

FILMLOOK^{inc.} NEWSLETTER

FALL

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2002

FOCUSING ON DOCUMENTARIES AND FILMLOOK[®]

One of the questions raised when a filmmaker decides to make a documentary is, what format should be used, film or video? This raises other questions... 35mm or 16mm? Betacam or mini DV? Film festival or broadcast? Although daunting to the novice filmmaker, these questions can be answered by examining the tools necessary for telling the story.

1. Is the subject matter improved if it is captured on film? For most documentaries this question is irrelevant, since the subject and the story are more important than the format. In Hollywood's world of blockbuster filmmaking, film is cheap compared to the overall budget. Directors and actors insist on film usage and, since there is limited funding, documentaries are under greater pressure to remain economical. Even using 16mm can be a budget breaker. Given the fact that documentaries can typically have several hours (even hundreds of hours) of subject material to go over, it's clear that video has a greater appeal for use in documentaries because it's cheap and readily available.

2. How intimate should we be with the subject? Documentaries are usually personal journeys for the filmmaker, the interviewees and the audience. Interviews with people can be shot in a formal studio with proper lighting, but a person interacting with the real world has a visceral appeal for the audience that cannot be expressed completely in an interview. Digital Betacam or Betacam SP afford great resolution and color under most conditions, but may not be portable enough for "run and gun" type filmmaking in the "real world." Mini DV, DVCAM and DVC Pro offer tremendous portability, economy of tape stock, and – depending on the type of camera used – a low profile. This is invaluable in immediately setting nervous interviewees at ease and for shooting in politically or socially hostile locations where a small consumer-type DV camcorder will not raise suspicions.

3. How will people see this documentary? Documentaries on film are becoming rarer as film-based editing systems give way to PC-based editing systems. Most film festivals today accept and project video-originated documentaries, and certainly most cable and broadcast

companies will accept them as well. A powerful story, even one shot in video, deserves recognition. It also deserves to look its best. To enhance the final look of a documentary, it may be desirable for a da vinci 2K color correction session that can address and manipulate a variety of color and image problems. This is useful also for final output to film, where a balanced video master is essential for a trouble-free scan to film for Academy consideration. If the documentary is to remain within the domain of video but the look of film is desired, then the da vinci 2K with FILMLOOK® processing will be the ultimate solution.

As it is in feature filmmaking, a documentary must have a compelling subject and a good story to make it worth an audience. Unlike a feature, a story in a documentary is grounded firmly in reality, where the final outcome may not be resolved neatly. ■

ESPN's NEW SERIES

NEW YORK—This season, ESPN is using FILMLOOK for one of its newest series for its EOE (ESPN Original Entertainment) division. The network has launched a new reality series called “**Beg, Borrow, & Deal**,” where two teams of four players compete cross country for a grand prize of trips to four major sports championships. Finally, “**Inside the Moments: MLB**” is a series hosted by Ray Liotta who profiles some of the greatest baseball players from the past and today, and the plays that made them famous. In addition to the currently running ESPN series “**SportsCentury**,” “**Year in Review**” and “**The Season**,” this marks the first time that so many series have used FILMLOOK simultaneously on one cable network. Check www.ESPN.com for air times and additional programming information.

NOSE FOR FILMLOOK

BASALT, CO—fleisherfilm has produced for Animal Planet “**A Nose for Crime**,” a documentary that profiles the courageous and amazing efforts of dogs who sniff out evidence in crime scenes. The dogs and their owners are featured in interview and re-creation segments that were entirely shot in video and processed in FILMLOOK's da vinci bay for final film simulation and color enhancement for Animal Planet and foreign distribution. The documentary is the latest to be FILMLOOKed for Carol Fleisher, who has produced the award-winning “**The Revolutionary War**,” “**The Power of Play**,” “**Future War**” and “**Why Dogs Laugh and Chimpanzees Cry**.” “**A Nose for Crime**” airs on Animal Planet; check local listings.

WEST POINT GOES FILMLOOK

LOS ANGELES—The History Channel and Digital Ranch produced the FILMLOOKed documentary “**The Long Gray Line: The Spirit of West Point**,” a revealing look at the history of one of the nation’s most revered educational institutions. The two-hour documentary combined archival photos and film clips from its 200-year history along with modern video footage of daily cadet life that was color-corrected and FILMLOOK processed. “**The Long Gray Line**” aired in August on the History Channel but can also be ordered from www.the-historychannel.com under the “new releases” link.

UNDERGROUND FILMLOOK

NEW YORK—Documentary filmmaker Edet Belzberg has chosen FILMLOOK for film simulation and da vinci color enhancement on “**Children Underground**,” a Sundance Film Festival Special Jury Prize winner and Academy Award-nominated documentary on orphans living in the subways of Bucharest, Romania. The documentary offers a relentlessly gritty portrait of the youngest victims of Soviet reform as they struggle to survive neglect and abuse deep underground. An actual transfer to film of the video-shot documentary was necessary for Academy consideration, however the home video and broadcast version of the film is being processed by FILMLOOK for final film simulation and color enhancement. More information about the film can be found at www.childrenunderground.com.

HEALING WITH FILMLOOK

MONTEREY, CA—The county of Monterey has commissioned the documentary “**The Healing Pole**,” a unique story about the construction of a totem pole, the troubled youths that created it, and its unexpected destiny as a gift to the city of New York after the tragedy of September 11, 2001. The documentary centers upon the Monterey teenagers at risk who agree to be apprentice carvers of a totem pole. After the carving is completed, the totem was to be left in Monterey, but instead was shipped cross country to New York as a symbol of healing and a monument for the people of New York. The documentary was shot with mini DV equipment, then sent through the FILMLOOK/da vinci interface. “**The Healing Pole**” will air on PBS this fall; check local listings.

TREES ON DVD

Raven Pictures International and Pioneer Motion Pictures have announced the release of the FILMLOOKed feature “**TREES: The Movie**” which is now available on DVD. An almost shot-by-shot parody of the movie “Jaws,” the feature has already spawned the inevitable sequel “**TREES 2: The Root of All Evil**,” which was shot in 24P video and is currently in postproduction. FILMLOOK congratulates the producers of “**TREES**” on their DVD release and look forward to working with them on their sequel! For more information, go to www.treesthemovie.com.

RAIDERETTES CHEER UP FILMLOOK

OAKLAND–ESPN Original Entertainment produced for the series “**The Season**” a two part documentary on Raiderette Cheerleading. Entitled “**The Making of a Raiderette**,” the documentary follows new recruits from the initial callback to the finals up to a calendar photo shoot on the sands of Hawaii. The two-hour documentary was done through the FILMLOOK/da vinci interface to maintain consistent color for teases and recaps. “**The Season: The Making of a Raiderette**” aired in September on ESPN.

CORRECTION

In our Spring 2002 newsletter we inadvertently mistyped Steve Cueden’s name as director of the feature “**Lucky**,” which received Best Director’s honors at the No Dance Film Festival. We regret the error and apologize to Mr. Cueden.

*If you have a news item for the FILMLOOK Newsletter,
please call us at 818-845-9200 and we’ll get it in our next issue.*