

# American Cinematographer

## REVOLUTIONARY ROAD

ROGER DEAKINS, ASC, BSC  
EXPOSES MARITAL STRIFE

## THE CURIOUS CASE OF BENJAMIN BUTTON

CLAUDIO MIRANDA TURNS BACK TIME

PLUS: EDUARDO SERRA, ASC, AFC  
INSPIRES **DEFIANCE**

JACK GREEN, ASC  
EARNS LIFETIME ACHIEVEMENT AWARD



made a significant artistic, technological, business or educational impact on post and was presented by screenwriter Howard Rodman to Elizabeth Daley, dean of the University of Southern California's School of Cinematic Arts.

Capping the ceremony, ASC associate member Ron Burdett received the Lifetime Achievement Award, which was presented by Silverman and Fred Rheinlein, last year's recipient. In his remarks, Burdett looked ahead to the future of the post industry and, paraphrasing Robert Frost, encouraged the attendants in all their endeavors. "We have promises to keep and many miles to go before the end of the journey," he said.

### FotoKem Transfers *Still Me* by Jim Hemphill

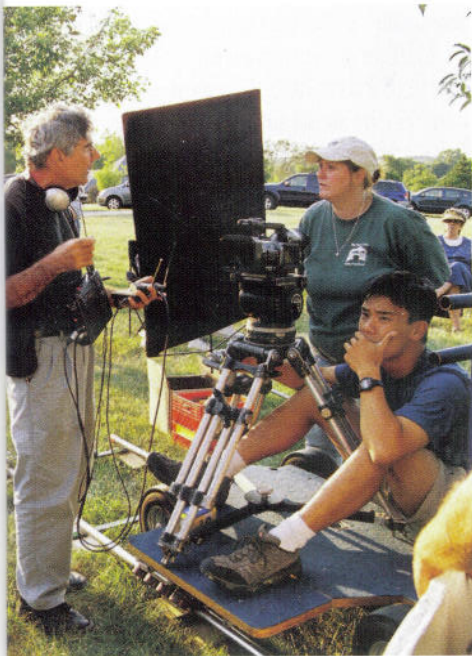
When cinematographer Chun Ming Huang began work on *Still Me*, a 20-minute character study about a stroke victim's difficult rehabilitation, he envisioned the story on film, but the production's limited resources dictated that the project be shot and edited on 24p standard-definition video. After the

short attracted attention by winning awards at three festivals, director Beth McElhenny began to think about submitting it for Academy Award consideration, and the Academy requires a 35mm print. "We had no idea the movie would get this much buzz, and until we found out we might actually have a chance with the Academy, we had no plans to transfer to film," says Huang, who shot the picture at 24p with a Panasonic AG-DVX100. "Originally, we planned on going straight to DVD, so I lit with the intention of outputting to video only."

The filmmakers took the project to FotoKem, where Huang worked closely with in-house producer Rico Hernandez, who supervised the transfer from MiniDV to a 35mm composite print. "In this case, the source material we received was a standard-def Quick-Time file," says John Nicolard, head of digital production for FotoKem. "We loaded that into Final Cut Pro and output a standard-def DigiBeta to start the process." The DigiBeta was upconverted (via a Teranex box) to HDCam-SR tape.

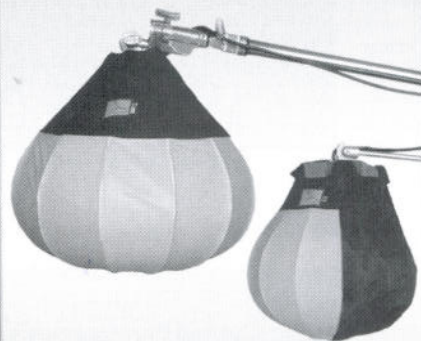
During the tape-to-tape color correction on the da Vinci 2K, Huang was primarily concerned with preserving the look of the original footage and prepping it for a different medium. "We didn't do anything too dramatic," he says. After the color correction, the filmmakers gave Hernandez all the text that needed to be laid into the movie, and FotoKem created HD end titles in After Effects that were added to the color-corrected master. An audio master was created as a 35mm SR optical track, and everything was brought into a DI suite to create a filmout file.

To record out to film, says Nicolard, "we have a FotoKem-specific linear-to-logarithmic conversion." The conversion was done on a Quantel Pablo, where the digital files were prepped with a film look for 35mm recording. "We could have used this session for further color timing, but we avoided it because everything was done nicely during the da Vinci session — and because the cost would have



Cinematographer Chun Ming Huang (sitting) and director Beth McElhenny confer with soundman Bill Soares during production of the short film *Still Me*.

