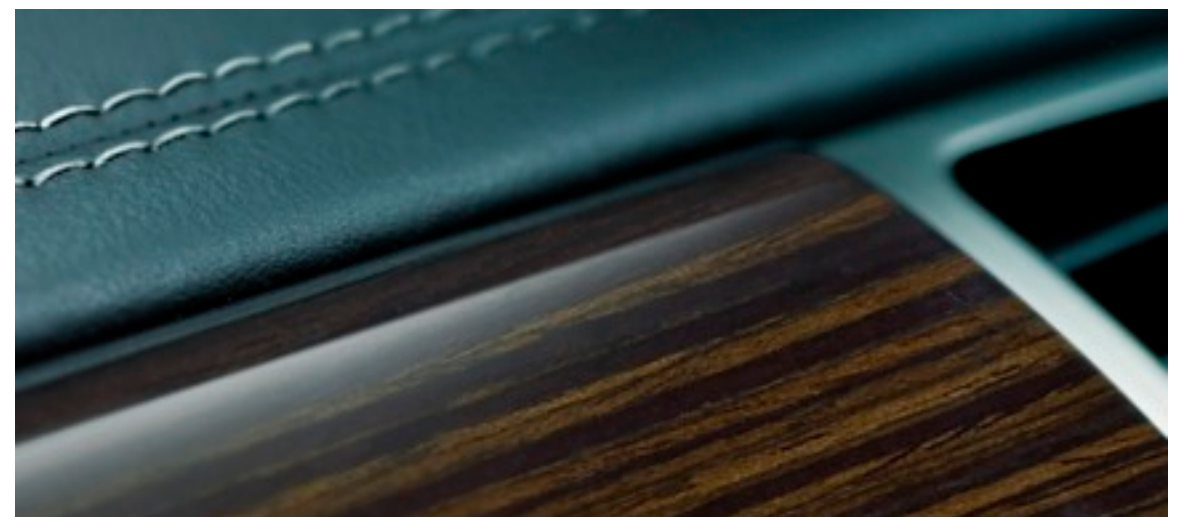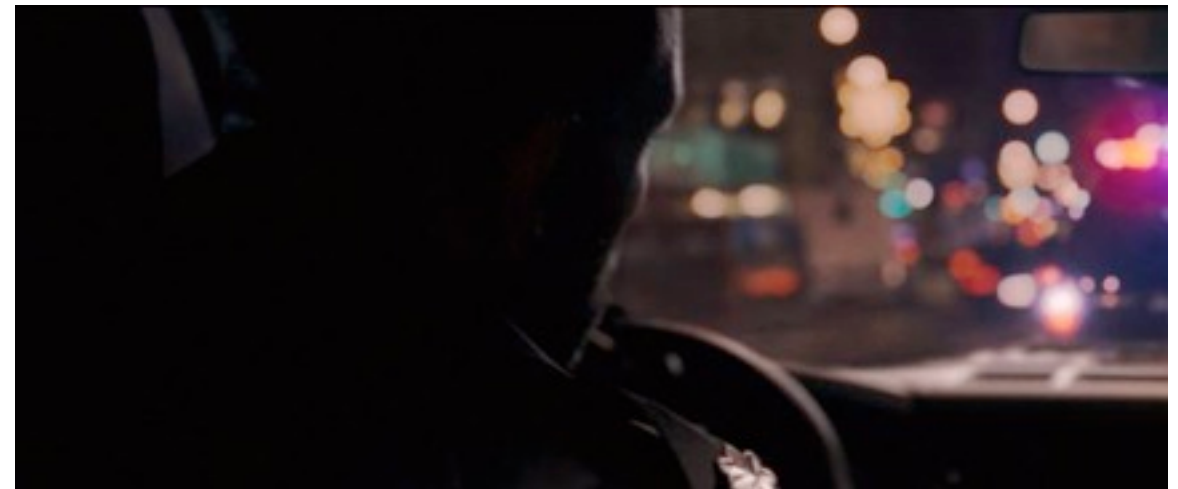
THERES ALSO A COMPLEX

technical element in the film.

