

JOAN OF ARCADIA:

An Inside Look
by
DEREK GROVER

PLUS

JACKSON HOLE:
HD Flourishes in the
Wilderness
by Kent Gibson

24P HD PUTS A
NEW SPIN ON AN
OLD CLICHÉ
an article by Kevin Smith

EYE OF THE
BEHOLDER
commentary by
by Tod Mesirow



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HD CENTRAL SHARING FROM 1 BEYOND

1 Beyond announced its new High Definition editing and compositing systems. The 1 Beyond HD Pro series is a full line of High Definition system and storage solutions--from lower cost systems for the independent producer and smaller stations to full real time shared SAN with quadruple redundancy for critical network applications. Two major networks have recently committed to 1 Beyond's technology for full 10 bit uncompressed compositing and editing, as well as the new 1 Beyond HD Pro Shared SAN--another 1 Beyond first. This is the first full resolution real-time HD Shared SAN in the industry.

MEDIA 100 HD LOWERS PRICE

Media 100 is making an aggressive bid targeting the large midsection of the post industry by dramatically lowering prices of its core products. The Media 100 HD system, offering 10 bit editing in both HD and SD native, will sell for under \$8,000 starting in February.

LEADER CHOSEN BY HALIN BV

Halin BV, one of Holland's largest independent electronic equipment manufacturers, has chosen Leader's LV5700 digital waveform monitor to align a range of HD broadcast production equipment. Dirk Wijnants, Halin's Head of Calibration says: "Leader's LV5700 has proved a great time-saver, enabling us to align HD products much faster than was possible with our previous test and measurement system. It provides multi-standard video and audio waveform display functions together with vectorscope, eye pattern and picture monitoring on a high-resolution TFT-LCD color screen."

HD FOR ARMY SIMULATOR UNIT

A high definition video photographed by Waymack and Crew of Little Rock, Arkansas is featured in the U. S. Army's "MSZ" motion simulator unit which is touring the country at NASCAR races. Race fans who visit the unit are taken on a virtual Army mission. Dan Waymack directed the three minute piece which is the first of its kind to be produced for the Army. Using a matched pair of Sony HDW F900 Cine Alta 24p high definition cameras,

Waymack led his crew along with a cast of 29 soldiers through a wide range of military maneuvers under simulated battle conditions. Waymack and Crew worked with the Army's advertising agency Leo Burnett USA on the project.

"MONSTERS", ONE OF 21 HD CHANNELS FOR VOOM

Entertainment Marketing Agency mOcean was retained by Rainbow Media Holdings LLC to complete broadcast design for the launch of "Monsters," one of Rainbow Media's 21 commercial-free, 1080i channels created for "VOOM," the Rainbow DBS satellite service launched in October of last year. The project marks mOcean's first all-HD TV Network Package. mOcean designed, created, and produced the original launch broadcast design work for "Monsters," the VOOM exclusive channel all about scary movies, which is taken to the next level by the power of HDTV.

POST SOLUTIONS COMPLETES "FOREIGN AFFAIR"

Post Solutions, HD Post House in Toluca Lake, recently completed the final HD online of *Foreign Affair* for Black and White Films, starring David Arquette, Tim Blake Nelson and Emily Mortimer. The soundtrack was completed by Victory Studios in Seattle. The HD master will now be converted to 35mm film for theatrical release. Black and White Films shot *Foreign Affair* in St. Petersburg, Russia and Mexico. The film had critical success at Sundance last year and is now entering widespread distribution.

PIONEER AND TIME WARNER JOIN HD PROMO PARADE

Time Warner launched an HDTV offer in conjunction with Pioneer Electronics that includes a cash rebate, six months of service and set-top box rental to cable customers who buy a Pioneer HDTV and subscribe to Time Warner's HD service. The retail campaign - Time Warner's first - evolved from a pilot program the two companies did last year in Los Angeles that resulted in a 175-percent increase in digital HD subs within three months. The offer will run in 1,300 stores nationwide, at chains including Best Buy, Wal-Mart, Sears and Circuit City, through Feb. 8, 2004.

HD 3D ANIMATION STOCK FOOTAGE

Paula Lombard, founder and president of FootageBank, is partnering with the CGI animators Butler Digital to output computer-generated 3D animation images to High Definition. The images include futuristic cities, galactic constellations, animated weather graphics, erupting volcanoes and more in order to make available inexpensive HD special effects options for film and television producers.

HD FOR "BLOBHEADS" AND "RADIO FREE ROSCOE"

DECODE Entertainment, a leading Canadian production company specializing in children's and family entertainment programming, has selected Fujinon high definition video lenses with its HD packages, provided by Sim Video in Toronto, for two of its top-rated series, *The Blobheads* and *Radio Free Roscoe*. HD was chosen because the producers wanted a film look, and they needed the most compatible format for the CGI component that makes up 50 percent of the *Blobheads* show. And once the Sony HDW-F900 HDCAM cameras, also supplied by Sim Video for *The Blobheads*, performed without a hitch, the producers decided to employ them on *Radio Free Roscoe* as well.

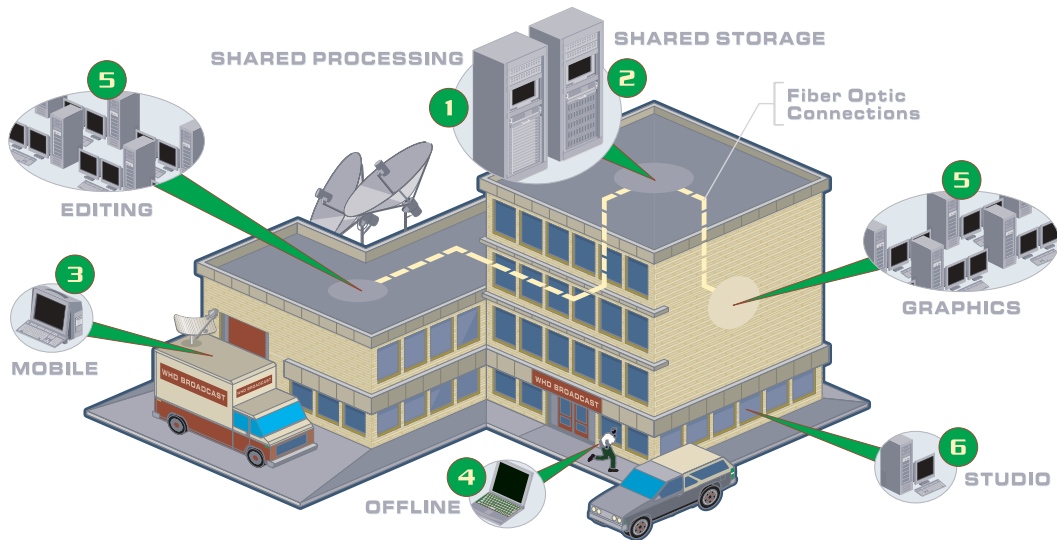
INTEREST IN HD RISING, BUT CONFUSION REMAINS

According to a survey conducted by media research group Ipsos-Insight, significant proportions of respondents who say they are familiar with HDTV report having looked at HDTV in a retail store (79 percent), and are considering purchasing an HDTV set in the next three months (15 percent). These numbers are considerably higher than last year. In late 2002, 69 percent reported having looked at HDTV in a store, and 10 percent stated intentions to buy HDTV in the near term.

