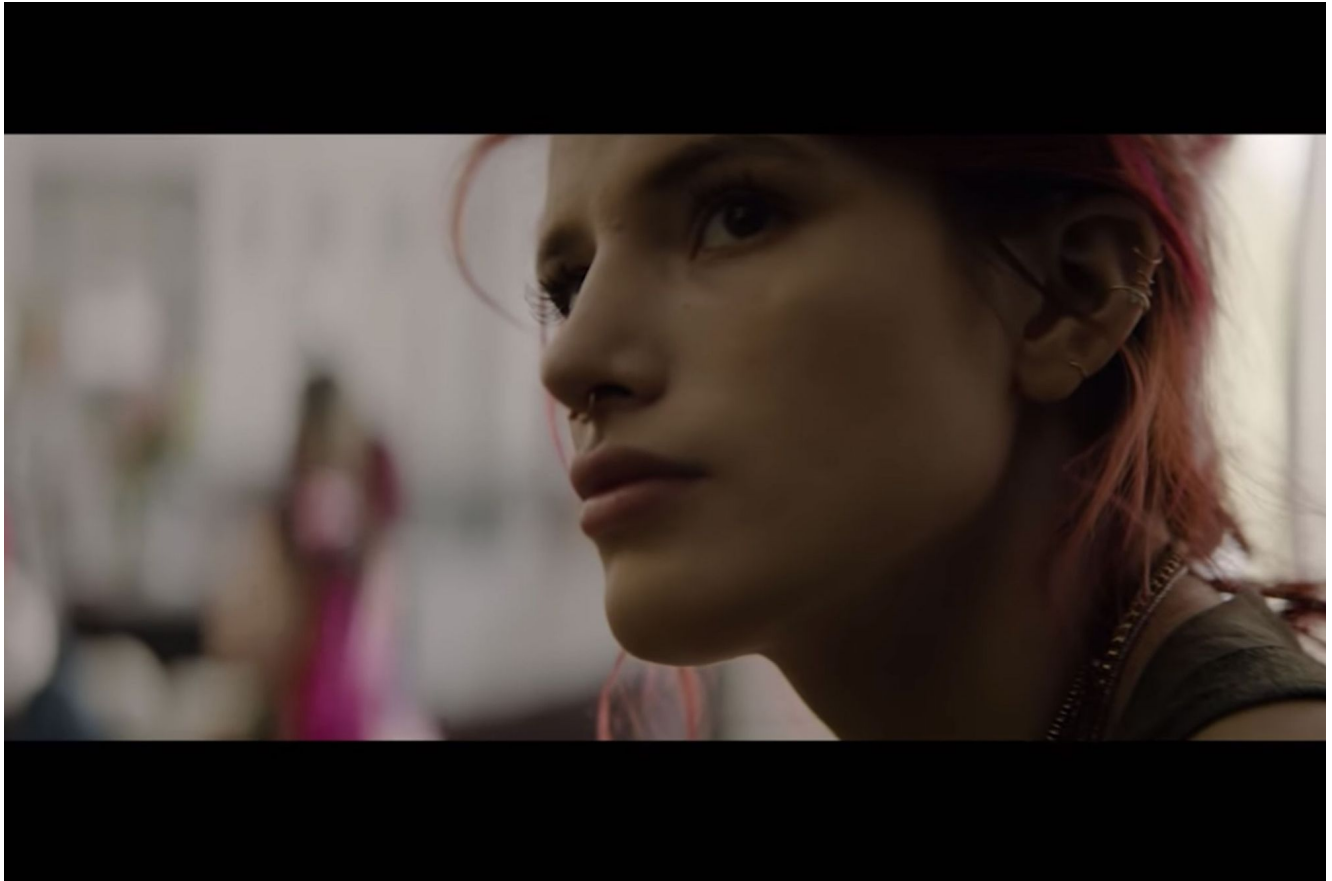


Here's the Ad for Pre-Rolled Joints ABC Wouldn't Air During the Oscars



Cannabis companies keep producing the best ads and television networks keep refusing to show them.

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If there is a trend, there is a definite trend in the cannabis industry of successful companies making exquisitely produced television commercials that TV stations and networks won't run.

Lowell Herb Co., the dominant pre-roll brand in California's immense legal marijuana market, has joined Acreage and MadMen in the select group of cannabis companies with classy commercials barred from over-the-air television. The 90-second ad, titled "Finally," was directed by the award-winning

director Cutter Hodierne and features actress Bella Thorne with voice over by actress Sasha Lane. Lowell wanted to air it during the Oscars, at least locally in Los Angeles where their headquarters are located, but ABC refused.

“It’s a new day and the whole world is opening its eye to the truth about this miraculous plant,” Lane says at one point in the ad. Later she says “Our farmers have been cultivating the land for generations, patiently waiting for this moment,” a description that might come as surprise to Emerald Triangle pot growers who used to sell black-market marijuana for thousands of dollars a pound and now struggle with plunging prices and a costly legalization process.

The ad concludes with a convivial gathering of young adults purchasing Lowell Herb pre-rolls from what appears to be a cigarette vending machine from yesteryear and lighting up, which is contrary to advertising best practices guidelines recently adopted by the National Association of Cannabis Businesses. The guidelines are voluntary and Lowell Herb Co. is not a member of the association.

“Our brand is celebrating legalization, from the people who make the product to the people who enjoy the product,” said CEO David Elias. “Large cannabis businesses are creating amazing content, amazing commercials, but the challenge for us is that advertising is very difficult.”

Being rejected by ABC puts Lowell in good company. Acreage produced a heart-tugging commercial featuring the true stories of patients whose lives were drastically improved with CBD. Acreage was willing to pay the \$5M it costs for a Super Bowl ad but CBS said no.

Related: Here’s the Medical Cannabis Super Bowl Ad CBS Refused to Run

In recent days MadMen released an ad produced by Spike Jonze exploring the history of cannabis from George Washington’s

hemp crop to the War on Drugs to our current, uneven state of legalization. You can see that on their YouTube channel (or here) but not on over-the-air TV.

Related: Spike Jonze Directed a MedMen Commercial About Cannabis. And It's Pretty Epic.

Lewis Goldberg, managing partner at KCSA Worldwide and creator of the communications firm's cannabis practice, compared the problems marijuana companies have getting ads on television to the problems they have accessing normal business banking services (which he believes is, for now, a more significant problem). Both television networks and banks are, doubtless, eager for the new business they could get from cannabis but federal regulations bar them from taking advantage.

"The cannabis industry is maturing and has realized it is a consumer package industry as much as a social justice effort or source of new medicine, so they are trying to reach consumers the way companies do, through television advertising," Goldberg said. "The major national broadcasters are overseen by the FCC much more closely than streaming providers and cable. When the money's too alluring you will see the networks petitioning to gain access to those ad dollars."

Goldberg, noting that roughly two-thirds of American live in states that have legalized at least medical marijuana, said corporations and the agencies that regulate them will eventually catch up with popular sentiment. "This is not counter-culture any more, it's culture," he said. "This industry has moved too far to be stopped."

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