The first important thing is that we should avoid CGI wherever we can. Of course we'll need some, but generally the tone and feel of the film should be cinematic and real. We don't want a fake looking Mr Strings and car at the heart of that. It would take more from the film than it would add.
I would use a mixed technique, achieving the majority in camera and using CGI to enhance that. Mr Strings would be an amazing piece of costume design, with the same texture as the car. His face would be manipulated in CG using the real expressions and gestures of our actor, so it feels completely human. We want viewers to really engage with and relate to him. This of course makes casting Mr Strings a really important part of the process.

As a reference, *check out this link* to the making of the Spike Jonze short 'I'm Here', which does a similar thing with robots. It's amazing how much emotion you get from the real human body language and human expression mapped onto the CG faces.

The Spaghetti Mobile is going to be super cool. It's such an exciting challenge to create this cheese texture for real, and then enhance or clean it up in CG. That way we'll stay away from a cartoony look and keep something that looks much more natural and organic, which relates back to the quality and taste of the product. We don't want people to think that Spaghetti Cheestrings feel or taste artificial.
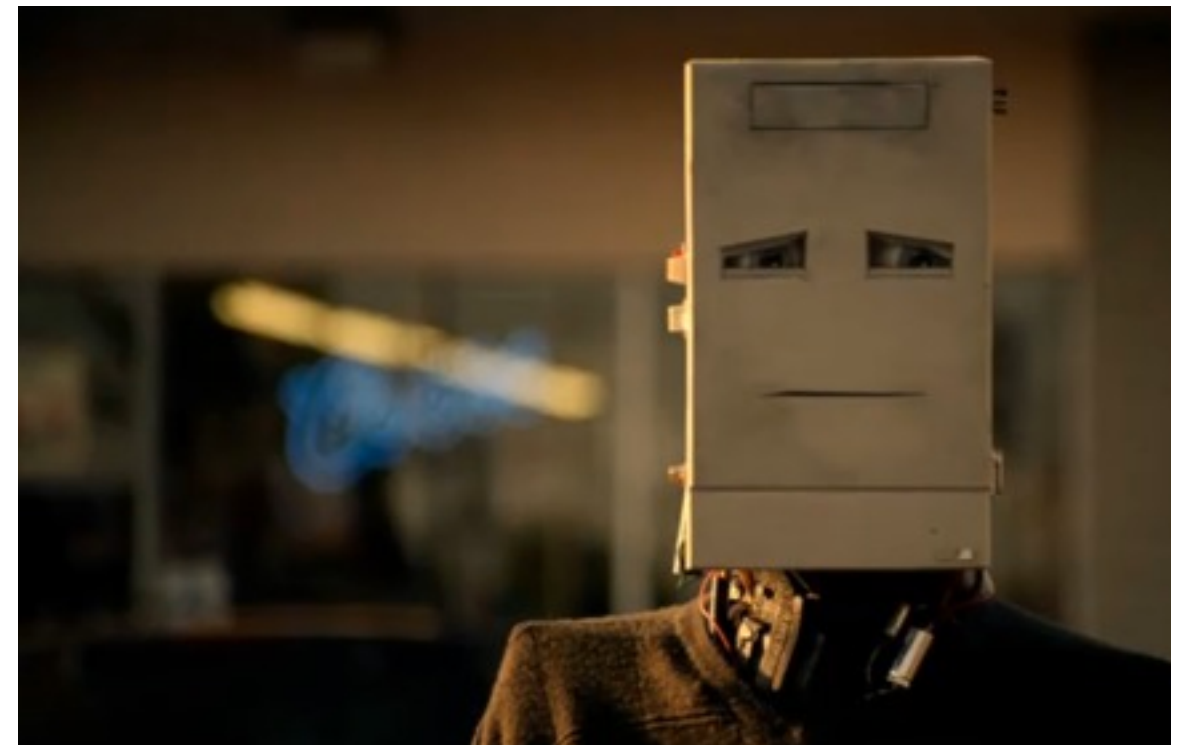
Concept Sketch

THE CAR IS THE CO-STAR

of the film, alongside Mr Strings. The whole film revolves around it, and yet we have to be really careful not to see too much of it too soon. It's all about the moment of reveal. Awakening curiosity in the viewers.

