

## Whiplash Sound Designer Ben Wilkins Joins GCRS

[Add to My shots](#)

By Selena Schleh on 5th September 2017 [@selenaschleh](#)

***Having made his name in film & TV, the acclaimed sound designer is now moving into the commercials world.***

From the roar of a souped-up car, to the eerie moans of a zombie and a sweatily intense drum solo, Ben Wilkins has brought some of the most iconic screen moments to life through sound.

The award-winning mixer and sound designer has created audio for a slew of Hollywood hits including *Starship Troopers*, *Dazed and Confused*, *Stargate*, *The Last Samurai*, *The Fast and The Furious*, *Star Trek*, and *Whiplash* - for which he picked up both an Oscar and a BAFTA - as well as hit AMC series *The Walking Dead*.



Now, Wilkins [pictured above] is set to bring his finely-tuned ear to the commercials world, having recently joined London-based studio **GCRS** as its first guest sound designer. Below, he tells *shots* about the sound of pulled pork and why the Sistine Chapel is essentially a giant billboard...

### Why is sound design so important from a craft point of view?

It's half the experience. Try watching something without sound and you quickly realise what's missing and tire of it. When we're babies we hear sounds for months before our eyes can focus properly. I think we carry on throughout life with that early attachment to sound. Sound and music play a huge part in peoples' lives and their perceptions.



**The evolution of sound design to a VR/360 environment was a key conversation last year. What are the other big talking points within the audio industry at the moment?**

Immersive formats continue to dominate the conversation and rightly so. As VR presents 360-degree environments, surely the sound should match that visual. It's a complex science which is beginning to be put to good use.

**Your career has seen you create audio for a slew of iconic films and series including *Whiplash*, *The Fast & The Furious* and *The Walking Dead*. What have been your personal highlights?**

It's the 'behind the scenes', little things that make a film memorable. I worked on Clive Barker's [1992 horror film] *Candyman*; the supervisor brought in a pig carcass and we spent a whole day recording it by cutting and pulling it apart with cargo hooks. We kept a leg and ate it at the wrap dinner for the sound department.



**Which project was the most complicated/challenging from an audio perspective?**

*The Walking Dead* [above] is proving to be the most challenging right now. On the surface it's a deceptively quiet show: no planes or traffic, a few survivors and then thousands and millions of "walkers" or zombies. But there are hundreds of hours of work that go into layering multiple elements to make up the iconic sounds that viewers love.

**Having joined GCRS, what are you hoping to achieve in commercials? And what can the advertising world learn from film, more generally?**

I started working on sound for commercials at a very young age, and learned a lot from industry pioneers, but felt that film sound was advancing technically much faster than other commercial formats. The early 90s were hardly a period of good-sounding cinema commercials, so I was drawn to storytelling through feature film sound. Now the technical standards are often higher for advertising, and the level of detail and attention I can bring to a commercial is brilliant. Feature film schedules don't easily accommodate detailed work; commercials often encourage it.





The ceiling of the Sistine Chapel [above] is widely regarded as a masterpiece, but it's essentially a commercial, a giant billboard depicting a product: heaven. That type of dedication to a piece of advertising intrigues me.