

# Mini Marathon



"Our art director sourced thin rubber sheeting that matched the colour of the tarmac in order to save the toddlers' knees and we had a barrier of parents blocking the way as their toddlers raced towards the edge of an elevated highway!"

Camera lenses and filters

ARRI 435 fitted with an old Angenieux zoom and Low Contrast and Chocolate filters

Film stock

KODAK VISION2 100T 5212

Forsman & Bodenfors' appealing commercial for Libero Up&Go disposable nappies features a 'mini' *Marathon*, but it's the runners that constitute the 'mini' element. They're under two years old.

Shot in Cape Town, South Africa, *Marathon* was produced by Anders Skog Films, a Swedish company formed in 1995 by director/scriptwriter Anders Skog and producer Sonia Maggioni. "My experience of Anders is that, most importantly, he wants to tell a believable and engaging story," remarks Maggioni. "This commercial began as a fairly loose script about children running through various city locations, but he honed it into one in which the characters were given a purpose." Skog prepared his reference from Kon Ichikawa's documentary footage of the 1964 Tokyo Olympics. "It was a real pleasure to give everyone a very clear idea of Anders' creative vision with such beautiful reference material," she notes.

"We would have had to shut down city streets in order to shoot on them, but we found a solution with the help of our contact in South Africa, the Big Pictures services, and shot on two short sections of unfinished roads known as 'cut off highways.'" They were fully controllable and Anders was able to create the feeling of a cross-city marathon. Our art director sourced thin rubber sheeting that matched the colour of the tarmac in order to save the toddlers' knees and we had a barrier of parents blocking the way as their toddlers raced towards the edge of an elevated highway!"

"Ken Jennings, the 'baby wrangler', was a wonder to watch," continues Maggioni. "It was such a pleasure to watch the shoot develop and we all marvelled at what was unfolding in front of us. Even at the point of watching the dailies, we knew we were looking at something special. Anders' clever documentary style matched his treatment and provided him with flexibility on his edit in Final Cut and director of photography Carl Sundberg was able to spot and 'steal' some wonderful shots that made the final edit."

Sundberg set out to replicate the look of Ichikawa's documentary, which involved numerous crews shooting stylish news footage on 50mm. "Our approach was time saving and made us go into a naturalistic way of shooting and lighting," says the DP who shot on an ARRI 435 fitted with an old Angenieux zoom. Determined to achieve a soft look in camera as well as in telecine, he tested a selection of soft filters to find the right vintage look. He eventually opted for Low Contrast and Chocolate filters and KODAK VISION2 100T 5212. "I know the stock well; it's very soft and slow and I could bring the depth of focus down. If I'd used a faster stock, it would have necessitated a lot of NDs," he says. "The key was rigorous preparation and child psychology and, once we danced to the tune of the toddlers, everything ran smoothly!"

A team of shake-compositors replaced the thin rubber sheeting on the road with the original tarmac, and toddlers and parents were duplicated in the wide shots to enhance the visual impact. The Chimney Pot post house in Stockholm helped to coordinate the post production work in the final grading and on line, and also supervised the visual effects. *Marathon* was scanned in HD and later graded on FilmMaster.

"I've had the privilege of working with Anders for several years and it is always an enormous pleasure," concludes Maggioni. "I feel that I have a small understanding of his creative process and I enjoy playing a small role within it."

*Marathon* was awarded the Bronze Lion at the Cannes Advertising Film Festival and the Bronze Medal at the New York Film Festival. Skog scooped the Gold Award for Best Direction at the New York Film Festival and the Golden Podium Award for best sports-related advertising film at the last SPORTEL-Monaco competition. Watch it at [www.andersskogfilms.com/pages/commercials/showreel/s1\\_libero.htm](http://www.andersskogfilms.com/pages/commercials/showreel/s1_libero.htm)