My idea is that we work around a classic European style sports car from the 1980s. Like a Lamborghini Countach. It's sleek, good looking and would kill any American muscle car in a quarter mile race. But Mr Strings doesn't drive it like that, he just cruises around. He has nothing to prove to anyone.

We made a concept sketch for you to take a look at. These show the spirit of what I want to do much better than any writing. When you look at them bear in mind that every little string would move and react to the car's movement, and it would all look completely realistic.

The strings should be the fabric of the car. Instead of just applying them to the body, we should take apart the doors, the hood, the roof and remake them out of our mock up Cheestrings. What we end up with is something that respects the basic lines of the car but has the fluffiness and out of control motion of Cheestrings. It's like nothing you've ever seen before.

In the end, we want people to laugh at it, but in a way that also respects the full on, balls out lengths we've gone to to make the best Cheestring car imaginable.

THE PERFORMANCES NEED TO BE

really brilliant throughout the film. Mr Strings of course is the centre of attention, but the supporting cast need to set the tone of authenticity. Everything is totally deadpan and credible. This is what will take it from being a 'comedy' spot into being genuinely funny.

We should think of them as three dimensional characters, not cliches. I would make sure every actor has a clear sense of who his character is and what he's doing when he sees Mr Strings and his Spaghetti Mobile. We should literally ask them to switch off from what they're really seeing and imagine it's something unbelievably new and cool. Like the Delorean in Back To The Future.