CINEFORM UNVEILS CONNECT HD FOR HD VIDEO EDITING

Los-Angeles-based CineForm Inc. rolled out Connect HD, its high-performance HD accelerator for Microsoft Windows-based video-editing applications. Connect HD will become the first video editing application to be bundled with Vegas 4.0 software from Sony Media Software. Connect HD will be also available as a standalone purchase.

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Joan of Arcadia: The New Testament

by Derek Grover

Joe Mantegna plays
"Will Girardi" in "Joan
of Arcadia" series

As CBS and Sony bask in the glory of the success of their freshman series *Joan of Arcadia*, the producers are seeing unexpected miracles happen before their eyes. Amidst a season filled with failed new dramas, "Joan" appears to be the lone standout and a bright light in the northern sky for the use of HD in single camera episodic television.

The Friday CBS series follows in the successful tradition of wholesome, family fare



of HD

Courtesy Columbia Tri-Star Television / Canterbury Productions

of *Touched by an Angel* and *Dr. Quinn Medicine Woman*. Creator and executive producer, Barbara Hall summarizes the series as a "Modern day Joan of Arc in which a 16 year old girl speaks to God, nothing gets fixed, nor can God intervene. The show was created to provoke thought and discussion about God, the metaphysics of things and the mysteries of the universe," said Hall in a recent publicity interview for CBS.



Courtesy Columbia Tri-Star Television / Canterbury Productions

Jason Ritter as
"Kevin Girardi"

Although the show may have been developed to provoke discussions about God, the producers had no idea the series would create such conversation about the viability of shooting a drama in HD. Even though situation comedies have all but abandoned film in the past two years, the industry has been slow to adopt the use of HD cinematography with single camera dramas.

This trend has been attributed to many things. Among those has been the fear that the unique look of High Definition would somehow detract from the success of a drama. And the perception that the format was not ready for the grueling pace of a single camera series, which often shoots on a hectic 15 hour daily schedule in the most cinematically challenging conditions.

"Joan" would have been shot on film had the studios not mandated the use of HD when the pilot was shot, said executive producer, Jim Hayman. Mr. Hayman received his post-graduate degree in filmmaking from NYU and jokingly referred to his alum as the most prolific film snobs in the world. "I wanted to shoot the show on 35mm as did most of the production team, not because of film snobbery per-se, but because we were concerned about the look of the show and the technical limitations of shooting HD. But, the studio told us we were going to use HD and that was that," said Hayman.

Film snobbery aside, Hayman is one of the few show-runners I have met who has the professional background to discuss the visual, technical and workflow differences of shooting a drama on film vs. HD. His multi-decade experience as a cinematographer of independent features and notable television shows like "Northern Exposure" led to his opportunity to direct in the early 90's.

"When I was offered this show I started doing some research on HD and was unimpressed with most everything I had seen shot, except for a few things. And though I was skeptical about using it, those few things that I did see that were good, were good because the DP had an eye for lighting," said Hayman.

"We began prepping the series in the spring of 2003 and that is when I was introduced to Charlie Lieberman by co-executive producer Peter Schindler. What drew me to Charlie as a director of photography was the admiration of the work he had done on "Once and Again" which Peter



"The new Army campaign was a challenge of immense scope--nine months of shooting in the desert, in the snow, under water, and in the air. We needed someone who was experienced in film and highly knowledgeable in 24PHD, someone with the talent and energy who, like the Army Rangers motto, 'Always Forward,' could keep the crew and the project always moving forward, and thinking forward, about the technology, the images, and most importantly, the story. We found that in cinematographer Dan Waymack."

SAM CIARAMITARO
DIRECTOR, LEO BURNETT, USA

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Courtesy Columbia Tri-Star Television / Canterbury Productions

had produced. I liked the way he lit from below and the contrast he achieved with that show. I approached him to DP "Joan" not from his experience or lack of experience in High Definition, but as someone who is a good lighter. Charlie is a bright guy and an exquisite lighter," stated Hayman.

Unlike many DP's in the past few years, Lieberman approached the opportunity of shooting HD for the first time with gracious enthusiasm. Though his knowledge of the format was limited to pre-production camera testing, he believed his lighting techniques would easily translate to digital cinematography. "It was just like learning a new film stock or processing technique," stated Lieberman. "When the producers contacted me about the show, they knew I had no experience with HD. But, they knew my experience level in the industry and were comfortable with that."

Lieberman said, "In past years the question of shooting HD has been a catch-22 in that if you don't have experience with it, producers don't want to hire you. And if the producers don't want to hire you to shoot HD, you can't get the experience." Lieberman also noted, "I think that there is a little sea change happening with HD in that at first the producers were concerned that the technicality of it was more important than the creative and now they are moving towards the fact that they just want good lighting."

Good lighting, an awareness of the imaging latitude of the cameras and a great crew seems to be the visual success of this drama. The pro-



ducers and director of photography have been very cognizant of the current limitations of HD cinematography from the outset of this series and have made specific requests of their locations manager, Jeff Spellman, to not choose places that have extreme contrasts, and cognizant of time-of-day issues that could affect the images.

"We shoot an average of three days a week on location in Southern California," says Lieberman. "I appreciate the fact that the producers have taken into account that HD has limitations which are different from film when you are dealing with high contrast. They are very careful in choosing areas or locations that could pose problems for me and it has been very helpful with the images we create with these cameras," stated Lieberman.



Courtesy Columbia Tri-Star Television / Canterbury Productions

Though high definition or any digital cinematography requires a bit more attention to locations or sets that would present contrast issues, I was impressed to find that the workflow of "Joan" was not much different than had it been shot on film. "We approach this production exactly as if it were shot on 35mm," stated Peter Schindler, co-executive producer of *Joan of Arcadia*.

