

the **work** guest review

1. XEROX "The Duel"

A couple is talking about what kind of car to get. They begin their usual banter; "red/blue, leather/cloth" when the woman pulls out a brochure. "Now *this* is a car," he says. "No. This is *my* car," she says. Turns out she customized a car online. The man is impressed, but all he offers is a grudging, "At least we talked about it." Tagline: "There's a new way to look at it."

Client: Xerox Agency: Y&R/N.Y. ECDs: Barry Hoffman, Bob Wyatt AD: Paul Jervis CW: Ken Wieden Agency Producer: Ken Yagoda Director: Joe Pytka/Pytka Productions

BILDSTEN: This spot is certainly well-crafted: good casting, restrained performances, peerless cinematography, well-cut. But in the end, I can't say I really have a clue what Xerox actually does these days. To me, they're still primarily a copier company and this spot doesn't change that perception. The concept of brochures on demand is something I've been aware of for a number of years, so it doesn't seem all that revolutionary. A nice bit of theater, but it didn't do what it was supposed to do. ★★★

DIMASSIMO: Selling a complex, conceptual product is the most difficult task in advertising. This spot succeeds better than most. The strategy is another wet dream from Xerox: "I dream that huge companies will use us to deliver next-day, totally customized, full-color brochures for high-margin products — wheeeee!" Maybe, maybe not. But with Joe Pytka directing, how bad a dream could it be? ★★★

2. MICROSOFT "Vintage"

A vertical split-screen displays two sides of the wine business: "the buyer" and "the cellar." A lively waltz accompanies a devastating scene in the cellar: a forklift drops two barrels, causing the racks to crash like dominos. The distressed vintner keys his computer. The buyer, who has been taking inventory during the wreckage, sees the price of wine skyrocket on his handheld device. Surreptitiously, the vintner sends one more bottle crashing to the floor. Tagline: "1 degree of separation."

Client: Microsoft.net Agency: McCann-Erickson/S.F. CCO: Kevin Moehlenkamp ECDs: Walt Connelly, Dante Lombardi AD: Michael Furlong CW: Paul Hicks Agency Producers: Kathy Love, Jonathan Shipman Director: Mehdi Norowzian/Chelsea Pictures

BILDSTEN: With this spot, I understand what this Microsoft software does. But for the life of me, I'm still confused about the story. I watched it 10 times and it still isn't clear exactly what is going on. Is the price of the wine rising to wholesalers because of the accident? Is the guy with the handheld a wholesaler who's buying the wine? Or does he work for the winery? As a creative director I spend so much time trying to make sure our commercials make sense. Because, like it or not, we do not have our audience's rapt attention. But at least I do walk away

understanding what the Microsoft software could do for me — if I were a vintner. ★★

DIMASSIMO: Once again, a B-to-B client selling a complex, conceptual product. And the agency comes through pretty well. Not a simple idea, but a compelling fantasy for the target audience. (I can update my inventory in real time with one click.) This is nicely executed and a real pleasure to watch. The art direction is crisp and forward, without being "edgy." The casting and talent direction are OK, although the star performers here are the inanimate objects. Those cascading wine bottles are beautiful. The use of two windows is a smart device here. There are two worlds: the world of the buyer and the world of the inventory clerk. The product promises to seamlessly and instantly connect the two. This device does just that. ★★★

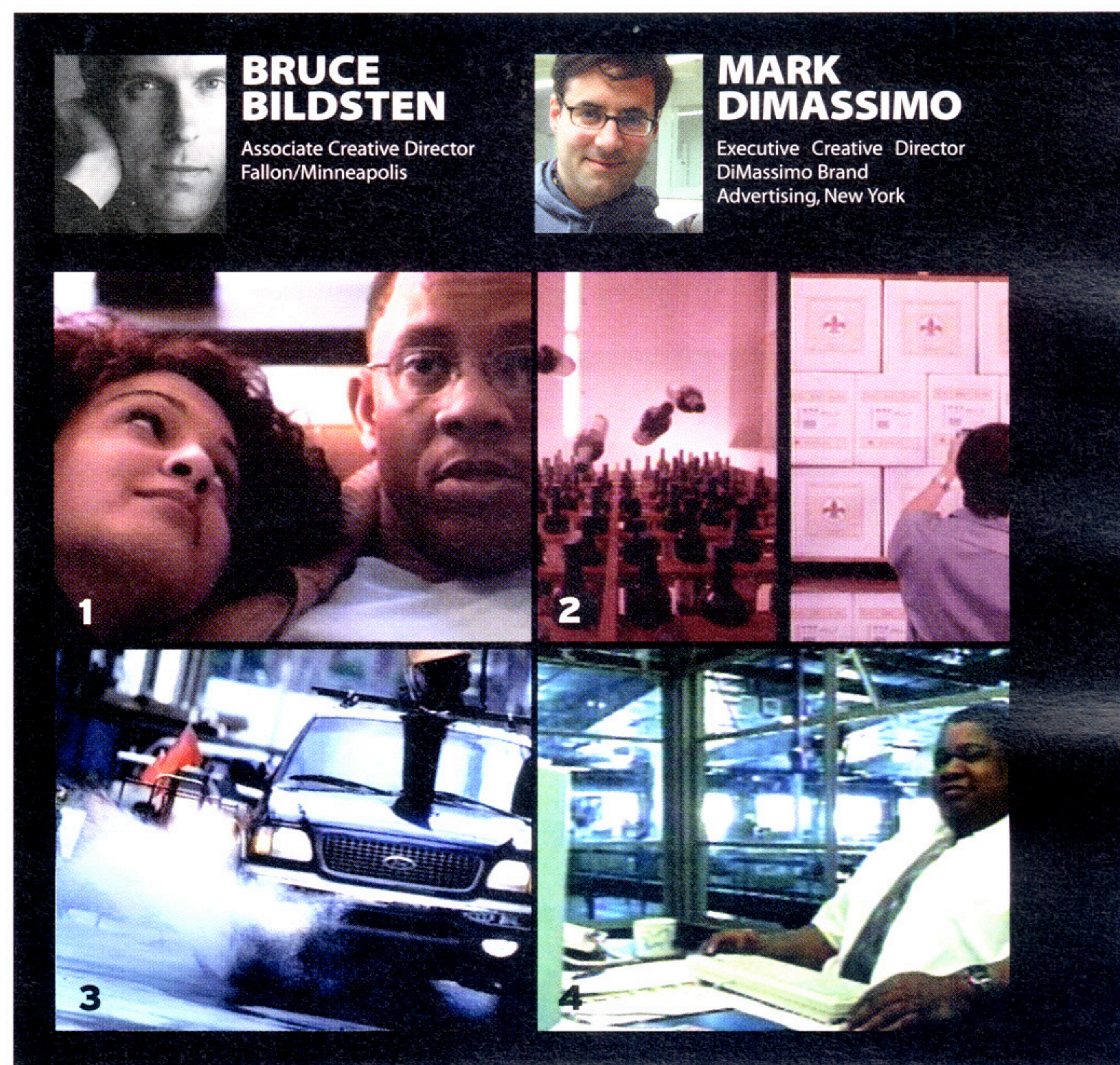
3. FORD "SUV"

