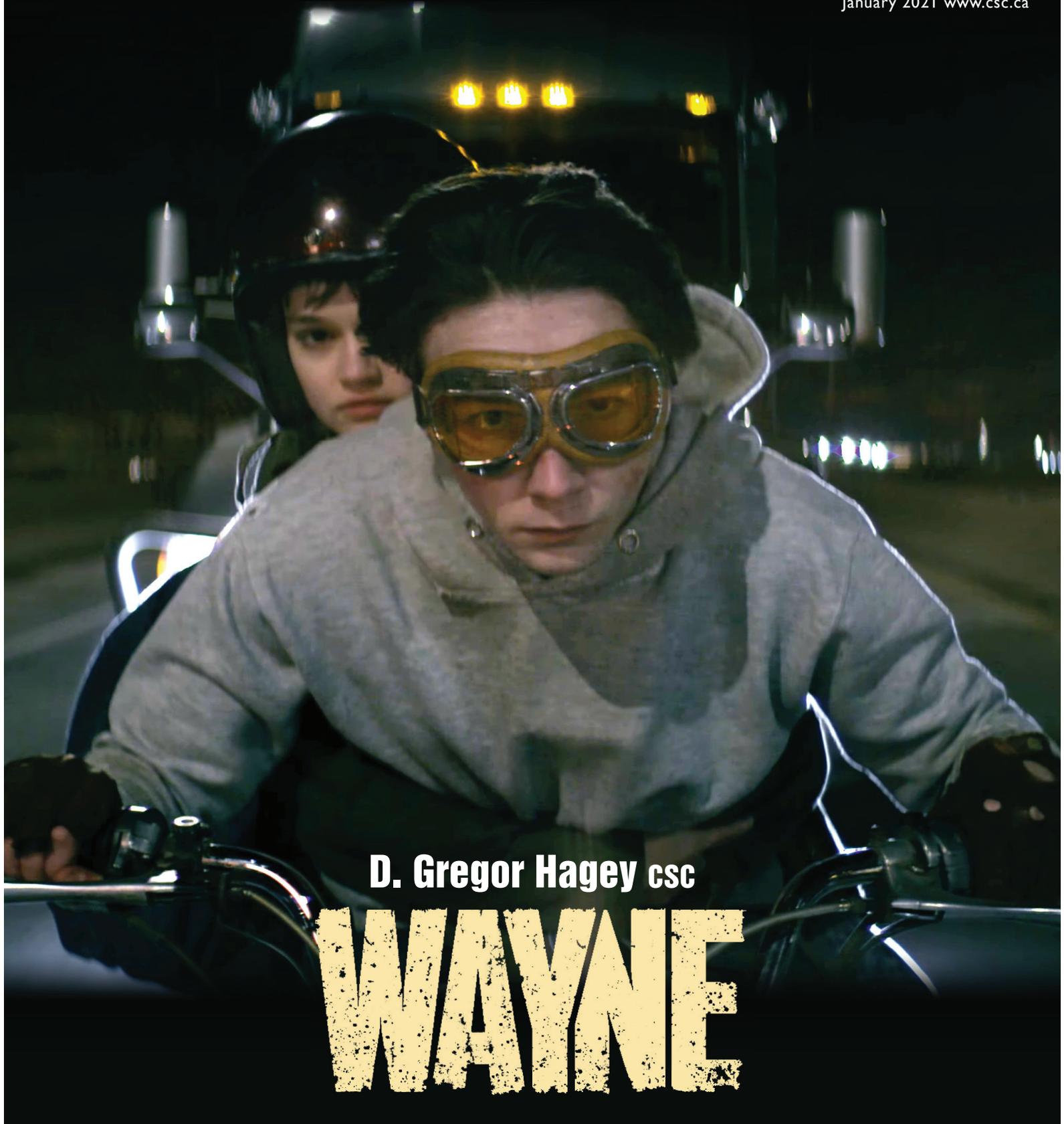


CANADIAN CINEMATOGRAPHER

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D. Gregor Hagey csc

WAYNE



Norm Li csc: Music Video Cinematography

D. Gregor Hagey csc *The Fu*



By Trevor Hogg, Special to *Canadian Cinematographer*

Even though streaming services have become a prominent source of programming, Google has discontinued producing original scripted content for YouTube Premium with Netflix picking up *The Karate Kid* sequel series *Cobra Kai* and Amazon Prime Video becoming the home of *Wayne*. The latter stars a teenager (Mark McKenna) channelling vigilante Charles Bronson as he embarks on a road trip with a female classmate

(Ciara Bravo) to reclaim a 1979 Pontiac Trans Am stolen from his late father (Ray McKinnon). “From my perspective, the people at YouTube were supportive and interested in taking risks with new stories and ideas,” D. Gregor Hagey csc who won for Comedy Series Cinematography at the 2020 CSC Awards for *Wayne*, states. “*Wayne* is not a conventional comedy.”

