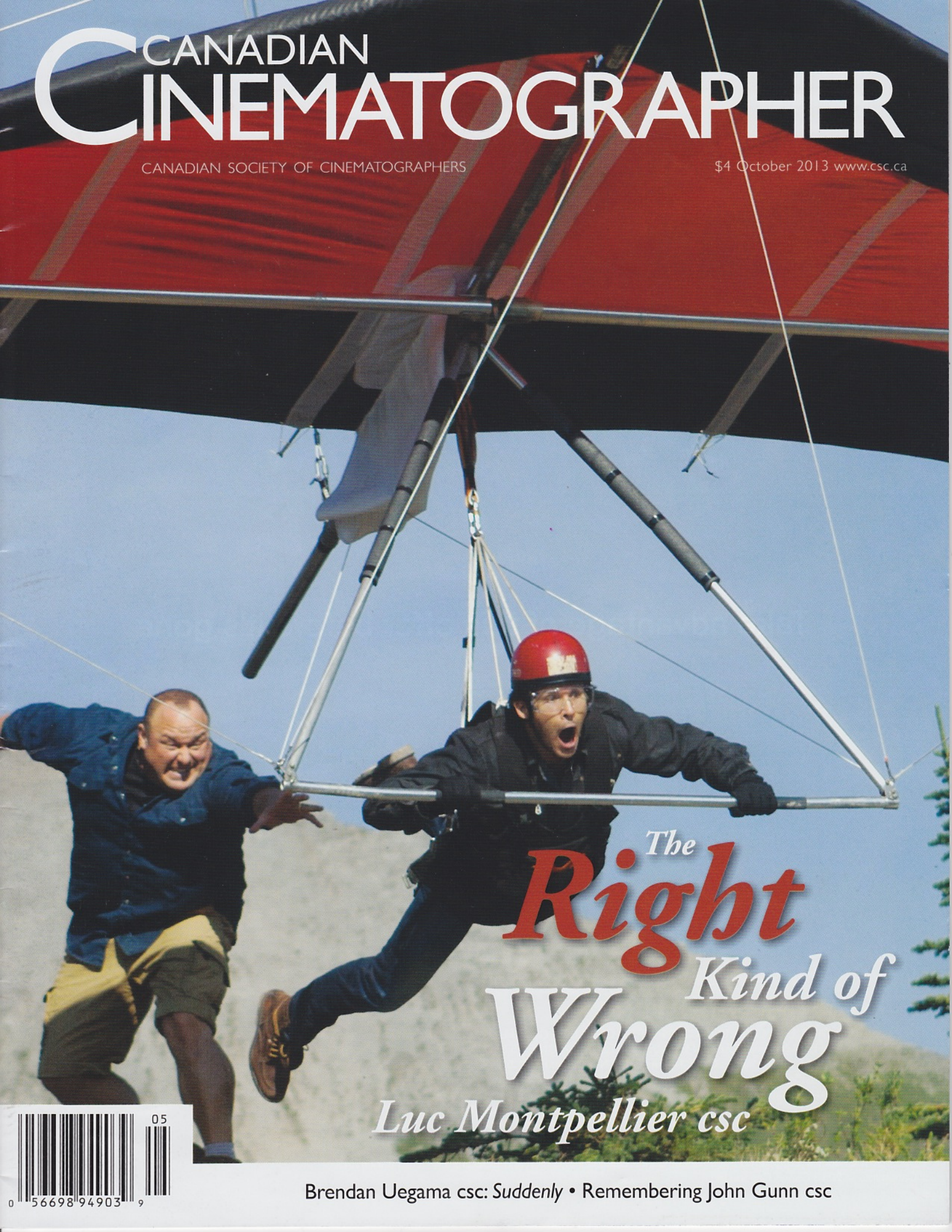


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The
Right
Kind of
Wrong
Luc Montpellier csc



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Luc Montpellier csc

The Right Kind of Wrong

By Fanen Chiahem

In *The Right Kind of Wrong*, opening nationwide this month after a Toronto International Film Festival premiere, a writer-turned-full-time-dishwasher goes to great lengths to win over the unlikely object of his affection. Like many modern fairy tales, or romantic comedies as they're more popularly known, its discourse on relationships is told from a hyper-real world.

The novel on which the film is based, Tim Sandin's *Sex and Sunsets*, takes place in "a mythic mountain town," director Jeremiah Chechik (*Benny and Joon*, *Diabolique*) says. "It's an amalgam of many places. So we just chose the most suitable mountain town we could find anywhere, and that was Canmore and Banff, [Alberta]. It just has an idealized quality. Everywhere you look is beautiful, and it felt like the perfect place to make the movie." Chechik decided early on that the stunning backdrop would do more than serve as a setting for the story ("I wanted the landscape itself to be a character in the film"), and he sought a director of photography who would give the landscape its stage.

