

EMMY NOMINATED CINEMATOGRAPHER

Jon Joffin relates the story behind the making of the honored mini-series, *A&E's The Andromeda Strain*

"Clairmont was my first call the day I began prepping *The Andromeda Strain*, the science fiction thriller mini-series for A&E, based on Michael Crichton's novel. I wanted to capture the fear, suspense and paranoia of the premise, yet create a look that was grounded and naturalistic - as if this epidemic was unfolding in your own backyard. I strove for a bold and high contrast palate while using extremely soft light sources, achieved by bouncing light through multiple layers of diffusion. One of director Mikael Salomon's criterion was to carefully direct the viewers eye to the action. This selective focus could only be realized with the Zeiss master primes that Clairmont provided. Shooting wide open at T 1.3, we created razor sharp focus while holding creamy, buttery out-of-focus backgrounds. The interaction of soft sources and thin focus gave the show a look that carried a dreamlike background into a hard edged plane of reality. When we asked for a 14mm lens, Clairmont found us one of only two 14mm Master primes then in existence, and the idea of having soft backgrounds on a lens so wide is extraordinary."

"Clairmont built a flawless package of three D20 cameras which proved impervious to the varying temperature extremes and relentless dust of our desert locations. The D20's wide dynamic range is surprisingly filmic - highlights don't seem to clip but roll off gently as if on 35mm film. We were on a tight schedule and needed a heroic amount of set ups. To move quickly and still maintain full control from the tent, Clairmont produced long range wireless remote iris controls enabling us to achieve smooth iris pulls as we moved from interiors to exteriors or from shadow into bright daylight. To tackle long distance, simultaneous splinter unit work, Clairmont ensured that we could send our B camera 1000 yards away using Fiber optic cable and still monitor side by side with our main unit."

"Cinematography is a collaborative medium and it takes a tough crew to pull off a strong director's vision. Clairmont's cutting edge arsenal of accessories and tools is always an integral part of my creative team...because if they don't have it, they can find it. If they can't find it, they will build it."

CONGRATULATIONS JON!

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