"I had produced a few HD shows prior to this and was aware of the limitations of shooting with it before we started this production. The workflow, or time it takes to shoot on HD vs. film doesn't seem to be any different. It doesn't slow us down nor does it make anything faster," stated Schindler.

"The decisions to shoot *Joan of Arcadia* on

HD were two fold, said Schindler. "Sony really believes in the future of HD and it was money driven, we are saving \$30,000 an episode by not shooting on film. The great surprise with HD is just how good it looks, I don't think there is any great sacrifice except for daylight exteriors and that will change as the technology advances." **HD**

Joan of Arcadia has been nominated for a "Peoples Choice Award" as one of the Best New Television Drama's of the season. The awards were presented on Sunday, January 11th.

Derek Grover, well known Digital Imaging Technician (DIT) for prime time television is now returning to his roots as a DP. He can be reached at derek@hollywooddigitalimaging.com

Amber Tamblyn
as "Joan Girardi"
and Michael Welch as
"Luke Girardi"

hd

by B. S E A N F A I R B U R N S O C



B. Sean Fairburn
SOC, Director of
Photography
818.621.3912 c,
Local 600, Agent
Steve Jacob
323.460.4767

HD Downconversion

With any Downconverter, don't assume that just because you're getting a picture that it's a good picture.

I recommend that you shoot a Frame & Focus chart like the DSC labs chart and shoot it very tight right out to the edge. Then check the underscan of the HD monitor and compare that to the downconverted monitor also in underscan. Or better yet, run the signal back into the NTSC card of the 24 inch monitor and change the channel to that signal.

Look for cropping and squeezing of your original image. Also look for additional edge enhancement or added detail that is always a factor to a degree.

Also, timecode with proper sync and 3/2 pull down must be spot on along with sound and must match sync with video as they are not compressed out of the camera.

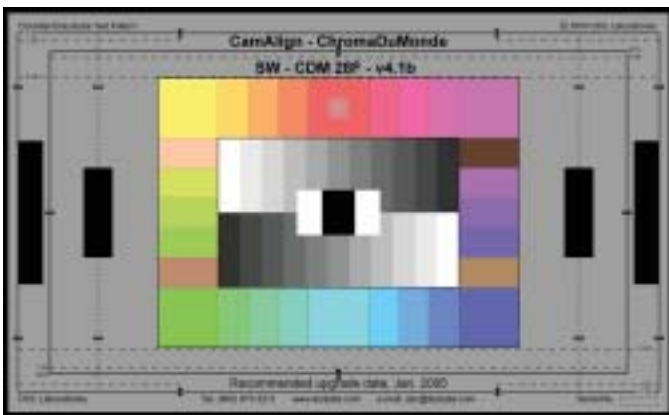
Do you want to trust all that to a little

onboard downconverter in the field to then create the DNA chain known as your EDL in offline and know beyond a shadow of a doubt that the list will track in HD online? Better to insure success than hope for it. The hundreds of dollars you save doing your own homemade downconverts will be blown in a few short hours in an HD online session trying to tweak and fix every single edit to the frame.

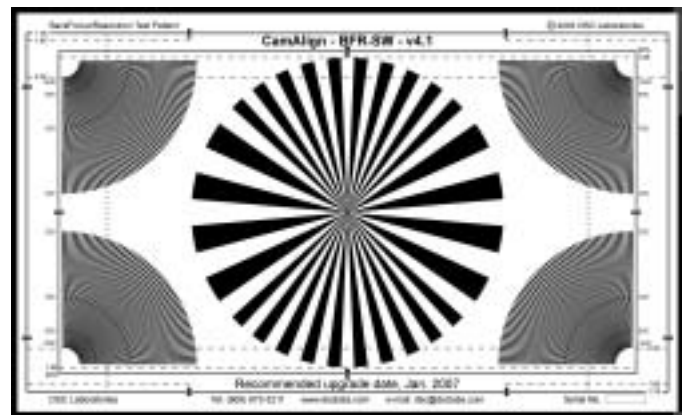
Whatever method you use, test that method with timecode, sound and picture all the way through the post production process to make sure that everything is appropriate: aspect ratio, 3/2 pulldown, layback of sound tracks and conversion from 30 frame EDL back to 24, sync sound, color and enhancement. This will give you a solid understanding of what your picture will look like as offline resource and/or deliverable.

Consult with your postproduction facility to confirm what works best for your production.

