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2019, Vol. 14, No. 3 US\$9.95



PATRICK ^{P5}
CADY, ASC



DIRECTING P3
KEEP THE PACE



DIRECTING P20
MUSIC VIDEO PRODUCTION



PETER LEVY, ASC P10

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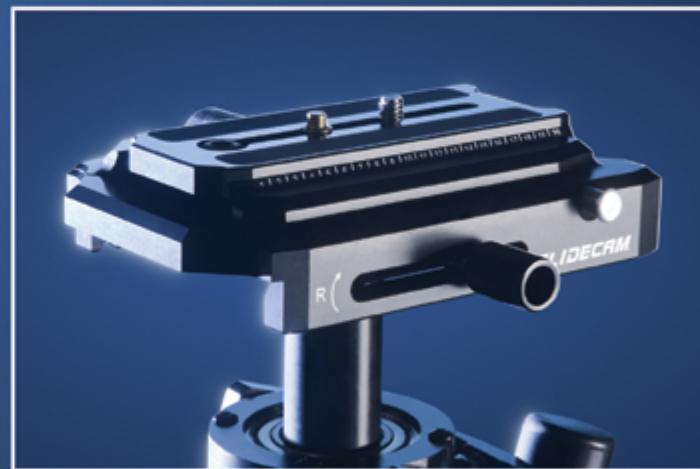
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Keeping Pace with the Director

Rhythm, Volume, Negative Space, Speed and Intensity

By David K. Irving

"Each picture has some sort of rhythm which only the director can give it."
~Fritz Lang

Pace is an important property in a film because the success or failure of a project in many ways is dependent on it. When the credits roll or the lights come up in a theater, you, as an audience member experiencing a well-paced film, can't believe it's over. You are satisfied. You are thrilled. You want more. You got your money's worth.

Going to the water fountain during a film, refilling your popcorn, looking at your watch, glancing around to see who is in the theater, checking out the sticky substances on the floor— all are tell-tale signs of a film's poor pace. A poorly paced film is a struggle to sit through. Even if the story is interesting, the acting engaging, the photography and the sets captivating, without proper pacing, an audience may become antsy. It is this ephemeral quality of pace that hooks the audience.

What is pace? It is rhythm, volume, negative space, speed and intensity all rolled into one. Comedy illustrates the effect of pace because a comic beat either works or it doesn't. A joke, or a funny bit of business, depends on the way it is told or performed. The precision of comedy relies on effective tempo. A joke told too slowly is boring and the listener may leap ahead and guess the punch line. A monotone is boring. If the speaker laughs all the way through the story, or tells it too fast, it is ruined. Storytelling is an art in which the manner of telling is as important as the story itself.

The director rehearses a scene until it works. Only then does he or she roll cameras. As the sole audience member on set, the director "knows" when the take is right, when it is instilled with the proper pace. This intuitive knowledge comes from a thorough understanding of the arc of the story, which is important, as most film projects are shot out of continuity. Editing is a boon for the director in that it affords an opportunity to adjust, tweak and/or shape the final pacing of a beat, scene or entire film.

So, how do you teach pace? Examples and practice. Screening a well-paced sequence and reviewing in detail how and why it works demonstrate effective filmmaking. So too can a poorly paced scene define in a glaring fashion what not to do. But noting surpasses the experience of discovering proper pace by directing a sequence with a good text and fine actors.



Director David K. Irving on the set of 1989 comedy, horror, sci-fi feature film, "C.H.U.D. II," starring Brian Robbins, Bill Calvert, Tricia Leigh Fisher, and Robert Vaughn.

ON THE COVER:
Patrick Cady, ASC and an 18K.
On the set of *Bosch*, Episode 509.

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WELCOME

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A Conversation with Patrick Cady, ASC

Camerawork, Lighting, and Transitioning from DP to Director

Exclusive interview conducted by Jody Michelle Solis

StudentFilmmakers Magazine:
Can you talk about your experience as a cinematographer who has occasionally transitioned to the director's chair?

Patrick Cady, ASC: I've been a cinematographer for 20 years now. I was an electrician and Gaffer, and before that I learned filmmaking at Ithaca College. It was a very hands-on school, we learned on film, there was a lab at the school, we learned all the technical things, light meters, cutting on film, we basically studied films and made films. So, I thought knowing all the mechanics was being a director. It wasn't until I got to see John Sayles and Roger Deakins ASC, BSC working together on *Passion Fish* that I started to think that maybe all the stuff I was interested in, of to do the lighting, framing, exposure... that visual part of the storytelling, was Cinematography. Then I went to NYU's Tisch school and met other students that had run theater companies, and realized they were directors.

Several years ago, I got to direct an episode of *Rectify* (Season 4, Episode 1) and I concentrated on performances and working with the actors. *Rectify* was a very good opportunity to approach that because it was a performance driven show. If the scene got better as we went into it, and it changed the blocking, we would go back and reshoot the master. Not that we had to do that very often,

but every now and then, that would happen. The show was that committed to the performance.

Transitioning from DP to director, the biggest help in the 20 years of being a Cinematographer has been getting to work with amazing directors. From Karyn Kusama and Bethany Rooney (who wrote "Directors Tell the Story," with Mary Lou Belli) to fellow DP turned Director Ernest Dickerson, I've shot for great people. They just epitomize the prepared, calm director, that person who makes the whole crew get really happy when

they show up. And when you've gotten to work with directors like that, you start stealing little lessons from them just by watching the way they do things. And that's really, really helped when I've had the chance to direct.

It's been very exciting getting to do more directing lately because it's going back to who I thought I wanted to be when I was an undergrad student. And it's exciting how many things (and technologies) have changed, and how many things have stayed the same.

Continued on Page 6 ▶



Bosch, Episode 505. Director: Patrick Cady, ASC.



The "pod car" that is used on Bosch.



Bosch camera crew setting up a shot of an airplane for Episode 507.

◀ Continued from Page 5

It comes down to doing your prep. That (I call it homework) makes you comfortable with the story you're telling and now communicating everything is easier. You can let people contribute and create the environment where everyone's making the movie together.

I got to see that at work, really early, with John Sayles. His book called, "Thinking in Pictures," was required reading at Ithaca. It's about making a movie called *Matewan*. The approach that he illustrates through that book, and just in the way that he writes that book, you get the sense that, oh, a film crew can be filled with very nice people who really know their jobs very well and collaborate with each other. And then I got to work with John, and to see him practice what he preached. That was just the way his sets felt. And then getting to shoot "Girlfight" for Karyn Kusama, and see her bring the same approach to her set and just to, early on, be lucky enough to know that a film set can be a collaboration where everyone wants to go to work every day, and everyone feels welcome, and everyone feels safe. I've been very lucky to have that my whole career, and I think it's really important for us to continue fostering

that exact approach. You need to know your job. You need to know what you're doing. But you also need to know you're working with a bunch of other people with valuable opinions, and someone's gonna have *the* right idea for a certain problem, and you've gotta be ready to hear it and welcome it.

StudentFilmmakers Magazine: Can you talk about your Primetime Emmy nomination [for Outstanding Cinematography for a Single-Camera Series (Half-Hour)] and your work on the episode "Hella LA" for the show, "Insecure"?

Patrick Cady, ASC: The nomination was a really big surprise and an honor. I had gotten on to the show, "Insecure", just because in Season 2, they had realized that they needed two cinematographers to alternate because they had so much location work. Ava Berkofsky was already in the middle of shooting Episode 3 of that season, and we alternated from then on, which meant I only shot three episodes. I came into the show and the look was already established by Ava. So, when I got nominated I realized it was just the luck of the draw of getting a really cool episode and the show being a great show.

StudentFilmmakers Magazine: Can you tell us about your role as producer for the documentary "Triviatown"?

Patrick Cady, ASC: "Triviatown" is a documentary about the world's largest trivia contest. It just happens to take place in my wife's hometown. I was fascinated with it, and I kept saying, oh, I should make a movie about this, and at one time, she said, "well, you should stop saying that and just do it"... which she has never said to me again because it took years to put together. So, I was putting it together, and I was going to be the director, and then, I realized I needed a co-director, and the perfect person to do that was my longtime friend, Brit McAdams. His first directing gig at VH1 was my first shooting gig at VH1, and we've been friends ever since. So, I coerced him to co-direct it with me. And we took a group of eight camera people and three sound people and a bunch of Mini-DV cameras, and we went and recorded the entire contest which was 54 hours long and generated almost 400 hours of footage, and then, spent the next two years cutting it down into a movie. It was really incredible and fun.

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The lighting around the bus for a night scene on Bosch, Season 5.



From Patrick's phone during Season 4. A Titan Crane with a 32' Hydrascope on it for a scene at Angel's Flight.

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We kind of screwed up the release by going with a smaller releasing company in the hopes of getting our money back to a couple people that had invested a few thousand dollars apiece, and we wanted to get them the money back. We had an option to go to another place, but we felt that they might claim to never making a profit, so we would never see any money for our investors. So, we should have just done that and gotten the movie seen. It would be nice if it can have a second life on a streaming site. I think it could have another life online.

StudentFilmmakers Magazine: Could you share with us your Top 3 Tips related to Camerawork?

Patrick Cady, ASC: Yes. The number one practical tip, and I have had hats made to say this ever since I was the cinematographer on the first season of "Cold Case", and that is to **Block, Light, Shoot** – in that order. It's always gonna seem at some moment like "we know the actors are gonna come in, and they're gonna be sitting here, and they're gonna walk from over there to over here". You think you can start lighting before they get out of their wardrobe change or whatever. You're gonna think you're getting ahead by lighting before you see it on its feet, and sometimes you're gonna get away with that, and other times it's gonna cost you a lot of extra time. In general, it's always faster to block it, then light it, then shoot it. It's my number one thing I teach and tell students to remember. We all get into those spots, we feel that we're getting behind and you can get a little jump on it, but if we don't know what the scene really is gonna be, and we haven't seen the performance from the actors, it's an easy way to lose time.

The second thing is that **story tops everything**. This is really my main overriding approach. I like when I'm prepping with the director, to ask some questions I think that the actors are gonna have. If I can get a really good feel for the story and I know what the director thinks that the most important parts of each scene are, then I know where to put the camera and how to light it. If we don't know those things, then we don't really know what we're trying to do. I think it's really helpful as a cinematographer to ask questions about the story you are trying to tell, figure out the why before you decide on the *how*.

I also think **it's important to prep visually and keep reminding yourself that you're not making a novel**. So, in reading scripts the number one note I give myself all the time is **HTS**, which stands for **How To Show**. So, it's common, and I can see why, and I don't



claim to be a screenwriter because I'm not, but it's common to run into moments where things get described that you can't actually see. Hence, *Tim's Niece walks into the room, she's upset with Tim*. Well, this reflects they're related to each other and how she feels. How do we show all that? That's why you need to know what the story's about, and then, prepping visually, you can help tell that story. You can think about transitions from scene to scene and how you can help counterpoint what people do with what people say. That's how drama really works.

StudentFilmmakers Magazine: What are your Top 3 Tips related to Lighting?

Patrick Cady, ASC: The first one is **Block, Light, Shoot**. [laughs] But also **if an idea is stupid but works, it's not stupid**. So, I've lit really dramatic scenes with a light bulb in a plastic paint bucket. If you don't have the money, please take consolation that the gear isn't always gonna make it at all better, your approach is gonna make it better. Good crew is better than great gear. Don't put your foot through it. Don't fix something that's not broken. And as a cinematographer working with a good crew, I think the number one thing to work on, is **explain your problems and not your solutions**. What I mean is, I came up as an electrician and gaffer, so I know the way I would fix something, but it's always better and invites collaboration (which is the reason we're doing it) if you say, "I want to send hard light through here, and then, have it feel like it's bouncing off the floor over here, so this person in the foreground will get a little glow on their face".

When you're talking with the director, and when you find out what she wants, what the scene is about, explain that same problem to the crew and they can help you find the answer and everyone's working toward a common goal.

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A Conversation with Peter Levy, ASC

Insights into Cinematography and Advice for Students

Exclusive interview conducted by Jody Michelle Solis

StudentFilmmakers Magazine: How did you get your start in filmmaking? Did you go to film school?

Peter Levy, ASC: I dropped out of high school at 17, and I tried to make a buck out of being a photographer. By the time I was 19, I did the stills on an independent film in Australia. I saw the cinematographer working, and I was like, *that's it, I want to do that, there's no question.* And for that, I'm very fortunate and very grateful, because at 19, there was no doubt in my mind what I wanted to do.

I became a documentary assistant working my way through the documentary world. I started shooting after about 6 to 7 years, which, in those days, was considered a bit audacious. You were expected to work your way up through the camera department for 10 or 12 years before you actually became a DP. But, in Australia, I was able to shoot music videos, commercials, and independent films. It was a long time after I was shooting that I called myself a Cinematographer. I believe that when you're a Cinematographer, it means you're a master of your craft.

In those days, I called myself a Cameraman. And it was a lot of years later—I was probably shooting for 8 years before I could look a cinematographer in the eye and say, yes, I am one too.

StudentFilmmakers Magazine: What advice would you give to students of cinematography and new graduates wanting to break into the industry?

Peter Levy, ASC: It's a question with no answer.



Peter Levy, ASC. Photo by Owen Roizman, ASC.

We've all gotten into the business by some different way or another, and no two ways are the same. In the end, the only real thing you can do is be a nice person who consistently does good work. After that, it becomes a crapshoot. Those two things you can control but the rest, I'm afraid, can just be dumb luck. Or, in many cases, bad luck. I really don't know. In the old days, you would go to the rental houses, and you'd find if a crew was prepping, you'd go and help them for free and just observe and talk and offer services for free. Enthusiasm and commitment are essential.

