



# SEVEN DAYS SUNDAY

The challenge of combining HD and Super 35mm in the DI Process.

**Niels Laupert's feature film *Seven Days Sunday* premiered on June 23, 2007 at the 25th Munich Film Festival, where Laupert, an HFF film school graduate, received the first annual Mentor Award. The film, which tells the true story of two juvenile murderers, was produced by fellow HFF graduates Thomas Bartl and Alex Dierbach. Another HFF student, Anne Bürger, assisted DoP Christoph Dammast for the second half of the shoot.**

Writer/Director Niels Laupert based the film, which is his first feature, on an idea he got in 2000 after reading an article in one of Germany's leading newspapers, *Süddeutsche Zeitung*: "The article talked about two 16-year-old Polish boys who, on a Sunday in January 1996, made a bet to kill a man the very same day," he recalls. "Later that night, they attempted to carry out their bet, but the first man they came across survived their attack. They went on, having learned from the first incident, to attack a second man and this time succeeded in killing him. The two adolescents were tried as adults and sentenced to 25 years of imprisonment.

"The article shocked me," Laupert continues. "But at the same time I couldn't stop thinking about this incident. How could it have happened? Why did all natural inhibitions fail? I knew from the outset that I didn't want to make an intellectual film about the issues raised by this tragedy. First and foremost I wanted to tell a story, utilizing all the available creative and technological possibilities. It was important to me to include the environment and surroundings of the protagonists and therefore we didn't want to limit the story by cutting together a series of close-ups. That's why Super 35mm was our first choice and why we decided to go with the 2.35:1 format."

Filming was split into two stages and centred around a high-rise apartment complex in a neighbourhood of Leipzig called Grünau, which looked very similar to the real crime scene in Poland. "The filming of the first stage commenced in January of 2005," says Laupert. "ARRI Rental in Munich provided the ARRIFLEX 535 and Zeiss Ultra Prime lenses for the shoot, while lighting and stage equipment came from ARRI Rental in Berlin. We shot on Fuji 250D and 500T film stocks. The second part of the filming started in May 2006 and for that we used an ARRICAM LITE. Additional footage, documentary footage and taped interviews with the convicts needed to be shot as well. It took several attempts to establish contacts in Poland; we had to make numerous requests before the convicted felons agreed to be interviewed and the Polish authorities granted us filming permits."

Interviews with the culprits, who were sent to different prisons, were conducted in October 2005 and October 2006. "For practical and budgetary reasons we shot the Polish part of the production on a Sony HDCam," says Laupert. "We weren't sure how the two convicted criminals, who at that point had already served 10 years of their sentence, would react to us being there. I didn't want to interrupt the concentration of an interview by changing reels. Plus the Polish authorities had stipulated that the crew entering the prison could consist of no more than 4 people."

The entire postproduction for the film was completed at ARRI Film & TV Services in Munich, where Alex Klippe was responsible for the DI workflow. Super 35mm footage was scanned on an ARRISCAN in 2K and combined with digitized HD footage in the online edit. The challenge during postproduction was to integrate the HD footage with the 35mm. This was necessary because in several scenes the documentary footage had to blend seamlessly into the fictional material: "I decided not to attempt to distinguish the two types of footage in order to avoid taking the viewer out of the story," says Laupert. "I didn't want to create a sort of docu-fiction format."

Experienced DI Colourist Manfred Turek was in charge of the digital colour grading. The primary colour grade was completed in a Lustre Suite and the final grade, involving several shapes and masks, was subsequently completed in the Lustre Master Suite, after a large-screen 2K digital projection. A further difficulty during the digital colour correction was caused by the fact that part of the shoot had taken place during winter and another part during spring, and some scenes required shots from both parts. This had been a challenge for makeup and continuity during filming and later, during postproduction, for Turek, who had to match the various lighting conditions.

"In the last few weeks before the premiere we worked in all areas of postproduction at the same time," recalls Laupert. "We took advantage of the fact that we could complete the entire finish and mix in one physical location. It was a very demanding time: we had to match the various materials, such as 35mm and HD, complete the VFX work and finish retouching, all at the same time. Simultaneously we had to complete the sound editing and the sound mix. ARRI supported us during this difficult time with their know-how and their passion."

The film was initially conceived as a 30-minute graduation project for the HFF in Munich and had received funding from the FFF-Bayern to the tune of 50,000 Euros. "But the longer I worked on the story," continues the director, "the more I came to realize that I couldn't possibly tell it in 30 minutes." Additional funding was therefore raised, from public as well as private sources, to transform the short into a feature. After Angela Reedwisch at ARRI Munich, a staunch proponent of the controversial project, committed her support, several other companies followed her lead. "Even though this was just a small film by an unknown director, we received the full attention and support of the ARRI team," concludes Laupert. "I really appreciated their professionalism and enjoyed the friendly environment. I am very happy to have completed my film at ARRI." ■

Sabine Welte / Niels Laupert



**SUPER 35MM FOOTAGE WAS SCANNED ON AN ARRISCAN IN 2K AND COMBINED WITH DIGITIZED HD FOOTAGE IN THE ONLINE EDIT. THE CHALLENGE DURING POSTPRODUCTION WAS TO INTEGRATE THE HD FOOTAGE WITH THE 35MM.**



👤 **CHECKING A SHOT:** Director Niels Laupert, DoP Christop Dammast, Theresa Luther, Gaffer Oliver Menebröcker, 1st Camera Assistant Korkut Akir (left to right)

👤 **KORKUT AKIR** 1st Camera Assistant

👤 **NIELS LAUPERT** Director and team on set

▲ **THE LEADING ACTORS**  
Ludwig Trepte and  
Martin Kiefer