HD

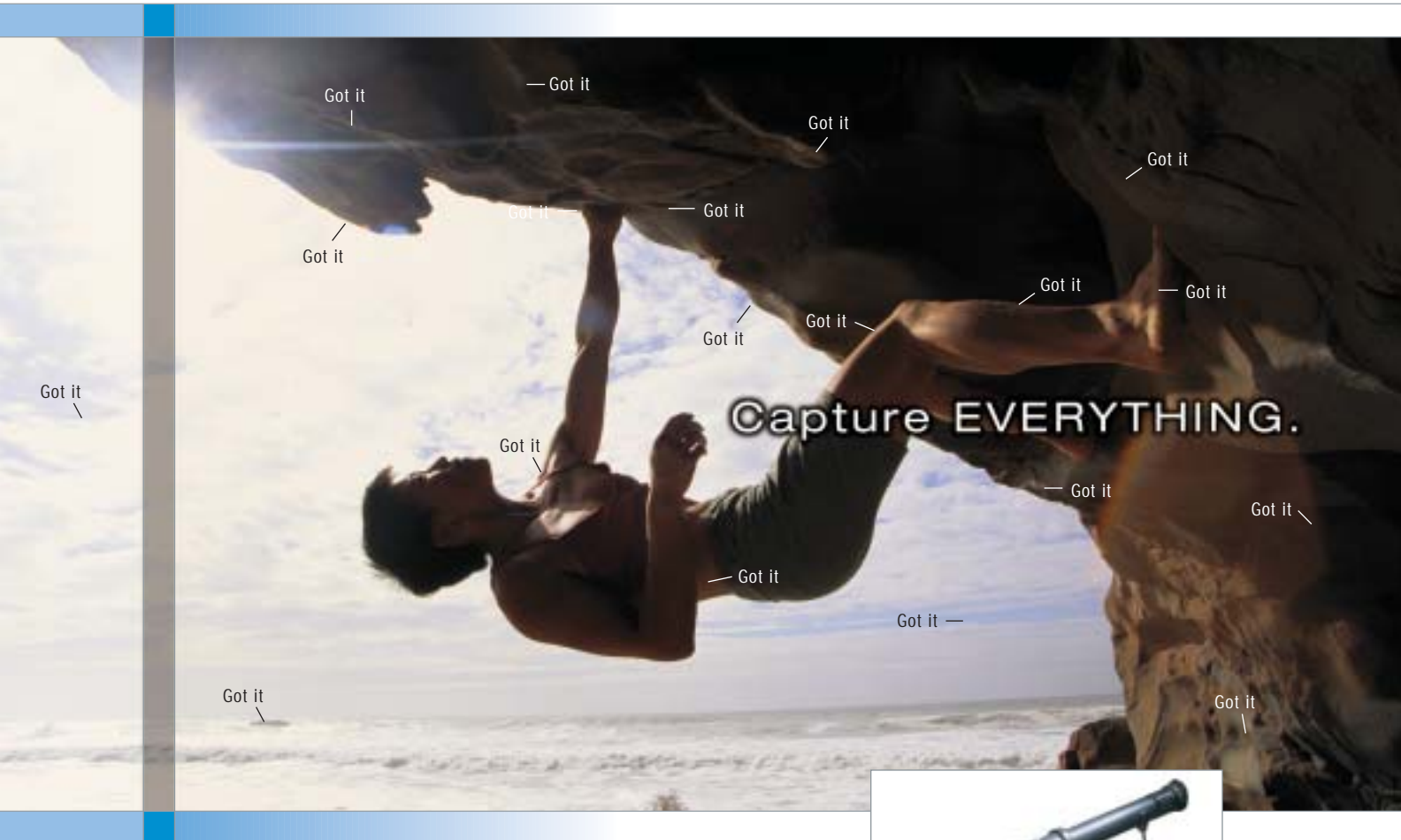


ChromaDuMonde (CDM) Chart



BackFocus/Resolution Test Pattern Chart

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THE CONSUMER FRONT

by DALE CRIPPS

While recent press reports are glowing it remains true that HDTV has some lingering “digital” malaise that bug the average citizen when encountered. The true HDTV enthusiast takes them as learning opportunities. We would, let’s face it, endure a nuclear holocaust to have our HDTV. Our stories of surmounting the difficulties in reception are a hero’s tale to be told to the

grandchildren. Not everyone, however, is so enthralled by it. Every annoyance or complication can quickly add up to a sour HDTV experience.

Christmas 2003 will be remembered as the watershed year for HDTV sales. There is ample programming to meet most expectations,

but there are still “wrinkles” in the technology that could come back to haunt us. There is also a huge confusion among the great body of consumers boggled by the options in new displays and the dizzying array of formats. To some it is just too much work to make a decision when the old standard is so easy. Many local TV operators give little thought to their sparse digital viewers, who provide them with endless pestering and still no revenue. Affiliate broadcasters often fail to throw switches to pass through the HDTV network feeds. They frequently run on low power which makes them both hard to find and receive.

Entering the mass market without complete preparation of the grounds carries consequences. Here is an example. Voom is a new satellite service launched in November 2003 by the Dolan family’s Cablevision. Voom promises more HDTV programming – some 39 channels - than any other ground or satellite service today. In their initial Sear’s offering they give free installation of a dish and an over-the-air antenna for picking up the local DTV channels. The offering truly sounds

great and I have every belief it will become so if they survive. But one of my East Coast customers called with a nightmarish tale that needs to be retold as a warning against those who are too eager and unprepared for mass marketing of these digital services. The installation of the Voom satellite dish, he said, was dragged out to three hours because coordinates given to them by Voom’s technical support were wrong! That was dwarfed, however, by the 7 hours it took to get the over-the-air antenna installation to receive anything. Those ten hours of frustration and costs severely tried the patience of my caller and the installer alike. Consider multiplying this same scenario ten thousand times during this Christmas season and you have the makings for a public relations catastrophe. Word to the wise: We are not yet across the river and any reversals in public attitude at this juncture could cause a lot of anguish among HDTV-supporters for years-to-come. To overcome these digital installation woes the end users must be entirely sold on the value of HDTV—become more like our early adopters than the skeptical and befuddled second and third circle adopters that they are. Any enthusiasm built for its greatness provides a much higher threshold of pain and tolerance from these inevitable difficulties. A difficult installation becomes more of an adventure of “heroic proportions” for them to share with friends and grandchildren than it is a tale of “woe is me”.

— Dale 



Dale Cripps is the publisher of HDTV Magazine, the first publication in the world dedicated to the consumer of High-Definition programming and hardware, and the founder and president of the High-Definition Television Association of America. He has been involved with the development of HDTV for 20 years and is a member of the Academy of Digital Television Pioneers. He is the winner of that organization’s prestigious Press Leadership Award -- the highest honor the industry bestows -- for the year 2002.





Fruit Bats

The World Upside Down

by Larry Zetlin

Australian wildlife and environmental documentary specialist Gulliver Media Australia and Germany's Marco Polo Film AG have chosen to uncover the secret life of the fruit bat, or flying fox as it is better known, for their inaugural one hour wildlife documentary co-production.

The producers plan to take viewers on a surprising journey of exploration from Brisbane's largest bat colony on Indooroopilly Island, set amongst ancient mangroves, across a large sweep of the city and environs as these ravenous bats flood the evening sky on their search for food in crowded city suburbs, orchards, home gardens and domestic backyards.

"There are very few people living in Brisbane who haven't experienced the summer feeding frenzy by these strange creatures when mangoes come into season. The lengths that they will go to and the risks they take to get at mangoes, paw paws and the like is amazing...and then to add insult to injury they drop half eaten fruit, urinate and leave droppings on rooftops,

garden furniture, cars, driveways...they are full of character" Larry Zetlin, co-producer says.

"Their behavior, both the individual animal and the colony, keeps you absolutely spell-bound and fascinated" commented producer/writer Annette Scheurich of Marco Polo Film.

Aboriginal reporter Wiruungga, from a small radio station from mid-north coast New South Wales features as the storyteller in this documentary as he engages the audience in the secret life of these strange, upside-down animals.

"The fruit bat obviously suffers from bad press with most people finding them creepy, eerie, filthy and aggressive," Larry said.

Queensland filmmaker Phil Lomas is Director/DP on the documentary and will shoot HDCam 1080i for the project. His previous credits include shooting for Beyond's series *Wildlife* and the BBC's *The Really Wild Show*. **HD**

For further information please contact Larry Zetlin at (07)3367-0899 or larryz@gullivermedia.com.au

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Jackson Hole: HD Flourishes in the Wilderness

By Kent Gibson

It's September and in the shadow of the Grand Tetons eagles soar and bugling elk rut while a group of humans forms its own intense assembly. A beehive of natural history and wildlife filmmakers confer with network executives and high technology equipment manufacturers at the Jackson Hole Wildlife Film Festival.

