

studentfilmmakers

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Editor's Letter



StudentFilmmakers is celebrating 10 years and our 10th year exhibiting at NAB. Be sure and stop at our booth and say hello. We are looking forward to meeting all the students, instructors and professionals who read the magazine. It is an exciting time for us here at the new *StudentFilmmakers* headquarters based in Dallas, Texas.

In this issue we have a number of how to articles and reviews with information you need to make a better movie. Whether you work in film or TV, or shoot and edit video, or shoot still photography and want to learn not only how to use the video capabilities of your camera, but how to use your tools to better tell your stories - you can put these tips and real-world techniques to practical use, even if the specific example is not from your industry. *StudentFilmmakers* is a magazine and resource that will truly inspire you, help your creative juices flowing, and help you take your projects to next level while giving you ways to think outside of the box. As filmmakers, content creators, and storytellers - who don't tell stories with empty hands, but yes, with hands full, and often needing to move fast with purpose, with real tools of the trade - and *not toys* - you will find also very important and useful the technologies and new product launches in this issue of *StudentFilmmakers* magazine.

Be sure to check out Jon Firestone's article, "A Shot in the Dark" about the Sony A7S and Odyssey 7Q+ workflow. Read our exclusive interviews with Craig Yanagi about the new JVC GY-LS300 4K handheld camera; Phil Bates, about the new ArtbeatsExpress.com; and Toni Lucatorto, about the new Phantom Flex4K High-Speed Camera.

In the **Cinematography department**, read Peter Stein, ASC's article, "Working with Actors: A DP's Perspective," and Scott Spears' article, "Lighting for Depth."

Read and absorb the articles inside the **Directing department**: "Directing Means

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Communicating," "Audition Tips," "Mastering the Master," "How To Use Action Verbs," "The 5 Key Moments," and "Directing and Acting in the Same Film."

Get new ideas and new inspiration in the **Film Business department** by reading these articles: "3 Landmines to Avoid When Making Your Movie," "Product Placement in Your Indie Movie," and "Internships: Living and Working Your Dream."

Also, check out these Departments: **Audio, Post Production, Documentary, Screenwriting, Camerawork, Production Design, and Professor's Perspective.**

Be sure to sign up and post your reels, resumes, and projects at the StudentFilmmakers Film and Video Network where you can meet film and video makers of all levels from around the world. You can search by Nation, City and State for filmmakers and crew to work with near you. Also, we select filmmakers, composers, and crew from our network to feature in the magazines and hope that you will post some of your best production stills and give us a chance to see them.

On the tradeshow front: you may be reading this issue while trekking the NAB Show floor as we speak. Don't forget to stop by our NAB booth #C10941 and say hello in person. Signup at our booth for a free subscription to StudentFilmmakers, and our sister publication, HD Pro Guide magazine. Enter our daily drawings to win a Samyang lens at our booth!

Looking ahead, and coming up in our tradeshow schedule is the Cine Gear Expo, UFVA Conference, IBC, CCW, PhotoPlus Expo, and Government Video Expo this year. Sign up to attend these upcoming tradeshows and meet us at the shows. You can also read about the industry tradeshows, real-time show floor news bytes, and new and announcements about industry tools, technologies and gear that we post online in our Tradeshow News Section on StudentFilmmakers.com. We hope you enjoy this issue of StudentFilmmakers and let us know how we're doing. Visit our website at www.studentfilmmakers.com

All the Best,
Jody Michelle Solis
Editor-in-Chief

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WORKING WITH ACTORS

A DP's Perspective

By Peter Stein, ASC

One of the most important relationships on a film set is how well the actors and the DP relate to each other. There is a great deal of interaction as the actors need to hit their marks, move to the best positions for lighting, stand up slowly and do a thousand other things so the scene works. Aside from being polite respectful and friendly, the cinematographer needs to make the actors look good – and the look needs to work for the scene being shoot. As DPs we always realize that this is the actor's career we are influencing and if an actor or actress looks good, or pretty, or handsome, or young or strong or important or scary we are doing a good job - if that is what is called for in the film. Actors are very aware when we are working to help them, and they will cooperate with us sometimes more than with directors whom they may disagree with as to the meaning of a scene – or how to perform it. They almost always appreciate the effort. In some films, actors sometimes "act" not only for the director, but also for the cinematographer, and look for encouragement from them.

At the beginning of a film many actors will come to me and say – this is the best side of my face, or I don't look good if the camera is low, or don't shoot me from behind if you see my bald spot etc. etc. etc. As a DP you need to listen to them as they know from experience and have possibly had problems before, or been told by other DPs, their agents or other people what works best for them. I always shoot tests with the actors of a film to find the best lighting (for different types of scenes), angles and viewpoints to shoot the stars in a new film project.

These examples come to mind:

I shot a film with Lauren Hutton who was a very famous model at the time. She told me "Peter, if you want to be friends with me, you will have at least 3 bounce cards under the camera in

every scene. I always had them there with a bit of light bounced into them... whether or not they were the main lights in the scene.

I worked with Lillian Gish once (who was D.W. Griffith's leading lady on a number of his films when movies first started) on an interview for the Kennedy Center Awards, and she said "Peter, can you put an inkie-dink under the camera like Mr. Bitzer did". Billy Bitzer was the most famous cameraman in the early days of the movies. Of course I had an inkie attached to the tripod under the camera – and she was radiant.

I shot a children's film with Hulk Hogan and Terry (Hulk's real name) was lovely to work with. However, when we shot a scene in a gym where he was working out with the little kids, all of a sudden when I was doing close-ups of his muscles he got very serious. He said "These are the money shots Peter – make sure they look great." I spent extra time and showed him what I was doing, and he really appreciated it.

Finally, I shot a huge period television movie with Jackie Gleason and Art Carney two of the biggest stars of the day. Gleason was not very happy during the filming and was more or less unfriendly to everyone on the crew including the director, but he was always very nice to me. He knew I could make him look good or bad.

If you can make an older actress look younger – you will work a lot. They appreciate it and the producers and the studios will want to keep hiring you – a very important aspect of being a DP ... working! It is also great fun to be able to achieve beautiful lighting while keeping the mood of a scene consistent. The answer for lighting is using soft light for actors – the softer the better for most women. Where you place that light is the key – no pun intended!

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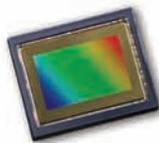
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LIGHTING FOR DEPTH

Techniques for Adding Depth to Your Shots

by Scott Spears

One of the challenges in lighting is creating depth. After a while, lighting the people in front of the camera become fairly easy once you learn what kind of light works for your actors faces, but the real fun is lighting the background. This is where you can create mood and depth on your set. The ways to this are as varied as the sets you're working on, but let's cover a few.

I highly recommend that you scout the locations out before the shoot, and if you can, bring the art director along. Working with the director, your job can be made easier by deciding on angles and knowing what kinds of props like lamps, paintings, furniture and other decorations you have available to set in your background. You will get an idea of what kind of light comes in from the existing lights and from the windows if there are any and how you can use it for the lighting schemes.

Let's start in a living room in a house. Your director has two people standing and chatting away. Consult with your director on how you can stage them to create a deep background and not have them stand in front of a flat/blank wall. Maybe one has the front door behind them and the other person has the house's dining room in the background.

We'll talk about the person with the door behind them. You could have a lamp on a table by the door which casts some light on the wall. This is called using a practical. Maybe this can be a warmer light than what's falling on your subjects. Using different color temperatures is a good way to create depth. You can put this lamp on a dimmer to control the light levels.

Another trick is to shine light through a window to cast the pattern of that window on the wall. If you need more breakup, you can dangle a tree branch in front of the light to create more shadows and shapes. Don't depend on the sun unless you can shoot very fast because the earth rotation will move that cool pattern out of your shot.

When shooting "A Letter From Death Row," we had Martin Sheen visiting his son in prison. The problem was that

Martin's angles were shot months later in a studio 2000 miles away from the original prison we used in Nashville. We didn't have a big budget to create a full prison set, so I was forced to light the location carefully so I ended up putting a slash of light on the back wall to create depth.

Now, maybe there is no window. Don't let that stop you. Talk with the director and ask if you're ever going to see all the walls of this room ever in the movie. If the director says we'll never see, let's say, the wall on the left, then you are free to create your own window. Take a piece of foam core and cut a rectangle and place some gaff tape on it to make the different window panes. Place that foam core in front of one of your lights and aim it at the wall. Voila! You have an interesting pattern on your wall.

For the film, "The King of Iron Town," (directed by Mickey Fisher, creator of the CBS series, "Extant," starring Halle Berry and produced by Steven Spielberg), I had a locker room which was very plain, so I used the barn doors on a light to create a pattern on the back wall to give a sense of depth.

On the horror film, "Season of Darkness," I used venetian blinds to create a nice pattern on the wall of the set. The key is to find ways to use whatever you have at hand in your lighting to form a sense of depth.

On the film, "Foreign Correspondents," I had Melanie Lynskey and Wil Wheaton sitting on the front stoop of an apartment building at night. We ended up leaving the door open so we could use the ceiling lights in the hallway to create depth. I added a slash of light on the exterior wall of the building to give some middle ground.

Now, we can move to a restaurant location with a couple having a conversation over dinner. You light your actor and it's time to look at the backgrounds. Again, work with your art director to have some items in the background. Maybe there's a bar sign on the wall if it's that kind of place. Maybe you can string up some white Christmas

lights to have some sparkle on a back wall. You can create a good out-of-focus background with the Christmas lights. This works great if you have limited depth of field. Or you can use some of your lights to create slashes or pools of light in the backgrounds.

Also, don't forget about color temperatures. If it's a cheesy (pardon the pun) pizza place, maybe there are fluorescent lights. You can let them go green or add green to give the room a sick look, while keeping your actors in white or warm light. If it's a romantic place, maybe keep the lights warm and soft.

Let the background go a little darker with a few slashes of light. This will make your actors stand out from the background and make the audience focus on them.

Exteriors are harder on a low budget because you may not be able to afford the big guns like 20Ks or Musco Lights. Again, a location scout will be helpful. If you're shooting in an urban location with lots of buildings, work with the director to line up shots with the lighting that is already there. This is like interiors where you use a practical lamp as a source, except it's a security light or display window. Here you can use different color temperatures to create depth.

In the background of one shot I was doing there was a parking garage with fluorescent that had a green tint that was great for separation. Today, most street lights are sodium vapor which gives off a very orange light. If you use tungsten light for your subjects and balance to that, then you have great separation.

For shooting in the woods, I like to get a fog machine to lay a blanket of smoke in the background which I backlight to create depth. Another option for the woods is backlighting a tree to create depth.

In general, always think about ways to create depth in your shots using angles and with lighting. Lighting people gets easy, but the fun is lighting the background.

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"I film a wide variety of things and travel a lot so the fact that its small and durable is key. I have lots of gear including drones, 12ft jibs, sliders, etc. but the HD-2000 is something I always bring along no matter how big the project is. It makes your action shots smoother and brings those boring shots to life."

~ Dalton Campbell

DIRECTING MEANS COMMUNICATING

Working with Your Cast and Crew

by Jonathan Moore



Having recently worked on a short film, I was struck by the director and her ineptitude when it came to communicating with the cast and crew. At times, I felt lost and unsure of what to do.

Technology has made making films easier than ever before. This often results in new filmmakers becoming enamored with the equipment and focusing on themselves and neglecting the very folks who are trying to tell their story: the cast and crew.

Being a good director means professionalism on the set. This means following the time-honored procedures of rehearsing, calling a shot and being specific with both cast and crew about what you want, as a director. It is no secret that many directors know exactly what they want – but do not have the ability or desire to communicate it.

Here are a few tips to begin better communication skills on set:

- **Use an Assistant Director to call the shot. You know the drill: Quiet on the set! Roll sound! Roll camera! Mark it – action! Doing this each and every time will encourage a routine and get both cast and crew in a rhythm that they will adhere to for the duration of the shoot. There are already too many unknowns on a set, so make sure there are no surprises when it comes to beginning a shot and that everyone knows what to expect.**

- **Rehearse! Yes, time is short. The sun is going down and you are losing light. But before anyone pushes the red button, at least do a couple of quick run throughs so that both cast and crew know what to expect from blocking and performance.**

- **About that blocking! It pays to have had at least some basic blocking established before shooting. Beginning filmmakers are often unclear about what the physicality of the scene is and give actors vague, useless direction. Be clear, specific. Help them work out the blocking in relation with the beats of the scene.**

- **Once “cut!” is called, always, always attend to your cast first. Give them some feedback on the take and performance. If time is short, it may be nothing more than a wink or a thumbs up. But give them something. Let them know you care, that you are there for them.**

- **Once a shot has been completed and you are satisfied with it, be sure and let everyone know that you are moving on to the next shot or scene. Keep everyone informed, let them know what to expect.**

Being communicative in a professional and practical way will foster a smooth shoot and production. It will give you an air of authority and respect. After all, as director, you are the boss!

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SHOT IN THE DARK

A Sony A7S Setup that Opens Up New Shooting Possibilities

By Jon Firestone

This year the Sony A7S camera came out, and the really exciting thing about this camera is its ability to shoot at extremely high ISOs making it by far the best low light camera that I have ever seen. The camera itself has some real limitations so I've coupled it with an Odyssey 7Q+ recorder/monitor which makes it a much better system. I've also been using some new small battery powered LED Scorpion lights, which are great for this sort of shooting. I'm also using the Neat Video denoising plugin which allows me to shoot at even higher ISOs and "Fix it in Post". For lenses, I'm using a very affordable set of Rokinon Cine Lenses which are fast, sharp and already setup as cine lenses. This setup opens up entirely new shooting possibilities, shooting in lighting conditions that I never could before. I'm able to shoot in available light at night and I can easily capture stars, and shoot by moonlight.

So here is a list of the gear I am using.

- **Sony A7S Camera \$2500**
- **Odyssey 7Q+ 4K recorder \$2295**
- **Varavon A7S Cage \$200**
- **Metabones EF-E Mount Adapter \$400**
- **Rokinon 24mm T1.5 50mm T1.5 and 85mm T1.5 Lenses (\$270-\$650 per lens)**
- **Switronix D-Tap Power Adapter for the A7S \$75**
- **Scorpion Lights \$1400 (4 Light Kit)**
- **DaVinci Resolve and Neat Video denoising plugin (\$100-\$200)**



Sony A7S is the heart of this system. It is the current ISO king. Its low light ability allows us to see in the dark, with ISOs up to 409,000, and useable ISOs in my opinion up to 40,000. This camera uses a full frame 12 megapixel sensor with lenses over each pixel that capture as much light as possible. These photosites are huge, and help with the low light sensitivity of this camera. There are a few drawbacks to this camera. For one thing, it is a small mirror-less SLR style camera with no professional inputs and outputs and no timecode I/O, and it only records 1080P internally. It has fairly significant rolling shutter, and it has a full frame sensor, which could also be considered an advantage, but that also means shallower depth of field and it means it generally needs full frame lenses. Sony does allow you to switch to an APS-C mode that will work with APS-C lenses, etc., however, it is no longer a true 4K camera at that point.

The Odyssey 7Q+ is the killer combo with the A7S and solves a lot of the shortcomings of the camera. The Sony A7S is capable of feeding a clean 8bit 4K signal over HDMI to the Odyssey, and the Odyssey can record that signal directly to ProRes. The newest version of the Odyssey 7Q is the 7Q+ and the advantage of the plus model is that it has 4k HDMI input on the HDMI port, whereas the previous models can only record 1080P over HDMI. The Odyssey also has timecode input and also has a down converted HD SDI output. These three things make the A7S significantly more capable in a production

environment. In addition to being a powerful recorder, it is also an incredible 7" OLED monitor, with a host of nice features including False Color, Waveform, Histogram, Focus Peeking and magnification modes. And, it also has LUT options. The Odyssey 7Q+ is one of my favorite pieces of equipment, and there is too much to cover here, but in this setup what it does is give me a really good recorder and monitor that allows me to get the full potential out of the A7S.

The Metabones EF Adapter, Switronix D-Tap Power Adapter and the Varavon Cage are all add-ons to make this camera more production-friendly. The Metabones EF Adapter allows me to use Canon-style EF lenses instead of Sony's E Mount, which is fairly important because there is a very limited selection of full frame E mount lenses on the market, and I already have a large selection of Canon glass. The Metabones adapter still has some trouble with electronic iris control on some lenses, which I hope will be worked out with firmware updates in the future. But this isn't an issue with the manual lenses that I am primarily using on this setup. The Varavon Cage gives me 1/4" 20 mounting holes all around the camera without blocking the battery and media doors or the hot shoe and also has port locks to protect the camera's delicate micro HDMI and other ports. The tiny batteries of the A7S aren't bad, but using the Switronix D-Tap Power Adapter for the A7S makes it so I can use one V-Mount battery to power both the Odyssey 7Q+ Recorder and the camera for long periods of time.