The characters in some cases won't have much screen time, so the performances have to be compact but effective. For this we need to look beyond the usual commercial channels and into the worlds of theatre and cinema, where there are some great character actors with a very wide range. This will really pay off in the authenticity of the scenes, which in turn will make sure we really nail the tone.
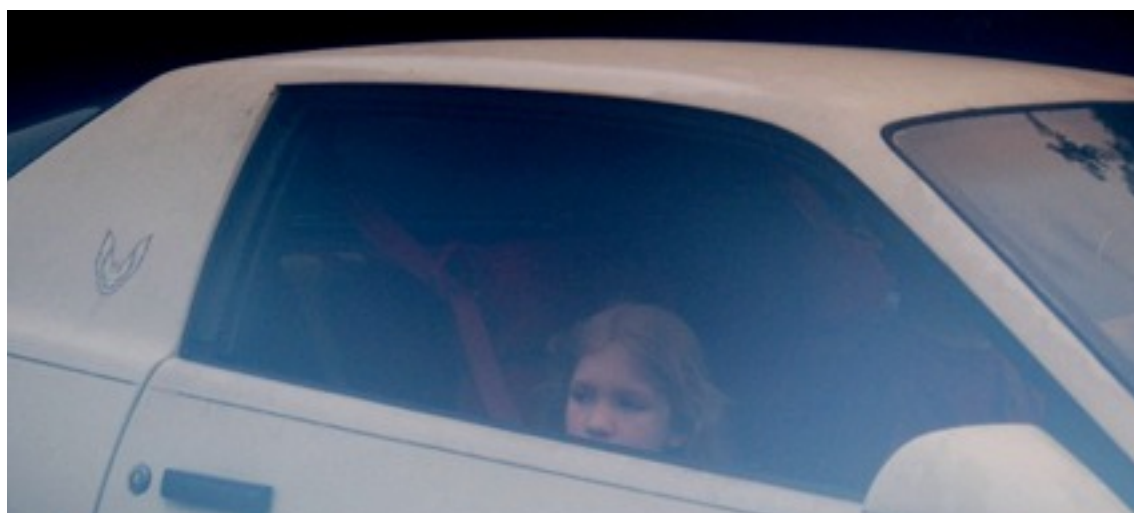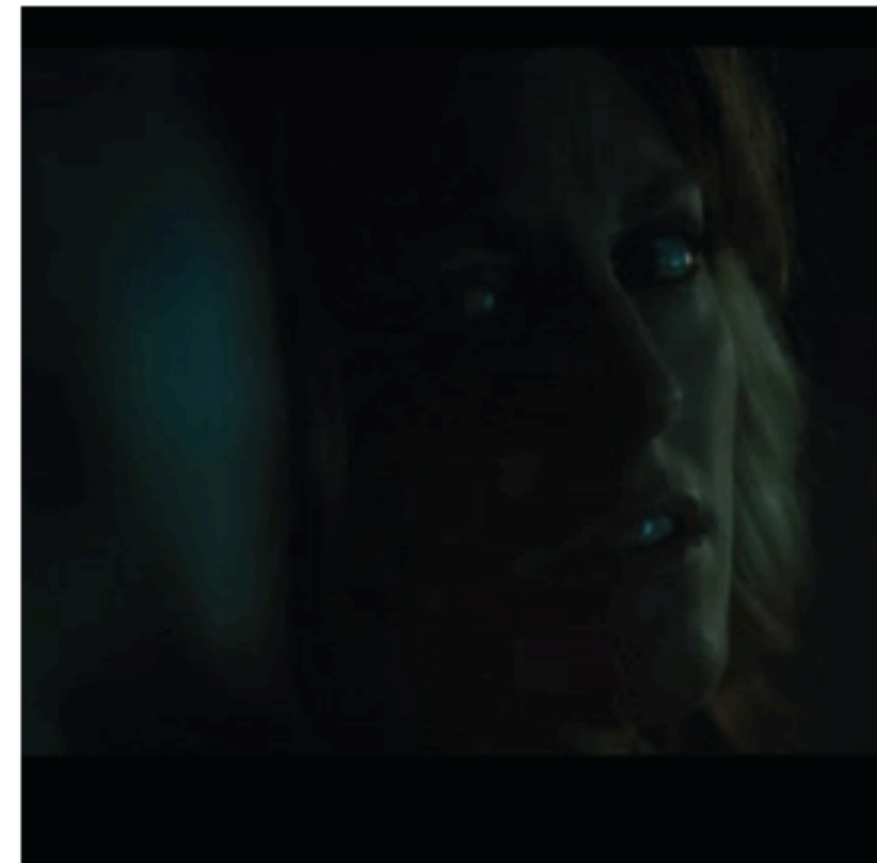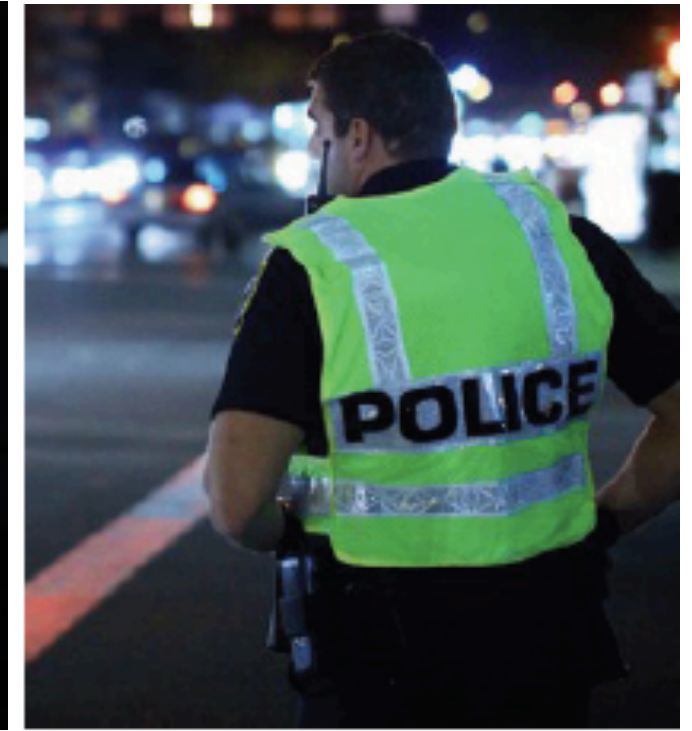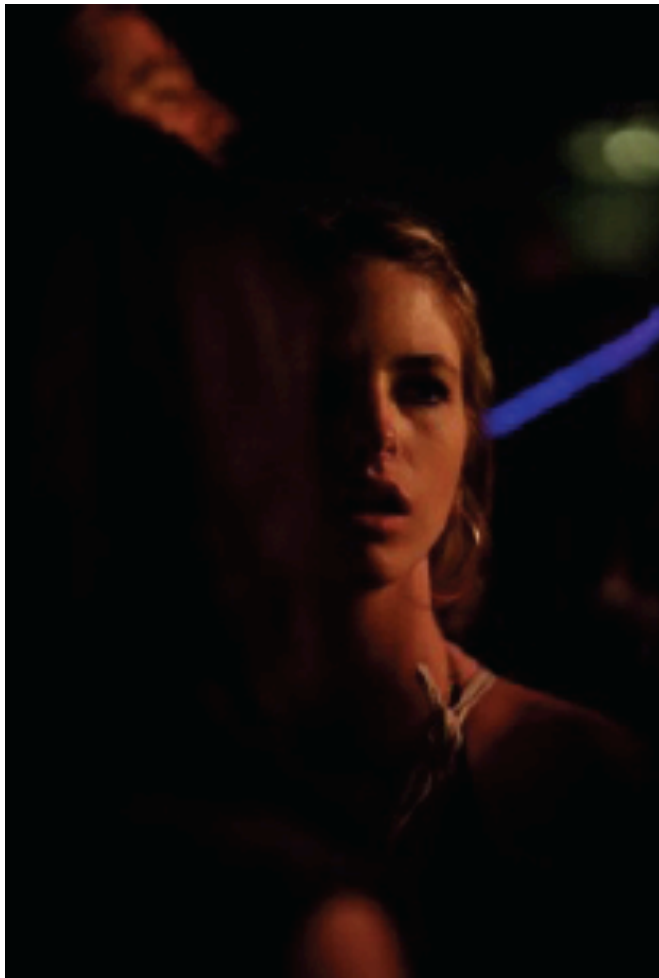
TO ADD TO THE EXISTING SOUNDTRACK

