

park city Digital Report

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NEWSBRIEFS

Lounge at the Adobe Lounge

The Adobe Lounge will be open Jan. 20-28 from 10 a.m. to 8 p.m. Located downstairs at the Kimball Art Center (at the corner of Main St. and Heber Ave.), the Adobe Lounge offers festival-goers a relaxing atmosphere in which to take a break, plan festival schedules and check e-mail. The Adobe Lounge is open to all festival credential holders, and to the general public as space allows.

Filmmakers Celebrate Quinceañera

The filmmakers of *Quinceañera*, Wash Westmoreland and Richard Glatzer, will host a case study Wednesday, Jan. 25, at 11 a.m. in the Film Center. Moderated by film-



maker Todd Haynes (*Far From Heaven*, *Safe*), the panel will address the film's high-definition production process. The event is open to all festival credential holders, and to the general public as space allows.



The Sound and the Fury

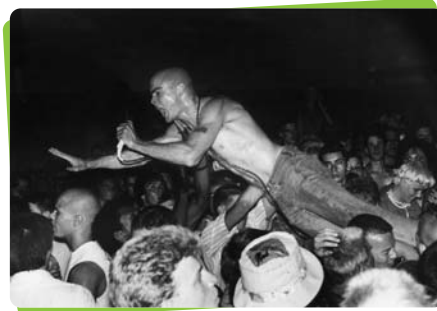
Production and Post on *American Hardcore*

Oliver Peters

The Sundance Film Festival is a showcase for the independent film spirit, a place where new technologies foster energetic ways of telling unique stories. Director/editor Paul Rachman brings that objective into focus with his documentary, *American Hardcore*, which chronicles the underground American hardcore punk movement. His film was inspired by Steven Blush's book, *American Hardcore: A Tribal History*. Rachman documents the punk music scene from 1980 to 1986 through interviews with such iconic bands as Black Flag, Minor Threat and the Circle Jerks.

Rachman started this project in 2001. By the end of filming he had accumulated 120 hours of interviews and another 100 or so hours of stock footage. Rachman spent a lot of time on the road to tell this story, so production had to be as portable as possible. All of the footage was shot with standard 30fps interlaced DV or DVCAM camcorders.

Rachman says, "I really didn't want to mess with 24p or HD on this film. The bands them-



...selves have a certain energy in their independent approach to music, so I didn't want to introduce any production elements that would stifle the energy on screen. It would have been disingenuous in a way. In addition, I used a lot of footage—including some the band members had shot themselves as kids. This came in all types of formats, but a lot of it was old VHS—even some recorded in the six-hour mode! So, overall, staying with interlaced footage gave me the best match to these stock images."

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Visiting the small town gay bar

James Careless

The documentary *small town gay bar* from Director Malcolm Ingram journeys into America's deep South to document a gay community surviving and thriving in the midst of ignorance, hypocrisy and oppression. Ingram (*Tail Lights Fade*, *Drawing Flies*) and his five-person crew put their personal safety on the line to capture footage in small-town bars throughout the South, but it wasn't the gay bars that were the source of the danger—it was the straight bars down the street.

Director of Photography Jonathon Cliff says, "Everyone in the [gay] bars was basically family, and there were all kinds of peo-

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»»TOOLKIT

Panasonic AG-HVX200 1080i/720p/480i P2 Camcorder

Panasonic's AG-HVX200—a DVCPRO HD handheld camcorder that records 1080i and 720p video onto solid-state P2 cards—is now available for \$5,995. The AG-HVX200 shoots in 1080/60i, 30p and 24p; 720/60p, 30p and 24p; and in DVCPRO50, DVCPRO and DV. The camera includes two P2 card slots that can accommodate Panasonic's new 8GB P2 cards as well as 4GB P2 cards.

The 100Mb/s DVCPRO HD format offers intraframe compression, 4:2:2 color sampling and 48kHz/16-bit PCM audio. On the 8GB P2 card, the AG-HVX200 records for 32 minutes in DVCPRO or DV, 20 minutes in 720p/24, 16 minutes in DVCPRO50 and 8 minutes in 1080i/60 and 720p/60. The camcorder includes two P2 card slots to permit continuous recording, and the cards are hot-swappable to assure nonstop recording. The AG-HVX200 can capture fast or slow action in 720p at various frame rates.

With the AG-HVX200, HD and SD video clips are recorded on the P2 card as IT-friendly MXF files that can be downloaded to a nonlinear editing system or server, or edited virtually instantly from the P2 card by connecting an IEEE 1394 or USB 2.0 interface. P2 cards mount like a regular hard drive from a NLE system's point of view, which eliminates the time-consuming task of digitizing footage.