StudentFilmmakers Magazine: This year, you became the mentor for two female cinematography students, the winners of the Sun Cinematography Award, which serves to encourage female cinematography students. Can you talk about the challenges one might face when transitioning from the classroom to the field, and what advice would you like to give to student and next generation filmmakers?

Peter Levy, ASC: I advise my students that, when in a position to do so, **always hire people who know more than they do.** Don't fall into the trap of hiring your buddies and your classmates - you'll be working with people who have had the same experience as you and you're basically creating a feedback loop where you cannot learn any more. There are industry professionals who know their craft inside and out - learn from them. Most are proud to pass on knowledge.

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Another piece of advice I would offer is, **a camera is just a box that takes pictures. Don't worship the box, worship the pictures it can take.** A camera is just a piece of metal with glass, plastics and electronics, and it's not worthy of love or allegiance. It's just a tool. Don't get distracted by camera brands and too much technology, nor what this lens does or what that lens does. Certainly, you have to understand light physics, optical physics and some digital color science so you can use this knowledge to enhance your photography.

I would also advise to shoot whenever you get a chance. We used to say, shoot a million feet of film and then, when you've done with that, shoot another million. **Shoot, shoot, shoot. Get experience. Push yourself. Don't be afraid of your own sense of taste and style.** Put your thumb

print on your work. But, understand you've got to find that balance between pushing the envelope and delivering the goods you've been paid to deliver.

The professional world is based on financial and commercial considerations and, for the most part, your cinematic aspirations are not on anyone else's radar. As cinematographers, we take other people's pictures for a living - that, in essence, is our profession.

StudentFilmmakers Magazine: What changes in technologies have you seen over the years? Also, what are your thoughts on cranes versus drones, for example?



Peter Levy, ASC: I love the potential of drones. I think it's really important when constructing a scene is to let the audience understand where they are. A drone shot can do that simply, explicitly, quickly, and easily. The potential with drones is fantastic. I find I use cranes, in general, less and less, but that could be just the type of projects I've been working on lately.

I'm now 50 years in the business, and the changes that have happened in my time have just been phenomenal.

The transition to digital was a really steep learning curve. But, like I figured out in high school, I didn't think to learn calculus, I just needed to learn the phone number of somebody who knew it. Well...I do the same thing with digital capture and color science - I'm fortunate enough to be able to ask friends at vendors and rental houses about new

technologies and how I can utilize them to my advantage with my photography. There's a lot of technical noise out there, and as cinematographers, we have to learn to separate the wheat from the chaff.

StudentFilmmakers Magazine: Can you share with new and aspiring filmmakers some of your insights related to Camerawork?

Peter Levy, ASC: Camera movement...I've always believed you should **feel the camera's being sucked in by the energy of the scene.**

Continued on Next Page ▶

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So, any time I do a camera movement, I always want to go towards the emotional content of the scene rather than tracking away from it or tracking sideways because it gives you a moving shot. **Let the scene dictate how it wants to be photographed**, and you'll find that you want the camera to advance, to be drawn in by the energy of the scene. Pretty much any time you track away from something, you de-energize it. **Of course, there are exceptions, and there are no rules.**

StudentFilmmakers Magazine: What advice on lighting would you give to new, young filmmakers?

Peter Levy, ASC: A piece of advice I got when I was a very young cinematographer was, **you can light the actors any way you want, but let the audience see their eyes.** To this day, I always make sure there's something in the eyes. Now, of course, you can point out some of the obvious exceptions.

You look at Gordon Willis, ASC's work on *Godfather* – the lighting and every frame is perfect, but he wouldn't

let us see the eyes, and the effect is very powerful. But we're not all geniuses like Gordon Willis.

The next thing I would say, is a misunderstanding about fill light. My advice to give to students is, **don't think of the fill light as a light source. Understand what it is ... and what it is, is a contrast reducer.** The more fill you're adding, the less contrast you're getting. Don't give it a name. Don't call it a fill light. Look at the image, and just use that lighting unit to control the contrast that you want and to keep it consistent.

Another piece of advice I give is to **always mix up the color temperature of your light sources.** You look around the real world, and there's light of different color temperature everywhere you look. So, you don't use 3200K or 5600K as a rule, it's simply a reference point. People will find if they light with one color temperature, it will look very flat and boring, and won't contain all the complexities of color especially in the flesh tones. Color has emotional overtones - use them.



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Get Your Film Made

Use These **3 Jump Start Ideas** Now

By Jared Isham

Getting your film made, for many, can be packed with fear and uncertainty.

The obstacles, no matter how much experience you have, are great but the good news is that the bar to entry is getting lower. At this particular time in the history of filmmaking, the excuses as to why you haven't made your film yet are getting rather slim. So then, why haven't you made your film yet?

Money for me was one of the biggest obstacles I have faced when it comes to making a movie. The good news is that the previously mentioned bar to entry applies directly to the costs involved to make a film. You can get an entire camera setup that is at a level enough to show in theaters and even more qualified for online streaming with a price tag below \$1000. For me, one of the more costly elements of making a film is what goes in front of the camera. This is the biggest obstacle for me and has dictated a lot of my own story writing.

I've been on a quest to decrease the costs going in front of the camera. I have come up with a few ideas that I hope can help and inspire you to get your own movie made.

#1 Don't fixate on the equipment you don't have.

You should focus on the equipment you have instead of what you don't have, then figure out a way to tell a story that is complemented by your gear. In fact, it hasn't been until recently that theaters started using 4k projection. To get an accurate number of theaters using 4k may take a lot of phone calls to theater owners. We could also take a look at a couple of other films that are great examples of use what you have: "Tangerine" and Steven Soderbergh's film, "Unsane". Both shot on iPhones, so you could either use your iPhone or opt for a flip phone and put the extra money toward a heftier camera.

Too often, I see filmmakers whine and complain about not having the best gear or that their gear won't work for the project they want to make. I have been in the camp before, not having the money, not having the resources and, ultimately, not having a movie to show for it. The beauty of film students is they often don't take no for an answer. When I was in film school, I looked at a situation, grabbed some friends and then said, "We have \$30, let's try to make a movie." Often times, as we advance further into our careers, our drive is sidetracked by the knowledge of how much these things actually cost, the cost of equipment and a process of making films that, dare I say, may not be the most efficient way to make movies anymore.

The short of it is, don't let your gear stop you from making something.

#2 Use what you have.

Since the major cost for me was what goes in front of the camera, I began to think creatively about how to minimize what was on screen in order to save money.

Robert Rodriguez was the trailblazer in the modern thinking of this approach. If you have read his book, "Rebel Without a Crew" you'll remember him speaking about how his buddy would tell him what locations he had available, and then, Robert would write the story based on those locations. If you haven't read the book, stop what you are doing and go find a copy and read it.

The location hunt has always been super hard for me, so I began writing stories that took place in locations that I had easy access to and for long periods of time. This will stretch your creative muscles and allow you to actually get a movie shot because the location obstacle is no longer an issue. The same goes for props, wardrobe, set dressing, etc. Make use of what you have to tell your story.

#3 Don't discount the documentary.

I never really made documentaries when I was in film school. I did one for the school when I went on a trip to Romania and that was about it. When I started my production company and began doing work for clients, documentary work was often the approach of choice. Then I launched production to my first documentary series and have fallen in love with the genre. It is the cheapest break into the industry as a filmmaker and no one can accuse your subjects of bad acting, because they are not acting. So, if you have written off the doc world, maybe reconsider. After you have done a few, you could try making a fiction film shot like a documentary. The creative possibilities are endless.





It seems more often than not, the pressure put on us filmmakers is self-imposed. Stress, bad attitude and anxiety seem to run rampant during production, and I believe it's often because of the tone the director sets when he's heading into battle - and more so when the bullets start flying and the bombs start dropping. Our business is very tolerant when it comes to how we talk or behave on set, (yes, even post #metoo) but think more often than not, the morale on a set ultimately resonates to what we see on the screen. We live in an imperfect world and work in an arena where problems and surprises (not always good ones) happen all the time. But it's how we roll with those left hook punches that can be key to our success - or failure - especially when starting out in your career.

Be Cool.

How to keep your cool when the world seems to be coming to an end.

By Shane Stanley

On our most recent film, "Break Even," we ambitiously set out to do something that many thought was impossible when it came to script versus schedule and because of the tight budget, it was crucial that every day we stayed on track. There was no room for makeup days, reshoots or a shift in the schedule with so many locations to film and a cast that had commitments all over the globe as soon as we wrapped. Bottom line, the pressure to make our days and hit the mark with extreme precision was everything -

especially when we had three company moves on average per day.

Did something go wrong? Ha - at least three times a day! We got caught in some freaky weather that prohibited us from going to the locations we had originally permitted and scouted. Our "hero" car caught fire in the middle of the Mojave Desert. Our support vessel broke down

halfway back from the islands and wasn't able to join us for the next 10 days of filming where it was needed for both on camera and to house extra crew the hotels couldn't accommodate. Cast and crew got stricken with massive food poisoning on our biggest day where we had seven cameras and a presidium stunt crew consisting of talent from "The Italian Job" and "The Fast and the Furious" and

Continued on Next Page ▶

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started our day four hours late as we waited for the walking wounded to stop throwing up. During our shoot we had cameras break down, actors who lost parents during filming and had to go be with their families. I can go on and on but during the six weeks of production, I don't think there was a day we weren't faced with a major blow. Oh, and speaking of blow... One set blew away during filming when a 50-knot gust came in and sent it flying. Thankfully, it didn't take out anyone - or anything we couldn't live without.

One day amidst another round of unscheduled chaos involving yet another damaged boat, this time that was left with a split hull and was a total loss, I finally felt my blood start to boil. I was coming to terms with the fact maybe I got us in way over our heads and questioned if this was all a grave mistake. I pondered just getting into my car and driving off into the great unknown as the crew and some onlookers inspected the damaged boat.

Continued on Page 18 ▶





◀ *Continued from Page 16*

Instead of blowing my top, although I know I did turn a dark shade of purple, I took a minute and walked out to the end of a nearby dock and just sat down as the dust was attempting to settle.

Was I mad? You bet your ass. Was I concerned? Absolutely. But I knew at that moment (and during all of these moments) losing my cool, getting upset or throwing a tantrum wouldn't put a fire out, it wouldn't bring families loved ones back from the dead and it certainly wouldn't have mended the hull of a now totaled fishing boat. It only would've divided the crew and severely added to the list of misfortunes that were steadily amounting.

I had to rely on my instinct and most of all my confidence as a storyteller. "You CAN do this," I reminded myself. No matter what, I could make it work. We're filmmakers and artists, and we have to adapt and think on the fly. So, I made a decision to keep my attitude sweet and make light as often as possible of all that was happening and did my best to keep a smile on my face. I was like Paul Giamatti in "Sideways" while smiling through all the pain. But the positivity was contagious.

What happened in turn was we had a group of people who, against all odds and while facing tremendous adversity, bonded together worked much harder to keep the boat afloat and the train rolling when it should have come off the tracks.

They picked me up when I was down and without even trying. I think we'll have a much better film because of it, and we all have tremendous stories to tell. Are there things I wish we could have done differently or that wouldn't have happened? Of course. But that's filmmaking and that's life.

Remember filmmakers, what we do is a gift. We're not entitled or special - we're just damn fortunate folks. When the sh*t hits the fan, don't take it out on your team and don't throw a fit. It doesn't solve the problem. Take a breath, put one foot in front of the other and go find a dock to sit on and cool your jets. "It's only a movie," as Martin Sheen told me during some forgotten mishap on set 25 years ago referring to what his lovely wife Janet said after his heart attack on "Apocalypse Now" as they were wheeling him in for surgery. Unless someone's life is in danger, keep your tone in check, be respectful and always appreciate those who are there supporting your mission. Trust me, the pressure to succeed is just as much on them as it is on you.

Production stills taken by photographer Shawn Frederick, #BreakEvenMovie.



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Chicago from Another World

Making the Music Video *endless frozen dawn*

By John Klein

When composer Andrew Edwards approached me to direct and shoot a music video for a track off his upcoming album, *"the center of the sky"* – an orchestral concept album inspired by the difficult time spent in southern Illinois during his mother's final battle with Stage IV cancer – I was incredibly honored and humbled by the request and leapt at the opportunity; he and I have collaborated on numerous commercial and non-profit projects over the years, but this was an opportunity to do something uniquely creative with someone I truly admire.

Drew called it the "reverse-engineered film festival." Ten different directors – all of whom had worked with him previously – were given tracks off the album. In his words, "When I am working on a film, the narrative is the touchstone, and the music is fungible - adapting to the immovable story. What would happen if the music became the touchstone, and the filmmaker had to adapt the picture to fit the immovable music?" Without lyrics to drive the imagery, his hope was for each director to interpret each musical symphony in their own way. The requirements were very minimal: focus loosely on themes of science fiction, the environment, and social justice; and, to Drew, "reflect the idea of an ultimately optimistic future." Each director was given a super-small stipend, and we were set loose!

