

Trespassing: film documents 'anti-nuke' protesters in their element

Carlos Blumberg DeMenezes brings a background in commercial production to his latest project, a feature-length documentary entitled **Trespassing**. He points out the film required a complete 180-degree shift in his approach.

"In commercials, you must control every detail," he says. "For this film, the goal was to let events occur naturally in front of the camera, and allow each person to come through without manipulation from me."

Trespassing is a critical examination of the nuclear policies of the United States government and a chronicle of the people who fight against them through protest and planned nonviolent disruptions, like "trespassing" on federal land. It was eight years in the making. DeMenezes migrated to the U.S. from Brazil in 1982. He used his own CP-16 camera augmented by a handful of battery-powered lights and a Tascam Sound Recorder.

He notes that it was essential for him to travel and work with a lightweight package at remote locations, including a proposed nuclear waste dumpsite near Needles, California.

Nuclear test site

DeMenezes paid attention to the grassroots protest movement, and made sure he was there with his camera when things were happening. One example was a visit to a nuclear test site in Nevada by a group of Hiroshima survivors, where a Shoshone Indian priest performed a cleansing ceremony. Another time, a night-time wake was held to bury the ashes of one of the movement's pioneers in sacred lands being occupied by Native Americans and their supporters in defiance of state and federal order.

"I knew that facts would be important, but I also learned over time that the heart of the film would be the human beings who fight this battle," says DeMenezes. "That's one reason it was important for me to shoot on film."

Other reasons include film's superior image quality and durability. "People say video is more cost effective, but I disagree," he says. "That depends on your

"The majority of the film was done with 7293," he says. "I am in love with emulsion. The skin tones it records, and the flexibility it gives you is fantastic. Often I didn't know what was going to happen or when. The 7293 film allowed me to be ready for anything, and it gracefully handled whatever we threw at it."

method. If I had started this project on video eight years ago, I would have had to change cameras every two years. The CP-16 is totally dependable, and that's important when the dust is blowing and it's 110 degrees. One day a belt broke in my camera. I had a spare, but that didn't work either. I used a shoelace, and it worked! I got the footage."

DeMenezes often used an ARRI T2 10-100mm zoom

lens that allowed him to be an objective observer in many situations. He often lit with whatever was available, including a Coleman lantern, and 12-volt rechargeable engine starting jumpers, "very inexpensive and effective." He used three camera stocks over the course of the production, Eastman EXR 200T 7293 film, Eastman EXR 500T 7298 film, and Eastman EXR 50D 7245 film for a final crater sequence shot using a SR2 on a Tyler mount in a helicopter.

"Without film's archival superiority those old images wouldn't exist."

Trespassing also relies on stock images from as far back as the 1890s. "This is another example of film technology coming through for me," says DeMenezes. "Without film's archival superiority those old images wouldn't exist. They are an important part of the human side of the story. You can look into the eyes of a Native American from 100 years ago and feel the emotion and the connection with what's happening today."

DeMenezes transferred his film to high definition video format for post-production at Westwind Media in Burbank, California. "It was an emotional experience to see how beautiful and graceful 16mm Kodak stock looks in the HD format, with one-tenth of the cost of shooting in HD!" He plans to bring **Trespassing** to the festival circuit and find a distributor. ■

Main Pic: Director - cinematographer of *Trespassing* Carlos Blumberg DeMenezes.

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