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Deutsch Puts 'Us Weekly' on First-Name Basis

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-Mae Anderson

NEW YORK Two new television spots for *Us Weekly* by Deutsch portray how familiar and relevant celebrities have become in people's lives.

The New York agency's ads show women talking about celebrities in shorthand, just by using their first names. The work introduces "Read Us, talk Us, trust Us" as a tagline.

One of the two 15-second spots shows three women in a restaurant discussing celebrities, but not mentioning anything other than their first names. "Cameron and Justin," says one, while the others reply, "I know!" "Demi and Ashton," says another, which is also met with an "I know!" The spot ends with one woman saying, "Britney and ... " while the others look on, puzzled.

A second spot shows two women discussing a date in terms of the first names of celebrities. "It started out romantic, but then he got all 'Colin' on me," says one, referring to Colin Farrell. "After all the 'Ben' he put you through?" the other replies, a reference to Ben Affleck.

Current events shaped the ads, shot Jan. 22 at Fresh restaurant in New York's Tribeca. Karen McIntyre, associate creative director on the spot, said the original ending of the first ad was "Britney and Madonna," a reference to the fact that the two women kissed at the MTV Video Music Awards last year. But during the shoot, the ending was changed to take into account that Britney briefly married a former high school friend in Las Vegas.

"That was the great thing about the client," McIntyre, a copywriter, said. "Sometimes you get clients who don't like to roll with the punches. But being in editorial, they were so up to the minute, they didn't mind the changes."

Paul Goldman of Partizan in New York directed the spots, the first TV effort for the Wenner Media magazine. Goldman was tapped for his ability to convey humor subtly. Florence Buchanan, Deutsch senior vice president and group creative director on the project, had worked with him before on campaigns for Merrill Lynch and MCI.

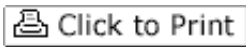
"We didn't want to get too broad with the comedy. The humor comes out in the subtlety of language," Buchanan, an art director, said. "We didn't want them to end up in a cartoonish place."

The spots broke last week and are running on national cable channels, including Oxygen, Lifetime and MTV.

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