

## Adventure sports cinematographer Richard Cheski captures drama and beauty on film

"Find something you love to do," says the career advisor. Richard Cheski was listening. Cheski has been an adventure/action sports cinematographer and producer for some 20 years. It grew out of the love of sports he developed during his youth, while living in Hawaii and Utah.

"I got my degree in photography and filmmaking in college but it was my love of sports that got me started as a cinematographer," Cheski explains. "I had some great filmmakers influence me including Akira Kurosawa and a variety of sports cinematographers such as Derek Hoffmann, the late Hal Jepson and Greg Stump, to name a few."

Growing up in Hawaii, surfing gave Cheski a personal view of man's unending efforts to exploit the wonders of nature in sports. He loves participating in sports, and funneled that passion into his photography and cinematography.

Extreme sports are more popular than ever today. They are being showcased in mainstream media from magazines and newspapers to movies and television. During the past 20 years, Cheski has built a library of adventure and travel stock film footage in sports ranging from BMX biking to snowboarding, mountain biking, motocross, skiing, surfing, wakeboarding and more. He licenses images and film footage for use by other producers.

Cheski is also working on a documentary series focusing on the extreme sport culture for release in HD format. "I have an amazing film-based library and now have the opportunity to transfer regular 16mm film and Super 16mm to HD formats. Film is still cost effective and future proof. The pictures look amazing!"

His company, EpicImagesOnline.com is headquartered in Park City, Utah. It specializes in sports action film and still photography. On the motion side, it offers action sports films, adventure travel cinematography, and, to a lesser extent, sporting event coverage. "What I really like best is the more organic sports photography — not events so much — just working one-on-one with the athletes."

With evolving technical formats and new media, the market for his imagery continually changes. Ten years ago, there was little to no demand for web images. Now it's a huge market. Five years ago, there was no market for mobile devices such as digital phones and iPods. Today, it is becoming commonplace.

One thing remains constant: Cheski's belief in film. "The reason I shoot film is plain and simple: high quality pictures. The quality is amazing. That was true when I started shooting, and it's still true today."

Because he derives so much of his livelihood from his stock library, Cheski has an equally compelling business reason for insisting on film origination: the ability to transfer high quality images to any digital video format. "I'm going into stuff I shot three or four years ago, and am re-transferring it to match new 35mm footage for high-definition, 16:9 commercials," he says. "That's something I couldn't do if I had originated on video."

Cheski shoots both standard 16mm, Super 16 film using ARRI SR3, and 35mm ARRI 2-C cameras. He leans toward the Super 16 format, when portability is needed to give him an edge to move freely and respond to unpredictable sports action. He prefers a Super 16 Angenieux 5.9mm for ultra-wide angle perspectives without distortion, and an Angenieux 12-240mm zoom lens in other situations.

Most of his work is outdoors. He has been using EASTMAN EXR 50D 7245 film as his primary film, and EASTMAN PLUS-X film for black-and-white converge as his primary emulsions for years. But now he is exploring new possibilities. "I tried one of the KODAK VISION 100T films with an 85B filter, and the latitude was great. I began shooting in the winter at about 5 p.m., and it quickly got very dark. When the film was processed, it was amazing how much it had captured." ■

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Left: Bill Bryan - amazing surfer on the California coast.