

# Stonehouse shoots TV spot in darkness

Film stock KODAK VISION3 500T 7219

Camera Aaton XTRplus



**Jeff Stonehouse has more than 100 national television commercial cinematography credits in addition to documentaries and music videos. On a recent series of commercials for the clothing manufacturer Carhartt, he encountered a challenging lighting situation like none he had ever faced.**

The campaign, which features a series of tough guys like cowboys and welders at work, took Stonehouse and director Andrew Walton of Good Films, Inc., a mile-and-a-half underground into a West Virginia coal mine. "There were 40-inch-high ceilings,

and it was claustrophobic and completely dark," Stonehouse recalls.

He thought that the mine was a perfect place to test the new KODAK VISION3 500T 7219 film. "I shot the new film side by side with the older (KODAK VISION2 500T) 7218 film," he says. "I'm a fan of the 7218 but the new film blew me away. The grain just disappeared, in spite of most of the images being three stops underexposed. It rendered the midtones beautifully, and I couldn't believe the detail I was getting out of the black coal on the mine walls."

The camera was an Aaton XTRplus modified to allow for a 90-degree shutter. The cowboys and welders were shot with shutter settings as low as 15 degrees. "Those settings gave certain crispness and a snappier quality, and more of a kinetic feel to the energy of the workers," he says.

Stonehouse brought some compact light fixtures into the mine. "We had some smaller HMIs, Joker 800s and 12-by-12 Litepanels," he says. "The coalminers provided power from a generator they had in the mine. We also ran battery belts for some of the Litepanels and a Joker 200 that we used as we were riding the rails up and out of the mine.

"It was important to capture some detail of the background in order to place the miners in this environment," he says. "If I had lost that detail, it would just be a face in the blackness. I got so much detail where I hadn't expected to get it. I was thrilled."

Stonehouse used a Tiffen Storm 1 filter to bring a slight coolness to the images, which contrasted the warmth he captured in images of cowboys and welders that made up the rest of the spot.

"The resulting flesh tones of the miners' faces had a gorgeous

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creamy, pastel quality that I thought was beautiful," he says. "I expected to see just teeth and eyes, given the extremely low-light levels. The results completely exceeded my expectations."

"Super 16mm was the right format in the tight spaces," he says. "Andrew and I often end up in real situations where we have to move fast in cramped spaces, and Super 16 has the necessary ease of use and flexibility, and we're not compromising quality."

The film was transferred with an URSA telecine at Pixel Farm, in Minneapolis, Minnesota. The dailies timer was Oscar Oboza.

Stonehouse scoffs at the antiquated notion that Super 16 is inadequate for HD display. "That is a myth," he says. "Half my reel is Super 16 and the other half is 35mm. I sit people down, professionals, and ask them to identify which was which, and people can't. Two years ago, I shot a Super 16 spot with Martin Granger from Moxie Pictures for Combos® Snacks, and it's won just about every award you can win in advertising. These Carhartt spots are finished and aired in HD, and the image quality is fantastic."