

DAEWOO: 'AERIAL FANTASY'

Agency: Duckworth Finn Grubb Waters (London).

Creative Dir: Paul Grubb. Art Dir: Mike London. Copywriter: James Fryer.

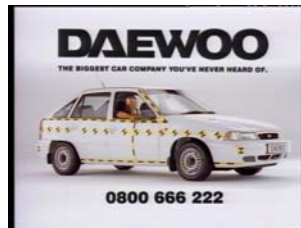
Agency Producer: Kate O'Mulloy.

Film Company: *Rose Hackney Barber*. Dir: Daniel Barber. Producer: Matthew Brown.

Post Production: *The Mill*. Editing: *Final Cut*.

Media: TV. Duration: 30secs. Released: January 2000 (UK)

The 'Lanos' has an ultra-rigid unibody structure that provides a solid foundation for ride and handling. The *Porsche*-tuned suspension features *MacPherson* struts in front and a compound-link design in rear 'to deliver handling that's as stable in the straights as it's nimble in the curves'.ⁱ



But does the world need another compact car?

Korean car manufacturers *Daewoo* wanted to prove that it did by promoting the compact size and 'sprightly' qualities of their new version 'Lanos' 3-door vehicle. London agency Duckworth Finn Grubb Waters responded with a TV spot that took stunt driving to radical new heights. It is interesting to see previous research and insights from earlier work that directed its message and how the execution utilises that background and yet also departs from it. It is also a chance to appreciate the construction, filming and editing processes before the final cut.

PREVIOUS STRATEGY:

Daewoo's style of commercial had previously been a studio-based production that always used the industry-leading *Daewoo* aftersales package as the main theme. The executions had played on the quip 'That'll be the day', which is often spoken in response to being told about an event one doesn't believe will really happen. For example 'Pigs will fly?...That'll be the day'.

DFGW took this and used it to advertise qualities about the cars, but especially about the sales packages and purchasing experience, turning 'day' into '*Daewoo*'. This simultaneously communicated both the unique and radical natures of the *Daewoo* offers and also made the viewer feel that *Daewoo* was giving them what they'd always wanted from a car company, but never thought they'd get. 'A free test drive?...That'll be the *Daewoo*'.

Daewoo landed in an overcrowded European market and there were several Korean manufacturers vying for shares. They had ambitious targets and therefore had to stand out. There was an available niche for a *customer-focused* brand and *Daewoo* carried out research to find out what people really wanted from a *car company*, striking 'Dialogue' between *Daewoo* and car buyers. In view of the results, *Daewoo* employed non-commissioned salesmen, fixed prices and friendly showrooms where customers could wander around without being pressured into buying. They ignored the traditional dealership structure, opting instead to sell directly, through *Daewoo* outlets, which gave them more control. In its first year of trading *Daewoo* gained a 0.92% share of the market.

In 1997, the model line-up changed and *Daewoo* boldly launched three new cars at once, the largest launch ever.

DFGW circumvented the problems of a limited budget by narrowing the audience to people who were already warm to the brand, and then attracting them into the store for a test drive. This way they could have an exceptionally rich experience of one of the brand's strongest assets: its unique and friendly way of doing business. This would enable advertising to move people very close to buying a *Daewoo*.

'Dialogue campaigns' worked mainly because the opinions were acted upon where necessary. They offered people the chance to test drive a *Daewoo* free, for a year, as an incentive to participate and this was very popular. They also gave *Daewoo* substantial feedback which allowed the company to improve its offering.

Daewoo realised that if people were given a framework, to guide them through the process of test driving a *Daewoo* and choosing a car, emphasising *owning* a car as well as buying one, *Daewoo's* competitive advantage would be highlighted in the most positive way possible, through direct experience.

'We're very confident in our new range of cars and our groundbreaking service. Now we want customers to compare us directly with the competition.'

This message went down extremely well.

INITIAL ADVERTISING:

Two briefs were produced, one to communicate the incentive and one to communicate the comparison of the cars with their competition, which could run simultaneously in the same paper.

Positionings and likely targets for each car were calculated, using in-house agency quantitative and qualitative research.

For example, the 'Nubira' Estate would be likely to appeal to:

'Couples with kids. They do many activities with their children: bike riding at the weekend, the school run, taking their kids to youth orchestra and buying huge amounts of 'Pedigree Chum' at Sainsbury's during the week. They have always got a huge amount of stuff to fit in their car, so they need an Estate.'