It is somewhat ironic that such a rough-hewn landscape would become a Mecca for all that is cutting edge in new video technology. HD leaders transform this outpost on alternate years into an array of theatres and screening rooms.

There are numerous screenings of documentary productions, but equally as many forums, seminars, workshops and demonstrations. This year the festival committee successfully expanded the reach of the festival into the community by transforming the rather low tech Teton Theatre in the small town of Jackson into a high tech wonder, screening parts of a number of festival entries free for the community. Jackson was dazzled by the perfect projection and sound with a standing-room-only queue led around the block. There were also programs for schoolchildren, and a day focused on conservation at the

new Wildlife Museum.

Delegates also came for the active social life and non-stop networking opportunities. Festival attendance includes invitations to all of the sponsored breakfasts, lunches, cocktail parties, barbecues and dinners. The big three network players - Discovery, National Geographic and the BBC are complemented by network reps and filmmakers from all over the world. With no TV or Internet to distract attention, delegates are often found in the bar late into the night making deals and cementing friendships.

Keynote speaker Ted Turner bemoaned having lost five or six billion dollars in the past couple of years, but he did not regret a penny he ever spent on documentary programs. Filmmakers moaned plaintively about plummeting budgets for documentaries, but were dazzled by the HD wizardry. Not all of the productions at Jackson Hole Festival are HD, but the festival reveals a rich future dominated by widescreen and Highdef. HD

Kent Gibson produces science documentaries and runs an audio post-production house called Soundesign – Studio City.

"Winged Migration"
from Sony Pictures
Classics



Photo by Matthieu Simonet



Finishing HD in SD

By Terence Curren

Shooting HD 24P and finishing in SD 24P is a viable cost saving option when final delivery only requires an SD master. At AlphaDogs, a post production studio based in Burbank, Calif., we recently had a chance to test out this workflow with a series of commercials for Stater Brothers Markets.

The client traditionally shot their commercials on film, but their director decided to shoot HD 24P to save on costs. The original plan was to edit in HD and then down convert the spots for delivery. AlphaDogs was brought in at the post phase, and suggested they cut costs by skipping the HD online.

The HDcam masters were down converted to digibeta and digitized into the Avid Symphony Universal. To save storage space and reduce rendering times by 20 percent, the tapes were input at uncompressed 24P, removing the 3:2 pull-down.

To establish the long history of Stater Bros., one of the spots called for a transition between a vintage butcher and the same scene in a modern store. The original idea was to make footage shot on an old market set black & white, and dissolve to the color footage from a modern

market. While editing the spot, we decided to apply an aged film look, with a sepia tint, and the clients were ecstatic.

The color corrector in the Symphony allowed me to polish the spots, even though the HD source material was excellent. Most of the correction involved removing the green from existing fluorescents, and adding more warmth to the faces—saving a separate and costly tape-to-tape session.

The final output added back the 3:2 pull-down. This creates a similar motion feel to film transferred to video, which combined with the vibrant color and punched up lighting gave the look that the client desired. Though in my mind the final output doesn't rival true 35MM production, it looks far superior to SD video with great cost savings throughout the process. **HD**

Terence Curren, president of AlphaDogs, can be reached at 818-729-9262 or www.alphadogs.tv



Arrested Development

by Brian Cali

When the new Fox Sunday evening comedy *Arrested Development* made its debut in late October it marked the first network, primetime series to use Panasonic's AJ-HDC27 VariCam™ HD Cinema camera for its entire season.

Hailed by critics as "the most original and bright comedies in years," *Arrested Development* follows the well-to-do, eccentric, Bluth family as they cope with the unexpected imprisonment of the family patriarch. For the series, two VariCams are on the set, as well as an AG-DVX100 24p Mini-DV camcorder for shooting flashbacks and other "blip" shots.

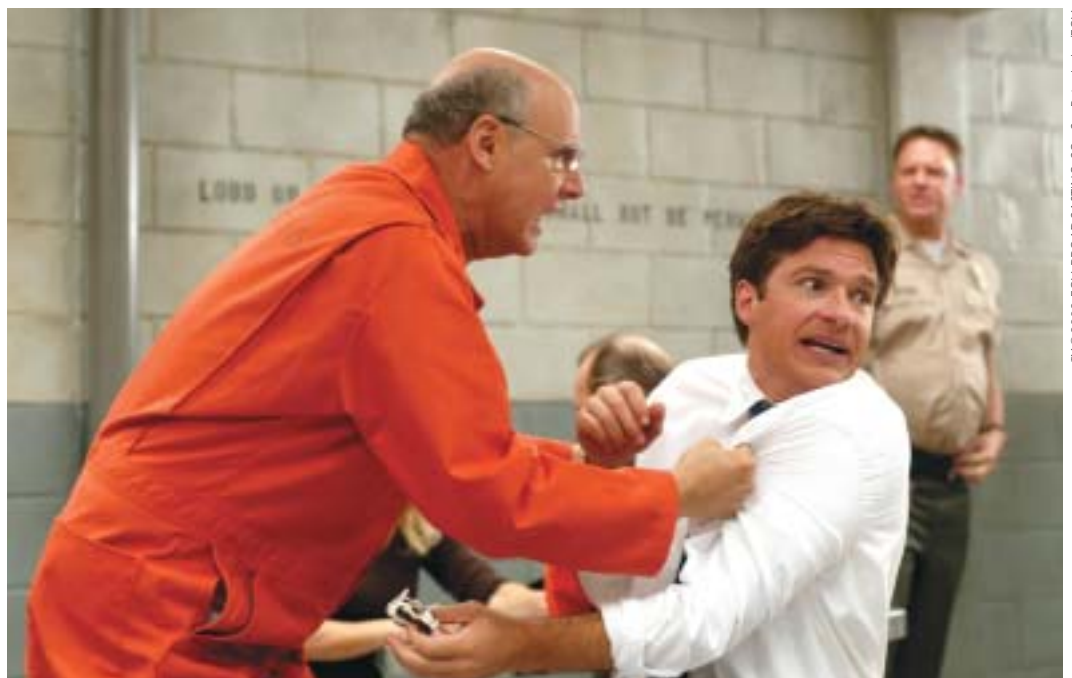
In explaining the series' selection of HD and VariCam, producer Victor Hsu said, "Co-executive producer Ron Howard wanted this to be a single-camera show more like the way sitcoms used to be, from his years on *Happy Days*. He liked the notion of giving the cast a day to rehearse and rewrite, and then shooting really fast, in a single day, improvising as we go along, changing things, getting as much of that on tape as possible. Instead of spending time on detailed lighting, jelling windows, deliberations over focus, etc., we decided to go for a lightning-fast pace on the shoot, all handheld. It's not documentary-style per se, but it maintains the spirit and style of that

approach. To accomplish all that, we needed portable, reasonably small cameras that could give us 24p images, and of course, we had a budget limitation."

