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TV COMERCIAL PRODUCTION STRUCTURE FOR LIMITED BUDGET

ABSTRACT

Making a great television commercial is an art in itself. Twenty years ago, there was no official available information about the steps to follow to prepare a TV commercial throughout all phases. The main reason for that knowledge gap is that the old method used was based on multiple agencies and vendors working on the same campaign, so the single groups do not have to know everything; they just needed to understand their own role and responsibility.

In the last years, video production and post-production industries are changing very fast. Digital retooling is taking place, causing dramatic industry restructuring. The old player's large post-production facilities using dedicated, proprietary equipment are being replaced by new players, small production companies, using personal computers to produce a different type of production media with the same professional result, at a lower cost.

Nowadays, the significant reduction of video production costs, the more and more disappearing barriers to access video, as well as brands looking to spend less and get more has forced many advertisers to renounce to big agencies.

Actually, with the new technology decreasing the cost of cameras and computers is possible to produce a TV commercial in all its phases (starting from concept, writing, production, and post-production (including animation and compositing) to final video), with a small group of

professionals. The one-stop-shop is becoming a growing business model. Many creative artist and directors from big agencies have resigned to establish their own production companies, and groups of talented young people are constantly gathering from all over the world.

This study will help to understand the structure and workflow of producing a TV commercial, starting from the copywriting stage until the final product, and passing through the classical production steps of cinematography and motion pictures, such as pre-production, production and post-production, understanding and analyzing every significant step of structure until the initial written concept will become a motion image.

In order to reach the objective of this study, I read and reviewed several books and web materials on different topics about stages of the production, planning, budgeting, shooting and editing, equipment and techniques, communication and documentation.

Keyword: *Video /production structure/ Tv commercial/ small production companies/ new players*

- INTROCUCTION

TV commercials as a communication medium have had a remarkable impact on millions of people around the world has become an integral part of our everyday life. They have to create a powerful emotional response in a very short amount of time conveying a clear message, which means a lot of effort to spend in production.

Translating an idea into an interesting, engaging and worthy video product is considered a very complex process. Production faces strict timelines and budget limits and involves different people such as cast and crew working with a variety of sophisticated equipment which needs to be arranged and planned before the shooting begins.

- **METHODOLOGY**

This research will go through the practical steps towards the creation of TV commercials including management and detailed planning which lead to smooth shootings, editing and release of the final product in time. In particular, will be explained the choice of approach in regards to specific products or messages, scripting the commercial, directing it, creating a storyboard, budgeting, casting, music, and production schedules as well as explain the post-production, editing process, music, and sound effects, and finally the screening.

Finally, this methodology will be applied to a concrete product. In fact, I will produce and direct one final video project (tv commercial) with complex technique including shooting, graphics and mixing with sounds, working on professional condition.

Then, we will go through the following 3 phases to develop a TV advertisement.

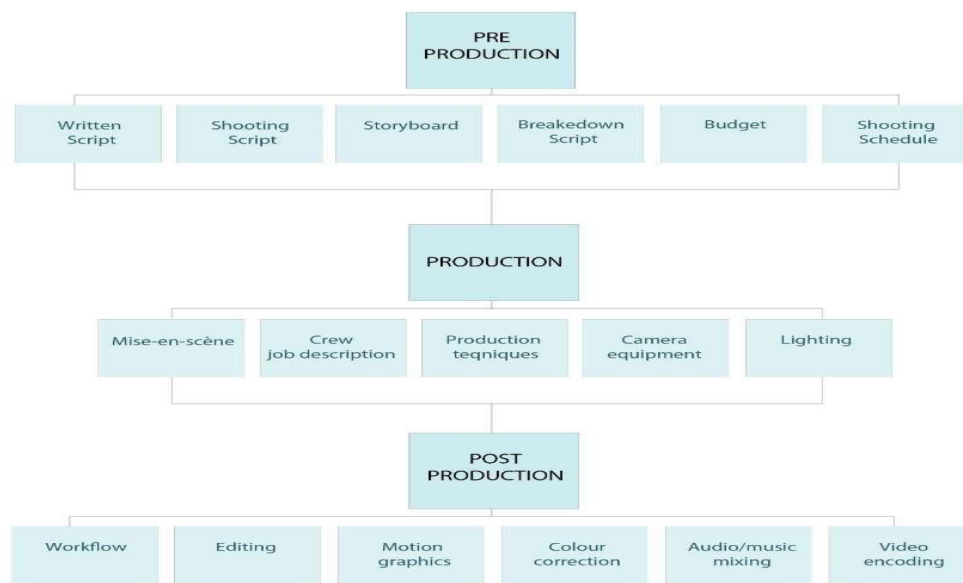


Fig. 1 Diagram of development stages of production of TV commercials (source: author's)

