

FUJIFILM presents

# indieVIEW

focus on **INDIES**

## ALSO



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## SPECIAL DELIVERY

Bobby Bukowski Shoots  
**The Messenger**

**The Messenger**  
Cinematographer Bobby Bukowski Sporting an Easyrig for the Handheld Intensive Shoot page 4

# Cinematographers on the Art and Craft of Filmmaking

compiled from articles in Fujifilm's *Exposure USA* & *IndieView* magazines



*"If I want a contrasty look, I can light it contrasty. If I want to soften it up, I can add a soft filter. It's a great help to have a high-speed negative with tight grain like the Eterna 500T that I can shoot under any circumstances and get such a rich negative."*

—Stephen Kazmierski ▶  
On the Hook/IndieView, 2008

*"[Director Mark Pellington] and I gravitated to the softness of the color space[of the Fujifilm Eterna 250T and 500D stocks]... We had a modest budget and had no budget for huge silks over actors and actresses. We knew we would be shooting in direct overhead sunlight at mid-day, and thought this [the softness of these stocks] would work best for that look."*

—Eric Schmidt ▶

Henry Poole is Here/ExposureUSA, Spring 2008



*"I love the skin tones [of Vivid 160T]. They're like velvet. I think they are beautiful...I've seen the Eterna Vivid 160 cut together perfectly with Fujifilm's other film stocks too."*

—James Whitaker ▶  
American Express campaign/  
ExposureUSA, Spring 2008

*"As soon as I saw the test [of Eterna 400T], I instantly said, 'There's my movie!' Even the guys at Technicolor were blown away by the Eterna's skin tone rendition and the stock's dynamic range. And the Eterna had great color stability in under- and over-exposure."*

—Philip D. Schwartz ▶

The Golden Boys/IndieView, 2008



FUJIFILM presents  
**indieVIEW**  
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EDITOR Jon Silberg

CONTRIBUTORS Bob Degus,  
Jon Silberg

ART DIRECTOR Riva Danzig

**Editor's Note:** The opinions expressed in **indieview** are those of the people interviewed. They do not necessarily represent the opinions of Fujifilm.

**Address your questions and comments to:**

Sandra Kurotobi, Fujifilm USA, Inc  
2220 W. Magnolia Blvd.  
Burbank, CA 91506  
p: 888-424-3854 f: 323-465-8279  
Email: Sandy\_Kurotobi@fujifilm.com

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# ALL THE WORLD'S A *Stage*

## Yaron Orbach Seeks to Capture the Man Behind the Performer

by Jon Silberg

**A**n *Englishman in New York* wasn't just another job for cinematographer Yaron Orbach. The story about raconteur Quentin Crisp's life in New York from the mid-1970s through to his death in 1999, stars John Hurt, who first gained notoriety portraying Crisp in the British film, *The Naked Civil Servant* in 1975. Orbach says of shooting this project—to be shown in January on British television and released subsequently as a feature—that the star and veteran British television Director Richard Laxton created an inspiring emotionally charged atmosphere on set.

Set in New York and covering a span of some 25 years, the film uses fact mixed with dramatic license to trace Crisp's eccentric life, some of his close relationships and his public downfall from the gay community after he referred to the '80s' AIDS epidemic as "a fad."

Shooting in the Super16 format with ARRI 416 cameras and Zeiss UltraPrime lenses, Orbach used Fujifilm Eterna 250D for day interiors, 250T for all night work and F-series 64D for day exteriors.

Orbach's approach to lighting subtly changes as Crisp's story unfolds. "The first part is slightly warm," he says, referring to the portion of the film concerning his triumphant arrival in New York following his British success. "He's very popular. We have a theme of this man who's always onstage. He would answer the most mundane question with a very elegant, philosophical response. He was performing even when he was just talking to one or two people."

The cinematographer with gaffer Shawne Greene, used a lot of very warm, dimmed-down tungsten sources to visually help define his early (he was in his 60s even then!) American success. He also found ways to light Hurt




from below with something of a theatrical look to almost subliminally suggest this concept of always being "on."

"We were trying to get to the private man," Orbach says. "We kept asking the question, 'When is this guy not performing?' So the color gradually becomes a little cooler and the compositions put him a little more alone inside the frame. He's a little bit isolated. It's not meant to be obvious at all; it's a layer underneath. But if you see the beginning and the end side by side, you'd notice a shift."

Orbach and operator Ludovic Littee went for a handheld look, the cinematographer says, "but a very controlled and deliberate kind of handheld look—not jarring, but just sitting there breathing a little."