"The AG-HVX200 inherits many of the functions of our popular, shoulder-mount AJ-HDC27 VariCam camera, including the exceptional DVCPRO HD quality images, variable frame rates to capture fast-speed and slow-speed action, and a CineGamma curve and cine-like color matrix to emulate the look of film. In addition, the AG-HVX200 has a Mini DV tape recording capability that allows customers to shoot 16:9 images on DV tape and edit with their existing workflow."

Audio performance consists of four-channel non-compressed 48kHz/16-bit digital audio in DVCPRO HD and DVCPRO50 and two channels in DVCPRO and DV. The HVX200 system interfaces include IEEE 1394 and USB 2.0, two XLR audio inputs, a component (D4) output, composite I/O, S-Video I/O, audio (RCA) I/O and headphone output.

For operator convenience, the camcorder is customizable with features including six user scene files, three user setup buttons and Camera Setup Memory. Other features include Shot Mark and Time Code Stamp functions and interval recording.

Panasonic P2, www.panasonic.com/p2

AMERICAN HARDCORE

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The directive to stay light and mobile also translated itself to the post process. The entire movie was edited on Rachman's 1GHz Apple PowerBook using Avid Xpress Pro nonlinear editing software. During the course of this four-year adventure, Xpress Pro became the mainstay editorial tool that enabled impromptu cutting on the road. Numerous FireWire drives were used for the media, so it was easy to toss the "edit suite" into a backpack and continue at the next location.

"I was blown away when I first saw the Avid Xpress Pro software running on my laptop. Here was the software that I really loved right at my fingertips. I started with version 4.3 and upgraded to 4.6, but I stopped there because I didn't want to get too carried away with updates in the middle of such a large project."

With a background as an editor, Rachman knew that organization would be key to the success of this film. He relied heavily on the software's built-in tools. "Media consolidation was a big issue for me. I would log all the footage from the interviews and then digitize the tapes. Next, I'd cut together a selects sequence for each person consisting of their best comments. As the FireWire drives would fill up, I used the Xpress Pro Consolidate Media function to move the media files for these selected comments to a new drive. By doing this, I was able to isolate the essence of their

interviews, which used less drive space and let me be more efficient, but I didn't erase the drives with the complete media. Instead, I kept and stored the original drives in case I had to go back to a comment that wasn't in the selects sequence. In addition, we took a lot of notes during the interviews. Avid has a bin view called Script View that allows the editor to enter comments, notes, descriptions, etc. This ability became very helpful to our workflow and let us avoid creating a complete transcript of all the interviews."

The first assembly of the film, which was about four hours long, consisted exclusively of interview elements assembled in a way to best tell the story without the use of a narrator. This version was cut down to about two and a half hours before Rachman started to weave in music, stock footage and B-roll shots. Once the cut was locked at 98 minutes, it was time to get *American Hardcore* ready for Sundance.

Although shot on DV, Rachman wanted to give the film the best possible look during finishing. As a veteran music video director, Rachman already had a relationship with Sony Music's New York post facility. Rachman booked Avid Symphony online edit time to conform his project as uncompressed media. "I had cut this on Avid Xpress Pro, so moving the project files to Symphony was a breeze. It's all Avid and everything comes across, so I just had to batch capture the footage from the tapes into the Symphony. In fact, my graphics designer gave me files in both DV and uncompressed versions. During the Symphony sessions, I simply had to link

to the uncompressed files by the same name and the graphics popped right up. Symphony has great color-correction features, which I used on this pass of the film, but color correction is a real skill. I consider this a festival version, so when we get the master ready for a true film-out, I'll work with a colorist for a second pass at color grading the film."

Rachman mastered the film to Digital Betacam, which was in turn converted through a Teranex format converter to Sony HDCAM for Sundance. The audio editing, sweetening and mix were handled at Sound One. "Sound was as easy as picture. All I had to do was export an OMF file from the Symphony. The OMF was burned to a DVD-R for Sound One to import into a Pro Tools system for the sound edit and mix."

I asked Rachman if he had any advice for young filmmakers. "Organization! I worked with a massive amount of material, and the only way to do this for four years without any hiccups is to have a solid plan. If you're a new filmmaker and don't know how to work out these details, then it is imperative that you find an experienced editor. Ask their advice before you start shooting so you can develop a roadmap that works."

As we wrapped up the conversation, Rachman was already planning the DVD releases. All the extra interview footage that's saved on those FireWire drives will make dandy outtakes and DVD extras. Like the punk bands that are its subject, *American Hardcore* has resisted the mainstream filmmaking approach to tell a unique and compelling American story. ◀

