

# A m e r i c a n   Y e a r b o o k



A personal story of high school bullying in a post-Columbine world.

“★★★★ ...it's damn good.”

- CHRIS NULL (*Editor-in-Chief, FilmCritic.com*)

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**2004 Feature Film Press Kit**

## Quick Info Sheet

American Yearbook by New Legend Productions LLC ©2004

97 mins - Unrated - NTSC Letterboxed 16:9 - Dolby Surround 5.1 channel compatible sound



### LEAD CAST:

Will Nash	NICK TAGAS
Chance Holden	JON CARLO ALVAREZ
Amanda Hunter	GIOVANNIE PICO
Ian Blake	CHRIS PETER
Jason Clark	RYON NIXON
Caleb Neal	MATT GUDENIUS
Kristy Palmer	JENNIFER NOBLE
Brandon Holden	DANIEL TIMKO
John Bailey	ERIC NYGARD
Mrs. Carter	LAUREN V.A. WATERS

### PRODUCTION TEAM:

Writer/Director/Editor	BRIAN GING
Producers	JASON BROWN BRIAN GING
Executive Producers	GABREAL FRANKLIN JOE & JOIE BOYDSON ELAN FREYDENSON
Production Manager	DANIEL BROWN
Original Score by	JEREMIAH JACOBS
Director of Photography	DAN COPLAN
Supervising Sound Editor	SCOTT KOUE'

### FAST FACTS:

- Only the second feature to be shot on 24P Digital Video with the new Panasonic DVX-100 camera.
- Independently financed, cast, crewed, and shot entirely on location in Northern California.
- Director Brian Ging's first feature film, this story is his passionate statement about school violence.
- Ging and 18 yr old fellow producer Jason Brown convinced local Acalanes High School to let them shoot 12 days on location during spring break and weekends, only paying for utilities and a supervisor.
- All extras were high school students who actually came *back to school* on their Spring Break to be in the film.
- The motorcycle that gets "smashed up" in the film was accidentally wrecked by an actor driving it to the set the day before it was to be featured in the big chase scene. Ging and a crewmember had to quickly repair the bike, only to have it smashed up again in a later scene of the movie.

## REVIEW:

Christopher Null's 4-Star review was published online in June, just after the film's World Premiere.

Excerpt from the online review appears below.

# FILMCRITIC.COM

## American Yearbook

A film review by [Christopher Null](#)  
Copyright © 2004 filmcritic.com  
(excerpted from website)

(June/04) - Brian Ging's indie feature *American Yearbook* is better than it has any right to be.

Shot on video with an all amateur cast, we get a flood of movies like this at filmcritic.com every week. Ging's is the serious exception to a well-heeled rule: His is the first film in a long while that doesn't suck. Not only does it not suck, it's damn good.

*Yearbook* is a drama about bullying, post-Columbine. Nick Tagas (looking like a young Simon Rex) plays the slightly off-kilter lead kid named Will; he's into photography and isn't exactly a ladies' man, yet he's not a hardcore geek. Unfortunately he finds himself on the wrong end of thug Ian (Chris Peter), a violent bully who takes his aggressions out on Will, first with a light beating and eventually with more severe attacks.

With the aid of his friend Chance (Jon Carlo Alvarez), Will obtains a gun and decides something has to be done about Ian to end the cycle of violence. But as we all know, violence begets violence, and none of this will end well.

Ging has the usual problems of shooting on video, on a low budget, and on a first feature. But on the whole, Ging's done as much right as anyone could. His script is natural and flows well, and he does a good job with the severe limitations of the video format (with impressive camerawork by DP Dan Coplan). He's even got a pretty good original score in the mix. And he has a handle on his material -- cold.

I see a ton of movies from a ton of wannabe directors every year, but Brian Ging is one to watch.

### RATING:



**Director:** Brian Ging

**Producer:** Jason F. Brown, Brian Ging

**Screenwriter:** Brian Ging

**Stars:** Nick Tagas, Jon Carlo Alvarez, Giovannie Pico, Chris Peter, Ryon Nixon, Matthew Gudenius, Jennifer Noble

**MPAA Rating:** NR

**Year of Release:** 2004

**Released on Video:** Not Yet Available

## Quick Synopsis –

Will is like any upbeat high schooler, but his dreams of being a photographer quickly fade, as he is relentlessly terrorized by school bullies Ian & Jason. Will likes Amanda, but her best friend is dating the head bully Ian. Confused and angry, Will meets a dark new punk friend Chance, both of them outsiders. Chance eventually convinces Will that they should get a gun and exact revenge; “pull a Columbine.” Amanda pleads with Will to stop the shooting and talk Chance down, but can Will stop what he and Chance have started, or are Will’s emotions too strong for him to just walk away... In an ending that shows the deadly consequences of school violence, fate spins the plan out of their control, and writes a tragic chapter into Briarwood High School’s yearbook. *(see page 11 for the Full Synopsis)*