My concept for the track, *"endless frozen dawn"*, centered around the idea of an alien being (played by my longtime collaborator Cole Simon) coming to Earth and taking human form so as to search for something he's lost, and in the process being affected and transformed by the forest and cityscape with which he interacts on his journey. Within that framework, I envisioned a kind of Terrence Malick-esque approach to the visuals: handheld, ethereal, anamorphic (to place it in the sci-fi realm), as though the camera was guiding him, and he the camera in turn. *What would Earth look like to someone who's never breathed oxygen or seen trees or street lamps? How would colored lights affect that being's vision? How would concrete feel on their hands? How does water flow?* The song brought all these strange visuals out that were all rooted in very simple elements.

With Cole as our sole cast member and only a few other people on the crew – myself, production designer Kaitlin Creadon, makeup artist Stacey Herbert, and camera assistant/grip Karson Kent – we filmed the video over two short, scattered weekend days. Saturday was our day at a forest preserve north of the city, and Sunday we captured sunrise on the lake and spent time downtown at night, with a brief interlude at the butterfly haven at the Peggy Notebaert Nature Museum.



Watch the Video Now

▶▶ <https://vimeo.com/343659550>

A small crew meant limited resources, but also the ability to move freely and follow bursts of inspiration as they unfolded; while we charted a path around the forest preserve and around Chicago, we were always looking for little touches to accent our alien's journey without simply turning it into a tourism video.

I shot the video on my Panasonic GH5 package with the SLR Magic anamorphic lens kit (a 35mm, a 50mm, and a 70mm, plus a set of Hoya diopters), which has a 2x squeeze onto the GH5's 4:3 sensor that results in a 2.66:1 ultra-widescreen image. Shooting entirely in 4K/60p – so we could conform to slow-motion later – allowed me to control the pace more freely in the edit, and gave each shot a kind of fantastical drift, as though we were experiencing this relatively normal city through the eyes of someone who had never seen anything like it before. A small A-lite and a bit of bounce provided our only non-natural light sources; the rest involved finding places and times of day where the lighting hit just right!



In a way, this video was my love letter to Chicago, but also a sort of cautionary tale about the transience of it all. Aside from the specific visual effects work done by Ryan Taylor, I wanted to find visuals that were almost strictly emotionally driven, not always bound by continuity or narrative coherence, while still getting a very basic story across for the viewer. Drew's music served as the catalyst for all of that and then some; hopefully, this video feels like a perfect melding of his creative brain and mine, and however people interpret the visuals and the story, hopefully, they're moved in some way to look at the world around them a little differently after watching.

The video for "endless frozen dawn", debuted in the summer of 2019, along with the rest of the reverse-engineered film festival, via composer Andrew Edwards's social media channels. Find him at www.bluepolicebox.com and find director John Klein at www.johnkleinfilm.com.

All behind the scenes stills by Kaitlin Creadon; www.tembomp.com.



Notes on Cinematography

6 Points

By David Appleby

There are a lot of great new books on cinematography on my shelf now, and every one of them teaches me something each time I sit down to read a few chapters. I find myself examining each lighting set-up and trying to determine what components make up the myriad of camera rigs that have hit the market in the digital age. And, so my students won't have to purchase more than one text, I'm also looking for how well the author covers the basics as well as the minutia of day-to-day practice.

But my favorite, most dog-eared and worn out text – the book I turn to when looking for inspiration or a creative boost – does none of these things. It doesn't have any photographs. It won't teach you the zone system, and it doesn't care what camera you use. What it does do is present a list of ideas jotted down in no particular order by the great filmmaker, Robert Bresson. His *Notes on Cinematography* was first published in 1975, and my early edition is full of scribbles and exclamations pointing out the entries that struck me, at one time or another, as helpful on whatever project I was in the midst of at the time.

Here are just a few of Bresson's thoughts on cinematography.

- #1 **Hide the ideas**, but so that people find them. The most important will be the most hidden.
- #2 **Style**: Whatever is not technique.
- #3 **If the eye is entirely won**, give nothing or almost nothing to the ear. One cannot be at the same time all eye and all ear.
- #4 **Make visible** what, without you, might never have been seen.
- #5 **The things we bring off by chance** – what power they have!
- #6 These horrible days – when shooting film disgusts me, when I am exhausted, powerless in the face of so many obstacles – are part of my **method of work**.



Diegetic Music

When Music is Visible

By Kristen Baum

Commonly referred to as source music, diegetic music requires particular methods of preparation and on-set protocol. It could be a singer singing on screen. Or a musician playing their instrument on screen. Or somebody turning on a radio on (or off) screen and you can hear the music playing.

When an audience can see where the music is coming from on screen—particularly if it involves an onscreen performance that needs to be synchronized to the music—there are special considerations in preparing for the shoot.

Directors who decide to just “wing-it” and “fix it in post” will learn there’s no end to the headaches created by doing it this way. Specific things need to happen on set to capture the music and performance in a way that will be editable in post.

As the director, the more you understand what will be needed in post-production, the better you can prepare and the more usable material you can create during the shoot.

How to Handle Music On Set

Best practices—hire an experienced music editor to work with you and your sound person for prep and on set. If the score created by the composer will be performed on screen, hire an actor who *is* a musician and who can play the music or competently “fake it.” Alternatively, you can hire a musician specific to the instrument being used in the shoot or hire a consultant to help coach the actor. You can also use replacement hands for the actual performance, taking close-ups of the hands of a musician really performing the piece so the true performance can be intercut with mid- and wide shots of the actor simulating the musical performance. Think of it like an action scene when you have a stunt double.

The music scene can be cut together more easily if there is proper preparation.

“Your 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

“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

“*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, New York

“As a film producer and distributor, *StudentFilmmakers Magazine* provides me the opportunity to read about new talent in directing, producing and crew. The technical articles are right on target and readers should hang on every word in the Film Business section. The only mistake to be made is not reading this magazine cover to cover.”
~Ted Taylor, Film Producer/Distributor, Winged Media Inc., Potomac, MD

“I enjoyed meeting you, and I’ve enjoyed reading your magazine. It really is very well put together and full of useful information for filmmakers.”
~Dan Strickler, Writer/Director/Actor



How To Relieve Stress When Shooting Live Events By Michael Skolnik

10 Helpful Tips



Stressed out shooting live events? It doesn't have to be this way (most of the time). I've spent many a night before a wedding shoot losing sleep over potential problems that might or might not happen. There are plenty of horror stories out there such as: camera not in record, batteries suddenly low, arriving late, etc. Most of these, if not all of them, could be prevented. While some of the solutions might seem obvious, it can't hurt to refresh ourselves. Hopefully, some of these obvious tips will allow you to sleep soundly the night before your next video event.

- #1 Make sure your car is in tip top shape.** Do you have a spare tire and is it in good shape? I always check the tires a few hours before I leave. Fill up the night before.
- #2 Print out a map with directions** just in case your GPS is having issues, and arrive, if possible, 1 1/2 hour before. Is there a parking lot?
- #3 Check all equipment** a few days before just in case there's an unforeseen issue with your equipment. You might have to borrow or rent just in case. Last year, I was setting up my

tripod just before a dance recital, and two of the screws were loose on the leg. Luckily, I had an Allen wrench in my tripod bag. I guess I should have checked it a few nights before!

#4 Make sure all of the batteries are charged, even the ones you hopefully won't need.

#5 Check list is a must.

#6 When your camera is ready to go, I always listen to all audio tracks, not just looking at the meters, to make sure my wireless system is on the correct frequency. Also, the older wireless systems probably aren't made with the correct range, and this could cause audio dropouts. Not good to say the least.

#7 Make sure you're in record! This one is a doozy, and thankfully, it's never happened to me, but I hear this happening way too much. It's easy to get caught up in what's about to happen. Pay attention.

#8 Communicate with the DJ and/or band as far as the timing of the night. I like to stand by the dance floor or with the entertainment most of the night. When I'm eating, I always have my camera on and at arm's length.

#9 Always be cognizant of your surroundings and your equipment. I tend to be a little absent minded on occasion. When I used to use a battery belt for my on-camera lights, I once put the camera down and started to walk away without detaching the connector. Thankfully, my assistant started yelling at me, and I was able to put my foot under the falling camera just in time! That never happened again.

#10 Finally, with SD cards being so small, it's easy to misplace or even lose them. I personally like to leave it in the camera if I'm just using one and take it out when I get home. Always make sure to immediately activate the record inhibit button and transfer the footage. I also carry a small case to put the SD card in so it's not just sitting in my pocket. Nothing like taking out your car keys after a long day and having the SD card fall out of your pocket and not knowing it!



Multi Mic Quick Tips

By Bryant Falk

We all assume more microphones on a project can only mean better sound.

Well, that is true and not true at the same time. Let's take a two-person interview to be used for, well, a movie, TV show, or Youtube channel. We place a lav mic on each of the talents and because our shoot is an indoor fixed location – they are sitting in two chairs Dick Cavett style, (*Ouch, I just really dated myself*), we can setup another two shotgun mics to cover them as well. Once recorded, we play back the track to only find there is a weird whooshing sound or, "Thinning" effect. I mean, we put four mics on the shoot so the audio should be like totally full and amazing, right? Welcome to comb filtering! I love the name of this phenomenon, don't know why, but it always reminds me of the opening animation in that now old movie, "Grease", where the cartoon dude combs his hair in the mirror.

What is comb filtering, you say? In a nutshell, and let's not get techie: think of comb filtering like waves on an ocean. Every mic, when each records audio, is creating its own wave of that audio. These waves are recording onto their respective tracks at slightly different times. So back to our ocean waves. If we have four waves moving together in perfect sync towards the shore, they will support and add to each other making a much bigger wave. The opposite is also true. If they are not in sync, imagine the low part of the wave hitting the high part of another wave. It will take power away from it. Audio is very similar. Our microphones are all different distances from each other and the two sources of audio. When we pull all these tracks into our NLE, (Non-Linear Editor like Reaper,

Pro-Tools and million others), you will see the audio waves are not quite all happening at the same time. This brings us to **Tip #1!** Line up those waves! Okay, nothing crazy, we are talking milliseconds here, but this will be enough to reduce that Comb Filtering issue. Each NLE will have a way to slide the audio. Pick one as the master, like the person being interviewed, and line up the other audio to that one. Okay, there are like a million other things I want to talk about to help improve this, but that could be for another magazine issue.

But, hey, you said there were two tips at the top of this article, what is the second one? Okay, so while you are in your NLE, you should play with trying to mute certain mics and see how it effects your mix. Want a really personal moment? Drop everything but the person who is talking. Looking to be more inclusive of the space... you got it, start sliding in the shotgun mics! You actually have some creative choices now to affect the mood of a moment by doing this.

So, all of us here at Abacus Entertainment want to say to all of you *StudentFilmmakers Magazine* readers,

Keep on shooting and keep on creating!

"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, 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
Silver Spring, MD

"As a full-time production manager and creative, it is costly and time consuming to keep up on emerging craft & technology. *StudentFilmmakers'* workshops and magazine help lighten the load."
~Victor Ramirez, Producer, New York
www.isvictorious.com

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Novice Editorial Mistakes to Avoid

10 Editing Tips

By Bart Weiss

As editors, we tend to get into habits. We do the same thing we have done many times before which is often good but, sometimes, the habits are not good habits. Then, we need to revisit, correct, or re-strategize the task at hand. Over the years, I have discovered many students who leaned editing on their own, and they may not have picked up best practices. In any piece of software, there are many ways to edit, and the way *you* do it might be ok for you, for now, but once you get into larger projects and get into time restraints you might want to change your approach or methods. I know changing habits is not easy. And I know everyone loves lists, so here we go.



#1 Watch the dailies! Back in the old days of shooting film, this was obvious, but now directors just keep the camera rolling, so there is so much, well, stuff. But in order to edit, you need to know what you have. Watching all the dailies is critical to judging performance on takes. But it also puts those images into your subconscious. So, when thinking about a reaction, you can remember that you once saw it watching the dailies. Skimming through the dailies can be easy in FCPX and also in the new Cut Page of Resolve. (Reference my article in the previous issue of *StudentFilmmakers Magazine*.)

#2 Make notes, create metadata! In the old days, we have a notebook where we wrote all the directors' and editors' notes down. Now, much of that could be added to the browser. Adding data on top of the clips, like using *keywords* and *favorites* in FCPX, or creating sub clips in other software can help your head get into thinking about the structure of the film.

Time you spend adding metadata to clips (which is admittedly a pain), frees your creativity later.

#3 Assemble before tweaking. Start by making an assemblage. Yeah, I know you know that, but *do you do it?* No. Most novice or student editors are in a hurry to get to it and start tightly trimming the scene at the start. *Why?* Because, "I am right here, I'll just trim a bit here and do a bit there," and after an hour, you have four shots cut. The process here is to build and assemble the film mostly in master shot with only a smidge of trimming.

At this point, we are looking to see if the film works. *Is the structure sound? Do I need to have some flashbacks or parallel action?* At this point, it is a good idea to project your assemblage.

#4 Don't treat your timeline like your messy room. Don't use your timeline as your big pile of stuff. I often see novices or students just bringing lots of shots in the timeline, and especially a ton of stuff at the end. Often, they will forget and wonder why the export is three times as long as the film.

If you had added metadata and labeled your dailies in the first place, you mark and find what you might want later can. Instead of just tossing clips in the timeline, be careful in the browser to precisely mark what you want to put in and where you want and really want it the first time.

#5 Keyboard commands. You know that you need to know more but, every time you reach for that mouse you are slowing down. When you use keyboard commands, you will feel more confident as an editor.

#6 Cut down on your use of the bloody blade. Many people were taught to trim by blading the shot, then, deleting the unwanted media. Learn how to *Ripple and Roll*. These functions are on all editing systems. They will save you time and make your editing more precise. Once you master Ripple and Roll, you can learn to *Slip and Slide*.

