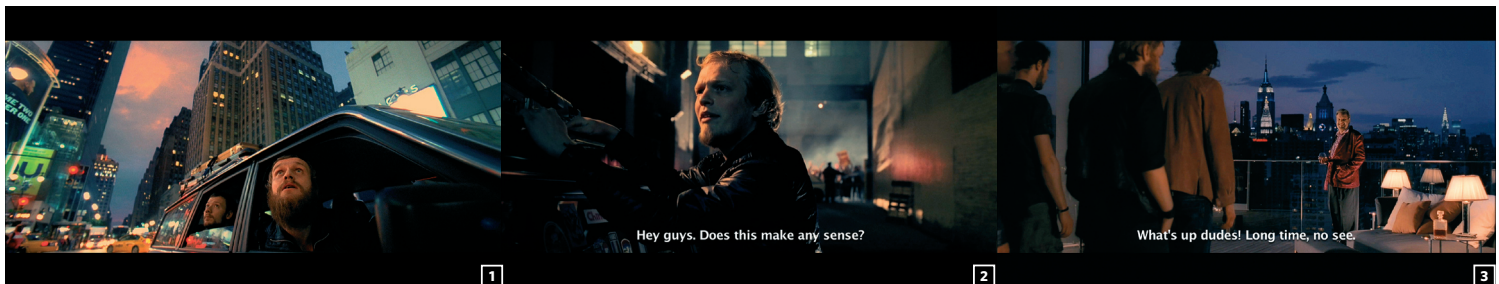


Making a change

Daniel Pearl shoots DNA spot



Change is the underlying message of a commercial produced for DNA, a telecommunications company that offers customers in Finland state-of-the-art mobile telephones and services, including a convenient and reliable gateway to the Internet.

The commercial takes audiences on a 90-second journey with a small rock music group through a string of successful performances at increasingly larger venues. However, they are still travelling in a beat-up car and staying at shabby places on the road, while their manager is getting wealthier and living high on the hog.

The spot was produced by production house Also Starring for the Sek & Grey ad agency. Both companies are headquartered in Helsinki. Markus Virpio was the director and Johannes Lassila was the producer. They chose Los Angeles-based cinematographer Daniel Pearl, ASC who was on the cutting edge of the music video revolution and has some 400 credits. He also has a diverse array of narrative film and commercial credits.

"The lead singer in the rock group was played by a member of the agency's art department who's also a musician," Pearl says. "We embarked on an adventure, shooting at different venues for two days in Manhattan, one on the road in New Jersey and at two locations in Helsinki. The group starts out playing small gigs for 20-25 people. They wind up performing at New York's Madison Square Garden."

Additional cinematography was done by Hena Blomberg, who filmed some of the performances by the band. The commercial was primarily produced in 35mm format and was composed in 2.40 aspect ratio for widescreen display. Pearl covered the action with an ARRI 435 camera that was generally on a dolly, and occasionally on a tripod, as well as with a few handheld shots. The exception was the day in New Jersey, when they filmed "running and gunning" shots in Super 16 format in order to render a somewhat edgier look of the group on the road.

The cinematographers rendered images onto KODAK VISION3 500T 5219 film at night and in darker venues, and on either KODAK VISION2 250D 5205 or 50D 5201 films in daylight, depending on the environment.

"I lit a scene with the group performing for 25 to 30 school kids through windows, and made it look like a summer day in

Finland," he says. "When we finished that scene, I blacked out the window and lit it as a nightclub for the next shot."

For the performance that was supposed to be at Madison Square Garden with a crowd of 20,000 people, they actually had some 2,000 volunteers in the audience. The illusion was created with stock footage and the power of suggestion.

The next shot is outside Madison Square Garden, where the group is loading instruments into the back of their old car with hundreds of girls at the end of the alley screaming for them. Police cars with flashing lights were blocking traffic. There were actually 40 to 50 extras. Pearl used backlight and smoke to make the crowd look larger.

"There's a magic moment in a night scene in Manhattan where there was enough ambient light to define the city skyline in the background," Pearl says. "At the same time, it was dark enough for the lights of the city to be seen. A night shot of them driving in Finland was filmed in available light, mainly streetlamps on the highway."

As the spot evolves, prosthetic make-up was used to make the manager look increasingly fatter. At the end, the band shows up at his posh penthouse apartment and demands a change. He tells them "no" because change is not good for them.

"You never see a phone in this commercial," Pearl concludes. "It's an engaging 90-second story which tells the audience that change is good and DNA is all about change."

Key Data at a glance

Director	Markus Virpio
Producer	Johannes Lassila
Cinematographer	Daniel Pearl, ASC
Additional cinematography	Hena Blomberg
Cameras	ARRI 435
Formats	35mm format in 2.40 aspect ratio for widescreen display
Film stock	KODAK VISION3 500T 5219 KODAK VISION2 250D 5205 KODAK VISION2 50D 5201

1-3 Stills from the DNA spot which was shot on 5219 pushed one-and-a-half stops to 1500 ASA in order to capture the ambient low level light. (Photos courtesy of Daniel Pearl, ASC)