The most important practice to explore and understand the structure of TV commercials is:

- Create a TV commercial for a real client (Polis University)
- Analyze TV commercial and identify the best value quality and cost structure.
- Find the proper format for a 30 second TV Commercial script and write it down.
- Breakdown the script.
- Create a timeline.
- Plan a budget.
- Create a detailed storyboard for the final Commercial project that addresses the audio and visual content of the commercial, camera angles and/or camera movements, and timing of various scenes.
- Shoot the footage on location using a professional camera, lighting, and sound equipment.
- Edit the footage on premiere pro and use

PRODUCTION STRUCTURE

- PRE-PRODUCTION

Written Script

Before we start writing the script, we should take the time to fully understand the company, marketing goals, target market, and single key benefit to build a concept around. There's a four-step process for writing effective advertising that's been in use for decades.

First grab the viewers' ATTENTION with a quick question, a setup, a funny situation, whatever.

Next, we have to develop an INTEREST in the product. What can it do for the user? How will it solve their problems?

Create a context for DESIRE. Continue to hit on the benefits of the product, how easy it is to use, how they'll be the envy of their friends and neighbors, and so on. Make them want the product.

Finally, urge your viewer to take ACTION. Tell them where to buy it, to call for more info, or to send opinion. Whatever we want them to do.

After development the basic key of marketing goals, we start working with the creative copywriting process using a Sid Field structure of a written concept for image, based on Aristotle three-act structure, which is very practical and effective to attract the audiences' attention (Trottier, 1998, Mou and Tu, 2013; Sheppard, 2009). This model used in screenwriting divides a fictional narrative into three parts (acts), often called the Setup, the Confrontation, and the Resolution. We must clarify the point of view on the script (the perspective from which the story is told) and start writing step by step the story concept and describe the action by a certain run, using climax or turning point of the narrative to create suspense.

Shooting script

In terms of film production, shooting script or (decoupage) refers to the process of breaking down the script into a series of sequences or scenes, the shooting script further divides the sequences into individual shots and serves as a basis for organizing the work of the director and staff.

The work of decoupage is further refined in the editing process, in which the shots receive their final definition. This process is important and useful because it allows us to describe the process of structuring a film or video concept, from its broad outlines to its finest details. Shooting scripts are distinct from spec scripts in that they make use of scene numbers (along with certain other formatting conventions described below), and they follow a well-defined set of procedures specifying how script revisions should be implemented and circulated.

In film and television, a script breakdown is an analysis of a screenplay in which all of the production elements are reduced into lists. According to Glebas (2008), a "script" has a specific format as used in film production that includes dialogue, action, timing, scene description, voice over, effects, etc.

We can use a similar detailed form that goes through each scene or shot on the script and describes it according to its needs. In view of our specific product we can first divide the page down into 3 rows: script video and audio and then add for each row further details. To fill the form, it's important to take into consideration the following elements:

- Characters in the shot
- Size of shot
- Camera movement
- Camera angle
- Major Actions
- Important objects
- Sound, Voice over and Music

The shots on breakdown script are not in order of filming. This comes later on in the process and becomes a document known as the shooting schedule.

Script	Video Shot size, c.movement, c.angle ,timing	Audio music,voice over,sound effects
<p>Scene 4 The general shot shows moments from the graduation ceremony and party, where students dressed in ceremonial uniforms play carelessly making selfies or getting wet with champagne, etc.</p>	<p>Shot1 long shot (baccalaureate ceremony) travelling out eye level time 3 sec</p> <p>Shot2 medium shot (3 student's selfie) pan right (slow motion 60fr/s) low angle time 2-3 sec</p>	<p>Voice over – Development asks for education and qualitative research</p> <p>(Zhvillimi ka nevoje per edukim dhe kerkim cilesor.)</p> <p>Music</p>

Fig. 2 Script model for TV advertisement (example taken from Polis University TV commercial script produced by the author)

Storyboard

The storyboard is the process of pre-visual thinking of scenes and builds an informational tool that helps the creative development of the scene during the production phase. The storyboarding process, in the form it is known

today, was developed at Walt Disney Productions during early 1930 (Whitehead, 2004) after several years of similar processes being in use at Walt Disney and other animation studios. Today they are used as an essential part of the creative process of any pre-visualization in Animation, Film, Music Videos, Tv Commercials, F/X shots.

