

WISCONSIN FILM FESTIVAL

British Television Advertising Awards at the 2007 Wisconsin Film Festival
*Getting pitches for Brits on Sunday at Monona Terrace**Ellen Meany on Monday 04/16/2007 09:04:48.*

Advertising is fun, and it pays the bills! If something popped up in your browser when you clicked on this, I hope you gave it a chance. WFF imported the [British Television Advertising Awards](#), a series of "witty, inventive, impeccable little films" from their sold-out run at the Walker Art Center in Minneapolis. Between this and *Sportsfan*, who knew Minnesota had so much to offer?

It's easy to pinpoint the differences from American TV ads. For one thing, the Brits are happy to let a story build. There's more sex, more horror, more gore. More raw feeling exposed. There's more intelligence, too. Levis jeans are sold using a modern retelling of Shakespeare. That would never make it on network here.

Public service, consumer products, banks, cars, even documentary TV. All are represented. A [landmine PSA](#), set at a girls' soccer game, is particularly devastating.

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So are the shorts warning teens to watch out for traffic, with horrifying statistics about pedestrian deaths in London. Celebrities show up only briefly: Brad Pitt begins a spot for the [global fight to end poverty](#), narrated by Liam Neeson, it features Colin Firth, Bono, Emma Thompson, George Clooney, Cameron Diaz, and many others.

At least ten commercials sell Lynx body spray, the UK equivalent of Axe, including a CNN-style mini-doc about the male-dominated town of Ravenstoke, Alaska, which successfully uses the scent to lure women. "Spray more, get more," is its [slogan](#).

McCoy's potato chips -- er, crisps -- inspire gentlemanlike behavior, as a snacking couchbound sports fan passes the remote control to his wife, to the tune of "Thus Spake Zarathustra."

There's an arthouse sensibility to many. Stella Artois beer is sold in two spots shot in a silent-film style.

Another has priests enjoying an afternoon walking on an iced-over lake. The beer is quite important to them. The theory of evolution is conveyed in reverse action in a masterpiece for Guinness, which is "worth the wait," truly an intelligent design.

The big winner in the awards is a Honda commercial set to "The Impossible Dream" from "The Man of La Mancha." I think it's Andy Williams' version. Honda's theme in this and several other ads is the power of dreams. Get there driving a nice car, or on a nice bike, or in a nice powerboat.

The Wisconsin Film Fest says they want to make a tradition out of showing these ads annually, which is what the Walker Art Center does. I'll reserve a ticket for next year.