



The Red Wolf Cometh

Hart+Larsson debuts a new web series for online laughs.

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Meet Phil St. Millay, a man of many self-descriptions. A leader of people. An architect of perverse business practices. A walking, talking paradigm shift. He's also been to China (and been laid there).

St. Millay isn't the ECD of that cutting edge digital/integrated creative shop you haven't heard of, from that city you can't find on a map. No, he's the main character of El Lobo Rojo, a new web series by New York creative agency Hart+Larsson that debuted last week.

You may remember Hart+Larsson from their Marc Jacobs print pisstake that hit the interweb earlier this year. Now they're back with this original web show that will debut new episodes throughout the summer every Tuesday and Thursday at 3 p.m. EST.

We spoke to agency principles Greg Hart and Tomas Larsson about why they went the web series way, how it helps Hart+Larsson and more.

So, why a web series?

GH: It's really just a chance to create a program specifically for the web and try to gain an audience over the summer months. It's not really attempting to do anything other than entertain people.

Where did the name come from and who is the red wolf?

GH: Well, we don't want to give too much away. We just liked the name El Lobo Rojo, it has a certain what-the-fuck-is-this essence to it.

How many episodes are there?

GH: We have 18 episodes, premiering new episodes every Tuesday and Thursday to see what we can do with that kind of scheduling as opposed to just throwing the whole thing up at once.

Is the whole series complete?

GH: We're almost done. We've shot everything and edited most of it, so we're just adding some final touches. But the story's done. We're excited because we know where it goes but no one else has seen it, so we're curious to see what the response will be.

Is it fairly tight-scripted or is there room for the actors to improvise?

TL: It's basically half and half. The premise is ours and we go into each scene with that in mind but there aren't a lot of fully scripted scenes.

GH: The script was designed to push the story forward, if certain scenes needed a nudge along. A lot of the first one was written, but it was to set up the story, introduce the main character and little facts about the gaming company (St. Millay owns) and stuff like that.

Where does the St. Millay (played by Phil McIntyre of PGM Artists) character come from? Is he based on someone you know?

GH: He's probably a composite of all the people the three of us know. It's a bullshit industry so we're confronted with it daily, which is not to say we're not also in possession of these qualities on occasion.

What does something like this do for the shop?

GH: I guess the short answer is about attention. We're all trying to get noticed in one way or the other. In this case it's a chance to show our sensibility, and beyond that there's the sheer joy in trying to create a program that people will actually like. We definitely believe in this character, this platform and this approach and think it could go to a second season and beyond. And, like a lot of things we do, we really like the experimentation aspect of it.

Are people going to like it? Do they like the scheduling?

TL: We often find ourselves in pitches trying to explain how we want a viral campaign to lay out and often times that's hard to get across. So we figured we'd just do it ourselves and then we'd have a case study of how we think it should be done. We just try to do something that is a bit weird or off but that also dares people to pay attention.

What is it about the industry's current climate that makes this possible and almost integral to your creative agenda?

GH: Well, we have to be, in some respects, experts in something. The world's changing all the time and if we're not willing to dig in and try to experiment, then who are we to convince a client to? So I think by nature we have to be involved in R&D projects like this. This is out there, there's no safety net. Our name's on it if people love it and our name's on it if people hate it.