The storyboard consists of a series of rough sketches, Images or Illustrations (like comics strips), that help the director to visualize and organize the camera treatment. The storyboard is a visual map of how the director hopes to arrange the key shots for each scene or action sequence. This still visual layouts of events, often include text description or detailed information tied to script, often have graphics that represent movement and camera details, scene description, voice over, and effects (Glebas, 2008; Tumminello, 2004). (fig. 3).

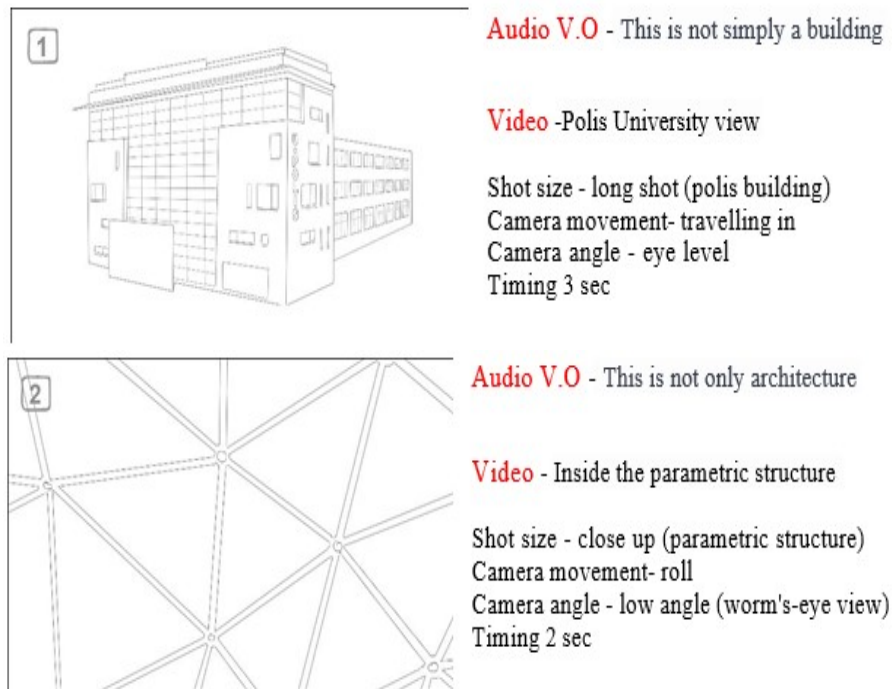


Fig. 3 Storyboard model for TV advertisement (example taken from Polis University Tv commercial script produced by the author)

Breakdown script (artwork, props, location cast)

A breakdown script is a detailed analysis of a screenplay in which all of the production elements are ordered into a schedule. The schedule is often organized according to categories: cast, extras, stunts, props, special effects, stunts, wranglers, vehicles, costumes, make-up and hair stylists, special equipment and or cameras, film scores, and music, etc., which are all broken-down with different colored marker highlights within a shooting script. In low budget production, this past is simpler (fig. 4), with limited elements and can be done using a doc in a computer or manually, with features inside Final Draft called tagger.

scene 1

location (EXTERIOR) 1-Building / Polis university
2-parametric structure

scene 2

Location –(INTERIOR) Co-plan offices (3-st floor)
Props - Sketches black and white of parametric structure, 1 laptop or Pad, table white rover, 2-3 roll papers, lamp carmine and turquoise, table coffee cup carmine and white, logo coplan adhesive A3 and A4,
Costume – shirt, t-shirts, scarf: turquoise, carmine, white, grey, open beige.
Cost-

Fig. 4 Breakdown script model for low budget TV advertisement (example taken from Polis University Tv commercial script produced by the author)

Budget

A TV commercial production cost can range depending on various factors that highly influence budgeting are listed below:

1. Production Time

The longer the production time takes, the more it's going to cost.

2. The length

The longer the commercial is the more footage has to be filmed.

3. The weather

If any of your locations take place outside, then you'll be at the mercy of the weather. A sudden unexpected rainstorm can stall production.

4. Locations

The more locations you have, the bigger a budget you'll need. Traveling expenses are required to get the crew from one location to the next, and you may have to pay rental costs or other fees (i.e. insurance) in order to film in certain locations.

5. Crew size

The more people are required on the production crew, the more expensive it will be. For larger shoots, you may need additional camera operators, assistant directors or producers, and additional grips or production assistants.