A lot of the creative satisfaction Orbach felt from working on this project originated with the director and star. "They were two powerhouses," he says. "Richard Laxton started directing for the BBC 15 years ago when he was just 25 and he has a very deep understanding of emotion, drama and character in addition to a strong grasp of composition and lighting."

"Couple that with John Hurt," Orbach concludes, "who was returning after so many years to play the same person that made him famous, in a sense completing a circle in his own life and career. He brought such energy to the set and so much emotion and subtlety to his performance. There were times I'd shed a tear during a take and often the crew would clap when the director yelled 'cut.' The shoot was really something special." 

Cinematographer Yaron Orbach. Inset: John Hurt as Quentin Crisp is the 1975 film *The Naked Civil Servant*.

### STOCKS USED

16mm

*An Englishman in  
New York*  
Eterna 250D  
Eterna 250T  
F-64D

# SPECIAL DELIVERY

## Bobby Bukowski's Camera Tracks **THE MESSENGER**

by Jon Silberg

**C**inematographer Bobby Bukowski was drawn to *The Messenger* because of the raw, emotional power he got from the script by Alessandro Camon Oren Moverman (also the director). It tells the story of a couple of soldiers who work together in the gruesome job of informing people that their next of kin has died in battle. They represent the very worst fear of those they call on. To the older member of the team it's just a job; He's been doing this for years without ever seeing a real battle.

Will (Ben Foster) in a reflective moment.



The younger one has just returned from a violent tour in Iraq and has trouble distancing himself from his part in people's real tragedies to the point where he ends up getting far too close to one fallen serviceman's wife.

In preparing to direct *The Messenger*, Moverman shared with Bukowski his notion about using the camera in fairly wide extended takes to capture the actors' behavior without conventional blocking and coverage. The cast, led by Ben Foster as Will, the newbie, Woody Harrelson as Tony, the seasoned veteran and Samantha Morton playing the recently-widowed Olivia, was encouraged to react in real time as Bukowski followed with his camera. This technique was most pronounced during the scenes where the two men deliver their notifications.

"There are six notifications in the film," Bukowski says. "Oren said he wanted each one to be its own 'short film' and to approach them as a single unrehearsed take. I carried an ARRI Lite with a lightweight Optimo zoom and a 400-foot magazine for these and just followed the actors wherever they wanted to go."

Bukowski used a camera mount from Easyrig to help redistribute the weight of the camera and relied on the nearly seven minutes of film that the 400-foot mag yielded because he was shooting 3-perf super 35 format. "We would start the notifications from outside," he says, "which introduced a bit of a challenge because I'd be stopped down on the lens and then when we'd go inside a house I would have to open up to at least T-2.8. I couldn't add much light from outside because we'd have seen the lighting instruments on the outside

**“I really like the color and the grain structure of the Eterna 400T and Reala 500D.”**

**—Bobby Bukowski**

of the house at the beginning of the take, so most of the interior lighting had to come from interior practicals.

“When those notifications occurred,” he adds, “all bets were off. If the actors wanted to go down flights of stairs and back up again or walk from room to room, I would follow them. We’d do a few takes of each of the notifications and there are a few cuts in each of these scenes in the final movie but really very few.”

Even for the rest of the film, which wasn’t covered with quite such intense methods—Bukowski used an ARRI Studio body, often on sticks or dollies and there was generally a little bit more coverage, though there is still very little cutting. “I don’t think there is a single cut-away in the whole film,” he says. “I think the way we shot this helped imbue the film with a sense of immediacy and truth.”

The cinematographer chose to shoot *The Messenger* with Fujifilm Eterna 400T and Reala 500D. “I really like the color and the grain structure of these stocks,” he explains. “I like to pull process film because it really gives you a beautiful, finegrain quality with a lower contrast and lower saturation. And I love the flesh tone in these stocks. I find it more gold than red. For want of a better word, it gives the flesh tones a ‘creamy’ texture.”

*The Messenger* was shot in 2.35:1 widescreen, Bukowski says, in part to help portray Will’s loneliness. “The character leads an ascetic lifestyle,” he elaborates. “We used the wide frame to show him surrounded by emptiness. There’s a lot of darkness in the frame as well, to accentuate the negative space surrounding him. Often, in the film, a character will just be on one side of the frame and the remaining portion of the frame is left black with just a small practical out of focus in the background.”

Bukowski found the collaboration with Moverman creatively rewarding. “In prep,” the cinematographer recalls, “he made sure the story was in my head and my heart and he trusted me to shoot without pre-planning a lot of what the camera was supposed to do. It was a liberating approach to shooting a scene without having



Left: Bobby Bukowski with his Easyrig camera mount. Below: Longtime messenger Tony (Woody Harrelson) confers with newbie Will (Foster).

seen it rehearsed.