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In this setup I'm primarily using a set of Rokinon Cine Lenses. They are manufactured by Samyang Optics and are sold under several brand names. These are fast EF lenses based on their still lenses but have been manufactured to have cine features like de-clicked apertures, gears for both focus and iris and long throw for focus with dual scale marks so that the focus scale can be read from either side of the camera. They are manual only lenses so they are best suited for shooting video and are very reasonably priced. All three lenses are T1.5. They also have a 35mm lens and T2.2 135mm lens that would be a nice addition to this set. These offer the most bang for the buck of any full frame Cine Primes on the market.

Scorpion Lights are ideal for shooting in these ultra low light setups. They come in a kit of 4 lights. These unique lights each draw about 13 watts and each give off about as much light as a 60W tungsten lightbulb. They are battery powered, and they have dimmers and barn doors built in. When you are shooting in such low light situations, you really don't need much light, in fact, it's easy to over light since you are exposing for the background; you have to light your subjects very little so that that they are aren't overexposed. So, for instance, where I would normally have used a 1000W tungsten light at ISO 400, if I am trying to expose so I

can see the stars clearly in my shot, I might be shooting at 40,000 ISO and to light my subject, in this case, I would only be using a 10W light to get similar exposure. Since the LED is as bright as a 60W tungsten, then I will probably be dimming the Scorpion light down significantly to get the proper exposure. They are also tiny and can mount almost anywhere. The lights have goosenecks and a baby pin at the end and combined with Mafers, they can clamp to many things. They come as a complete package which includes 8 batteries, 4 chargers, 4 AC power adapters, 4 lights with dimmers, 4 Mafers, and even a D-Tap adapter, a small set of filters; and the whole kit comes in a small waterproof case that only weighs around 25lbs (11kg).

On the post production end of things, I use the Neat Video denoising plugin to do further noise reduction. This is a plugin for several different platforms. I do the bulk of my color correction and grading in DaVinci Resolve, so I bought the plugin that works for it. It takes a lot of processing power, but it can do temporal noise reduction and does a great job of reducing noise without losing detail or adding artificial sharpening. With this plugin, I can push the image to even higher ISOs if necessary and still confidently reduce the noise in post. This plugin is nothing short of incredible and has saved me in the past and made unusable footage look great.



AUDITION TIPS

How to Get the Right Actors for Your Films

by Peter John Ross

As aspiring moviemakers, we are always burdened with finding actors to appear in our movies. Where do these elusive beings live? How do we get them to be in our movies? How will we know if they are right for a role? The answer is simply auditions. This is very basic info, but also handy.

First things first. Set a date(s). What will also work best is if you don't have an audition until you already have a camera, and a way to edit the movie FIRST. What good is an audition or even footage for a movie if you can't finish it? And setting the shoot dates can let you know if certain actors are even available for those dates to begin with.

We have to let people know about the auditions. Many newspapers, especially the alternative, more arts-friendly papers, will post your audition notices for free. There are also message boards, posting boards, and Yahoo Groups on the Internet that provide one of the best new outlets for letting people know about auditions. Also a flyer or an email to acting teachers or even the local talent agencies give an outlet for this. As long as you are upfront about the amount being paid, even if it's \$0.00, will make everything work better.

Give plenty of notice, and remind people a few days before too. You may want to have more than one audition time to allow people with varying schedules the chance to audition.

Where? Public libraries have conference rooms anyone can use for free. Or you can do this at home, but for some people, that can be a turn off, but if it's all you've got, then use your house. Just make sure you have two rooms. One for the auditions, and one for people to wait. It's not fair if some people get to see how

everyone else auditions and gets to talk to the director/producers and it's not indicative of their raw ability.

Use a Sign-In Sheet – include their name, phone number, email, and the time they arrived. It's always good to have everyone's contact info. Also find out if they are SAG, AFTRA, or any other union. Have a column on the sign in sheet for "union or non-union". A union actor may not be able to work on your film, or they can get permission.

You will also want them to sign a release that allows you to use their audition tape for anything you need as well. You may never know when you may have the next J-Lo audition & you pass her up. These auditions also make great DVD extras, even for us aspiring filmmakers. It can also have additional info.

If the more experienced actors come, they will have their own headshots, if not a Polaroid or digital camera will also be good to use for any new or aspiring actors that don't have headshots. Attach the pics to the release form/info sheet.

Make sure you tape the auditions. Even if you just go to VHS, you need to see the actors on tape. It's amazing how many people seem to read well, but watching the tape it comes across flat. Or sometimes, someone that didn't feel good in the room really shines on tape. You don't want to get into editing your movie to only find out THEN that this person doesn't film well.

First you'll want the actor to SLATE for the camera. That is state their name, their age, the part they are reading for, and a phone number so you can get a hold of them or their agency if they are represented.

You will provide the actors with SIDES, meaning 1-2 pages of script that will be used to test them for the character. So usually give them something with depth and some meat, or at least epitomizes the character to you, the director.

Tell the actor something about the character & the scene they are about to read. Then let them read it through without any direction. After one read, don't deliver the lines yourself and tell them "more like this..." (also called LINE READINGS), but ask them to do it again with more of the particular emotion you want. Tell them "HOW" you want them to act, don't show them. This is also called DIRECTING.

Use a poker face. Even if the actor is doing horrendous, don't make the person feel bad. It can cause your reputation to be ruined. And even if an actor is perfect for a role, do not make any offers at the audition. Take your time, review the tapes and be sure of it.

If there are two actors that could be right for a role, and even if you're fairly sure, try doing CALL BACKS. Call Backs are a second round of auditions. Bring the best actors back, have several of them read the sides together and see how they read with other actors.

After the Call Backs, feel free to make offers for parts. Verify their ability to work on the shoot dates. Be flexible, especially if you aren't paying. But also know that sometimes you won't get your first choice for a role, even though they auditioned and even did call backs. And sometimes you will even get through rehearsals and an actor will be a no-show. That's when you call your 2nd, 3rd, and sometimes 4th choice. If you held professional auditions, it won't be a problem to attract good actors.

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NATHAN CROWLEY AND GARY FETTIS

Production Design and Set Decoration of "Interstellar"

by Scott Essman

On a project of the magnitude of *Interstellar*, one conjures images of soundstages full of sets, floor plans, prop storage, and myriad art department accoutrements. However, as with all of the latest Christopher Nolan films, *Interstellar's* art department began in a humble place – Nolan's home. "We always start in his house, in what was the hood of the garage," said *Interstellar's* production designer, Nathan Crowley. "The art department was started in *Batman Begins* and is now a nice art department. And so we have this space in his house in LA—we always start here. They have some offices in there now. So it's my favorite bit. [Visual effects supervisor Paul] Franklin is usually there; people come in like Hoyte [Van Hoytema, cinematographer]. He allows us to find the film visually, with him. And it is sort of a private 4-6 weeks — sometimes its 8 weeks depending on the size of the film —where we actually try to discover what we want to say visually."

In this low-stress pre-pre-production period, Crowley feels free to explore, preceding the immediate ramp-up into building the art department's needs. "To figure out how we are going to go

about the film and what it should look like, privately, allows me to then engage with 200-300 people, and I can instruct them correctly," Crowley explained. "It's streamlined, and we haven't gone down any dead ends. That's the way we have always done films. And it also allows me to do my work with [Nolan]. You know, we draw together — he likes sketching as well. We have computers now, 3D printers, and we test ideas, and we have a mold shop, so I usually bring in a moldmaker or I bring in key people, [such as] an illustrator. At the same time, we look at locations, and we go 'wondering.' So we might fly to England and go look at a location, or we might fly to Iceland. And that allows us to go off and discuss the film in a place."

After the pre-pre-production period, Crowley moved out of Nolan's house in to offices, and specifically into two enormous soundstages at Sony Pictures in Culver City to realize spaceship interiors and exteriors plus robots. "We sat at computers and created the ships digitally, and we made a model as well," said Crowley. "That [robot] TARS needs to be modeled because he needs to be a thing that you can touch. And then we 3D printed it to test the ships

shapes. We had a lot of ground to cover in a short amount of time."

An art school alumna, Crowley likened such an experience to the *Interstellar* design work with Nolan before shooting commenced. "It's like going to art school for 6-8 weeks doing fantastic stuff with a friend," he related. "It's just raw design. It's incredibly busy because I got to do a bit of the Ranger; we got to figure out the *Endurance*, but what about that *Tesseract*? Give it to Paul Franklin; see what he can come up with. So you use whatever medium you need.

To realize the TARS robots, Crowley enlisted special effects coordinator Scott Fisher to work out the machine's hydraulic doors. "We made TARS as a real puppeteering robot," said Crowley. "So they had metal finishes and screens, and they were puppeteered by Bill [Irwin] from behind by hydraulics. It was very much important to bring Scott in and say how would you go about making this, because a lot of TARS is practical in this film. When you design robots, it's difficult because there's so many ideas about one. I definitely remember being with Chris and wondering if we were going to be

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brave enough to present the world with TARS. And so that was a great journey."

Surely, *Interstellar* featured numerous exotic locations all of which Crowley supervised in addition to building elements on stage. "We always try to think of everything that involves landscape," he stated. "We go on 'wondering trips;' where are there giant bodies of water that are only two-foot deep, that we can actually work in all day and put a space ship in? There is one in Chile, but it is sunny and beautiful. And then there is Morecambe Bay in the North of England where again it would be a couple miles of water that was shallow, but it looked pretty miserable. We knew and worked in the glaciers in Iceland, [but] does it look enough like an ice planet? So, we thought, we either go to Chile and the Argentinean glaciers which Chris had already been to, and take a wondering trip down there, or start with a nearer place for us, so let's go and look at Iceland and either rule it in or rule it out."

After settling upon Iceland for a key water planet, when Crowley moved into production, he transported his exterior spaceship elements there, mobilized by large cranes, plus hydraulic landing gears and hydraulic doors, so that actors could realistically disembark into the terrain. "We had to build a five-mile road down to the water, and a couple a miles up to the glacier to get the ships in," Crowley specified of his ship pieces, 20-feet long and two-feet wide. "We built them here in LA and flew them on jumbo jets over. And so it was a big deal, but then you get it all in camera. Does it cost any more than a stage? Probably not, because you don't have all the costs of being on a stage or in a tank. That gives you

something that is kind of visceral, that you feel in the film because you lose control of it. And that's what I love the best. My favorite photography is when the weather comes in and it like pounds you, and, on film, it always reads as less as when you are there because film cleans it up a bit.

Four hours from the watery Iceland location, Crowley created the illusion of a wholly different planet on one of Iceland's glaciers. "One night we had to take the Ranger out of the water planet and up to the glaciers," he said. "We wanted to take it in one piece, because we had to film it a few days after. We spent the weekend to move it — we were cutting down signposts as we drove because it was wider than the road, and then re-welding them as we went by. We could slowly move it about 15 miles up to the glaciers. I get huge pleasure out of the construction and the task and mounting the climb. I find that extremely exciting. When building these sets, I just love seeing these things come into play."

At its peak, Crowley's department numbered 300, including an art department supervisor and several art directors. For the opening scenes on a future failing earth, Crowley built a house outside of Calgary, Alberta, Canada, including 500 acres of actual corn. "It was in an area where you don't grow corn, and [the farmer] wanted to experiment," Nolan relayed, "and he said, 'Well it might fail,' and we said, 'What does failed corn look like?' And he said, 'Well, it's only going to be about 4 or 5-foot high.' Perfect, we want it to fail! Because [in] the story, it's not going well. We don't want 10-foot corn."

Back on Stage 27 at Sony, Crowley built

the surreal black hole environs of the Tesseract. "We build a huge portion where Matthew goes to the bookshelf and the stress furniture," said Crowley. "That was a tricky one to build, and obviously we had huge visual effects extensions on it. That was about 120 feet by 90 feet. And [it had] all those rooms, so we had to sculpt all these books vertically on the x, y, z-axis. And then it was all hung; it was like an art piece or art installation. The flow of the books was all painted and printed like wallpaper. And then Paul Franklin projected texture on it, so it felt like it would move. Special effects made the books go in and out up to like 20 feet high. I've never had a set like it and never will again. And Chris was determined to build as much as we could. Really, we carried on stretching out furniture until we ran out of time. We also had the Ranger Interiors and the Lander Interiors on 27."

On Sony's Stage 30 was a 150-foot gimbal with separate 50-foot pallets all on hydraulics for the scenes inside the *Endurance* spacecraft, the result of 12 weeks of construction. "We had obviously the navigation, cockpit, communications, the hyper-sleep pod, and then we had a living quarters pod," Crowley related. "We had copies of those pods standing vertically, so we could get them floating around in the pods in a zero-G element. So a lot of sets had to be built twice, and then stood up vertically."

To enhance Crowley's sets, serving as *Interstellar*'s set decorator was veteran Gary Fettis. "It was the project of a lifetime really," Fettis stated. "You know the way Chris Nolan works and Nathan Crowley: they have a war room where it is very secretive. But it's their brainchild, the layout of the movie and the design of the

film, and once I got to be a part of that and see what they were planning, it was fascinating. It just gets you to the point where you can't wait to get started. And the power behind Chris Nolan, his belief in his story and his bit of story telling, and the magic in this film was compelling. It was an incredible experience."

For his preparation period, Fettis had 22 weeks, which he related was "just enough" time to amass his wares for a project of the immensity that Interstellar would become. "But immediately once I read the script, I was assigned, I walked into the war room, the design room, and Nathan walked me through it," Fettis said. "And then I went and put my crew together and brought in the right people to do the job, and it wasn't like everything was going to be solved right away. We knew it was going to take on an organic shape and be an evolutionary process where we collect the elements. It was

determined earlier by Chris that this wasn't going to be futuristic — that it was grounded [in] NASA — what it is today. We were trying to recreate these big ships like the Endurance and the Ranger, and to try to do those was a daunting process, but it finally got done."

Using reference photos from NASA photographs, Fettis loosely structured his interior ships and while leadperson Mark Weissenfluh lead a crew to retrieve objects which would be dressed into the set. On Interstellar, 20% of the elements within the set were rentals, 40% was the result of manufacturing, and 40% were pieces that were purchased. "We just started collecting at that point, all around Los Angeles, gathering parts from aviation warehouses: components and switches and panels and things," said Fettis. "Gang boss Kevan Weber and model maker Adam Mull and the shop supervisor David Klassen were very talented guys. He had

all his tools and a big workshop, ready with mold makers and electronics people. And we just started manufacturing [as] we started to get drawings and sections. Set designers would come in, and we would have shelves of parts, and they would grab things. Nathan would have them, 'Okay you create section A; you can work off this shelf and then pull their stuff over.' And then draw it up, like panels and gauges, and then I would put some set dressers on it to build it out in pieces. And we pieced it together like a large model."

For Fettis, this unique project represented the culmination of the breadth of his career-spanning efforts as a set decorator. "The level of enjoyment was in the reward of seeing these magnificent pieces come together," he revealed, "and just see the actors go in there and get blown away, like they really felt they were in that environment. And that was rewarding, more than anything I've ever done."

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AN INTRODUCTION TO AUDIO METERING

How loud should my dialogue be recorded?

by Fred Ginsburg, CAS, PhD

The answer to the questions, "How loud should my dialogue be recorded? What should it read on the meter?" depends mostly on what type of meter you are looking at.

Essentially, there are three types of professional audio meters that you are likely to encounter, not counting the cryptic "idiot meters" filled with random symbols that often take up space in video viewfinders. (More about these "idiot" meters later in the article.)

The most common form of audio meter is the popular V.U. Meter. The Volume Units meter dates its origin back to the earliest days of broadcasting. The underlying concept was to measure (the signal voltage) of a radio announcer speaking with a monotone voice. In those days, boring



was better; and announcers were always restrained and as non-wavering as they could achieve.

The V.U. meter measured the AVERAGE loudness of their performance. Zero was deemed as the optimum averaged loudness for radio transmission. An announcer could sporadically raise their performance to peak up to +10dB and still just barely stay within the broadcast parameters of the time. Or, they could lower their voice by around the same amount from time to time, without driving the engineers into frenzy.

And so, for decades to follow, the V.U. standard continued to be used on mixing consoles and audio recorders. Zero V.U. still represented the optimum AVERAGE loudness for normal voice levels, allowing for peaks up to +10dB without horrific distortion or overload.

When using a V.U. meter, the goal is to record normal dialogue as close to zero as you can; only exceeding zero now and then in order to accommodate brief loud outbursts (shouts, screams). Any prolonged loud outbursts should only hover only slightly above zero (such as +3 or so).

Although your peaks can hit up to +10dB, your AVERAGE should not register more than just a few dB hot.

Think of a V.U. Meter like a photographic meter that measures the average grayscale of a scene. It is calibrated to assume that there will be some brighter highlights along with some deeper shadows.