## Director’s Statement –

"This is not some 'high school massacre bandwagon' story reenacting the events of the Columbine tragedy. This story has a highly-charged emotional plot with key scenes of intense school violence, but this film focuses more on bullying, explored from a post-Columbine perspective, focusing on the intense emotions of the kids and not the guns and gore. I have responsibly presented the topic of bullying in a more emotional and personal context as opposed to glorifying it with the style or stereotypes typical of Hollywood. My personal goal with American Yearbook is to bring the important subject of school violence to light in a story that people can truly identify with, and to assure that no one will leave the theatre without being impacted by the emotions in this film."

- Brian Ging (Writer/Director)

## The School Violence Phenomenon –

With a rash of deadly school shootings becoming a familiar headline in recent years, the topic of school violence is being discussed more than ever as it infiltrates the media and our national culture. This shows clearly that America is ready and eager to get to the truth of why our children are suddenly taking the lives of their classmates at a faster and deadlier rate than at any other time in history. According to the 2002 U.S. Secret Service report, “Safe School Initiative,” many students involved in school shootings gave bullying as a contributing factor to their behavior. American’s schools have become a deadly ground, and this nation is hungry for understanding,

While American Yearbook focuses mainly on bullying, there are several other recent films exploring the topic of school shootings. The award-winning film ‘Elephant’ by Gus Van Zandt broke considerable ground, reenacting a Columbine-esque shooting in a highly artistic way. It won the Palm D’Or (Best Film) of the 2003 Cannes Film Festival. A year earlier at Cannes, Michael Moore’s film ‘Bowling for Columbine’ won a Special Jury Prize, for its exploration into school and gun violence. To date, ‘Bowling for Columbine’ has become the single highest grossing Documentary of all time! School violence is a worldwide phenomenon, and continues to be a source of fascination for audiences the world over.

## A Newcomer–

With American Yearbook, writer/director Brian Ging has shown his strength as an artist, and a true glimpse into one of Independent Film’s most promising new talents. In the path of similar Writer/Director/Producers such as Kevin Smith (Clerks), Edward Burns (Brother’s McMullen), and Robert Rodriguez (El Mariachi), Ging created his small personal film from start to finish. Starting with his original script, written over a year’s time with many revisions, Ging kept rewriting till he got it right. Then he produced his passionate vision with his own savings, friend’s cash, and credit cards. Ging was Director, and eventually Editor as well, cutting the feature on an Avid Xpress Pro system given to him for free by Avid. With eighteen-year-old fellow producer Jason Brown’s assistance, Ging acquired free casting services from an A-list casting agent at Integrity Casting, coordinated 12 full days of on-location shooting at a public high school without paying a location fee, and with the help of American Yearbook’s Sound Designer Scott Koue’, landed a cut-rate 5.1 channel surround mix at Saul Zantz Film Center for no up front cost. Beyond Ging’s gifted storytelling abilities as a writer/director, he has emerged as a charismatic producer who consistently seems to be able to find rare deals with top professionals, bringing them onboard his projects by using his enthusiasm and passion, not his budget. This gave American Yearbook amazing production value at a very low budget, proving Ging’s ability to use his creativity for producing as well as storytelling.

## Breakthrough Technology & Panasonic's Embrace –

Always riding the cutting edge of technology, director Brian Ging and D.P. Dan Coplan selected Panasonic's newest DV camera the DVX-100 for the production. With its revolutionary new 24P Cineswitch technology, this breakthrough camera creates an image that closely mimics the look of film and has caused a huge publicity stir within the tech community praising its groundbreaking new 24P technology.

With the DVX-100, Ging and Coplan were able to capture amazing film-like images to once again maximize production value on their limited budget. Being the second feature to shoot with this highly publicized new camera, several early magazine articles were written about American Yearbook and Ging's creative approach of utilizing various new consumer technologies to capture his film at a super low budget.

Enamored with American Yearbook's important message, and use of their new camera, Panasonic interviewed Ging and Coplan, writing a full press release about American Yearbook, and its pioneering use of the DVX-100. It was released to over 100 publications and journalists, posted to Panasonic's website, and was re-published in several other publications, including Videography.com, infoComm, 2Pop.com, and a Hungarian magazine called mediaTechnika. With American Yearbook wrapped, Panasonic asked New Legend Productions for clips from American Yearbook which are now being used on their publicity demo reels which have screened in Panasonic's booths at NAB and the Cannes Film Festival this year. *(see Pages 11-15 for clippings)*



## Website –

The website <http://american-yearbook.com> has chronicled the evolution of American Yearbook, and with expertly designed graphics, ongoing news, and a downloadable trailer of the film, has been a successful tool to spread word of the film.