A scene from *The Right Kind of Wrong*, an eOne Films release.

Fortunately, he had seen Sarah Polley's 2011 romantic drama *Take This Waltz*, shot by Luc Montpellier csc whose handling of the Toronto-set story left an impression on him. "I thought anyone who could make Toronto feel like the most magical beautiful city really is extraordinarily talented," Chechik says, laughing.

"I think Jeremiah and [producer] Robert [Lantos] were both very much wanting to think outside of the box. How do we make this film stand out from anything else?" Montpellier says. "It's a romantic comedy, but we wanted to turn it on its head a little so the audience could experience it in a unique way. We wanted an amplification to all the decisions in the film. From my lighting and the camera movements to costume, makeup and hair, everything needed to be considered that way. Even the colours are saturated to a point where they go a little bit beyond reality."

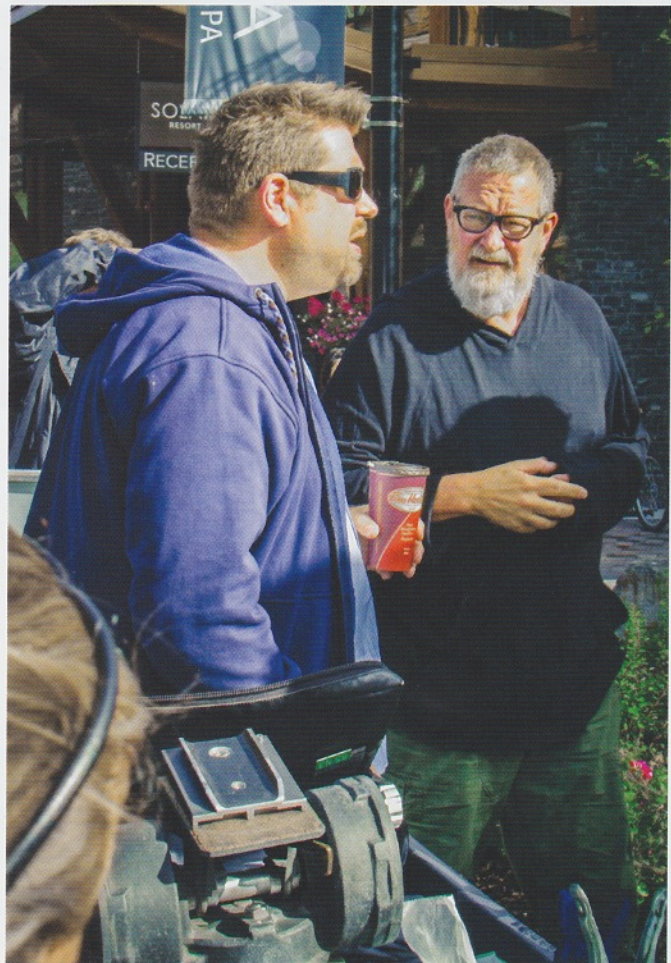
So they decided to shoot full anamorphic, with Montpellier pairing the then-newly released ALEXA PLUS, with its 4:3 sensor, with Panavision's C- and E-series anamorphic lenses, and capture in ARRIRAW format, a first on a Canadian-produced, locally shot feature film. "I thought that the combination of new technology and more legacy lenses was the perfect combination for this film because it was a marriage of the old and the new," Montpellier explains. "You end up with quite a unique look – this very modern looking image but there's a slight timeless quality to it at the same time. The optics are slightly soft around the edges, and that's what I love about the anamorphic lenses. I just love the contrast of the lenses but with the dynamic range of the ALEXA. To me the ALEXA has the most filmic digital grain; it just made it perfect."

Although the costs of shooting this way were prodigious for a Canadian shoot, Panavision and Technicolor were dedicated to seeing the filmmakers' vision through. "We were quite close to Luc as a DP we've worked with for a number of years," Jeff Flowers, Panavision's vice president of marketing in Western Canada, says. "When we start with cinematographers early in their career and make a commitment to support them, that becomes part of that support."

Also, ARRIRAW files can be difficult to handle in postproduction, Montpellier says, "but that's where Technicolor were real heroes in that aspect. They were really willing to dive in with both feet to do a 4:3 ARRIRAW anamorphic shoot. And they really put a lot of research and development in making sure their systems on the set were going to be right. And we had their mobile lab on wheels which was key as far as being able to deal with all this material in the field because we didn't have a laboratory and we were generating our own dailies on the set."

"All of us wanted to do it because we knew it was the right thing for the film," Technicolor's Technical Operations Manager Brian Reid says. "With those RAW images and more pixels we knew we would get the full breadth and scope of the landscape. The images are fantastic."

