

TV Series

Lock, Stock

# Lock Stock - and the Last Link in the Chain



Shooting the opening scene of Episode 6 - bloody corpses in a cattle truck.

The feature *Lock, Stock and Two Smoking Barrels* was so well received that Channel 4 planned a TV series within the genre. The result, *Lock Stock*, comprises a two-hour scene-setter, followed by 6 x 50 minute episodes capturing the spirit of four dodgy but not truly villainous characters, 'likely lads' from London's East End, ducking and diving their way through life. Tim Palmer was slated to shoot the last four episodes in two blocks of two with an intervening recce week.

A US citizen, he has lived in the UK for all his 34 years, apart from a period reading History at The University of California, Berkeley, California. Once returned, Tim established himself as a fully operational stills man (fashion catwalk and commissioned work). He spent two years as a clapper-loader then in 1994 attended the National Film School at Beaconsfield. Since graduating in 1997 he has kept himself busy with commercials and shorts — including *Mavis and the Mermaid*, the recent winner of the Kodak Short Film Showcase — and, for a year or more, TV drama for Channel 4 and BBC's Screen 2.

This is his second TV series. His first, also for Channel 4, was a three-part series entitled *Coming Soon*. *Lock Stock* fuels yet wider ambitions. "From an aspiring DP's viewpoint *Lock Stock* is wonderful experience. This is TV drama of the highest quality with a cinematic feel. The designer's palette is of warm olive colours to give a subconscious feel — very little blue in frame, and if there is they'll paint it out. I don't normally like colour-effect filters, but to enhance that feel, I've been using the lighter 'antique suede' filters. It's stylised, contrasty, with interesting angles, blockings, and camera moves. To cut, for example, from a 5.5 to a 135 in the same scene is



PHOTO: PAUL CRAIG

Tim Palmer discussing a set-up with director David Thacker.

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pretty unconventional and breaks all the accepted rules of stylish elegance, but what the hell if it works? I do use diffusion occasionally; I just didn't on this show. Within those broad criteria I'm given a free hand, with the added advantage of having different directors for each block. My first one, Rudolf Mestdagh, liked wide-angle lenses, the second, David Thacker I know, goes for telephoto. It's going to be great."

They are shooting super 16 (16:9) using an Arri SR3, with a second high-speed on occasions — typically for fights and mayhem since all FX are in-camera. Tim operates himself — from preference and necessity — but with an occasional guest operator for busy times. The make-up is roughly 50/50 East London locations and in the conveniently nearby Three Mills studios. He is using Vision 250D — "I rate it at 200" — for day exteriors and location interiors, the Vision 200T for night interiors and studio work, with the fast Vision 500T for night exteriors. "With those three stocks I can do anything".

Especial difficulties? "None really that can't be got round. The schedule being paramount, and coverage needed for four or more principals in most scenes, encourages a form of shorthand lighting. A set-up for one kind of scene can apply, with quite small modifications, to another and so achieve the desired look in the minimum time. That said you must still care for your subject, and give the script, the story, and the characters the justice they deserve.

## Filmdata

### Tim Palmer

As well as *Lock Stock*, Tim's other television work includes *Sex 'n' Death* and *Coming Soon*. His many short films include *Mavis and the Mermaid*, winner Best Film Kodak Short Film Showcase 2000 and *Doom and Gloom* which was selected for the 1998 Cannes Film Festival, won the Arte prize at the Brest Film Festival 1997 and was a 'Best of Fest' finalist at the Edinburgh Film Festival 1997. Tim has also worked on many commercials and promos.

## Production team

### Lock, Stock

Producer	Antony Wood
Director (Block 4)	David Thacker
Director of Photography (Blocks 3 & 4)	Tim Palmer
Focus-Puller (Block 3)	Luke Palmer
Focus-Puller (Block 4)	Jeremy Forster
Clapper Loader (Blocks 3 & 4)	Charlie England
Trainee (Blocks 3 & 4)	Paul Craig
Grip (Blocks 3 & 4)	Paul Hatchman
Gaffer (Blocks 3 & 4)	Gary Chaisty
Guest Operator (Block 4)	Paul Donachie