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## Matters of Light & Depth

Creating memorable images  
for video, film, & stills  
through lighting

by Ross Lowell

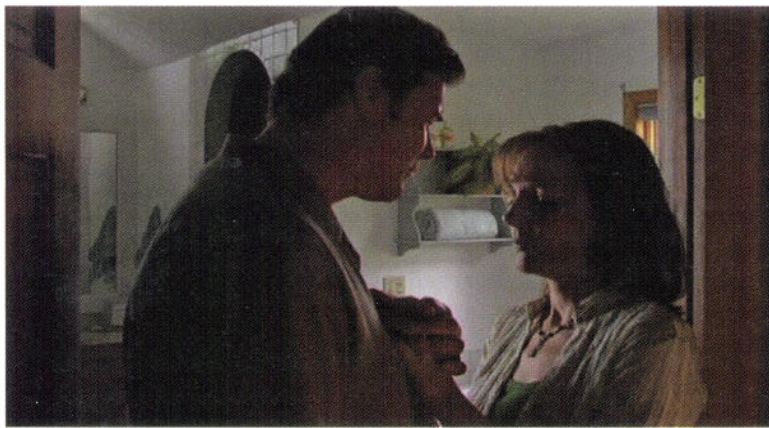
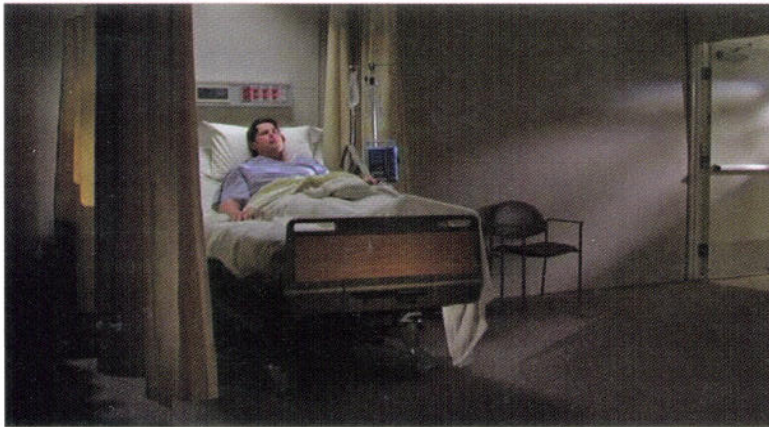
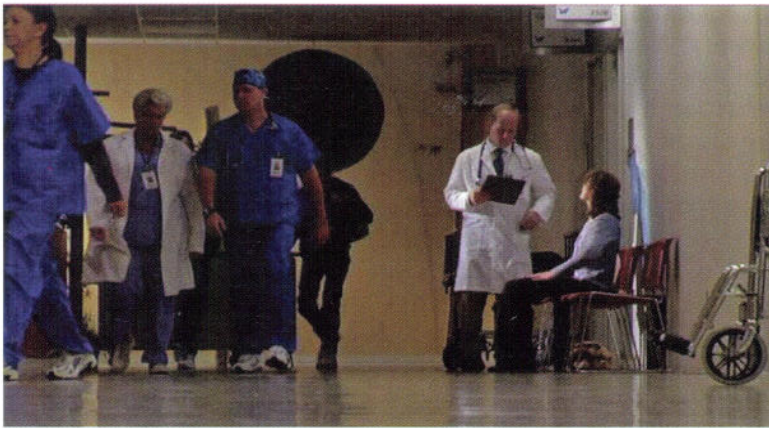
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Frame grabs from the finished short, which focuses on Jack and Rosanne (Scott Kling and Tina Gloss) as they struggle to cope after Jack suffers from a stroke. The footage, captured on MiniDV, was transferred to 35mm film at FotoKem.



rocketed up!" says Huang.

The logarithmic DPX files created in the Pablo were exported to a server, and an Arrilaser was used to record the file onto Kodak 2242 internegative stock. Finally, the SR optical soundtrack was married to the 35mm negative, and the final print was made on Kodak Vision 2383. "The most expensive part of the entire process was the filmout," notes Huang.

The cinematographer adds that ending up on 35mm subtly changed the image quality for both better and worse. "I had to give up some information in the highlights and shadows, which is unfortunate, because the image gets a little washed-out. Using available daylight as much as we did, some things just had to give." On the plus side, he was happy with the grain structure the image gained. "You can't get that nice, true grain shooting video, and it helps a little in softening out the edges and getting rid of that video look. But it was a big challenge to make sure I retained as much of the detail as possible during the transfer process."

Huang recommends that filmmakers shooting on MiniDV who intend to transfer to 35mm keep a sharp eye on the shadows and highlights. "You have to make sure you give the colorists plenty of information to work with. It's hard for me because my style can be quite contrasty; I light by eye, so I'll usually take the exposure that looks good to me and go with it." He also recommends shooting on 24p HD in 16x9 whenever possible because that eliminates some stages (and expenses) in the transfer process.

Nicolard echoes these sentiments, though he also advises that independent filmmakers shouldn't get too hung up on technology when embarking on their projects. "Anyone who's shooting MiniDV is generally doing it for budgetary reasons, because if they had more money, they would shoot HD or film. The most important thing is just to get your project made. If it's good, people will respond to it." ■