The information allowed the creatives to visualise to whom each car might appeal and why, and so understand the kind of 'tests' that the cars might be put through in real life. This led to a creative idea for the model ads that encapsulated the idea of testing by showing 'before' and 'after' views of the cars being put through their paces by their likely target.

Obviously, the whole idea required a creative route illustrating the incentive and comparing the cars to the competition; but the decision to split the idea into two separate messages allowed the creative department to produce ads which were focused, and would therefore be more effective, and the targeting analysis allowed them individually to portray the cars how they might be usedⁱⁱ.

LATER ADVERTISING:

By 1st January 2002, the advertising emphasis had shifted with three new adverts for the 'Matiz' and 'Tacuma' models.

These TV spots were filmed in South Africa, using a very cinematic style, with sharply-filmed and edited storylines emphasising that the 'Matiz' and 'Tacuma' were both class-leading cars, as good to drive as they were to own. They continued the use of the earlier taglines, but they directed attention to qualities of the vehicles themselves rather than the *Daewoo* customer service.

'A car you can park anywhere?...That'll be the Daewoo 'Matiz'.'

In the first production, the Matiz is seen looking for a place to park. As it travels round, we see various people who have hurriedly painted double-yellow 'no-parking' lines across ridiculously small gaps, such as the doorway of a phone booth and the end of a diving board. The execution captures the fun spirit of the 'Matiz' and also demonstrates its practicality for use in the city.



A second (20 sec) 'Matiz' commercial shows the car approaching a multi-storey car park with a 'full' sign outside. The car enters and a moment later, the driver emerges, obviously having squeezed in somewhere.

In the 'Tacuma' advert, the power of sound highlights the virtues of the optional in-car entertainment system (Sony 'PlayStation' or DVD player).

A motorcycle traffic policeman is waiting on a quiet road. From a distance we hear the sounds of a car travelling at exceptionally high speed. The policeman prepares himself for a chase and a booking, but round the corner glides the 'Tacuma', travelling at a very sedate speed. While the confused police officer looks quizzically at his equipment for faults, the rear window of the car closes, shutting-off the noise of the high-speed engine and squealing tyres. Inside the car, it is revealed that the sounds have been coming from the 'PlayStation'ⁱⁱⁱ the youngster in the rear seat has been using. A voice-over explains:

'A choice of in-car entertainment?...That'll be the Daewoo 'Tacuma'.



According to DFGW, 'Car ads tend to centre around a set of clichéd back-drops, overly good-looking young couples, driving the car as fast as legally possible around impossibly jaw-dropping landscapes. This...campaign is deliberately contrary to this, with moody locations, few shots of the drivers and, in the case of the 'Tacuma' commercial, speed that deliberately parodies the attempts of other car companies to show their vehicles moving fast.'^{iv}

Nigel Unwin, Daewoo's marketing services manager explained that the new ads 'demonstrate that Daewoo's products hold solutions to everyday problems such as parking and keeping the kids entertained during long journeys. Traditionally, Daewoo's industry-leading aftersales package has figured strongly in the advertising but, with the 'Tacuma' and the award-winning 'Matiz', Daewoo has two models which are class leading and desirable. The feel and style of the adverts reflect that.'^v

'AERIAL FANTASY':

The 'Aerial Fantasy' execution came somewhere between the earlier and later marketing strategies, but like the latter, followed Daewoo's European strategy of concentrating on the individual personality and qualities of each model. As a European release, this time the ad had the endline '*Designed around you*'.

The target audience was:

'Potential 'Lanos' drivers across Europe. Typically these are couples in their late 20s and early 30s just starting to settle down and maybe considering marriage. They've got increasing responsibilities in their lives (e.g. job, rent/mortgage and setting up home). While they have these new responsibilities in their lives they don't want to let go of their youth just yet and certainly don't want a boring car to drive. The design of a car is very important to them and they want a stylish looking car that's good fun to drive, we want them to understand that the Daewoo Lanos has been designed with these needs in mind'^{vi}.



The idea was to communicate that the *Daewoo 'Lanos'* was designed around the needs of a young couple while drawing attention to the fact that it was safe, good fun to drive and had attractive styling. A 30-second TV spot was required which could also work as 20-second and 15-second edits.



The creative solution was that all of these qualities could be demonstrated through the use of a fantasy of the car as a skateboarder, visualising the experience.

