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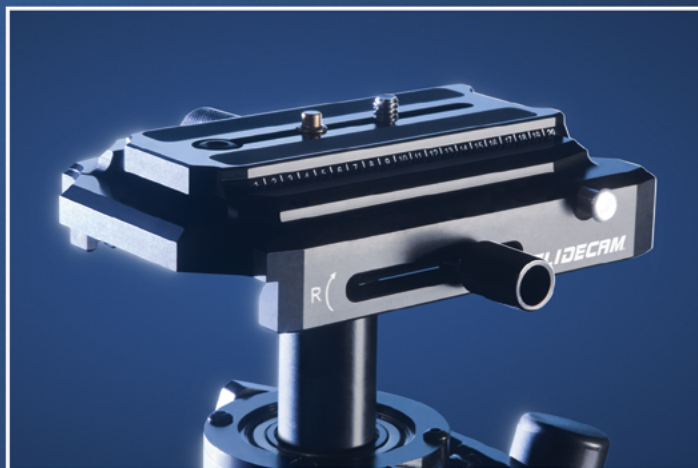
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Award-Winning Filmmaker/Producer Carey Missler Talks Beachtek

Interview conducted by Jody Michelle Solis

StudentFilmmakers Magazine catches up with Carey Missler, certified, licensed drone pilot and award-winning filmmaker/producer at DCD Productions. (www.dcdproductions.ca)

What differentiates Beachtek from other similar on-camera sound devices?

Carey Missler: I have been using Beachtek products for about 5 years for audio for movies and corporate shoots. The Beachtek products never disappoint. The audio is always crystal clear, and the products have great preamps.

What is your set up procedure and quick tips for best quality sound?

Carey Missler: Usually now my set up is with my RED Camera. Can also be used on any other cinema or DSLR camera with a 3.5mm mic jack. Simple. I always make sure my levels are adjusted as needed and do a few sound tests before recording.

Which Beachtek devices do you own?

Carey Missler: I have the DXA RED and the DXA CINE, both are amazing products.

What kinds of shooting situations do you use Beachtek and where has it been especially helpful?

Carey Missler: I love using Beachtek audio to capture ambient sounds for example of nature. I also love using the DXA RED for interview setups as we shoot a lot of interviews.

If you can share your insights or a piece of advice for filmmakers and storytellers around the world, what would it be?

Carey Missler: If you have an idea just go and do it. Don't worry about budget. If you're passionate about something just go and film, it. It will always turn into something good. Don't let anybody tell you that you can't do something...



The Director's Gear 3 Things

by David K. Irving

As the leader of a production unit, the effective director will select the right tool at the appropriate moment with command and confidence. And each director is different – some come laden with gear, while others manage to get by solely on their wits. Most fall somewhere in between.

Let's start with clothes. First and foremost are the shoes. Directing can be physically brutal, and frankly, it's an endurance test. Standing up all day requires the director to identify a comfortable and dependable footwear. Depending on the nature of the production and a self-imposed image, directors sport a wide variety of outfits. From all black, to the coat and tie look. Filming in a rain forest requires specific attire, as would a shoot in the arctic. Exteriors require a hat and sunglasses and rain gear when called for. One key word – layers. A six o'clock a.m. call time can be chilly, whereas by noon, it could be very warm.

Directors love tech gadgets for a reason. Filmmaking is about the frame and composing what's specifically in it. That viewfinder and a high contrast filter, (both worn around the neck for easy access) and a wireless monitor, can be indispensable for getting that look, feel and action on the film that you have so clearly in your head. And while you're at it, keep ready a pair of headphones to listen to a scene as it's happening. Yes, a director pays attention to it all, all the time. For large-scale communication don't go shouting across a field, let walkie-talkies and bullhorns do the amplifying for you. And, it doesn't hurt to carry a good luck charm. I keep a piece of marble I collected from Carrara in my pocket.

Of prime importance is a director's health, for when he or she shuts down, so does the unit. Most directors will tell you that eating and drinking properly plus getting a good night's sleep, are not negotiable. My own toolkit includes a B-12 shot.

"I would be in good physical condition. Avoid drinking and abusing yourself in any way because shooting a film is so physically exhausting. So, get as much sleep as you can."

~Paul Verhoeven

ON THE COVER:

Rigging Go Pro mounts for 'Ken Box 2', a digital web series for the Razor Crazy Cart launch, with director Todd Grossman and driver/creator Ali Kermani. Photo Cred: Brian Lucky Skillen.

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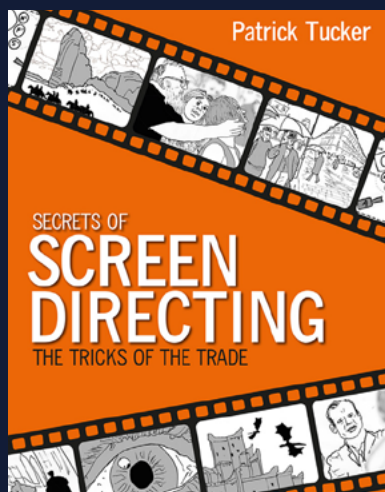
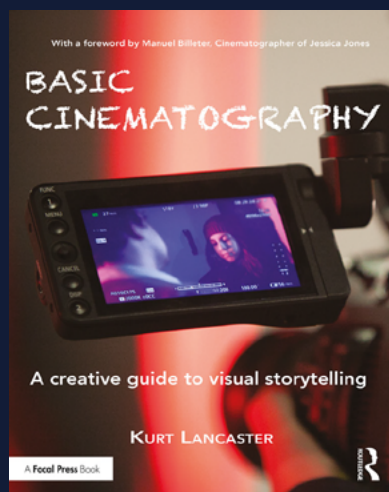
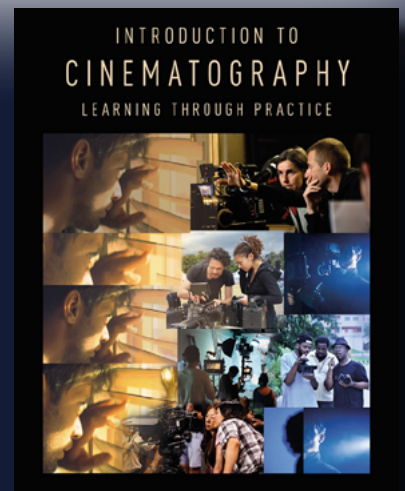
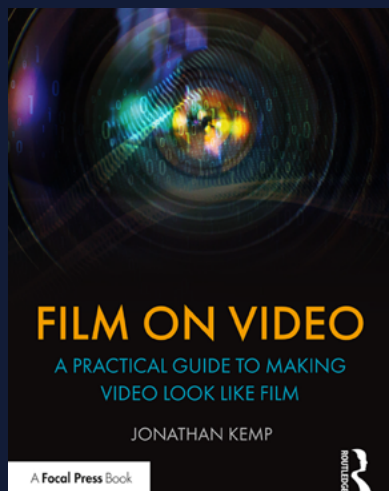
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Never Stop Learning

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Changing Our World



By Dean Goldberg

I've been a full-time academic now for a dozen years—and being older than time itself, I spent a lifetime before academia, as a filmmaker. I can remember all the way back to my film school days in the late 70s, learning how to load an Eclair 16mm camera. And while I, too, was forced over the years to climb the video ladder from ¾ inch Umatic to Beta SP to early iterations of HD, I was also lucky to be able to spend the last ten years that I worked in the industry as a commercial director doing a fair share of my film shoots in 35 millimeter. That said, our budgets were usually small compared to the big ad agencies, and it was always a challenge to be able to hire enough crew in each department. Most of the time, I'd get a 1st and 2nd for lighting, grip, camera. On the jobs that were flush enough to hire a 3rd, I was always grateful. But, back then, there was always a bare minimum essential crew, even when we were doing a run-and-gun interview on Beta SP. We still needed camera, engineer, grip and lighting; and lots of rolling carts full of video and sound equipment.

Boy how things have changed—and no—I didn't just wake up to this change, it's been years in the making. But I did think it might be interesting for those who never saw a celluloid strip with sprocket holes, or held a 14lb film camera, to analyze some of these amazing changes; for good or ill.

The other day, I shot a video interview of a beautiful and talented young artist, Sienna Martz, to promoting her show at the CMA Gallery at Mount Saint Mary College in Newburgh, NY, where I teach film and media. Happily, for me, the shoot was only about twenty minutes away from my house. Equipment-wise, I was able to stash everything I needed in the backseat of my Volvo. My gear included a Canon EOS 70D DSLR, an Ikan 3200-5600K LED light, an Ikan on-camera LED light, a reflector, some ½ CTB and CTO gels, spun glass, white board, black board and a couple of stands. Oh yes, and an

AZDEN wireless lavalier as well.

I'm sure those of you in school or those who've already begun working in the industry have heard the tales from some of the older (and more distinguished?) members of the team about how they had to schlep heavy camera, grip and lighting equipment around in the grand old days. And while as the years fall away, the exaggeration builds up; taping almost anything but news was never a one man show. And while it still "takes a village" to do a professional shoot, that village can be awfully small—down to just a couple of caballeros, in fact.

Again, this is nothing brand new; shooting with a good DSLR camera and very limited lighting is almost old hat by now. But the use of LED lights exclusively on professional projects is revolutionary. The lights have improved exponentially; these days CRI ratings of 98+ have become practically standard. No gloves? No need. As we know, these lights don't get hot. Couple that with the superior 35mm sensors, maybe even a mirrorless rig, and you have a quality that I couldn't hope to achieve on tape 15 or 20 years ago. So why is this extraordinary? Technology improves every day, right? I mean, what did your first cell phone look like?

I recently had an "LED versus Tungsten light," as well as the "Limitations of the DSLRs" debate with ace cinematographer Apal Singh. Apal shot the world's first full-length, feature film with a DSLR in 2010. He used a Canon Mark II and shot with just two lenses; 24-70mm L series and 70-200mm L series. The film, "Highway," was nominated in the main section of the Berlin Film Festival where only 8 films are selected. And, as Apal put it, "The cameras are so much better since then!" As far as using LEDs? "You should not be thinking of lighting with anything else other than LEDs! Period!" He went on, "Recently, my friend shot a big budget feature using LEDs exclusively. Normally, this kind of film would take 40-50 light boys, 5-10 generators and thousands of meters of wire, etc., but his film was shot with all the lights fitted into a small truck, no generator and only 5 light boys and a gaffer."

Meanwhile, back to my own little interview.

The lights, extension cords and all other sundry items were inside our location in about 8 minutes—and that's because I took a phone call before we loaded in! I had scouted the location, a living room with a couple of nice windows, a few days before so I set up where I thought I wanted to be; chair near Window #1, 80mm focal length, ISO 640. But after a serious look-see, once we actually set up, I decided to move to Window #2, a different angle and a shorter focal length. Lighting re-do? About 90 secs to a new plug. No generator, of course, and not even a quick look in the basement to check out the fuse box. I would still use a window for my key. I needed just a "hint of mint" on the fill.

The result was a beautiful shot for the "talking head." The Canon EOS 70, already an older camera, has a great sensor and wonderful saturation. If anything, I would be turning chroma down in post. The B-roll included shots of Sienna working in her studio. No lights needed—and, of course, I was able to get some beautifully composed and moving shots even without a rig—just handheld.

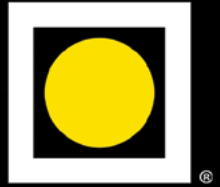
We were in and out in 90 minutes, which may not be anything special to those of you who grew up in the era of digital, but for an old hand like me, it's still amazing.

The pros? The ability to really paint your picture, the lack of crazy lights melting your interviewee, the great sound even without an XLR cable to mic. And of course, getting home early for dinner.

The cons? Nada. Just find the oldest film guy or girl you know and ask them about loading an Eclair in a camera bag when everyone is tapping their feet and pissed off because you didn't have an extra magazine. So that's my little tale. Got a feature you want to give me, then it'll be an ARRI Alexa or all someone else. But now, at least, for most projects, my little DSLR behaves brilliantly.

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Great Cinematography Begins With...

Inspiration and Research

By David Landau

In my teaching career, I have seen all too often how film students will rush to start production. Other than a scout trip or a short shot list, the cinematographer and the director will show up on location and start to try to shoot. But too often their hard work visually doesn't resonate with the actual story. The cinematography of any good video or film is always driven by the content and the script. Well before shooting begins, a director of photography needs to know the script and each scene – what is the purpose of the scene within the story, what are the character's emotions at that moment, what is the intended mood, what are the scenes before and after. This will lead naturally to finding the inspiration for how the story should look visually.

So, the first step for any cinematographer is to read the script and get to know it – understand it – feel it. The next step is to do some research. DPs often get inspiration from paintings and photographs. But inspiration can also come from music and even philosophical ideas. What is the time and place of the story? Is it a period piece? Is it set in an exotic location like "Memories of a Geisha", or does it reveal an underbelly of society such as "Thirteen", or will it have both such as in "Slum Dog Millionaire"? Is it present or past or future and what would those time periods look like in terms of color, contrast and atmosphere? Look at the extreme differences between the looks of "Minority Report" and "Blade Runner", both stories set in the future but with widely different feelings and looks.

Some DPs will meet with the Director first before starting to come up with their own ideas, while others will bring with them visual references to share with a director on what they are thinking would work for the story and overall film. This is often called a Look Book. Sometime directors will create their own look book to share with their DP and art director. The first meeting with the



director is all about how the director sees the film, what they want in mood, feeling, texture and how they want the audience to react. Later meetings will involve shot lists, storyboards and shooting order, but the initial meeting is to discuss the script and see if both the director and DP are on the same page, thematically and visually. Does the DP understand the theme of the story – the character arcs, the turning points? What is the director's primary focus – style, laughs, tension, character study, etc. All of this will inform and inspire the DP's creation of the images that best support the final film.

The movie "Titanic" was strictly geared towards being a tearjerker – nothing else mattered. The primary audience was romantic females so everything in the production – from the casting to the costumes to the sets and the cinematography was geared towards that

audience. Look at the elegance in which the images were photographed, the color palette, the image softness, the glisten in almost every shot. Nothing was lit or photographed naturalistically. Cargo holds are dark and scary places, but in the love scene it's a soft white pastel imagery. Below deck rooms and hallways are dingy and dirty and cramped – but not when the lovers go there to dance, it all had the look and feeling of an afterhours nightclub and a party. Every shot was romanticized, including the many death scenes which were made all the more melodramatic by the camerawork. Book covers from Romance novels, photos of the luxury cruise ships and their high society passengers and looking at the melodramatic silent movies of the time period could all give ideas on how to shoot that film which won Russell Carpenter an Oscar. (He also shot the TV show, "Wonder Years", "True Lies", "21", "Charlie's Angels", "The Ugly Truth".)

In "Saving Private Ryan," the harsh cold brutality was the main focus of the opening scenes. Washed out colors with a grittiness and framing that imitated the actual photography taken by war cameramen was what the DP was going for. Compare the handheld camera work in that film against the handheld camera work of the Bourne movies. They are very different in feeling, in framing and in movement. Janusz Kaminski watched world war II news footage for inspiration. He also looked at the films made in color during the 1940s. Even more importantly, he looked at the framing from that time period. Kaminski won an Oscar for that film too.

Reading and understanding the script and talking with the director will allow the DP to discover how the script and the story wants to be shot. What style, what colors, what feelings will come from the script but also research the DP does. That's how the best visual style of any story is created.

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Camera Composition

That Tells the Story



By David Landau

Composition is selecting placement of everything within the frame and deciding what has emphasis. If we fail to do this, if we just shoot a shot, the frame could become visually dense, filled with details that turn out to be extraneous to the story and prevent the audience from getting the point the cinematography is trying to make. Conversely, the shot could become too sparse, not using the framing to communicate the feeling of the story and leaving it all up to the dialog, which can visually bore a viewer. The eye and the camera do not see the same thing. The brain is actively and constantly processing information from the eye and cuts out unwanted details that, in the camera's passive view, is given equal importance.

Camera Placement

First is camera placement. Before you can decide where to place the camera, you need to understand exactly what should dominate the composition, what should be included and what should be excluded from it, and what meaning will be conveyed by the shot beyond what is contained in the frame. Effective stories have strong core ideas. So, what is this story about? What is the film's theme? What is the director's focus? Once a cinematographer knows this, then she/he can make every composition support the core idea of the film, the story and the scene.

A DP can create a visual strategy where the placement of the character in the frame is also plotted throughout the film to match his/her journey and change. Perhaps he is off-center and in unbalanced framings until he begins to learn and change, then he starts to be in more balanced framings, such as in the work of Karl Struss, ASC, in the great silent film, "**Sunrise**," where the main character is framed at beginning in the boat, and then, differently at end in the boat at night. Perhaps depth of field changes as the character changes, perhaps lenses change, beginning with wide angle and moving towards telephoto as in the work of John Bailey, ASC, in the film, "**Ordinary People**," where he photographed the teenager with the counselor with wide angle lens at the beginning of the story, but as they grew closer, he shot them with longer and longer lenses to close the distance visually and blur away the background. Color palettes can change as well. Angles can change – such as always dolly behind the characters until they learn something or change – then the camera dollies in front of them – as again in "**Sunrise**."