During the later decades of the twentieth century, professional audio engineers realized that they needed to pay more attention to the peaks of a recording than the "middle gray" portion. It was the peaks that went into distortion if they were



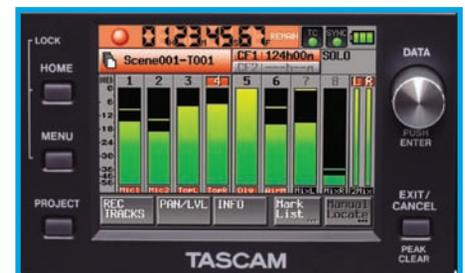
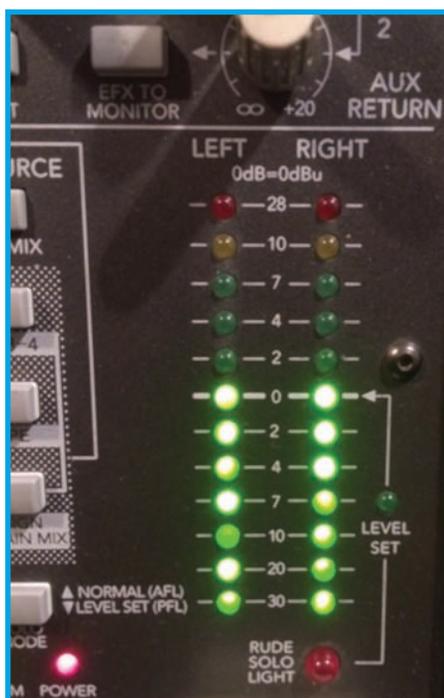
recorded too hot, so that was the part of the signal that required stringent monitoring.

Professionals began using modulometers to measure peak recording levels (also called "peak meters"). The venerable Nagra reel to reel tape recorders were renowned for their highly reliable metering system, which used state of the art modulometers to determine audio levels.

On the Nagra, peak audio levels were supposed to stay below the zero mark. Zero now represented the loudest that audio could be recorded without risk of over modulation. Normal dialogue levels were expected to hover around negative 8dB or negative 10db. Only the loudest outbursts were supposed to approach zero.

In reality, though, one could record loud outbursts a few dB over zero, because distortion in an analogue signal is gradual, and the clipping is only minor within a few dB exceeding the zero mark.

Think of the difference between thermometers calibrated in Fahrenheit compared to Celsius. Water freezes at 32 degrees F, but at zero degrees C. The boiling



point is 212 degrees F, but 100 degrees C.

Audio distortion (theoretically) occurs around +8 or +10 on a V.U. meter; but at 0dB on a peak reading meter (modulometer).

If we subtract 10dB of headroom to allow for the difference in volume between normal conversation and a shout, then our normal (middle gray) dialogue level would be zero on the V.U. meter, but -8dB or -10dB on the peak meter.

Because dialogue does not respond to metering the same way a simple frequency tone would, most audio engineers felt that 8dB was a more realistic value than 10dB. Hence, the reference tone on all but the earliest generation Nagra tape recorders was set to -8dB (the equivalent of zero on a V.U. meter).

Enter the digital age.

Unlike analog recording, where the ill effects of over modulation increase gradually — in a digital signal, there is no forgiveness. Either you are a fraction below zero, and your recording is perfect; or you are a fraction hot, and you suffer major clipping.

On the other hand, examine what happens if you record too low. On the analog track, our recording begins to get buried amongst tape hiss and electronic system noise. Not good. We strive to record as loud as we can, without going over, in order to achieve the best signal to noise ratio and the cleanest recording.

In digital, we are not nearly as worried about recording at lower levels. Tape hiss and system noise are no longer threats. We are, however, paranoid about exceeding our allotted headroom and going past the zero mark. Therefore, we record 10dB lower than we normally would for analog.

That means, for proper digital audio, we want our conversational dialogue level to be around -20dB. That allows us lots of headroom in case of loud outbursts, while still keeping us under the zero mark.

Many popular mixing panels, such as Mackie and Behringer, still use what is essentially a V.U. style meter. Some other popular ENG mixers also use sort of a hybrid metering system, which is still closer to the V.U. concept, where zero represents the loudest that you want to keep dialogue averages at.

Therefore, you want to set your levels so that zero on your mixer corresponds to -20dB on your recorder. Turn on your

tone generator, and set it so that the tone registers at zero on the mixer and negative 20dB on the recorder (and always record at least thirty seconds of reference tone at the beginning of every session).

Which brings us back to the notion of “idiot meters”. Many manufacturers of consumer camcorders feared that camera operators were too stupid to understand the difference between the old style V.U. meters versus the modern digital meters. True, they could have just stressed that in the instruction manual, and maybe even managed some meaningful color coding — but instead, they chose to make things even more confusing.

Sometimes they just reverted to using analog V.U. metering in their digital recorders. Other times, they just shifted the numbers around so that -10dB represented -20dB. In some cases, they just avoided numbers all together and just presented a bunch of random symbols like circles, squares, diamonds, or triangles.

Bottom line. If you are shooting with a highly professional camcorder, it is probably calibrated with a proper digital scale and you can trust the numbers.

However, if your camcorder cost less than a new luxury car — you need to be cautious. If time allows it, record some audio tests at different levels. Set dialogue as you normally would on your mixing panel, but record it on the camera at a variety of levels at 5dB increments. Make sure that your audio test includes normal speech, some shouts, and some whispers. Transfer the video to an edit system if you can, or at least to a good stage monitor — and determine the best setting for your particular camera. Zero on your mixer might sound best at zero, -10, -12, -20, or ???

If you have to set up in a hurry, and there is no time for proper record/playback tests — then try this field solution.

Set the camcorder to automatic level control for audio. Understand that we normally avoid using automatic level control because it cannot differentiate between normal conversation, shouts, whispers, or dramatic pauses. The auto system raises or lowers the gain so that any incoming sound gets recorded at the same level. Which is good for conversational dialog, but bad for anything loud, soft, or silent (unless you love very boosted room tone). When the actor changes voice level, then the system often over reacts and the gain acts like a bungee cord, violently bouncing up or down as it adjusts to the new status quo. Give the auto level control what it was designed to hear, and it is happy. Therefore, feed the camcorder some nice, monotone

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dialogue — being careful to avoid any loud outbursts, soft passages, or long pauses. If the automatic system does not encounter any surprises, it will do its designed job and record sound at an acceptable level.

Watch the meter and see where the auto system thinks that good dialogue should be. The meter will always be in motion, so get a sense of where the spread falls.

Disengage the auto level control, and manually dial in the gain on the camcorder so that your (still monotone) dialogue spans around the same range on the meter. Now that you are back in manual model, any loud outbursts will register as hot, and softer passages will register as lower. Quiet pauses will barely register at all.

One final comment. When you record dialogue, don't worry too much about specific numbers on the scale. Pure tone goes to a number and stays put. But human voice is always in swing, and the needle is always swaying back and forth. Think in terms of recording ZONES instead. Set your levels so that you divide your scale into three zones: way too hot, way too quiet, and “in the ballpark”. Always monitor sound through a good pair of headphones, and learn to trust what you hear.

HOW TO USE ACTION VERBS

A quick tip on adjusting the intensity of your actor's performance.

By William Dickerson



In every scene in a film, characters have goals they set out to achieve: to win an argument; to seduce a woman; to escape the clutches of a captor. In acting terms, these goals are called objectives. The means through which an actor goes about achieving these objectives is to use an action verb.

While the actor prepares action verbs for use in her scenes, you should also prepare a list of your own in the event the actor needs directorial guidance. The list of verbs that I occasionally reference is organized so that I can tweak the intensity of the performance. Sometimes an actor takes a verb and either makes a stronger choice than I'd like (often perceived as "overacting"), or makes a subtler choice than I'd like. Some directors handle these two problems by giving direction like: do it "smaller," or do it "bigger."

Unfortunately, when actors play results like these, their performances may feel false. The emotions that the actor releases should be byproducts of the techniques she is using to achieve the character's objective. An actor isn't sad because the director instructs her to be sad, but rather she's sad because her character is trying to warn her boyfriend that she's thinking of leaving him, and he's not listening to her. If the actor isn't being persuasive enough, or you think she could use a stronger tactic, instead of warning, she could reprimand him. If he still doesn't respond, the actor can teach him a lesson, in one last ditch effort to get him to respond. If you want her to be more subtle and less intense, she could give him a cold shoulder.

If the actor uses the right action verb to drive her performance, the emotion will bubble to the surface on its own.

THE 5 KEY MOMENTS | *A Directing Tip*

By Dean Yamada

As a professor in the Cinema & Media Arts department at Biola University, I have had the privilege of traveling to Germany, Indonesia and Japan to make films with my students. It is both a significant cross-cultural experience and a way for my students to gain firsthand production experience on a feature film.

Our latest venture, *Cicada*, is a 100-minute lighthearted drama in the Japanese language that is currently screening at film festivals across the country. Ten students comprised the core of the crew that was making this film with me day in and day out. There were also three alumni from our previous shorts, who had key leadership positions: DP Daniel McNutt, 1st AC Trevor Smith and Key Grip Joey Kennedy.

Because these projects are rooted in academia, there are limited resources with

which we can make a movie. As I have learned over the years, limitations produce creativity. My students and I are forced to be creative in how we approach the filmmaking process. Today I am sharing a directing tip that dictated how we scheduled and shot our feature, *Cicada*.

Legendary screenwriter Robert Towne (Chinatown) has a quote that I love: "A movie, I think, is really only four or five moments between two people; the rest of it exists to give those moments their impact and resonance. The script exists for that. Everything does."

Taking Towne's philosophy, and keeping in mind our limited shooting schedule, I wrote down the five key moments of the film - the five moments that would give the film its resonance. These were not the scenes that were the most elaborately

staged or technically difficult. These were the moments that would ruin the film if they were melodramatic or understated, but would give the story its impact if they were performed just right.

We had 20 days to shoot 90 pages, so we had to work at a fairly quick pace. Each camera set-up received an average of only 2-3 takes. Working in a language not our own - with very little rehearsal time - placed us in difficult positions at times. But as the director, I had to know where to place our focus and how to best use our limited resources.

Out of 119 scenes in *Cicada*, I chose only five moments that we needed to absolutely nail tonally to give the film its heart. So when we arrived at each of those shots, our 1st AD Lydia Dunham knew that we needed to give them more time.

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MASTERING THE MASTER

7 Important Things You Should Know

By Jack Sholder

WHAT IS A MASTER?

Every filmmaker knows the answer. It's a wide shot that shows everybody and everything that happens in a scene from beginning to end, right? Well, sort of. Does it need to show the whole scene? Not necessarily. Do you have to shoot a master? Not really, but it's usually a good idea. And when is it a good idea?

There is no rulebook that tells directors what a master is and why they need to shoot one. While I was a working director I shot masters and didn't think much about it most of the time. When I began to teach directing, I realized I needed to think about the things I didn't much think about so I could explain the process in a way that was useful and comprehensible to my students. Here are a few things I came up with.

DOES A MASTER NEED TO COVER THE ENTIRE SCENE?

A master should cover as much of the scene as possible. One way to accomplish this is to get way back so the camera takes in pretty much everything. Unfortunately, that's usually not much of a shot, and it's not much use in the cutting room other than to start a scene off since it has no point of view.

Assuming you have the means to move

the camera, you can usually cover a scene by cleverly choreographing your actors and camera. I encourage you to keep the shot going – not just masters but every shot – as long as you can, which is sometimes well past where you thought the shot would end. Still, particularly in a longer scene, there can come a point where even a good master can fall apart. At that point, you should probably design a second master to complete the scene, or even a third if needed. We sometimes call these mini-masters.

DO YOU HAVE TO SHOOT A MASTER?

No rule says you must. I shot a film in India, and directors over there would shoot only the amount of each shot, including the master, that they thought they needed for the cut – essentially cutting in the camera. Speaking as a former editor: not a good idea. The Indians did it to save film, but that's hardly a concern in the digital world. However, I've never had a feature go together the way I thought it would and actually work, and neither have my students working on shorter films. The more coverage, the more options you will have in the cutting room. And believe me, you'll need as many options as you can get.

By the same token, I can think of any

number of terrific movies with scenes that essentially had no master. A single of Joe looking right and a reverse of Suzy looking left works even if you never see them in the same shot.

WHY IS IT IMPORTANT TO SET UP OR SHOOT A GOOD MASTER?

First off, it is the answer to the puzzle of the scene. You can't direct a scene unless you fully understand what it is about, who it is about, what function it serves in the film as a whole, etc. That is the puzzle. Once you know those answers you can work out the blocking and, based on that, the camera angle and movement if any.

Your master establishes screen direction. Which side of the line do you want to be on?

It helps determine who the scene is about. How the master is set up should show this. Often that character is favored. You can be wishy-washy and shoot a 50-50 master, but those tend to have no point of view which is what directors are paid to supply. That said, sometimes a 50-50 master is the way to go. How to know? That's why some directors are better than others. They know.

Your master sets the blocking. Once you've

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set up the master you can figure out what you need to cover since everything is now locked and you've already solved the puzzle. Another advantage is that pesky actors can't change things once they've shot the master. Even the worst of them understand that the coverage needs to match the master. I speak from experience.

WHEN CAN YOU GET AWAY WITH JUST A MASTER AND NO COVERAGE?

That depends on your style. Some directors, like Woody Allen or Bela Tarr, like to shoot whole scenes in masters. Hitchcock shot an entire film in masters. Watch *Rope* if you don't believe me.

My rule of thumb is if it's less than half a page and it's not a scene with a lot of emotional changes, just a master is OK. I'd still urge you to shoot a piece of coverage just to cover your butt. Even if the scene is perfect, you may restructure the film and need to cut a line, and then what?

HOW DO YOU GO ABOUT SETTING UP A MASTER?

1. First you need to fully understand the scene – see “the answer to the puzzle” above.
2. Ideally, you have already thought through the blocking and the master
3. Rehearse your actors. A word of caution: never set the camera or lights before the rehearsal. Take my word, it's a very bad idea and ultimately does not save time. All it does is paint you into a corner. Also, clear the set. The actors and you should feel free to try things out some of which may not work. With the crew watching, there is a tendency to want to give a performance or look good, which is not what you are doing when you rehearse; you are engaging in a process, the end product of which will look good, not the process itself. I generally give the actors a few very general directions – enter from here, sit over there - and then let them run the scene a few times. Then I start adjusting – why don't you try sitting on this line, etc., often nudging them into the plan I worked out in my head. But watch the actors to see what their instincts want to do and where they want to go. They often know best and can improve upon the ideas you came in with.
4. You want to get to the point where

perhaps the dramatics may still need work, but you're confident of the blocking. At that point, Stop! Check back with the DP to make sure it's still working for him. Then bring in the keys, show them the blocking, and describe the shot. Make sure your 2nd A.C. put marks down for all the actors' movements. Then get the hell off the set so the DP can get it lit and ready to shoot. Do any further work with the actors privately off the set.

A WORD ABOUT SETTING UP A MOVING MASTER SHOT.

Figure out the starting position of the camera. That is “1.” It's preferable to have a viewfinder or an app such as Artemis so you know exactly where you want the camera to go. Mark the spot with a piece of tape. Go to your end position. Mark it as “2.” The operator sets up the frame for 1, then sets up the frame for 2, then follows the action as the camera moves from 1 to 2. In some cases you might have one or more intermediate stopping places, in which case you mark those and the operator sets up the frame for those stops. Now the move is from 1 to 2 to 3 etc. That's all there is to it.

So, some thoughts on mastering the master. Hopefully the next time you go out to film something, this will help you work more expeditiously and confidently.





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IF I HAD TO CHOOSE ONLY ONE FILM TO STUDY...

"A Clockwork Orange"

by David Worth

If I had to choose only one film, to study... I would choose Stanley Kubrick's 1971 Controversial Classic: A CLOCKWORK ORANGE. Why? Because being able to study that film up close and personal changed my life as an independent filmmaker.

During the 1970's, I was Editing a small feature that I also has been the Director of Photography on called: DEATHGAME. Even though it was only a \$150,000.00 film it boasted a couple of Academy Award nominated Actors. Sondra Locke and Seymour Cassel and we captured the film in Anamorphic Panavision, a wide screen very sophisticated camera system that was the state-of-the-art back in that time.

Remember, this was way back in the day before VHS Tapes & long before DVD's, so the only way that you could study one of your favorite Films or Directors was to go to a screening. That's why it's been reported that Orson Welles screened John Ford's famous film STAGECOACH over thirty time in order to study this outstanding Director's work, when he was preparing to Direct CITIZEN KANE. The result was that Mr. Welles would often tell his minions that there were... "only three great American Directors: John Ford, John Ford and John Ford!"

But I digress...

I was Editing DEATHGAME and preparing for the Sound Mix by placing each Actor's Dialogue on a separate 1000 foot 35mm film reel. This enabled the Sound Mixer to set a separate sound level for each Actor. In between each Actor's dialogue I needed to place what was called "fill leader" in order to keep all of the reels synchronized and the this "fill leader" was old, unused 35mm film prints supplied to you by your film lab.