## Production Biographies:

*Brian Ging (writer/director/producer/editor)* - Known for his enthusiasm, passion, and dedication, this 29-year-old self-taught filmmaker's never-ending drive is what has brought "American Yearbook," to where it is today. Ging began his career by starting a videography business at age 18 in his hometown of Phoenix, Arizona. At 20, looking to broaden his life experience, he joined the U.S. Air Force as a Rescue Fireman, traveling as far as Haiti, where he was sent on a medical mission, living there for four months.



Leaving the Air Force, Brian settled in Northern California where he taught himself filmmaking by writing, directing, and editing four successful short films. When inspiration for a feature struck, he was ready. As Brian explains, "I wanted to tell an important and high-concept story for my first feature. I was watching a news break about a school shooting at Santee in San Diego, and all of a sudden it occurred to me that I could tell the story of a school shooter as a *victim* instead of a monster. Truly focus on the kids *lives*, and not the bombs and video games."

Brian worked tirelessly to get the script right, taking over a year to write and rewrite the story so that it was a truly realistic portrayal and had the strong anti-violence message he was going for. Once he knew his story was up to his standards, Ging set the forces in motion to make it into a movie. He was armed only with a tireless ambition, his credit cards, and his best friend Dan Brown's dedication to help as Ging's Assistant Director. Ging says, "Sometimes I think the only way we got through the production is by *not* having any feature experience. We'd never been on a real film set, so we had no notions of how many people it takes, etc. I just made sure we did what we needed to do so that each shot would be emotional, dramatic, and cut together smoothly. I was used to my student films, in which I just flew by instinct each day and it was much simpler. For A.Y., I planned as much as I could. I broke down the script into days based on what made sense to me, and when we could get certain locations. I heard another indie film had shot in 25 days, so I set mine at 21 (Although it ended up being 24 by the time we were done). My girlfriend would cook huge meals for the actors and crew in our kitchen. Basically, I pulled every favor and begged and pleaded with every location and agency we needed. It's amazing how much help you can get in the Bay Area when you are genuine and passionate when talking to people about your film. And although we bent the rules a bit to make things happen, we didn't break *too* many laws..."

### **A TYPICAL EVENING AFTER SHOOTING:**

Brian Ging, his girlfriend Kellymarie Demaray, and 1st A.D. Dan Brown were all roommates during the production. Dan would unpack the production van each night (a minivan loaned by Dan's parents). Kellymarie, getting off work at 5pm, would laboriously cook a 25 person meal for tomorrow's set, and Brian would review footage, call cast & crew, and edit the next day's shotlist. Dan would repack the vehicle with gear and props, and go over the schedule with Brian about 2 am. They would all get up the next day at 7am, Kellymarie would go to work, and Dan and Brian would drive the van to the set by an 8am call time.

*Jason Brown (producer)* - At the age of eighteen, Jason was a high school senior when he heard about American Yearbook, and offered to assist Ging in producing it. He was instrumental in convincing Acalanes High School to let the production shoot on campus over spring break, and in getting scores of extras (his classmates) to show up for filming.



Though a teenager, Brown is already a five-year veteran of the entertainment industry. Starting his professional career as an entertainment journalist, he quickly rose to writing for top publications while still in high school. He worked as an editor at the popular Computer Gaming World magazine, and later wrote for Gamespot.com, the world's leading video game web site, mainly as writer and critic, but also as a video producer. Brown also writes for the Bay Area's local Contra Costa Times newspaper as a film reviewer, with nearly a dozen movie reviews published. Now completing his freshman year of NYU's prestigious film program, Jason has recently produced the 35mm feature film "Still Life".



*Dan Coplan (Director of Photography)* - A graduate of San Francisco's Academy of Art College, with an MFA in Motion Pictures, Dan Coplan has gained some solid experience as a cinematographer. Coplan has been filming professionally since 1999, and he began his career working at George Lucas' Industrial Light and Magic (ILM). Since then, Dan has filmed "Duets" for broadcast on MTV, an array of short films, a full documentary for the Tech Museum of Innovation in San Jose, and more. Dan was even hired to film as far away as Costa Rica and Venezuela. Additionally, Coplan won the 2002 Videomaker/Panasonic award for Best Comedy.