#7 Wait for the grade. Don't start color grading until you have locked picture. Yeah, I know this is the fun part, but that shot might not be in the final film. Now go back and log your footage. (Boy, do I sound like an old grouch.)

#8 Use the EQ. So, after you locked picture and now you are color grading – but, just like every show needs to be graded, every piece of audio needs to be EQ'd or finessed. You will be surprised what some EQ can do for you.

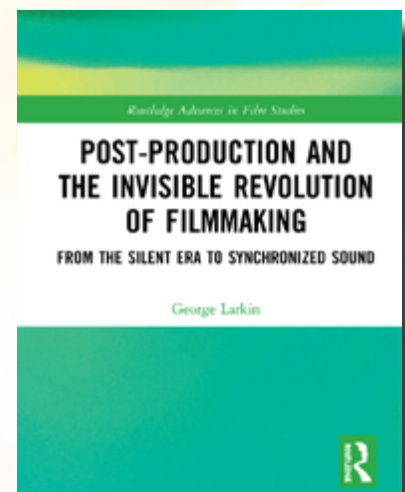
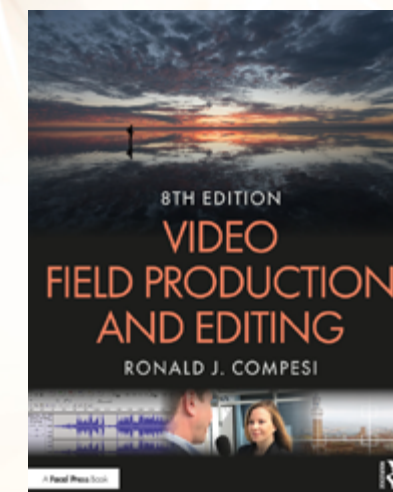
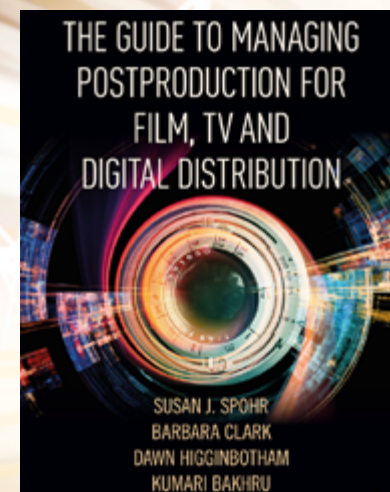
#9 Back up. Do I even have to mention this? Yes, so many novices and students are willing to lose their hard work because they would not spend money and time to back up their media.

#10 Have fun. You cannot control the world, but you can when you edit. You can find a nuisance that was not in the original material, or you can make the mediocre sing. It is all in the power of your imagination and your knowledge of the techniques and tools of editing.



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Never Stop Learning

Do You Really Need a Mixing Panel?

Recordist vs. Sound Mixer

By Fred Ginsburg, CAS, Ph.D.

Let me begin by asking, "Do you consider yourself a RECORDIST or a SOUND MIXER?"

The difference is akin to being a LINE COOK versus a CHEF DE CUISINE.

A recordist is in charge of recording soundtracks. Bringing a sound into a recorder, setting a proper level, and letting 'er rip. In the case of multiple audio sources, the recordist sets a level and individually records each audio feed. Every track is recorded individually for optimum quality. There is no concern for comparing relative levels, nor dealing with phasing/overlaps, perspective, and interactions. Get it; set it; forget it.

It is, then, up to post-production (or a live sound mixer further up the recording chain) to continually adjust relative sound levels and to creatively open/close those individual sources to craft a well-balanced soundtrack. Editors (or live mixers) will artistically choose which tracks to listen to and when. Sometimes, they will select only one track at a time, but usually it will be an active blend of some of the tracks (rarely, if ever, all of the tracks) – in order to achieve a consistent and dramatically structured complement to the visual components of the story.

If all that you are planning to do during the shoot is to record the outputs from each of your microphones directly onto blank channels of your camcorder and/or portable audio recorder – then, perhaps you actually do not need a mixing panel. All of the sorting out, volume adjustments (riding gain) between actors, and selection of tracks will be tasks left up to the editors.

However, professional films are not recorded that way! By the time the editors view the dailies and begin their rough edits – they should be working with sound files that are almost cinema ready. Editors want to be able to assemble their first cuts based on visual and story content with relative assurance that the accompanying audio will sound acceptable to their clients. Editors do not want to spend all of their initial time trying to re-mix audio from the dailies in order to sort out what is usable, what is not, and what is worth the time and effort to ADR (aka loop) to make the audio usable.

A sound mixer not only records the audio tracks during the production, but also MIXES (blends) those tracks to produce a cohesive soundtrack that is ready for editing. Yes, at a later stage during post-production, that "production track" will be de-constructed into its individual components, supplemented with additional soundtracks (such as back-up ISO's, ADR, sound effects, music, et al.), and finely polished for surround sound release. But all of that takes place AFTER the picture is cut.

Which brings us back to the initial question, "Do you need to use a mixing panel on the set?"

When you plug a microphone directly into a camcorder or a small audio recorder, you give up any subtle CONTROL of that microphone. Level controls are coarse and physically tiny on most prosumer recorders, and pretty much inaccessible on most camcorders while you are shooting. If you were able to access the volume control for a mic during a take, even slight adjustments tend to yield overwhelming increases/decreases of volume. Some recorders do not allow you to make adjustments while recording.



A mixing panel provides the soundperson with remote control of the audio being recorded. Even if you are only using a single microphone, the use of a mixer will allow the soundperson to completely monitor and adjust the levels during the actual take.

There are two primary audio controls on most mixers: the main fader and the trim/gain knob. The (small) trim knobs (we call knobs as *potentiometers* or *pots*, by the way) are used to set the course or base level of the audio. The trim, in reality, is a pre-amp that brings mic level up to line level inside of the mixer. We use the trim pots during set-up and rehearsal to get the audio within the ballpark (not too loud but not too soft; somewhere in the middle). We avoid adjusting the trim during a take, since it tends to be a strong adjustment and can often call attention to itself on the soundtrack.

The main fader or slider is a very subtle control of the audio. With it, you can close a mic or fade it open quickly to bring it into play. During the actual performance, you can ride gain to slightly raise/lower the dialogue without the listener being aware.

I always recommend that you set your initial trim while the fader is exactly half-way up the slot. Ignore the (for music) markings along the slider path that indicate Unity (aka neutral) which is usually $\frac{3}{4}$ up. For film dialogue, it is best to park your faders at the halfway point because that allows you maximum range to slide louder or softer during a performance.

In addition to the mixing panel allowing you to easily and precisely control the volume of each microphone, it also allows you to creatively blend mics together onto individual recording tracks. This is an important feature when you have fewer recording tracks than you do individual microphones.

When you do have more than one mic sharing a track, you need to

be careful that the same audio is not picked up by more than one mic at a time, per track. When multiple mics overlap the same audio on the same track, the signals may combine or cancel each other out – what we call *phasing interference*. You would hear it in the headphones as echo & hollowness. So, if you have mics working in close proximity to each other, such as a boom and a lav on the same actor – try to assign them to separate recording tracks. But if the lav is on an actor who is far from the boom, then you could put them onto the same track.

Very often, we need to fade microphones in and out of the soundtrack in order to prevent phasing and to prevent the dialogue track from becoming too cluttered with background noise. Easy enough to do with a mixing panel, but extremely difficult to do without one.

Another very useful function of mixing panels is the ability to EQUALIZE our microphones. Although the term equalization refers to adjustments of the bass, midrange, and high frequencies – in the case of film production we use the term EQUALIZATION quite literally. Do NOT make the amateur mistake of trying to use the frequency controls to make each microphone sound its best and to reduce background noises. Those corrections will usually result in the dialogue not sounding consistent from take to take, especially when you are shooting non-linear and over multiple days.

Use the equalizer controls (bass, midrange, hi) to make multiple microphones SOUND SIMILAR. It is normal for booms to sound different than lavs and planted (aka hidden) mics. Do not mess around with the EQ of your boom mic; that is the reference sound and anchor for your dialogue tracks. But any additional mics on your set could be frequency adjusted to make them sound closer or similar to what your actor sounds like under the boom.

During set-up, move the boom so that it is over the other mics. Listen to your actor (or a stand-in) under the boom, and then listen to the lav or plant mic. Adjust the volume and EQ of the lav or plant mic so that the resulting audio sounds more similar to the boom (but do NOT adjust the EQ of the boom itself).

So, the boom operator can hear!

Another very useful function of mixing panels is so that your boom operator can hear. It is important for the boom person to not only hear their boom mic, but to be able to hear the entire soundtrack as it is mixed on the set. Most of the time, we use more than one microphone at a time. On large shows, it is commonplace to run two booms, a couple planted mics, and god knows how many radio mics.

Continued on Page 30 ►



◀ Continued from Page 29

If the boom person cannot hear their own mic, then they have no idea what is being picked up. If they only hear their own boom mic, then they assume that everything on the soundtrack is dependent on that one mic and will aim it wildly across the set hoping to hear every sound! But if the boom operator is able to hear the other mics in play, as they are faded in/out – then they can be confident that they only need to concentrate on their assigned “boom” zone and not to worry about hard to reach sounds deeper in the set.

You can use a Y-cable to allow the boom operator to share the headphone feed of your mixing panel. Some mixing boards offer a dedicated COMS output specifically for the boom op. Personally, I like to use the AUX output for my booms, so that I can customize their listening levels and select which mics are feeding their headphones. No need for them to hear TONE, or sound effects mics.

Making the most of your available record tracks

The mixing panel not only gives you total control over each input, but it allows you to control your outputs.

If your camcorder or audio recorder only has two available record channels (mistakenly labeled as Left/Right, rather than as One/Two) – I would route the main output of the mixer to these channels.

You have a couple of options: discreet two track, dual mono, or dual attenuated mono.

Discreet two track means that you will send a Left/Right mixed track from your panel to the recorder. The sounds (or mics) on the Left channel will be different than those sent to the Right channel. This is to avoid phasing interference or to give the editor a little choice. It means that the Editor will have to do some minor sound mixing when they work with the dailies.

Dual mono just means that the same exact track content is being sent to both the Left and Right record channels. They are identical in content and volume. If you only sent audio to the Left side, then the Right side would be just blank static in the headphones or during playback.

Dual attenuated mono is similar to dual mono, except that we purposely record the audio for the Right channel 10 or 15 dB lower than the audio on the Left. This covers us in case of an unexpected shout or loud sound that would otherwise be distorted. During editing, they would only use the Left production track (but treated as a centered mono track on the timeline) for most of the rough cut. If the editor encounters a distorted section of the performance, then it is a simple task to mute that portion of the Left track and utilize the (attenuated) audio on the Right track (which is now a centered mono track on the timeline, underneath the “normal” track). Smiley face on the Editor!

When we have four (or more) recording tracks available to us, we can still provide dual attenuated mono on tracks one and two for the convenience of the editor – as well as providing two or more discreet tracks of additional audio. Usually these additional tracks are what we refer to as ISO's.

An ISO is an audio track that is the direct, raw feed from one individual mic (or a couple selected mics that do not interfere with each other). Your ISO track should be un-mixed and fed directly from the trim or gain output. It should exit the mixing panel BEFORE

it is controlled by the main fader, so that if the sound mixer makes an error in opening/closing a specific mic, the ISO track remains unaffected. We refer to that as a “pre-fader direct output”.

Most of the professional (albeit inexpensive) mixing panels such as Mackie and Behringer do offer some form of pre-fader direct outs, but novices should seek the advice of experts to learn the secret workarounds of getting pre-fader direct outs from the entry level models.

Have your cake and eat it, too

What we do in Hollywood is to provide a dual attenuated mono LIVE MIX to the editor for use in the rough cut, along with several ISO tracks of our most important mics for the sound editors to access later on, during the sound editing phase if they need to re-construct or modify the finished scenes. ISO tracks would include the boom, second boom, planted mics, and radio mics worn by the key actors.

These ISO tracks are RECORDED, but not MIXED or adjusted during production. Like a recordist, we just set them, forget them, and record them. Not too loud, not too soft. No EQ corrections. Just raw feeds, ready to be painstakingly re-constructed if the need arises. Producers take note: it can be done, but it is time consuming and expensive, so try to use the Production Mix as much as possible and only use the ISO's when it is a last resort.

Summary

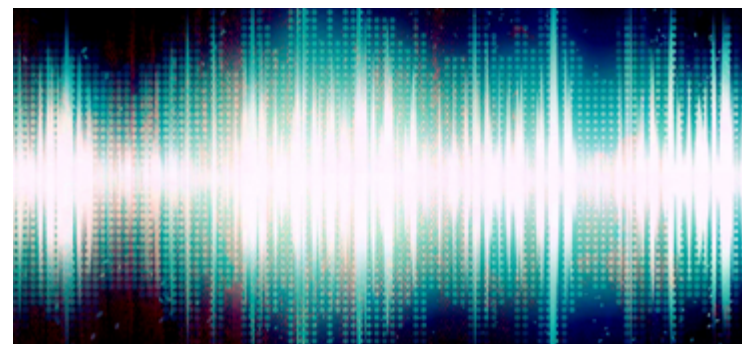
Mixing panels provide the soundperson lots of control over the quality of the audio being recorded, whether it be from a single mic or a complex, Hollywood style set-up.

Mixers allow us to control the volume of each mic smoothly. We can also equalize mics so that they sound similar as we fade them in and out.