Eye Line is also part of dynamic framing. In artistic cinematography, the actors are positioned for the camera, not the other way around. The closer the subject looks towards the camera lens the more intimate the scene becomes for the audience, the more they feel for what the character is saying/ thinking/feeling. Seeing both eyes allows more clues for the audience to understand the facial expressions. Not seeing one eye makes the subject a little more removed from the viewer – the audience is an uninvolved observer. Seeing 3/4s back is even more removed, but seeing over their shoulder becomes an indirect subjective point of view – we see what they see. We don't see their reaction, only what they are looking at.

Viewpoint is also a major tool in composition. Camera height in relationship to the subject and in relationship to the surroundings can change the audience's perspective on what is going on and how someone is feeling. Eye level, high angle and low angle are used to show equality, inferiority and superiority when used in CU and in MS shots. But with wide angle lenses and telephoto lenses the camera height can create unique views that imply spying, distancing, intimacy, etc. Since we normally see at eye level, shooting at eye level is "normal". Shooting at a different angle adds dynamics to the shot – allowing the audience to see life from a different perspective.

Camera Framing

Framing is all about directing the viewer's attention to a focal point within the frame and giving contextual clues that are derived from the story itself. Audiences tend to assume that if it's in the frame, it's there for a reason – it has meaning. It's a big screen and the human eyes converge on one focal point – so composition will help direct the viewer's attention.

How to make something the focal point? Size, Focus, Brightest, Placement within frame (Top left – center/center), color, movement, compositional elements that lead to that subject such as converging lines are just a few. People read from left to right, top to bottom. Upper Left has more focus. Anything center gets more focus. Whatever is brightest gets more focus. What is in focus gets focus. What is largest gets attention. The audience also generally looks in the direction the people on screen are looking – so they look at whoever or whatever the characters are staring at within the frame as well.

Cinematic Composition is cinematic storytelling rather than just recording the image of what is going on. Several simple common ways to add cinematic imagery include;

- Frame within a Frame – adds foreground to background depth, can imply comfort or constraints, also removes the viewer from the subject as if we were spying on them;
- Movement within frame – allows the frame to be active;
- Obstruction of view – makes the viewer work for it, feel like they are eavesdropping, adds dept;
- Depth – adds 3-D space and implies a relationship between foreground, mid-ground and background. Add depth by not shooting against walls, move subjects out. Don't shoot straight on like a play, rather from off angle to added dimension.
- Extremes – extreme wide shots and extreme close-ups are visuals we do not experience in normal life. So, they become more interesting and dynamic, thus cinematic.



Geometry is the grammar of composition. Converging lines, triangular composition and patterns all provide visual interest and can be used to make the image more dynamic. A great example of this the work of Vittorio Storaro, ASC, AIC, in the film, **"The Conformist."** Lines, curves, textures all provide the image with interest and dynamics that can be used to convey a meaning or a feeling within an image. Because we read from left to right, lines from top left to bottom right give a sense of order, of moving away, going somewhere. While lines from bottom left to top right have more resistance, more disorientation, imply a more strenuous journey. Things moving left to right are going somewhere, while things moving right to left are coming from somewhere.

Curves clam and slow down the action. They have soft edges, and therefore, add a softness to the scene. Curved images are always seen in bedrooms, from pillows to bedposts to draping curtains. Curves can be sensuous, giving an association with the human body.

Using set and architectural elements are often used to create frame-within-frame, Dutch tilt for emotional effect such as in the work of Robert Krasker, BCS, ASC, in the film, **"The Third Man."**

Using balanced and unbalanced framing can also support the storytelling through imagery. Balanced framing is "at rest" – more calm moments. A balanced frame is symmetrical, but it can also be felt as restricting, confining. Unbalanced framing is more active to the eye; thus, it can add tension, unease, urgency or importance to a scene. These are considerations cinematographers take into account when composing a shot.

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Basic Composition Rules

The Rule of Thirds involves composing your head room, nose room and room for movement of actors. This rule comes from painting. Basically, the concept is to divide the frame into thirds both vertically and horizontally. According to painting and drawing esthetics, by placing important things/people's head/people's eye at the cross points we create more dynamic framing. It also assures enough head room and lead room when the eyes are placed at these points. For tighter shots the eyes are on the upper third intersections. Wide shots, establishing shots, extreme high angle shots eyes can be placed in the center thirds. The general rule of thumb (but all rules can be broken if done deliberately) is no more than two thirds of the frame should be filled with action/actor – leaving space for breathing.

The Hitchcock Rule, which basically says that the size of object in frame is related to its importance in the story. Audiences will assign its importance because it gets their attention. Big is important. If it's not important now viewers will assume it could become important later. But if it's never important ever maybe don't make it so big. Don't confuse the viewer.

Three Plains of Composition, which using the foreground, acting area and background to create interesting framing. Some call this the three axis of composition – X is horizontal, Y is vertical and Z is depth. The more depth within the frame, the more interesting the visual and the more the viewer feels they are looking into a real three-dimensional world rather than just a two-dimensional screen. Depth cues that can be added in framing include overlapping objects and using perspective – the smaller objects are the farther away they are. We can also employ aerial perspective, which is objects further away are less saturated and there is less visual contrast, to add depth to the imagery.

There is a major difference between just photography the image and creating artistic visuals that support the story and emotion of a scene. Not all films will merit as much cinematic compositions as others – such as most comedies which rely heavily on physical acting and dialog. But recognizing and understanding how dynamic camera framing can add to the storytelling is something all cinematographers, directors and even editors need to know, which will help them achieve creative work.

Historical Re-enactors

Add Authenticity and Production Value to Your Independent Film

By Fred Ginsburg, CAS, PhD

Medieval. Crusader. Viking. Caribbean Pirate. Colonial/Revolutionary War. Civil War. Wild West. Victorian. Steampunk. Great War. WW2.

Shooting a period piece can be expensive and beyond the budget of most small-scale filmmakers. Sure, you can wardrobe up a couple of actors. And, maybe, come up with a neutral location that could pass for anywhere, anytime.

But if you want to “wow” your audience, it would be nice to have a bunch of costumed players and period encampments in the background!

On a big Hollywood show, that would entail hiring a lot of professional “extras” as well as trained stunt people, and renting a ton of period authentic wardrobe, props, weapons, and encampment construction.

However, there is a very inexpensive alternative. Every month, all around the country, hundreds of role-playing hobbyists gather together to enact “living history” recreations or to engage in mock battle scenarios.

These are serious history buffs. They have done their research. Made or purchased period authentic wardrobe. Acquired props and weapons. And, have learned how to use them. Some of the guilds have even constructed period encampments with tents and vehicles. Some of the participants are expert craftsmen, able to recreate daily life (cooking, etc.) as well as period trade skills (blacksmithing, carpentry, textiles, and so on). Masters-at-arms have trained the combatants in safe but impressive use of period weapons and tactics.

You have most likely seen them at Renaissance Faire festival, Civil War gatherings, wild west shootouts, and public celebrations.

What you may not realize is – you have probably also viewed them countless times on cable television in historical documentaries as well as historical dramas.

Director Ridley Scott spent a year visiting medieval fairs, scouting for the best equipped and battle skilled knights and Saracens before he filmed *Kingdom of Heaven*. Even though he could afford Hollywood stunt people and extras, Ridley realized that re-enactors did this stuff all the time and would come off on screen more believably than tinsel town posers.

Civil war blockbusters such as *Glory* and *Gettysburg* utilized hundreds of weekend warriors to stage epic battlegrounds and encampments. *Deadwood*, *West World*, *Vikings*. The list is almost endless. And those are just the BIG shows. We haven't even begun to list all of



the stuff on the History Channel, Discovery, and Smithsonian.

Why spend a fortune trying to achieve a level of authenticity and grandeur when all of that is just a phone call away, and nearly for free?

These weekend re-enactors love what they do. And they love having an audience, whether it be live spectators or screen viewers. They have worked hard, spent a lot of money on accoutrements, and trained to be authentic and impressive. Nothing excites them more than the chance to be seen and appreciated!

If you are producing a multimillion-dollar feature film, then do expect to pay participants a daily rate that falls somewhere in between an unskilled extra and stunt background. But you would still be saving a lot in the budget and ending up with a very high level of authenticity and battle skill.

If you are a low budget filmmaker, often for the cost of beer, BBQ, and refreshments – many of these guilds can be at your disposal for a day or two. What you might need to pay is obviously dependent on the budget and intended distribution of your project.

I have worked with living history and re-enactment guilds that have added production value and scope to student films, internet labors of love, and countless low budget documentaries. As long as the film project was relatively non-commercial – these re-enactors did not expect much more than a modest donation to their group and/or some refreshments. And, of course, a copy of the finished production!

When you work with a guild, there are some important do's and don'ts.

Treat everyone with respect. They are probably volunteers (big Hollywood shows notwithstanding), and are not obligated to stick around if you get too bossy or snooty. Feed them well, and do not think of them as “inferior” to cast and crew. Make them always feel welcome and appreciated for what they are contributing to your project.

Direct your film, but do not micro-manage and over-direct these extras. Work with the guild officers. Explain to them what you need, but let them control and stage the background. They know better than you do what will look good to viewers, and how to stage/cheat battle sequences to look authentic, yet still be safe for the participants. They do this all the time; trust their judgement.

Sometimes you will need to explain how a filmed sequence will be constructed in the editing and post-production process. Guilds are used to live audiences; so they may not be up to date in cinematic sorcery or how you plan on integrating the footage. Explain it nicely. Do not “talk down” to guild members as if they are children. Some of these re-enactors have worked on more films than you have!

If you insist on personally staging the action in micro-detail, then you assume liability for anything that happens due to your lack of experience. It is better if your re-enactors are

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more like independent contractors in that they determine the best way to achieve your vision; just tell them what you are going for, and then be willing to accept experienced advice.

Nothing upsets historical re-enactors more than Directors who insist on silly "Hollywood" bravado. Avoid clichés such as "fanning" a six-gun, or making impossible shots, or ridiculous gun handling and sword handling. If you are going for a "super fantasy" sequence, discuss that with the guild reps way in advance of your production schedule to see if they are okay with your stylization.

If your re-enactors will be using edged weapons or period firearms – there is a liability issue, especially if your actors will be embedded in a melee or action scene. Make sure that your actors are trained and coached in the use of their armaments and what is expected of them. Work with your guild masters-at-arms to avoid situations and behaviors that could create risks for actors or guild participants.

For example, black powder rifles and pistols are loaded with gun powder but never bullets for staged battles. Bullets are only shown being rammed down the barrel in "insert" shots, which are done at a separate time under the strictest conditions. Re-enactors do not even use ramrods, due to the danger of accidentally discharging a weapon with the ramrod inserted -- which would be the equivalent of a spear gun!

Black powder pistols and flintlocks do discharge hot gasses and sometimes very

small particles. Fiery jets do not just come out of the muzzle, but also at the priming pans or the cylinder gaps of revolvers. Make sure that sleeves are clear of these flashpoints, lest a poufy wardrobe catch fire.

Blanks are not "safe". They pose physical risks at short range, which is why re-enactors always cheat their angles so that they can safely aim away from their opponents.

Always be alert for unintentional "muzzle sweeps" where a "loaded" firearm or projectile weapon (cross-bow, long bow) pans across other participants as it is deployed. Cross draw holsters and shoulder holsters are particularly susceptible to this kind of mishandling.

Sound people always have to be on their guard. Any unexpected discharge of firearms or field artillery could cause damage to microphones and eardrums!

Swordplay requires a lot of skill and repetitive practice, especially in group melees. Swinging a weapon poses risks not only to the combatant in front of you, but equally so to the warriors on either side and behind you. Missing a block or parry could result in an actual strike, so combatants always choreograph their moves. When I used to do steel-on-steel combat (yeah, I was a "Renny" when I was younger), we would have code

words to cue our partners on what to expect. For example, if I were to insult your mother – then expect me to strike downward towards your head. An insult to your liege or king might signal a straight lunge to the chest.

As a producer, make sure that you have signed releases (prepared by an attorney) for every participant. There should also be general release forms or contracts signed by the guild itself, in addition to the individual release forms.

We are talking about a lot of extras, many of them armed. Their firearms are usually real; and even blunt swords can break bones and rip skin.

Discuss the situation with your entertainment/production insurance agent so that the production company has enough liability coverage in case something does go awry. Some productions may require workers comp or special agreements with SAG.

However, in the long run – the use of local re-enactors and living history guilds can add a depth of realism and epic spectacle that you probably never imagined that you could afford.

Audio Techniques for Documentary

How to Capture Good Location Sound

By David Appleby



Pictured left: Alan and Susan Raymond shooting, "An American Family" in 1971. Photo Courtesy of Alan and Susan Raymond. Center: Photo Courtesy of Emily Austin Akins. Richard "Ricky" Leacock. Right: Photo Courtesy of Drew Associates.

As with all recording, good audio demands that you keep your subject's volume as strong as possible (signal) while keeping any competing sounds (noise) to a minimum. What's different about documentary production is that you will need to accomplish this in situations where you have little or no control over what you're covering.

In narrative filmmaking, you may be working on a sound stage where noise is almost non-existent. Even on location, you can employ acoustic treatment to limit interference and unwanted reverb. The boom operator and mixer are able to watch the blocking of the actors during rehearsals, so they are able to choose the best position(s) for their microphone(s) as well as know who will be speaking and when.

When the camera and microphone are immersed in the real world in real time, it's a very different animal and particular skills and equipment are needed to capture good "location sound."

From the beginning of sound films in the late twenties, through the 1950s, almost all sound for documentaries was created in post-production.

There were some experiments setting up sound gear on location but, for the most part, audio recording equipment was too cumbersome to work with in the field. Thus, in most documentaries from the 1930s through the 50s, music and narration were prominent.

Shotgun Microphones

By 1960, filmmaker/engineers like Ricky Leacock, D.A. Pennebaker and others had created a "synch rig" that employed a portable reel-to-reel tape recorder that could be synchronized with a 16mm camera. (We refer to this as double system recording.) There was no cable connecting the recorder to the camera, allowing each to maneuver within the space as needed. The recorder could be carried over the shoulder and a "shotgun" microphone allowed for recording relatively clean audio from a distance. This two-person team was much nimbler than the larger crews of the past and they were able to create an intimacy with their subjects that opened up new possibilities for documentary material.

Shotgun microphones have the advantage of being very "directional," meaning that they pick up mostly from the front while nullifying sound from the sides. So, the sound person can isolate a conversation, for instance, from much of the noise around it even when recording from a distance. That's good for keeping audio out of the shot but it's a compromise. The camera is free to frame a wide shot or pan from one thing to another without worrying about getting the mic in the frame, but audio will always suffer when increasing the distance from the source, so there's a balancing act going on. The subjects are free to move about as they please and that freedom can result in great film – something that may be worth a less than perfect soundtrack.

While it may be more distracting than a long shotgun from afar, a shorter shotgun on a boom (technically a *fish pole*) held above and within a few feet of the subject's mouth is the choice of a mixer wanting the most natural sounding recording.

Handling a boom for a long period of time and knowing where to stand, when to get close and when to back off requires experience, fitness and an intimate knowledge of what the camera is seeing at any given time. In addition to being aware of how the shot is being framed, the boom operator must be careful to avoid casting shadows on the subject or background.

Lavalieres

Of course, you may be asking why not just put a small lavalier mic and a transmitter on your subject, thus eliminating the need for other mics altogether? While this seems like a better option than having a mic either farther away or intruding into the scene, there are reasons many filmmakers avoid them.

These reasons are both philosophical and practical. Some filmmakers have no problem asking a subject to perform everyday tasks, manipulating both time and space in order to capture the images and sounds needed to convey a particular situation. Asking the subject to be "wired up" would be just one more request. Others would never do such a thing, finding it anathema to "capturing reality." What you do affects what you get.

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Pictured left: Photo Courtesy of Alan and Susan Raymond. Center: A Sennheiser receiver mounted to a camcorder. Photo by D. Appleby. Right: Alexandra Pelosi. Photo Courtesy of Bobby George.

Documentary legend, Ricky Leacock was always inventing or adapting his equipment so he would be able “to walk into a room shooting.” Nothing would be asked of the subjects except access. Nothing would be staged or repeated. The world of the subject would be kept as natural as possible given the presence of a small two-person crew. This is because he was adamant about how the crew and their equipment affected documentary performance. Connecting a mic, transmitter and antenna to a subject worked against the hands-off relationship he felt so important to protect.

