



LUMIX PRO Case Study

Nightshift by Lee Brimble and Stuart Morgan

Nightshift was the brain child of Lee Brimble and Stuart Morgan, who have between them spent many years shooting cars for magazines, TV programmes and commercial clients but wanted to shoot a short film with more of a narrative. Lee and Stuart have both been early adopters of the LUMIX Series. Stuart says "It took one day of testing the S-series before realising that this was a system I wanted to work with. My clients have noticed the change and I know I'm shooting some of my best stuff." Before Stuart came to LUMIX he had used pro camcorders and mirrorless cameras from other brands but found he didn't like the colours he was getting, some of his kit was too big and heavy, and some of the cameras were also not able to cope with bad weather.



Lee had done a lot of research and had used a number of other systems on the market, but found he had problems with dust on sensors, odd colours, difficult menu systems, camera sizes and poor ergonomics. "The LUMIX S1 just blew me away" he says. "And now I own an S1, an S1R and the S1H. It's the image quality and the build quality that convinced me, and the LUMIX S Pro lenses are the best I've ever used. I'm probably going to raise some eyebrows, but I prefer the video image quality from the S1H to that of my other cinema camera. It's cleaner and more organic." He also wanted something more compact "that could be packed into my hand luggage for traveling. When the LUMIX S series came out I saw it as the perfect tool - great build quality, small and compact but with excellent image quality whether you are shooting stills or video as Stu and I talked about cameras and using the same gear, we got to talking about shooting together and Nightshift was born."

"We choose the S1H because we had been using the S1 for a while and liked the cinematic look especially when combined with the Sigma Cine Primes. We got the green light for the project and had to move pretty quickly as we had a series of short windows with Stuart, Garry (Director) and myself in between our days jobs," said Lee. The plan was for Lee to be D.O.P on the main shoot while Stuart would shoot the behind-the-scenes footage and stills. "We wanted to shoot the BTS on the LUMIX S1 and LUMIX lenses because we wanted a sharpness to the BTS that would make it look different to the main film." Stuart adds "Our decision to shoot this on the S1H and S1 actually really helped us because everything was compatible with everything else, so we could swap lenses and other kit all the time. Moving kit between locations in one vehicle really helped with the atmosphere on the shoot, but more importantly it allowed us to keep our set-up compact and light, and our footprint very small - which was great when filming on the streets of Manchester!", concluding "There is something about carrying just a single camera bag containing an S1, an S1H, three lenses, a Ninja V and a few accessories that I found liberating. It was everything I needed for most of the BTS shoot, so the choice was an easy one."



"As the shoot was taking place within a short period, there was an understanding that the camera would be in motion for a lot of the shots" explains Lee. "It would be hand held while we were on foot, recording from a car or shooting the LEXUS from inside - so the IBIS was going to be really important for this shoot". Stuart agrees that the camera's in-body stabilisation system was critical to creating smooth footage without the use of additional equipment "IBIS is one feature where Panasonic leads the way."



Headlines are usually grabbed by spec such as 10-Bit, V-Log and recording formats when a new camera is released but Lee and Stuart also found plenty of other aspects of the LUMIX S cameras a real benefit when shooting Nightshift. "I like buttons on cameras and those on the S1 and S1H can be configured to suit the way I operate," says Stuart "I don't want to be constantly delving into the menu to find features, and with these models I don't have to. The cameras are dead easy to operate and really intuitive to use when in the field, especially when shooting at night like we did for Nightshift." Lee also appreciates the depth of features these cameras offer, "When shooting in the hotel we had flickering from the lights in the headboard. Using the syncro-scan function I could easily dial in a different frequency and it was gone. It might seem a little thing, but it means I can shoot in so many more environments thanks to this feature being included."

Lee says "As with all video production, it's a team effort not only from us as the crew but also with all the gear we used. The Atomos Ninja V external recorders and screens were essential for this project as we wanted to record the project in V-Log and HLG with the broadest bit depth as possible. The rest of the kit included a Ronin S gimbal, G-Tech hard drives, SanDisk cards and Aperture lights everything worked perfectly on set. With the amazing car we got from Lexus, and the rest of the crew, we were lucky. It was cold and wet most nights but the gear never let us down." Stuart adds "It was a good job that the S1 and S1H are weather-proofed as we had some pretty horrible conditions during the shoot, both cold and wet, but they performed really well throughout."

They have just got it so right with the S-Series cameras. I know I can rely on it to give great handheld footage. In fact, I only used the S1 on a gimbal once when shooting the BTS film, everything else was handheld. To be honest I often find myself grabbing the S1H or S1 to get that quick shot, where previously it would have needed a gimbal. IBIS has been a real benefit for me on fast-paced shoots, many times I have picked up the camera and captured action that I would have missed if I had to set-up and balance a gimbal. I am not saying it is a gimbal replacement but I am certainly more than confident that it will allow me to get the shot." Lee concluded "Yeah, on some recent TV work my footage was used because I was able to be in the right place at the right time with a camera and the IBIS really helps with that."

"The shoot was cold and wet, but we didn't let that stop us. The challenge was making sure that Esme (actress) did not get too cold but she was amazing throughout. Everything was shot at night but we rigged-up some small LED lights that I could control via my phone, to add a bit more character to the Manchester nights. The majority of the film though was shot at ISO 4000 or above. The ability of the camera to capture clean footage at such high ISO settings is amazing and helped with the fast-paced nature of the shoot, as we did not have time or ability to light the whole set. Having head room in the ISO and the confidence I would be able to use the shot even with a grade was liberating" says Lee.



As there wasn't much time to shoot good organisation was critical, Lee and Stuart knew they had to plan every element of the shoot including the resolution, frame-rate and codecs they would work at, "Working in 10-bit has always been a big deal for me, as I like to play with the grade a lot in post. I also want a great natural look in-camera for projects when we don't have much time or much budget for post-production. Stuart and I managed the edit and post-production between us, so being confident of what we are going to get from the footage produced by the S1H made planning shots a lot easier." Stuart added "I recommend not getting in the mind-set of feeling the need to shoot RAW or V-Log all the time though. The Cine profiles can be a better option in many cases and it gets you used to getting things right in-camera rather than relying on fixing things 'inpost'."

Lee did a lot of the grading of the film and enjoyed working with the files the LUMIX cameras produced, "I wanted a pretty heavy grade to match my vision for the film and was really impressed by how much I could push and pull the V-Log footage in the grade, but the RAW footage was even better. You can really dig into blacks and pull back the highlights without damaging the end results." Stuart agrees, and says the LUMIX system has made his life a lot easier "So far I'm getting better colours than before, straight out of the camera. The images hold up well in post-production, the cameras feel like they are built to last and the L-mount lenses have been superb in every way. The LUMIX S1 and S1H are the most enjoyable cameras I've shot with in a long time." What's the most significant positive about Lee's conversion to the LUMIX S system? "The combination of image quality, build, optics and ease of use have made me improve as a photographer," he says. "And I can't pay a higher compliment than that."