

Photo Shoot

Get the Picture, Writer and Director Rupert Wyatt's 11-minute pilot for his forthcoming feature **Fourth Wall**, was one of five films funded in 2004 through the UK Film Council and FilmFour's highest-level shorts scheme, Cinema Extreme, a programme aimed at encouraging filmmakers to explore new storytelling methods.

Wyatt was inspired to write **Get the Picture** by an actual event in 1971 when a war photographer took pictures of the torture and execution of suspected Pakistani collaborators by Bangladeshi guerrillas. Could the photographer have stopped the atrocity and, crucially, did his presence incite the event? The action-packed political thriller confronts the dilemma head on.

"Rupert creates wonderfully interesting and original compositions and cares enormously about images and lighting," says Director of Photography Philipp Blaubach who collaborated with Wyatt on **Subterrain**, **Ticks** and numerous corporate films and commercials. "It was his idea to combine close-ups of photographic equipment with metal and weaponry in the film's mysterious opening scene in an unexpected way, making them difficult to differentiate. A camera can be a deadly weapon; that's what this film is all about," remarks Blaubach.

Starring Brian Cox (**Troy**, **Manhunter**) and Lloyd Owen (**Monarch of the Glen**), **Get the Picture** is set "somewhere in Afghanistan on the Pakistan border", but budgetary restraints dictated an English location and a challenging three-day shoot. "We found a pretty wild looking concrete demolition site in Hackney, East London, in which a building was on the verge of collapse. The Production Designers added palm trees, broken telegraph poles and diffused smoke capsules, creating a remarkably realistic war zone."

Blaubach handheld the Super 16mm ARRI SR111, even on dolly shots, using close-ups to translate the energy of a photographer snapping away and finding focus. "I shot almost everything wide open to separate the background and direct the audience's eye with different planes of focus for a more filmic feel," he states. B Camera Operator, Matt Fisher, shot on a long lens with an Aaton Minima and Editor Martin Swann intercut the contrasting scenes to intensify the frenetic atmosphere.

The opening sequence in an army truck was shot inside a building. The roof of the truck was peeled away and replaced with black drapes and an 8ft by 16ft reflector was hung 15ft overhead. "The Gaffer made strategic slits in the drapes, allowing thin strokes of light from the overhead 4 kW's to filter through to the people inside the truck. It was the only instance in which lighting predominated over visual style," notes Blaubach.

He rated Eastman EXR 50D 7245 at 40 ASA for daylight exteriors and Kodak Vision 250D 7246 at 200 ASA for night-for-day indoor scenes for increased negative density. "The stocks intercut very well and gave me the finest negatives for blow up to 35mm anamorphic using an ARRI Laser. We cropped the image quite substantially for Scope 2:35 aspect ratio, leaving such a tiny negative that I worried whether it would hold up to huge magnification on a cinema screen, but the image quality is absolutely beautiful. At one point we considered using anamorphic lenses, but found that the resulting superwide aspect ratio of 1:3.32 (2x Super16) would have to be equally cropped on the left and right to arrive at the standard Scope ratio that there would have been no advantage."

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"Philipp and I have developed a fantastic partnership," comments Wyatt "and although I was slightly reticent about his idea of shooting on 16mm, I trusted his judgement. I'm well pleased with the final look; 16mm is relevant to the subject matter in terms of texture. It has a documentary feel, yet it retains a cinematic quality."

Get the Picture was premiered at the November 2004 Edinburgh Film Festival and has been screened at film festivals in Bristol, London, Stockholm and Chicago. It was also screened on FilmFour and Channel 4 in the UK. It will compete at the ICA Film Festival in London and the Florida Film Festival in April.

The full-length feature **Fourth Wall**, is currently being cast and is scheduled to start shooting in London in October. ■

Above: Actor Hosh Kane,
Below: Actor Brian Cox in a
tense atmospheric scene on
Get the Picture

PHOTO: PHILIPP BLAUBACH, DP

PHOTO: VENETA DEARDEN