I would build a layer of rich and cinematic sound design. We need to really place the viewer in the moment. Again, like the opening scene of a feature film. We hear every detail of the city. The ticking of the car engine at a set of lights. The crackling asphalt under the tyres. It's completely immersive.

HERE'S HOW THE FILM COULD RUN

We open with a wide shot of an empty street at night. We hear the sound off screen of a car engine, it's loud. The car darts through the frame and crosses at full speed, we just get a glimpse of it on the dimly lit street.

We see a traffic light turn red. Cut to the detail of a couple of car wheels suddenly stopping. Then we cut to the inside, to the clocks on the dashboard slowly moving while the car hums, maybe we see the keychain of the car key moving back and forth, it's a little cheese or maybe a little jar of milk. There's a bit of reflection from the driver, he looks a bit yellow.

A white luxury car pulls right next to us. We see this from inside the car of our hero, from his first person view or an overshoulder shot. We cut to the window of this other car. It starts lowering and from inside it we see a gorgeous woman looking completely in awe towards something. What we don't know.

THE CAR STARTS IT'S ENGINE

and leaves frame. We catch a split second of it; we just see a yellow hue moving fast, and the sound of a powerful engine. Maybe we can set up this one with a fast inter cut montage of gas pedal, clutch, stick shift movement.

Maybe we could cut to the reflection of the street lights bouncing on the windshield. They pass rapidly and keep on covering the face of our hero. We don't see much of the car either, just the windshield and maybe a subtle cheese curl poking into the shot.

All the time the viewer is creating a mental picture of who's driving and what this incredible spectacle might be. We intercut enigmatic details with the reactions and situations that we pass through, like a building or a street in complete darkness whose lights start lighting up as the Cheestring Mobile passes by.