The mountains also provided a pre-existing palette for the film – the warm earth tones, the green foliage and the cooler tones



Photos this page by Brian Reid

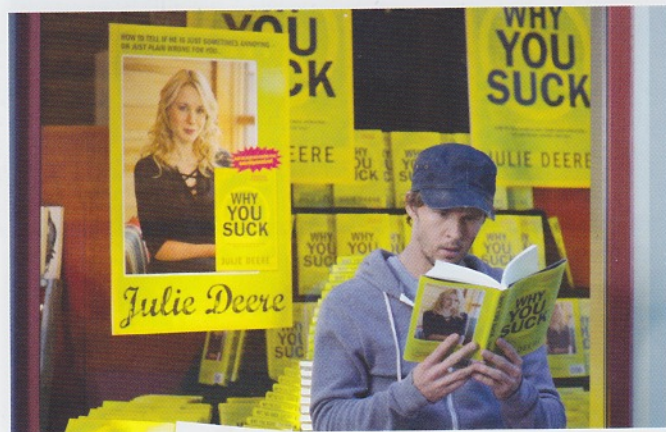
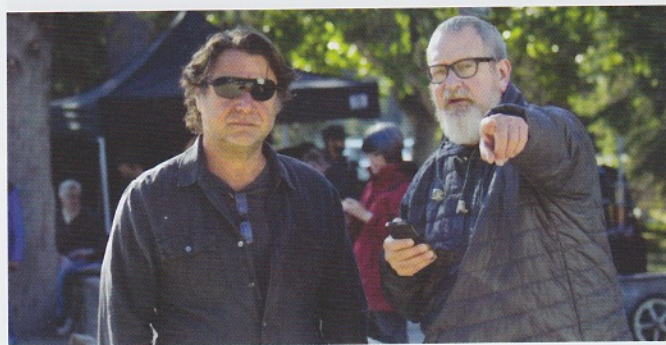
DOP Luc Montpellier csc with director Jeremiah Chechik.

of the bluish haze over the horizon. "It was a perfect palette for what we were trying to do," Montpellier says. "And it became the palette for the wardrobe and the colour temperature of light that I used."

To get the look just right, Montpellier and Chechik did some rigorous testing. "I've become quite well versed in colour correction on my own. I've had to learn all these tools, so that when I'm discussing things with the director and the creative team,



The ALEXA on the set of *The Right Kind of Wrong*.



Top: (From left) Montpellier, Chechik, producer Robert Lantos, postproduction supervisor Doug Wilkinson and senior colourist Mark Kueper. Second: Lantos (left) and Chechick (right) on the set of *The Right Kind of Wrong*. Third: Leo (played by Ryan Kwanten) outside the bookstore, reading his ex-wife Julie's new book in *The Right Kind of Wrong*. Fourth: Leo and Colette (played by Sara Canning) getting close in *The Right Kind of Wrong*.

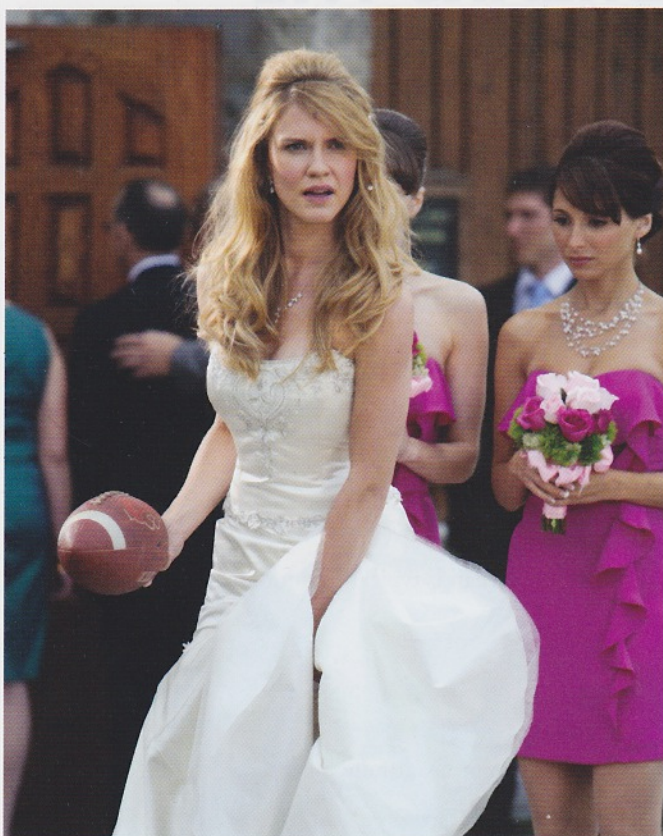
I can actually show them," Montpellier says. The DP captured dozens of still and digital images of the locations, sometimes with a Canon DSLR. He and Chechik then created the look of the film on a DaVinci Resolve. "We would pick colours within a frame, isolate them, desaturate them, isolate skin tones. So we ended up painting digitally. You could say almost every shot in the film had a special effect. Instead of leaving that to chance in post we really needed to create our palette. We made all our colour decisions in preproduction and during production, and that information was carried on through to post, and that's what's kind of unique but you're seeing a lot more of that happening, just because there's a lot more digital manipulation these days in post with creating your final look."

