



# Exploring the lives of Russian gangsters in **Kill the King**

Cinematographer Bruce Alan Greene has recently completed shooting on *Kill the King*, a character-driven drama that looks at the murky side of the Russian underworld. It was shot on location in Batumi, Republic of Georgia with a crew made up of Russians, Ukrainians, Georgians and one American. The movie was directed by Alexander Atanesyan. This is the second time Bruce Alan Greene has teamed up with Mr Atanesyan; the pair shot *Montana* in Southern California, the previous year.

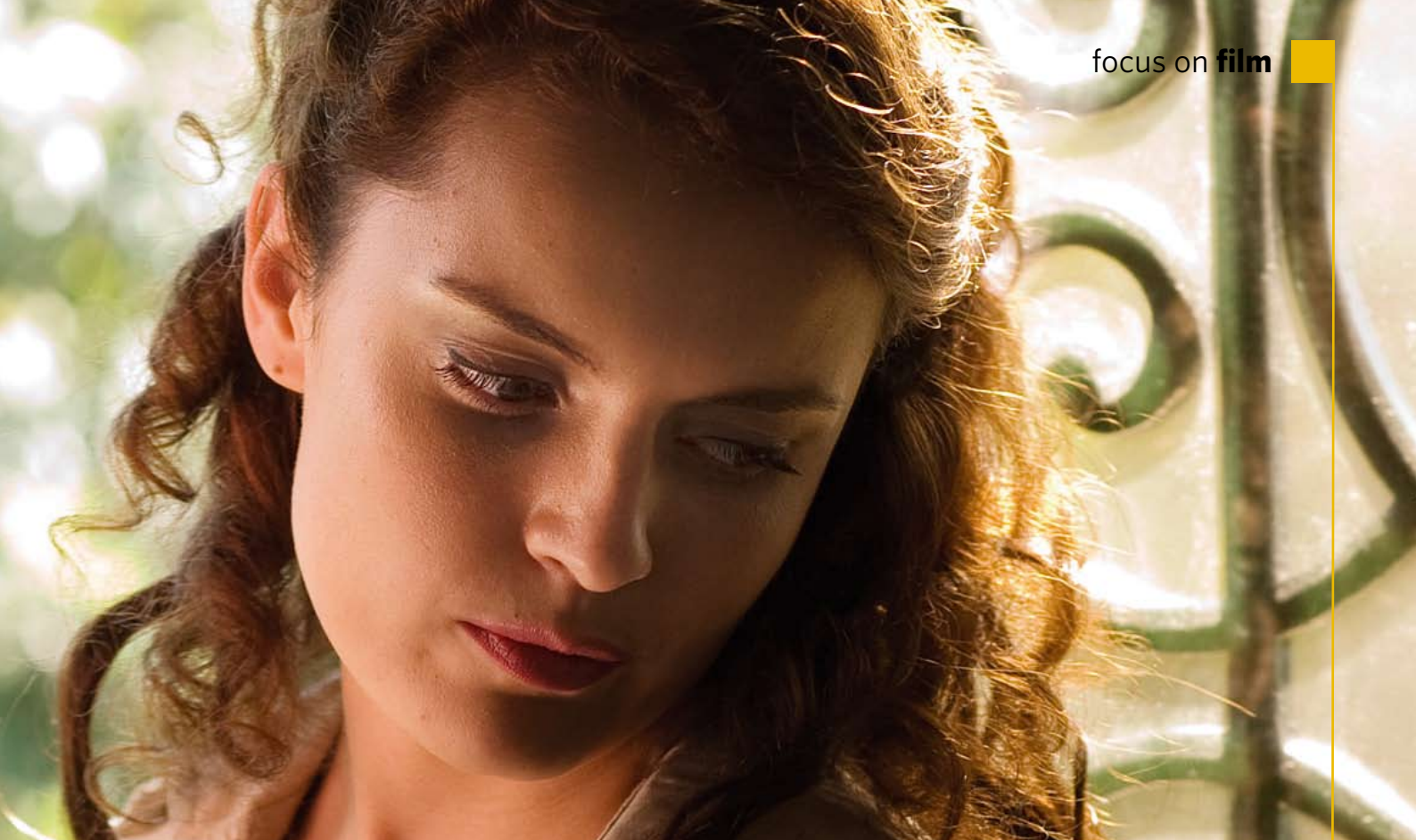
*InCamera* caught up with Bruce Alan Greene and posed some questions about the filming of this feature.

Q

**What sort of 'look' were you aiming for with *Kill the King*?**

A

*Kill the King* is very much a location film with minimal set building. As such, I felt that the 'look' of the picture would be largely determined by the script and the locations themselves. I wanted to maintain the unique look of the locations in Batumi through mostly 'natural' looking lighting especially as this film is a character-driven drama and I wanted the look of the film to emphasis the actors and the script more than the photography. Occasionally I went for a more 'Hollywood' look especially in the more romantic scenes. The criminal characters in the film approach their violence in a very routine way and it was important to keep the violence portrayed in the very normal fashion in which the characters wield it.



Q

**Can you give us a brief plot outline?**

A

*Kill the King* is the story of Polina who was orphaned as a teenager and adopted by the local mafia boss. She grows up to marry one of his soldiers who is then murdered by his fellow gangsters. Polina becomes suspicious and plots her revenge leading to a climactic confrontation with her adoptive father. The film is an intense character drama that explores the traditions of Russian gangsters in changing times.

Q

**Why did you shoot on film rather than video?**

A

Film was certainly the choice of the director and myself and it was a natural fit for the script. From a technical standpoint, the Russian and Ukrainian crew was very comfortable with the film workflow i.e loading the film, knowing what it would look like and sending it off to the lab. Shooting digital would have required equipment that would have been unwieldy on this shoot, even if we had wanted the look of digital capture. We still have the advantages of digital post-production as we shot super 35 widescreen for a D.I film-out so film was definitely the best choice.

Q

**What film stocks did you use?**

A

We used mainly KODAK VISION2 500T 5218 and some 5212 for day exteriors. Because we were at a remote location, I wanted to keep the

number of film stocks to a minimum. Also, I like the look of the 5218 and the 5219 was not yet available to us at the time of shooting. As it turned out, we had a lot of dark cloudy days and we ended up using the 5218 stock quite a bit.

Q

**Can you give us some brief technical details please?**

A

*Kill the King* was shot in 2.4:1 aspect ratio in super 35mm format. It will be scanned for D.I at Hollywood Intermediate in Burbank and an anamorphic negative will be used for printing. Cameras used were an ARRI 535 and an ARRICAM LT with Zeiss Ultra Prime lenses. There were approximately 46 days of shooting and the dailies were processed and transferred to disk at the Sinefekt Laboratory in Istanbul; editing was done on Final Cut Pro in Moscow.

Q

**Were there any particular obstacles you had to overcome during filming?**

A

This picture was a big adventure for me being the only non-Russian speaking person in the cast and crew but apart from the language barrier, there was really just the normal challenge of making the best possible movie in a limited amount of time. We had two terrific camera operators from Moscow for the conventional camera set-ups which was a huge help to me and I'd like to thank Andrey Belkanov on 'A' camera and Slava Khrapliuk on 'B' camera. Also Ruslan Zavorotniy from Kiev did a terrific job running the lighting crew.