

"Paul Weiland's autobiographical film *Sixty Six* was never going to be a run-of-the-mill experience," remarks award-winning commercials Director of Photography Daniel Landin of his debut feature.

Set in suburban England in the summer of 1966 as the country is gripped by World Cup fever, young Bernie Reubens looks forward to his forthcoming Bar Mitzvah. His parents, however, are increasingly preoccupied with business problems and their wilful older son. Worse still, his Bar Mitzvah is on the same day as the Cup Final and, when England qualifies, Bernie's big day looks set for disaster.

## The amazing summer of *Sixty Six*

Landin had already enjoyed several collaborations with Director Weiland (*Roseanna's Grave*, *City Slickers II*), but admits the personal aspect of *Sixty Six* held a particular interest for him. "Paul's singular take on English suburban life in the mid 1960s was viewed from his family who were still living in the 1950s, so it was important that the film had a feeling of reality. These were flawed and sympathetic as well as tragically funny characters," he states. "I had a strong sense that *Sixty Six* should not be a sanitised or rose-tinted period film, but rather about relationships, with vintage backdrops taking second place." Landin resisted the temptation to shoot 1:235, which he felt would over-emphasise the visual, and settled for 1:185.

The house interiors were shot on two stages and propped with ornaments and fixtures of a 1960s Jewish home, many of which came from Weiland's mother. Landin recalls the challenge of maintaining rich shadows and crisp skin tones whilst shooting in cramped interiors. "We lit most of our location interiors with daylight Kino Flos, rigging them wherever possible so 'A' Camera Operator Phillip Sindall, Paul and myself could have maximum freedom blocking out the shot with the actors. These were complemented with exterior 6kW and 12kW ARRI sun PARs generally with some light CTS gels for sunlight. Having started all our location interiors as daylight balanced with Kodak VISION2 250D 5205, we shifted to 200 tungsten and sometimes had to intercut reverses with location work shot weeks earlier. Challenging..." With ARRIcams and Ultraprimes on a Fisher 11 dolly, Landin avoided the need to "fly too many walls, which helped the feeling of naturalism and occasional claustrophobic oppressiveness in the family home."

Below: Gregg Sulkin as Bernie Reubens in Working Title's *Sixty Six*.

His greatest challenge came at Fulham Football Club where shots were needed for intercutting with original 1966 35mm World Cup Final negative. "We had a number of archive shots on low quality tape for reference, but obviously no data regarding lens sizes and inclination, so I decided to stick with 5205 and duplicated the higher contrast feel of the archive film through lighting. When we went into MPC we analysed the original negative and immediately realised that grain was the biggest factor but digital trickery defocused some of the larger green areas. We also softened our modern camera negative to balance the 40 year difference in stocks."

The eight week London shooting schedule averaged ten hour days with twenty set-ups on 'A' camera and simultaneous complementary shots on 'B' camera. "My long-term collaboration with Gaffer Barry Miller meant he roughed out scenes while we were turning over," remarks Landin. "I've had my fair share of back-to-back 18 hour days shooting promos and music videos, so the pace wasn't new, but the long haul brought fresh demands. Good humour was essential and we had a great team."

"Dan is an incredibly talented DP and his input was considerable," notes Weiland. "The fact that he operated 'B' camera was invaluable. He used very few lights, his shots were always spot on and he was involved with many decisions right from pre-production. His experience on promos and commercials meant he was used to working at a fast pace. It's a beautiful film with a great atmosphere and what's really interesting is that I'm getting so many compliments on its look and we haven't even graded it yet. *Sixty Six* is about the period when I was 13 and is based on a speech I made at my 50<sup>th</sup> birthday party. It's been an amazing journey for me." ■