The colour tests also informed how much lighting Montpellier would need to do for the exterior shots in order to create a consistent look. In fact, Montpellier says he ended up doing more exterior lighting than is typical for him but that it was necessary to create contrast, which enabled him to isolate certain colours, especially in skin tones.

Offsetting the beautiful landscape outside were the intentionally drab interiors that were reflective of the characters' realities. "Outside you've got beautifully heightened coloured vistas that almost look like postcards, but then we would contrast that with our lead character's workplace," Montpellier says. For Leo's workspace, a restaurant kitchen, the crew found a kitchen that was lit with banks of cool white fluorescent fixtures. One of the tubes in the location even flickered, and Montpellier left it that way. He simply added a few more tubes in places as practical sources and altered the colour temperature to enhance the blue-green tones. If the interiors were shot with the same romance as the exteriors, he says "you would miss the point of his work environment, the kitchen, being depressing to him. I really wanted you to feel the impact of the shift when we went into the kitchen."

Montpellier's policy of letting the environment dictate how he would light applied to interiors as well. "I'm a big fan of creating a stage for the actors and being as unobtrusive as possible for them. In studio environments that we'd build from nothing I very much tried to build in the problems I would have on a location shoot that might make the light react in a certain way," he says. For example, rather than having light sources hanging from a grid, Montpellier had light coming from windows and practical sources. He placed large sources like 18Ks outside windows and let the light shine through. "When you restrict yourself like that you end up with a light design that's a lot more naturalistic."

Although most of the interiors were shot in a studio (Leo's apartment was built in an off-season curling rink in Banff), the filmmakers wanted the interiors to feel like they were shot on location. To recreate the outside world through the windows, Montpellier's gaffer took photographs of the real exteriors, enlarged them and hung them outside the studio windows to serve as backdrops, which could be lit for day or night. For example, "In daylight, I had to light in such a way to create enough brightness outside so that it felt like the cameras just almost couldn't hold the detail, which to me subconsciously tells



Sara Canning plays Colette in *The Right Kind of Wrong*, an eOne Films release.

an audience we're on location," Montpellier says. He had a series of 10Ks and Maxi Brutes on the floor around the exterior of the house. "And then we bounced all these tungsten sources up to create a certain softness and that was kind of our base light for the exterior. And then depending on the time of day, I would bring in harder light sources to create the sun to be able to match things in studio to location," he says.

Matching was a cornerstone in the production of *The Right Kind of Wrong*. In some scenes, different directions were shot in two

separate places, so Montpellier and his gaffer were constantly consulting large diagrams that showed where the light sources were coming from in order to keep track of things. Montpellier recalls one particularly challenging sequence in which Leo, who is afraid of heights, does a hang gliding gag to impress his love interest. It required multiple stunts, effects and construction cranes, but most importantly it was shot in three days over which the light changed quite dramatically. "So I really had to be conscious of how the sequence was going to cut together," Montpellier recalls. "We had three cameras, and it's a location where I couldn't use huge overhead diffusion sources because it was basically an area where there were dead windmill farms around. We couldn't risk flying diffusion frames because it would be dangerous, so ultimately I had to create a consistency in the scenes without any tools, so it was a mixture of postproduction and making sure things matched and cheating the directions."

It was during those moments when having the Technicolor On-Set Truck was particularly helpful, Montpellier says. "I could just walk out of the studio and go look on this truck and call up any day's day. I could even take in a test shot if I wanted to and start timing it together to try to match it very much like I would in a lab. So it was very useful on a tight schedule like this to be able to do that and make sure our choices were really good.

"Shooting in a place like Banff, getting your dailies back at this resolution was almost unheard of," Montpellier continues. "We were getting this ARRIRAW footage processed and getting them back the next day just like you would if you were shooting in Toronto, Montreal or Vancouver. And the Technicolor truck was equipped specifically to an ARRIRAW show, and that's what's great about those guys. They send it out equipped to handle the specific needs of your project. That's I guess the future of laboratories now. They realise they have to offer all these on-set services to support the filmmakers because of the more instant feedback with the images you're getting. So it's a real fascinating time right now. The way we make films is drastically changing more and more each year." 🍎



From Left to Right: Maya Samy plays Pia, Ryan Kwanten plays Leo Palamino and Mateen Devji plays Ravi in *The Right Kind of Wrong*, an eOne Films release.