We can provide an important headphone feed to our boom operator, as well as selected audio to other key personnel on the set such as the Director, Scriptie, or Client.

Multiple microphones can be assigned or live mixed to different recording tracks. In some instances, it is possible to record raw feeds from each mic onto ISO tracks in addition to an attenuated dual mono Production track.

Mixing panels are relatively inexpensive. Models from Mackie are under \$400; and models with similar features from Behringer are under \$200. But make sure that your mixer has XLR microphone level inputs, and convenient slider/fader controls on the inputs. Rotary controls limit your ability to simultaneously adjust more than two inputs at a time unless you have the finger dexterity of a magician.



The Blank Page 4 Ways to Overcome Writer's Block

By Michael Halperin

One of my mentors, the late, great screenwriter Ernie Lehman (*The Sound of Music; Hello Dolly; North by Northwest*), confessed that before the computer became ubiquitous he always faced the empty page in his typewriter with trepidation. “I didn't know if I could write anything worthwhile.” Then he started working.

Fear engulfs almost all writers when they face the blank page or blank computer screen. We may have an interesting character in a story that needs telling, but apprehension crops up. Can we create 120+ pages of a screenplay; a 300+ page novel; a play?

I have a weird ritual...You can figure out your own... by writing the first line of the Declaration of Independence: “When in the Course of human events...” It places words on the blank slate.

After that, the real work begins. Writers of merit push through the fog ignoring so-called “writers' block”, usually an excuse to go to the refrigerator for a snack or refreshment and self-commiserate about the obstacles to creation. Punching through the self-created wall makes the difference between success and failure. We can always rewrite and rewrite and rewrite until story and characters reach their zenith. I rewrote the opening paragraph of one of my novels 35 times. Obsessive? You're damned right. But it was published.

There's no teacher, no screenwriting guru, no magical 12 steps that will turn a mediocre writer into a brilliant creator. However, techniques exist for storytelling that may assist latent talent to emerge.

- (1) Write what you know** and what you have experienced.
The caveat: real life is not reel life.
- (2) Take “what is” and turn it into “what if”.**
Characters should tread the path less traveled encountering the unexpected, managing to extricate themselves from physical or psychological trauma with drama, humor, or even melodrama.
- (3) Write what is important to you** and not what pleases others.
- (4) Ignore the current trend.**
By the time you complete a screenplay that train will have left the station.

Where to begin?

Read screenplays of and view motion pictures that failed. They tell you more about how to create by illustrating missed story points with enormous holes populated by uninteresting characters.

STUDENTFILMMAKERS Testimonials

“I came by a copy of *StudentFilmmakers Magazine* just by complete and sheer luck. I was in the local library one day when they had their magazines on sale, 3 for \$.25. I flipped through the bocket of old magazines of all sorts. And at the very bottom was this single copy of *StudentFilmmakers Magazine*. Well, as you can imagine, I felt like I had struck gold. I have read it cover to cover, and it goes everywhere with me. I read it on the bus to film class, during the break, I take it to work with me and read it on lunch. Thank God for such a publication! I believe I have read my only copy about 5 times now, cover to cover!”
~Carmen Dubois, British Columbia, Canada

“I wanted to extend a warm note of gratitude thanking all of you at *StudentFilmmakers* regarding my previous post calling for crew last-minute last weekend. Due to the overwhelming number of quality responses I was unable to get back to all of you! We found a great person to work with and created a great product for the client. I am incredibly impressed with the global network and comraderie that studentfilmmakers.com offers. The talent levels and willingness to make great contributions is unmatched anywhere compared to what you will find here. Thank you so much and I hope to work with as many of you as possible on future projects.”
~Rani Karnik, New York

“**The online magazine looks remarkable.** I was really taken aback by its layout and design. Great job!”
~Bill Jones, Teacher/Instructor, CA

“**You have a great mag there.** I've read every issue and pass them on to student filmmakers.”
~Nancy Carlson, Chair, Telecommunications Chair, Ball State University, Muncie, Indiana





How to Define Your Type as an Actor

2 Important Guidelines

By Sara Sue Vallée

Are you a recent acting graduate or new to the world of casting? Well, this article is for you! As you may know, auditions occur before any production in order to find the suitable actor to play the part in a specific project. In fact, the casting process involves many people that may be sharing a different vision about the character at hand. This is one of the reasons it's highly important to determine your type as an actor as you enter the film industry. Knowing your type will not only help you market yourself better, but also help you in the long run as you build connections with casting directors and filmmakers.

It's easier to enter the film industry following one path than trying to master all of them. Once you make a name for yourself in the film industry, it will be easier to be considered for different types of roles. So how do you determine your type?

#1 Skill Sets and Physical Attributes

First, make a list of all the skill sets and physical attributes that define you. When you look at a picture of yourself, what do you see? (And it would be a good idea to ask your close friends and family, too.) Do you see naivety, strength, vulnerability, mysteriousness, villainy, toughness, etc.? It's important to list what energy is perceived at a glance, rather than the type you feel you are, because this is what casting directors see first. From there, make a list of the characters usually associated to those characteristics. The girl next door, the bad boy, the villain, the quirky guy, the seductress, and the list goes on. Once again, try to remain as honest as possible, and try not to list the characters you dream to play; we are trying to be marketing efficient.

#2 Explore Genres

Another great way to define your type as an actor is to explore genres. The best way to explore genres is by acting in independent films. Since casting decisions are made at a lower scale, it's easier to submit yourself and be considered for a wider range of characters. Exploring genres allows you to find what types suit you best. You will learn a lot about what you emanate at a natural state and the projects in which you shine the most.

These two guidelines are essential to define your type as an actor. Knowing your type will allow you to use the proper headshot for submission and build a demo reel that portrays your energy. And yes, it is possible to remain versatile as an actor and still have a type, so don't fear embracing your unique characteristics. The sooner you know who you are, the sooner you will find yourself in the audition room; reading for the roles that suits you.



Upping Your Career Opportunities in Film Production

5 Important Tips

By Pamela Jaye Smith & Monty Hayes McMillan

Pamela and Monty attended the University of Texas at Austin film school. They've spent decades working on all sorts of media in Hollywood and around the world, including the Arctic, the Andes, and SE Asia. Here are some tips to make working in film production work for you and your career.

#1 Do It All. The more experience you have the more effective you can be when you're in charge. It makes you facile, valuable, and empathetic. You also build strong relationships, which is essential to career success.

Pamela was once directing a documentary on construction in the morning and working craft service on Pizza Hut commercials in the afternoon. From hard-hat to hair-net and back. Prove that you'll do your job to get the job done, and they keep hiring you for the jobs.

Also, you know when someone's trying to pull one over on you. They say it can't be done for that budget, but you know it can because you did it two weeks ago on another gig.

It's like in the military: someone who's been in the trenches and come up through the ranks gets more respect from the rest of the crew.

#2 Be True to Your Word. When you take a job, do the job. You don't leave and go to a better job. If you miss one, you've missed one. But the people you're working for, and the people you turned down, will both know that if they hire you, you'll show up and do the job. You're expressing honour and loyalty, which in a business known for flakes, really makes a difference.

Every now and then, there are jobs you shouldn't take. We only turned down two. We were working on an industrial/military project featuring the Navy. Though promised footage from them, the deadline loomed, and it still had not arrived. Realizing we could not accomplish the job to our standards because they were unable or unwilling to fulfill their obligation, we respectfully explained the problem and bowed out. The film turned out okay, though we like to think not as great as if we'd been able to complete it. The same people hired us again and again for a number of years -- they knew our dedication to quality.

The other one we turned down was an offer to do a tourism promotion film for Pakistan. We thought it was a bad idea, but we considered it. After due consideration, we decided it was indeed a bad idea. However, we each got a very large and very impressive Pakistani dagger. Better those hanging on the wall than showing up elsewhere...

#3 Fix It First. The first response when something goes wrong is find somebody to blame. That's counter-productive when time is money and the clock is ticking. A better procedure is...

[1] Fix the problem and continue shooting.
[2] Then, figure out what went wrong and why.
[3] Then, put policies in place to prevent that particular problem from happening again.

There will always be problems, mistakes, and emergencies on a shoot. The trick is not to make the same mistakes again.

#4 Top-Down Talking Pyramid.

Especially when talking to a department head, AD, or Production Staffer, you first need to get their attention and get them focused on your topic. "So, Jason says if we really need it on Tuesday, he can sub-rent that drone for us, and it'll cost a bit more, but if we can push the shoot to ----".

You've just wasted precious seconds. Start at the top of the pyramid with the topic, then work your way down:

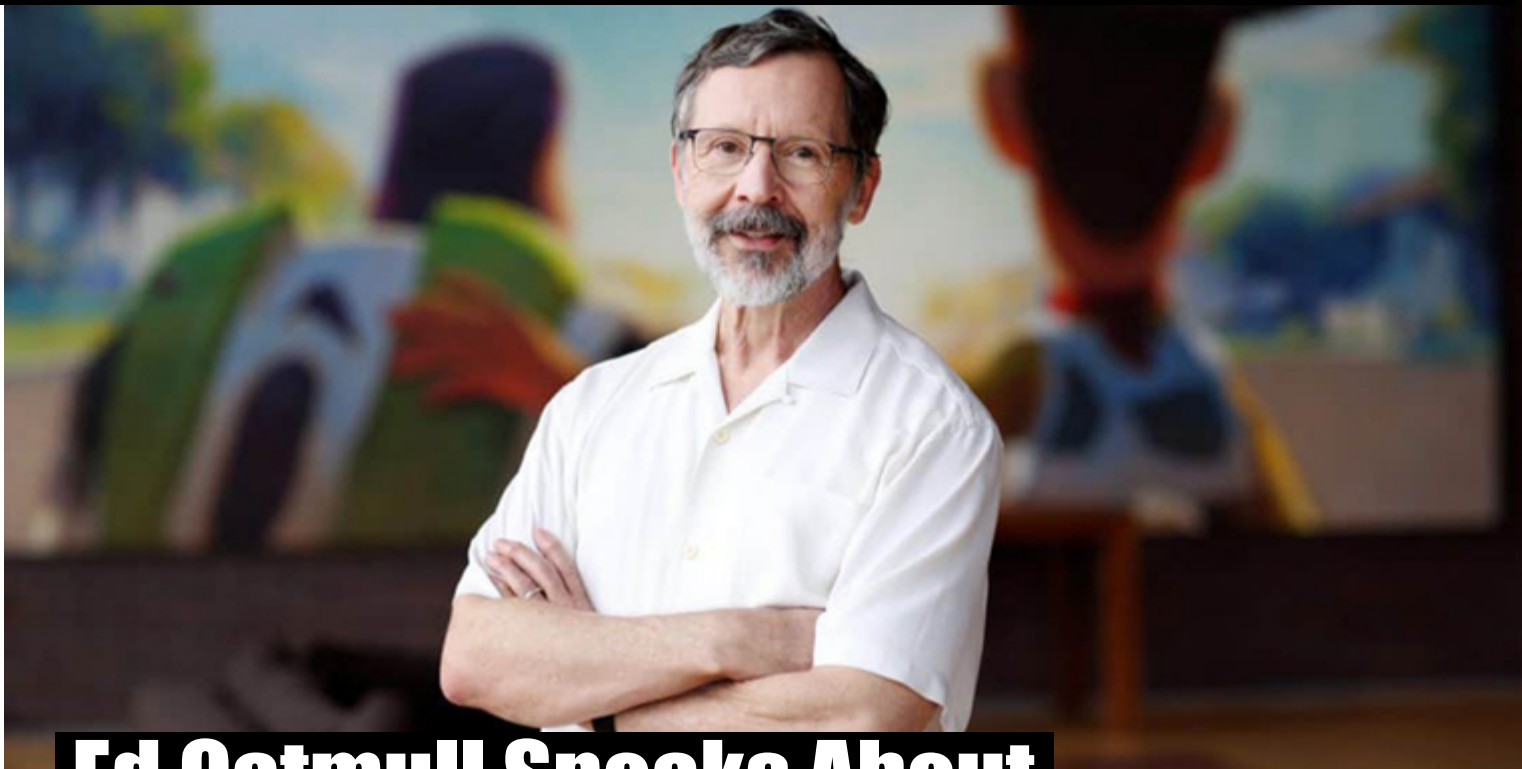
About the special drone. [You got them focused.] It's not available Tuesday. [You've stated the problem.] They can sub-rent one, but it'll be more expensive, or we can wait two days till theirs is available. [You've given the choices.]

Effective, efficient communication is essential on a busy film set.

#5 If You See Something, Say Something.

Sometimes crew members see things the director, AD, and script supervisor just don't see. You could go to your department head, but if the problem is not in your department, you're best off going to the 1st AD and letting them decide whether to go to the director. If you don't speak up, it could lead to delays or to reshoots, which means more money. But always respect the chain of command; it's your best way of being heard.

You'll learn so many fascinating, useful things in this business and no doubt have many amazing experiences, meet some great people, and contribute to creating fine media. And along the way, you can pass on your insights to others and help us all improve ourselves, our creativity, and our careers.



Ed Catmull Speaks About

Pixar

By Scott Essman

After beginning his career as director of the Computer Graphics Lab in Long Island at the New York Institute of Technology in 1975, Ed Catmull became vice-president of northern California-based Lucasfilm's fledgling computer division in 1979. By the time of Lucasfilm's sale of the computer division to Steve Jobs in 1986, it was renamed Pixar Animation Studios with Catmull as co-founder and chief technical officer. After ten years of extensive research and development and the production of a host of amiable short films, Pixar released "Toy Story" in 1995 and was on its way to becoming the top computer-animation feature film company in the world, with Catmull installed as full president since 2001.