“Oren wanted me to use the camera as a human being’s eye in the room observing what’s happening between the characters,” Bukowski continues. Depending on who was talking or what grabbed my attention in the scene I would focus the camera in that direction or zoom in on whatever I found captivating. I think the approach worked very well for the film.”

## **STOCKS USED**

*The Messenger*  
Eterna 500T  
Reala 500D



# SOULS ON ICE

## Andrij Parekh Works as Cinematographer and Producer to Bring **COLD SOULS** to Life

by Jon Silberg

**C**inematographer Andrij Parekh had worked with creative collaborator (and life partner) Sophie Barthes on two short films and a documentary when she told him about a dream she'd had—a dream that would become the basis of *Cold Souls*, her feature debut as a writer/director. In the dream, which Barthes had after spending a night reading C. G. Jung's classic psychology text *Modern Man in Search of a Soul*, she found herself in some kind of futuristic medical office where people are having their souls removed. Woody Allen happens to be ahead of her in line and when he is shown his extracted soul, he is infuriated to see that it looks like...a chickpea! The dream ended right before getting to see what her own soul looked like.

Writer/director Barthes fleshed out the concept into an unusual tale of a New York actor who visits a "soul storage" facility to have his own soul removed because his role as Anton Chekhov's *Uncle Vanya* is causing him

so much emotional distress. This leads to complications, which ultimately take him to St. Petersburg, Russia. Parekh, who shares Barthes' sensibility and sense of humor, was so excited by the script that he knew he wanted to bring his talents as a cinematographer to the project and also to act as a producer. "It was such a humorous, poetic and imaginative script," he declares. "It felt like Nikolai Gogol's *Dead Souls* meets Woody Allen's *Sleeper*."

Neither Parekh nor Barthes thought financing was a forgone conclusion by any stretch, given the unusual concept but then the script was given an award at the Nantucket Film Festival. On her trip to collect her prize, Barthes happened to meet the actor she'd envisioned as the ideal lead: Paul Giamatti. She pitched it to him and he accepted the role. Giamatti's involvement brought along other cast members, including Emily Watson, Dina Korzun and David Strathairn, and the financing necessary to make it as a small indie feature.

Parekh, whose approach to lighting in films such as *August* and *Half Nelson* is very understated and naturalistic, embraced some aspects of that aesthetic for *Cold Souls*, rather than relying overtly bizarre camerawork to underscore the unusual storyline. "It's not that it looks like those other films," he stresses, "but my lighting in general has evolved with more simplicity, using fewer units, so that I'm lighting rooms, not faces."

The cinematographer brings a different, more stylistic and theatrical feel to the points in the film called "soul sequences"—a term that will make sense when you see *Cold Souls*. For those, the cinematographer used "poor man's" visual effects to alter the image. "For some of the shots I mounted a lens from my eyeglasses in front of the camera lens," he notes.

Paul Giamatti's character's quest takes him to freezing St. Petersburg.

Photo by Adam Bell



“I love the soft palette of [Eterna 400T].  
...I’ve used the 400T before and I really  
like its texture and softness.”

—Andrij Parekh

The imagery primarily takes on a straightforward appearance with a lot of soft natural and bounced light, letting the locations and environment speak for themselves. “We shot 75% of the movie in New York and 25% in St. Petersburg,” he explains. “New York has a kind of sharp, cold winter light while St. Petersburg’s light has a lot of yellow and green in it— so that was the look I went for in each place.”

The cinematographer shot everything but the “soul sequences” on Fujifilm Eterna 400T. “I love the soft palette of that stock,” he says. “I don’t like the ‘crushed black’ look or stocks that look too ‘punchy’ with too many primary colors. I’ve used the 400T before and I really like its texture and softness.”

The Eterna 400T looks best to his eye when printed on Fujifilm’s higher-contrast release stock—the qualities of which give just a bit of extra bite to the negative’s softness. And he shot with ARRICAM Lites and Studios (in New York) and a Moviecam Compact (in Russia) in traditional 1.85:1 format, expecting to do a photochemical finish. However, through the post process, Parekh realized that as *Cold Souls* was a totally independent film made with no distribution deal in place, he really couldn’t



Above: Cinematographer/producer Andrij Parekh and writer/director Sophie Barthes examine a composition. Photo by Roman Prokoshin

guarantee what stock it would be released on if it were to get a theatrical release. So he decided to grade it digitally with Colorist Tim Stipan at Technicolor, New York, where the negative had also been processed. “By taking the film through a digital intermediate,” Parekh notes, “I could make sure it could have the look I wanted even it was released on the lower-contrast Fujifilm print stock.”