Ricky once told me that when a film crew making a documentary on the pioneers of Cinema Verité attempted to put a lavalier under his shirt, he told them to get the hell out of his house!

That said, you may have noticed that all news crews use radio mics now – hand-held and lavalieres – and you may find that miking your main subject with a lav and transmitting that signal to a receiver connected to the mixer or camera allows you the freedom and quality you need. Furthermore, you may find that the subject forgets about the mic attached to their body and performs naturally.

For me, this is a last choice for the following reasons:

[1] Unlike a news crew, I’d want to hide the mic under the subject’s clothing, requiring tape, moleskin, more tape, and a loop to relieve tension. Even with all that, there’s still a chance that the person may create some rustling sound or touch their chest (and mic) at an inopportune moment. Unlike in narrative filmmaking, I don’t like to ask them to repeat something because of bad sound.

[2] The sound is too “close up,” exaggerating the bass frequencies and capturing sound more from the chest than the mouth, all making it sound more like a TV interview and less like natural dialogue.

[3] Radio mics are subject to various types of interference and, eventually, you’ll experience some of these.

[4] When you treat your subject like an actor, they will inevitably become one.

But varied situations call for varied strategies and you should be prepared to use a lav and transmitter when other options aren’t suitable, such as when there are multiple subjects and your audio person can’t reach them all with their boom or shotgun.

Alan and Susan Raymond were early practitioners of adding wireless mics to the mix when filming verité style for *An American Family* in 1971:

“Notice that Susan is recording double system sound using a crystal sync Swiss made Nagra 1/4” tape recorder and she is holding a German made Sennheiser 805 shotgun microphone. Also notice she has a backpack on that is holding an early wireless microphone system receiver. The Nagra had three separate mike inputs so she could have three microphones running at the same time though they had to be mixed by Susan into a mono recording at 7 1/2 IPS on a reel-to-reel tape.”
– Alan Raymond

Double System vs. Single System Recording

While news film cameramen from the 50s through the 70s could plug an audio cable into their camera and record sound on a magnetic stripe adhered to one edge of the film, filmmakers have almost always recorded “double system,” the camera recording picture and the recorder (first optical, then magnetic, and now digital) recording sound. The camcorder allowed for audio and picture to be recorded on the same device (“single system”) but the emergence of DSLRs with their generally poor sound quality again saw filmmakers going back to recording audio on separate recorders (better signal to noise ratio, better preamps to boost the mic level signal to line level, and a higher sample rate).

If you’re using a traditional camcorder or a newer digital cine camera, you can record single system, double, or both. Just as it did for documentary filmmakers in the sixties, working with double system allows sound and picture to move independently of each other – no cables to maneuver or trip over. To achieve the same in single system, you’d need to untether yourself from the camera and use a transmitter to send a signal from your sound mixer to a receiver on the camera.

If you choose to shoot double system, remember that you’re going to need to use a slate of some kind to facilitate synching the picture to sound in post. In most documentary situations, the use of the standard clapboard slate is impractical. Besides requiring another crewmember, it’s far too intrusive and distracting to the subjects being filmed.

Slating: Heads or Tails?

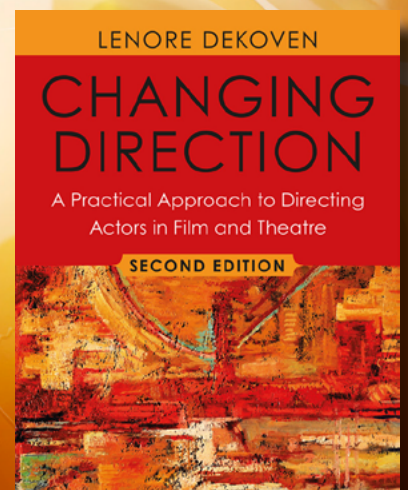
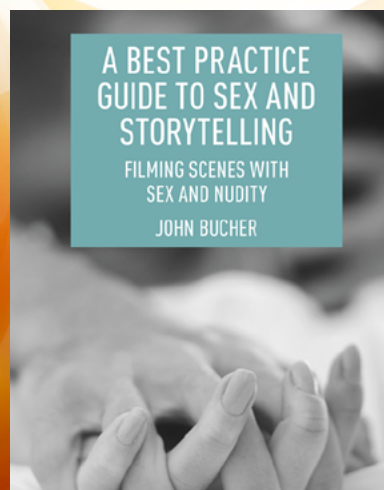
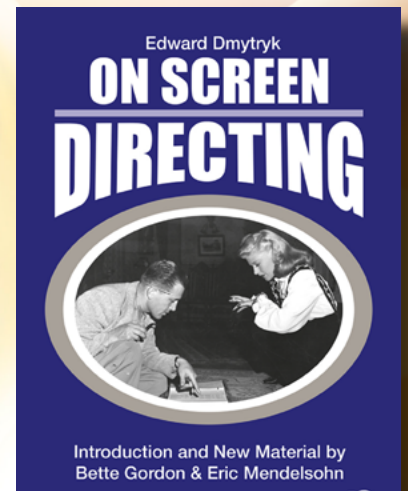
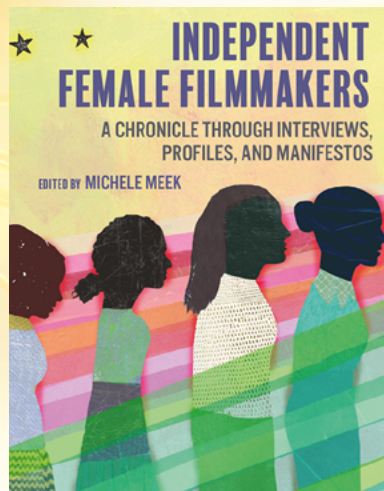
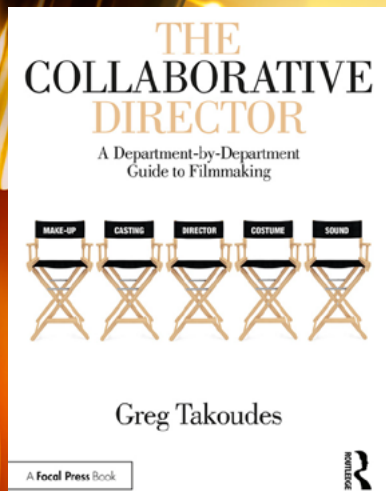
Narrative filmmaking techniques allow for a slate at the beginning (the head) of every take. A camera assistant places the slate in the shot, calls out the scene and take numbers, closes the clap stick, then moves out of the shot before someone calls “action.” In documentary filmmaking, the cameraperson might begin filming at any moment. The audio person follows suit if they are not already running (often times, in double system, audio may be recording even when the camera isn’t). Slating, then, needs to occur at the end of the shot. This is called *tail slate* and it must be done before the camera stops rolling. The cameraman turns to the always ready sound person who whispers a quiet description of what was just shot into the mic and taps it to provide a visual/audio reference point. The camera can then stop recording.

There are other ways to do this. A “bloop box,” for instance, sends a tone to the recorder while flashing a light for the camera. The important thing is that you create a reference point for both audio and picture without disturbing the people or events you’re filming.

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Most editing software allows you to synch double system sound to picture by recording with the in-camera mic as well and allowing your editor to synch the two tracks by matching their waveforms. This works fairly well but, even with this method, I've gotten more accurate results when the definitive slate sound is present.

On-Camera Microphones

A directional mic built into or attached to the camera can be useful as a second source, or as a sole source of audio when the cameraperson is working alone. In such a case, you want to keep the camera as close as possible to the source (using a wide-angle lens) in order to isolate it from other sound. There have been some excellent documentaries made using this method. The films of Alexandra Pelosi (*Journeys with George, Right America: Feeling Wronged*) come to mind. When she's at a distance from her subjects, the audio track in the final film contains mostly first-person voice over. When her subjects speak, mostly in interviews, the camera is close enough for the on-camera mic to do its job well.

When working alone and concentrating on a single subject, it may be that you'll need to mic that person with a lav and transmitter to be able to get a usable recording when they're at a distance or not facing the on-camera microphone

Headsets

Always wear headsets! If you're shooting double system, the audio mixer/boom operator needs to have a headset on at all times. If you're working single system with audio coming to the camera from a mixer, BOTH the audio person and the cameraperson should have headsets on. Any problem with audio coming out of the mixer, or from a transmitter/cable, will be heard by the cameraman.

Also, remember that most headset connections are allowing you to hear audio as it comes from the microphone.

In most cases that works fine but you will not hear audio problems that may be occurring on the recording itself.

So: [1] Make sure you listen to playback periodically to check the quality of the recording you're getting. **[2]** If you have a device that allows you to monitor the recording rather than the *input*, use it. (You're hearing audio played back from the recording device.) It takes a while to get used to the slight delay this creates but it's worth it to be able to monitor exactly what's been recorded.

Recording Tips

Headroom

In the days of analog recording you'd want to set your voice levels around 0 on a VU meter, leaving you a good deal of room above that for louder than anticipated sounds to be recorded without distortion. In such a case, the range of decibels above zero is called headroom.

With a digital meter, 0 represents the loudest something can be before the audio falls apart (clipping). So, applying the same principle of leaving room above an average record level for louder speech or sounds, you need to set levels low enough to provide adequate headroom. Taking advantage of digital's wider dynamic range, most practitioners use -12 dB as a "0 reference" but arguments can be made for allowing more (-20dB) or less (-9 dB) headroom. (Audio level controls are always on the manual setting.)

In uncontrolled documentary situations you may want to leave even more headroom to be able to capture higher peaks without distortion.

Another safety procedure is to assign the audio from a single source to two channels on the recorder or camcorder. While sending the same tone to both, you would set channel one to -12 dB and channel two to -15 (or lower). That way, in the case of an unexpectedly loud occurrence, channel one may over modulate but the audio on channel two remains fine.

NOTE: I'm familiar with one recorder, the ZOOM H6 that automatically records duplicate tracks with 12 dB less input gain to "save" your audio when a loud sound distorts your primary tracks.

If your recording device has a *limiter* on it, you may want to use that as well. Unlike automatic gain control which you should never use, the limiter only kicks in when your volume comes close to clipping. At their best, limiters can work quite well, but at their worst they can negatively affect adjacent levels. If you have this feature, experiment with it enough that you're confident in its performance.

One More Thing

If you're working with a two-person crew and you're in a situation where there's a lot going on (New Years Eve in Times Square!), the person handling audio needs to be alert to everything happening around them. While shooting, the cameraman tends to concentrate on what's happening within the frame, so it's up to audio to be listening and watching carefully, both to get the best audio to accompany what's being shot AND to be aware of what the camera may be missing.

And don't undervalue the need for *wild* sound when the camera isn't rolling. Just as the camera may shoot MOS (without sound), there are many opportunities for audio to record without camera. Be listening for sound that may offer bits of dialogue or a sense of place and go ahead and record them. These additional on-location sounds can provide information, background ambience and local color, all of which can be invaluable in post-production.

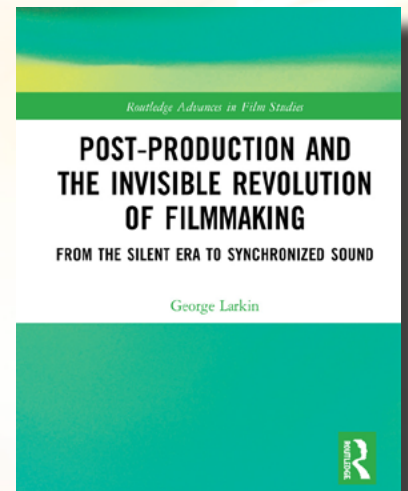
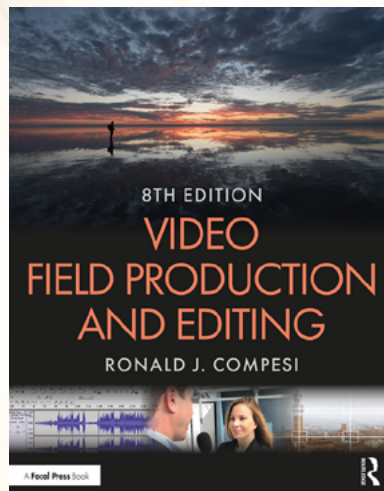
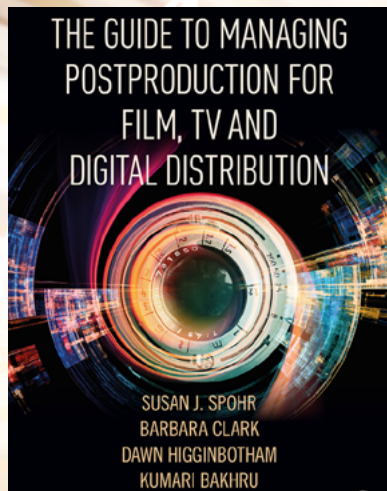
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From behind-the-scenes of new film, "Break Even" – coming in 2020!



Good Morning, Filmmaker!

It's a Great Day to be Alive!

By Shane Stanley

"Happy Anniversary, Dude," was how screenwriter CJ Walley greeted me one morning during the production of our new action/thriller, "Break Even". Off my puzzled look he said, "We first discussed working together a year ago today!" Honestly, it had felt like ten years had passed, and it was only day three into filming. Although production on this project came in at lightning speed, it had left just as quickly with the ferocious aftermath of a hurricane. Every day we got hit with something - our hero car caught fire, one of our guest stars father suddenly passed away two hours before her call time, a location blew away while filming - and that wasn't even in a 24-hour timeframe. Honestly, I think the constant adversity bonded us closer together and we have a better movie because of it.

From March to May, we bounced from island-to-island, desert-to-city, and then back to the islands, and even though we wrapped last Thursday, it all feels like a lifetime ago. What I was reminded of during this incredible journey wasn't how 'hard' filmmaking can be but the relationships you forge during the battle and that everyone on set matters. Sure, without the talent, the camera and wardrobe, you can't get much done. But don't forget to look around, take a minute and appreciate the sound department, the hair and makeup team, the grips, the production assistants, drivers and even the man (or woman) who shows up to empty the tanks on the honey wagons.

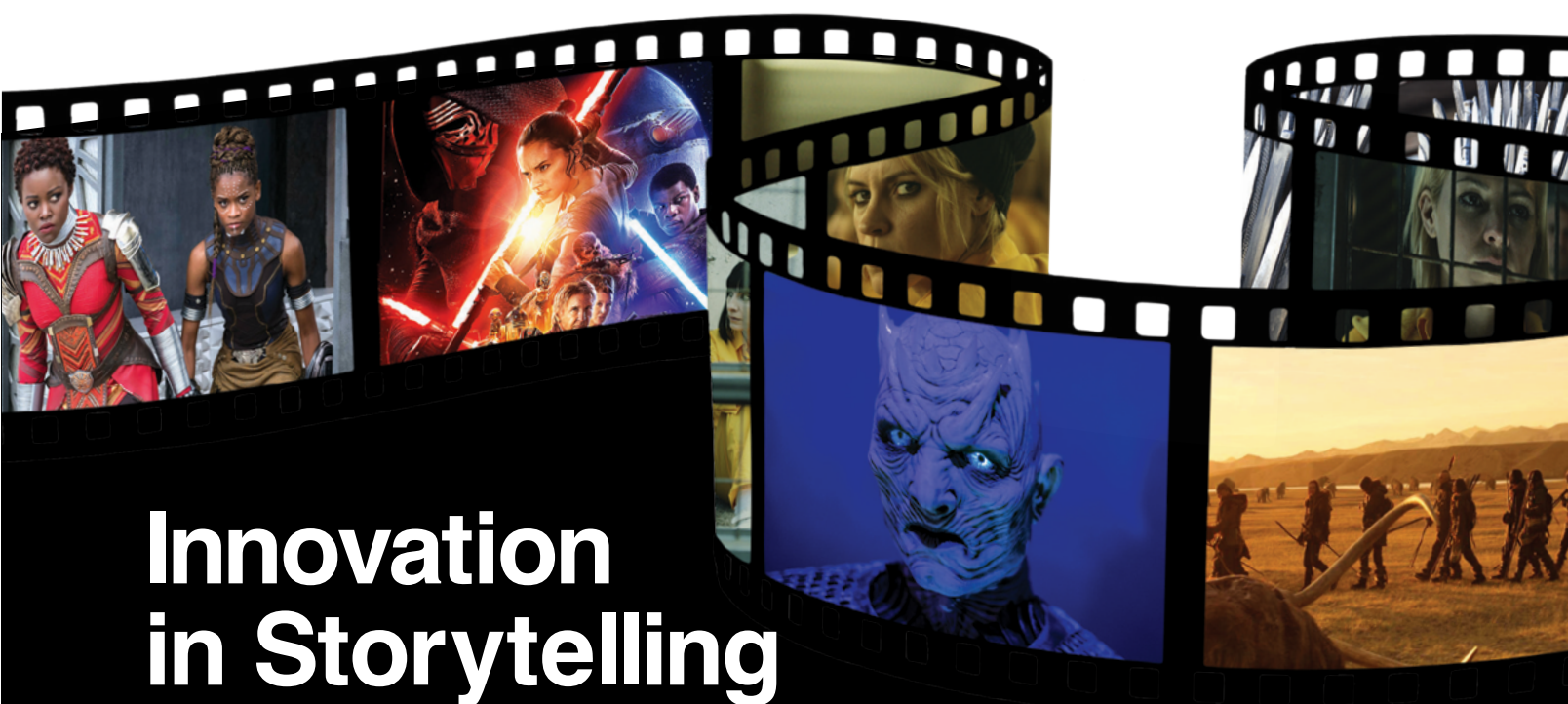
As filmmakers we tend to get myopic. It's easy to seal out the real world, ignore anything that doesn't support the task at hand, and only focus on what's right in front of you. But without all the bodies present that are listed on the call sheet, chances are you won't get anything done. I'm a firm believer any day that you can wake up, look yourself in the mirror and say, "Good morning filmmaker", it's a great day to be alive. Remember to appreciate the opportunities you're given, the people around you and to just breathe. Filmmaking is hectic - but only if we make it that way. Your set shouldn't be tense, filled with bad attitudes or angst. When people feel appreciated, they will go the extra mile, and when you're making movies, you need all the help you can get. And for my entire team, I am extremely grateful.

