

# LIVEBOOKS BLOG



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A collaborative online community that brings together photographers and creative professionals of every kind to find ways to keep photography relevant, respected, and profitable.

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January 25th, 2010

### Trailer for all-DSLR movie live & heading to Sundance

Posted by [liveBooks](#)

A trailer for [Betrayed](#), one of the first narrative shorts shot entirely with a DSLR (the [Canon 5D Mark II](#)) was released online today (watch it below). Here at [RESOLVE](#), we've been keeping an eye on the project since its Coming Soon page [went up](#) in August, and we are happy to bring you an exclusive first interview with director Joshua Grossberg about how the camera changed the creative process and how the team is working to get funding for a feature-length version.



**Miki Johnson:** *How did you get involved with the Betrayed project and why were you interested in being a part of it?*

**Josh Grossberg:** My friend, photographer [Robert Caplin](#), told me about this terrific DSLR that Canon had just released, the Canon 5D Mark II, and how it is going to be a great new tool for filmmakers. So a team was put together including Robert and producer Thomas Xenakis. **Our goal was to use the 5D to shoot the first five minutes of a feature-length thriller I had co-written and planned to direct called *Disappear*.**

The project grew from there, at which point I tapped a longtime collaborator, Michael Kier, to help me revamp the script. We co-wrote what became a nine-minute neo-noir short called *Betrayed*, which utilizes the same characters but serves as a prequel of

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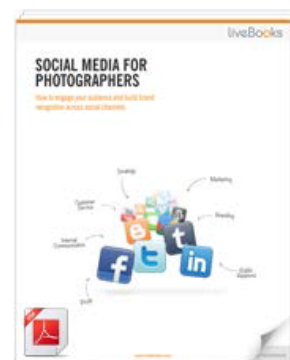
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sorts to the feature.

**The purpose of the film is to tell a story unto itself while at the same time attracting equity financing for the full-length version, *Disappear*.** Our approach is similar to the strategy director Courtney Hunt used for her Sundance Award-winning *Frozen River*.

With a gracious assist from Elisa Pugliese, who produced the film *August*, Seth Gilliam (from HBO's *The Wire*), PJ Sosko, and Cara Buono (*The Sopranos*) came aboard to play the principle roles — a terrific and talented group of actors — and we went from there.

**MJ:** *What appealed to you about shooting a film using a DSLR as opposed to other cameras?*

**JG:** **It saved me money, and the opportunity to utilize a brand new, cutting-edge technology was very exciting.** The compactness of the 5D, its remarkable cinematic quality, and the fact that it would quickly establish itself as a direct competitor to the **Red** was another huge draw. And the fact that I would be collaborating with close friends was like icing on the cake.



Steadicam operator Guy Rhodes prior to filming a fight scene in Brooklyn.

**MJ:** *Did shooting with a DSLR significantly change the way you thought about directing the film?*

**JG:** Absolutely! Before the 5D, I took a rather dim view to digital filmmaking, mainly because I had yet to see a camera — the Red included — that I thought truly lived up to the persistence of vision that comes with celluloid and that didn't make me aware of the fact that I was looking at pixels. **While you're still dealing with electronic image processors and mega-pixels with the 5D, the results blew me away,** particularly in what the DSLR could achieve in low-light situations. The wide latitude it gives filmmakers allows us to do, for instance, magic-hour filming without having to rent expensive HMI's and other cumbersome equipment to get the exposure.

It also saved us time and freed up the performances of the actors who practically forgot there was this little camera capturing their every line and move. Seeing it projected onscreen in High Def, the quality was just fantastic, especially given this was a no-budget production. **The idea that now independent filmmakers can go out and shoot movies with the production aesthetics of a big budget Hollywood feature is truly revolutionary** and tears down the wall between expensive A-list productions and indie features.

Of course, at the end of the day, while the technology is wonderful, it's still subservient to the story — so you better have a good one. I'm happy with the results of *Betrayed*. It feels like a puzzle picture to me like *Memento* and *Michael Clayton*, movies that take you for a thrill ride and leave you coming back for more. I want to figure out the nuances, kinda like my favorite films. And seeing the performances by Seth and PJ in particular, I hope people will really enjoy it.

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Daniel Milnor

Doug Menez

Ed Kashi



Director Joshua Grossberg (center) works on site with producer/editor Thomas Xanakis, right, and Jody Bradshaw, assistant script supervisor.