OK, I was building my sound tracks and running out of "fill leader" so I called our film lab, which happened to be MGM and

requested another box... When it arrived and I opened it up, what did I discover? The "fill leader" that I had been sent was a complete 35mm print of Stanley Kubrick's A CLOCKWORK ORANGE, with French Subtitles.

I was in Cinematic Euphoria! This was one of my all time favorite films but I had only been able to see it at a screening and had not been able to place it onto an old upright Movieola and study it scene by scene and shot by shot. So I immediately took my work off the Movieola and placed the stunning work of Stanley Kubrick and his Cinematographer John Alcott onto it and began to run my favorite scenes forward and backwards... forward and backwards... Cinematic Nirvana!

When I was viewing the scene where our anti-hero "Little Alex" killed the "Cat Lady" with the large sculpture of a phallus, I came to the end of the scene where I could clearly see that Mr. Kubrick was chasing the Actors 360 degrees around the location with a very wide angle lens on the camera and I suddenly realized that I was able to see all four walls, the floor and the ceiling of this practical location and there were absolutely NO MOVIE LIGHTS!!!

I immediately hit the break on the Movieola and began to go through the scene frame by frame to see what was being used for the lighting. I soon discovered that Mr. Kubrick had lit the entire practical location with half a dozen "light sculptures" in various shapes into which he had placed an array of 100 or 150-watt light bulbs!

I was astounded! This was a true epiphany for me! This was no Roger Corman film, or a small Indie Production: This was a Big Warner Brothers, Stanley Kubrick Film that had been nominated for four Academy Awards!!!

Of course I studied the rest of the scenes in this graphic film and later many other of Mr.

Kubrick's productions and discovered that he had pioneered this visionary technique that was both Actor Friendly & Production Friendly: Building ALL of your Lighting into your Sets or Locations.

Actor Friendly: Because this technique enables you to keep the actor's "in the moment" and to keep shooting 360 degrees wherever you happen to be filming. Also the Actors do not have to worry about hitting "their mark" or being in "their light" to perform... The entire location has become their Mark & their Light. They are free to roam and discover as is the Director, DP and the Camera.

Production Friendly: Never does a Director have to be told by his or her DP whenever they might ask to shoot in the other direction: "Give me two hours to relight the set". Those days should be gone forever!

The most recent practitioner of this outstanding technique is one of today's most visionary Directors: Alfonso Cuaron and his DP Emmanuel Lubezki on the feature films: E TU MA MA TIMBIEN & THE CHILDREN OF MEN... Check them out and see Mr. Kubrick's technique of Natural Locations, Practical Light & Hand Held Cameras being used in some of today's most cutting edge films.

This film changed my live as a Cinematographer and Director and I've used this technique on the Clint Eastwood film: BRONCO BILLY as well as the martial arts classic: BLOODSPORT and countless others...

I can't say whether or not Mr. Cuaron learned this astounding technique as I did by studying Mr. Kubrick... All I can say for certain is that Mr. Kubrick was there first! All the way back in the day in the early 1970's with his outstanding and revolutionary film: A CLOCKWORK ORANGE.

THE PHANTOM FLEX4K HIGH-SPEED CAMERA



*Toni Lucatorto,
Media Products
Manager, Vision
Research, talks
about the Flex4K*



Exclusive interview
by Jody Michelle Solis

Q: Tell us about the Phantom Flex4K.

TONI LUCATORTO: The Flex4K is our latest high-speed camera designed specifically for the Cinema industry. It can shoot up to 1,000 frames per second (fps) at 4K, and 2,000 fps at 2K, and also handles standard sync-sound frame rates as well. The camera is now known for its excellent image quality and has been used in all kinds of projects from high-end commercials, music videos and special effects in feature films.

Q: What distinguishes it from other cameras?

TONI LUCATORTO: The Flex4K is primarily a high-speed camera, built upon decades of experience in the scientific world of high speed imaging. The features that make it unique when compared to other high-speed cameras are the things that make it work for the production industry: On-camera control menus, battery backs, accessory power ports, fast on-set workflow using our Phantom CineMags, video outputs and of course 4K resolution and image quality.

Q: Are there any workflows, applications, or needs that the camera solves that other cameras don't at this time?

TONI LUCATORTO: The Flex4K is truly unique in its ability to shoot 1,000 fps at 4K resolution. Beyond that, the images the camera produces are cinema-quality and the CineMag workflow on set means little to no downtime in between shots, so it is more-or-less free of the trade-offs normally associated with specialty cameras.

Q: Do you think this is a good camera for schools?

TONI LUCATORTO: The Phantom Flex4K system would be a great teaching tool since there are endless combinations of available resolutions, image formats, and frame rates. The camera supports video and file based workflows, something important for students to gain experience with. High speed is becoming more and more popular, thanks to our smartphones and youtube, so learning about high speed and lighting for high speed should be making its way into film and video curriculums if not already. I understand the camera may be cost prohibitive for many schools, but it's certainly something worth exploring.

Q: Can you share some features and applications?

TONI LUCATORTO: One of the more popular features is the ability to

continuously monitor live while one or two of the SDI feeds are playing back the video. This, combined with segmented memory enables a workflow of continuously shooting high speed while the DP never misses the action. This is used often in live sports broadcast, but also has applications on a studio set.

Q: If you could share some quick tips related to the Phantom Flex4K, what would they be?

TONI LUCATORTO: Shooting high speed has some unique aspects, from the type of lighting, to the generally huge amount of files you end up with at the end of the day. For that reason we always recommend working with a trained Phantom Tech, who will make sure the production goes smoothly and can consult with the team and help guide decisions up front. Along those lines, I always recommend making sure you have the workflow understood before the production. If you are shooting raw, ensure you have fast hard drives and a 10Gb Ethernet workflow station for file downloading. Make sure your color grading and edit systems handle Cine raw files, otherwise ensure you have a plan in place for file conversion.

STORY DEVICE

Interspecies Love

by Pamela Jaye Smith & Monty Hayes McMillan

Interspecies Love is an excellent story device to make observations on the way humans treat each other and a clever way to portray our more animal-like aspects.

EXEMPLAR MOVIE

Avatar

Why it exists (evolutionary back story)
Some versions of humanity's source calls for off-world aliens doing genetic manipulation on the local primates. But in *Battlestar Gallactica*, you find a feedback loop of humanoid-to-humanoid.

HOW IT SERVES US NOW

Is this preparing us for alien contact? Is it an artifact of ancient astronauts doing breeding experiments here? And really... what's the deal with alien anal probes?

EXAMPLES IN MYTH AND LEGEND

Greek king god Zeus was a rampant womanizer of mortal females, immortal females, and half-mix females. As a swan, he seduced mortal Leda, who bore him Pullox and Helen (later of Troy).

EXAMPLES IN MEDIA

Avatar is an excellent example of technologically advanced cultures taking advantage of other beings who are seen as "less than". There is *Interspecies Love* between Jake and Neytiri and a generalized mutual respect and love between the human scientist Grace and the Na'vi.

SYMBOLS

Two very different versions of the same thing in juxtaposition: eyes, hands, sex organs, etc. In *Avatar* the helicopters and the flying dragons represent the differences between the humans and the Na'vi.

KEY ELEMENT

The Shining Action

In *Galaxy Quest* when human Fred Kwan and Thermian Laliari embrace, her appearance generator is over-ridden and an octopus tentacle comes up behind Fred. She gives him a look, "You okay with this?" He swoons into her tentacles.

CINEMATIC TECHNIQUES

When bringing together different species, photograph them face-to-face from the same angle if it is a mutually accepting situation. If it is predatory in any way then the predator is at the higher angle looking down on and

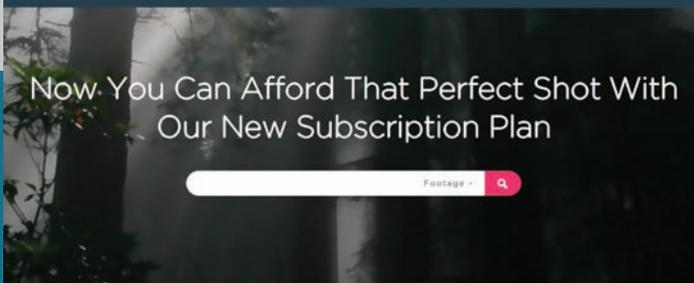
overpowering the prey.

Show the non-human's point of view of humans as significantly different from human vision with infra-red, black-and-white, multiple lenses, etc.

CONCLUSION

Interspecies Love is a really rich situation you can use to make all sorts of statements and send all sorts of messages in your stories – while greatly entertaining us in either heart-warming or terrifying ways.





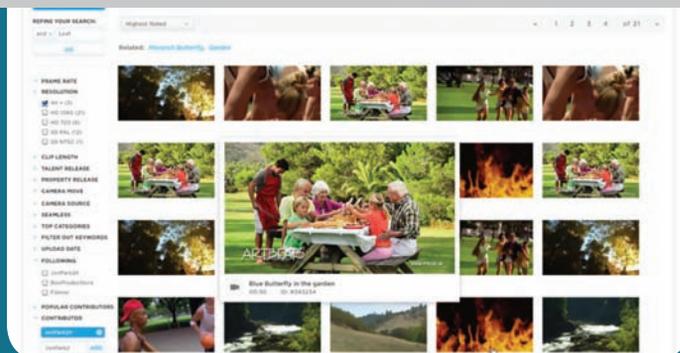
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ANNOUNCING THE NEW ARTBEATSEXPRESS.COM

Exclusive Interview with Phil Bates, Artbeats President and Founder



Q: What's new at Artbeats and what surprising new things will Artbeats be announcing come NAB 2015?

PHIL BATES: A launch of our brand new website ArtbeatsExpress.com. It is a new sales platform bringing Artbeats premium content to the world through a very affordable subscription plan. This is the most important change in our company since we started selling stock.

Q: What is the story behind your success?

PHIL BATES: Our strategy has always been to provide footage that is difficult or expensive to shoot, which makes it a true solution for editors and compositors. Also, we strive to be the absolute best at friendly, helpful customer service.

Q: What attracted you to the creative realm and where did the idea for Artbeats come from?

PHIL BATES: I have always loved creating art going back to when I was a small child. In college I took courses in graphic design, which led to jobs that started my commercial art career. Regarding the Artbeats name, it starts with knowing that I am a fan of Space and Ambient music. On my desk at home, I had a space music catalog called Heartbeats. One day, I remember looking down and seeing that the first half of the name, the "H" and the "e" were covered by another sheet of paper. What remained was "-artbeats". I knew then that, that would be the name of my company. Before that day in 1989, my company was called "Phil's Graphics".

Q: What inspires you?

PHIL BATES: I am inspired by the thought of bringing something beautiful, new and innovative to market. I love patterns and textures, the rhythm of nature in landscapes at magic hour, and the simplicity of fire and

water elements.

Q: What kinds of new categories are you planning that you can share with us?

PHIL BATES: We just released our first 4K-tornado footage that was shot last spring. Coming soon will be our Tree Shadow background footage, which will be a new way to incorporate organic movement to static images. We are also creating "playback" footage, which will be simulated programs from sports to news to games that can play on TV screens within a scene. We will also be filling out our Driving Plate category with East Coast locations including New York and Washington DC.

Q: How are you different or better than the other companies offering beats?

PHIL BATES: I am assuming you mean, how do we compare to other stock footage companies? Our strategy of shooting footage that is difficult or expensive to shoot has set us apart from the beginning. As a result, there are subjects we carry that are not available anywhere else. I am also a stickler for quality, so our brand has gained a trusted reputation. In addition, we have connections with the largest film and TV studios and have learned how to provide them with custom service and license agreements.

Q: Do you shoot?

PHIL BATES: Yes, I do, and I love it. There are times when it does not make sense for me to shoot, like when filming aerials with specialized equipment. In those scenarios, I fly along and direct the operator. It's all wonderful.

Q: When did you get started, and did you go to film school?

PHIL BATES: I never went to film school. I actually started by hiring a production crew for my first film fire effects shoots back in 1996 and watched carefully. That fall bought a Bolex

16mm camera and just experimented shooting special effects, then in August of 1997, I rented a Mitchell 35mm film camera with a Norris Intervalometer and got a quick lesson on how to use the equipment from Dan Norris himself. I then packed the equipment along with an ice chest full of 35mm short ends and drove to Arizona to shoot time-lapse storms. The first day of that shoot, I sent the film FedEx to a lab and a colorist who told me how my exposure was (which got a thumbs up). From then on it was learning as you go.

Q: What advice would you give a new filmmaker?

PHIL BATES: A mistake I often see is a lot of love and passion towards the latest cool and feature-rich equipment. If the emotional investment is in the camera and not the story, the film will suffer. It is always about the story. Secondly, I would suggest when at all possible keep ownership of footage you shoot for clients. If that is not possible, then retain the rights to repurpose the footage for stock licensing. When you are on a shoot, piggyback your own shots when you can.

Q: Do you edit and what editing program do you use?

PHIL BATES: Yes, I enjoy editing. I've done quite a few music videos and "how-to" training programs. I use After Effects, even for long pieces just because I am comfortable with it, having used it now for nearly 20 years.

Q: What are your favorite movies?

PHIL BATES: I love the first three Star Wars movies. They had a huge impact on me as I developed my creative style.

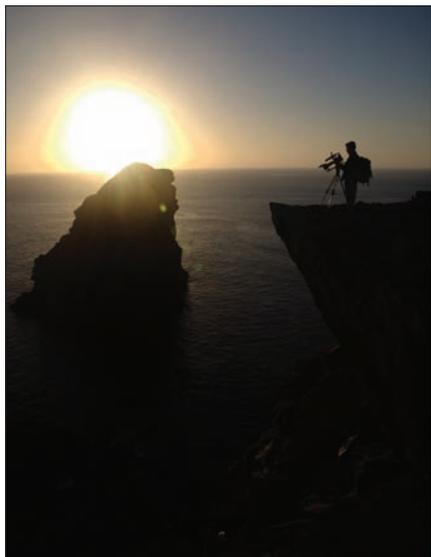
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DOCUMENTING ARCHEOLOGY OFF THE IRISH COAST

By William Donaruma

For the last three years I have been fortunate to become involved with an ongoing archeological project off the Irish west coast on the islands of Inishark and Inishbofin. A team led by Professor Ian Kuijt have been researching the history and the people as well as digging artifacts from pre-historic to medieval to as recent as 1960 when the remaining 24 residents of the remote island of Inishark were evacuated by the government and it was left abandoned. This has proven to be a challenging and rewarding experience both in terms of the logistics of solo travel with my production gear that involved planes, busses and boats, but also in working to capture the austerity of the place and the feel of the people living there.

My last venture was in June, 2014 when we were to embark on a two week dig



on Inishark, which involves camping with a crew of about 20 people with no power, unpredictable weather and lots of electronic gear. While I, and many of us in production, have learned to handle adverse weather conditions, there is usually refuge at the end of a day or possibly three, but seven to eight days with one day off island in between was new to me. This is also a solo production in handling the gear, workflow, etc. although my pal Ian is always excited to put down his trowel and help when he can and we have made a great team working to capture the essence of these islands.

Getting to the nuts and bolts of handling this production involved keeping most equipment dry, re-charging batteries and off-loading footage on a daily basis. I always bring my RED Epic, which is instrumental for dynamic range, detail in landscapes as well as time-lapse and slow motion. This time, however, I knew I would be shooting more interviews and wanted to achieve a different perspective from angles and motion that would require a lighter camera on a portable jib. I haven't been too keen on adopting DSLR style shooting, but after having success using a Canon 6D (helmed by an experienced DP, John Klein) as a second camera in Rome, I decided to jump in with a Nikon D600 and Tascam DR-60D audio recorder. This would enable smaller file sizes with longer interviews, as well as floating the camera over the top of the dig site on a Kessler Pocket Jib Traveler. I would also have a back up camera if something happened to either one. You cannot go all that way and then not be able to shoot!

This strategy worked out well as I was also using the new Kessler Pocket Dolly with Parallax attachment with my Epic to achieve a different motion point of view and a RigWheels dolly for longer runs on 12 foot pipe we bought at a hardware store in Clifden. Knowing how to pack efficiently and keep everything dry involved a learning curve as I began to figure out what I would keep along side me in my tent and what I could store outside my tent under a tarp. All of my computer equipment, laptop, hard drives, power supplies, card readers, were sealed tight in a Pelican case that I could flip open and immediately start storing media at the end of day. We did run a generator during certain times, so I would monitor what else needed charging for the crew and added batteries and my laptop accordingly. I always managed to stay ahead of that game and backed up



media to Lacie Thunderbolt Rugged drives initially with an internal drive dock as back-up. Once off the island I would back everything up again to a larger Lacie drive and worked off of that to get a quick cut of footage for a community event a few days after the expedition.

