



"Saturday"

a Benjamin T. Brammeier film

Production Notes

About the Production

"Saturday" is a collaboration between writer/director Ben Brammeier and director of photography Justin Hayward. The initial scope of the film was much smaller. Ben and Justin planned to write a script that would utilize available resources, but as the script flourished, it became clear that it deserved more.

Within two weeks, from the time the script was completed to the two day shoot, a camera, lighting, and sound package were rented; locations were scouted and acquired; set items were purchased; and casting was complete.

The shoot was originally scheduled for one day, but weather forecasts were poor, so the small crew scrambled to shoot the final exterior scene of the film on the prep/rehearsal day. The actual shoot day proved to be a grueling 16 hour ordeal for the cast and crew, so shooting previous day allowed the film to be completed.

Ben and Justin returned to Chicago and began post-production. The two edited the film using Adobe Premiere in the free time between paid projects. For the film's score, Ben approached Dave Carlson of Bucktown Pictures/Maestro-Matic for recommendations and Andy Deitrich came on board. He composed the original score in his home studio and mixed the sound at Maestro-Matic.

The film was mastered to Mini-DV and BetaSP in April, 2003. Currently "Saturday" is being submitted to various film festivals across the country. It has already screened at the St. Louis Filmmakers Showcase, Indiefest Chicago, and LA Shorts Fest.

Cinematography

One of the first things people comment on after watching "Saturday" is it's visual style. A common question is, "What was it shot on?" The "film" was shot using a Cannon XL-1 Mini-DV camera with the standard Cannon lens. Director of Photography Justin Hayward had a one ton tungsten lighting package to light the film. The decision to shoot on DV was a monetary one, but with careful lighting, the XL-1's "Frame Mode" and usage of specific focal lengths, the project comes close to looking like 16mm. "In an ideal world I would shoot on whatever medium best suits the story, but I'd rather shoot on DV than not shoot at all. And for that matter, I'd rather shoot on DV with a good lighting package than shoot on 35mm with no lights," says the director. "I really think the film's strongest point is its visuals. Justin is entirely responsible for that."

Minor color correction was done using Adobe Premiere and a Matrox RT2500. A DVD, which preserves the native DV quality, is available.



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Production Design

An often overlooked aspect of filmmaking is Production Design. "Saturday" required a house that looked as if an old woman had been living there for 40 years. Old furniture and fixtures and a lifetime's worth of collectables were desired. Many locations were scouted but none offered the desired look *and* accessibility. The decision to dress the set was daunting due to the hurried production schedule and a modest design budget.

Returning to their roots, the filmmakers decided to shoot in Justin's parent's house, which was located across the street from the exterior location. This was logistically convenient but it needed to be completely dressed. In a matter of 36 hours, Production Designer Janie Goldstein completely transformed the living room and kitchen. "The only items that belong to the house are the piano and dining room table. Everything else you see, Janie put there... from the couch and rug, to the pictures on the wall, and the wood paneling," says director Ben Brammeier.