**MJ:** *What was the greatest challenge shooting this project? Would you do anything different knowing what you do now about the process?*

**JG:** Because we were working with a technology that was relatively unproven on the film front, figuring out the workflow was an issue. And the fact that we were shooting in 30P meant that we would have to later sync sound, which was recorded separately. **Perhaps the biggest challenge was maintaining focus during dolly shots and push ins/push outs.**

On the post-production front, since very few people, if any, had used the 5D before, editing proved to be a challenge because we had to find an intermediate format, otherwise the raw files were too big for **Final Cut Pro** to handle. We ended up relying on Pro Res for both the editing and the output and the folks at **Post Logic** did a great job working with us to ensure quality control.

**MJ:** *I hear you have some meetings lined up at Sundance, etc. to talk about funding for a full-length version. Can you talk a little about that process? What are this film's selling points?*

**JG:** Until you're more established, the process is simply: **Do whatever it takes to get your film in the hands of decision makers.** I'm excited about all the possibilities Sundance brings. I'll be talking to a host of film executives as well as investors — some of them are major studios looking to develop *Betrayed* as a feature, others are indies. We'll be going to Cannes in May as well. But the goal is to cobble together the remainder of the financing and roll cameras on the feature sometime this summer or early fall.

Aside from being one of the first filmmakers to shoot a feature exclusively on the 5D, in our view the other big selling point that we maintained throughout the creative process is the manipulation of words in the script. Every line spoken by an actor is duplicitous by design, since they are intended to be interpreted in more than one way. The double entendres are part of the puzzle and audiences will hopefully have as much fun figuring it out as we had writing it. Nothing is as it seems. **Hopefully *Betrayed* will give people a flavor of what's to come in the full-length, *Disappear*.**

**MJ:** *Any other important things you learned through working on this film?*

**JG:** This may sound cliché but it's undeniably true. **If you believe in something strongly enough, don't give up your vision.** There will always be times when you wonder why the hell you got into this crazy business, but keep your head down, stick to your guns, and the rest, as they say, is gravy.

Posted in [Inspirational Work](#) / [Miki Johnson](#) / [Photography](#) / [Videos](#) / [Workflow](#)



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## 7 Comments

SCOTT B.

JANUARY 26TH, 2010 AT 7:11 AM

It's Steadicam, not Steady Cam ;-)

Other than that nitpick a great article!

MIKI JOHNSON

JANUARY 26TH, 2010 AT 6:04 PM

Thanks Scott! Good catch and fixed up now :) Glad you enjoyed the article.

JOHN HILDEBRAND

JANUARY 26TH, 2010 AT 6:45 PM

pretty cool can't wait to see it all. i have this camera and shoot video all the time its the best

THE KILLER APP FOR NEW VIDEO CAMERAS – LOW LIGHT FILMMAKING

JANUARY 26TH, 2010 AT 5:28 PM

[...] Resolve blog recently reported on young filmmakers able to shoot a short or trailer for virtually no money using [...]

TWEETS THAT MENTION TRAILER FOR ALL-DSLR MOVIE LIVE & HEADING TO SUNDANCE | RESOLVE — THE LIVEBOOKS PHOTO BLOG -- TOPSY.COM

JANUARY 26TH, 2010 AT 10:45 PM

[...] This post was mentioned on Twitter by liveBooks Inc., liveBooks Inc., pdavison1, pdavison1, Ariane Fisher and others. Ariane Fisher said: RT @jimshoemaker: Trailer for movie shot on Canon 5D MK II heading for Sundance: <http://blog.livebooks.com/2010/01/movie-dslr-canon-mark> ... [...]

JIMMY JEONG

JANUARY 29TH, 2010 AT 6:28 PM

One machine to do it all! Wow. The quality on the video is really amazing. Grant it they have production people who really know how to work the colour and tweak the heck out of the video, but I'm sure the raw footage is still amazing.

QUORA

MARCH 4TH, 2011 AT 7:46 PM

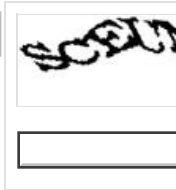
**How feasible is it yet to shoot a feature on prosumer DSLRs?...**

The latest developments in the DSLR cameras shows that it's quite cost effective to shoot a movie using them. Here are some examples of shootings: - <http://www.usa.canon.com/dlc/controller?act=GetArticleAct&articleID=2326> - <http://blog.vincentiaforet....>

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