Coplan is familiar with creating and manipulating images both during filming, and as an editor. But of all his roles, Coplan says his true love is when he's able to work hands-on as director of photography: "I jumped behind the camera and found my passion; a way to be technical and artistic, meet lots of fun and interesting people, get some exercise, and work on projects that very few people get exposure to." Coplan owns a variety of his own cameras, including a Panasonic DVX-I00, of which two were used to film "American Yearbook."

Since American Yearbook, Coplan is gaining strong experience with High Definition projects, as a DP and editor. He engineered and shot for "Rides," a television series being shot in on High Def for The Learning Channel.

Dan currently lives and works in Los Angeles, California. Go to <http://dancoplan.com> for more info.



## Cast Biographies:

**Nick Tagas** (*Will Nash*) - An in-demand Bay Area theatre actor, Tagas has been booked non-stop for over 18 months without a break. American Yearbook was his first film acting performance, but Director Brian Ging saw true talent in this ambitious actor, and knew that he had what it took to carry the powerful emotions of the film. Nominated for a Solano County Arty Award this year, Nick also garnered critical acclaim several years back for his performance in Angels in America. Several bay area newspapers have labeled Tagas a rising star to watch for.



**Jon Carlo Alvarez** (*Chance Holden*) - In literally his first acting performance, Jon Carlo has proven that he truly has the makings of a film actor. Carlo studies film at the Academy of Art College where he first heard about the auditions for American Yearbook. Knowing that Chance was a perfect role for him, Carlo showed up 2 hours before the audition with his friend to be first in line. Carlo had an eager willingness to learn film acting. He slipped right into the role of Chance, and delivered some of the strongest performances in the film. He lives in San Francisco, and continues to attend the Academy of Art College studying film production.



**Giovannie Pico**. (*Amanda Hunter*) - A pure joy to work with, this enthusiastic and charming actress is on her way to solid film acting career. She's had television roles as co-host of Botong-X for Philippine television, and with Gary Busey in the sci-fi Shadowlands pilot. Including American Yearbook, Giovannie has starred in seven feature films, mostly being featured in lead roles. Her quirky personality, stunning looks, and tremendous personality make her a joy on the set, and a treat to see onscreen.



**Chris Peter** (*Ian Blake*) - Chris's first acting role came in 1986. Over the following ten years he performed in over 30 productions in 5 states. By far his favorite roles were Brick in 'Cat on a Hot Tin Roof' and Ray Dooley, a foul-mouthed Irish loner in Leenane county Galway Ireland. In 1998 Chris was cast as fortune writer Garret Henry in the film 'Fortune Cookie' directed by Clay Essig. The following two years Chris studied under Gregory C. Haynes and the Actor's Gang in Salt Lake City. Chris was cast as Jacques in Shakespeare's 'As You Like It' with a then unknown film star, Patrick Fugit (Almost Famous, Spun). Recently, Chris landed the role of Greg opposite Giovanni Pico in the Bay Area film 'Jonas Daye'. Chris currently lives on a farm in central California with his dog, Everything.



## Full Synopsis (some spoilers...)-

Two friends meet in their senior year at Briarwood High School. Will Nash is a middle-class dreamer on the road to achieving his goal of being an artistic photographer. Chance Holden is a rebellious punk from the trailer park whose constant moving has forced him to adopt a “screw them before they screw you first” attitude. The two of them are outsiders in their own ways, struggling to survive in an affluent high school. They are quickly targeted by a group of relentless school bullies. Will stands up to the torment at first, but it soon becomes more than he can bear alone, and Chance steps in, manipulating Will’s anger, and pushing him to retaliate.



Will dreams of dating Amanda, a passionate school reporter, but her best friend Kristy is dating the head bully Ian whose group rules the halls with extortion and violence. As Will and Chance resist Ian, the abuse quickly escalates from a bloody beating for Will in the boy’s locker room, to eventually a fight at a football game that leads into a car chase, ending at a remote water-tower where the bullies trap them and smash Chance’s treasured motorcycle. The two struggle with their abuse, venting their emotions by making a tongue-in-cheek death list of which bullies they’d like to kill. But after the violent night with the bullies at the water tower, the joking turns to vengeance.

In a generation growing up in the wake of such school shootings as Columbine, Jonesborough, and Santee, should these two exact their revenge with gunfire as they see from the news? (*more-*)

## Full Synopsis (*Continued*)—

Will and Chance *must* respond to their abuse, and are overwhelmed by their emotions, feeling that a shooting Monday morning is the only solution. That's what they've seen in the news, right...? The abuse escalates, and the two plan to "pull a Columbine". Amanda tries to intervene, pleading with Will to stop the shooting and talk Chance down, but can Will stop what he and Chance have started, or are Will's emotions too strong for him to just walk away... In an ending that shows the deadly consequences of school violence, fate spins the boys' plan out of their control, and writes a tragic chapter into the history of Briarwood High School's yearbook.