The biggest variable was actually learning how to pack so that I could carry everything I needed from site to site and also knowing that weather could shift

at any moment, so having a waterproof equipment bag and Cinebag backpack with rain cover proved to be essential. (I have a picture of me carrying all of the gear at once.) These kinds of productions make for constant learning experiences, which is why we all love to get out there and shoot. Both physically and mentally demanding, with sunrises at 4am and sun sets at 11pm, it has been great to push myself beyond a comfort zone and come away with great footage of those

memories and great friends along the way. Many shared pints at Murray's Bar on Inishbofin doesn't hurt either!

To see more about this project and the media produced so far, you can visit the links below.

<https://clicproject.wordpress.com/>

<https://vimeo.com/user9941071/albums>



INTERNSHIPS

Living and Working Your Dream

by David Kaminski

Want to see the world on a cruise ship and film a reality show? Work in the city of your dreams and learn a new language while filming vacation destinations?

All it requires is some strategic planning and a little luck. Students invest a lot of time and money in their educations, yet they often leave the details of their careers up to chance. But it doesn't have to be that way for you. All you need to do is ask yourself some important questions and make a reasonable plan.

SELF-ASSESSMENT AND PREPARATION

- How many hours have you spent building relationships with prospective employers?
- Who in your future profession do you admire the most, and what have you done to secure a position with them?
- What contacts do you have from the last several years, and how can you rekindle those and ask for favors and leads?
- Where would you like to live and work in the future?
- Who can you find that can help you search for jobs, get you prepared, and give you honest feedback about yourself?
- What is the job market like now,

and how will it change in the future?

- What skills do you have that could be helpful for your profession?
- Do you have a resume, references, a portfolio, a reel, a website, or other evidence of your long-term commitment to the profession and for the position that you are applying?

START EARLY AND BE THOROUGH

If you haven't started yet, begin immediate. You should give yourself at least six months lead-time to find an internship.

Consider setting aside a hundred or more hours to perfect your reel, your resume, your pitch. Meet with friends and practice mock interviews and have them critique your work and ask you questions. Every practice will help you become more natural and more confident.

Plan a presentation (in person, on video, or audio) that is targeted to the people who will hire you. Imagine that you are selling yourself and your skills to investors. Make them believe in you. If you are applying to do camera work, then show them your range of skill, and make sure that every shot is perfectly in focus, with perfect framing, color, and movement.

Do not overlook small details. Spend the time to learn about the companies

you want to work for, and understand in advance of contacting them how they can use you, in what capacity, department, and with whom you could work. Know the intimate details of their productions, software, workflow, timelines, budgets, equipment, and the skills they require for entry level. Impress the company with how much you know about them and how you think you can improve their bottom line.

The fine points of appearance: your hair, your clothes, the way you walk, the way you talk, the look in your eye. Make sure you sell yourself down to the socks you are wearing. People will look at everything, and they will make judgments.

Dressing up your paperwork and resume. Spend the money on fine stationery. Get a business card that is the most striking and professional you can find. Printed on vellum, on plastic, a custom logo of your own design? Include color prints, optical media, a flash drive, hard drive—anything that you think fits your job title and that makes the interviewers feel that you have thought ahead and planned for the interview and for their needs. Create several packets and arrive with enough to hand out to several people, if others come to the interview. Arrive with your laptop to show your work if you think that will help you.

Call a day ahead of any scheduled interview to confirm the time and location. Be professional, and know that your early call to their office will let them know in advance that you are a quality candidate.

Be relaxed and be yourself in the interview. You are living your dream.

THE JVC GY-LS300 4K HANDHELD CAMERA



Craig Yanagi, Manager, Marketing and Brand Strategy, JVC Professional Video Division, talks about the GY-LS300 4KCAM S35mm Camcorder



Exclusive interview by Jody Michelle Solis

Q: Are there any new things that are being announced for JVC at the 2015 NAB Show in Las Vegas?

CRAIG YANAGI: JVC will have announcements regarding the new 4KCAM line of professional camcorders, as well as for the current line of ProHD professional camcorder line.

Q: What are you exhibiting at NAB2015?

CRAIG YANAGI: JVC will be exhibiting our entire line of professional camcorders, monitors, Blu-Ray / HDD Combo Deck recorders and HD Video Streaming solutions, as well as future product concepts.

Q: Tell us about the GY-LS300, and what distinguishes it from other cameras?

CRAIG YANAGI: The GY-LS300 is the world's first and only model which combines the form factor and functionality of a professional compact handheld camcorder with a Super35mm sensor, true multiple lensing options, 4K and HD recording to affordable SDXC media, internet camera control and live streaming capability, all at an affordable price.

Q: What advantages does it have over other cameras that are in a similar market?

CRAIG YANAGI: The GY-LS300's body design is reminiscent of the industry's iconic camcorders embraced by independent production (DSR-PD150, DVX-100, AG-HPX200) with professional features such as XLR mic inputs with phantom power, built-in ND filters, and enables the lensing flexibility of the MFT mount with full control protocols. Most importantly, the VSM (Variable Scan Mapping) technology provides the GY-LS300

the ability to scan the Super35mm sensor to match the native circumference of the light passing through the lens, maintaining its true angle of view.

Q: Are there any workflows, applications, or needs that the camera solves that other cameras don't at this time?

CRAIG YANAGI: Our customers as well as voices in the marketplace have expressed to us that the form factor and feature sets of DSLRs configured for video acquisition is or can be cumbersome and expensive. With the GY-LS300 providing the features and functionality of mainstream professional camcorders, such as time code, and having the ability to record same H.264 files as DSLRs, production issues are greatly minimized. In addition, the ubiquitous MFT mount enables the adaptation of a multitude of professional lenses, ranging from EF, Nikon and PL based lenses - and film primes can range from 35mm to 16mm as the GY-LS300 has the ability to map the sensor to align with the circumference of these lenses. The GY-LS300 can also take the image being captured and both record to affordable media and stream live simultaneously via RTMP encoded signal to popular CDNs (Content Delivery Networks) such as YouTube and UStream when a WiFi dongle or portable hot spot is engaged. Finally, we also enable 4K recording at 150Mbps H.264 at 24P, 25P and 30P, together with everything mentioned, at the price of S35 sensor camcorders only enabling HD capture.

Q: Do you think this is a good camera for schools, as well as a teaching tool for professors? Can you share some features and applications?

CRAIG YANAGI: With the GY-LS300's lensing flexibility, with accurate field of view acquisition, and fully supported H.264 file recording as well as live streaming capability, this camcorder is ideal for use in multiple curriculums, whether it be filmmaking or journalism. For film schools with 16mm prime lenses, they now have a means to not only use the glass, but use them as they are without recalculating for focal length. The widely supported H.264 file recording format (generic to DSLRs) enables the instructor to focus on the discipline and pedagogy of visual storytelling, and not have to worry about post production. All the instructor needs to do is add a lens and media - the GY-LS300 comes with everything else (mic, battery, power supply) included.

Q: What kinds of workflows and needs does it provide solutions for?

CRAIG YANAGI: The GY-LS300 H.264 files are fully supported by Adobe Premiere, Apple Final Cut X and many other popular mainstream professional NLE (Non Linear Editing) systems. The camcorder can also record AVCHD files, which can be edited with Apple iMovie and other comparable editing systems, so a wide range of users are able to acquire and edit with this camcorder.

Q: If you can quickly share three best practices related to the GY-LS300 system, what would they be?

CRAIG YANAGI: Important - read the operation manual to identify the proper camcorder settings, be sure to purchase the proper media, and conduct shooting and editing tests.

LEE SMITH

Editor of INTERSTELLAR



by Scott Essman



Though working with an established director such as Christopher Nolan would be appealing to most below-the-line craftspeople, it took a lengthy call from Nolan to editor Lee Smith to convince him to first join the ranks of Nolan's crew on *Batman Begins*. "I had just finished editing *Master and Commander* in Los Angeles and got myself a U.S. agent," Smith said by phone from London where he is now cutting the next James Bond film, *Spectre*. "They asked if I wanted to work on a Batman film, and I didn't want to. [Chris and I] had an interesting chat for an hour. Chris was gauging my taste and what I liked and didn't like about movies. You're going to spend a lot of time in a cutting room situation. I went home to Australia, and my agent said, 'You've got the job.' We went on to do six films in a row."

Over Nolan's three Batman films, plus *The Prestige*, *Inception*, and now *Interstellar*, Smith and Nolan

have decidedly formed a healthy collaboration. "We have a great shorthand which we've built up over the years," Smith explained. "We enjoy talking and reviewing the footage and investigating how you can make all of the changes editorially. We have similar tastes. They don't align perfectly, but on the whole they align enough."

Unlike Nolan's earlier films with Smith as editor, *Interstellar* brings the pair into the territory of an abstract space epic, requiring a unique approach, especially to establishing the film's rhythm and pace over its 169 minutes. "We took our time with it," Smith described, citing the earlier films in contrast. "You really are packing a lot of information and speed in the Batman films. This film had a rhythm all of its own. It was a matter of keeping interest rolling along. We did test it numerous times and were pleased with the way the audience responded to the movie. We never

had any negatives about the length. It holds its own."

To achieve a measured pace for a film that bridges three hours, Smith points to Nolan's economical shooting style as assisting him in the process. "I think Chris has got the film very well-planned out in his head," Smith related. "He has more of a clinical precision to what he's shooting; he knows exactly what he wants and how to get it — he knows the end result. Other directors may change their minds and change coverage and the way the scene is going. He's more planned in the way he executes. On that scale and complexity — *Interstellar* or *Inception* — if you weren't on top of how that film would play out, they are very complicated to edit. There's always a way, in Chris's coverage, to make it work."

One of *Interstellar's* standout editing moments occurs when Matthew

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McConaughey's astronaut character, Cooper, watches video messages of his children who have grown up over two decades in what to McConaughey seems like mere hours. "It is one of my favorite scenes, mainly because McConaughey, in take one of four takes, decided for him to not let him watch the video monitor before the cameras rolled," Smith described. "We had already cut the footage on the monitor – it was live footage. He responded in a real and emotion a way. You couldn't cut away from him. As the scene continues, it does go backwards and forwards – the crisis of realizing that you've missed your entire children's youth. The end of the scene – he reaches forward, the screen cuts blank, and we cut to Murph [his now adult daughter, portrayed by Jessica Chastain] recording that message. You think things are happening at once, but he is watching a message years prior."

One of *Interstellar's* staples of principal

photography was its lack of green screen background placement to achieve a method of adding visual effects in post-production, which would obviously influence the film's editorial approach. "Working with [visual effects supervisor] Paul Franklin – Chris hates shooting green screens and I hate editing green screens," Smith revealed. "We shot with rear projection and front projection. It wasn't always the final version, but it's being filmed as if it's all real. Green screens are old school. It's all in the pre-planning, pre-shooting, getting the right plates, the real environments to match your lighting against. I never buy the depth of field on the green screen; I can spot all of this stuff."

Smith pointed to another element in Nolan's live-element shooting strategy which he believed worked to *Interstellar's* benefit. "Chris has so much captured in frame, there's no way around it for [visual effects

artists]," Smith said. "It's a lock once you shoot, and it gets the best results. People felt like they went on a journey into space. Actors were on full spaceships at Sony with projections out the windows. I think it shows in the final film: a total construct with a lot of work – the more physical real process that Chris goes through. The results are there. I've always believed that if you can show everyone [a real element] on the set, they respond to it very differently. As soon as you stick it on a gigantic green screen in a sound stage, it's all very controlled. Then it becomes like animation."

Of his 10-11 months of cutting on *Interstellar*, Smith exuded obvious pride. "In Leicester Square in London – a billboard for *Interstellar*," he said. "It's pretty cool for a film that isn't a franchise or high-action movie to be doing so well. These are the kind of films you can look back on in 20 years, and it's a great feeling."

IS CINEMA STUDIES REALLY IMPORTANT TO A PRODUCTION CURRICULUM?



To Have and Have Not

by Dean Goldberg

"You know you don't have to act with me, Steve. You don't have to say anything, and you don't have to do anything. Not a thing. Oh, maybe just whistle. You know how to whistle, don't you, Steve? You just put your lips together and... blow."

That was the line 20-year-old model turned actress Lauren Bacall threw to 46-year-old Humphrey Bogart in the 1944 adventure romance *To have and have not*. It became one of the most famous lines in movie history and put Bogart firmly into the pantheon of leading men-tough guys while launching young Lauren Bacall into a glamorous orbit that lasted for more than a decade. The legendary Howard Hawks directed the film. Hawks knew his way around every popular genre of film, from westerns, *Red River*, to musicals, *Gentlemen prefer Blondes* (with a dazzling Marilyn Monroe). Sid Hickox, a master cinematographer who had lensed Katherine Hepburn in 1932 for George Cukor in a *A Bill of Divorcement* photographed the film. He filmed Bogie again in *The Big Sleep*, another that teamed B& B.

Did I also mention that the screenplay came from a Hemingway novel of the same name? Or that Hawks hated the book and basically took the title some pages and, with the old man and the sea himself, rewrote the damn thing?

Question: Was this little capsule of information interesting? Helpful? Worthwhile? What exactly is the point of all this random information? At my own august (but modest) institution of learning I might actually find out after my students filled out the obligatory "student evaluation" form at the end of the semester. The question would most likely look like this:

Overall this class was a valuable learning experience.

(please check one)

- STRONGLY AGREE**
- AGREE**
- DISAGREE**
- STRONGLY DISAGREE**

It usually goes about 70/30 in my favor, which means that I bored the heck out of a third of the class, while on the other hand 7 out of 10 stayed awake. The numbers don't really tell the story though, since some don't even answer. Comments? That gets even stickier. Few pontificate about the class in any meaningful way. Judging by past evaluations the comments will range from "I wish we watched some movies in color! I mean black and white, WTF?" Or, "Goldberg's a cool guy but the movies are really long and boring," to "I wish the seats weren't so hard."

Of course my snippets of relevant information about the history of a particular iconic film would be part of a more serious epistemological, sociological and political lecture that would synergize both pedagogy with empirical analogy. (Translation: I'd gossip, tell geeky tech film stories and then we'd watch the movie.) In the end even though most of my students end up writing boring papers about their experience with about as much enthusiasm as they have when forced to baby sit during their spring break, a few have some interesting things to say, and one or two—(remember I said "modest college?"), will write amazing papers that reflect their excitement about the industry.

The question of how important Cinema studies are to a production student's education has been an issue for as long as I can remember, one as complicated and full of entanglements and confusion as ever. Some of the problems stem from the difference between the two separate skills in relation to how they fit into the academic environment. In many some undergraduate institutions and many grad schools you'll find a majority of Cinema Studies courses are taught by professors from other disciplines, like history, english or philosophy. Often the film courses are relegated to adjuncts that are more familiar with the DVD versions of films than they are of the theatrical versions. Then there's the misnomer that because one loves movies one might be expert enough to teach a class in cinema. I often hear comments like "I know every director and actor of every western ever made," to which my usual response is to slowly walk backward a few steps then turn and run.

Finally there's a turn on the old saw that says "Those that can't do, teach. Those that can't teach, teach gym." The new maxim might go something like, "Those that have no interest in gym might try their hand at teaching Cinema." From the town library down the to the lovely old gentleman on TCM, there's always someone ready to stroll down Hollywood's memory lane. Seems like everyone's an expert on the movies.

So why bother making our way through the minefield of film theory and practice? It's pretty simple actually. Though nothing can replace on location experience, lighting and camera instruction, screenwriting and editing workshops and industry internships—the final product of all that work (film or HD) is part of an ongoing artistic journey that began in the 19th century is still evolving and deserves to be studied with the same rigor as we study art, music or literature.

In fact, filmmakers have a leg up since many artists and writers reflect their influences in their work at the risk of being labeled "derivative" or even worse, while moviemakers revel in their plagiarism. We do what's been done before with absolutely no hesitation or guilt. Want a fast example? See if you can find rolling boulder sequence in the 1959 version of Journey to the Center of the Earth, then screen the much more famous opening scene in Raiders of the Lost Ark. An homage to Henry Levin the little known director? I think not. More likely, Spielberg never forgot the thrill watching James Mason, Pat Boone and company running for their lives on the big screen. So when he dove into is his treasure trove of exciting visuals, the idea of the bolder "chasing" the good guys broke through the collage running through his head. But who knows? Maybe it was the cinematographer's head, or the art director's. It doesn't really matter, because

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in the end, the scene, with different actors, different art direction, and different music—came to life anew. The fact is that the process of filmmaking should be filled with knowledge of the content, meaning, psychology, science, politics, art, music and history of what's come before, if the work is going to mean anything to anyone. I won't argue that so many movies are a popular entertainment full of blunt stupidity and generic formulas that fill our malls with mind numbing visual and audio noise, but movies are also an art form that has informed and enlightened audiences of all kinds—workers, academics, war brides, little kids in 3d glasses—and done it for more than a century. It is a form that utilizes the essence and magic of all the arts while providing us with a real-time experience that changes each time we let it unfold before us.