For many of you reading this, you aspire to lead troops into battle and slough the dragon known as making movies - and I hope like hell it happens for each and every one of you. But along the way, be kind, tread lightly and remember...what we do is a gift. Act like it.





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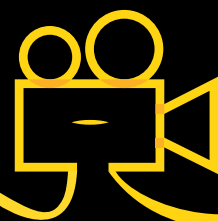
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Basic Sound Package

for Student and Productions

By Fred Ginsburg, CAS, PhD

Lots of my students ask me to give them some examples of what kind of sound package they would need for their senior films (or for their equipment budgeting exercise). So, I have gone ahead and put together what I would consider to be a good, general purpose, starting package.

Of course, your final package will vary, based on the complexity of the shoot along with your access to equipment (and the depth of your budget for sound).

Recorder/Mixer

These days, the recorder of choice is the Sound Devices 688 paired with its CL-12 companion fader controller. There are still a lot of mixers who like the older 788, along with its CL-9 board – only because the 788 has 8 inputs for mic/line, compared to the 688 which only offers 6 mic/line along with 6 line only (assuming that your radio mics provide line output).

Make sure that you include all of the necessary input/output cables for your system. USB to connect recorder to fader controller; TA3-XLRf input cables; TA3-XLRm output cables; timecode out cable along with adapter cable to feed a Denecke TC slate.

An AC adapter to power your rig. Also, some sort of battery powering, in case there is no available AC power.

Headphones for the mixer and boom. On fancier shoots, some sort of wireless assistive listening system, such as Comteks, to send headphone feeds to Director, Script, 2nd Boom, and possibly other people on the set. Make sure you have the proper connecting cables!

You will need a computer keyboard for inputting data. Make sure that you have the proper connections and/or adapter units to do this. Some Sound Devices recorders require an accessory module to accommodate keyboards!

Backup Recorder

Things break or get broken. If something were to make your main recording system inoperable, you will need a secondary system to get you through the day. Your backup system does not need to be the same quality as your main system, nor as many tracks. Four or more will suffice. Timecode is great, but to be honest, the post people could sync from clapsticks if they had to.

In addition to your backup recorder, you will need a backup mixing board to go with it. Mackie 1402's or bigger; or comparable brands. Make sure that you have the necessary output cables to connect your mixer to the recorder, including one or two live mix feeds as well as some ISO feeds.

Sound Cart

It needs to be portable and transportable. Good wheels for going over cables or rough terrain. A top shelf or hutch for radio mics. Hooks for cables. Someplace to secure boom poles.

Booms

At least one or two decent boom poles, not less than 12 feet extended and internally wired. You will also need a duplex cable in order to connect your boom-person to your gear. Make sure that you have necessary adapter cables on the sound cart end of the duplex cable in order to send a headphone feed back to the boom operator.

I have my duplex cables built with XLR male and female connectors at the sound cart end. This allows me to just use a couple XLR mic cables if I need to extend the length of the duplex. It also enables me to use an adapter cable if I require 1/8-inch, 1/4-inch, or TA3 connections at my end.

Microphones

Have at least three high quality, condenser shotgun mics. A general purpose "short shotgun" such as the Audio Technica 4073 or Sennheiser MKH60; a "wide angle" condenser cardioid to eliminate echo in a tight room, such as an Audio Technica 4051 or a Senn MKH40; and a "long shotgun" encased in a furry zeppelin windscreen for exteriors, such as the Audio Technica 4071 or the Senn MKH70.

There are also other makes and models of mics that are comparable in quality and performance.

Bring some hardwired lavaliers for use either as body-worn mics or planted mics. I like the Audio Technica AT899 and MT830R, or the Senn MKE-2. The Countryman B3 is nice if you want to isolate an actor from the background.

Your package should include not less than two wireless lavalier kits, but perhaps as many as six. Make sure that you have the necessary adapter cables to feed them into your mixer or recorder. If using the 688, check to see if the wireless can provide line level outputs (if you are going to use them on inputs 7-12).

It is always good to bring along a dynamic handheld mic for clean voice-overs or loud sound effects.

Make sure that you have foam windscreens for all of your boom mics, and suitable shockmounts.

Cables

In addition to the myriad adapter cables unique to your recording systems' inputs/outputs, you will need a variety of XLRf-XLRm mic cables.

I would suggest not less than four 25 footers; along with four 50 footers.

If you are going to wire audio back to the camera, dedicate at least two 50 footers just for that purpose (and check what type of input connectors are on the camera). Very often, we use a wireless setup to send scratch audio to the (video) camera for on set playbacks.

Throw in a handful of shorties (5 or 10 footers) and jumpers (2 footers). You may need them.

Don't forget to bring some electrical extension cords (stingers). Since none of your sound stuff draws much current, you can use standard house/garden AC cords (50 or 100 foot).

Timecode Slate

Sometimes, this falls under the Camera category, but more times than not it is the responsibility of the Sound Dept to bring it and set it up. Make sure that you have the necessary cabling to jam sync the slate from the recorder; as well as to be able to jam sync the camera from the slate.

Expendables

Media. Have at least three pair of media cards for your recorder. Brand new, same brand and capacity. Check them IN your recorder to insure that they are compatible (some manufacturers list approved cards on their websites, but card specs change all the time, so double check!) You may need to purchase a card reader for your laptop if it cannot natively read your style cards.

The production company (Post-Production) may want dailies on CD/DVD disks or flash drives. Ask.

Most of your toys require batteries. Mics, radio mics, slates, some recorders, Comteks, etc. Stock up.

Rigging accessories for your lavs and radio mics. Moleskin, safety pins, rubber bands, medical tape, alcohol wipes, furry bits, cheesecloth, 4x4 gauze pads, chopped glove fingers, cleaning swabs, colored tapes, colored markers, dry condoms, ACE bandages – just to name some of the junk in my kit.

Sound reports (you can design and print your own) along with a clipboard.

Power strips. First Aid Kit. Mints and mouthwash (for you, as well as for the actors). Flashlights. Simple tools. Toilet paper. Large plastic trash bags for rain or dust protection. Spare T-shirts.

Instruction Manuals

Be sure to download and store the PDF instruction manuals for all of your sound gear, as well as for the camera, onto your laptop in case you need to look something up. There may not be internet on the set.

By no means is this a full and complete list of gear and accessories. This is the minimum amount of gear that you should have at your disposal. But the final list will be dependent on the specifics of your shoot.

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The PRO-XR package will include a number of accessories to make it compatible with mobile video shooting right out of the box: a mini-tripod/mobile grip, a clamp-style phone mount with accessory shoe mount, a traditional TRRS adapter cable for smartphones and tablets, and a Lightning-to-headphone adapter for iOS mobile devices without a headphone jack.

The expected retail price of the new PRO-XR is only \$249.

For more information, visit:
www.azden.com



From Our Readers

Thank You For Writing To Us!

"It would have been wonderful if I had a magazine such as the *StudentFilmmakers* magazine available to me when I first started dreaming about becoming a cinematographer. It would have helped greatly to open up and help me understand the world of filmmaking and how to become part of it."

~Andrew Laszlo, ASC

"Your magazine [*StudentFilmmakers Magazine*] has some very high-end stuff, and it's good people, and I'm really impressed. I think that the quality of writers is phenomenal. It might be over the heads of some of your readers, but for others, it is a good resource."

~Ron Dexter, ASC

"*StudentFilmmakers*—the magazine— combines just the right blend of literary and visual esthetic. Unlike the slick, glossy, overblown consumer and trade film magazines this publication is earthy and connects on every level with the student filmmaker. The information is vital and urgent. Congratulations on a superb effort and for your contribution to the world of student filmmaking."

~Jim McCullaugh, former publisher of American Cinematographer and former Executive Director of the American Society of Cinematographers

"*StudentFilmmakers.com* is a great resource for people working in video, as well as a very cool magazine. I would recommend you check them out."

~ Shirley Craig, Rev Up Transmedia
www.revuptransmedia.com

The Scoring Process

Behind the Scenes of a Film Score

By Kristen Baum

As a director seeking a score for your movie, it's important to understand what's involved in the making of a score.

The workflow between the composer and director is only a portion of the scoring process. It doesn't just go from the composer to the director then back to the composer and then poof, there's a score. The part that happens behind closed doors can often seem like that part of a math equation where the teacher wants us to show our work and we just want to say a miracle happens here, but following that analogy in film scoring, there's an intense amount of activity that follows the director's approval of each music cue (the composition itself) to prepare it for the scoring session.

The needs of the music department vary somewhat depending on the type of score desired, but whether the score will be played by a large orchestra, by ten musicians or even three, the process for taking music from the demo to the finished product is the same.

For this article, let's assume there will be a group of musicians that will be hired to play the score at a recording session (or sessions) for the purpose of discussing workflow and personnel.

Scores that are played live and recorded involve many people. The composer is one of those people. The composer's team for a live-recorded score includes an orchestrator (or team of orchestrators), a copyist, a contractor, musicians, a conductor and a music editor. Additionally, the scoring stage must be rented, and a recording engineer hired. For lower budget projects that don't have the funds to hire each of these positions, understand that the work is the same and the composer will have to absorb cost—time and money—to accomplish the necessary work.

So, here's what the workflow looks like with the various positions filled:

Once a cue is approved, it goes to the orchestrator, who prepares the music for the musicians to read. After the orchestrator has finished each cue, it must be proofread, whether by the orchestrator's team, the composer or both. At this point, the cue goes to the copyist and to the music editor. The copyist prepares the score and parts for each instrument. The music editor will often coordinate with the orchestrator and will prepare an individual ProTools session for each cue, assuring that the click track and picture are aligned so that bar one of the score matches bar one of the ProTools session. That insures sync with picture. At the same time, the contractor hires musicians and reserves the recording studio where the session will take place.

Each job requires a certain amount of time to complete, so any changes requested by the director at the last minute are often difficult to accommodate as time is usually in short supply.

On the day of the scoring session, everyone comes together to play the music so it may be recorded. Provided good prep, the scoring session will run smoothly and seem smooth.

Just like good pre-production of a film insures that the shoot goes smoothly, good pre-production of the score will insure a good scoring session and thereby a well-produced final score. Good communication between composer and director coupled with an understanding of the composing process will help insure the music department has adequate time to deliver your optimal score.

Casting

Color blind. Gender blind. Age blind.

By Tamar Kummel

Think about some recent movies or TV shows starring Meryl Streep, Melissa McCarthy, Sandra Oh, Denzel Washington, Morgan Freeman, Robin Williams or any other of your favorite actors. I bet you can't picture that movie or TV show starring anyone else. They are perfect. But I will bet you that ½ those roles were not meant for them. They were written for someone younger, thinner, whiter, and possibly male. Each one is ridiculously talented, and also not a 25-year-old, white male.

I would like to propose a new thought process. A new way of thinking about characters and casting. And a new way of looking at the world. Not from your point of view, but from an inclusive, global way.

I want you to think outside the box. Think outside when writing. Think outside when casting. So many times, we pigeon-hole our thought process. We "write what we know." But I bet you know a lot more diversity than you even realize.

Oftentimes as writers, we get restricted by what actually happened. We think, "I'm a 20-year-old male, so the character has to be too." Or, "this is about a family, so they all have to look alike." Or the worst thought, "Only males talk this way." But I can assure you, women talk about everything, at all ages. We curse, we laugh, we talk about sex. And some of us, lots of us, don't want kids, don't think about kids, and are not just moms. And you know what, if we are moms, we still have names. It's not just, "Mom."

It's 2019, people. Families look all kinds of ways. Two dads, two moms, light skin, dark skin, you name it. Their kids can be adopted from all over the world. People marry at all ages, even into their 90's sometimes (I've seen it). They have kids at all ages. And best friends don't have to be the same sex.

People of all ages still date. They still work. They still have hopes and dreams and experiences.

Just because you picture your scene with two men in their 20's, may not mean you couldn't cast two women in their 40's. Think about it. Does it change the integrity of the scene? Not every male/female scene is subliminally about sex. They can be best friends, enemies, or strangers. Imagine you wrote a scene between two people sitting around talking. What did you picture? Twenty-five year old males? Fifty-year-old, black women? How about 60-year-old Asians, one male, and one female? Does the scene change? Does it get better? More interesting? Diversity is normal. It's interesting. It's easier to tell characters apart. It's more reflective of our society. And it's a good thing to do.

There are 100,000 actors in New York City. There are 400,000 actors in Los Angeles. These are actors of all ages, all types and sizes. Great actors with a wealth of experience and talent. They want to work. And they can make your project more interesting. Give them a chance.

FROM OUR READERS

"StudentFilmmakers Magazine is a staple among all the media teachers and their classes in our 6 Sacramento Sierra Digital Arts Studio Partnership region. In addition to our email circulation to our membership, we always distribute it during our biannual all youth film festival events now in their 16th year. We believe that digital media arts is a 'stem cell' proficiency and digital literacy the 21st Century essential prerequisite every youth most command. Your publication is a vital demonstration of work force achievement, reinforcing youth career appetites and nourishment. We count on you heavily. Thank you for your brilliant work."

~ William Bronston, MD CEO
Sac Sierra Digital Arts Studio Partnership (501c3)
www.towerofyouth.org,
www.ybama.org, www.caldigarts.org

"StudentFilmmakers Magazine is a great place to find information about filmmaking and cutting-edge technology."

~Brian Sponagle, High School Teacher

"Excellent magazine with great articles."

~James Garcia, Director/Producer, NY

"As a film enthusiast, I think StudentFilmmakers Magazine provides valuable information about this art, as well as hints and technical tips regarding the whole new world of DSLR cameras."

~Marcelo Noronha

"The online magazine looks remarkable. I was really taken aback by its layout and design. Great job!"

~Bill Jones, Teacher/Instructor, CA

"This magazine has been a great resource of useful and current information in my classroom. Hands-on production is a very important element in my class, but I also have the students reading articles from my *StudentFilmmakers* magazine... For me, this magazine is just as important in my classroom as the camera or any other piece of gear."

~Neal Bennett, Industry Film School, Shrewsbury, NJ

"Dear Jody and the whole team at *StudentFilmmakers* Magazine, **THANK YOU SO MUCH for an opportunity to be featured in your AMAZING Magazine.** THANK YOU – THANK YOU. If there is anything I can do for you, please do let me know."

~Zoran Dragelj,
Editor/Producer/Director,
www.imdb.com/name/nm1389179/

"StudentFilmmakers.com has advanced my knowledge as a cinematographer through both their information-rich website and hands-on workshops in Manhattan, New York, with industry leaders and experts."

~Andy Levison,
Steadicam Operator, California

"On behalf of the Film Production Program at Confederation College in Thunder Bay (conflix.com), I want to thank you for the *StudentFilmmakers* Magazine. It is really good. Our program is located in a small city, quite far from major production centres. Our students will eventually leave here for the wider world. For us, your magazine is a good window on the wider film making world. It's really good to connect our students through your magazine, with that wider world. Thank you."

-Dennis Austin, Professor, Film Production, Confederation College, Ontario, Canada

Make a Film

With No Bad Acting

By Jared Isham

One of the big problems with low budget or micro-budget movies is the acting. Not all micro-budget budget films have bad acting but many of them do and for good reason. Acting is hard and, like any craft, takes a lot of practice to become great at and when you are learning your craft you can't always expect highly skilled, well trained professional actors to want to jump on your project, especially when you have no money. This is a dilemma that even experienced filmmakers face, and it doesn't always come down to the acting, but more of the interpretation of a character aligning with the vision of the director.