## Press Attention -

Many early articles were written about American Yearbook and its pioneering use of the 24P Panasonic DVX-100 digital video camera. Early publicity was written by the tech magazines about the production including Ging's creative post-production plan of shooting on 24P and blowing up to HiDef. HighDef magazine, a trade mag for those working in High Definition video, summarized Ging's plan and experiences with the DVX-100. Local newspapers were there for the film's production, documenting the rarity of a low-budget feature being shot on-location at a Bay Area high school. The Contra Costa Sun ran an article featuring the local students involvement in the production, to include Ging's fellow producer Jason Brown, completing his senior year during production. American Yearbook has also been listed in the San Francisco Chronicle as a Bay Area film coming to screens soon. Even Hungarian magazine MediaTechnika published an article on American Yearbook.

**- Press Clippings appear on the following pages -**

- Article Published in Bay Area newspaper, the Contra Costa Sun.

## Contra Costa SUN

### Golf race heats up this week

■ Acalanes, Campolindo, and Las Lomas are chasing Miramonte.  
In Sports, Page 9



### Style hounds

■ The warm weather brings out the animal in everyone.  
Page 8

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**CAMPOLINDO SENIOR** Jason Brown, the producer of "American Yearbook," gives directions during shooting.

## Acalanes stars in new indy film

■ Local teens get bit parts in "American Yearbook"

By Meera Pal  
STAFF WRITER

While many local high schoolers spent their spring break catching up on sleep and updating their wardrobes at Broadway Plaza, a group of Lamorinda students spent the week hoping to earn their big break in an independent film shot at Acalanes High School.

A \$ production, "American Yearbook" is a relatively small-budget, feature-length film, destined for the Sundance Film Festival. The story about a teen who gets bullied in school, revolves around the trials and tribulations of going through high school in a privileged, upper-class community.

Producer and Campolindo senior Jason Brown said it was pure coincidence that the movie's setting mirrors

that of Lamorinda. Director Brian Ging scouted 40 different Bay Area high schools before he chose Acalanes as the ideal set. Unfortunately, the Acalanes Union High School District initially said no. But thanks to an old tie with new Acalanes principal John Nickerson, Brown was able to convince the district to allow the shoot during spring break.

Rather than renting the school site from the district, the production company, New Line Productions, agreed to pay the salary of administrative technician John Thomas, who was required to be on site at all times during shooting. The production also paid for all use of water and electricity.

While this was not the first movie Brown has worked on, it was his first role as producer, which he describes as the person who "is responsible in getting everything that the director needs.

He brings together diverse components."

One of his biggest responsibilities was gathering the large group of extras needed to make a believable movie about high school. About a month before shooting, Brown spoke to the drama teacher at Campolindo and began placing posters around school, announcing the need for extras. He set up open auditions, where students were photographed. Eventually, he placed posters at Acalanes High School, as well. By the time shooting began, Brown had gathered more than 100 students.

"It's fairly unique that we're using so much local talent," he said. Even director Ging is a Bay Area boy, who graduated from Solano Community College.

Campolindo senior Peter Haas is one of the students who decided to take advantage of the unique local opportunity

See FILM, Page 2

## Film

FROM PAGE 1

over his spring break. He learned about the shoot from the school's bulletin.

"The only reason I did it was because I was interested to see how they made movies," Haas said.

The first day, Haas began as someone who just walks by in a scene. That night, he received a call from Brown, saying that the director wanted him to play an extra in a specific scene. The next night, Haas received another call saying the director wanted him to have a small speaking role. And then a few days later Haas was asked to consult on a character, using his experience as a volunteer with

the Moraga Police Department. Haas admits he was surprised to be given so many opportunities on the movie.

"I truly got to experience the movie, from all sides," he said, adding that movie-making is not as glamorous as some would think. Some days were spent simply waiting on the side for hours, as they shot one scene over and over again. Despite his role in the movie, Haas admits he won't be changing career paths anytime soon. He still plans to enter a career in law enforcement.

In the meantime, Brown definitely plans to pursue film in college, hoping to continue his role as producer.

"It's a unique mix of making sure you get the movie made and having an artistic say," said Brown.



DARREN M. ANTONOVICH/STAFF

**THE CAST AND CREW** of "American Yearbook" take their places in the Acalanes High School cafeteria and get ready to start filming.

