

Howard Audio, Ray Charles and a few notes that changed his life

Issued by [Howard Audio](#)

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The new brand campaign for leading vehicle telematics and tracking company Tracker, conceptualised by House of Brave, uses beautifully crafted storytelling to successfully reposition the brand in an altruistic space, moving its focus from pure stolen vehicle recovery to a provider of proactive value to its partners and customers.



The brief from Tracker was to move the current brand perception from stolen vehicle recovery or protection to care - from metal (the vehicle) to flesh (the consumer).

HOB Executive creative director Vanessa Pearson says that in order to achieve the brand shift, they needed to move the focus from what the brand does, to what it believes in and stands for: “We spoke about how lighthouse brands behave and how they communicate; that product advertising explains the product to me but good brand advertising is about creating empathy – it has a purpose that relates to consumers and communicates this purpose in order to add value to their lives and lifestyles”.

Shot by 0307 Films and director Kevin Fitzgerald the TVC tells the story of a young, blind boy who has a difficult early life within the backdrop of post-depression America. This young boy’s only joy is listening to a local shopkeeper play piano. The shopkeeper takes him under his wing and teaches him how to play, changing his life forever.

It is in fact the true story of a relatively unknown man named Wiley Pitman, who cared enough and took the time to nurture and protect the love for music and the inherent talent of a young, blind boy who became the musical legend, Ray Charles.



Adam Howard – composer and Howard Audio's owner - was commissioned to oversee the musical direction of the commercial. The brief was to compose two pieces of music. First was to compose a typical “boogie-woogie” piano piece.

Wiley Pitman was proficient in the boogie-woogie style of piano playing. Most boogie-woogie pieces are in the traditional 12 bar blues form – all having a distinctive “hook” that get’s repeated over the 12 bar form. Howard composed the “Tracker Boogie!” – where we hear the un-mistakable hook that we identify as being the link throughout the spot – the actual notes that where the instrument of change for Ray Charles. At the end of the commercial, we go forward in time to where a young Ray Charles (just before he becomes famous) is performing to a small audience. Howard then had to compose a piece that would sound typically like a piece Ray would have performed - at that time in his career - and typical of that rhythm and blues/soul sound of that time – but the crunch was to weave musically the hook of the boogie-woogie into the new piece – as this is the point in the commercial where he pays tribute to his mentor – only him and Wiley know this.....a few notes that changed a life forever.

The most important thing was to find Ray Charles (well...a very good impersonator!). We initially auditioned a few voices in South Africa – but the creative team wanted to get closer to Ray’s distinctive voice and style. We looked overseas and got our choices down to 4 singers – from the USA, UK, Italy and.....Slovenia. Yes – Slovenia. Through some connections in the UK – Howard was advised to check out Uros Peric – a young 39 year-old jazz singer. “We all couldn’t believe how close Uros got to Ray Charles” says Howard....”Uros just get’s that style – and of course is deeply influenced by the music of Ray Charles – and has is own tribute show. He was an absolute dream to work with – and the end result is a piece we are all very proud of – and a piece that hopefully stays authentic to the music of Ray Charles.”

Pearson says: “Tracker’s campaign line ‘Never underestimate the power of looking after something’ speaks to the potential in each of us and you never know what someone may achieve or become given time, opportunity and the power of care and protection.

“We believe with someone by your side, your outlook changes. It’s empowering to know that someone has your back.”

A moving story that succinctly captures Tracker’s brand promise that ‘to care is to protect’.

[Watch the commercial here](#)





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