6. Equipment

If all we need is a camera and a tripod, then the equipment won't cost as much to use. However, professional commercials can use a variety of equipment, including dolly tracks, sliders, drones, steady cams, jib arms and more.

Other items, like professional actors, makeup or wardrobe stylists, visual effects, animation, or in-depth color correcting can also add to the TV commercial production cost, and they're all valuable and worth considering in your budget.

Schedule of shooting

A shooting schedule is a plan of each day's shooting for video production. Managing the production schedule before shooting production. It is backed up by a document called the Day Out of Days which is a more specific department schedule (cast, stunts, art department and so on). This helps all departments to budget, schedule and prepare what might be needed on which shooting day.

The schedule will normally be done quite a few months before you start filming, as the organization of the schedule determines the budget. The schedule becomes more concrete at a certain point, but it typically shifts in

small areas right up to Day One of principle photography (and then continually evolves as the shoot progresses, to adapt to the requirements of the shoot). Once the schedule is as locked as it can be, it is then issued to all departments – the art department, wardrobe, make-up, prosthetics and all the rest – who can then start scheduling what they need to prepare for when. Each schedule should include the at least the following information:

- Scene Number
- Scene Name
- Number of Breakdown Sheet
- Page Count – This is where the breaking pages’ down
- Location Name and Number
- Day or Night
- Interior or Exterior
- Characters names and numbers
- Extras – How Many?
- Special Notes: Animals, Vehicles, Music, Effects or Special Equipment

POLIS UNIVERSITY TVC SHOOTING SCHEDULE - DATE 16/03/2017 – 17/03/2017							
Ora	Location	Scene Description	Model	Props/Clothes	Light	Camera	C. A1 gl es
9:00 – 10:30	(tek restoranti ne katin e fundit)	Arkitektura	Agon Dalladaku, Ardita Sylaj, Arnisa Lushaj, Atdhe Granica, Edin Durguti, Joana Dhiamanti, Kristina Bello, Sotir Dharmo.	Props: Tavoline rovere, laptop / tablet, makete arkitekturore te studenteve. Veshjet: T-Shirts/shall: turquoise, carmine, te bardha, gri, bezhë e hapur, etj			4
10:30 – 11:30	Zyra e Co-Plan	coplan	Drita Shutina, Eranda Janku, Fiona Imami, Iva Tavanxhiu, Zenel Bajrami.	Props: Skica la veletta, 1 laptop ose Pad, tavoline rover, 2-3 letra te mbeshtjella roll, llampe Carmine ose Turquoise, gotë plastike kafë carmine ose e bardhe, logo CoPlan adeziv A3 dhe A4, Veshjet: T-Shirts/Shell: turquoise, carmine, te bardha, gri, bezhë e hapur etj.			4

Fig. 4 Schedule of shooting model for low budget TV advertisement (example taken from Polis University Tv commercial script produced by the author)

- **PRODUCTION**

The shooting process

The shooting process involves a series of professionals under the supervision of the director. The director of photography is responsible for the photographic look of the film the choice of cameras, lenses, and film stock, the camera set-ups and movements, the consistency of photographic quality from one shot to the next and he or she supervises the work of the camera crew, including the camera operator. Other technicians include the gaffer, who sets up the lighting, and the key grip, who manages the props. The sound mixer is responsible for coordinating sound recording during the shooting process. In the case of a low budget, the number of professionals can be reduced in favor of multi-tasking.

Mise-en-scène

Mise-en-scène (French "placing on stage") is an expression used to describe the design aspects of a video production, related to the "visual theme" or "telling a story" both in visually artful ways through storyboarding, cinematography and stage design, and including poetic treatment through direction (Henderson, 1976). In video production, mise-en-scène refers to everything that appears in front of the camera including the composition and choreography that depend on the sets, props, movement of actors, costumes, and lighting

Crew job

According to Millerson and Owens (2008), there are basic job positions that exist on small Tv commercial production such as producer, director, director of photography; Art Director, assistant director or associate director, floor manager or stage manager (FM), Lighting /supervisor (gaffer). In small productions, single persons can be responsible for different job positions to reduce cost.

- Producer

The producer is concerned with the business organization, budget, the choice of the staff and crew, interdepartmental coordination, script acceptance, and production scheduling.

- Director

The director is responsible for creatively visualizing the script.

- Director of photography

The director of photography assists the film director by establishing the visual look. In the case of the low budget, the director can assume also the role of director of photography deciding artistic and technical instrument regarding lighting, film stock, shot selection, camera operation, and other elements.