Shooting:

James Friar and Mike London wrote the original idea, then a script was produced to accompany it. Storyboards were then commissioned, set constructed and advert shot, but it was a mammoth operation. It was decided to make a 'Lanos' become a skateboarder by getting stunt-drivers speeding up and down the ramp of a leviathan U-shaped half pipe, launching into the air and performing 180-Aerial tricks. Paul Grubb, DFGW's Creative Director, commented 'We wanted to recreate the energetic, filmic dynamism found in the extreme sports programmes, to enhance the youthful image of the car'^{vii}.

The 'high-flying auto acrobatics' were a combination of the live stunt work and digital effects supplied by two London firms, *Asylum Effects* and *The Mill*. According to Jason Watts, senior *Flame* artist at *The Mill* (responsible for post-production), 'The director, Daniel Barber, first considered shooting a model of a car riding a miniature half-pipe and compositing this with real human skateboarders in a massive, full-size set piece. We realised that it was going to be difficult to make a miniature look convincing shooting up and down the pipe and spinning in the air in time with live performers, so Daniel decided he wanted to investigate the possibility of shooting the whole commercial full-size'^{viii}.

The location for the shoot was the London's Royal Albert Docks where the largest half-pipe ever built was erected by *Asylum Models* on a steel rig. This monster ramp was approximately 50 feet wide and 25 feet tall, with an elongated smooth central section. Mounted roller-coaster runners spanned the inner curve of the pipe on which the car ran and two stunt people actually rode in the car, fitted underneath with a rotating drum.

On each run, the car would be lifted and dropped by a huge industrial crane, travel down the runners and up the opposite wall. The runners extended 10 feet above the side of the pipe so that the car could crest the rim. At this point, *Asylum* operatives triggered the drum, flicking the weight around and

pulling the car through a 180-degree turn in mid-air, just in time to be facing down the wall, ready to make another drop. *Asylum* weren't allowed to take the engine out of the car as it was needed to preserve the vehicle's structural integrity, but the engine never drove the car. It was the work of gravity and momentum alone.

'The stuntman and stuntwoman inside the car had no control', says Watts, 'but they were quite safe. They wore crash helmets and had stunt cameras on the inside and the outside of the car, but you can see from the drivers' faces the fun they were having each time they were dropped'.

Four or five camera angles were filmed at any one time, with a whole array of different speed cameras positioned all around the rig.

One of the many tasks for the computer graphics artists at *The Mill* was painting out the roller-coaster tracks and the crane. There was no motion control and there were no clean plates shot of the pipe without the car because Barber had wanted to give the commercial a documentary feel.

If the shots were too fluid or contrived, they would not have had the 'gritty, skateboarding feel', so the camera was nearly always on the move. Extra 'grit' had been supplied by the bad weather.

'That made the post-production challenge all the more demanding', says Watts. 'Once we cleaned up all the plates and painted out all the tracks, we had to finish the car movement to help it spin around. We added motion-blur and speed-compressions, ramping the speed of shots up and down to sell the idea that the car was accelerating through the pipe and flying through the air in slow motion (to hold it up in the air a little longer). When the car came up out of the pipe, there were shots where the camera was looking through the rig into the pipe and the car was obscured by the tracks. When we painted out the rig we had to rebuild parts of the car, the bottom half of the bumper and the wheels, to restore the areas we had removed. Time precluded building the underside of the car in 3D, so we decided to use the traditional cut-and-paste method, cleaning up one frame in 2D and using that as our model.'

