

Here's the First Branded Mannequin Challenge Video That's Really Worth Watching

Entry from Belgium puts powerful twist on viral craze

By Angela Natividad

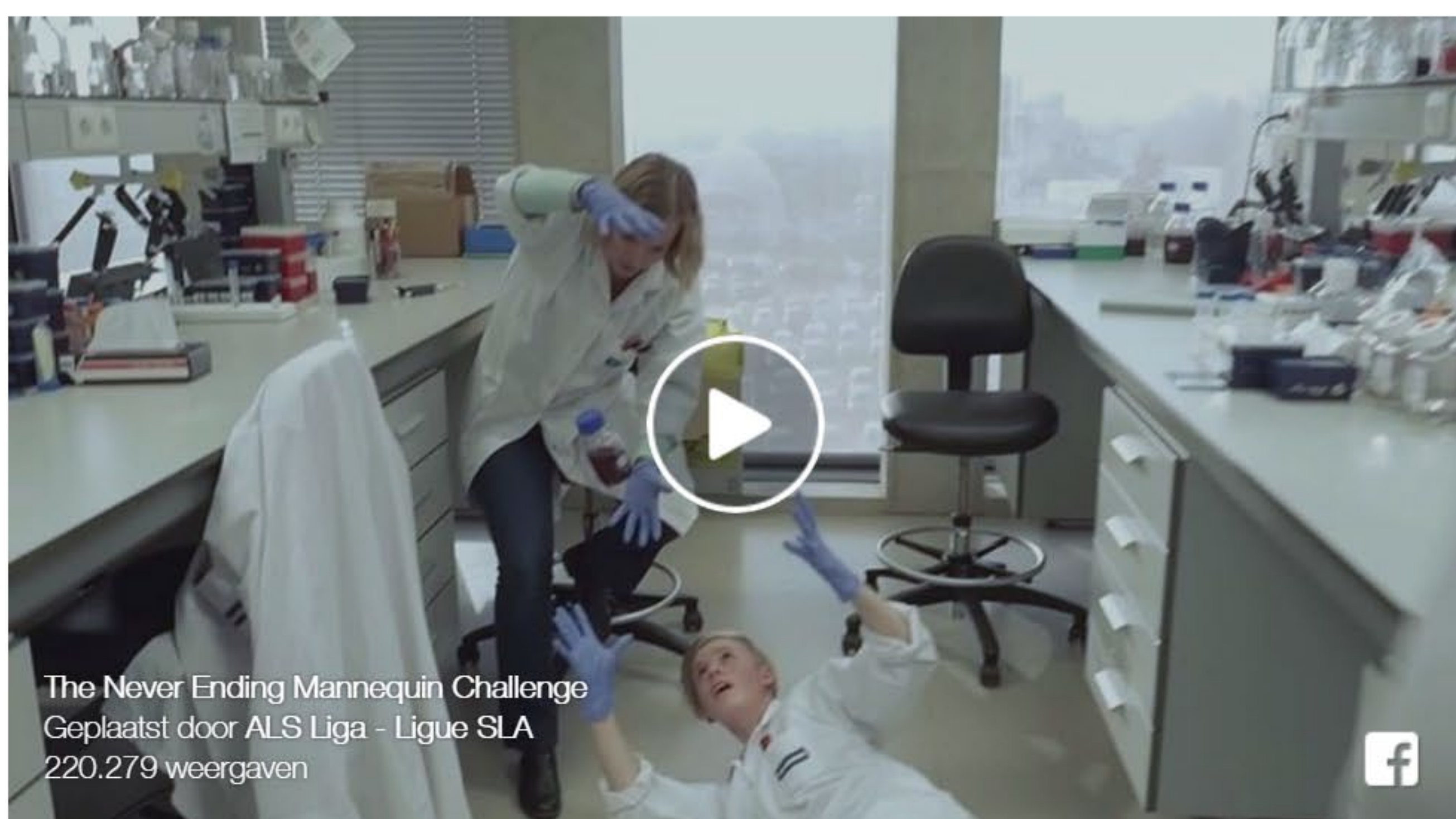
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A few brands and agencies have tried the Mannequin Challenge, but here's one that has a powerful and compelling message to impart.

The video below is set to Sremmurd's "Black Beatles." In keeping with Mannequin Challenge tradition, the camera pans smoothly through a laboratory, where everyone seems frozen in place—with vials of blood exchanging hands, smoke rising out of beakers and objects appearing stuck in mid-fall.

Check out the full video before reading further.



Yes, after the ALS Ice Bucket Challenge's [explosive success](#), it's only natural that an ALS organization want to get in on this latest social media craze.

Popularized with help from [Rae Sremmurd](#), it's seen participation from [Hillary Clinton](#) and [Bon Jovi](#), to those ladies formerly known as [Destiny's Child](#). But Belgium's ALS Liga makes its video more than just a gag. At the end, people unfreeze around a guy holding a sign that reads "Every day is a Mannequin Challenge for ALS patients."

ALS, or Lou Gehrig's disease, is a progressive neurodegenerative disease that affects nerve cells in the brain and spinal cord. [Symptoms](#) can vary, but the conclusion at the end of ALS Liga video is apt: It can involve having trouble with basic motor functions, making it hard to hold a pen or lift a cup, or even control your voice.

It usually appears between ages 40 and 70. In addition to baseball star Lou Gehrig, Stephen Hawking is a notable sufferer.

"In past weeks it was difficult not to see Mannequin Challenges on our social feed," says Publicis Brussels creative Marc Richard Vander Heyden. "Some were impressive and amusing. So it inspired us to make a touching one with a strong message."

Asked how this builds on the Ice Bucket Challenge, Vander Heyden says the goal is ultimately the same: "This video is meant to make people think about the disease and to show the effect it has on your body. Encouraging them to donate and help the real researchers from the video find a cure will hopefully give ALS patients better life expectations."

With the Ice Bucket Challenge, the ALS Association more or less sparked the flame on its own. It's since kicked off a 2016 Ice Bucket Challenge to raise money on an ongoing basis. But ALS Liga isn't so much starting a trend as following one—something that was expected, since the ALS Association was so instrumental in the last one.

But Publicis isn't worried about whether this small drop in a bigger viral bucket will top the last. For them, the key is reminding people to keep contributing.

Says Vander Heyden: "We're hoping to use the hype of Mannequin Challenge in the right way to give a single message: Keep the research moving, and find a cure for this terrible disease called ALS."