## ENTERTAINMENT

PERSPECTIVES2004 | 11

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# Coming soon to a theater near you

By Patrick Bobillo

The New Year will see the release of a number of films that were shot at locations around the Bay Area. They run the gamut from major Hollywood studio productions to smaller, independent fare.

Here's a peek at some of the more interesting projects:

• **"The Assassination of Richard Nixon"** is based on the true story of Sam Byck, a downhearted salesman who, almost 30 years before 9/11, devised a scheme to hijack an airliner and crash it into the Nixon White House.

The role of Byck should give star Sean Penn plenty of opportunity to chew the scenery: the real-life Byck sent rambling tape recordings to public figures, picketed the White House dressed as Santa Claus and shot three people on the day of the attempted hijacking. Naomi Watts and Don Cheadle co-star.

• Adam Sandler and Drew Barrymore try to recreate their "Wedding Singer" chemistry in **"50 First Dates."** Barrymore plays a woman suffering from short-term memory loss and Sandler is the man who has to woo her anew every day, since she never remembers who he is. He is forced to go to great lengths to prove to her that she is already in love with him.

co-worker. He also discovers that his true love has been right in front of him all along. Riegert has assembled an impressive cast for the project, including Eli Wallach, Eric Bogosian and Isabella Rossellini.

• Brian Ging's starkly filmed indie **"American Yearbook"** tells the story of two high school "outsiders" who are pushed around by the school bully in episodes of escalating violence and humiliation. All too aware of how others in their situation have ended it, the two must decide whether a school shooting is the answer to their problems.

Filmed at Acalanes High in Contra Costa County, the movie examines a frightening subject in the style of a classic suspense thriller. But Ging doesn't feel that his film is exploitative.

"My angle on this story is not to glorify teens shooting their classmates, but to take the audience into the mind of these at-risk teens and show just how powerful the emotions created by bullying can become," Ging said in an interview posted on the film's official Web site.



COLUMBIA PICTURES

Adam Sandler, right, woos memory-loss

- American Yearbook featured in entertainment section of San Francisco Chronicle.

DANNY LEE

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- EDITORIAL INFORMATION
- ABOUT PANASONIC

## News & Info

### BAY AREA FILMMAKERS SHOOT "AMERICAN YEARBOOK" WITH PANASONIC AG-DVX100 MINI-DV 24P CAMCORDERS

Full-Length Feature to Be Upconverted to HD for Festival Forays

SECAUCUS, NJ (July 1, 2003) – Acquisition was recently completed on "American Yearbook," a full-length feature shot by Bay Area filmmaker Brian Ging with two Panasonic AG-DVX100 Mini-DV 3-CCD camcorders.



Principal photography on the drama finished in May, with shooting taking place in and around San Francisco, CA. Ging was writer/director, with Dan Coplan serving as Director of Photography. (Both filmmakers own AG-DVX100s.) The feature, shot in the camera's 24p standard mode, will be upconverted to high-definition 24p for submission to top-tier festivals.

"American Yearbook" is a true-to-life story about high school bullying for a post-Columbine generation. Two friends meet—Will Nash, a middle-class kid struggling to achieve his dream of being a successful photographer, and Chance Holden, a rebellious punk from the wrong side of the tracks. Two outsiders struggling to survive in an affluent high school, they are violently terrorized by a group of bullies during their senior year. The faculty and parents seem unsure how to handle the school's violence. The action builds to an unpredictable ending wherein the boys struggle to make a moral decision and avoid a bloody confrontation.

The breakthrough AG-DVX100 is a unique Mini-DV 3-CCD camcorder with exclusive CineSwitch™ technology that supports 480i/60 (NTSC), cinema-style 480p/24fps and 480p/30fps image capture.

- Panasonic's press release of July, 2003 about American Yearbook. This clipping is from Panasonic.com.



Commenting on the decision to up-res to HD, Ging said, "We feel that HD will be a much better master copy to blow up to 35mm should we get a theatrical distribution. Having acquired in 24p on DV, it only seems to make sense to bump up to its big brother HD mode. Also, eMotion Studios (Sausalito, CA), where we'll do the conversion, is eager to test its Final Cut Pro CineWave system on a long-form

AG-DVX100 project, and the facility's principals are very excited about 'American Yearbook.' Our tests were truly breathtaking.

Several clients were at eMotion when we test-converted some footage, and they kept saying 'That's digital video? How much was the camera?' It amazed all of us that technology has come so far that a \$3,500 camcorder could produce such feeling in its images."

