

Filming Reunion

creative freedom on a budget

Film stocks:

KODAK VISION3 500T 7219 and KODAK VISION2 250D 7205, KODAK VISION2 200T 7217

How do you create visually compelling images in ordinary surroundings? Learan Kahanov knew the answer to that question was one of the keys to success on *Reunion*, an independent feature with a limited budget. In it, members of a Yale secret society reunite 10 years after the death of one of their own. Most of the drama is revealed in dialog and on the faces of the characters, who gather in a corporate conference room and other locales to ponder their lives.

"Because we had to make these spaces feel realistic, I knew this wasn't going to be a movie about bold lighting," the cinematographer says. "It was going to be about where to place and move the camera. We used composition and movement to connect or isolate characters when the story called for it."

The budget was tight and the schedule was a compressed 19 days. Kahanov and director Alan Hruska considered digital formats, but decided to shoot in the Super 16mm film format. "We chose Super 16 because of the ease and speed of production," says Kahanov. "There's no engineer, no video village, no massive monitors to lug and no tether."

"Also, the film has a visual theme using windows, and many of our main interior locations had floor-to-ceiling windows," he adds. "How do you handle that with HD? We needed the interior light to feel normal while balancing to bright exterior daylight. We didn't have the time, manpower or gear to pump in that much light. I knew that film would have the dynamic range to handle those situations."

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The conference room location where a third of the film takes place was built on a stage at Broadway Stages in Brooklyn, New York. A 90-foot TransLite of the cityscape was visible through two layers of window glass that enclosed a hallway along one side. A large, heavy conference table dominated the room, and Kahanov used it to his advantage. Sometimes he placed one of the two ARRI SR3 cameras on a P+S Technik

SKATER® Mini Camera Dolly and rolled it across the surface of the table. In most other situations, the camera was on a Fisher Model 10 dolly outside the characters' chairs.

Kahanov used two wider angle 16mm Cooke S4 lenses along with a set of ARRI/Zeiss Ultra Primes designed for 35mm format. In daylight interior and exterior situations, he recorded images on KODAK VISION2 250D 7205

7205 film having the range in overexposure, I knew I could let the outside go hot and still retain detail on the negative. If I had been shooting HD, I would have needed at least two times the firepower in lights."

Kahanov plans to collaborate with New York's Mega Playground's Jason Crump on the digital intermediate timing. Crump also handled the tests and dailies

film. In the conference room set and some other interiors, he used KODAK VISION2 200T 7217 stock. Night exterior and most night interior scenes were captured on KODAK VISION3 500T 7219 film.

"We tested 7219 and were blown away by the tight grain structure and how far it dug into the shadows," says Kahanov. "Seeing how much latitude the 7219 had, I was able to reduce my lighting order significantly, and with the

transfers, so he already knows the footage and Kahanov's intentions.

Crump will transfer the film images as 4:4:4 log encoded video to HDCAM SR format to capture the full dynamic range of the negative. "We established a working relationship during dailies that will continue in the DI," says Crump. "I'm looking forward to grading *Reunion* with Learan."



1 A scene from *Reunion* shot in New York City using KODAK VISION3 stock to help reduce the lighting package. (L-R: Cynthia Stevenson, Alice Evans, David Thornton, Amy Pietz, Jessica Hecht, Chris McDonald, Josh Pais, Anna Khaja, Jamey Sheridan) Photo by John Clifford