Wearing his producer hat, Parekh marvels at the series of events that led up to getting Giamatti attached and turning such a difficult-to-categorize story into a viable project. Barthes hadn’t had much hope about the Nantucket festival screenplay competition. Not only did the script win the competition but that fact gave her totally unexpected access to her absolutely ideal lead. And, Parekh sums up, “There aren’t that many people who could have played this part so well. Paul Giamatti plays an actor who has a soul and doesn’t have a soul and then has somebody else’s soul. Paul’s range is just incredible!”

Left: Barthes and Giamatti study playback. Photo by Adam Bell



**STOCK  
USED\***  
*Cold Souls*  
Eterna 400T  
\*partial



# THE FAMILY

Jonathan Hall on Gangster  
Picture **CHARLIE VALENTINE**

by **Bob Degus**

**D**irector Jesse Johnson and Cinematographer Jonathan Hall wanted the film *Charlie Valentine* to have a textured, *film noir* look inspired in part by the work of Gordon Willis, ASC on the *Godfather* movies. The contemporary drama concerns a gangster, Valentine (Raymond J. Barry), his search to reunite with his troubled son, Danny (Michael Weatherly), and a major heist.

The initial decision to shoot *Charlie Valentine* digitally worried the cinematographer. "I knew that because of our very limited shooting schedule," he says, "the days were going to be hectic. If I was working digitally, it would require more time dealing with monitors and scopes to do each setup than it would if we shot film. This would have slowed us down and I predicted the final product wouldn't have been what we wanted it to be."

Hall's solution came from embracing a once-popular, decades-old 35mm format, originally called Technoscope, which was used on such late-60s/early 70s classics as *Once Upon a Time in the West*, *American Graffiti*, and *THX-1138*. Technoscope was a drive and aperture plate system that enabled users to shoot a 2-perf frame (smaller than traditional 4-perf or super 35 3-perf) in a 2.35:1 aspect ratio. The format was always a trade-off for budget-challenged productions. Shooting 2-perf

essentially cut the cost of the film in half, bringing a 35mm widescreen option into the affordable range. But the smaller image area and the postproduction blowup



Above:  
Cinematographer  
Jonathan Hall  
with a Panavision  
Platinum rigged to  
shoot in the  
2-perf format.  
Right: Danny  
Valentine (Michael  
Weatherly)  
surveys the strip  
club where he  
works.

Photos by  
Jack Zeman



required to project it theatrically in anamorphic 4-perf format compromised image resolution and accentuated grain.

"I've shot various Fujifilm stocks for a few years," says Hall, who chose Eterna 500T and Vivid 160T for *Valentine*. "I knew how they behaved and I knew that the grain structure was tight enough that it would hold all the characteristics we wanted, even while we were 'punching into' the negative so much.

"The story required several distinct looks," Hall continues. "There is a series of flashbacks that different characters have throughout the film. We used one of the

looks for portions where Danny's recalling his earlier life in prison. We wanted to give the impression almost that Danny is an animal in a cage. I used very hot lighting so there were only highlights and shadows. I also gelled the lights to create a very nasty green-feel and added a bit of a flicker to it on set so the scenes looked like they were lit by bad fluorescents while the skin tones looked hyper-saturated. This was all shot handheld, with wide angle lenses, so I could be right up close to someone and the audience could still see the world around them."

For these sequences Hall used the Vivid 160T and pushed it one or two stops to help add contrast and grain, suggesting almost a "retro Super-8" feel.

With much of the remainder of the film, Hall and Johnson wanted to exchange that look for something more naturalistic with a desaturated feel. "For instance, in Danny's loft apartment, we used three existing giant bay windows as the big daytime wash light that comes in and fills the room, bouncing off the hardwood floors and white walls. It worked as a very flat edge light that was very natural, again allowing us to see everything in the room, yet it was very peaceful. We enhanced this feel by using long lenses and slow dolly moves."

Here, Hall again used the Vivid 160T without correcting for the daylight color temperature. As he explains "I could gain 2/3 of a stop in exposure and I was after a bit of a cooler look here so it worked well not using the 85 filter."

Hall was also drawn to the Eterna 500T and Vivid 160T because of his previous experience with them in digital postproduction. "The stocks are designed with digital finishing in mind, and I've had great luck with them. So when it came to doing the [digital grading] on *Charlie Valentine*, we wanted to be able to stretch the look to make it more colorful, saturated and contrasty and these stocks really gave us have a lot of options." ▶

Father and son, Danny (Weatherly) and Charlie Valentine (Raymond J. Barrie), assess a windfall. Left: Charlie intimidating a member of his crew before a heist.