THERE COULD ALSO BE

a street basketball game, dimly lit, and all the guys just freeze over, as they hear the music and see the Cheestring mobile. The ball bounces away into the fence, ignored. They yell things at Mr. Strings, trying to get his attention. Maybe one of them takes a picture with his cellphone, but Mr. String remains cool and just gives them a look, friendly and approving.

Maybe while he's rolling through the city streets he passes in front of a hip, very elite club, and this small guy covered in bling has two smoking hot blondes right next to him, following him, but as they see the Mobile, they stop looking at the little guy, who also looks past them, longing to be the guy in the car.
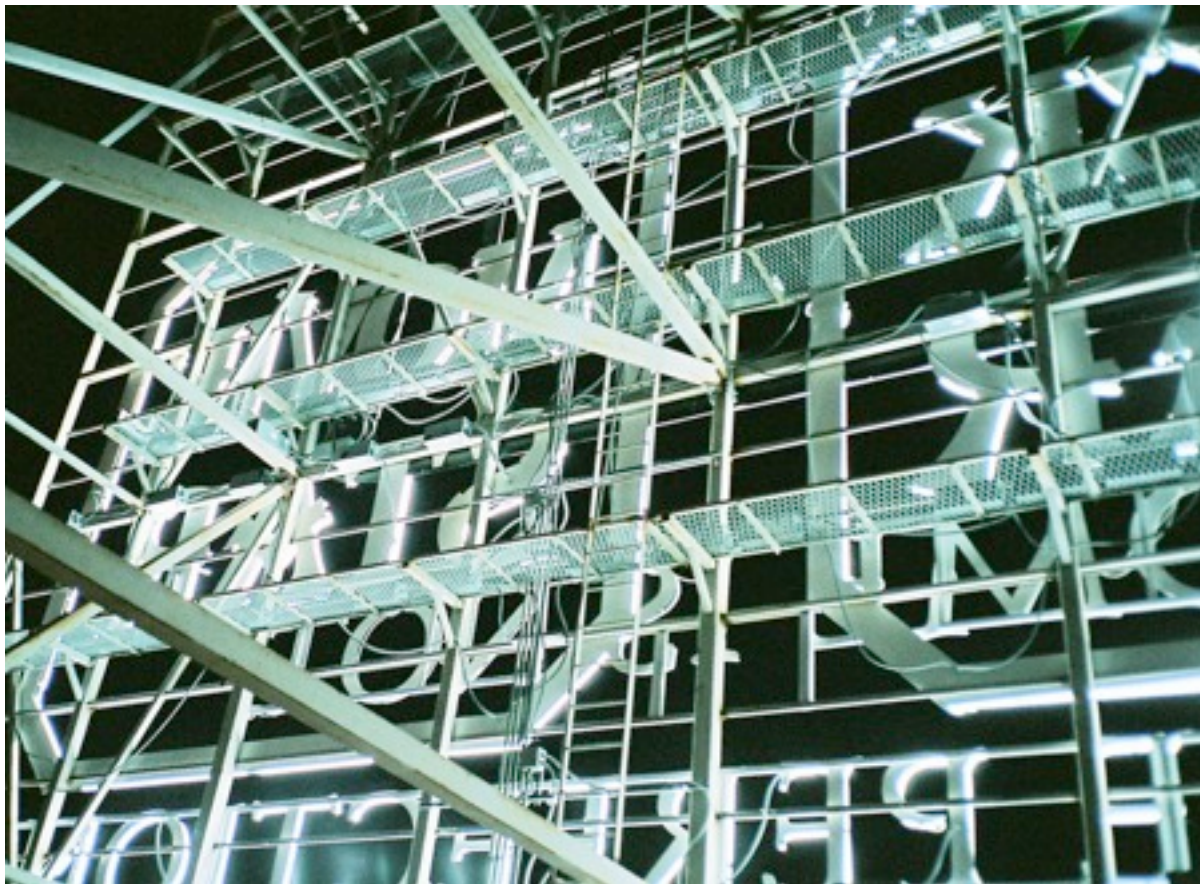
SOME GUYS ARE PLACING A BILLBOARD,

when they get distracted by the Mobile. First they hear the sound, then see what's coming and let something on the billboard drop. The neon lights on the billboard blow out, and this causes a blackout on the street. The sparkles from the exploding neon lights are the only light source, and we see them reflected on the car windows or even exploding around the car as it passes through.