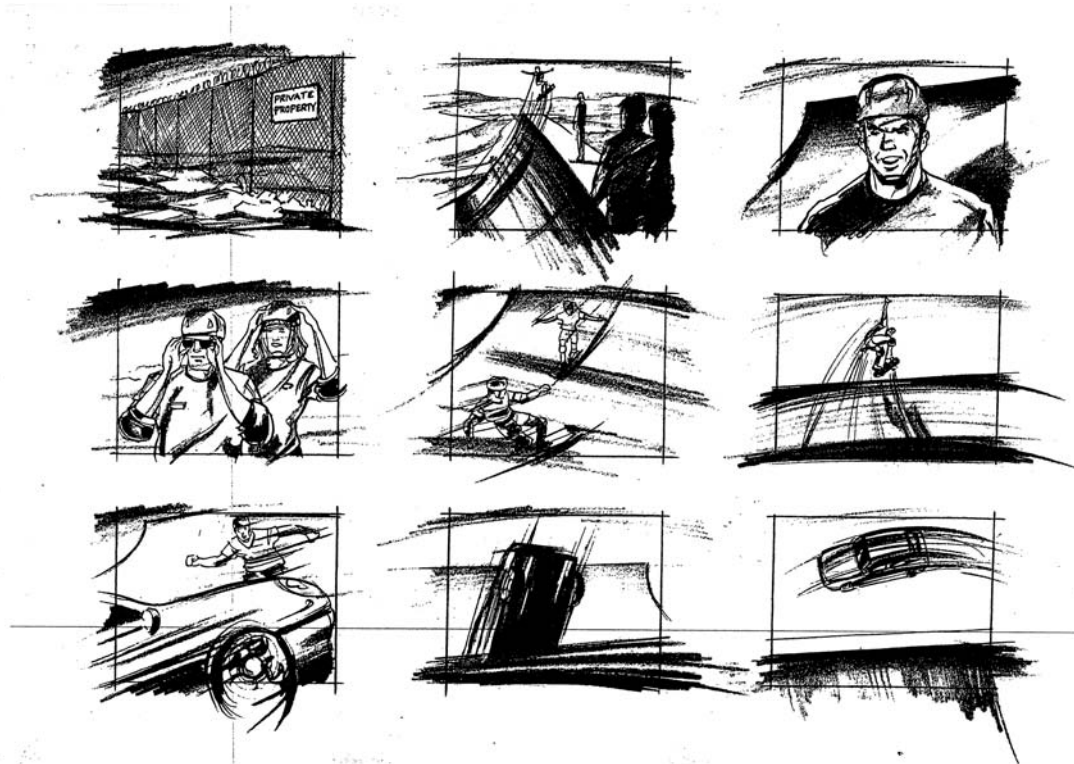
The creatives had travelled to pro-skating events and competitions all over Europe, roping-in professional skateboarders from England, France and Sweden. These included Dave Allen, Terence Bougdour, Ali Cairns, Sean Geoff and Jocke Olsson. They helped advise on the authenticity of the ad and, initially, they were supposed to skate the giant pipe so they could be composited with the car, but it was just too big for them. Olsson was the first to have the bottle to drop in, but he fell over immediately. The sides were so high, in fact, the skateboarders would be travelling too fast and it was dangerous for them to attempt aerial manoeuvres. Some footage of them riding in the pipe was shot, but for 'airing' clips, they had to be filmed at a later date on another big (but reasonable) half-pipe built separately in Oxford.

Once the footage of the pro-skaters was obtained, *The Mill* artists composited those elements into the original scene. Fortunately, both half-pipes were built to similar specifications so they were working in the same parabola.

Watts continues, 'When the car was making its leap, we also added animation to the suspension to create the impression that, as the car left the pipe, there was no longer any friction between the wheels and the pipe. The wheels were spinning because they were just touching the surface of the pipe as the car rode the track, so we used a little cut-and-paste to sink the car down a little, putting extra weight on the wheels. Then, when the car left the pipe, we lifted the wheels away from the base of the chassis to make the dynamics of the jump as believable as possible

For the end of the commercial, Daniel decided he wanted to create a different effect where first you see a skateboarder jump up on a stair rail and come sliding down. Then, just behind him, the car comes sliding down as well. *Asylum* built a roller-coaster track on top of a stair railing that was strong enough to support the car. After they hoisted the car on top of this rig, the rig was almost obscured and the car rode down the track inclined at an angle. When we received the shot at *The Mill*, we painted out the track and rebuilt the rail to make it look like it was single handrail. To further sell the idea that the car was scraping down the rail, we added a few grinding sparks for the moment when the car dropped down on the rail and approached the camera. We repositioned the car slightly at the beginning of the shot and dropped it in from a little bit higher in the frame to enhance the movement, which they couldn't do on-set because they didn't want to damage the car. The approach was to shoot everything as real as possible. In fact, I think that approach was what made the whole commercial possible. There's only so much realism you can re-create with models. If you can stage and shoot a visual effect as real as you possibly can, then you're halfway there.'^{ix}

Finished Execution:



The ad opens on a sign on a wire fence reading 'Private Property'. The camera zooms through the fence into a large, purpose-built giant skatepark, set in the middle of nowhere in an apocalyptic-futuristic fantasy.