In 2017, Iain MacDonald (*Shameless, Preacher*)



Never Waynes



Mark McKenna (left) as Wayne McCullough and Ciara Bravo as Delilah Luccetti in Amazon Studios' *Wayne*.

directed the pilot, which led to YouTube ordering nine more episodes in 2018 with the show going to air in 2019. Despite other directors being brought in – including Steve Pink (*Grosse Pointe Blank*), Tessa Hoffe (*Coronation Street*), Michael Jann (*Drop Dead Gorgeous*), and Stephanie Laing (*Veep*) – Hagey was responsible for shooting each of the 10 episodes. “I was lucky to have a strong gaffer ‘Fast’ Eddy Mikolic and key grip Fraser Boyle. Second unit DP Rion

Gonzales went on technical surveys and scouts with directors while I was on set shooting and took extensive notes for me. Aside from that, there were maybe one or two lunch meetings with the director, and I had to do my homework on the weekends.” The pilot felt like a short indie feature. “It was two weeks of prep, seven official shoot days and another day where we reduced the unit. It was very busy. I had three weeks of prep for the series and five shoot

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days per episode,” Hagey says.

Wayne creator Shawn Simmons (*Now We’re Talking*) focused his attention on running the writers’ room and was involved in approving the style of his show. “Maintaining the visual style and tone of the show was part of my responsibility,” says Hagey, who created a look book consisting of the pilot script and corresponding final stills. “I made that up when we went to series to share with all of the departments as a way to show them what we had done before.” There was also room for creative contributions from the directors. “Episode 9, which won the CSC Award this year, is a good example. Michael Jann came to me with an idea for the opening scene to be shot handheld. One of the rules was we don’t do handheld on this show. It’s much more controlled and composed frames. But Michael made a good case for it and that’s how we shot the opening scene; it worked well. The handheld work was expertly executed by my A operator Brett Hurd, who was a close collaborator throughout the show.” Unlike the rest of the series, a number of scenes in the pilot were storyboarded, like the final sequence when Wayne and Del (Ciara Bravo) are riding the motorcycle out of town. “Stunt choreographer Neil Davison [*The Lighthouse*] would film a previs of what he had worked out in advance, so we had a good idea of what to expect. Typically fights are fairly time-intensive to photograph so the more preplanning that you have benefits you on the day.”

Visual references included *Mad Max*, *Death Wish*, *Moonrise Kingdom*, *Paranoid Park*, *Brick* and John Hughes (*The Breakfast Club*). “I would usually describe the visual style as Gus Van Sant meets Edgar Wright to each director. While researching the

pilot, Iain and I were interested in films that were centred around teenagers,” Hagey explains. “There is an episode in the series where Del gets picked up in Georgia by a truancy officer and gets sent back to school even though she doesn’t go there. It’s a funny moment where she is in a detention room in the library of a high school; that’s a big nod to John Hughes.” Violence is an integral part of the narrative. “In the pilot there is a scene where Orlando Hikes [Joshua Williams] is getting beaten up by bullies in the school hallway. Wayne runs down and beats the kid with a trumpet. Teeth and blood come flying out of his mouth. We shot from behind as Wayne swung the trumpet at the actor’s face at a safe distance, but with the lensing you can’t tell the difference. Visual effects took over and added teeth and blood flying out of the mouth. In colour correction we had to enhance the blood sometimes especially for dark scenes by creating power windows to make the red pop a bit more.”

Given the tight production schedule, there was not much time for major location moves, however, it was important to create the impression of a cross country road trip. “The story is literally Wayne travelling from Brockton, Massachusetts, down to Florida,” Hagey remarks. “There is this component of trying to find places that are different as they make their way south. The art department had the job of doing that by adding little details to every location and drew a map that was on their wall with



Credit (All): Courtesy Amazon Studios



(Top left) Ciara Bravo and Mark McKenna in Wayne, “Chapter One: Get Some Then.” (Top right) Kirk Ward as Calvin Clay in “Chapter Nine: Thought We Was Friends.” (Middle left) Ciara Bravo as Delilah Luccetti in “Chapter Nine: Thought We Was Friends.” (Middle right) Ciara Bravo and Mark McKenna in “Chapter Three: The Goddamned Beacon of Truth.” (Bottom left) Kirk Ward, Mark McKenna and Francesco Antonio in “Chapter Nine: Thought We Was Friends.” (Bottom right) Akiel Julien, Francesco Antonio and Harrison Tanner.

little markers where each episode takes place. It was a helpful tool to look at.” All of the shooting took place in Toronto, Hamilton, Scarborough, Etobicoke, Burlington, and Mississauga. “For Florida, we were at a rundown warehouse in Etobicoke that was used for the main compound where Wayne’s step-

dad Calvin Clay [Kirk Ward] lives. The art department added palm trees and all kinds of decorations to give it a more colourful Southern feel.” Weather was an issue when it came to visual and narrative continuity. The pilot was shot in November/December 2017 and the series in June, July



Credit: Brett Hurd



Credit: Brett Hurd

(Top) Mark McKenna (left) and Ciara Bravo on the set of *Wayne*.

