

For the lonely men...

 By [Damon Stapleton](#)

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This beautiful description comes from a speech Leo Burnett did many years ago...

He spoke about those lonely people that work into the night, pushing themselves. When everybody else has left, they stay. Their solitary, unobserved greatness is based on satisfying themselves before they satisfy anybody else. They are advertising's invisible heroes.



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The truth is, without these magical mad men and women, who have this need to go beyond an impossible, invisible line in their heads, advertising would be a simple, unsatisfying business.

And the impossible invisible line is never larger than when the great migration begins. It is a mad migration. For a few weeks, creatives get the fever and they become a strange hybrid. They are half-crack addict, half-Olympic champion. Addiction meets desire. Or perhaps, for once, we just want to have the best outfit at the party.

I have seen creatives do the impossible year after year in the weeks that will follow. And when I say impossible I mean a 'Red-Bull fuelled, staring at the ceiling at 4am, I will show you I am not shit, shark frenzy' kind of impossible.

Right now, the planet could be covered twice over in the amount of white board being cut and used for entries into Cannes. And Hollywood films have probably been halted because somebody is using the edit suite to make one final change to a case study.

Cannes. I can never work out if it is a small town or large set in the South of France. First, they have a film festival, then a porn festival and then finally, an advertising festival. As you can imagine, there are many jokes about the fact that we are third. Although, I wouldn't be surprised if there is a plumber's award show that follows us. Cannes is a town that is like a beautiful frame. Each week the frame remains the same but the picture changes.

I have done the pilgrimage at least ten times. Each time, what always strikes me is that Cannes has this amazing ability to absorb an entire global industry. This small French town seems to swell but never burst. I have always wondered if there are secret underground hotels.

It is a beautiful place with beautiful people who seem to spend the week only eating food you can hold in two fingers. There is the glitz of the large boats, the big boys holding court at the Carlton and the tasty Burgundy-inspired stories of last night. There are the soulless wankers who wear mirrored sunglasses so they can look over your shoulder as they speak to you. The 15-minute meeting people who have done so much networking they look like they are on medical grade acid while trying to drive a car. The frightening East European bouncers presiding over Champagne-soaked parties full of white-linen strangers who eventually all go and lie down in the gutter bar.

Above it all, though, for me at least, there is this very strange feeling of belonging to something. Or perhaps more accurately, being in something together. If you look hard enough past the new outfits and old routines, you will see the lonely men and women meandering down one of those perfectly aged French streets.

Cannes is for those crazy bastards. And they deserve every moment of it. It is for those long, lonely nights when they tried to find something shiny and new without a signpost. It is for those that were brave enough to try again and again.

More importantly, for the lonely men and women, it brings those long nights to an end. A moment in the sun.

A pause.

A breath.

And then we begin again.

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ABOUT DAMON STAPLETON

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