Jobs sold the company to Disney in 2006 for approximately \$7.4 billion in an all-stock deal, and Catmull became president of Pixar and Walt Disney Animation Studios. He is now an advisor, set for official retirement next month, but before the announcement to his stepping down, he spoke about the state of Pixar in its new world as one of Disney's flagship properties on the heels of the release of the widely anticipated "Toy Story 4".

Though Disney distributed all of Pixar's films from the outset, Catmull noted a key difference in the relationship now that Disney is their parent company. "Our philosophy coming in," Catmull reflected, "we were going to have the studios all be independent from each other. So, except for John (Lasseter, former chief creative officer of Walt Disney Animation Studios, Pixar and Disneytoon Studios) and me going back and forth [between Disney in Burbank, California and Pixar in Emeryville, California], there's nothing else that goes back and forth between Pixar animation and Disney animation. Two different personalities, two different groups of people, two different creative drives — and that's the way we want it to be."

In addition to supervising Pixar, Catmull oversaw the aforementioned Disneytoon Studios, whose output included Pixar's "Cars" offshoot, "Planes". "We have Disneytoon studio which is the third studio, and what we do with Disneytoon studios is they take whole series in a world," Catmull described. "So, they've had one series which is in the [Disney] 'Fairies' world, and now there'll be a series in the 'Cars' world. So, the realization is just have a world of 'Cars', and they'll just keep making things in that world and growing it and expanding it and building it. That is what Disneytoon studios will do for us."

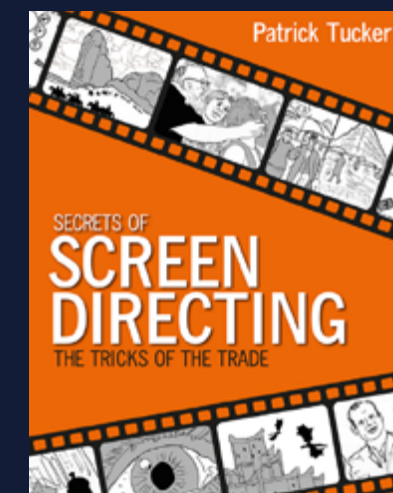
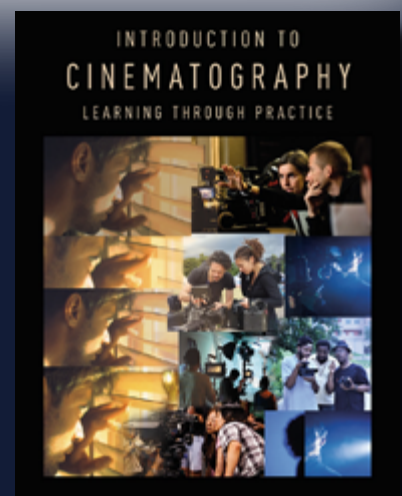
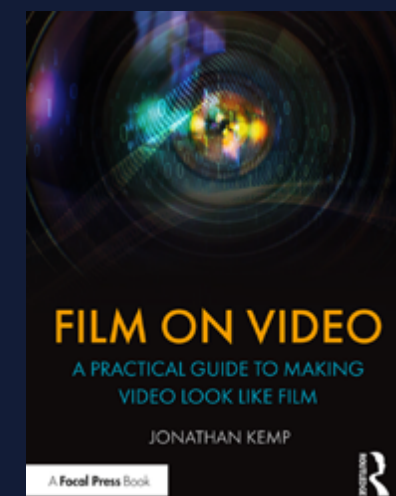
[Ed. note: After "Planes"' sequel, "Planes: Fire & Rescue", Disney reorganized its animation divisions, leading to the announced shuttering of Disneytoon Studios in January of 2018, not long after this interview was conducted.]

Catmull was clandestine when speaking about technical developments in Pixar, leading to new levels of realism in films such as "Toy Story 4", which include a variety of newly developed tools—unthinkable 24 years ago when the first "Toy Story" film was made. "We never stop changing the tech," Catmull revealed. "It's just integrated in what we do, so, to me, it's all mixed together. It's part of changing things up all the time."

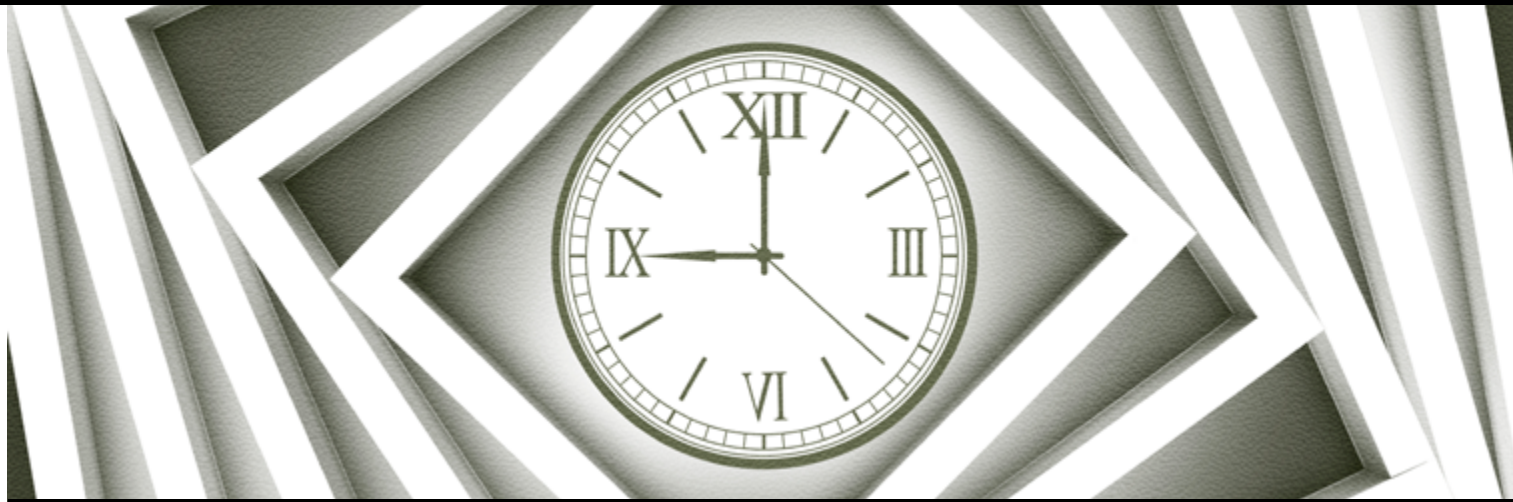
Lastly, when pointing to his long-term goals, specifically for Pixar, Catmull was pat in his response. "It's always been to make great films," he stated. "That's all it is. Nothing else matters."

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Never Stop Learning



Don't Waste Your Money Making a Film

Just Go To Film School

By David Landau

There are some people who have been writing on the internet, in articles, and even in a very, poorly written book, that instead of spending money on tuition for film school, you should just use that money to make your own movie.

That's almost the same as saying, instead of spending money going to flight school, just buy an plane and try flying. After all, you've flown on planes before, seen them on TV and in the movies, and played with toy airplanes. So how hard could flying a plane be, right?

Some people might argue that *you can't kill yourself making a movie*, but the facts are that many people have gotten killed making movies, almost of all them from doing stupid things. Things film schools teach you **not** to do in fact.

But an airplane is a complicated piece of machinery, some would say. But a film production is also a complicated piece of machinery, and anyone who fails to recognize that is doomed to failure. Just because you can accidentally get a good picture because of how advanced digital cameras have become does not make what

you shoot a good movie. Movies require good stories, creative photography, high quality sound recording, and post sound design; creative art direction, believable acting, captivating music, and that's just the top of the iceberg. All the stuff that goes on below the surface that keeps the top part afloat is essential and almost never recognized by the public – and certainly not by high schoolers, no matter how many hours they've spent reading nofilmschool.com.

Making your own feature film without any true education on how it is done professionally has proven to be the biggest waste of money. People who have gone this route have made unwatchable, unintelligible movies that only the filmmakers can sit through. Their films never get distribution, and they never make any of their money back. But worse, they never learned how to make it better the next time, because they didn't know what they were doing wrong. And, they wasted so much time and money doing things incorrectly and never learned how to do it better and more effectively. They often can't even recognize how poor their creation is because they have become too emotionally attached to be able to look

at their film objectively.

People who just make their own films have no standards to live up to, no quality control, no guidance from those more experienced than themselves. Spending the money you would have spent on a four-year college educational has a much, much lower return on investment. Strictly speaking financially, you will never make any money from a bad film, and it will not lead to future employment, but statistically having a college degree still gets you a higher salary than only having a high school degree. And four years of college teaches more about how to become an adult and a productive member of human society. It opens your eyes to not just academic subjects, but self-discipline, personal interaction, collaboration, cooperation and comprise.

But, you could use the money you would spend on a four-year education to hire professionals to do all the hard work for you. But you still won't have a story that captures an audience (other than your friends and close relatives who know you) or have told it in a visually entertaining enough way to keep people engaged and in their seats for 90-120 minutes.

Technically, it might be excellent – and I have seen these films in festivals. But they suffer greatly in the lack of creative storytelling.

But there never were any films schools before the 1960s, so how did all those filmmakers from the 1920s through the 1950s learn how to do it so well? They actually had the best films schools, ever. They attended Columbia, Universal, 20th Century Fox, MGM, RKO, Warner Bros, Paramount or United Artists. And those were just the ones in the USA. People started working at the studios as teenagers and learned the

crafts and the arts of movie-making with hands-on education over the course of many years, slowly graduating up and up, until they became directors, screenwriters, producers, cinematographers, editors, art directors, and sound track composers, etc. Learning to work in the movies was and still is a mentoring procedure. Those that came before and achieved success passed along what they had learned and done to the next generation, who added their own creativity to it, and then, passed all that on to the next generation, and on and on. But in the 1950s, the studio system died out, and that great half a century training ground for artists and craftsmen disappeared. And film schools were born all around the world.

A good film program fulfills the gap left by the extinction of the movie studios. It allows the novice to learn from the more experienced. A good college film program provides both a technical and a creative education. It teaches, motivates and inspires the next generation of cinematic storytellers. Some film programs may specialize in documentary, others

Making your own feature film without any true education on how it is done professionally has proven to be the biggest waste of money.

experimental and others narrative fiction. Some concentrate on general visual storytelling while others will allow students to specialize in their specific area of creative interest such as editing, cinematography, screenwriting or directing. Some are oriented more towards the movie/TV industry while others towards independent art films. You, the struggling filmmaker-to-be must do some research into the various college film programs to see what they have to offer and who your mentors will be, to determine what would be the best fit for you. Some are big, some are small, some are older, and some are newer. And, not equally as good. But you can easily find one that suits your goals and helps you start a path to fulfilling your dreams. They are almost all worth so much more than throwing your money away on making your own feature film before you've taken years to learn how to actually do it.

STUDENTFILMMAKERS Testimonials

"*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

"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, Austin, TX

Being a filmmaker is an everyday learning process that never ends and having *StudentFilmmakers* as a go-to resource is vital to me. Whether you are a veteran pro or just getting started there's no better place to go for in-depth, real-world filmmaking trends and best practices for your filmmaking needs. The information you get from *StudentFilmmakers* is about living it. This is real world hit the ground running filmmaking. You will not be disappointed.
~Gary San Angel, Director / Blogger, componentgeek.com

"*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

"Excellent magazine with great articles."
-James Garcia, Director/Producer, NY



"The students love *StudentFilmmakers* magazine. Many of them have told me how helpful the articles are in their video production efforts. They are learning a lot and being inspired by being exposed to the technical production details and personalities of the film makers."

~Mark Hall, Instructor, Radio-TV/Film Program, Butte College, Oroville, California

"Students are required to read an article of their choice in *StudentFilmmakers* and write a short synopsis and write about how they can implement the idea or skill in their own filmmaking. Students especially like seeing places they can submit their work in your advertisements. We distribute the magazine to our video production and animation students, but I find students all over campus picking it up in the library. Thank you for this great resource."

~Daria Matza, Video Productions Instructor, Coronado High School, Coronado, California

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

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

"I remember reading my first issue of *StudentFilmmakers Magazine* years ago – it seemed to be written for me personally. Every article was relevant to what I was trying to learn. There were articles that helped me with 'where I was,' as well as articles that allowed me to envision what I aspired to be. To this day, it remains my favorite source of information as a filmmaker."

~Jean A. S. Strauss, Filmmaker of *ADOPTED: for the life of me, adoptedforthelifeofme.com*

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

~Brian Sponagle, High School Teacher

Good Dialogue Needs This

By Scott A. McConnell

A mother walks into a room and informs her two young daughters that they are going on a playdate with some children they have never met. One daughter replies, "**Will they like me?**" The second daughter responds, "**Will I like them?**"

While there are many qualities that good dialog can have – irony, individualized voices, realism, essentialized brevity, and wit – implication is one of the most important qualities of dramatic dialog. The above vignette is an example of good implicit dialog. Let's look briefly at the implied meanings in both bites. When the first daughter asks, "Will they like me?" she is revealing one type of soul, that of a person who lacks confidence and likes to fit in, who wants to be accepted. The second daughter doesn't care about being liked, and esteeming herself highly, she wonders if the other kids will impress her. Both kids are well revealed by the key implication in their quote, respectively: Dependence and Independence.