The cost of quality acting puts a lot of us micro-budget filmmakers in a tough spot when it comes to making a film that we hope will compete with more established, well know filmmakers and help us to transform our filmmaking passion into a filmmaking career. I don't have anything against actors, in fact, I found my passion for making movies from starting off with acting in high school and college. I found that I don't particularly think I am the best actor, which is why I prefer to do my work behind the camera. Acting is tough and I have mountains of respect for anyone who chooses to step in front of the lens and perform for the world to see. But as a filmmaker, it is sometimes tough to learn how to craft performances that are memorable on screen.

Fortunately for indie filmmakers working on getting their movie made or starting out their career, there is a style of filmmaking that should not be overlooked -- documentaries. You may think that it is not really the same thing as a scripted movie. Yes, but storytelling is storytelling and if you are able to learn how to tell a story with a documentary you can use that to make even better movies that are scripted.

Another factor to consider is costs. The saying that practice makes perfect has never been debated as far as I know, but if you consider the expenses that go into making a scripted film you might wonder how you would be able to practice. That is where documentaries come in. If you find a topic to make a documentary about, then start asking for interviews and put them on the calendar. Paying for interviewees for participation is not usually considered necessary and sometimes is frowned upon for reasons of tainting the interviewee's answers to questions, so you shouldn't worry about how much it will cost to make a doc. All you need is a camera and you're good to go. So, you shoot some b-roll, get appearance releases for people that are in your footage and conduct a few interviews and you have the makings of a movie.

By this point, you are wondering what any of this has to do with avoiding bad actors in your film, right? When you interview someone and they are authentically themselves, they are not acting, what they are saying is actually them. When you do this, you have zero bad acting in your film because you have no actors. Use it to study character, to learn how to edit beats and moments into your film, focus on the escalations that the subject faces and at the end you have a film that you can post YouTube, submit to a festival or sell to V.O.D. platforms. The world of film is all about being creative and creativity will allow you to use these little tricks to come up with a new way to tell stories and eventually if you are new to this, you won't worry about bad acting because you'll know who to cast in your film that will align with your vision -- that's a topic to discuss.

Resolve's Cut Page

Cut Quickly, Move Faster

By Bart Weiss

For the last several years, Blackmagic Design continues to be one of the first stops at NAB, and in recent years, it hasn't been for the cameras but for the innovations in DaVinci Resolve, the color grading that has morphed into a full-fledged editor. Each year, it gets more robust adding sophisticated sound editing (Fairlight) and graphics (Fusion). This year, they have new cameras and new black boxes and new features all over Resolve, but I am most excited about the addition of a new page in Resolve, the Cut Page.

For those that have not worked in Resolve, instead of exporting or opening up another app, when going to different functionality, you just click to go to another page in the app. This is quick and helpful.

They promote the new cut page as a way for those that need to cut quickly to move faster. Especially for those doing Youtube videos, and that might be true, but I think the cut page can be useful for anyone editing to help get your first cut together, then you can just hit the edit page to do more detailed work.

The interface of Cut Page is designed to work with a laptop, which is again a great way to start your edit.

Looking at the interface, you can see two timelines. The top one shows you the whole project, and this is not just another view, it is an active timeline that you can trim or edit more shots around in. It's a nice way to see the whole as you are working in the weeds.

The second timeline is unusual and might take a moment to feel comfortable with. Here, the cursor stays in the middle of the screen and the clips move around it. Once you get used to it, it works well.

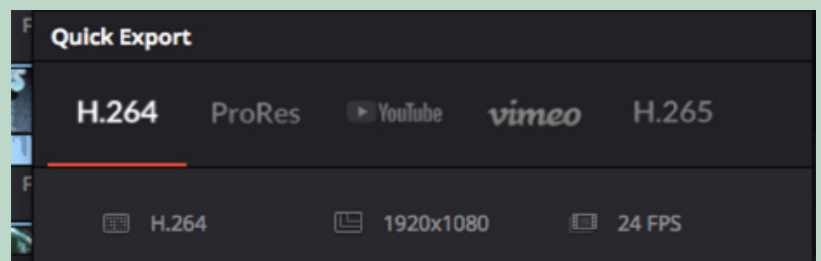
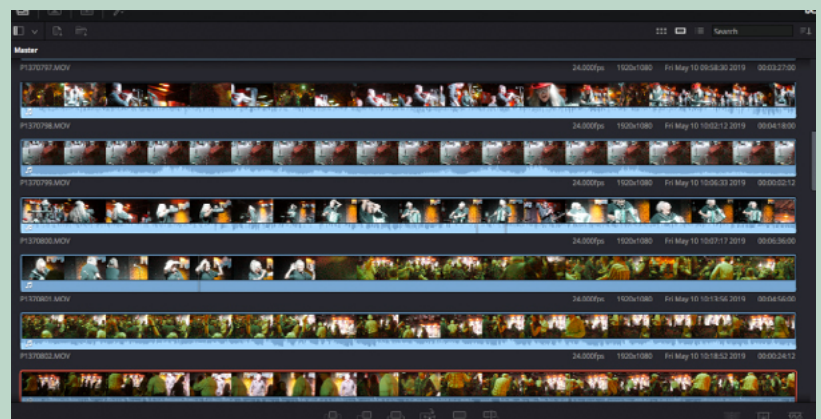
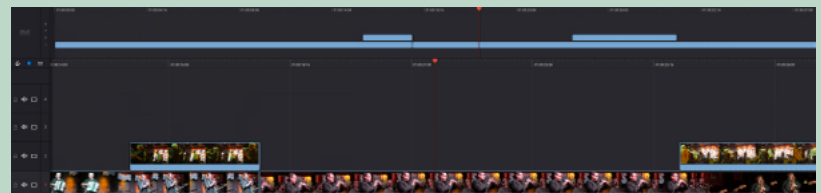
The top left window, the bin area, has three ways to look at your footage. A clip icon view, a list view and a filmstrip view that will look familiar to FCP X users (as is much of this cut page). You can quickly skim through the filmstrip to get where you want.

On the top right side, you can see either the source clip, the timeline, or something special. Tape view. In this mode, you can see all of your footage at once. This can be really helpful to find something specific or to remember something you forgot about. This fixes something Walter Murch talks about in his book, "In the Blink of an Eye," (which I strongly recommend you all read,) where he discusses how digital video editing loses the moments of finding footage while running through the film or tape reel to get the footage you needed. It was a pain and time-consuming, but occasionally looking through the dailies to get to the end of the reel, helped you fix a problem. And now this button gives us that back if we want it. Another great thing about this is, I just got back from a shoot, and I could get a quick view of my dailies. It even adjusts the speed of playback depending on the length of the show.

You can get a lot done in this page. When you hit the tools button, you can scale and crop, stabilize, retime a shot, dynamic zoom (Ken Burns effect), and more.

There are many other niceties like being able to export right out of this page, and a smart insert mode that will insert the shot closest to where the cursor is, so you don't need to be right on it.

But this is a public beta you are working on, so there will be bugs around, but there has already been an update, and Blackmagic Design is very aggressive in updating software and taking user input on features. It's also worth noting that there is a very robust version that is free. And at that price, it is worth exploring.



Smart Phone Filmmaking

Distribution for Mobile Filmmakers

By Susy Botello

How many times have you attended a film festival and wondered what it would be like to be a part of the festival? I don't mean, as a volunteer or staff, I mean a part of the show. You make a movie and are featured during the festival...wait, make a movie? Don't let that hold you back.

You hear Hollywood filmmakers and influencers say it all the time, "Just get out there and make a movie." Your mind says, 'Yah, right. Loan me your camera!'

We all know it takes more than a camera to make films but that is the first thing that comes to mind. Allow me to lower the barrier for you. Allow me to share with you an opportunity that I have been building for more than ten years so that anyone who really wants to make films can do it without the worry of buying or leasing cameras. If that sounds good to you, then you are invited to jump in and actually "do it" and start turning your stories into films today. I sound like I am selling you something, but I am not. I just want to make you aware of something you already have in your hand right now. That's right, your smartphone has a camera.

You've heard about it by now. Few people have not. Ten years ago, I launched a film festival in San Diego which held the doors wide open to any human being on the planet who made a short film using any brand or make mobile phone camera. Last month, we held our 8th edition of the International Mobil Film Festival™ aka International Mobile Film Festival. We showcased 29 short films and 2 full-length feature films. All shot with smartphones. And that's not all!

Some of the films used nothing but the phone. You may be picturing those vertical videos you see on social media right now, but no, we don't accept vertical videos. We believe they have a place and I think, at times, they are appropriate. We don't accept for a number of reasons, but one is that we are putting the films on a big screen.

You have, by now, heard of "Tangerine" by Sean Baker. It was picked up for limited distribution by Magnolia Pictures and was shot with an iPhone. So, without further ado, I bring you to your stories!

Whether you imagine, experience or wish to share a good story, the opportunity is in your hands. Literally.



Aside from 31 films, we had about a dozen or more filmmakers from different places and countries come to the festival. They connected through their passion. They networked with each other. They supported each other during the festival. And then, they shined like stars, because in this film festival, they are stars.

The festival takes place annually during the last weekend of April. This year's festival took place on Saturday and Sunday, April 27 & 28 at Marina Village Conference Center in San Diego.

A beautiful venue on the edge of the marina with amazing sunsets and boats on the bay.

The festival's first day screened all the films in both the Shorts and Feature competitions. It opened with a feature film by Steven Peterson, shot with a Samsung phone, Consensus Reality. Steve came from L.A. The day closed with a feature film by Ross Perkins, shot with an iPhone, Mad House. Ross came from Australia with the film's producer Kimberley Hart. All the films brought thrills, tears and joy to the audience. Both features were about 1 hour 23 minutes in length.

Sunday brought two VIP Special Guest Speakers: Filmmaker John Woosley came from Missouri to share a full workshop seminar on mobile filmmaking. He shared the gear and the apps he used for a film we featured, which was too long to compete, Alex and the Firefly, a teen romance shot with iPhone.

CK Goldiing came from the UK to share his viral film, 61 Hugs, a film about a challenged over thinker, which was filmed in one take with his Samsung smartphone. He presented his film, with a Q & A session where many in the audience were moved to share the film on their social media.

It also included a Q & A panel with most of the attending filmmakers followed by an exciting Red Carpet Extravaganza! with all the filmmakers. The filmmakers were escorted by the Star Wars Steampunk Universe group. The filmmakers rocked the red carpet. The cheers were heard throughout the marina. It was a unique experience which brought lots of excitement and great photos. The youngest filmmaker was 19 years old and the oldest was 84 years old.



The awards ceremony was also exciting and brought many cheers.

Here are the results:

"Mad House" by Ross Perkins won Best Feature Film
 "Upend" by Blake Worrell won First Prize
 "The Deepest Cut" by Alexandra Guillossou won Second Prize
 "Dulcinea" by Francisco Lidon Plaza won Third Prize

Imagine you are attending this film festival and now you realize that you have the camera they used to make their films in your hand. Imagine what that does for your confidence.

This festival is open to all ages, all countries, and any human being who makes their films using their smartphones. I want to share this with all of you. I believe you can do it too.

You can find out more about the film festival and be a part of it. Submissions for the next edition open June 19 for the short film competition of 1 to 5 minutes and the feature film competition of 40 to 90 minutes. Are you inspired yet?

DISTRIBUTION FOR MOBILE FILMMAKERS

When it comes to distribution, consider this: Everything you do on your smartphone is set to share online. Everything you record and shoot with your camera can be seamlessly shared and distributed online.

When you shoot with a DSLR, or another traditional camera (not your smartphone), you are most likely going to bring it into your editor and the file may be huge. When you shoot with 4K on your phone, you can convert it to HD and your footage will be almost undistinguishable when compared to any other film after editing. I bet you think you "have" to shoot in 4k or upload 4k videos online. That will be more work than you need. That will end up causing you headaches and that, is not always the best option when you take the reality of distribution right now.

What is your purpose when it comes to distribution? "Tangerine" was shot with an iPhone 5S and was picked up by Magnolia Pictures for a limited distribution deal. It had a run in selected theaters worldwide and was distributed online on Netflix. Just think about that for a moment. How many independent films are there in the world? How many of them end up in the way "Tangerine" by Sean Baker did? If you do the math, which I hate—but using common sense at least, you may realize there are a limited number of really good films shot with smartphones versus thousands and thousands shot with DSLR and traditional cameras.

The competition for distribution is huge. Everyone is trying to reach the top in Hollywood. Everyone wishes to make a fortune with their films. Perhaps even make a living. How many films do most independent filmmakers complete in one year? Think about the size of the production and the budget that entails. Then you end up putting everything into one film for that one magic shot.

Typical mobile filmmakers can make more than one film in a year. Once you have a plan for post-production, production is fast. Crew size, budget, time and gear is reduced. Within days or a few weeks, you have your film "in the can." Let your editors take it from there and carry on making films. The wonderful thing is that you can meet the criteria to send them to Amazon, Apple and Netflix; to name a few.

But here is the fun of being a filmmaker. What you save in production you can use to find film festivals to distribute your films to. Get your films out to mobile film festivals like ours to get exposure with a live audience. There are now more film festivals following our lead and accepting feature length films. Submitting to film festivals like ours doesn't cost much. But if they are located somewhere you may enjoy, if their festivals have a good reputation with attending filmmakers, then get over there and take advantage of the opportunities they offer. Ask to be in the Q & A Panel. Perhaps a presentation after your film or before your film screens. Network with industry people in attendance. Film festivals run throughout the year. Your film can be screening in a different film festival once a month or more.

There are also online options you cannot turn a blind out to. That includes VOD for you. If you have a Vimeo Pro account, you can set your film as VOD. If you want to premier your film on YouTube for a limited time, you can screen your film there and remove it later. Promote it on social media before it's finished to build interest and a following. Get your actors involved in promoting your film.

You can self-publish a book and you can self-distribute your films. Brush up on social media and use hashtags. But the best thing about making movies with your phone is that you are saving money. You are saving time. You are saving a lot of the work compressing video and formatting. MP4 works for many mobile film festivals to get your film on a big screen. You can shoot and edit short films to build your brand as a storyteller and filmmaker—and build your audience yourself. All you save is reducing your production and workflow and guess what? By reducing all that work and effort you increase your potential and your audience. You need to think about what you really want and go for it. You now have the tools to do it yourself. One day, after you have built up your reputation and the world is talking about your films, the traditional distributors will be reaching out to you to sign a deal. Meanwhile, make movies with your smartphone and have fun doing what you love to do!

"Thank you very much for the quality magazine and web site!

It is, by far, the most awesome resource that I use, not only for my personal development, but also reference and encourage my students at Bowling Green State University to subscribe to. I read several magazines and web sites each month in video and film production. I can honestly say that *StudentFilmmakers* is by far my favorite publication and web site. The articles are insightful and very useful, the resource links are invaluable. I look at all the sponsored links and have made purchases from several of your sponsors that I had not visited prior to seeing them advertise on your web site. I regularly look at the classifieds and have successfully sold some of my equipment that I was not currently using. And, very importantly, I have found several people to network with. Excellent job! Thanks for all you do to make it the success that it is!"

~Jose A. Cardenas, SOC, IATSE Local 600, Bowling Green State University, Department of Telecommunications

"StudentFilmmakers Magazine reaches far more than film schools. The articles help people making movies of any age. So many professionals still learn and this magazine's insights cater to all the newest trends in filmmaking, lighting, and technology. When you have contributor's like John Badham who directed 'Saturday Night Fever' writing for *StudentFilmmakers*, it attracts filmmakers from every level. I've been subscribed for over 3 years."

~Peter John Ross, Independent Filmmaker, Sonnyboo.com

Step Away from Your Work To Do Better Work

By Mark Simon – Storyboard Artist

I'm often asked how I deal with artist block. I don't really get artistic block because I give myself mini-breaks whenever I can.

There are times when I can't come up with a way to break down a scene. I just don't see it. Rather than sit and stare at my Cintiq, I get up and change my surroundings for a few minutes.

When I'm storyboarding on "The Walking Dead," I'll step outside and walk over to the sound stages and step through the latest sets. I even brought my electric skateboard to the studio a couple of weeks ago and took a ride through the backlot.



The other day I was storyboarding on a stop motion film and was about to start on a new sequence. I had most of the shots figured out, but I really wanted to come up with at least one really kick-ass shot to enhance a scene.

So, I took a mini-break, grabbed my camera and stepped outside my office and photographed nature. I'm lucky. My office looks out at a forest. I have deer and all sorts of creatures just outside my door. Seeing even a little chipmunk gives me a thrill.

So, what happens when I take these little physical and artistic breaks?

My mind keeps working on the problem. But I've broken the negative loop. Sometimes I get inspired by something I see. I get a fresh perspective.

