

How has ETERNA negative adapted to your latest feature film *Suspicious Minds*?

During the years that I have been working as Director of Photography, I have used Fujifilm stock in feature films and advertising work. It always reproduces color and skin tones in a very lifelike way.

Suspicious Minds is my latest work, in which I had to portray the degradation of the human mind caused by jealousy through images. A week in the life of the main character, Marcel, is depicted in two hours of film, and we see just how far the human mind can go when jealousy is involved. Marcel never shows his internal mental situation externally. He is a meticulous scientist, who controls all his movements and his actions perfectly, but he can't control his jealousy; the jealousy controls him.

What difficulties did the photography entail in this new movie?

It's easy nowadays to fall into the temptation of making "terror" out of any script. However, we didn't want to make a horror film, but a film which was a portrait of a human being who loses control of himself. Fujifilm stock gave me the possibility of playing with this reality, of being able to express

every element of the periodic table, every minute detail we photographed, in great detail. There are five other characters in the film, and we gave every one of them slightly different treatment, without those small differences actually being noticed. Fujifilm stock separates colors in a very elegant way, giving textures the pictorial touch I was looking for in this film, and here we have the final result.

When the director, Carlos Martín Ferrera, called me and asked me to read the script, he said, "Néstor, we have embarked on this project but we don't have a lot of cash. It is a very small film, but we know we want to shoot it with you, on 35mm and in two shots at the most." After reading the script I answered: "Yes, I'll do the film, and I also think it would be a good idea to film camera-in-hand. I think we have to transmit a reality and I would like the actors to feel free and the film to acquire different shades of meaning all the time, to be full of detail, to be alive."

What characteristics do you ask of the negative in each situation?

Photographically, I like to create areas of light and shade and make the characters move through them,

and I'm not afraid of going from pure whites to deep blacks. That's where the Fujifilm stock came into its own, responding 100%, achieving pure whites and deep blacks with a wide range of greys to finely portray shapes, colors and volumes, so that when you see it at the cinema it looks like the characters are coming out through the screen and walking around the stalls. The transparency of the negative, with its color and contrast, is unbeatable.

Art in all its expressions is wonderful. I had visited a Rembrandt exhibition at the Prado Museum and had been very much impressed by a particular painting, so I called Carlos and we went to the exhibition and saw the painting together. It became our inspiration.

I always try to push the negative to the limit in all the technical aspects, in color, contrast, and scale of greys. If I am working on highlights in a scene, I try to make maximum use of the high scale in the negative until it loses detail and becomes a stain, but it's possible to bring out a lot of detail from those highlights. If the camera faces the lights, and the sun, and you take everything to the limit, you have to know all you can about the negative material you are using, how it responds in each situation.

The more you know about your tools, the better performance you will get. If on the other hand the sequence is shot with the minimum light possible, then you will also need to know everything about how the material will perform, because you want to get detail where your eye doesn't see it, but the negative does, capturing that detail, that color, that texture of a face, a hand or skin. That is why I ask such a lot from the negative, because I like to go to the limit; if not, everything becomes flat and boring.

What advantage does filming on negative stock have over digital? And how does it affect the quality of the final result?

To compare filming on negative stock with digital filming is like comparing Mono with SR Stereo in sound. Personally I can't tell the difference between Mono and SR Stereo but when it comes to distinguishing digital and negative I do see a great difference.

When I watch films from the 40's and 50's, I can see that after 70 years they are still of extraordinary quality. Since then, negative stock has improved greatly in the sensitivity and the grain. Digital is not comparable to negative, not in the highlights, nor in medium tones, nor in the lowlights. Nor is it comparable in grain or texture. If I read a script and visualize the film in digital, then I will shoot it in digital because the visual aspect of the film requires that to support the drama. Digital and negative are for the time being two completely different media. ■

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Spain

Néstor Calvo, Director of Photography

