

AFI STUDENTS Shoot Film in  
Glare of Sun and Sea

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# On the Beach

“35mm really captures the magnificence of the beach a lot better than anything else.”

**D**ockweiler, a 17-minute American Film Institute short directed by Nick Palmer and shot by Cameron Shaw, both AFI students, promises to turn heads once it gets screened. Dockweiler is the name of the beach where the action takes place and Palmer got the idea for the film while doing community service on that beach a couple of years ago, and became fascinated by the unique world he encountered.

Dockweiler is centered on a beach cleanup crew, the men who work on it, and the man who runs it and has used it to give meaning to his life. Palmer’s film turns that situation into a dramatic thriller. The film was shot mostly at Long Beach, just south of Los Angeles. “It was the perfect location,” says Shaw. “We also shot at the Will Rogers and Dan Blocker beaches in Malibu.”

The Dockweiler crew shot for nine days. “The way AFI works, you’re allotted six principal photography days, with a seventh second-unit day in the middle of that,” Shaw explains. “In our case we’re doing two partial re-shoot days, for a total of nine.”



*Jay Jones, Tony Todd and Keith  
Burke during a scene at Dan  
Blocker State Beach.*



Actors Tony Todd, Keith Burke and Jay Jones rehearse a fight scene.

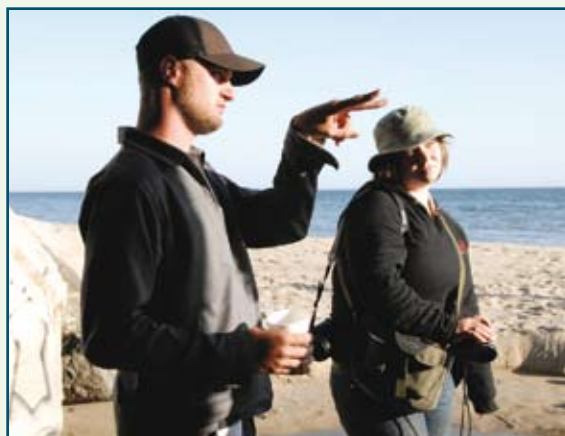
Shaw and Palmer teamed up partly because they're both inspired by the same movies, so they had similar feelings about the way Dockweiler should look. Those films include David Gordon Green's *George Washington* from 2001 and last year's *There Will Be Blood* from Paul Thomas Anderson. "In both of those films there's a slow feeling of foreboding throughout," says Shaw. "It gives you the impression that something you're not sure about will happen at the end."

Burbank rental facility The Camera House provided equipment for the film. The camera package consisted of a Moviemcam SL system. "It's a very lightweight camera," she says. "It worked out really well, especially because we wound up doing two days of Steadicam shooting."

Gaffer Amanda Treyz checks the light on actor Keith Burke while the camera crew sets up for a shot.

**D**ockweiler was shot almost entirely on beach locations with intense, strong light. Shaw's crew consisted of four people: herself, camera operator, first assistant and second assistant. In addition, the technical crew had seven additional people in the grip and electrical department.

The production was shot on Super 35mm at a 1.85 aspect ratio. The producers toyed with the idea of shooting the film on 16mm, but decided that "35 really just captures the magnificence of the beach a lot better than anything else," says Shaw. "It has that texture to it. It really makes the beach feel important, and that's what we wanted because the beach is a major part of our main character's life."



Dockweiler was shot on Fujifilm Eterna 500T stock. "It held all the detail," says Shaw, "and I was really happy with it for latitude reasons. Almost our entire cast is African American, so I was very concerned with being able to expose for faces when they're not facing the sun and the background is really bright or there's glare on the water but the film really held detail in highlight and shadow areas. We decided to go with the same stock for the entire shoot so we would have a consistent grain structure so we used the Eterna 500T throughout." ■

DOCKWEILER  
**STOCK USED**  
Eterna 500T