Movies are a reflection of our nature, our world, our history and ourselves. For the filmmaker, they are the virtual libraries that can be added to, taken from or even—by the most talented of us—rewritten.



THE JOY OF X AND THE GENERATOR

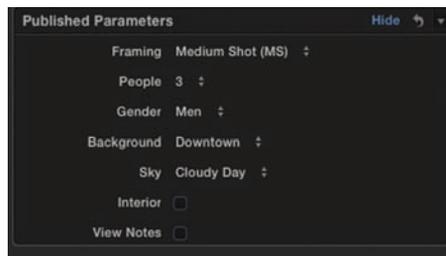
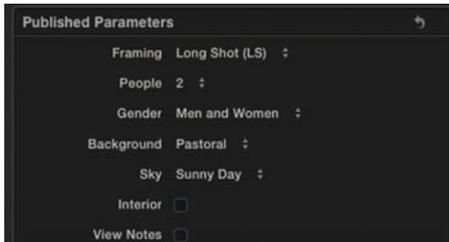
Check out these generators.

By Bart Weiss

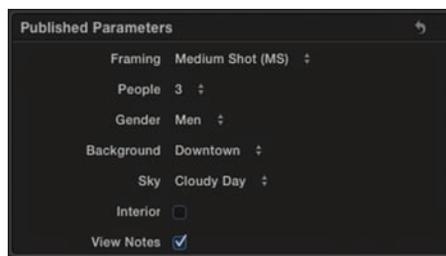
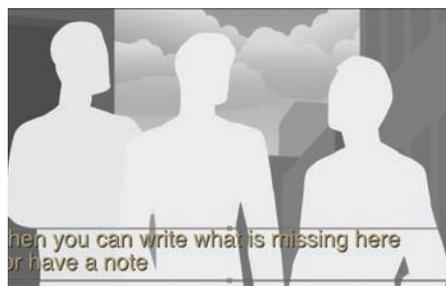
Over there between the titles button and before the themes is the generator button. Chances are you have never gone there, but after today you will check it out.



One of the big surprises there is, is the placeholder generator. Which is a place to place an image while waiting for the reshoot or archival material to come in. Once you drop it in the timeline, you can go in the inspector and make some changes. You can change it from a wide pastoral shot with 2 people (men and women) on a sunny day, to a medium 3 shot with all men downtown and, yes, with the sun still shining.



You can also drop in some notes by clicking the view notes button.



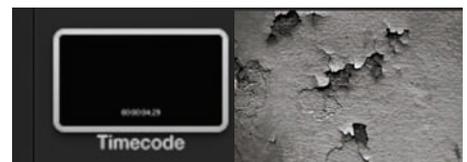
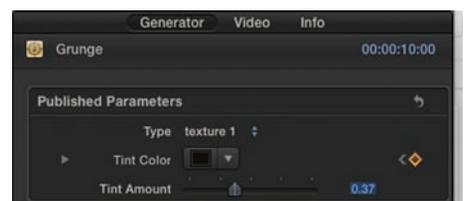
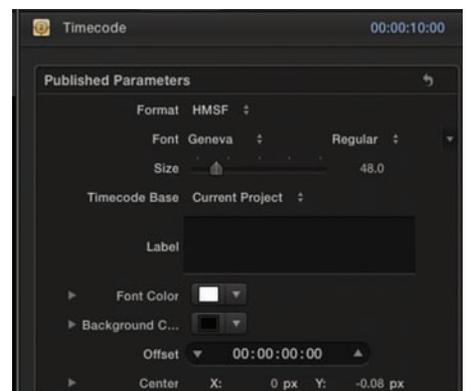
One could easily imagine using this to make storyboards or make a whole film with just this generator.

There are some other really great ones for using behind titles or graphics. I particularly like the metal and grunge. In each, when you select the type in the inspector, you can get a wide variety of looks and colors. You can change the tint and color and, of course, you can keyframe these so you can change the amount of time or color of the shot. The other way to add a bit of motion to these backgrounds would be to just add the Ken Burns effect, found in the crop button.

Some other generators that I use are the lines, lens flare and the truly wonderful clouds. Again, all these are controllable, either through the generator tab in the inspector or as in the clouds you can change the color in the color tab in the video tab.

One last generator of note is the time code generator. So if you need to create a window dub, say for someone to do a transcript, you can just drop on the clip. Then go to the settings to match what you are doing, start at the frame number you need to start at, and you got it.

So, now, go generate some joy.



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DENNY TEDESCO BRINGS 1960S STUDIO MUSICIANS TO THE FORE



Though very few know their names, everyone knows their music. Named *The Wrecking Crew*, they include a horde of tightly-knit Los Angeles-based studio musicians from the 1960s who, in various configurations, played on dozens of hit songs during that formative decade. Among the roster of artists for which *The Wrecking Crew* provided the background guitar, bass, drums, piano, saxophone and other instruments were The Beach Boys, Frank Sinatra, Nancy Sinatra, Sonny and Cher, Jan & Dean, The Monkees, Gary Lewis and the Playboys, The Mamas and The Papas, The Tijuana Brass, and Phil Spector's seminal Wall of Sound groups.

Now, Denny Tedesco, himself a longtime Hollywood set decorator and grip, is telling the story of *The Wrecking Crew* in a new eponymous documentary. For Tedesco, the story was particularly personal as his father was a key member of *The Wrecking Crew's* stable of musicians. "I started this project in 1995 when my father, Tommy Tedesco was diagnosed with terminal cancer," he said of the guitarist. "It was a way of me dealing with what was going in our lives and at the same time wanting to let the world know about what impact he and his friends made in musical history."

Given that the material centers on the mid-1960s, Tedesco's endeavors involved rummaging through photo, film, and musical archives now 50 years old. "When I started, it was only 30 years old," he explained. "All of that material that was there—the music was there. We found a bunch of photos from [drummer] Hal Blaine. It took many years to find stock footage. It was more about getting the interviews first. Then, we could start putting it together."

Since many of the musicians worked with his father, Tedesco's plight was drastically simplified. "The musicians themselves weren't that hard," he revealed, noting that many lived in his Los Angeles base. "Some lived in Nashville; some were in Washington State. You hope that



you can get past the gatekeepers: agents and managers. They do a pretty good job at it. If you can get through, they will most likely say, 'Yes.' If I could ask the agent who would ask Cher, I knew we had a chance. We did — she loved them [the *Wrecking Crew* musicians]."

Given that the vast majority of *The Wrecking Crew's* hits were recorded in the 1960s, Tedesco knew that his film would largely focus on that period of music. "We had to have all of the music rights before anyone would touch us," he stated. "We had help from people around the country through donations, Kickstarter, Jerry Moss and Herb Alpert [the latter two of whom founded A&M Records]. The music companies were not the problem—they were very giving."

Nevertheless, music rights for a film, especially a documentary, can be prohibitively expensive, and for *The Wrecking Crew*, Tedesco needed wall-to-wall classic songs. "There was so much music, it was at a level that was unaffordable with 110 songs," he related. "We had to raise over \$700,000—we had to license stock footage, photos, and the musicians' union to pay \$200,000. I'm still paying for stuff."

Despite ideas from potential producers for how to work around having 110 songs in the film, Tedesco stood his ground, insisting that including the songs was necessary to tell the musicians' story. "Every song has these guys in it," he noted. "Every song in that film comes from AFM [American Federation of Musicians] contracts. Other people would say, 'Knock off a few songs; bring it down to 20 songs.' Frank Sinatra, and the Byrds, and the Mamas and Papas, and the Fifth Dimension all had a different thing going on. This was a town that was a factory, knocking stuff out."

Regarding an intimately personal project created with independent financing, including his own property, for Tedesco, the most surprising aspect of making the film was the amount of support he received from virtual strangers. "I can take

with *The Wrecking Crew*

By Scott Essman

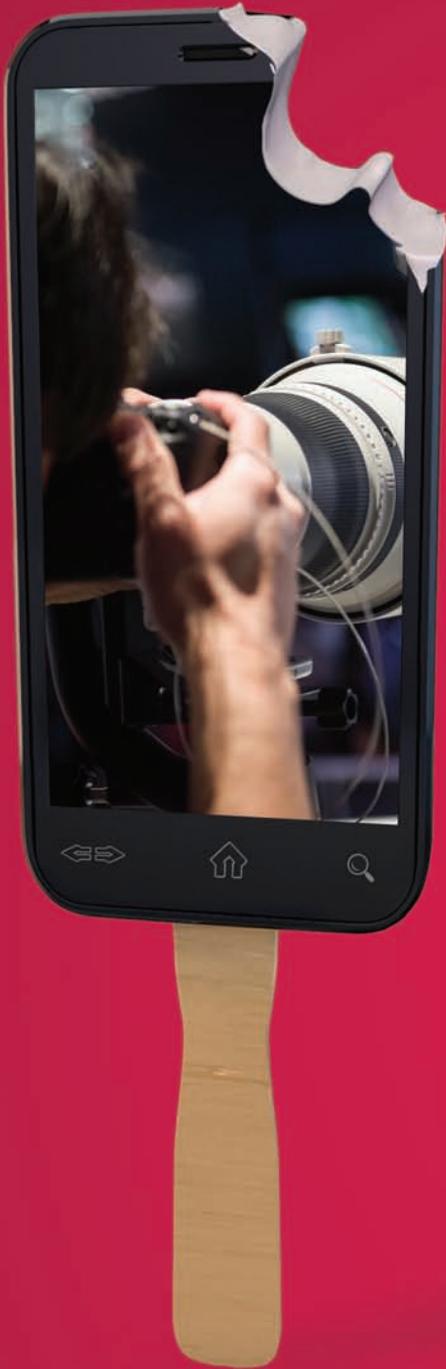


family and friends on this journey for so long before they tune out," he revealed. "Strangers would remark how much it meant to them. 'A friend of mine is dying — is there any way I could show him the film?' That, to me, was a thrill. These folks have been with me since the early 2000s. Once I started showing [early versions of the film] publicly in 2008, we had a fanbase that grew."

Though his film deals with a half-century-old material, Tedesco confessed one advantage his film represents in the contemporary marketplace. "50% of the story is known before you get to the theater — the music," he said, "showing folks that my father and these folks made a living playing their instruments, and they take us on a musical journey. They were excellent musicians who could communicate with each other. They're not always playing together every day; 15-20 players played together every day. They were coming out of rhythm-and-blues, [and also were] jazz musicians who could improv. You are getting all of these great players coming together playing off each other, but also listening to each other. They had to nail it in the first few takes. They had to do three songs in three hours."

Looking back on *The Wrecking Crew*, Tedesco believes that they have fully maintained their relevancy in today's musical world. "You could hate everything that they ever did, but you can't say that you weren't influenced by them," he detailed of today's crop of musical artists. "Rock and roll was new. That stuff comes in and you don't know how important it was [at the time]. You need to know what came before. You have to put your heart and soul into it."

The Wrecking Crew opened on March 13, 2015, on VOD and iTunes plus at Landmark's Nuart Theatre in West Los Angeles, South Coast Village 3 in Santa Ana, California, and IFC Center 5 in New York; it expands to 70 theaters over the next two months in other cities.



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DIRECTING AND ACTING IN THE SAME FILM

"As a filmmaker, learning something about the craft of acting is arguably one of the single most important things you can do to up your game."

By Jeff Turboff

You're on set, shooting your film. First day of principal photography. But your actors aren't giving you what you want. What do you do? If you're like a lot of directors, you tell your actors, "Say it like this!" You give them a line reading, yell, "Action!" and they give it to you just the way you said it, and you think, "Well, good enough," and you move on. What you may or may not know is, you might have just alienated your cast and given them the impression that you see them as puppets. And in doing so, you may have also committed to pretty much wooden performances for the rest of the project. Either that, or they just know you're not a director who knows what actors do, and they're essentially on their own for the duration of the film. It's not your fault though really. You conveyed the way you want it to sound. The way it sounded in your head when you wrote the film, right? But this isn't the way actors work. And if you've cast your film with truly skilled performers, you're actually seriously handicapping your project by not being able to speak their language. Understanding that is a big step toward making more believable movies.

As a filmmaker, learning something about the craft of acting is arguably one of the single most important things you can do to up your game. I took up acting a little over two years ago to help make me a better writer and director, and it has. (In the process though, it's become a passion for me in its own right.) Actors want good roles. Actable roles. Stuff they can sink their teeth into. Multi-dimensional characters with full rich lives. Just what we on the other side of the camera

want for our characters. Because of the fact that our work as writers and directors ultimately ends up in the hands of actors who must bring our vision to life, why should we handicap ourselves by not understanding how actors do what they do? Actors... good actors... are craftsmen and craftswomen with a highly technical skill of understanding and delivering the emotional intention of a story and each of its moments, as envisioned by the writer and director.

Though what they do is often mysterious to us as filmmakers, rest assured, their craft is a fairly technical one with an array of tools and terms; objective, super objective, back story, moment before, substitutions, body center, circles of attention... the list goes on. Believable performances largely come out of the plethora of details that an actor works at putting into the life of the character, whether those details are salient to the character or not. This is the milieu of an actor's craft. What we want to see on the screen when we watch a film is a person with a real life, and the more the actor has that stuff going on in his or her life, the more we as audience members are willing to go along for the ride with him or her. A strong actor will have amazing presence, ready relaxation, and freedom of expression. And as directors, we need to make it our duty to help them develop those necessary details and achieve these prerequisite conditions that yield great performances.

After two years of actor training, I decided I'd gotten a little tired of just

doing student films, and decided to write something for myself to star in with one of my fellow acting students, Caycee Black. We chose horror and developed a story together, JIMBO, for which I then wrote the screenplay. Single location, small scale, high drama. This would hopefully give us a leg up as fairly new actors by putting us in something I was pretty sure I could knock out of the park. I knew that I'd understand the story, I'd believe in its merits, I'd know my characters inside and out, and I could control many of the variables like production design, shooting strategy, and control over the edit. But now, with a couple of years of actor training, I also knew I could not only get the technical side of this storytelling task down, but also, I had tools I could use to explore character, both for myself and with my star actress, Caycee.

We workshopped the characters and the relationship between them for countless hours of rehearsals, using a bunch of techniques gleaned from the approaches of Meisner, Stanislavski, Chekhov, and others, as taught to us by our acting coach, Bob McAndrew, as well as stuff I'd learned about Method by attending a few months at The Lee Strasberg Theatre and Film Institute. Other rehearsal techniques I invented for the project. The fact that Caycee and I had the same teacher meant we could really talk acting shorthand together. And the fact that I as a director having studied acting, could talk language that she understood as a performer, meant the possibility of really deeply exploring nuances of character and relationship that I'm



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sure I would never have been able to articulate and explore with her if I didn't have the vocabulary of an actor. This was absolutely key for us to get performances that felt real, and which felt matched to each other for tone and intensity and so forth.

In Greek mythology, the newly deceased who cannot pay the ferryman Charon for safe passage across the river Styx are left to wander the shores for a hundred years. In the same way, if you can't ferry your actors to safe passage to the other shore, they will forever wander, never reaching their destination, which is a believable performance of your screenplay. You see, actors need to be able to talk about character, emotion, and relationship, not just know where to stand and how to sound reading a line. A good director can usher them to those places he or she needs to by understanding how they work. And this business of learning what it is that actors do is almost completely experiential. You really can't get it from books. I'm here now to advocate to you, as directors, to learn the craft

of acting. It's possibly the single most important thing I've done in terms of my growth as a filmmaker. Good actors will know something about the filmmaking side of things, such as the fact that a tight frame means they can't move as much as a looser frame. And a good director will understand the actor's craft as well. You can usher your actor to those places he or she needs to go when you understand what is important to an actor in his or her process. If you're one of those directors, like I used to be, who rolls eyes at the idea of an actor's process, chances are your films are going to be the kind that has audiences rolling their own eyes. Good actors are hard enough to find as it is. Make it easier by becoming the kind of director that can nurture solid performances.

Now, with *JIMBO*, I wore a lot of hats, and one of my biggest challenges was being on both sides of the camera at once. I had to monitor my own performance as well as continue to guide the performance of my co-star, I had to be mindful of the mise-en-scene, think about how things would

cut together in the edit room, etc. It never felt like too much though, one, because I had a great crew I trusted a lot, but also because of the great number of hours Caycee and I put into rehearsing and discussing the piece. By the time we got to set, we had such a good understanding of story and character that our biggest challenges as actors were getting the moment before right, keeping the energy high, and having a good technical quality to our voices. We never practiced how we would say our lines, but we always had a great understanding of what each moment in the film meant to each of us as characters, as well as the journey for each of us from start to finish, and that process we went through in rehearsals allowed us an amazing latitude of freedom to be in the moment, true to our emotions, present for each other, without any sense of contrivance, and ultimately (we hope), completely believable (well, as believable as a story with supernatural elements can be, anyway.) I guess you all will be the judges of that when the film is released to festivals beginning sometime around mid-2015.