He continued, "The biggest thing that blew me away about the camera wasn't really a tech feature or setting. It was the way it made me feel when watching the actors on screen. I felt the story coming alive. Traditional video has this immediacy to it that makes you think 'reality.' When I watched our footage, it allowed me to emotionally escape into the story in a way that was much more like film. It felt like a movie, not like a TV show.

"I was also quite impressed that you can manually set the time-code starting numbers, adjust audio levels, have balanced XLR inputs, save a large number of scene file settings, and have so much manual control over the settings—all in a camera that costs half the price of most broadcast cameras with those features. There was no limit to the amount of control we had over the image, and with the in-camera image control it was no major chore to match the two cameras."

DP Coplan said, "I've been very pleased with the camera, and have used it for assignments ranging from theatrical production to corporate gigs to concert footage. For 'American Yearbook,' given that we wanted to finish both to current TV standards and widescreen HD, I used gels on the flip-out screen to frame for 16:9 while protecting for 4:3. I'm not a big fan of zooming, but there were a couple shots that benefited from a slowly creeping zoom. Being able to switch to servo mode from manual mode, which would have made a subtle zoom difficult, allowed us to get the feeling we wanted from the scene.

"In other cameras in this class, adjusting the iris mid-shot is impossible because of the noticeable 'stepping' you get between aperture openings. But with the DVX-100, I was able to smoothly ride the iris when compensating for changes in luminance within a scene. Practically speaking, the camera was terrific in a variety of settings—we mounted it to the side of a car, shot from the back of a van, and even scaled a traffic light with it—something that would have been far more difficult and risky with a full-sized camera."



"American Yearbook" is Ging's first full-length feature, following four

narrative shorts. The director will handle the off-line (with Dan Coplan assisting with color correction) on Avid Xpress Pro on a PC, and will then output the footage to a Mac at Emotion Studios for the up-res to HD with Final Cut Pro. The director added, "We are scheduling our post schedule around the Sundance deadline, and intend to launch a festival submission campaign starting then. Whether we get in or not, we will try to get 'American Yearbook' out to as many top festivals and distributors as possible. We are looking for our distribution agreement to include a blow-up to 35mm should we get a theatrical deal, but are assuming that our largest distribution will be on DVD/Home Video. We're preparing a 5.1 Digital surround mix for all distribution formats."

Ging continued, "The AG-DVX100 was great for handheld and Steadicam shots due to both its light weight and bright flip-out screen for ease of viewing. It was also easy to find batteries and tapes because of the popularity of the camera and format. Lastly, it was a lower-priced camera that gave us a beautiful image while allowing us to go with a two-camera shoot on a budget that should have only afforded one. "I'd gladly shoot with the -DVX100 again—in fact, I won't shoot another video project without it. I feel that any event—from weddings to commercials, to music videos and movies—can all benefit from its great image quality and the consequent emotional power. There's no going back to traditional video for me—24p is the future of video, and I'm its biggest fan. With the price of the -DVX100 so low, it's pretty hard to argue the advantages of any other camera out there in its price range."

- Panasonic's press release continued. (right)  
- Below is an article written in Hungarian magazine media-Technika.



With a suggested list price of \$3,795, Panasonic's ultra-compact 4.2-pound AG-DVX100 offers entirely new features and price performance levels, and is engineered to give shooters a single camcorder that captures in 60i to acquire standard video projects and in 24p to add the "look and feel" of film to their productions. To acquire stunning digital pictures, the AG-DVX100 is equipped with newly-developed 1/3" progressive-scan 410,000-pixel 3-CCD imagers to deliver more than 500 lines of horizontal resolution (nearly double that offered by VHS analog), low smear and flare, a low light performance of 3 lux (at +18dB) and a high sensitivity of f11 at 2000 lux. The native progressive CCDs eliminate interlace

artifacts including horizontal jaggies and motion-edge tearing.

The well-balanced, ergonomically-designed AG-DVX100 features a precision wide-angle zoom lens (4.5mm to 45mm with a 56-degree viewing angle) and a host of manual controls to make subtle picture adjustments. Shooting with the AG-DVX100 is a breeze from overhead or from low angles with its two, easy-to-view displays – a large, centrally-located pivoting electronic viewfinder for left or right eye use, and a flip-out, 270-degree, 3.5" LCD panel.

For more information on "American Yearbook", contact Brian Ging at [production@american-yearbook.com](mailto:production@american-yearbook.com) or Dan Coplan at [www.dancoflan.com](http://www.dancoflan.com).