But I always come up with the answer I'm looking for and I'm refreshed when I get back to my desk.

Staying glued to your desk is not a good idea. Give yourself little breaks. Even if it's just 5-10 minutes. Grab a coffee. Talk to someone. Take some pictures. Walk in nature. Love on your dog. Do a mini-workout. Take some photos or risk your damn life (or in my case, risk your drawing hand).

So, step away from your work during the day. Stepping away keeps the blocks away.



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"I've only recently been introduced to StudentFilmmakers.com and the publication, and I must honestly say, **the website and magazine is a candy store full of goodies about filmmaking!** I've subscribed to various publications pertaining to my craft as filmmaker and editor, and find myself skipping over articles. But with this publication, I want to take in the entire issue. Not only is it cutting edge, it is highly enjoyable, which places it a huge step ahead of the others. Thanks, *StudentFilmmakers*, for such a great product!"

~Joe Andolina, Independent Filmmaker in collaboration with ThreeOneSeven Pictures

"Just renewing my subscription (Can't wait to see the cinema H2O article!) and wanted to pass along a couple of 'real world' observations about the magazine. **I get a lot of complimentary subscriptions to industry-related publications, but *StudentFilmmakers* is one I'm happy to actually pay for.** I've spent about 10 years working professionally in television production and I can tell you one thing for certain: We're ALL students. Every market has it's share of competition, and it's a perpetual learning curve to stay as many steps ahead of them as possible. Just being creative with your content isn't enough. Sometimes it's equally, or even more important to be creative with the processes and techniques you're using to achieve what's being asked of you.

***StudentFilmmakers* has proven more than once to be a valuable resource** for getting familiar with those processes and techniques, and discovering new ones. Many Thanks for a great publication."
~Jon Stephens, Producer/Editor, WTAP Creative Services

How a Meaningful Theme Creates Drama

By Scott A. McConnell

Michael Connolly is one of the best mystery-crime writers today, many would say the best. His novels are best sellers and have been adapted for film and television. His series, "Bosch", currently plays on SBS in Australia and on Amazon Prime in the U.S.

A former *Los Angeles Times* police reporter, Michael Connolly has created two major heroes, each with his own series of novels set in Los Angeles. One series features LAPD detective Hieronymus Bosch, the other defense attorney Mickey Haller. What helps make both crime series emotionally evocative is Connolly's use of a theme that focuses on the psychology of his protagonists. Connolly poignantly dramatizes how this detective and lawyer cope with the ugly world in which they work: Los Angeles's dark side of murderers, rapists, serial killers, and psychopaths, as well as the opportunistic and morally vacuous civil servants who control the City of Angels.

More specifically, what lifts Connolly's gripping mysteries to a higher level of drama is the nature of his heroes' internal conflict. In multiple of the Bosch novels, for example, this morally driven LAPD detective struggles against being overwhelmed by a bitter, malevolent view of life. That is, of falling prey to the belief that the world is an ugly place dominated by human evil. By adding this philosophical-psychological problem for his protagonist to overcome, Connolly adds greatly to the drama of his Bosch stories. The development of this theme gives depth and meaning to the story's characters and events and significantly enhances the readers' enjoyment of the novels.

Let's consider just one way that Bosch's psychological conflict enhances his adventures. When Bosch fights and defeats evil (criminals and bureaucrats!) his victories buttress his benevolent view of the world, that justice and the good can succeed. But this work-related success is not enough for Bosch to retain a positive view of life against his daily contact with malice and evil. Bosch also fights to sustain a benevolent feeling about life by searching for and experiencing goodness and innocence in the larger world. Bosch primarily achieves this through romantic relationships and most importantly through loving his daughter Maddie. How Bosch uses this filial relationship as an antidote against malevolence is especially evident in "The Narrows", where Bosch hunts a former FBI profiler who has become a serial killer. Much of the novel's action takes place near Las Vegas, where Bosch's toddler daughter lives with the detective's estranged partner. After making the harrowing discovery of a tortured victim in the serial killer's lair, Bosch rushes back to Vegas. In a revealing scene, the detective visits Maddie and sits beside her while she sleeps. In the darkness, Bosch stares at little Maddie then holds her hand, as if drawing innocence from her, as if refueling his soul to protect it against the devils that can infest the world.

Bosch's struggle between a malevolent and benevolent world view clutches you in suspense: Will Bosch succumb to bitterness or will he hold onto innocence and love? Typically, at the end of a Bosch novel, detective Harry Bosch has vanquished evil in the world and often found joy or solace in the arms of a lover or through interactions with his daughter. Connolly is not the first detective writer to have his hero suffer the acidic effects of too close a rubbing against evil. Connolly, however, makes the fight against a malevolent view of life an essential part of his hero's soul and actions in the world.

Michael Connolly's novels are riveting crime stories. They are suspenseful, explode with clever twists, and exhibit brilliant, resourceful and moral heroes. But it is Connolly's focus on the psychology of his heroes that adds a psychologically insightful and emotionally touching dimension to his stories. When we enter the dark world that Connolly creates, this writer-come-moralist grips our hand as he leads us past the evil he depicts. But with his other hand, Connolly places our palm on the cheek of an innocent child. Connolly condemns evil *and* reminds us of the potential innocence and beauty of our fellow human beings. That is writing to profoundly enjoy and which we all, especially writers, can learn from.

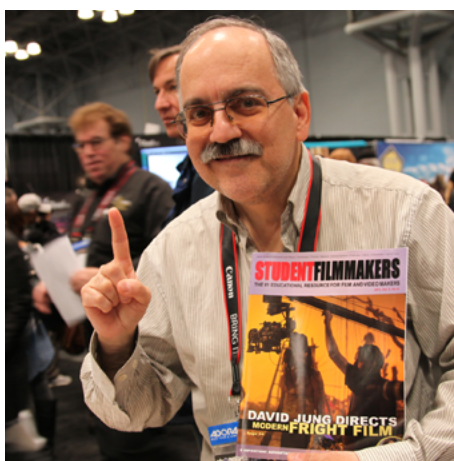
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CINEMATIC TECHNIQUES

Love of Art, of the Land, and of Adventure

By Pamela Jaye Smith & Monty Hayes McMillan

Visual media requires thoughtfulness, talent, and skill to make effective use of all the innovative as well as traditional gear available to today's filmmakers.

Our book, "Show Me the Love! All Kinds of Love for All Kinds of Stories," includes a section on Cinematic Techniques in each chapter. Here we'll explore three of the categories: Love of Art, of the Land, and of Adventure.

From Paniflex cameras to iPhones, from jib arms to drones, from prime lenses to panoramic cameras, you can make your story-telling more effective by utilizing some of these visual approaches.

ART

Art can alter our state of being and take us outside the daily concerns of physical existence. It can bring us peace, inspiration, contemplation, exaltation.

For grand architecture like a Gothic cathedral or pyramids you want the feeling of it towering above us with looming, impressive and often oppressive power. The same goes for skyscrapers and sci-fi cities.

For a character who is the creator of these edifices (the architect, the pharaoh, the investor), show us their perspective from the top looking down.

Watch Leni Reifenstahl's controversial, "Triumph of the Will," for a superb example on the dynamics of photographing architecture and large spaces.

360 shots and virtual reality can be very effective for exploring both exteriors and interiors.

Werner Herzog in "Cave of Forgotten Dreams" uses intimate camera work to illustrate the effect of ancient art illuminated in the shadowy dark.

The arts are wonderfully complex and contradictory worlds within themselves. Placing your characters in those turbulent streams of creativity, power, pride, temptation, defeat, or victory can create compelling dramatic conflicts and resolutions.

LAND

One of the most basic loves people have is a love of their homeland. By bringing out this aspect you can deepen your characters and give them even more to care about, fear to lose, fight and even die for.

Shooting "on the deck" (on the ground) conveys a close connection between your character and the land or it can convey the character of the land itself. Dry barren earth, rows of plowed furrows, sprouting plants, small animal holes, the spongy carpet in a three-canopy jungle, crunching snow, etc.

Environmental shot: wide angle, hold it a long time, let the land speak for itself, fuse the viewer into the land, allow your audience enough time to absorb the entire environment. David Lean was very good at that, particularly in "Lawrence of Arabia". Werner Herzog also covers Arabia in "Queen of the Desert", with wide long shots as well as rising drone shots revealing the scope of hidden

rock labyrinths. Terence Malick in "Days of Heaven" and "The Thin Red Line" made the land itself a large part of the story.

Sweeping aerial shot: moves along the land in a visual caress. "Out of Africa", "The English Patient", "The Lord of the Rings", "Wings" (the first film to win an Academy Award for Best Picture), and "Battle of Britain". Overlaying color footage of current lands with LIDAR beneath-the-surface scans can reveal lost architecture.

Because it is such an integral part of being human, bringing this love of land into your characters makes them more sympathetic and identifiable.

ADVENTURE

Since the first hominids dropped down from the trees to explore the savannahs, we humans have distinguished ourselves by a desire to know what's around the corner, "over the hills and far away", and even beyond the stars.

The wide environmental shot also works well here. Thelma and Louise driving across the US. The airplane in the sky. The queen riding the dragon. The ship tossed on the vast sea. Give us the human in the midst of that which embodies the adventure.

The close tight shot of putting on the uniform, picking up the tools. Taking on the mission.

The Leap. Stepping into the unknown. Jumping out of the airplane. Diving into the ocean. Or Kirk and Sulu free-diving from the Enterprise to save the planet Vulcan.

Start close in on the heroine, zoom out to the whole area affected by her actions. Reverse that.

Sustained coverage of the huge monstrous processes of nature unfolding before our eyes sucks us into the experience much more effectively than jerky cuts can ever do. The rising tsunami, the encroaching forest fire, the erupting volcano – all deserve long holding shots that make you want to break away and run. The tension is increased by holding the length of the shot.

Love of Adventure takes us to other times and places, opens our minds, moves our hearts.

These stories inspire us to dust off our passports, pack up our pith helmets or space suits, and set out for the vast unknown.

The sense of adventure that started humans out on our great migrations tens of thousands of years ago will always draw us to the extremes. In your stories a protagonist with a sense of adventure might well save the human race.

"Space... the Final Frontier. These are the voyages of the starship Enterprise. Her ongoing mission: to explore strange new worlds, to seek out new life forms and new civilizations, to boldly go where no one has gone before."

~Star Trek

Different types of stories call for different cinematic techniques. Your viewers want both familiarity and surprise. Explore and practice with both the traditional visual tools and the new technologies to bring your creativity more to life and enhance your audience's experience.



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The Best Camera in the World

Ready to Capture the Moment

By Todd Grossman

We've all heard it, 'the best camera in the world is the one you have with you'. But is it true?

Behind the adage is the simple idea that if you don't have a camera on you, you won't capture 'it'. But what is 'it'? No, not the trans-dimensional shape shifting clown. 'It' could be the perfect stock footage moment you came across one afternoon downtown. Or that surreal sunset you need to shoot for today's snap or Instagram post. Or you're on set shooting a narrative short film or even *Transformers 17*, and you see an opportunity to capture a unique angle during an action scene, but you need another camera (seriously, look closely and you'll see GoPro shadows clearly visible during the final battle in *Transformers: Age of Extinction*). Regardless of your 'it', there's truth in all of these examples. As a filmmaker, at any given moment in life, you'll find yourself ready to capture a moment, and whatever you have with you, will get the job done.

Now if time permits, there are even more cameras available to us as filmmakers than ever before. From the never-ending debate of RED vs Alexa, to the rise of DSLR and Mirrorless (such as the highly anticipated Sony A7S III) you'll find an ideal tool for nearly every moment. On top of that, if you're feeling nostalgic, you could shoot on good old-fashioned film with the few remaining greats that still do; such as Quentin Tarantino and Christopher Nolan. If the softness and surreal quality of film sounds appealing, I strongly suggest the Keanu Reeves documentary *SIDE BY SIDE* which breaks down the analogue / digital divide through interviews with countless legends in the industry.

In recent years, I've had the privilege to shoot a variety of action projects with companies ranging from BlueRock Creative and 87eleven to various film studios. On the one end we've shot smaller digital spots such as pro skateboarder Kilian Martin's *EDGE*

OF THE WORLD. That was captured on simple Go Pro Hero 7's, an A7s II mounted on a Movi gyroscopic stabilized gimbal, and aerial moments on a DJI Mavic Pro drone. On the higher end we shot pick-ups for John Wick and numerous commercials, such as the ARCH Motorcycles campaign, which we captured on the ARRI Alexa, Alexa Mini, and a proprietary heavy load drone. In each case, the camera was chosen specifically for the project.

Ultimately, everything we've shot had a distinctly different look. Some of which was born out of choices we made in prep. Location choices, framing, cast, lighting, and performance, are just a few of the very choices you may find yourself making on projects. However, in all cases, there were times when we could have swapped cameras for a similar result. One camera manufacturer might boast a higher resolution, while another boasts less compression... but when push comes to shove, you have to choose how a final image looks to the naked eye, to really decide what best suits your project.

Many filmmakers choose cameras based on specific project needs which can include camera size, sensor size, dynamic range, color accuracy, frame rates, post workflow, and other technical merits. For action I generally prefer a faster FPS (Frames per Second) so I can snap into slow motion for that just right moment. When filming 7-Time AMA Supercross Champion Jeremy McGrath, I knew there would be fine particles of dirt flying in the air, so shooting high speed to grab those surreal moments was the right choice. With Arch Motorcycles, we had its founders Gard Hollinger and Keanu Reeves racing through canyon roads with several stunt riders, but we knew filming a motorcycle riding in slow motion often just looks like the rider is 'driving slowly', since there are none of those particles. So, we shot a standard 24 FPS.

In the end, we used a variety of cameras on every project based on what best suited our needs. However nearly any camera could have done the job in most cases, which is why, the best camera in the world, will always be the one you have with you.

How to Kick Off a Film

Where Do You Start?

By Richard La Motte

If you want to be a filmmaker, where do you start? Well, it's different for all of us, but here are some things to think about.

If you want to express an idea, you're following in the tradition of those first people, thirty-four thousand years ago who took the time to use black and red color to write and draw on the cave walls of France and Spain, and by doing so, leave us a notion of their humanity. Why did they bother to do it? Because they wanted to record their thoughts or ideas or observations. The same as us today.

The real beauty of their work can be found today in some film makers. A lack of self-consciousness (Authenticity). A portrayal of the essential (simplicity is elegance). The realization of a fundamental principle of illustration (the eye goes to contrast).

But of course, in film we have a couple of other dimensions, movement and sound through time. Our story format is longer and more complex. So how might we organize our thoughts to attack this process?

The first thing in Film is Story. There are tons of books on how to write screen-plays. But, what makes for a good story? I know people have suggested various paths in the construction of genres with plots and sub plots, but is there any one basic idea that serves as a starting point? Maybe. I think it was Rod Serling who said something like: "There are only two plots – the good guys and the bad guys get their just desserts." – Good wins, evil fails. If you think that's too simplistic, analysis just about any movie or book you've ever enjoyed. Chances are the good guy (or gal) starts off as the underdog, faces tremendous obstacles, and goes on to win the day.

Why does this story-line win time after time? Because it's life affirming, and people, being alive and facing obstacles in their own lives, like to see other people win.

Of course, other formats are possible. We used to joke that a 'Cinderella' ending was a 'Hollywood' ending, and an ending where the hero didn't win was a 'New York' ending. As for 'Message' movies – I think it was Louie B. Mayer who told his writers, "If you want to send a message, call Western Union."

"Message" films can work at Film Festivals to show sensitivity and style, but generally not in the marketplace. So, before picking story material, think about your distribution and sales. I know that might sound crass, but they call this the 'Film Business' or the 'Entertainment Industry', and the best way to raise financing is to be able to show how you can return a profit.

Let's say you have your script. Now what?

Production planning is the key to everything. Where you spend and where you save. Permits, logistics, rentals, purchases, accounting, scheduling and budgeting. Don't 'Blue-Sky'. The three departments that most often cause cost overruns are: Set Construction, Transportation and Costumes. Why? Because today you can shoot a small film on your I-Phone, and feed everyone with ready-made platters from Cosco, but you still might need to spend money on those above three areas. So don't be tempted to ignore them.

Okay, what next? John Ford once said that he considered every scene he shot to have three parts: Scenic, Set, Scene. Background, Shooting Set, and Actors. Background is the world your story inhabits. The Set is the primary story-telling place. Actors are the story-telling vehicle.

Because you're making a 'Moving Picture' you have to pay attention to illustration – still pictures. How would you draw the scene if it were the cover of a book? What would be the story telling ingredients as visuals? How would they be composed? Lit? How about the 'Pose and Gesture' of the actors, or their wardrobe? What would you have the audience see that supports what you're having the audience hear? This includes anything that contributes to your production value.