Dialog bites like these that help define a character are especially important in the beginning of a script where a writer has to deftly reveal to the audience the nature of his or her lead characters.

Before we discuss why implication is an important quality of dramatic dialog let's contrast the implicit dialog above with explicit versions of these bites. Yes, it's good to be exact and clear but would the following explicit dialog involve your audience?

Daughter 1: "These kids might not like me and that will upset me. I want to be with kids who like me. I like to be accepted."

Daughter 2: "I might not like these kids and won't like spending time with them. I like to choose my own friends who are interesting to me."



Long winded and on the nose dialog! These two rewrites explicitly state what the daughters are thinking and feeling. Bad dialog. Why? Because it leaves nothing for the audience to do with it. Its meaning is obvious. In contrast, implicit dialog forces the viewer or reader to do mental work on the words. Hearing implicit dialog, an audience has to think (usually doing so lightning fast) about the explicit meaning of the words. Because it performs this mental task, the audience is more involved with the characters and story. (The effect of using implication in dialog is comparable to another important writing technique, "show don't tell.")

So, when you are studying movies and TV shows listen carefully to the characters and see how in the best dramas (and not in melodramas!) the characters often speak implicitly, making you figure out their exact meaning. Doing this study and editing your own written dialog to make it more implicit, you will drill into your subconscious an order to write more implicit dialog. Let's be explicit about the result of writing implicit dialog: Your audience will be more engaged in your work so your story will be more dramatic to them.



"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

"*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 *StudentFilmmakers* 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



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Featured Editor & Colourist
Kasia Jarco *London, UK*

BODY OF WORK

Color grading used to be a quite niche profession, primarily associated with the film industry. However, today most of the video productions out there are made or at least are tried to be made to the highest possible standard, using high-quality cameras, so colourists have a broad range of productions to work with. That's why most of my work comprises short form productions, like music videos, ads or promos, but I also had a chance to grade one feature film so far.

CURRENT PROJECTS

I've just finished grading a series of promo videos for an Italian fashion company.

POST PRODUCTION / COLOR GRADING PROCESS

I always start from a discussion with the director and/or the producer about any particular look and style they want to achieve and we exchange some ideas. After that, I usually go straight to work. Sometimes I work with client and we do the grade together; sometimes I am in the suite on my own. When I work on my own, I feel I have more freedom but in the end, it is always a collaborative work. We work with people and for people, so good people skills are crucial in this job.

TIPS FOR CREATORS

- #1 Forget about your own preferences.** All creatives, including me, have their own style. I would describe mine as dark and contrasty. But colourists always work for someone else, so we have to be very flexible and open to create a variety of different film looks, even if we don't like some particular color combinations or styles.
- #2 Learn color theory from art.** And I'm not talking only about watching movies. Still photography and painting are also my favourite ways of getting inspiration.
- #3 Less is more.** There's nothing worse than over-processed images.

Go to ►► networking.studentfilmmakers.com



Featured Music Composer
Art Peterson *Petaluma, CA*



CURRENT PROJECTS

I currently have 20 CDs on sale under the name, *Aftershock*. One on sale under the name, *Deep Blue*. I'm working on a film now called, *Mars 2055*. I'm doing sound design for an IMDB credit.

FILM SCORING & COMPOSING PROCESS

For film scoring, I take a look at the film and run it by a few times. Then, I can see where I can fit music in. Sometimes, it's a camera zoom out, or angle change. I sync it up to the film so everything starts and stops on time, then, I produce it so it sounds professional. Composing process: I get an idea for a song. I write it down on notation. I add to it. Harmony and Counter Point. I write out the Strings, Brass, Woodwinds, Percussion. Record it. Mix it. Master it, Produce it. Viola. Finito. Finished product.



Here's a link to my CDs: <https://store.cdbaby.com/Artist/Aftershock>; *Deep Blue*, <https://store.cdbaby.com/cd/artpeterson2>. Here's a link to *Mars 2055*: <https://twitter.com/marsmovie2055>

TIPS FOR CREATORS

Get out there and network. Join clubs. Meet people in the business. Stay current with your sound. If you can't sound like Hans Zimmer sound the best you can sound like.



Featured PA & Camera Assistant
Andreina Boada *Miami, FL*



BODY OF WORK

Since 2013, I've been working in projects such as short films and feature films as Camera Assistant, PA, Lighting Assistant, and recently, I've been working as background talent in films trying to create my path here in the USA as a filmmaker.

CURRENT PROJECTS

My goal is to work in film industry in the USA. I'd like to work with a sci-fi short film script that I wrote a few years ago. But more immediately, I'm looking for new opportunities as Production Assistant and Camera Assistant.



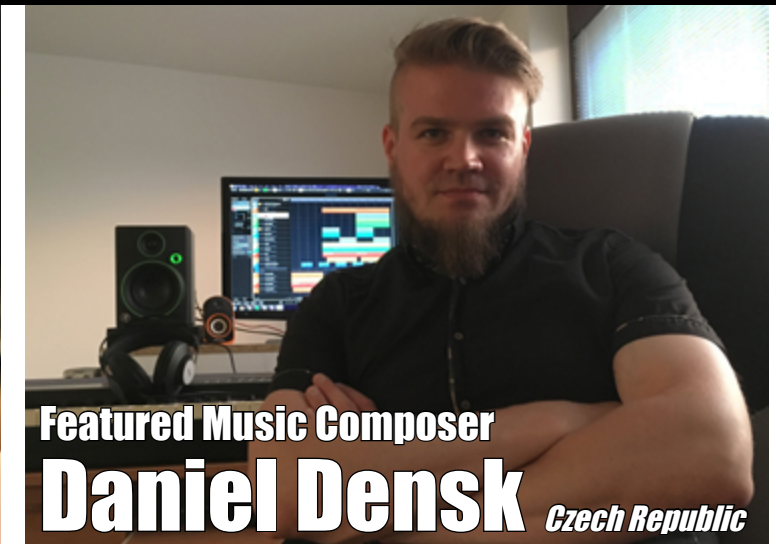
PRODUCTION WORK

Working in production, it means a lot to me. It is creating something from nothing. It is very hard work. When you're at the beginning phases of a project – whether you can visualize the final product or not – still, you know that you are working to create something powerful in which people can enjoy and can reach their feelings.

When I work in the camera department, it's very rewarding, being there and helping the magic happen. For me, it's something that has a lot of energy in me. I describe it as: on the set, it's where I feel more alive than in other times or places. I was born to be on the set. It is where I can express better myself.

- (2013) Producer - *Beyond The Sea*, vimeo.com/94449946
- (2014) Lighting Assistant - *Kenny*, vimeo.com/97288003
- (2014) Director Of Photography - *Amalia y Rafa*, vimeo.com/119411055
- (2014) Camera Trainee - *Kenke*, [Trailer: youtube.com/watch?v=U89h37n_TYQ](https://youtube.com/watch?v=U89h37n_TYQ)
- (2015) Camera Assistant - *The Candy Box*, vimeo.com/161240959
- Official Selection Short Film Festival Corner- Festival de Cannes 2016
- imdb.com/name/nm7232255/
- linkedin.com/in/andreinab/
- [@userandrei](https://twitter.com/andreandrei)

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Featured Music Composer
Daniel Densk *Czech Republic*

BODY OF WORK

I am a music composer from Prague, Czech Republic. I started doing music about 10 years ago in a local band playing electric guitar, which I pretty much do until now. Throughout the years, I started feeling that I would like to develop my musical skills further beyond the possibilities of a single instrument. I also had an amateur passion of film score composing, mainly work of Hans Zimmer spoke to me a lot.

I started to get in touch with Steinberg Cubase DAW and various virtual instrument libraries, and I completely fell for it. So today, I compose as much as possible, because, as the wise Mr. Zimmer said, music tells a story, and since I really love storytelling and music, this is the right place for me to be.

CURRENT PROJECTS

Nowadays, I am getting in touch with various filmmakers from my area trying to see what musical help might be done, but these are early stages to be honest so frankly there's not much to be said at this point. I was recently also approached by an Argentinian music composer who already worked on an Academy Award winning film, so that is really a thrilling chance to be given for me. It is a very specific musical project which aims to create very specific pieces of music for very specific audience.

FILM SCORING & COMPOSING PROCESS

I tried many different approaches throughout the time, but I found out that what fits best to me is the miraculous aspect of randomness. I came up with many of my ideas just travelling in public transportation and suddenly a melody came in my head. I kept developing it – and that is a point when I usually need to hide in some corner somewhere and sing the melody into my cell phone's dictaphone, otherwise within next 10 minutes the melody is completely lost in my head. I just need to hear the main melody first, let it come to my head, and only then I develop this first idea further.

CHALLENGE & SOLUTION

I think that a big challenge to any composer is spend hours and hours developing a piece of music and in the end find out that it just is not good enough. To have the courage of deleting the whole thing and starting from scratch is a huge challenge, everyone sees the time invested in the effort – and deciding for a solution of recreating the whole piece is a hard one. But from my experience it is a solution that is worth it, because facing the truth and in the end creating something even better should be rewarding enough.

TIPS FOR CREATORS

Don't be afraid of certain risk-taking. During my composing process I sometimes decided that I would just go for a radical solution that sometimes brought the correct solution – and sometimes it did not. I loved the motif itself, but it just wasn't fitting with things that were happening on-screen. But I kept the motif itself finding out that in a little while I was able to use it again – and this time it did the trick. Go for the edges and do your best.

www.danieldenkmusic.com

8 THINGS to think about when Choosing a Camera

By Bruce Logan, ASC

So you got the job – the Director loves you, and the Producer can tolerate you. Nice! Now what? You have to choose a camera.

If you own the right one, then the answer is obvious. And maybe that's why the producers can tolerate you. But if not... how do you go about choosing a camera?

I have never owned equipment, because I haven't wanted the trouble of maintenance, storage, and obsolescence. And because that same producer, that's able to tolerate me, always wants me to throw the camera in for free. It might be arrogant but I don't really want to be hired because I have free equipment. But I guess it works well for those who are owner/operators.

Half the time when I shoot a movie these days, I don't have a choice of which camera to use. The producer tells me, "I just bought a couple of REDs, so that's what we are going to shoot on."

But here are my criteria, in order, of what I look at in choosing from the plethora of cameras available.

"Frankly, I don't give a damn..." which camera I shoot on these days. With very few exceptions they are all more than good enough to make a feature film on.

So, to start, as the politicians say: "It's the glass, stupid!"

1 THE GLASS

The most important thing to me when choosing a camera is what lenses I want to use. And incidentally, they will probably cost more than whatever camera I rent.

Lenses will have more of an influence on the look of your picture than your camera.

So, maybe you want to use **Hawk uncoated anamorphic lenses**, which have **PL mounts**. So you will need a camera with a PL mount.

That alone will cut down your choices, though many cameras with EF mounts will take a **PL conversion adapter**. But it certainly eliminates any Camcorders.



It may be that you want a lot of different lenses to shoot your picture, and you want the most number of lenses you can get for the money. In which case you will probably select EF lenses.

I haven't heard of many people using an EF adaptor on a PL mount camera, but I'm sure it's been done.

You may want to shoot your movie entirely with a couple of **zoom lenses**, or "variable primes" as the better quality ones like to be known. If you do, and you like to use a zoom motor or a studio follow focus you will need PL mount lenses.

2 WORKFLOW

My number two reason for choosing a camera is for its workflow, maybe because I do so much post work on the movies I shoot. But I think it's selfish for a DP not to consider what happens to their footage after having all the fun of shooting it.

It used to be that RED had a problematic workflow requiring an expensive piece of hardware just to transcode the footage for editing. But that's now a thing of the past with several editorial softwares being able to cope with **native R3D files**.

It might be that you choose a camera which has only a RAW workflow. One camera I tested recently had a transcode engine, which required purchasing a high-end color-correction program. There was a free software transcoder that you could download, but it took me four days to transcode two hours of footage. There was no way to queue the files, so every couple of hours I had to set a new file to process. A nightmare you wouldn't want the production to be stuck with, let alone the editor. So beware of your workflow.

3 RESOLUTION

Netflix now requires 4K or better image acquisition for new projects that they buy, and you wouldn't want to want to exclude them as a company that might buy your project.

In any case, a 4K master is a delivery requirement for most distribution companies now. You don't want an HD or even 2K acquisition to be "blown up" to 4K.

People will tell you that 2K is still the de facto standard for theatrical distribution... and it may well be... but for how much longer?

4 SPEED

The native **Exposure Index** of a camera is very important for shooting a feature film, especially if you are shooting a night picture in very low lighting. Perhaps you weren't able to afford those expensive super-speed lenses?

I suggest you shoot a test with the camera you intend to use, in the lighting that you will be using.

This is because a lot of manufacturers make claims about their native ISO and their low noise features which, to put it politely... stretch the truth. Shoot your test footage, and take it through the color-correction process you are going to use for the project, to make sure you're happy with the noise and data level.

5 CODEC

The codec that a camera shoots is often proprietary. You need to make sure that the software your editor is using can handle these files, especially if the camera is new.

Some cameras shoot raw files and ProRez files simultaneously. Some features I've shot only wanted to use the ProRez files because of the cost of hard drives and data management through out the process.

Shooting some RAW codecs take up an incredible amount of data space. The **Sony F65** camera comes with a rolling cart full of drives, processors and decks just for managing the massive amount of data on-set – beautiful pictures, but a lot of infrastructure.