- Art Director

Art Directors prepare set requirements according to the script. During the shooting, Art Directors oversees the construction of the set, dressing and striking.

- The assistant director or associate director

The AD is responsible for assisting the director.

- Floor manager or stage manager (FM)

The FM is responsible for the general organization, safety, discipline (managing noise), and security in the set. Floor manager can also be substituted by an Assistant director in case of a simple set organization.

Lighting /supervisor (gaffer).

The lighting director is responsible for designing, arranging, and controlling all lighting treatment, both technically and artistically.

Production technique

There are mainly two different production techniques related to the shooting a video:

- Single-camera production, in which one camera is used to shoot everything.
- Multi-camera production in which every camera is independent on shooting the same shot from different angles (Millerson, Owens 2008).

Low budget productions usually chose the first option which is foreseen in the scrip in order to optimize staff and cost.

Camera equipment

Camera

The choice of the camera for shooting a tv commercial it is conditioned from the budget of the production. In this project the budget allows me to rent the best quality camera on the market, digital Arri Alexa 4k.

Lents

The choice of lenses for shooting a scene also contributes to determining the shape of the visual field and the planes of the image that receive special emphasis. The phenomenon of the depth of field, for example, is determined by the construction of the lens. It refers to the zone of the image that is sharply focused and is measured on the axis of the camera: for example, an image might be in sharp focus between 9 feet and 14 feet from the camera. The areas closer than 9 feet and further than 14 would be more or less out of focus. The depth of field of an image becomes particularly apparent in shots, fairly common in contemporary cinema, which shows an actor out of focus who approaches the camera until he or she comes into focus. Similarly, rack focus changes the depth of field during a shot, for example, by showing a foreground figure in sharp focus, then shifting to a sharp focus of a figure in the relative background.

Chosen Lents: Rental Arri / Zeiss prime lenses,
18mm,25mm,35mm,50mm,85mm.

Dolly truck

The camera dolly is generally used to produce images which involve moving the camera toward or away from a subject while a take is being recorded, a technique is known as a "dolly shot" or traveling in/out. In this case, it was necessary to use a dolly truck.

Crane

The crane is using for complex movement shot, tilting a whole building from distance. In the case of my video production, it was necessary for the final scene.

Drone

The drone is used for shooting a very long shot on eye bird angle of the city.

Lighting

In HD the number of lights is required to create the tone and mood of the scene. The quality of the video many times depend on lighting.

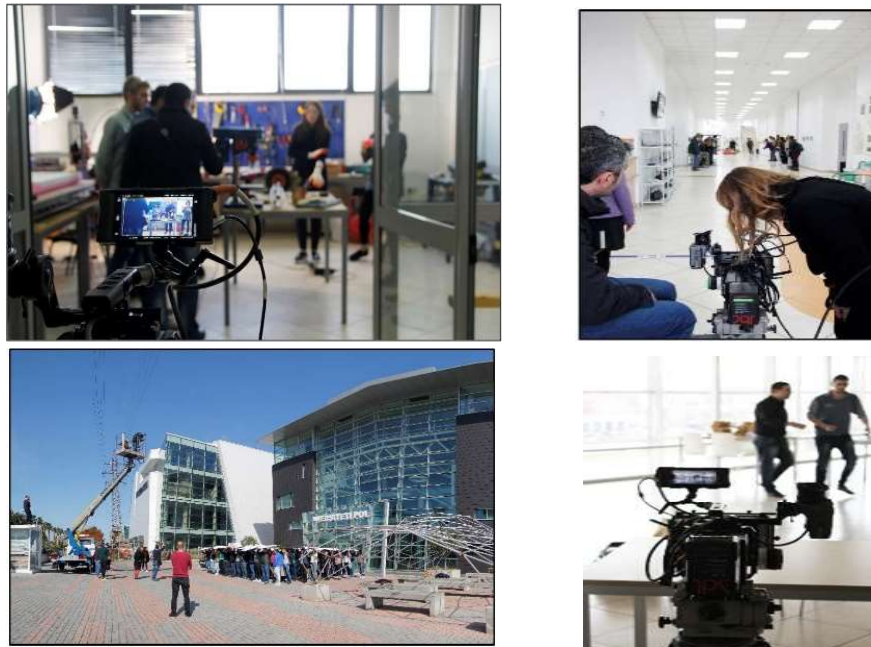


Fig. 5 Pictures from production phase. (example taken from Polis University Tv commercial produced by the author)

- POST-PRODUCTION

Post-production is the third and final step in video creation and production and begins after all the footage has been captured. In this phase, graphics and music can be added. Video can be filtered through color correction and

special effects. Editing process means to select and cut scenes, insert effects, work with audio and sound of actors or background sounds, etc.

