

Perhaps even more phenomenal than the special effects in the Australian independent feature film, *The Inside Story*, is the perseverance of the film's writer/director/producer, Robert Sutherland.

Completed toward the end of last year and shot entirely on location in Melbourne, Australia, *The Inside Story* is the culmination of a seven-year journey and the result of no less than twenty-two drafts of the script - an effort later rewarded with the prestigious (AWGIE) Australian Writers Guild Award for Best Feature Film Screenplay.

Representing a bold shift from the accepted style of Australian features, the film tells the story of the discovery of a mysterious book that carries a dark history. The main character, Dean Olsen, played by Andrew Curry, is seduced by the secrets held within, and finds himself confronted by an ancient evil.

Sutherland had a clear vision of what he wanted to achieve and the limitations within which the shoot would take place. The six weeks of principal photography embraced the modest budget and made full use of Sutherland's parents' home, the central location for the shoot.

The budget also demanded the film be shot in Super 16 and the result is remarkable for the outstanding image quality and convincing visual effects. Cinematographer, Luis Da Silva comments, "The stocks nowadays are so good...some industry people saw the film and thought it was actually shot in 35mm." Da Silva selected Kodak Vision 200T 5274 film stock shooting the film 'normally' throughout, with the forthcoming visual effects in mind. The use of one film stock afforded efficiencies of time and assisted the two-man camera crew by reducing the number of magazine changes and minimising short ends.

In collaboration with Sutherland, Da Silva, "decided to keep daylight interiors and exteriors quite natural to avoid having to over light however, with all the night scenes, we decided to bring up the color because there's a lot of magic in the special effects and we wanted to keep it magical and keep it really colorful." Sutherland recalls, "There's a contrast between those scenes that are everyday and contemporary and scenes where we are visiting other realms, which were shot much more creatively and colorfully. It was about defining two layers of the story."

Visual effects house, Phenomena, completed over



The Inside Story: Supernatural 16mm

150 effects described by visual effects supervisor, Mark Dickson as, "definitely the most ambitious visual effects I've seen in an independent film of that nature." The creation of the demonic being in the film was achieved in 3-D and composited as a ghostly, partially transparent figure. The shots called for extensive motion tracking in post-production to create realistic interaction with the actors on set.

Almost two years after principal photography, Sutherland's goal of an imaginative, otherworldly story was achieved, and the 35mm blow-up was complete with full film



Scenes from *The Inside Story*.

"Definitely the most ambitious visual effects I've seen in an independent film of that nature."

resolution effects and Dolby Digital SRD sound. The film continues to gain momentum via the international festival circuit, having screened at the Singapore Film Festival in March and caused a stir at the Sydney Film Festival as one of only two Australian feature films on the program. To further appreciate *The Inside Story* the trailer may be viewed at www.discovertheinsidestory.com

Data File

The Inside Story

Producer/Writer/Director: **Robert Sutherland**
Executive Producer: **Robert A. Jones**
Director of Photography: **Luis Da Silva**
Laboratory: **Cinevex**
Visual Effects Supervisor: **Mark Dickson**

Robert Sutherland

After completing a Bachelor of Arts at the University of Melbourne in 1992, Sutherland gained experience from within the Australian television drama industry. His short film, *The Shadow* (1992) demonstrated his interest in visual effects and his computer-hacking drama, *Computer Games* (1995), premiered at the Brisbane International Film Festival. He is currently developing another feature project.

Producer/
Writer/
Director
Robert Sutherland