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and August of 2018. Story-wise Episode 2 is supposed to be winter in Massachusetts. “We definitely had some fake snow to put into the shots to create a transition from the pilot to Episode 2. It goes by quickly, so you don’t question it too much,” Hagey says, adding that the time gap in the production schedule caused some issues with the locations. “The house where Del lives with her dad and two brothers was not available when we went to series the next year; it has a huge part in Episode 5 which explains why Del’s mom is missing from the story. Shawn came up with the idea that the family had moved, and we found a house in Hamilton that was appropriate for the look that everybody wanted.”

YouTube specifications requiring 4K delivery, and the desire of Hagey and MacDonald to shoot anamorphic led to utilizing two RED WEAPON cameras with Helium sensors provided by Sim International. “There is basically no other camera choice for anamorphic because you have to crop the middle square of the sensor,” Hagey explains. “It’s 5K when you shoot anamorphic down from 8K. I was happy with the result. Cooke Anamorphic has a lot of desirable anamorphic character in the lenses. 25 mm was the widest, and we had a 32 mm, 40 mm, 50 mm, 75 mm, 100 mm and 135 mm, and a Cooke S4 14 mm spherical for high-speed shots above 96fps.” The decided upon aspect ratio was 2:1. “We almost always shot at 1600 ISO, occasionally going up to 3200 ISO when needed. We shot in Legacy mode set to REDlogFilm.”

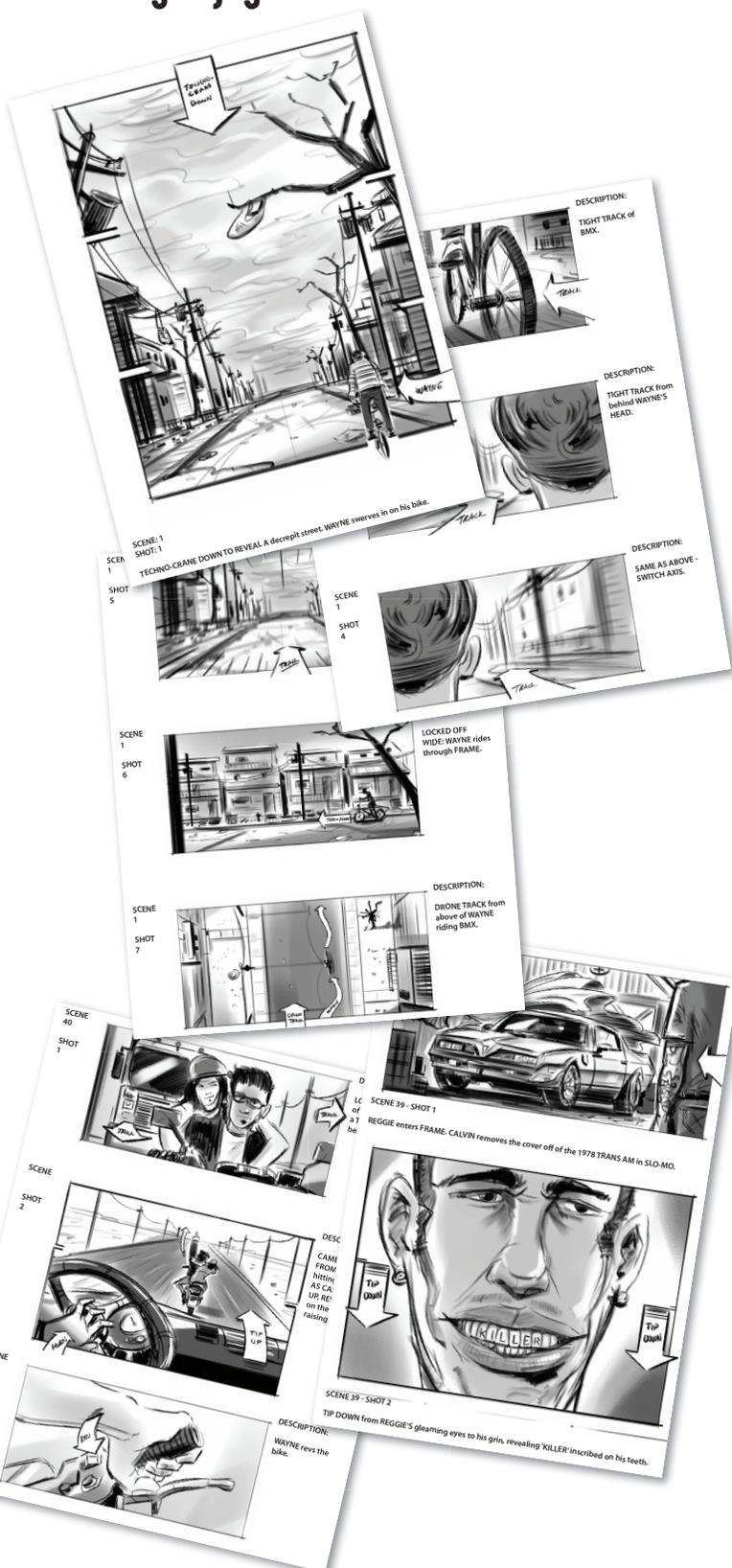
An additional camera was the Sony a7S II, which was a crash camera and rigged for small spaces. “There is a sequence where Wayne rides his motorcycle through a school, so we did have to do a custom rig. A Sony a7S II was rigged to the motorcycle to get that point of the view of riding through the high school hallways, down the stairs; it was a cool shot. We also rigged the Sony a7S II to get closeups of the speedometer and accelerator as the motorcycle drove down the highway. For the rest of the scene we had a camera car that Wayne and Del ride down the highway; that was Nikola Tesla Boulevard in Hamilton, which at night has a great view and cool industrial lighting. The motorcycle was on a process trailer close to the back of it so you can