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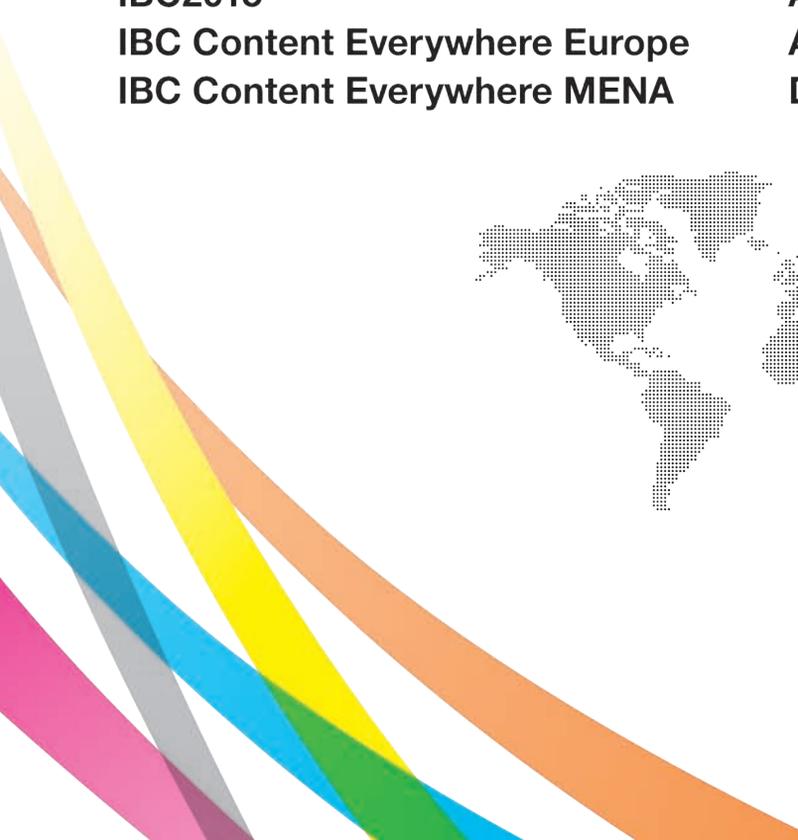


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DIRECTOR MARC LAWRENCE REWRITES HIS OWN STORY

"The Rewrite" features an all-star cast, including Hugh Grant, Marisa Tomei, J.K. Simmons, Allison Janney, Chris Elliott, and Bella Heathcote.

By Scott Essman

Based in part on his own college education at the State University of New York at Binghamton, writer-director Marc Lawrence crafted the new film, *The Rewrite*, in which Hugh Grant's character, a washed-up screenwriter, takes a teaching job at the same SUNY school. "I've had this thought about writing this story of a fallen screenwriter for a while," Lawrence said from his New York base. "Something that had been percolating. I'm interested in that whole argument of whether you can or can't teach creativity."

In the story, for which Lawrence noted "the timing was right," Grant's Keith Michaels, a one-time Oscar winner, is so bereft of work, he is forced to take a temporary professorial residence at

Binghamton – which *The Rewrite's* script notes is the top publicly-funded university in the northeastern United States despite its rustic surroundings.

"Binghamton was a backwater place where his initial reaction was to sort of slowly let the colors seep in, and the romance becomes apparent to him," Lawrence noted of his film, lead character, and plot.

After Lawrence pitched the story directly to Grant, the actor gave him a verbal commitment, putting in motion their fourth feature collaboration. "Hugh said, 'Sounds good,'" Lawrence recalled. "It's always based on how he reacts to the script. Once Hugh said, 'Yes,' we were off

and running."

With Grant on board, Lawrence lined up Castle Rock who put a deal together. Lawrence then brought in notable supporting players Marisa Tomei, J.K. Simmons, Allison Janney, Chris Elliott, and many new faces portraying Grant's disparate group of youthful screenwriting students. "It was not a bigger studio film," Lawrence reflected. "We didn't have to go through a lot of layers or echelons. I have been doing films for them since *Miss Congeniality* [which he co-wrote and executive produced]."

After the Lawrence-Grant creative partnerships on *Two Weeks Notice*, *Music and Lyrics*, and *Did You Hear About*

the Morgans?, Lawrence approached *The Rewrite* as a simpler project. "We wanted to keep it very small compared to the other films we've done together," Lawrence confessed. "It's a micro-budget. It was relatively easy at that budget — with Hugh committed and Marisa — to get it going. We wanted to keep it small, story-wise."

As with most smaller films, *The Rewrite*'s 28-day production schedule mandated several production challenges. "We wound up, because of the bizarre logistics of movie financings, [that] it was prohibitive to shoot it all at Binghamton," Lawrence related. "It would have blown apart the budget. We shot [there] for only four days, and what we got was exteriors. We shot the rest at the campus of C.W. Post [on Long Island, New York, Lawrence's childhood home]."

During a screening at SUNY Binghamton with Grant in attendance, Lawrence noted that they were predictably playing to a guaranteed audience of devotees. "Any view of the campus received a standing ovation," Lawrence recollected. Additional shooting took place in Brooklyn, Queens, and in Manhattan on soundstages at the Javits Center.

Of working on as fast a pace during principal photography as he ever had on a film, Lawrence professed that it energized his cast and crew. "The actual shoot was really terrific," he detailed. "I like working at that speed. Time can be wasted when you are working at a bigger budget. You've got to get three-and-a-half to five pages a day instead of two pages a day. It was the first time I made a movie [at that] budget. It was an enormously pleasant shoot."

Lawrence noted his being pleased with the final results. "I think the cast is so good, that once we got that group of people together, we were going to be in relatively good shape," he said of his key players. "Your chances of it being interesting and enjoyable are fairly high. I was excited to go out and do it. I'm pretty pleased with it; it's hard to ever talk about your own stuff."

Comedy film "The Rewrite;" photos courtesy of RLJE/Image Entertainment Films release. Photo credit: Anne Joyce.

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3 LANDMINES TO AVOID WHEN MAKING YOUR MOVIE

Independent Film Distribution

by Jerome Courshon

You've completed your movie—great! Now you're probably on the hunt for a distribution deal. You're perhaps thinking about festivals, or you're calling friends for recommendations. And getting lots of advice, from your next door neighbor to your aunt.

Unless you've been down this road before—and possibly several times—there are three serious mistakes that independent Producers & Directors make in their distribution journeys. Can you avoid these?

1 OVERCONFIDENCE

Many filmmakers think they'll "win the lottery" and get into Sundance—and then win it again with a big deal at Sundance—so they don't bother to learn about distribution and what it takes for most films to get into the marketplace successfully.

Don't get me wrong. Confidence is one of the most important assets for a Producer or Director to have. We just tend to take it a bit too far, until we get that dose of reality that making a good movie and getting it to market is not a piece of cake.

So learn about distribution now. Don't wait. Understand the landscape for movies & documentaries, what all your options are, and how to maximize the revenues for your film. If you think just putting your movie online at iTunes is going to make you rich... think again.

2 STUBBORNNESS

Very little time passes between each time I hear a Producer tell me that their Director doesn't know much about distribution, but is insisting on doing it his/her way... and then I later hear about the horrible mistakes made. Or vice versa, where the Producer is insisting on a particular path, only to hear the Director tell me later a fatal mistake was made.

Here's the truth: Stubbornness and unwillingness to examine the 'game' of distribution is a top killer of completed movies and documentaries. There are a number of major markets for your film: Theatrical, Cable/Satellite/Telco VOD, DVD/Blu-ray, Internet VOD, Television, and Foreign Sales. Be sure that you (or the decision maker) fully understands these markets—and if they don't, educate them! The destiny of your movie depends on it.

3 BELIEVING THE BULL

Here's another truth about distribution: Most everyone who speaks about it, is either: a) parroting something they heard or read—which frequently is not true—although they speak it as though it's the truth; b) don't really know what they're talking about; or c) has an agenda to get you to believe something.

Want some examples? "Indie film is dead." "The sky is falling for indie film." "DVD is dead." The first two of these statements were spoken in 2008 by a well-known person in the film industry during the start of the recession. Did indie film die? Of course not. But these words spoken by this man ricocheted everywhere, and did a great disservice to people.

The third phrase ("DVD is dead") has been written about all over the place; after all, it's a great story for the media as they love to speak and write about doom & gloom. Is DVD/Blu-ray dead? Of course not. (Not yet at least.) It's still one of the two largest revenue generating markets of the film industry, standing at \$10.3 Billion this past year.



Bottom line is, don't believe all the chatter out there. Most of it is just that—chatter. Yes, the journey you are on is a challenging one. Be confident yet humble, acknowledge what you don't know (because in truth, no one knows everything), and when people tell you some "facts"... just realize this is their reality, not necessarily yours. If you can do this, you will successfully avoid several landmines in front of you.

Film Producer & Distribution Expert Jerome Courshon has assisted thousands of filmmakers with achieving successful distribution through his classes, speaking engagements, and consultations. For more info about him or his acclaimed 3-Day Program, "THE SECRETS TO DISTRIBUTION: Get Your Movie Distributed Now!" visit: www.Distribution.LA

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PRODUCT PLACEMENT IN YOUR INDIE MOVIE

Is product placement worth an indie moviemaker's time?

by Theresa Pickett

Is product placement worth an indie moviemaker's time? Placing brands in movies can be very appealing to some companies who want the appeal of their product to seem authentic. With video production taking more of a turn toward viral videos, companies receive regular requests from bloggers who create video reviews. Your film production can have appeal to companies hoping to reach a wider audience.

How Does Product Placement Work?

You can secure funding for having a product in your movie. By showing a product in your movie in a positive way, your movie would attempt to make a statement to the audience that the product is worth purchasing. Since crowd funding is so popular today, receiving payment for having

an item in your film may be worth the time.

Another approach to product placement would be to receive an item for free in exchange for putting it in your movie. Receiving an item for free can be worthwhile if you can get an item that you could use later. Get an item that you would have purchased anyway for free to practice wise budgeting practices.

HOW TO WORK WITH COMPANIES TO DO PRODUCT PLACEMENT

Contact the companies you want to work with directly. In your pitch email, include information about your qualifications as a moviemaker as well as a link to your

website. Show links to any work you've done in the past. Your pitch should have as much data as you can include about the potential reach of your project. You could describe the amount of views your website gets, successful crowd funding campaigns, and the reach that your social media audience has. Companies want to work on projects that have the potential for a bigger reach.

When you've drafted a good, final draft of your pitch, create a spreadsheet where you can put the contact information for the PR professionals. There, you can make notes about the conversation you have. Some companies might have specific requests, so stay very organized, especially if you might work with more than one company during your production.

CAMERAWORK

THE ACTOR'S EYELINE

When capturing your scene, whether it is drama or comedy, when you are doing "Over the Shoulder" (OTS) shots, it is important that you get your camera as close to the eyeline as possible. This means based on the 180 degree line, you want to get the lens as close to the line, basically have the camera positioned right over the "downstage" shoulder of the actor who is listening to the actor you are capturing. In this way, the actor's look or "eyeline" will appear more directed towards the person they are speaking to and not at some abstract point outside

the frame. Keeping the camera as close to the line as you can also allows you to get two sizes of coverage without moving the camera - a basic "Medium Close up" (MCU) featuring the shoulders of the actor being captured and as well as a "Close up" (CU) and if you need it - an "Extreme Close up" (ECU).

Camera position is very important because you either bring the viewer closer to the action of the scene, or you move them away when the camera is positioned at a place away from the eyeline. When you

Notes on Camera Position

By Regge Life

do this, the viewer becomes an observer and not a participant. The other benefit of this kind of camera placement is training your actors, who might be students, to get used to the close proximity of the camera. This is an important lesson, particularly for theater actors who are used to performing on stage, to hundreds of people without anything in their way. When the camera is on the eyeline, they learn a valuable lesson in gauging their performance and vocal energy.

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Submit your completed entry form by April 30, 2015. You can send it in whether you have completed your short, three-minute movie or not... so get the entry form in as soon as possible. Upload your video by May 31, 2015 to: www.vimeo.com/groups/ikanfly.

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According to Rich Topham Jr., Founder and President of Professional Sound Services, "We have had an independent sales associate in the southern Florida market for about two years and he has been handling a large number of sales to Latin America. Now he along with our staff of experienced audio professionals are able to welcome these and all clients on site to utilize our services. As more and more productions from all over the world choose the

beautiful scenery of southern Florida for their shoots, we know the time is right to open in this market." Mr. Topham went on to say, "With three locations, Professional Sound Services wants our clients to know that we are readily available and committed to them whenever they need services and equipment."

Plans in the near future for the Ft. Lauderdale location include hosting educational equipment lectures and an in house exchange board for sound mixers to post their availability and for productions to search for crew members.

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www.facebook.com/pages/iFootage-International/1417457228529231



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INDIPRO TOOLS, New York based manufacturer of power and audio solutions for DSLR/Video equipment. Developers of the Unique Power Grid system that combines power and XLR audio all in one compact unit, and also proud to announce the new release of the Universal Power Pod System that's powered by either 2 or 4 Canon LP-E6 batteries, these units are now available in 7.2 volts and 14.4 volts. A large array of cables is available for this system, from DSLR to video and accessories. Big Battery Power from Small Battery Solutions. Made in USA.

www.indiprottools.com



OYEN DIGITAL

Oyen Digital is an innovative developer and manufacturer in the storage industry, specializing in external solid state and conventional hard drives for videographers, independent filmmakers, professional photographers, and many other industries. We are dedicated to developing ground-breaking storage products using our extensive knowledge and experience in audio/video production and mass storage. Founded in 2005 and headquartered in Oakdale, Minnesota, we have established a reputation for high quality products and exceptional customer service.

www.oyendigital.com



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Eye Of Mine Action Cameras has a passion for innovation. "We specialize in custom camera mounts, underwater video out housings, wireless transmitters and camera housing prototyping. We partner with Hollywood companies as well as leading companies in fishing, sports, diving and environmental organizations. Some of our clients include National Geographic, NASA, NOAA, Disney Studios, Dept. of Navy and Discovery Channel. Eye Of Mine strives to be cutting edge innovative with the action camera industry in order to give our customers what they need and when they need it."

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ROKINON

For over 35 years, Rokinon lenses have offered an outstanding combination of quality, performance, value and customer support. Tests by leading digital and video publications, along with user testimonials, have often indicated that Rokinon lenses perform equal to and sometimes superior to OEM optics that cost more than twice the price of a Rokinon. Rokinon Cine DS lenses are specifically designed with extra added features for film makers and videographers including tight color matching, de-clicked aperture control rings, unified focus gear and aperture gear positions, T-Stop calibration, plus dual right and left side aperture and distance scales. High performance yet highly affordable, the Cine DS system includes mounts to fit and cover Full Frame, APS-C and MFT cameras, focal lengths from 10mm to 135mm, a 12mm Full Frame Fisheye and a new 100mm Macro lens. Rokinon lenses offer superior optics, features and focal lengths... "Pro Performance that's Priced Right."

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Ikan designs and manufactures digital video and DSLR gear that filmmakers, videographers, photographers and other creatives want and need at a reasonable price. Ikan first made its name in the industry selling video production monitors and now offers a variety of solutions for professionals and beginners alike including: camera support & components, lights, teleprompters,

continued from page 61

software, bags, batteries and chargers. Products are distributed worldwide through authorized dealers and via

www.ikancorp.com



SOUND DEVICES

Sound Devices is a worldwide leader in both portable and installed production sound and video products for a wide range of mission-critical applications including live event capture and playback, TV/Film production and Broadcast. The Sound Devices product portfolio includes field mixers and multi-track audio recorders whilst its Video Devices branded product line includes rackmount video decks and on-camera video recorder-monitors.

www.sounddevices.com



PROFESSIONAL SOUND SERVICES

Professional Sound Services (PSS) located in New York, NY and New Orleans, LA and Ft. Lauderdale, FL is dedicated to providing the best in audio equipment sales, service and rentals throughout the US and the World. For a number of years PSS has brought a concern for service to a loyal clientele

in production sound for motion pictures, broadcasting, and video production. They also serve recording studios, schools, universities, and government agencies worldwide. Owner Rich Topham Jr. is a leader in bringing "sound education" to many throughout the years.

www.pro-sound.com



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New Dawn Effects is a special effects company providing practical special effects, equipment rental, prop rental and fabrication, pyrotechnics, rigging and flying and mechanical special effects. "We are able to service smaller productions with our box truck and larger with our trailer. We have several personnel resources with FX cards and pyro licenses. We also carry colored smoke bombs, Smoke grenades, Green, Red, Blue, Orange, Black, Purple, Yellow, and White smoke."