This shows us the shape of the car, but no detail whatsoever.

We could also follow the Cheestring Spaghetti Mobile from up close, with the camera rigged to the car. A group of teenagers have recognized Mr Strings and are trying to get alongside him on their bikes, but our hero gently pumps the gas leaving them behind, in the rear view mirror we see the receding, pulling focus to a small smirk playing on Mr Strings' lips.
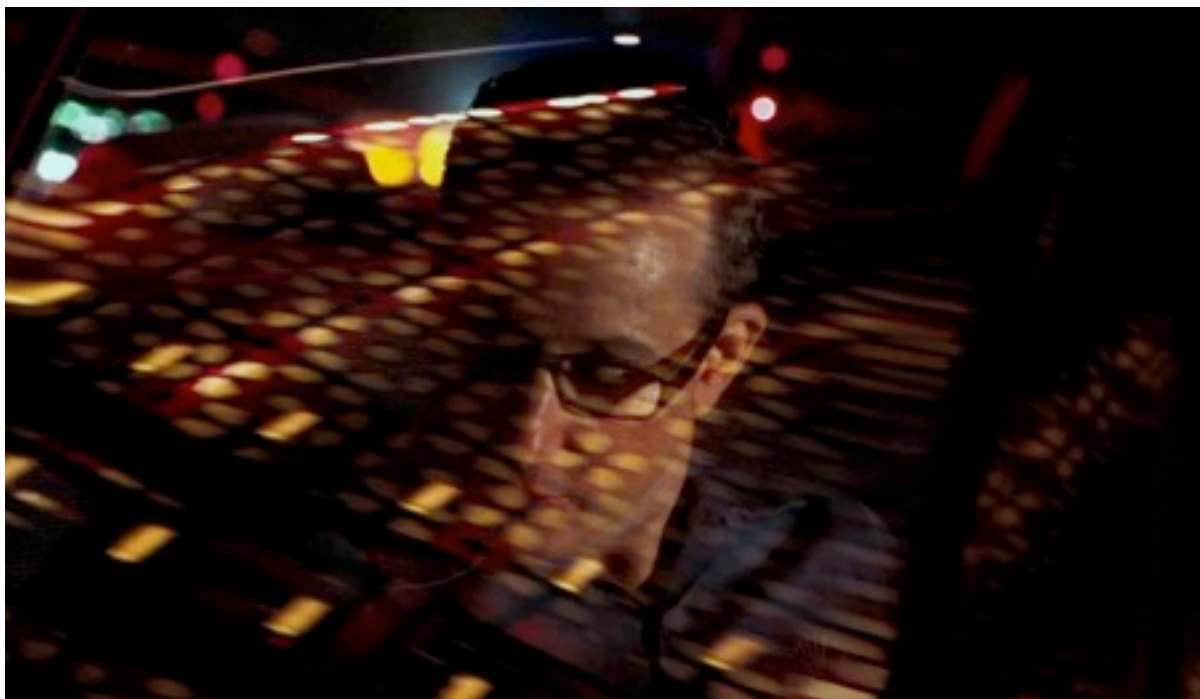
FINALLY WE SEE THE CAR

pulling up somewhere. The door opens, and in a smooth tilt movement we see Mr. Strings step out of the car. Cutting to a wide shot, we finally reveal the mysterious car, and realise that it's completely made of Cheestrings.

The party itself is a different world. I think that it could be cool that it's more exclusive than a big flamboyant Hollywood party. More like something intimate, where people know each other and there's no red carpet or screaming fans. Think of the famous parties at The Chateau Marmont when the A-list used to go, get a drink and let loose. It's super exclusive of course, and they would have things like a valet service to park your car, but at this level that's everyday. No one makes a big deal out of it.