On VariCam's performance, Director of Photography James Hawkinson added, "I've been very impressed with the camera, and have found it extremely versatile in achieving different looks. We've shot in the grainy style of a security camera, desaturated, greens—it all looks great. I feel VariCam was absolutely the right choice for the show. Given its lightweight and flexibility, it fits our aesthetic and keeps up with our breakneck schedule. I've never once wished I was shooting with a different camera."

Hsu concluded, "The show's overall approach, including the use of the VariCam, does save money from the way typical sitcoms are produced. It's not the camera itself that's saving us money, but our choice of a documentary style—and this camera works well for that approach. We don't carry a generator. We don't spend much on lighting on location. We travel light and fast. We get a lot of setups done each shooting day. And, of course, the rental of this package is less expensive than other HD options." HD

During a prison visit, Michael (Jason Bateman, R) is unsuccessful in getting any information from his father (Jeffrey Tambor, L) about missing company documents in the "Arrested Development" episode "Top Banana"



TM © 2003 FOX BROADCASTING CO. Cr: Peter Iovino/Fox



High Definition Bass Fishing

By John McCalmont

Rowdy Film and Entertainment, Inc. has taken high definition production to a new arena, with the first outdoor sport-fishing tournament program shot and posted exclusively in 1080i high definition. "Competitive bass fishing is one of America's fastest growing sports and is one of the most difficult sports to cover," said John McCalmont, president of Rowdy Film and Entertainment. "You have no control over weather conditions or the environment, and shooting in high definition makes it that much more challenging."

Camera crews, utilizing up to four Sony HDW 700 cameras, were put in high-speed bass boats to follow anglers who are competing for over one million dollars in prizes annually. Each production crew endured the same hardships as the tournament anglers they followed, often shooting ten hours at a time just to capture that one moment, in stunning HD detail, when the angler lands "the Big One!" "This is about as real as reality television can get," continued McCalmont. "We watch the triumphs and heart-

aches as competing teams set out before dawn to battle high winds, rain, fog and 100-degree days."

Bass Champs was off-lined by Rowdy editors using Avids and on-lined with a Pinnacle CineWave HD System. With so much raw footage to work with, the editors discovered that off lining the show with Avids made workflow more efficient. Show graphics in 2D and 3D were created using the Adobe family of products along with "3D Invigorator Pro."

"I think it's great that HDNet provides the kind of sports programming that is so accessible to the average viewer," continued McCalmont. "The show has received a large volume of positive responses including many viewers who were introduced to HDNet and HD TV just to follow the *Bass Champs* Tournament. HD

Bass Champs is currently shown on HDNet, Sundays at Noon EST. The show will be rebroadcast, letterboxed, in primetime on the Outdoor Channel, Monday nights at 9:00pm EST.

John McCalmont can be reached at john@rowdyfilm.com.



Listening in HD

By Jeffrey Lehmann

Negotiating the scenic passes of the Southern Rockies on the Durango & Silverton Narrow Gauge Railroad.

"Weekend Explorer" Producer/Host Jeffrey Lehmann on a Moose Safari in the Maine Highlands. Both images shot by Brian Kelly.

In the 1950's Desi Arnaz and Lucille Ball took a pay cut and paid the significant extra cost to shoot their series on 35mm film, instead of preserving it on poor quality kinescope, for the backend rights to the series. The studio agreed to this, since they thought that once shown it would have no future value. This gamble paid off big time for Desi and Lucy, and it was the birth of syndicated television.

I grew up and still live and produce in the small beach community of Del Mar on the same street that Desi Arnaz had his summer beach house. I saw him on the beach regularly and we talked daily once I started working summers at the Del Mar Race Track's Turf Club as a 16 year old. He always called me "The Kid."

With the knowledge of Desi's experience ingrained in my head, I have always produced my travel series, "Weekend Explorer," as evergreen as possible. When I first saw HD demonstrated 5 years ago, I knew I had to start shooting my series in it as soon as I could afford it. I finally got to start shooting on a 1080i Panasonic AHDC20A in October 2002.

It is hands down more expensive for us to shoot in HD than BetaSP. I expected this to take

some time to amortize, but HD is already starting to pay for itself. This is due to the higher profile our series is getting and the ability to air the series on both HDNet and the PBS Network without creating significant overlap. I expect to do the same thing in Europe and Asia, where my standard definition series already airs.

I expect this gamble on my part to be paying dividends for years to come. Of course, it'll be nothing like my old neighbor's success. But, I like to think that somewhere up there Desi is looking down saying, "The Kid was listening!" **HD**

Jeffrey hosts/produces the Emmy and multi-Telly awarded Weekend Explorer series for his company Barnstormer Productions. He can be reached at jeffrey@bptv.com.



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24p HD

Puts a New Spin on

by Kevin Smith

The oldest video cliché in the book is the “talking head.” Audiences pretty much expect it. But viewers are numb to its impact, due to overuse and “sameness” in execution. Though when crafted in fresh ways, the “talking head” can be an effective and compelling means of storytelling. We recently faced a challenge presented by a project that required several different interviews. How do we pull more emotion out of the interview? How do we get beyond the talking head so that the audience identifies with the person

on the screen and his or her words?

Washington Mutual asked us to create an opening video and a number of bumpers for an annual meeting attended by 3,500 managers. Our creative treatment required several on-camera interviews of ordinary people. We wanted to reach inside their personalities, draw out their definition of “value,” and make the audience feel their pleasure and pain. We wanted the managers to sit knee-to-knee with these everyday folks.

We chose 24p high definition as the solu-



tor could maintain eye contact, even though the interview subjects were looking into the lens. The system resembles director Errol Morris' *Interrotron*, which he's used on several films, including segments for the 2002 Academy Awards ceremony. We used a Sony HDW-F900 CineAlta with 18mm, 25mm and 40mm prime lenses to shoot the interview subjects against a white cyc. We changed focal length and composition frequently within each interview to allow for options in post. The interview footage was intercut with portraiture footage of the same people, set in softly contrasting gray. HD helped us make the interview subject's visual separation clear and precise against the background. And the 24p frame rate added a filmic quality we wanted.