## STOCKS USED

*Charlie Valentine*  
Eterna 500T  
Vivid 160T

# End of the Road

Sharone Meir Takes a Trip  
Down *Dark Streets*

by Bob Degus

**D**ark Streets defies easy categorization. That's because the 1920s Jazz-age period piece/film noir/musical, directed by Rachel Samuels and lensed by Sharone Meir, takes place entirely inside a man's head during the last few moments of his life, as he lies on the ground bleeding.

"It's a bit like the setup from *Sunset Blvd.*," says Meir, referring to Billy Wilder's 1950 classic, which is told in flashback by William Holden's character who is already floating dead in a swimming pool at the start. "It's the same idea," the cinematographer explains. "Here I am. Let me tell you how I got here! It was a very different sort of project for me. Most of the work I've done has been a lot more realistic and gritty, where this is all stream-of-

consciousness style. And that gave me a lot of freedom to go places visually."

Meir had long wanted to make use of the swing and shift lenses cinematographers can use to alter perspective and depth of field. During preparation for *Dark Streets*, Meir and Samuels traded ideas about inexpensive techniques that could put a unique stamp on the images that would help indicate the unreality of what the audience is seeing. Extensive post work and computer-generated imagery were beyond the budget's scope.

"I told Rachel I had always wanted to shoot an entire movie on swing and shift lenses," Meir recalls, noting Samuels' declaration: "Your dream might well come true! Little did I know, it would turn out to be a perfect example of 'Be careful what you wish for,' because Rachel also wanted to be moving the camera all the time! This is something you don't typically want to attempt with these lenses. For one thing, there are no markings on the barrel to allow for follow focus. But we ended up trying it anyway. And with a lot of patience, especially from the cast, we did it."

He explains that Otto Nemenz adapted a Preston Cinema Systems motor designed for remote follow focus, to the sprocket gear where the manual focus knob on the swing and shift lens is normally attached. Then they used the control knob to mark out the focus points for the lens. "A full turn on the remote focus knob would give us everything within the shot from deepest focus to the most shallow," Meir adds.

Calculating focus was an unusually complicated procedure because once the lens was shifted away

Below: Chaz (Gabriel Mann) and Crystal (Bijou Phillips) exchange a glance.

Photos  
Jack Zeman  
©Samuel  
Goldwyn Films  
/ LA Dark  
Streets, LLC



# “[Fujifilm Eterna 500T] holds excellent detail in the blacks.” —Sharone Meir



The Lieutenant (Elias Koteas) takes aim.

Bottom left: Madeline (Izabella Miko) in a musical number.  
Bottom Right: Chazz and Crystal share a night out.

from the film plane, it was no longer a simple linear measurement of how many feet from the camera the subject was, but rather it involved calculating a set of angles in relation to the film plane, the degree of swing and shift, the action of the scene and the movement of the camera.

“Just a simple push-in on somebody,” Meir says, “was an extraordinarily complex focus pull because you would have to not only consider the push-in distance, but also the left-right movement of the actors, which you normally

wouldn't have to worry about.”

The lenses also presented another issue in that they don't have a very wide aperture. “Then,” Meir adds, “depending on the degree of angle in your shift, you lose up to another stop. This became more critical when we wanted to shoot at 40 or 60 fps.”

Meir chose to shoot Fujifilm's Eterna 500T after his positive experience with the emulsion on the film *Peaceful Warrior* [See *ExposureUSA* magazine Fall, 2006]. “It holds excellent detail in the blacks,” he says, “and I found it to be a very linear stock in that the colors don't get cold at the high end and too red in the lows.

“It is very clean and has a soft, beautiful color palette which is not too punchy.” Sharone sums up. “Just the look we wanted for *Dark Streets*”



## STOCK USED

*Dark Streets*  
Eterna 500T

# FUJIFILM

## THE ART OF **CINEMATOGRAPHY:** TELLING THE STORY ON FILM —

### **FROM START TO FINISH**

#### **ORIGINATION**

*Fujifilm Negative Stocks*



#### **POST**

*Fujifilm Digital  
Recording Film — RDI*



#### **INTER-NEGATIVE/ INTER-POSITIVE**

*Fujifilm Color Intermediate  
Stocks — CI*



#### **PRINTING**

*Fujifilm Positive Stocks —  
3513DI and 3521XD*



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