Then we cut to a close-up of a 'cool' kid wearing futuristic skateboard gear, and pan across to a couple, putting on their own protection gear. The kid looks slightly down his nose at them as if to say 'You're too old to be doing this'. The couple ignore his looks and exit the screen, leaving the skateboarding 'dude' looking superior.

Suddenly, a gleaming new three-door silver Daewoo 'Lanos' rears up from a ramp behind the kid, jumping, twisting and landing safely in front of him, driven by the couple he'd sneered at!

At this point the voiceover announces: '*Not only is the Daewoo Lanos a safe car to drive...*'

The kid stands aghast at what he's just witnessed. The 'Lanos' proceeds to work the rest of the park (intercut with shots of the kids doing stunts to heighten the fantasy feeling of the commercial)

The voiceover continues: '*...with standard features like ABS and dual airbags...*'

There is a cut to the car turning impossibly in the air like an aerial skateboard trick, turning through the frame in slow motion. Spectacularly, glints of sunlight catch the smooth bodywork contours. Cut to the kid, still in awe, cut to a shot of the sky. The 'Lanos' spins majestically through the frame.

The voiceover concludes: '*...it's also a fun car to drive*'.

Cut inside to the couple wearing five-point safety belts, looking happy as the world spins by outside the windows. Cut to the car landing safely.

The 'Lanos' then stops in front of a row of steps near where the kid is standing. By now, he's smiling, appreciating what he's seen. Just as he thinks it's all over, another five-door, red 'Lanos' lands on the railings to the steps, slides down them and stops beside the three-door 'Lanos'. The kid smiles, wiping his brow, and the ad cuts to the Daewoo end device and voice-over tagline:

'Daewoo 'Lanos': Designed Around You'.

The completed ad aired first in November 1999 in Belgium and the Netherlands, before France, Spain and the UK.

CONCLUSION:

The endline had the double meaning of 'designed around the human frame' and 'designed around your needs and desires'. A departure from the early sober, informative ads and the later, filmic, moody executions, it nevertheless continued to communicate that *Daewoo cared*; cared about customer safety, and the aspirations and desires of the target age group.

The ad demonstrated that *Daewoo*, who had by then gained a reputation for customer-consultation with the previous work, and had gained massive customer insight through the 'Dialogue' campaigns, were in tune with the feelings of late 20/ early 30 year-olds. These people were faced with the fact that their future would involve increased responsibility and a sacrifice of youthful freedom. It suggested that, with buying a car at least, there was room for compromise and one could still have fun in a safe, family-orientated car.

The ad was a highly memorable science-fiction fantasy, standing out due to the nature of its incredible achievements of engineering and special effects, and the fact that such an idea could be made into a reality. It also demonstrated that anything can be created for an ad with enough vision, effort, and of course, the funding.

The *Daewoo* brand transformed the agenda in the UK car market and is the most successful new brand launch ever in the industry's history. The campaigns have won numerous awards including IPA Advertising Effectiveness for 'New Launches' and 'Integrated Advertising'.

The 'customer focus for real' campaign marked an evolution of the *Daewoo* brand's positioning by launching a new, groundbreaking partnership with the *Institute of Advanced Motorists*.

Daewoo is still the fastest growing car brand in the UK, with a year on year growth of 25%^x.

ⁱ <http://www.daewoo.com.au>.

ⁱⁱ 'A different kind of car launch? That'll be the Daewoo', Charlie Dawson & James Champ, DFGW APG Paper for *Creative Planning Awards 1997*, Account Planning Group 1997, See <http://www.warc.com>.

ⁱⁱⁱ Games console.

^{iv} A DFGW spokesperson, quoted from 'A new type of TV commercial?...That'll be the Daewoo', <http://www.autowired.co.uk>, 15th June 2002.

^v Quoted from 'A new type of TV commercial?...That'll be the Daewoo', <http://www.autowired.co.uk>, 15th June 2002.

^{vi} 'BRIEF: Lanos 3dr 1999', provided by DFGW.

^{vii} 'Duckworth Finn creates an amazing Aerial Fantasy', Press Release, DFGW, 11th November 1999.

^{viii} 'Aerial Fantasy' at the mill', Joe Fordham, <http://www.vfxpro.com>, 3rd January 2000.

^{ix} *Ibid*.

See also: 'Mill Delivers Skateboarding Car', Joe Fordham, <http://www.vfxpro.com>, 10th November 1999.

^x <http://www.dfgw.com>.

IMAGE CREDITS: DFGW