HD provided technical advantages as well. Washington Mutual needed the videos projected onto four 30-foot screens. And we needed to intercut the interview footage with existing 16mm and 35mm-original imagery. HD's incredible image resolution allowed us to project large-scale while maintaining eye-popping clarity. And our 24p HD images matched the film-original shots very well with minimal color correction:

HD also let us stretch our budget. We knew we'd need hours of original footage, which ruled out shooting film. (We ended up with 12 hours of interviews, cut down to less than five minutes of content that hit the screen.) HD saved us 30-40 percent over the potential cost of shooting, processing and transferring film:

Washington Mutual, like any company, is interested in stretching a dollar. We look for ways our clients can leverage their investment in motion media by repurposing videos for use in several venues, as opposed to a one-time showing. HD's superior resolution and native 16:9 aspect ratio provided Washington Mutual the option of repackaging for playback on a five-screen plasma wall at the company's conference center.

We think producers working in business communications should look at HD, if they need a new angle on the talking head. You can achieve near-cinema quality, emotionally compelling interview footage on a video budget with high-impact results. And you'll reach your strategic goal of delivering greater value to cost-conscious clients. **HD**

Kevin Smith is president and creative director of Eyeplay, a Seattle visual communications agency. He can be reached at kevin@eyeplay.tv.

Shot on 24p HD,
Eyeplay produced this
event video for client
Washington Mutual
featuring actual
customers of the bank

an Old Cliché

tion. HD's richness and resolution, combined with our interviewing technique, highlighted the "characters" and their messages in a creative way. We took the talking head cliché to a new level. And HD helped our client get more for its money in the long run.

The first challenge was getting the interview subjects to talk directly to the audience. Our technique: a two-camera system whereby the interview subjects looked at the director in a mirror reflecting his video image. The direc-

A Grandfather's Gift:

Rachmaninoff's *Sophie's Songs*

by Carol Freeman

In the late 1930's and early 1940's, Sergei Rachmaninoff wrote the music to accompany a collection of eight favorite poems written and selected by his granddaughter, Sophie. These songs were never performed publicly, they were composed in Sophie's vocal register, that of a blossoming teenager and were intended as a gift to Sophie from her Grandfather for her to perform. Peter Wanamaker, Sophie's son, found *Sophie's Song's* in his great-grandfather's music bureau after his mother's death.

In the summer of 2001, Peter and his life-long friend Stephen Lamson, president of the Kirkland Orchestra, went sailing together. On that day, they began a discussion about the marvelous music that Peter had uncovered and about how to bring these compositions to the public. With the encouragement of and financial backing from Al & Kathy Wisne, of Fort Lauderdale, FL., this dream became a reality.

Chris Lobdell, a composer, orchestrator and arranger with Warner Bros., was a natural match for the project. His passion for the composers music developed as young man when he first

heard and later performed Rachmaninoff's work.

In October of 2003, the Kirkland Orchestra under the baton of R. Joseph Scott with soloist Anna Kazakova and pianist Chris Lobdell premiered five of the eight *Sophie's Songs*. This brought together executive producer Stephen Lamson, producer/director Malcolm Rooke-Burdon, his assistant Ann Coppel and the staff of Seattle's Victory Studios. The orchestra's performance was shot live over two nights using 3 Sony HDW-F900 multi-frame-rate HD cameras locked together at 23.98P. DP on the project was Jeff Streich with the assistance of Geoff Dunlap and Rick Barnes. Rooke-Burdon decided to shoot in the 24p HD format because it was the best format to fulfill in both the domestic and foreign markets, giving him pristine video in all the formats.

The concert and the story of Rachmaninoff and his granddaughter are currently in post-production at Victory Studios, using the Avid DS HD. The *Sophie's Songs* project includes not only the world premiere concert, but also a television documentary, anchored by Cindy Shrieve. **HD**



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Eye of the



B y T o d M e s i r o w

Ladies in traditional Indian clothing in Mumbai, India (formerly known as Bombay)

"It's a show about beauty," said the executive producer/host Serena Yang. We were meeting about four one-hour programs she was making for the Travel Channel. What a perfect opportunity to use High Definition in a documentary setting—the highest resolution video image available to capture varying notions of beauty around the world. I knew just who I wanted to work with, director of photography James Chressanthis. Jim and I had worked together years before when we did a story reuniting a marine biologist with the dolphin

she had met as a teenager in a 'swim-with' program, that had inspired her to pursue marine biology. Jim had shot a significant amount of Highdef, in addition to 35mm work for features and network series. Besides his skill as a cinematographer, Jim brought an artist's and an engineer's sensibility, crucial if we were to travel with an HD package, just the three of us, around the world.

Our first stop was to test filters and exposure latitude with Serena on-camera. Clairmont Camera's customized version of the Sony CineAlta900/3 worked like a charm, and the images were beautiful. The normal 1/4 pro-mist most often used with a betacamSP or digibeta proved to be the wrong choice, in any light, with Highdef. Jim pulled a few special tricks out of his bag, using Schneider Classic Soft and Black Frost filters. The results were amazing. Contrary to what many people assume about the amount of light needed to create an effective HD image, the HD image needed less light than regular betaSP or digibeta. Chressanthis rated the camera at 500 ASA.

We visited Australia, New Zealand, Japan, India, Italy, England, New York, San Francisco, Phoenix, Los Angeles, and the Mojave desert, where temperatures topped 107

degrees the whole day. Only once did we have a problem. In Sydney, the tape transport mechanism stopped working. Reason unknown. We switched over to a backup camera, an older Sony 900/2. Though Jim had to be much more careful with exposure of highlights, we still produced great images. Any machine made will fail to function at some point. It didn't dissuade me from loving the medium.

In New Zealand we spent several days with T'ame Iti, a Maori activist. We filmed him getting more tattoos, or "moko," and were regaled with his tales of life as a Maori working to retain his culture in the modern world. The full facial tattoo is not merely decoration; it's the story of his life, and his tribe, and his family history. Highdef was advantageous because we weren't working with the same cost constraints of film. Our ratio of footage shot to final show was able to be much higher, a vital feature for documentary production.

In Bologna we had the chance to visit the Ducati factory, and meet with designers and engineers. We asked a thirty-year veteran of motorcycle engineering what made Ducati's different, and he said each one was designed to have a heart and a soul. The HD 16x9 format

Beholder



was ideal to capture the huge scale along with the vibrant detail of the factory environment.

