

Creating a compelling short story on film



“Thematically and aesthetically, film was the automatic choice for image acquisition.”

Director Sam Catalfamo and cinematographer Michael Jari Davidson collaborated to create an “otherworldly” look for their award-winning, 10-minute short *Teen Getaway*.

The film follows two teenagers who slip away from a party and end up lost in the woods. They decide to live there indefinitely, but are later forced to deal with the inevitable fate of being suburban teenagers.

Catalfamo and Davidson discussed the look for the film while in pre-production, and European film movements from France and Italy were a theme. Davidson drew upon a variety of these films that had previously left an impression. “The story is influenced by European sensibilities with its bored, bourgeois kids looking to escape their stagnant scene,” says Davidson. “With that in mind, I took aesthetic cues from *La Nouvelle Vague* and Italian neo-realism, while Sam relied on the use of non-actors and developing a sense of automatism in their delivery.”

The majority of *Teen Getaway* was filmed over three days in an apple orchard on the banks of the Credit River in Brampton, Ontario. “Being away from the city center on a skeleton crew was a bit bold, but we were lucky enough that nothing unexpected happened while in production,” explains Davidson. “The biggest challenge was our surroundings and the elements. We were loading mags in a dusty barn. We had to deal with swarms of mosquitoes, as well as the blistering sun.”

Catalfamo and Davidson chose a variety of Kodak stocks to achieve *Teen Getaway*’s dreamlike look. “One of the film stocks we chose was KODAK VISION2 50D Color Negative Film 5201, which gave us a shooting ratio of 3:1. It held up incredibly well, even in the high-contrast day scenes with blazing overhead sun. We also mixed gauges, shooting Super 16mm (7201) for an underwater scene, and some Super 8mm for the end credits.

“Thematically and aesthetically, film was the automatic choice for image acquisition because it contributed to the surreal feeling throughout the film that keeps the audience guessing,” says Davidson.

Since they were shooting in somewhat rough locations, Davidson chose an ARRIFLEX BL4 Evolution as his A Camera because of its rugged design. He used a standard set of Zeiss T1.3 super speed lenses. “I’m a big fan of 35mm in most situations,” he says. “It gives just that extra nudge of air around the subject, for loose two-shots, even close ups.

“I used an Angenieux 25-250mm T3.5 HR zoom for one of the most beautiful shots in the film; a long-lens medium shot of the two lovers drifting along with the river’s current. The sharp detail the 5201 picked up in the splashing water is just sublime.”

Teen Getaway was submitted with over 500 entries to the 2010 Toronto International Film Festival Student Film Showcase, and subsequently won Best Film, as decided by a panel of industry judges. One of the awards for winning the Showcase was an ARRILASER film-out exhibition print courtesy of Technicolor Toronto.

Teen Getaway was also an official selection at last year’s Cinefest Sudbury International Film Festival, and will continue to make the rounds on the festival circuit.

Key Data at a glance

Director	Sam Catalfamo
Cinematographer	Michael Jari Davidson
Camera/Lens	ARRIFLEX BL4 Evolution with Zeiss T1.3 super speed lenses
Formats	3:1.
Film stock	KODAK VISION2 50D Color Negative Film 5201