## „Amerikai Évkönyv” Nagyfilm kiskamerával

„American Yearbook” címmel egészestés filmet készített Brian Ging, a Bay Area alkotója, két Panasonic AG-DVX100 mini-DV 3 CCD kamkorderrel. A dráma nagy része májusban készült el a felvételek helyszínén, a kaliforniai San Franciscóban. Ging volt a forgatókönyvíró és rendező egy személyben, Dan Coplan a vezető operatőr. A felvételeknél 24p SD módban dolgoztak a kamerák, ezt konvertálták át nagyfelbontású 24p-be, a filmfesztiválokon való részvétel követelményei szerint.



Jelenet a filmből

mediatechnika

Az „American Yearbook” egy valódi, életből vett történetet a középiskolai erőszakról. Két barát találkozik: Will Nash, a középosztálybeli kölyök, aki álmainak valóra válásáért küzd, sikeres futóművész akar lenni és Chance Holden, a gyanus utakon járó, rebellis punk. Két hátránnyal induló ember, aki a túlélésért küzd egy jó nevű középiskolában, de erőszakosan terrorizálja őket egy csoport zsarnokoskodó fel-sőéves. A tanári kar és a szülők láthatóan nem tudják

kezelnit az iskolában dőlő erőszakot. A történet befeje-zése váratlan, amikor is a fiúk küzdelmes erkölcsi döntésre jutnak, kitérnek a véres össze-csapás elől.  
Az AG-DVX100 mini-DV 3-CCD kamkorder különleges CineSwitch technikával van felszerelve, amely 480i/60 (NTSC), filmes megjelenésű 480p/24 fps és 480p/30 fps szabványú képek felvételére alkalmas.

A „American Yearbook” Ging első, egész estés filmje, előtte négy rövid elbeszélő jel-legű alkotást hozott létre. A rendező offline módon (Dan Coplan színkorrekciós közre-működésével) fogja kezelni az Avid Xpress Pro-t egy szemé-lyi számítógépről. Ezután az elkészült felvételek egy Mac gépre kerülnek az eMotion Studios-nál (Kalifornia), ahol Final Cut Pro Cine Wave nem-lineáris editorral készül a végső feldolgozás.

E.S.

## Full-Length Feature Shot with Panasonic AG-DVX100

Acquisition was recently completed on „American Yearbook,” a full-length feature shot by Bay Area filmmaker Brian Ging with two Panasonic AG-DVX100 Mini-DV 3-CCD camcorders.

Principal photography on the drama finished in May, with shooting taking place in and

around San Francisco, CA. Ging was writer/director, with Dan Coplan serving as Director of Photography. (Both filmmakers own AG-DVX100s.) The feature, shot in the camera's 24p standard mode, will be upconverted to high-definition 24p for submission to top-tier festivals.



Dan Coplan operatőr és Brian Ging rendező az American Yearbook forgatásakor



# American Yearbook

**24P DV to HD**

By Brian Ging

- HighDef Magazine article.

Bully "Jason" played by Ryon Nixon (left), corners "Will," Nick Tagas (right), in the locker room after a chase across campus.

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As a first-time feature film writer/director, I've grown accustomed to diving headfirst into scary territory, and it was more of the same the past few months shooting my feature *American Yearbook*. Luckily I found countless books on everything from handling actors and contracts, to chili recipes that feed thirty people on set. There was no roadmap when my DP Dan Coplan and I jumped into the highly technical world of 24P DV filmmaking.

We shot *American Yearbook* with the cutting edge Panasonic DVX-100P Mini-DV camera. It yields an amazingly film-like image that I felt was just perfect for our story of teenage bullying set in an up-

scale high school. The film deals with the intense pressure that school violence puts upon its victims, and shows how a teen might contemplate revenge using the recent rise in school shootings as their influence. It's a realistic high school bully movie about a post-Columbine generation.

Now that production is complete, we are looking at several issues. For one, we shot using the 24P "Standard" mode as opposed to the "Advanced" mode. This gives a better look for screening on video, but will provide some decreased resolution when going back to 24 fps for our HD festival prints. We will edit with Avid Xpress Pro for PC (coming in July) which

should work together with our 24P footage. Though we shot on Digital Video (MiniDV), we will up-res our image to HD at E-Motion Studios for festival screening. Interestingly, we will be using Final Cut Pro on a Mac for the up-res. Given the 24P footage, the up-res to HD should look much better than with standard DV.

We have a long road ahead in post, and there are no books yet to help us. In the coming months we will post our experiences in 24P to HD post-production online at: [www.american-yearbook.com](http://www.american-yearbook.com) **HD**

Brian is an independent filmmaker living in Vacaville, CA and can be reached at [production@american-yearbook.com](mailto:production@american-yearbook.com)