What this will do is make the fact that even at the party people are impressed by Mr Strings and the car even more remarkable. These people are not easily awed. Maybe the host of the party comes out to greet Mr. String and in the process tries to steal a string of cheese from the car.
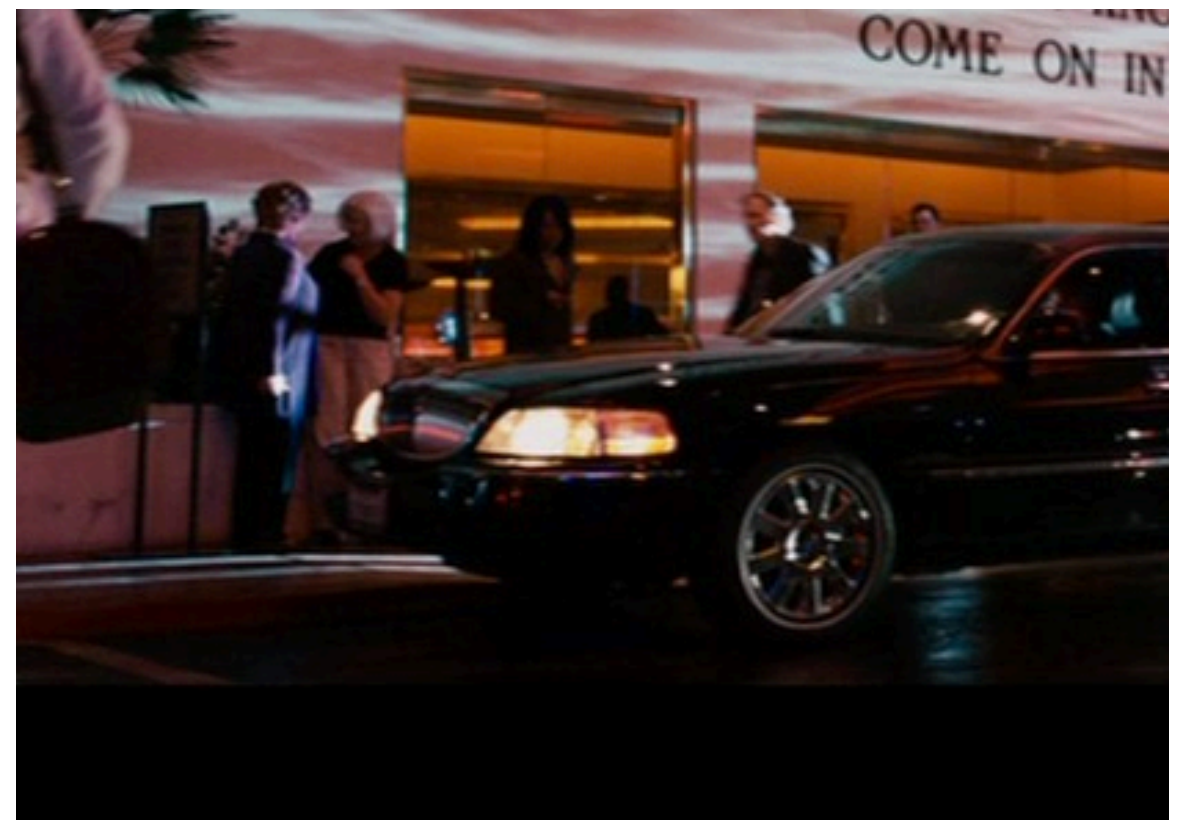
MAYBE THE VALET ASKS HIM

him *"is that a..."* and since Mr. String is so used to his car being cheese that he doesn't pick up on the question right away. He interrupts him:

"yeah, it's a V8."

And the valet sort of looks at him, confused:

"Uh yeah but, is it made of cheese?" and Mr String is sort of reminded: *"Oh... yeah."*

We could even throw in a movie style one liner as he hands him the key, like "careful not to grate it."

AS YOU CAN TELL

I think this is a really exciting campaign, and I'd love to talk to you about it further. The ideas above are just some first thoughts, as a starting point to open the door to more creative thinking between us.

I think if we can establish a really authentic cinematic tone, all the comedy and cleverness of the script will really come alive.

Thanks for reading!
Rafa.