At the end of the day I came away from this intensive immersion into shooting HD in the field, around the world, in a variety of situations, new crew at every stop, and seriously long days with a deep admiration for the beauty of the format, and of Jim's ability to extract the most from the ever-

maturing format. The cost/benefit analysis for high-quality imagery in a documentary setting when comparing super 16 or 35 and HD falls squarely on the side of HD. **HD**

Tod Mesirov is a producer, director, and writer working in the non-fiction realm for cable and broadcast outlets worldwide.
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T'ame Iti is a social worker, Maori activist, and radio D.J., allowing us to film him adding to his moko (Maori tattoo)

Forum

by CHRIS CHINNOCK

First HDTV Forum for Display Industry

November marked the very successful debut of the HDTV Forum, which Insight Media and DisplaySearch co-produced. The conference exceeded expectations drawing nearly 300 people.



Chris Chinnock is President of Insight Media, a market research company specializing in the projection display industry. chris@insightmedia.info

It is impossible to summarize the material that was presented and discussed at the HDTV Forum in a few pages - let alone a few bullet points. But here goes anyway:

- Keynote Jim Sanduski, Samsung Electronics VP of Marketing, issued requests to broadcasters and suggestions to the FCC and Congress, arguing that the transition to HDTV is the largest and most important in the history of the TV industry due to its impact on resolution, aspect ratio, sound, form factor and expected time to saturation.
- CEA's Sean Wargo's data suggested that consumers are aware of some HDTV terminology, but are still quite confused about what it really is.
- A wealth of HD content is currently being aired, with a lot more coming each month. But again, consumers and many others in the retail chain are not well educated about this.
- HDTV is here, it's real and now moving beyond the "tipping point", but HDNet's Karl Miesenbach embarrassed attendees after a show of hands revealed only a small, perhaps 5% ownership of HDTV sets.
- Top network executives Martin Franks (CBS) and Hal Protter (WB) reiterated their commitment to HDTV.
- Warner Brothers executive Annette Bouso revealed they have the largest high definition film library in the world with all releases since 1997 created in the 1080p format.
- Pete Putman and other speakers provided



a clear understanding of the effects of compression on the quality of the received HDTV signal and how these signals are manipulated by broadcast, satellite and cable operators.

- Best Buy's Andrea Kimmel and Stewart Meyer shared their experience with Best Buy's HDTV customers and explained their strategy for simplifying the HDTV shopping experience.
- CRT TVs are expected to remain the market leader on a unit basis through 2007 in all size segments except 40" + due to growth in emerging markets.
- Samsung and CMO revealed that they intend to spend \$16 billion and \$9 billion on new LCD TV panel capacity. Sharp continues to introduce enabling technologies that boost its LCD TV performance. DisplaySearch expects LCD TVs to lead in HDTV unit shipments by 2006.
- Consumer front projection products will increase steadily, but opinions differ dramatically about the size of this emerging segment. HP went out on a limb suggesting they might supply 1M projectors to consumers in the not too distant future. 



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The Reagans

The Story Behind the Making of

by Bob Fisher

Put aside your feelings about the controversy regarding *The Reagans* miniseries that was unceremoniously yanked from the CBS Television schedule. Forget whether you agree or disagree with the characterizations of Ronald and Nancy Reagan in the film dramatization. Focus on the superb production values that are weaved throughout the fabric of the story. The miniseries was produced in Super 16 film format and aired on the Showtime cable network letterboxed in 16:9 aspect ratio. Cinematographer James Chressanthis, ASC, supervised timing and put finishing touches on the images during HD post-production at Modern Film and Video in Burbank.

"Advances in film and HD postproduction technologies have made the Super 16 format a viable option," says Chressanthis. "It renders sharp, clean and grainless images with a wide tonal range, and subtleties in highlight and black areas. It's a very lush look."

The cinematographer artfully employed the wide screen format as part of the visual grammar in depicting the relationship linking the Reagans.

As the story unfolds, Chressanthis and director Robert Ackerman bring Nancy and Ronald closer and closer together in the frame reflecting the intimacy of their deepening relationship.

Chressanthis, who recently shot a four-hour documentary in HD format, says that there is a textural difference in the qualities of film and digital images. He describes the HD images as "beautiful," but says they lack the details and nuances in colors, contrast and textures that are engrained in the visual language of *The Reagans*.

The three-hour movie was filmed in 45 days on sets and at practical locations in Montreal, Canada. Chressanthis generally covered scenes with two Aaton XTR cameras and the new generation of Zeiss lenses. Night and interior scenes, some 80 percent of the shots, were recorded on the new 500-speed Kodak Vision2 7218 film. The negative was converted to digital video with a Thomson Spirit DataCine at Technicolor labs in Montreal, which offered electronic sharpening and grain reduction features. HD

(L to R) Actor James Brolin and actress Judy Davis in a scene from "The Reagans" shot by cinematographer James Chressanthis, ASC.

The Production Road of

30 Miles

By Bryan Firehawk

According to the filmmakers of *30 Miles*, a controversial 80-minute thriller featuring two characters thrown together on a lonely desert road, shooting on Highdef 24p with P+S Technik's PRO35 Digital Image Converter is the *only* way to go. For first time feature director Ryan Harper, shooting with a Sony HD900 compared with film allowed a higher shot ratio enabling more set-ups and creative flexibility. "We were able to shoot an astounding 10 pages per day. I even had the time to try out different ideas as well as different performances." Harper adds that using the PRO35 was also key because, "It allowed us to use ultra prime 35mm lenses

to achieve depth of field along with a film look."

DP Amit Bhattacharya was equally pleased with this equipment combination. "Besides the physical bite imparted by ultra primes in terms of color, contrast and sharpness, the PRO35 also gave us the ability to pull focus. We used this to our advantage when doing tight two shots through the side windows of our picture car. For quite a few shots, I was able to shoot with an 85 or 100mm lens at T2 to throw one of our actors completely out of focus and then pull to him to catch a particular emotional moment. Use of the PRO35 with cine lenses also helped us achieve superior

night imagery – richer blacks and more shadow detail."

Producer Josh Jaggars adds, "Using HD combined with the PRO35 and cine lenses enabled us to produce on a very fast schedule and limited budget, saving us time as well as money. It also provided us production values superior to normal HD and the creative edge we needed to tell this challenging and unique story. We plan on using this equipment combination on up-coming projects, which includes two features and several shorts next year." **HD**

30 Miles was produced by Your Half Pictures based in Los Angeles, California and stars Lawrence-Hilton Jacobs (Cooley High) and Rusty Gray.

"Anthony" played by Lawrence-Hilton Jacobs ("Welcome Back, Kotter") calls for help on the side of a desolate highway.