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CINE GEAR EXPO

Dates for Cine Gear Expo LA 2015 have been announced! The event will be held June 4-7, 2015. The Expo will be held at The Studios at Paramount, Hollywood, CA. The Studios at Paramount, Hollywood, CA 90038. Exhibition and Premiere Seminars: Friday, June 5, 2015; Hours: 12:00noon-8:00pm; Saturday, June 6, 2015; Hours: 10:00am-5:00pm. Film Series at Cine Gear Expo: Thursday, June 4, 2015; Hours: TBA. Friday, June 5, 2015; Hours: 8:00pm-10:30pm (Reception). Master Class Seminars: Sunday, June 7, 2015; Hours: 9:00am-5:00pm (various Hollywood locations).

www.cinegearexpo.com



IBC

IBC sits at the global crossroads of the electronic media and entertainment industry and provides a full and vibrant experience, whether you are a student or CEO, an innovative start-up to media superpower. Held at the world-class venue, the Amsterdam RAI, every September, it is always at the forefront of industry innovation and provides unrivalled networking opportunities. Join 55,000 attendees from more than 170 countries for IBC2015 between 10-15 September.

www.ibc.org



CCW EXPO

At CCW+SATCON, creativity, ingenuity and inspiration are everywhere you look. More than 300 of the most innovative companies servicing the broadcast, media, satellite and entertainment industry are here, showcasing the new technologies and essential innovation needed to successfully deliver your content to an ever-changing market. These are the industry's top people, products and resources – the ones you need to see. There's no better way to see them. November 11-12, 2015, Javits Convention Center, New York, NY.

www.ccwexpo.com



PHOTO PLUS EXPO

The PDN PhotoPlus International Conference + Expo is the largest photography and imaging show in North America, attended by over 22,000 professional photographers and enthusiasts. Explore over 220 exhibits, see thousands of new products, attend over 80 conference seminars, keynote presentations, special events and much more.

www.photoplusexpo.com



GV EXPO

GV Expo returns to Washington on December 1-3, 2015 to inform and inspire video professionals. Whether you are a video professional working in government, broadcast, cable, production, post-production, multimedia, education/non-profit or the like, attend GV Expo and see the latest new technology the video industry has to offer! You will learn cutting-edge techniques and gain the opportunity to network your way to success in today's dynamic digital marketplace.

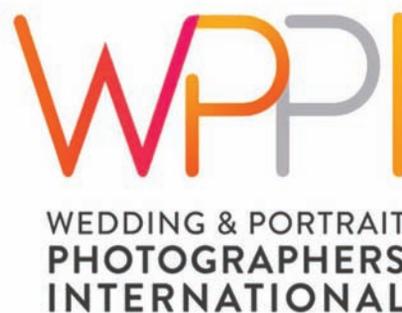
www.gvexpo.com



WPPI

WPPI Conference and Expo is the premier industry event for photographers and image-makers specializing in the creative and business aspects of wedding and portrait photography. Each year, nearly 16,000 professional and aspiring photographers attend WPPI to learn new techniques from industry leaders, build new relationships to grow their business, experience new products and solutions from major manufacturers to improve their productivity, and enjoy the many attractions in Las Vegas.

www.wppionline.com



UFVA

The University Film and Video Association is the organization to share ideas about developments in film/video education, scholarship, technology and artistic pursuits. The 2015 UFVA conference will be held August 4-8 at American University in Washington, DC. This year's conference theme is Media with Impact. Information about the conference site is available at ufva2015.com. A preliminary program should be available in early May at ufva.org and ufva2015.com. All conference participants must be active members of UFVA.

www.ufva.org



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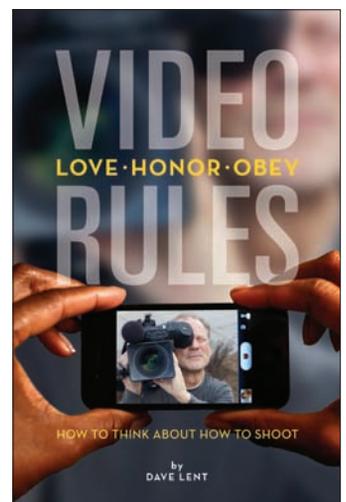
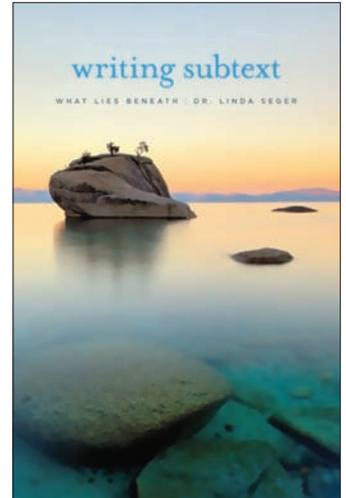
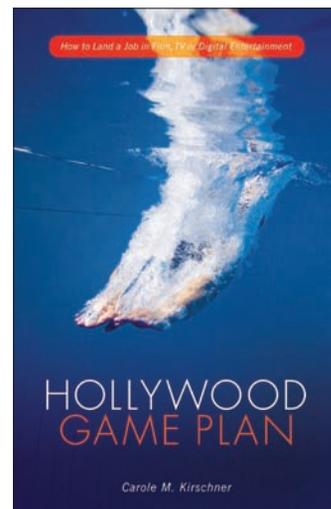
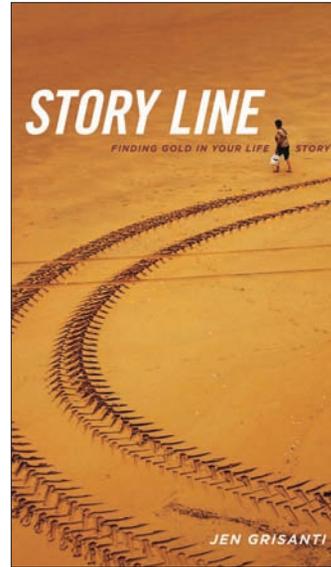
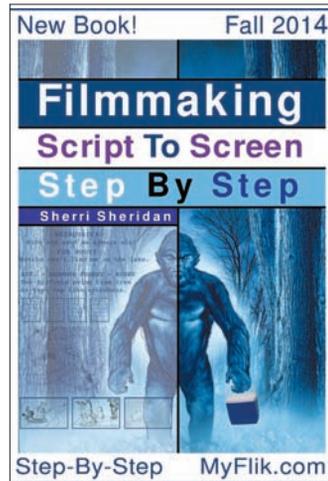
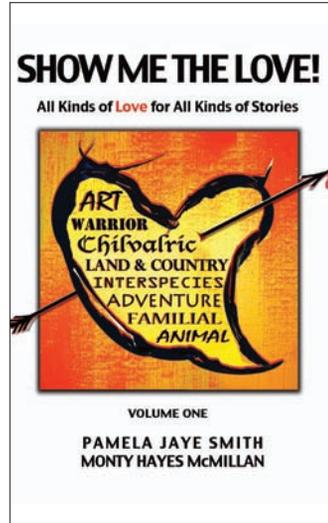
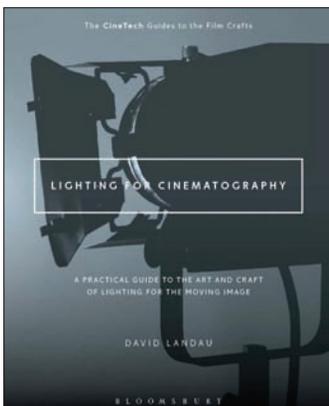
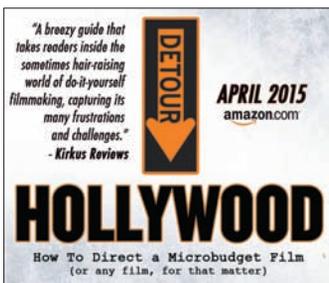
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Contributors



**KIM EDWARD
WELCH**

Kim Edward Welch is the Publisher of television/broadcast/cinema trade publications, HD Pro Guide Magazine, for HD professionals and StudentFilmmakers Magazine, the # 1 Educational Resource for Film and Video Makers of all levels. www.hdproguide.com
www.studentfilmmakers.com



**PETER
STEIN, ASC**

As the Director of Photography on more than 50 feature films and TV movies, Peter Stein, ASC has photographed major studio and independent releases including classic cult films in various genres such as comedy and horror - as well as noted documentaries. He was invited to join the prestigious American Society of Cinematographers in 1999. www.petersteinasc.com



**DAVID
WORTH**

David Worth has a resume of over thirty five feature films as a Director of Photography and Director and has worked with talents like Clint Eastwood, Jean-Claude Van Damme, Shelly Winters, Roy Scheider, Dennis Hopper, Sondra Locke and Bruce Campbell. He has taught filmmaking at Chapman University, USC and at Chapman Singapore where he also lectured at the NYU TischAsia campus. He is presently a part time professor at UCLA and The Academy of Art University in San Francisco. His first textbook, "The Citizen Kane Crash Course in Cinematography" was published in 2008 and is available at www.amazon.com.
www.davidworthfilm.com



**JACK
SHOLDER**

Jack Sholder has directed 15 feature length films for New Line, Fox, HBO and others. Before that he was an Emmy Award-winning film editor. He currently is Director of the Film & Television Production Program at Western Carolina University. <http://filmandtv.wcu.edu>



**REGGE
LIFE**

Regge Life's films on Asia, West Africa and the Caribbean are part of the permanent collections at more than 800 schools and libraries. He is currently the Distinguished Director in Residence at Emerson College. He has just completed "Cocktail Party," adapted from the Akutagawa Prize winning novel of the same title that details the complicated and often tragic relationship between the US military stationed in Okinawa, Japan and local residents.



**PETER
JOHN ROSS**

Peter John Ross is an award winning filmmaker and producer of the Emmy nominated PBS show FRAMELINES, airing regionally in the Midwest. Ross has published articles and books on filmmaking, and has played at film festivals around the globe. www.sonnyboo.com
www.peterjohnross.com



**SCOTT
SPEARS**

Scott Spears is an Emmy Award winning cinematographer with

over 30 feature films to his credits. He is producer for the filmmaking show Framelines.tv. You can learn more about him at www.scottspears.net.



**WILLIAM
DONARUMA**

William Donaruma is an award winning filmmaker and Teaching Professor in Filmmaking at the University of Notre Dame where he also serves as the Director of the Center for Creative Computing and Creative Director for the Office of Digital Learning. His feature documentary, Strong Bodies Fight, has won international acclaim and is available on DVD and streaming online. His current work has him shooting around the world most recently in Rome, Italy and off the west coast of Ireland. Donaruma has years of production experience, having worked for Universal Studios as well as a variety of production companies and television networks. Additional information can be found at: www.williamdonaruma.com
<http://ftt.nd.edu/faculty-and-staff/alphabetical-directory/william-donaruma/>
<https://vimeo.com/user9941071/albums>



**JON
FIRESTONE**

Jon Firestone is known for his work on Gathering of Heroes: Legend of the Seven Swords (2015) and The Sensei (2008). Co-directed with Mark Steven Grove, Gathering of Heroes stars Martin Kove (The Karate Kid, Cagney & Lacey, Rambo: First Blood Part II) and Christopher Atkins (The Blue Lagoon, TV's Dallas, the cult favorite The Pirate Movie). Firestone developed and taught the 3D graphics program at the Colorado Film School and works as a freelance director and cinematographer when he is not pursuing his other passion as a Visual FX Supervisor and Animator. He

has written technical articles published in StudentFilmmakers Magazine (Cinematography and Camerawork departments).



**DEAN
GOLDBERG**

Dean Goldberg began his professional life as a film editor, then moved up to producer/director. He wrote and directed television episodes for "Missing Reward," "A Current Affair," and other shows featuring dramatic reenactments. Dean became a member of the DGA in 1990. His ad agency, "Wolf at the Door," produced prize winning campaigns for media companies such as Comcast, Time Warner and Cablevision. He is currently as Associate Professor of Communication Arts and Film Studies at Mount Saint Mary College. He is also Co-Director of the Digital Media and Technology program there.



**JONATHAN
MOORE**

Jonathan Moore is an Associate Professor of Cinema Arts at Vanguard University in Orange County, California. Currently, he is in post-production of a feature documentary and recently appeared in a music video for the critically-acclaimed southern rock band, "Blackberry Smoke."



**FRED
GINSBURG
CAS, PH.D.**

Fred Ginsburg CAS, Ph.D. is a highly experienced and award winning professional sound mixer whose decades of work includes features, episodic TV series, national TV commercials, corporate, and government. He is a member of the Cinema Audio Society, University Film & Video Association, and the British

Kinematograph Sound & Television Society (aka The Moving Image Society). He currently instructs at California State University, Northridge (CSUN); Chapman University Dodge College; and has conducted seminars/workshops for over 90 organizations worldwide.



**SCOTT
ESSMAN**

Scott Essman established Visionary Cinema in New York in 1989, moving to Los Angeles in 1995. In 2008, he won a Rondo Award for Best Feature Film Commentary for work on the Legacy Set of Universal's *The Mummy* (1932 version). His filmography includes more than 28 productions including *Jack Pierce: The Man Behind the Monsters*, *Ten Men on the Field*, and *Trane and Miles*. Essman has published over 500 articles about people who work behind-the-scenes in movies. He teaches mass media, filmmaking, and digital video editing at the University of La Verne, The Art Institute of California, and California Polytechnic State University, Pomona.



**THERESA
PICKETT**

Theresa Pickett, owner of www.theresasreviews.com, has her BA in History from Flagler College and her M.Ed in Elementary Education from Vanderbilt University. Theresa worked behind the scenes and on camera for over a dozen projects and was voted one of Nashville's Best Local Actresses in the Nashville Scene's Reader's Poll.



**TINCUTA
MOSCALIUC**

Tincuta Moscaliuc is the very beautiful and talented designer of Welch Media, Inc.'s *StudentFilmmakers Magazine* and *HD Pro Guide Magazine*.



**BART
WEISS**

Bart Weiss is an award-winning filmmaker, educator and director/founder of the Dallas VideoFest and produces "Frame of Mind" on KERA TV. He was President of AIVF and was a video columnist for *The Dallas Morning News*, and United Features Syndicate. Bart received an MFA in Film Directing from Columbia University.
www.videofest.org



**DEAN
YAMADA**

Dean Yamada received his MFA from USC and is an associate professor at Biola University, where he specializes in production and post-production classes. "Mujo No Kaze", shot in Tokyo, went on to win 1st Prize at the Inigo Film Festival in Sydney, Australia. "Jitensha" has won multiple awards including Best of Fest at the Broadcast Educators Association Festival of Media Arts Festival of Media Arts (2010); Best of Show at the Imago Film Festival (2010); and Best Dramatic Short at the Windsong Film Festival (2010).
www.jitenshathemovie.com
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**PAMELA JAYE
SMITH &**



**MONTY HAYES
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SHOW ME THE LOVE! authors Pamela Jaye Smith (www.pamelajayesmth.net) and Monty Hayes McMillan (www.hightechmedia.com/monty-hayes-mcmillan.html) have worked in all aspects of the media industry for 35+ years, in Hollywood and around the world including the Arctic, the Andes, and SE Asia on features, TV series, music videos,

commercials, documentaries, and web series. MYTHWORKS, www.mythworks.net, Applied Mythology for Individuals, Organizations, and the Media Arts. Mythic Challenges, www.mythicchallenges.com, Create Stories that Change the World. Alpha Babe Academy, www.alphababeademy.com.



**DAVID
KAMINSKI**

David Kaminski creates media for entertainment and social change with community groups, professional organizations, students, and adults. The projects have earned dozens of national awards and have screened across the country in festivals and on television. He lives in the New York metro area.



**WILLIAM
DICKERSON**

William Dickerson is an award-winning filmmaker and author. His debut feature film "Detour" was hailed as an "Underground Hit" by *The Village Voice*, an "emotional and psychological roller-coaster ride" by *The Examiner*, and nothing short of "authentic" by *The New York Times*. His book, "DETOUR: Hollywood - How To Direct a Microbudget Film (or any film, for that matter)" is due out on April 14th, 2015.
williamdickersonfilmmaker.com



**JEROME
COURSHON**

Jerome Courshon is a leading expert in independent film distribution. Through his master classes and consulting services, he takes the guesswork out of how the Motion Picture distribution business works. His course, "THE SECRETS TO DISTRIBUTION: Get Your Movie Distributed Now!" is taught to both neophyte and established Producers & Directors. He has written on distribution for numerous trade magazines and

is currently a regular contributor to *The Wrap*. For more info about him or his classes, visit: www.Distribution.LA



**EDMUND
OLSZEWSKI**

Edmund Olszewski has worked for more than 10 years as a cameraman and editor for a faith-centered cable TV network based in New York. He has also worked as a videographer and cameraman for different independent productions. For more than three years, he has assisted Peter Stein, ASC in lighting and cinematography workshops with StudentFilmmakers.com.



**JEFFREY
TURBOFF**

Jeffrey Turboff is an award-winning video editor, (Emmy, Murrow, Cronkite, Peabody, and Deadline Club) as well as screenwriter, director and actor. His latest projects (aside from his bread-and-butter editing gig) include a short supernatural horror he has written, produced, directed and acted in, entitled "Jimbo", and his recently completed documentary "Modworld."
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