Storyboards might help in that process, even roughly drawn ones because they help you fill the space on paper before you actually have to fill that space in a viewfinder. It can stimulate ideas you can prepare for in advance, instead of last minute thoughts that might hold up production.

In the end, filmmaking is a decision-making process, be deliberate and honest with yourself about the numbers – and good luck.

FROM OUR READERS

"Love the depth and variety in *StudentFilmmakers Magazine*:"

Good writing from knowledgeable people on interesting topics, great articles that fill the gaps in my production know-how.

Looking forward to the next edition!"

~Scott Osborn, Writer/Producer/
Director/Composer, Obelisk Group,
Austin, TX

"I've been a big fan of

StudentFilmmakers for years,

as we never stop learning this craft and there are always new things to learn. The first time I saw this magazine was in some Gear Expo in LA around 2007. I love the magazine, the articles on this magazine keep our feet on the ground teaching us very practical things we already knew or we didn't. It's also glad to see that the magazine is available in digital format to be able to carry my collection anywhere. The quality of the magazine (design, pictures) and the content of the articles is amazing and well researched, comparable to industry standard magazines such as American Cinematographer and Filmmaker. I'm always recommending this magazine to people who want to go to film school or who are already working in the film industry. There is always time to keep learning.

– Juan Vela, Independent Filmmaker,
Los Angeles.

"I've never been much of a magazine reader, but **I love your magazines and have read every article.** It is very educational and informative. Your articles are direct and to the point, and there's always something new to learn from them."

-Zhibo Lai, Filmmaker, ReelLight Films,
Silver Spring, MD

"As a high school video production teacher always looking for real world applications in the video/film industry to present to my students, **I often use *StudentFilmmakers Magazine* as my textbook and as a springboard for each student to continue their individual explorations** into specific areas of interest. After receiving the first issue, I was pleasantly surprised to find that the term "student" is used broadly by your publication. In my best estimate your magazine is saying we are all students of the medium: from graduate school filmmakers to independent producers to 'big Hollywood types'. Your magazine covers it all. Keep at it!"

-Marty Hoban, Video Production Teacher, The Hun School of Princeton, Princeton, New Jersey

"*StudentFilmmakers Magazine* is a huge hit with our students. In class, I quote from it, and students often refer to specific articles they have read."

-Steve Grossman, Assistant Professor of Cinema, The New England Institute of Art, Brookline, Massachusetts

"We display it in our main faculty suite and down at our equipment office. It is usually gone in 2-3 days! **Students have told me they find the information useful and look forward to each issue.**"

-Lorene Wales, Chair-Cinema Television, Regent University, Department of Cinema, Television, Virginia Beach, VA

"I have been teaching filmmaking for over thirty years and have received and subscribed to many film making magazines. **Yours is the best I have ever read for aspiring film makers.** Keep up the good work."

-William Arscott, Professor of Art, Stephen F. Austin State University, Nacogdoches, Texas

Development Phase

Our Roadmap

By JC Cummings

Once you get a 'green light' the next phase begins.

Among various convoluted phases of any production process, DEVELOPMENT, is one of the most important. As elementary as it sounds, defining who, what, where, when and how becomes the very foundation to a successful project.

When I teach or lecture, I often call the development phase our 'Roadmap' steering us through the maze adding "tangible" to what we're about to create. Since, creativity is an intangible and scripts are words on paper, putting thought, design, elements and a storyteller's concept together in the very beginning allows a team to focus and 'stay the course'. Now, we're ready to create a visual interpretation of a storyline. Also, when we get to a pre-production phase, we'll have a comprehensive checklist to work from.

Scripts define our direction for constructing. Yes, we'll need to construct our productions with every detailed element (known at that time) necessary to move to the next category. Productions during this phase are filled learning fundamentals while absorbing the storyline.

Many showrunners begin with creating an image in their minds while reading each line of a script. Location or soundstages, talent, prop's, possible equipment to be used to get a shot, budget, production staff numbers, all types of "what if's" allowing them to put the complex puzzle together. After a few readings of the script are complete, you'll have a wide image of what the story is about and how to bring it to 'life'.

Now, we need to deal with production ideas. Do we need name talent or do we consider talented newcomers giving them a break? Do I shoot in a controlled environment on stage or deal with on-location issues. Who could have the 'eye' or emotion to truly pull off the emotional shots? Wait...what about the budget? Should I worry about this now or wait until I get into pre-pro?

Unfortunately, in a producer's mind or showrunner's thinking, the answer is all of the above. Remember, development is our roadmap, however we structure it, we'll need to follow it communicating the process with our team. Brainstorming with the team is very important.

Let's take a look at our proposed budget. With our roadmap in place we can begin to sculpture a rough budget. The budget is the fuel that will drive our project. If the budget is limited (which most are) we'll create a figure to help us define our next phase "PRE-PRODUCTION". If you get stuck attempting to clarify budgets, move on to a basic schedule of events including drawdowns of funds, bookkeeping procedures and other business-related functions required.

There are plenty of software apps to help with organizing business activity. Remember to keep "business" in the project so you don't go over budget. Check out incentives, talk to film commissioners examine your options for example: where to set up the base of operations until we have all finances secured.

Do the legwork, work your deals, it doesn't have to cost a huge amount of money, dedicate enough time, deep thought, keep strong notes and track of your timecard so you get paid for your efforts.

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small TALK

by Tushar Unadkat



I was fortunate to get Business Edge from Rotman School of Management at University of Toronto where I learned valuable lessons on how to achieve success as an entrepreneur. One important lesson is on small talk and this is especially helpful for those working on films or other independent projects.

Feel free to engage in small talk with me by following me:

twitter.com/tusharunadkat
[instagram.com/tushar_unadkat](https://www.instagram.com/tushar_unadkat)
[youtube.com/c/TusharUnadkat](https://www.youtube.com/c/TusharUnadkat)
[linkedin.com/in/tusharunadkat](https://www.linkedin.com/in/tusharunadkat)
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What is small talk?

Any informal type of discourses that does not cover any purposeful subjects of conversation is **small talk**.

In 1923, Bronisław Malinowski, an anthropologist whose writings on ethnography, social theory, and field research were a lasting influence on the discipline of anthropology, first studied the phenomenon of **small talk** and to describe it, coined the term “phatic communication”. He explains that an interaction with a tightly focused topic or **purpose** is also generally not considered a conversation.

Narrowing these points, an expert wrote that “Conversation is the kind of speech that happens informally, symmetrically, and for the **purposes** of establishing and maintaining social ties.” As a marketing professional, I agree that communications serve five major purposes and that it **informs, express feelings, imagine, influence, and meets social expectations**. Each of these purposes is reflected in a form of communication.

Although the purpose of **small talk** is slight beneficial, it is but an effective strategy to manage the interpersonal distance and considered a bonding ritual. **Small talk** outlines the relationships between colleagues, friends and novel acquaintances, and serves multiple functions.

They say, every so often **small talk** goes a long way toward presenting yourself as pleasant and likeable. You do not need to like someone in order act friendly with them at work. **Small talk** is an **important** workplace skill and a starting point for building camaraderie and trust.

Shyness can hold people back as you tend to avoid public situations and speaking up or due to so much chronic anxiety. If you are shy, take comfort in knowing that you are far from alone, 4 out of 10 people consider themselves shy. But here’s the good news: You can overcome Shyness. It is possible to break through with efforts, time and a desire to change. **Small talk** is one of the best remedies to overcome shyness.

Usually in the entertainment industry we are classified as liberal thinkers and open to any conversations, however, safe topics for **small talk** are weather, arts & entertainment, sports, travel, or even hobbies amongst others. While, **stay away** from talking about, religion, politics, financial, death, personal gossip, etc.

Be mindful that pointless **small talk** would be a blunder. It is because mastering this art can not only provide you with personal gains but even with professional benefits. It helps to create a lasting impression.

Small talk may inspire new ideas and may help building lasting relationships.

One of many techniques to succeed is parallel thought exercises to generate ideas. As a beginner, I would scribble topics in a book and think of the extent of **small talk** it can offer. It can be useful to practice it with a friend and then carry it forward to those you meet on a new project. This way, you may refine the content and soon you will find out that it is an effective and useful way to develop and extend your networks.

Small talk is a practise of opening a conversation. Making **small talk** intends to offer you contacts with friends, industry professionals, colleagues and others that last for a longer time period.

Unquestionably, these talks update you everything about the present and as a result, you become more focussed and attentive to everything that is going around you. Not to be limited only to the smartphone, this interaction can help you gain knowledge from other intelligent minds in the simplest way.

Small talk is important because almost everyone needs it. Whether you are planning a new film project ahead or you want to be in a network of filmmakers, or you are signing a crucial business contract, all this requires your ability to engage in **small talk**.

As per the connoisseurs, your pitch is essential for your project to flourish. Even simple, innocuous chats with the investors are important. Producers are always hunting for resources who can think out of the box and **small talk** tips help you think the other way.

Small talk is an ice breaker that leads to opportunities unexplored and it can lead to a host of outcomes, from a merely pleasant exchange to the signing of multimillion-dollar business deal.

Small talk makes you smarter, as I read in a recent study by researchers at the University of Michigan. They found that social and friendly interaction can boost our ability to solve problems, like working a crossword puzzle might. That’s because, as Oscar Ybarra, a psychologist at the university explained: “Some social interactions induce people to try to read others’ minds and take their perspective on things.” The results highlight how social functioning can enhance core mental capacities.

Creative professionals benefit more out of **small talk**, as it can not only help develop new interesting characters for your film script but also helps you consistently work in vivid environments, projects and accept variety of crew members.

Cinematic Employment vs. Cinematic Art

By David Worth

It's simply not realistic to think that just because you've graduated from one of the best film schools in America or, for that matter from any of the other outstanding film school elsewhere on the planet, that you're going to find work in the "professional film industry."

Very often getting any kind of a foothold, even on the bottom rung of the ladder in Showbiz, can be as much "luck & timing" as being born the son or daughter of Cinematic Royalty. Just being at the right place at the right time wins out over a film school degree nearly every time.

Back in the day, I wanted to become a Cinematographer and attempted to join that Guild. The answer was "No!" Because at that time Local 659 was a "father to son closed shop" and you were either on the inside looking out, or on the outside looking in. I was most definitely the latter. However, by being at the right place at the right time that all changed... But that's another much longer and more convoluted story.

Allow me to pose a question: Isn't going to film school becoming more like reading all of the redundant books on Writing? It's been said, that if you need a book to become a writer, then you're probably not a writer. So it follows, that if you need a film school to become a filmmaker, then you're probably not a filmmaker! It follows that, if you're **driven** to write, then you'll become a Writer. If you're **driven** to make a film, then you'll become a Filmmaker!

What's the worst that can happen? Whether or not you go to film school? Not getting a job in Showbiz. Right! But today you have the option of creating your own job because the technology is there for you to do exactly that. You can get a DSLR & a GoPro, Wireless Microphones, Adobe Premier &/or FCP &/or Di Vinci Resolve and After Effects... Ta-da! Now you've become your own studio and you can "Green Light" your own productions.

The next question is ARE YOU DRIVEN to do it? If the answer is "Yes!" Then get some like-minded friends and colleagues together, only work on the weekends so nobody has to quit their day job and make whatever movies you want to make! Don't try to compete with Big Hollywood Productions instead if you choose to become a Cinematic Artist, here are some of the possibilities that are open to you...

"The Artist explores philosophical questions about being in the world, heightened awareness of the mysteries that surround us and favoring intuition and poetry over rationality and logic. They consider the process of making art by playing with scale, the ephemeral quality of materials, the nature of time and language, and the relationships between the subjects that they create. The Artist proposes that that works of art can inspire us to contemplate and to question, offering more possibilities than certitudes, more curiosities than arguments."

Doesn't that sound much more creative, dynamic and doable than just another Horror Film or Thriller or Rom-Com or Web Series? Today we have the tools to Google views of distant universes shot by the Hubble telescope, or find virtually any fact about any subject known to man with a key stroke, yet how seldom are we actually awed by anything? Is there any awe and wonder included in the content of our films, or for that matter in the content of any of the films that we see being produced today?

Out of the billions of years of our planet's existence, just consider what's happened during only the last 25,000 years:

- (A.) 21,000 years ago, the last glacial maximum occurred, with sheets of ice as far south as the Great Lakes, and covering what today is known as England.
- (B.) 18,000 years ago, early humans began to cultivate plants, and herd animals.
- (C.) 8,800 years ago the first cities appeared.
- (D.) 5,500 years ago, the wheel was invented, along with writing.
- (E.) 540 years ago, the printing press was invented.
- (F.) 130 years ago the telephone, and 60 years ago the computer!

In less than 18,000 years, everything that has become our planet's culture, our religion, our countries, our politics, our language, our education, our science, our music, our crusades, our inquisitions, our wars, our holocausts, our exploration, cultivation, and eventual the ravaging of our own planet, has occurred.

And here we are today with our iPhones and iPads, with the world at our fingertips, all knowledge is at our command.

But how often do we as Artists and Filmmakers pause to contemplate that what we call "civilization" is barely 18,000 years old, and we are standing on a planet that is 4.5 billion years old? A planet whose life forms have survived several nearly total extinction events, as well as millions of years of volcanoes and ice ages, and realize that the Earth will also survive the brief and fragile carbon footprint of our civilization.

Let's put some Awe, Amazement, Wonder and Mystery into our Art and Craft as Cinematic Artists & Filmmakers!

Show Me Something Awe Inspiring!

The Making of the Film *Out In The Woods*



By Emily Peacock (19); Freshman at New York Institute of Technology; Major in Global and Electronic Journalism, Minor in Culture and Literature.

"Out In The Woods" is an independent short film that is a fantasy/horror genre made in 2018, by French filmmaker Simon Doutreleau. The film was inspired by the world-renowned novel, "Pet Sematary," (1983) by Stephen King. It follows the lives of two parents (Louise and Anna Spencer) after the death of their son, Thomas. Both parents are struck by grief after their son's passing and are desperate to fill the void they are feeling in their hearts. The father is tempted by an ever-present darkness that is pushing him to take extreme measures to bring his son back. The film is exciting, eerie, and enchanting.

The screenplay took over one year to write by Doutreleau, who was a student at the time. The goal was to produce "Out In The Woods" with his university, ESRA in collab with Stonestreet Studio, but, "it got rejected by the school, they said it was 'too ambitious' of a film for a student," relays Doutreleau. So, he waited until he graduated to put his film into motion. It took almost two months for Doutreleau and his team (a mix of French exchange students and American production professionals) to get everything together to start filming. They managed to find an isolated house in Connecticut that had the right spooky surrounding forest to shoot at. Quickly after finding the perfect location, actors were gathered by Doutreleau via backstage.com with the help of his casting director, Marvin Zana and line producer, Nicholas Thau. Props were homemade by Nahema Hafiane (art director) and rented from State Supply.

After renting the equipment from ARRI Rental, shooting began. Included in their equipment was one ARRI Amira camera, one jib arm, tracks, SkyPanels, and a lot of other lighting materials. They had the house they were filming in and the neighboring house where they got to sleep during the ten days that they were filming. The locations included a cemetery, a church and its basement, the Connecticut house, and the surrounding forest, all of which reside in the small town of Sharon, Connecticut. The director of photography, Julien Grandjean, is spoken highly of by Doutreleau, who says the picture would not have been the same without Julien. The team of 25 would average a good 12 hours of work each day, sometimes they worked "way more than 12 hours" if they had a particularly difficult scene, says Doutreleau. The special FX were a big part of production, as there had to be the illusion of rotting skin and demonized hands in the film. These looks were achieved by Evilise Martinez.

Finally, after all the scenes were recorded and equipment had been returned, post-production could begin. Many scenes incorporated special effects. The music was carefully chosen. The abundance of shots was reduced to 130 scenes, which make up a total of 24 minutes and 59 seconds. The editing began in May of 2018 and was finished in November of 2018. The post-production was the most difficult part of the making of this film, as part of the team had to return to France and others stayed in New York. One of those editors being Yann Brogard, who oversaw communications between the people in France and America. I got to speak to Brogard, he says, "finding the balance between doing what was best artistically for the project and getting it done in time was quite an achievement for everyone involved in post-production." Files were sent back and forth to be looked over and changed for months, but the end product was worth it. Doutreleau says that the team became a family on set, and they all enjoyed the work so much that it was almost as though it wasn't even work at all.