Bill Ford, the company's CEO and the grandson of Henry Ford and Harvey Firestone, traces the roots of the SUV back to the annual camping trips his grandfathers took with Thomas Edison and "whoever the president was at the time." Ancient Model T footage gives way to modern images of outdoor enjoyment via SUVs; kayaking, snowboarding, rock climbing, etc. Tagline: "No boundaries."

Client: Ford Agency: JWT/Detroit ECD: Bruce Rooke CD: John Parkinson Agency Producer: Carole Gall Director: Leslie Dektor/Dektor Film

BILDSTEN: I feel for the creative team on this one. The briefing probably went something like this: "We need to make the CEO the star of the commercial, because everyone will think he's warm and caring, and because his name is Ford. And he'd like to mention the Firestone family and their warm family connection with the Fords, even though there was that rather public spat regarding the exploding tires on the Explorers. And we'd also like to get across what an environmentalist the CEO is while we show our super size Ford Expedition plowing through the woods. And he'd like to show how hip and active the people who buy these SUVs are, even though they're just driving them to the mall. You'll need to shoehorn in five products, and can you tie it all up with our 'No boundaries' slogan?" The proverbial 10 pounds of dung. I'm not buying it and I doubt many others will. ★

DIMASSIMO: This is the era of "lucky sperm" in leadership. In this spot, Bill Ford comes across as thoughtful, humble and acceptably real. He does the best job in decades of reconnecting and updating the mission of his grandfather. The tag is a mantra the first Ford would have happily chanted. The way it's presented is a little conventional for my taste, though. (Standard



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closeup talking head, cutaway to historical footage.) But it's well-executed all around and it proceeds from a smart brand vision. An ambitious effort that does a nice job of tying together multiple agendas. Overall, a confident step in the right direction. ★★★

4. UPS "Brown/Shipping Manager"

A rotund shipping clerk expounds on the various ways "Brown" makes his life easier. It opens in the clerk's office, with shipments on a conveyer belt in the background. Suddenly he's in the middle of a highway, then on a tarmac in the shadow of jumbo jets. "Brown says relax!" he says. "We'll get it done." Apparently, "Brown" tells him many things — but not that he should eat more pie. Tag: "What can Brown do for you?"

Client: UPS Agency: The Martin Agency CDs: Cliff Sorah, John Mahoney Agency Producer: Steve Humble Director: Phil Joanou/Villains

BILDSTEN: I like this commercial. A lot. Overnight shipping is not a glamorous category, but this spot is incredibly charming. The idea of referring to UPS as "Brown" is especially smart. The color of their trucks is so distinctive, I think it's genius to make more of it. The casting is

wonderful — as far from a corporate America stereotype as you can get. You can't help but love the guy. The premise is similar to the Xerox spot ("We're more than you think we are"), but it's very clear and understandable, even though the film work is inventive and the editing nonlinear. I'm left with a perfectly clear idea of all the things UPS could do for me if I were a shipping manager. The Martin Agency gets a rap for being primarily a print agency, but I think they do fine TV, as well. ★★★★★

DIMASSIMO: The return of bad '80s advertising. I went back to study the credits, expecting to find, well, not The Martin Agency! I can just hear the meetings. Acct. Dir.: You have equity in "brown." You own "brown." Client: We want to be like IBM. They're "blue." Acct. Dir.: Yes. IBM owns "blue." UPS can own "brown." Planner: We've checked it with your target audience. Brown means reliable, practical, dependable. Client: We want to be like IBM. CD: Your spots will be letterboxed — just like IBM. Except their bars are blue. And yours will be... brown! Planner: Brilliant! Acct. Dir.: Brilliant! (Thinks: I turned down big money at Grey for this?) ★