(Top) Mark McKenna (left) and Ciara Bravo. (Middle) Mike O'Malley, Ciara Bravo and Joshua J. Williams. (Bottom) Mark McKenna and Derek Theler (right) as Conan.

Credit (All): Courtesy Amazon Studios

“I felt supported by every level to take creative risks and push the envelope. Creatively, *Wayne* was a very enjoyable show to work on.”



Courtesy D. Gregor Hagey csc



Storyboards by Gergely Kapus.

(Above) D. Gregor Hagey csc on the set of *Wayne*.

see the road, but the actors are safely strapped in. Visual effects removed the safety tethers.”

LEDs, HMIs and Kino Flos were supplied by William F. White. “I transitioned fully to LED by the end of the show,” Hagey reveals. “That was largely thanks to my gaffer Fast Eddy. There is a good scene where we created a lightning effect at night. We used an array of SkyPanels on a lift that were being remotely triggered with a program to create lightning. It worked well. There was no issue with a rolling shutter. We had a couple of 18Ks to recreate the sun when we needed and a SoftSun for a pawnshop location.” Over the series, the production had to shut down seven times because of lightning strikes. “At Del’s house for Episode 5 we lost power not because of lightning strikes but because someone stole the Seaway cable that connected all of the lighting to the generator. It’s worth a lot of money because it’s copper. We had surrounded the place with lights to simulate daylight. Then all of the lighting starts to go down. Fortunately, we had more cable, and the shoot did go on. It was one of the more unusual problems that I had onset.”

When the story shifted to Florida, we wanted to contrast it with Massachusetts, which was cold, grey and desaturated,” Hagey remarks. “Florida was much more colourful and had a gold quality



to it. We tended to use atmosphere for the interiors in Florida as well. The sunbeams contrasted with the overcast light of Massachusetts.” Only one LUT was produced. “I was emulating Fujifilm 3510. I wanted something gritty with more cool tones and have greens register more. The DI was graded in Los Angeles at Company 3 by colourist Mike Levy. I got to go down to grade the pilot and work directly with the colourist. He did a great job of keeping the contrast that I wanted but still keep blacks and shadows with a velvet quality to them. They’re a bit open and not totally crushed. I graded the

series remotely through Deluxe Toronto, which had a system where I could view what the colourist was viewing, had him on a speaker, and we made adjustments on the weekend or during the week after the show wrapped. It worked well.”

Other key crew members included rigging gaffer John Hall, rigging grip Carson Foster, B cam operator/Steadicam/underwater Brent Robinson, pilot only B Cam/Steadicam operator Brad Hruboska, A cam 1st AC Brent Craig, B cam 1st AC Chris Chung and DIT Morning Glory. “The final sequence in the pilot with Wayne and Del on the motorcycle getting chased by the tractor trailer logistically was a big challenge to do,” Hagey recalls. “It was insanely cold, a reduced unit and was day zero. That was the first time working with everybody together, and there was no other way to fit it into the schedule. The car crash in the final episode is a great sequence that ties together a lot of main unit and second unit work. I shot a good portion with a homemade Lensbaby. I used a technique called freelensing. If you hold the medium format lens in front of a film camera by hand, you can distort the image and tilt the focal plane. I felt supported by every level to take creative risks and push the envelope. Creatively, *Wayne* was a very enjoyable show to work on.” 🍷



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