"Out In The Woods" is an exceptional short film with a stellar storyline. The scenes flow smoothly. The special effects are incredibly well done. (The demon hands look exceedingly life-like!) I was on the edge of my seat watching this movie play out, and I am sure the people that will be seeing its debut at the Chile Film Festival (FIXION Fest, Fantastic & Horror Film Fest, Santiago, Chile) will be at the edges of the theirs, too. You can watch the trailer for "Out In The Woods" here: <https://vimeo.com/309517182>

CREW LIST:

Written and Directed by Simon Doutreleau
Producer Olivier Doutreleau Valérie Doutreleau
Line Producer Nicolas Thau
Unit Production Manager Joseph Gonzalez
Location Manager Diana Benson
Director of Photography Julien Grandjean
Camera Operators Julien Grandjean / Thomas Desmedt
First Assistant Operator Agathe Denis
Second Assistant Operator Yann Brogard
Gaffer Richard Ducros
Key Grip Léo Galtier
Art Director Nahéma Hafiane
Assistant to the Art Director Jean Charles Gaignant
Props Master Nahéma Hafiane
Props Assistant Jean Charles Gaignant
Script Girl Eva Breyse
First Assistant Director Paloma Amadeï
Second Assistant Director Harry Georges Walters
Sound Engineer Adrien Halfon
Boom Operator Julien Laborie
Makeup Artist Eviline Martinez
Editor Yann Brogard
Music by Alexandre Méaux
Sound Editor Fabien Lagarrigue
Sound Designer Damien Drouillard
Sound Mixer Fabien Lagarrigue / Damien Drouillard
Sound Recorder Julien Laborie
Color Grading Tristan Westeel / Julien Grandjean
Title Paul Jouchet
Poster Designer Kévin Mokhovski
Special Effects Yann Brogard
Mastering Yann Brogard



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Framing Your Shots as a Visual Device

5.

Give Your Shots Added Depth with a Professional Gloss



EVEN A MORE DYNAMIC SHOT IF A
FGD SILHOUETTED FIGURE IS

Drawings by

JOHN HART

Here are many examples from film classics, with a nod to the history of art and masterpieces. It's just a question of the professional placement of your actors and surrounding objects within a chosen environment. Remembering as you compose your shots to use the "can't miss" rule of thirds, either vertically or horizontally.

In **ILLUST. 1**, I am deliberately using rough concept sketches to show as an example that you can still storyboard for your project even if using limited drawing skills. In **ILLUST. 1**, the **golden principle of thirds** must be applied to any visual presentation in film or video. Using wide screen ratio 2:1 aspect ratio. **A.**, Horizontally, 2/3 Sky, 1/3 Land; or, **B.**, 2/3 Land, 1/3 Sky. See also **C.** and **D.** for **forest placement**.

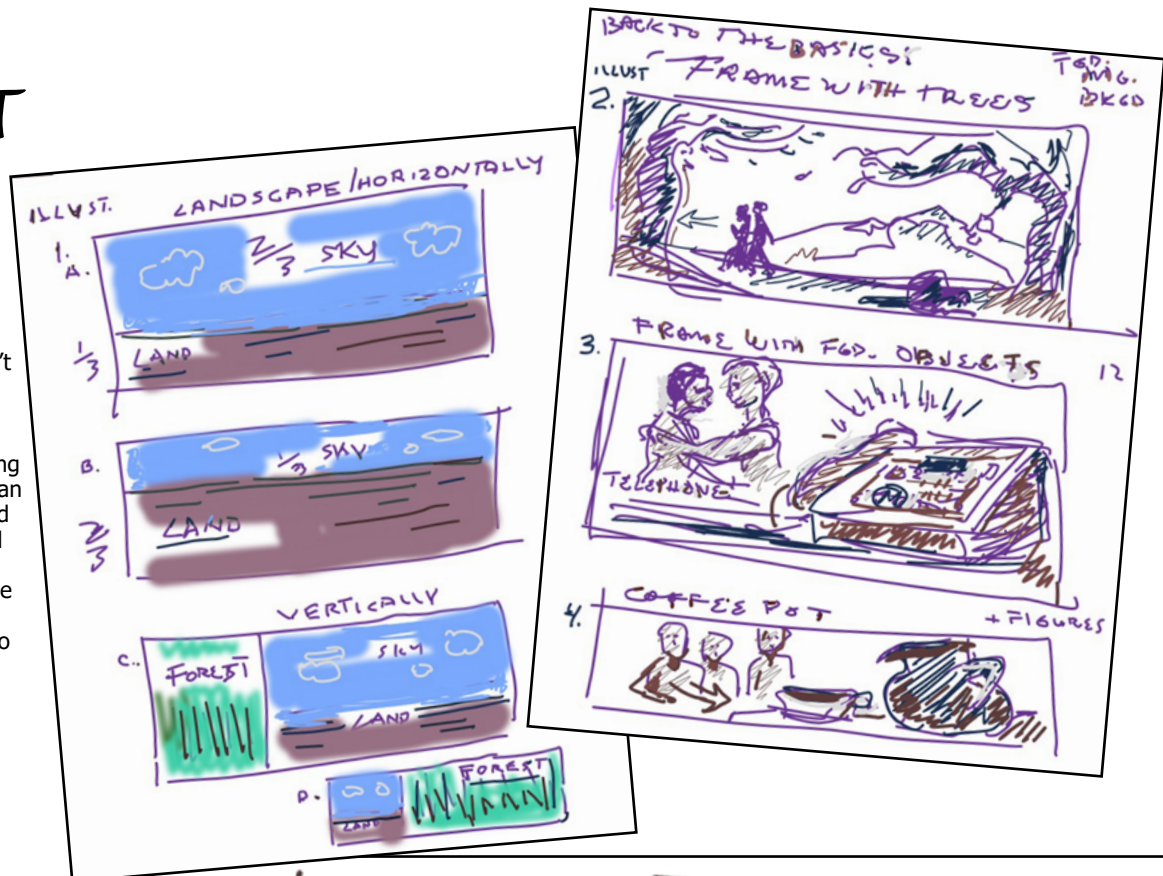
An idea for foreground framing is **ILLUST. 2**: framing your shot with trees. In **A.**, a traditional device as it is, it frames the action on left of frame and gives the images depth, while attracting your viewing audience to the center of interest.

ILLUST. 3 shows framing with foreground objects here with a telephone a la Alfred Hitchcock (Dial M for Murder, 1954). In

ILLUST. 4, we have chosen a coffee pot as the FGD (foreground) object to frame your shot. Calling attention to the "Ring" and cueing reaction from the actors on left of frame.

In **ILLUST. 5** we see the text and narration for a scene in "The Mummy" film, starring Brendan Fraser. Prime examples in these two illustrations are the use of large monuments in the foreground, framing advancing armies. The **H.L.** reference is the **horizon line** from which the one-point perspective advancing army is drawn. See if you can indicate the central vanishing point frame which those one-point perspective lines emanate?

In the bottom **ILLUST. A.**, the addition of a close-up (C.U.) fighting soldier in the extreme FGD, or FGD plane adds even more drama and depth to the advancing action scene. Finished frame now contains multiple plane action. A FGD plane, a MDG (mid-ground) plane and BKD (background) plane.



Simply examine each frame to see in some - where the actor moves from FGD framing to a BKD position. The use of arrows to indicate action or movement of actors and objects within the frame is an accepted visual tool/device.

Kim Edward Welch

Filmmaker, Composer, Publisher and Editor of Broadcast/Film/Television trade publications, StudentFilmmakers Magazine, the #1 Educational Resource for Film and Video Makers, and sister publication, HD Pro Guide Magazine, the HD Production Resource for Professionals.

The StudentFilmmakers.com and HDProGuide.com websites, magazines, and workshops bring together professionals, independents, and students of all levels into one integrated resource and network community. Never Stop Learning. Never Stop Networking. www.studentfilmmakers.com www.hdproguide.com

David Worth,

MA has a resume of over forty feature films as a Cinematographer 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 worked with indigenous crews from Hollywood to Hong Kong, Bangkok to Indonesia, Italy to Israel, South America to South Africa, Bulgaria to Romania and back again. He has taught filmmaking at Chapman University, USC, UCLA and at The Academy of Art University in San Francisco. His three textbooks include, *MILESTONES IN CINEMA 50 Visionary Films & Filmmakers* and are all available at kdp@amazon.com. David's website is www.davidworthfilm.com.

Kristen Baum

is a Sundance Fellow and LA-based film composer. She works on a broad range of film projects with collaborators all over the US and Canada. Find her music on soundcloud.com/kristen-baum. Visit her website at kristenbaum.com, or check out her film credits at imdb.me/kristenbaum. Photo credit: Daniel Kresco.

**Mark Simon**

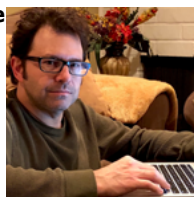
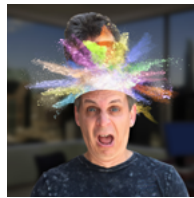
is a 30-year storyboarding veteran amassing nearly 5,000 production credits. Recent credits include the movies *Woody Woodpecker* and *Chucky 7* for Universal as well as *Dynasty* and *The Walking Dead*. www.Storyboards-East.com www.MarkSimonBooks.com

David Landau

has worked 30 plus years in lighting for features, TV, commercials, documentaries, industrials and music videos. He teaches lighting and cinematography at Fairleigh Dickinson University, shoots low budget features and corporate videos and summers as one of the gaffers on Project Runway. Five-time Telly Award winner for lighting and cinematography and an IATSE Local 52 member, he authored the book "Lighting for Cinematography" (Bloomsbury Press). Written by David Landau and David Bennett Carren, check out new book, "Next Level Screenwriting," (Focal Press).

Filmmaker Shane Stanley,

author of the popular new book, *What You Don't Learn In Film School* is a lifelong entertainment industry insider, who has worked in every aspect of the business, covering a multitude of movies, television shows and other successful projects. He has been a steady earner in film and television since he was in diapers with a career that started in front of the camera at 9 months old and grew into a life of a multi Emmy Award-winning filmmaker spanning over three decades. To order a copy of Shane's book and for his seminar schedule, visit whatyoudontlearninfilmschool.com and www.shanestanley.net.



As a member of the Directors Guild of America **Dean Goldberg**

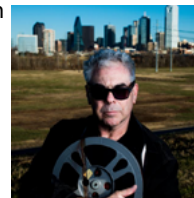
wrote and directed television episodes for "Missing Reward," "Hard Copy," "A Current Affair," and many other shows featuring dramatic recreations. From 1997-2007 he was creative director and president of Wolf at the Door Advertising. An associate professor of Communication arts and Film Studies at Mount Saint Mary College, he is also co-director of their new Technology and Digital major. Professor Goldberg directed, "Newburgh Rising: A Photographers for Hope Journey," about a group of photographers from around the globe led by photojournalist David Burnett.

David K. Irving

is currently an Associate Professor and former Chair of the Film and Television program at New York University's Tisch School of the Arts. David has directed six feature films and dozens of documentaries. David is the co-author of the award-winning textbook, "Producing and Directing the Short Film and Video."

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

**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 and the University Film & Video Association. Fred holds doctorate, graduate, and undergraduate degrees in filmmaking; has published more than 200 technical articles along with a textbook, instruction manuals, and hosts an educational website. Fred instructs location recording and post-production sound at Calif State University Northridge.



Filmmaker and published author, USC alum **Todd Grossman**

directed the ARCH MOTORCYCLES campaigns featuring Keanu Reeves, 2019 spots for YAMAHA GUITARS and created the animated spy series MAX AND MIDNIGHT. He also produced the feature thriller CORBIN NASH, re-shoots for JOHN WICK, and co-founded SEMAPHORE BRAND SOLUTIONS (a leading influencer marketing agency). He's currently in development on three feature films and continuing to travel the world for various project. www.instagram.com/tgfilms www.imdb.com/name/nm0343725/ www.bluerockcreative.com/todd-matthew-grossman

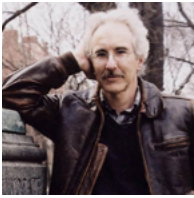
**Richard La Motte's**

filmography as a costume designer includes "Gods and Generals", "Goonies", "The Wind and the Lion", "Man Called Horse II", "Rambo III", "Island of Doctor Moreau", "Stolen Women", "Shaughnessy", "Geronimo", "Crazy Horse", "Tecumseh", "Broken Chain", "Army of One", "Hounds of Hell", "Stitches", "The Legend of Two Paths", "Hawken", and "Indians". For over 40 years, Richard has worked and traveled extensively with experience ranging from Producer, Director, and Writer to Technical Adviser, Costume Designer/Supervisor, and Production Designer. He is the author of the book, "Costume Design 101: The Business and Art of Creating Costumes for Film and Television."



David Appleby

is an award-winning documentary filmmaker and professor at the University of Memphis. Since being awarded a Kellogg Fellowship in International Development in 1987, his work has concentrated on community development issues and civil rights. His films have aired nationally on PBS, ABC, A&E, and Starz.
www.memphis.edu/communication/people/appleby.php

**Jared Isham**

is an independent filmmaker. His first feature film was the western "Bounty" that was distributed by Lionsgate on V.O.D. and his second film was the faith-based family film "Turn Around Jake" released by PureFlix Entertainment starring Michael Madsen and Jen Lilley. He is a partner and creative director at Stage Ham Entertainment, LLC., (www.stageham.com) a freelance T.V. & commercial editor and shares micro-budget Filmmaking tips and advice on his website www.jaredisham.com.

**Tamar Kummel**

is an actress, writer, director, and producer in New York City and Los Angeles. She's easily found on IMDB, social media, and anywhere that serves food. She's usually wearing purple. She recently completed her first feature documentary, "Fighting For Allergy Free Food." Along with 2 companion books. More information on current projects, clips, resumes, and books on her websites:
TamarKummel.com,
CaptainPurpleProductions.com,
FightingForAllergyFreeFood.com,
TamarKummel.blogspot.com

**John Hart**

is an adjunct instructor at NYU and teaches Film Intensives and Storyboard Seminars. He is the author of "The Art of the Storyboard, A Filmmaker's Introduction," (Taylor & Francis, 2nd Edition): Communicate your vision, tell your story and plan major scenes with simple, effective storyboarding techniques. Using sketches of shots from classic films, from silents to the present day, in his book, John leads you through the history and evolution of this craft to help you get to grips with translating your vision onto paper, from the rough sketch to the finished storyboard. More than 150 illustrations from the author's and other storyboard artists' work illuminate the text throughout to help you master the essential components of storyboarding, such as framing, placement of figures, and camera angles. John has 120 tutorials on YouTube at www.youtube.com/user/MyPinto21/.

**Susy Botello**

worked in video production professionally as a scriptwriter, videographer, editor, and media manager. She also worked on short and feature films in San Diego and Southern California beginning as a production assistant, script and continuity supervisor, director of photography and production coordinator. Beginning her career in the industry professionally in 1998, she realized storytelling is filmmaking. Her passion is storytelling and empowering storytellers with mobile filmmaking. She founded and launched the first International Mobile Film Festival in San Diego in 2009, for only films shot with mobile phones to put them on a big screen to build respect and prominence for people making films with smartphones. She is the owner of S. Botello Productions™ with the International Mobil Film Festival™ and other programs. She is an inspirational and enthusiastic public speaker at events sharing mobile filmmaking and had panels during San Diego Comic-Con International 2016-2018. including a podcast focused entirely on mobile filmmaking.
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 Twitter: @SusyBotello and @MobileFilmSD
 Instagram: @MobileFilmSD
 Facebook: @MobilFilmFestival and @SusanBotello

**"Show Me the Love!" authors Pamela Jaye Smith & Monty Hayes McMillan**

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, web series and VR projects. MYTHWORKS – Applied Mythology; Mythic Challenges – Create Stories that Change the World; Alpha Babe Academy.
www.pamelajayesmith.net
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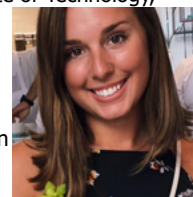
Internationally celebrated, multiple award-winning media personality and art critique,

Tushar Unadkat is CEO, Creative Director of MUKTA Advertising and Founder, Executive Director of Nouveau iDEA (New

International Dimension in Entertainment & Arts). Tushar earned more than 30 film credits that includes working with Oscar-winning producers as well as India's National Award-winning directors. Currently, Tushar is in pre-production of a feature film based on Hindu mythology inviting investors to support his project.



Emily Peacock is a freshman at the New York Institute of Technology, studying global and electronic journalism with a minor in culture and literature. She has a passion for traveling and the arts, as well as spreading information. Her dream job is writing about intercultural communications across the globe.

**John C. Cummings**

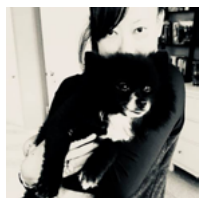
has become a sought-after Producer, Director, Showrunner, including a production logistics specialist in the film and television industries. Mr. Cummings continues to share his knowledge with over 40 years of "on set" production experience and storytelling as an independent producer. Beginning in radio for a short time, moving to film and broadcast TV, where his career lead him to acquire rights and later producing a successful nationally syndicated children's series. As success continued, Mr. Cummings was contracted to develop other television projects for broadcast networks and outside companies.
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**Scott McConnell**

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