Workflow

Before begin editing in Premiere Pro, we need footage, graphics, audio files. The steps we take in editing video, from import or capture throughout the final output is called workflow. The basic steps of a workflow are the following:

- Import and export settings and file naming methods

The first step is to determine the best capture and export settings. Then we can import any ProRes camera files into Premiere Pro. Files should be named sequentially, considering the number of shot, so it is easy for as to find a specific.

- Keep all your files in a folder and use an external backup

All of the files should be in the same folder in order to find them easily. It's important also to use an external hard drive to media files.

- Use bins to organize the work

Use bins to organize clips, graphics, audio, and any additional elements.

Editing

Editing is the phase of production in which the shot fragments need to be assembled in a certain order. This process consists in excluding certain footage, cutting others and establishing the final form of the video. In film history, it is considered as an aesthetic event (Guynn, 2011). In fact, the editor's art consists in giving value to a shot creating a meaningful sequence. In the nowadays digital era, video editing has maximal freedom in operating this assemblage as you can use a cut-and-paste method, and easily include different effects that cannot be achieved with linear editing.

Motion graphics

Motion graphics are actively used almost in every video production. On tv commercials, motion graphics have become part of the moving image. In the video a motion graphic is used for reading packshot with client logo and slogan, with a gradient background and supers text which is run over the footage.

Audio and music mixing

Audio post production in TV commercials usually refers to the audio synchronized with the video. In the movie, the original, or production audio recorded during the shooting lacks in performance or quality, therefore the actor or actors are brought into a sound studio to record some or all of their dialogue are dubbed, mixed or replaced. In low budget vide, this is usually impossible.

In a 30-second TV commercial is used usually an industry standard post-production technique for adding music, voice-over, and other audio elements common to commercials, all with Adobe Audition. Then we import the various audio elements and assign them to stem mixes, finesse the voice over track and mix and output the final soundtrack.

Color correction

The color correction (also known as color grading) is the last step in the process before a video is completed. Although the raw video taken from the camera may look good already or at least perfectly passable, color correction provides an opportunity to make the image footage look even better, more vibrant, more accurate, or better fit the mood and themes of our project.

In this project, the color correction and color grading passed through the process of correcting contrast, color balance, and hue/saturation. Using the toolset in Adobe Premiere Pro and After effect.

- Adjusting contrast, color balance, and hue/saturation of individual shots
- Using automatic color-correction techniques

- Establishing shot-to-shot consistency
- Applying color treatments
- Correcting color problems

Video encoding

All the videos undergo a video encoding process to transform them from the original source format into a viewable format on the media platform devices. Video encoding is a process of converting a given video input into a digital format that is compatible with most types of media such as television, digital cinema projecting, web players, mobile devices, dvd, youtube streaming, or blu-ray disc. This is because different browsers, video players, and devices support or can play videos in different formats. The most important point to remember is that each video format comes with its own specifications such as video codec with H264, that we use to encoding our video (tv commercial).



Fig. 6 Final images after post-production process extracted from the video produced. (example taken from Polis University Tv commercial produced by the author)

- CONCLUSION

Today TV commercial production is very competitive in terms of costs having increasingly sophisticated results due to public access to new technologies. Single individuals forming their own group of freelance professionals, and following all the above-mentioned steps can achieve a high-quality production and TV commercial, with moderate cost and using group resources. The way the TV commercial project is structured allows you to control the difficult production process avoiding arbitrary situations and being more efficient in terms of organization and budget.

Having a well-structured process mean:

- Strong pre-production with a well written visual script.
- Writing a shooting script with a very detailed description of production like camera movement, shot size, camera angles, timing, audio, etc.
- Creating a visually illustrated storyboard, pass through the breakdown script, base on which will be calculated the costs up to the good organizing shooting on set with well- defined job description of the crew.
- Following this, the post-production stage with nowadays technologies can be easily finalized from home computer or by a small studio, with maximal quality and competitive cost, by following all the classical ordinary steps of post-production.
- Keep the director organized and able to optimize. If the structure is not clear and well programmed, then you're likely to get lost in the mess or have problems during the shooting, which can lead to unpredictable situations.

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