6 SENSOR SIZE

I like 4 perf 35mm "Academy" sized sensors... mostly because when someone talks about an 18mm lens I know exactly what to expect, because I'm used to shooting 35mm film. I also like the amount of depth of field that I get using this size sensor. A lot of people like larger sensors, but for me the depth of field is a little too shallow and it's tougher on the focus-puller.

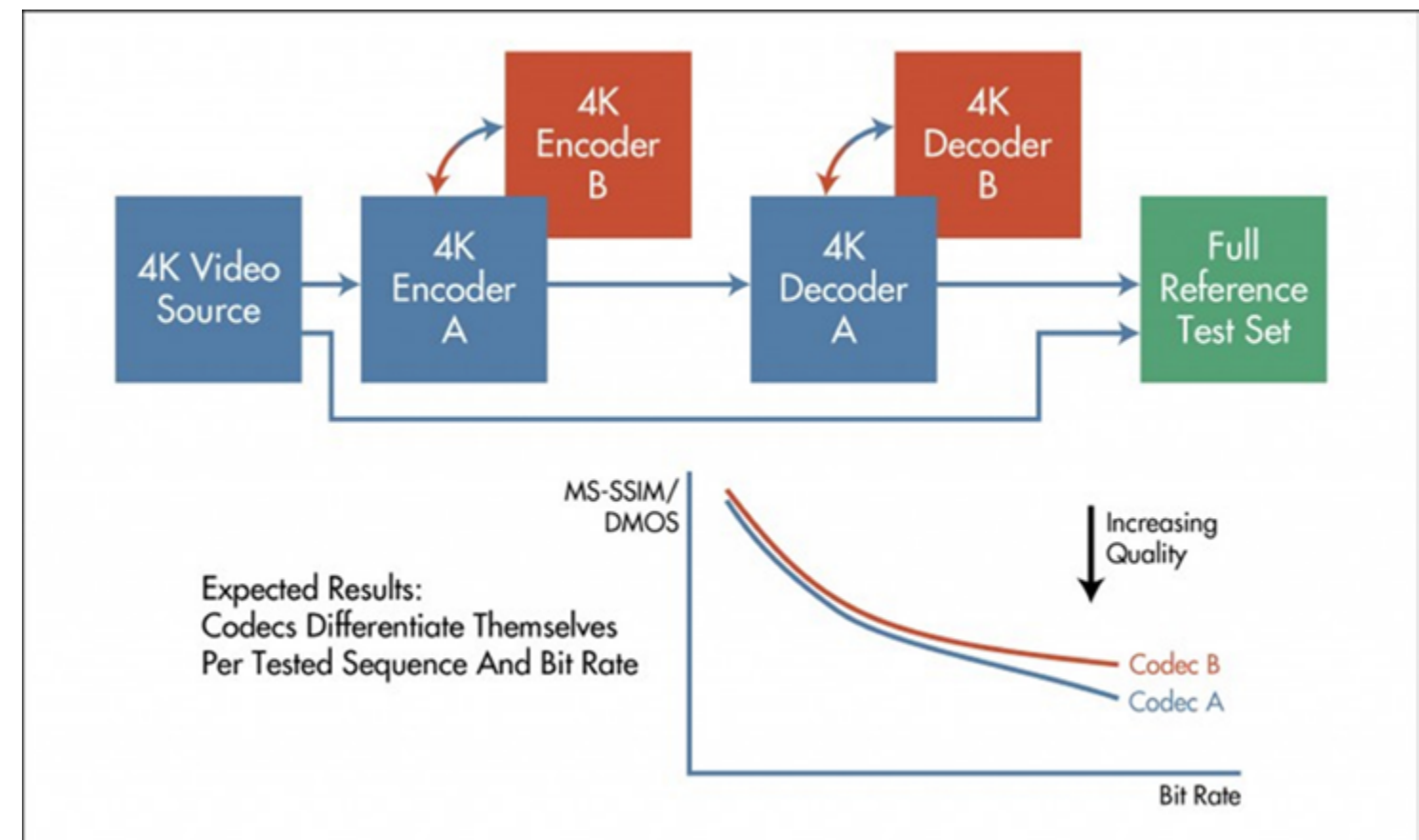
In order to shoot Hi-Speed (slow-motion) images, some cameras will change the amount of the sensor that they utilize.

I admit I get totally confused about how wide an image is going to be with any given focal length lens. I've given up trying. I just put up a 50mm and say a bit wider or a bit longer.

7 GLOBAL SHUTTER

The next most important feature for me is a **"global shutter,"** especially if I'm shooting an action picture.

Continued on Page 44 ▶



◀ *Continued from Page 43*

This is the feature where by all the photosites are activated simultaneously, as opposed to being scanned on line by line like an old TV signal.

This is important because, when you pan the camera fast on a tall building with a non-global shutter the building seems like it is leaning over at an angle. Or like what you see in car footage shot with a **GoPro camera**. It makes the whole world look like it's made of Jello.

8 SIZE

Size does matter, especially if your picture is predominately hand held and shot in very tight quarters. These days, the lenses I use are usually heavier than the camera.

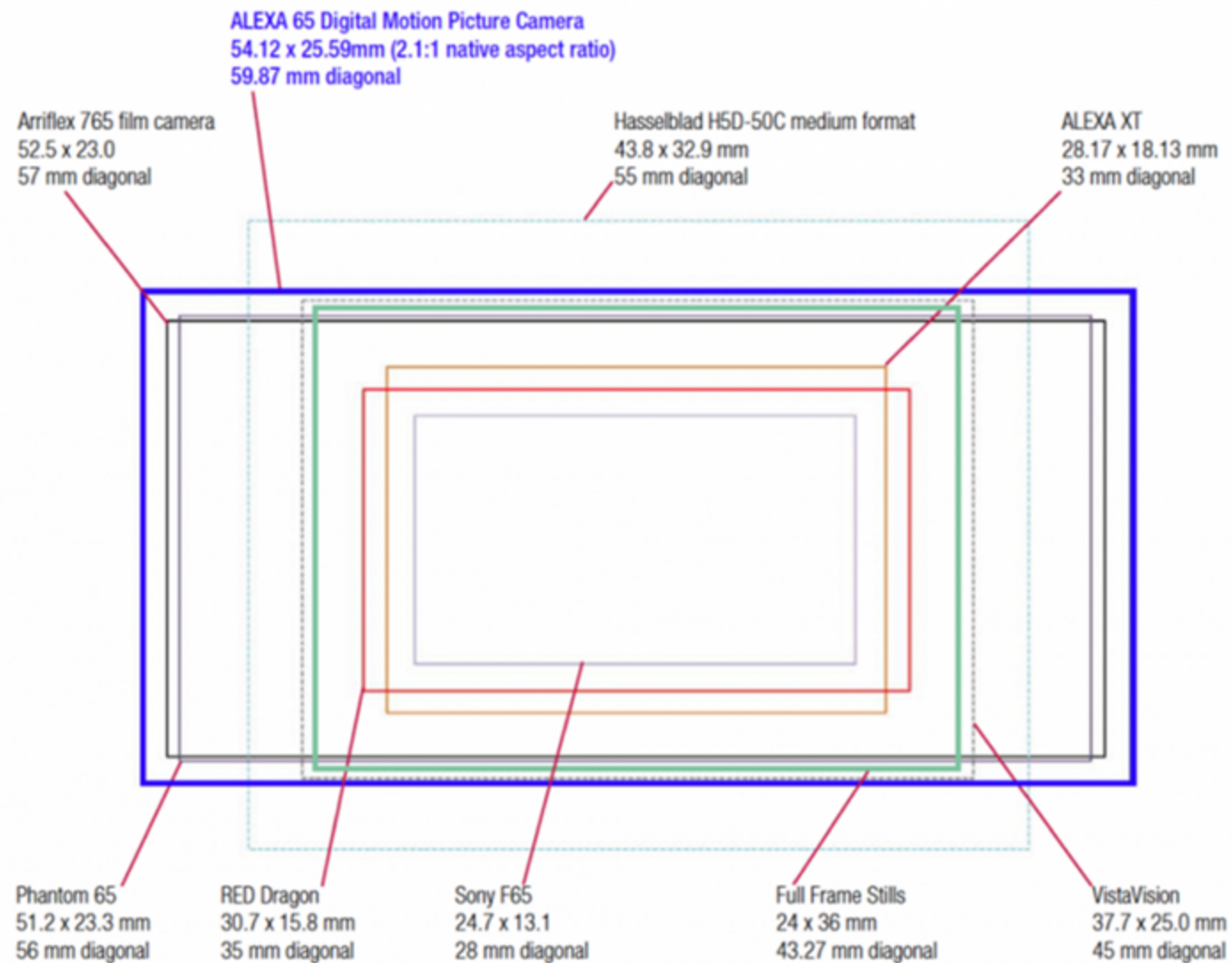
But many of the new cameras that come out are way bigger than modern technology dictates. They usually say, "It's the cooling. Makes them very reliable." I'm afraid I no longer have use for the large Panaflex sized cameras.

My ideal sized cameras are the **Alexa Mini**, the new **mini Panasonic Cinema VariCam**, and the **Sony FS700**. I've shot several films with DSLR cameras, but by the time you put a real lens on these cameras they are a bit fiddly and not too robust, especially when it comes to the mini HDMI plug.

I hope this helps just a little when you are choosing a camera to work with from the myriad of choices!

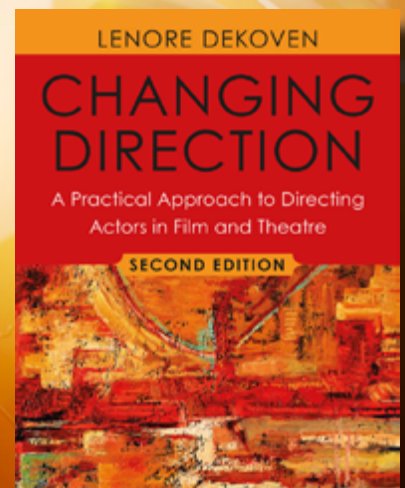
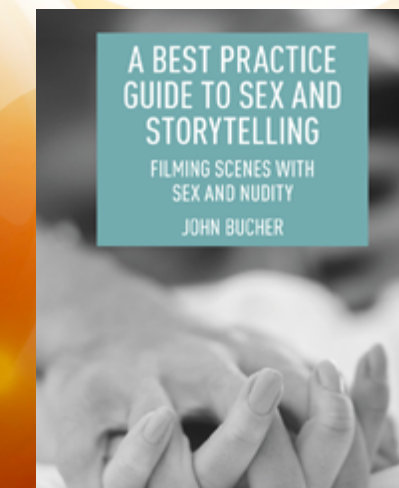
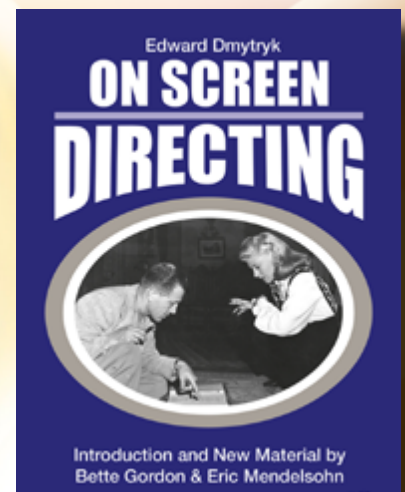
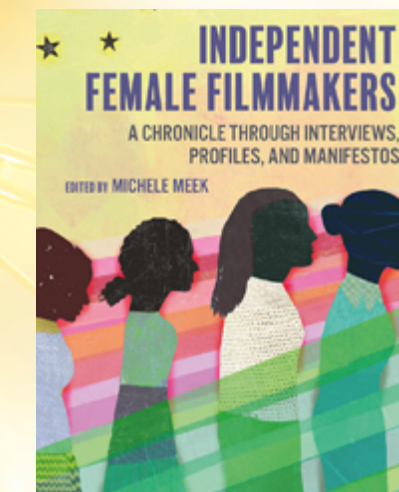
Happy shooting!

Sensor Size Comparisons



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Never Stop Learning

Kim Edward Welch

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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.



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).



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."



Shane Stanley

Filmmaker, 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.



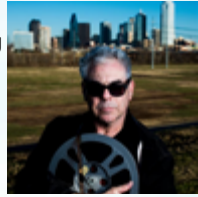
Fred Ginsburg, CAS, Ph.D.

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.



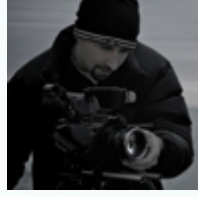
Bart Weiss

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



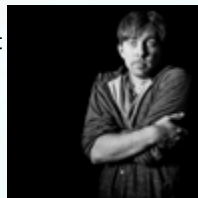
John Klein

is a director, cinematographer, and producer in Chicago. His directorial work includes the award-winning short horror film, "Cry It Out," and the feature films, "Happily After" and "Chrysalis", and he's lensed projects of all shapes and sizes, from the micro-budget web series, "Young Couple" to the Lifetime movie, "Nightlights". He also teaches film production at DePaul University and Flashpoint Chicago. www.windycitycamera.com



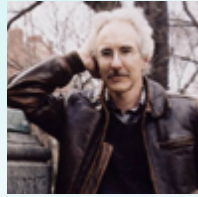
Jared Isham

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.



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



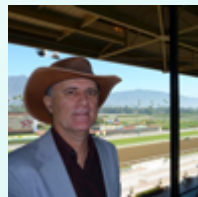
"Show Me the Love!" authors Pamela Jaye Smith & Monty Hayes McMillan

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 www.mythworks.net www.mythicchallenges.com www.alphababeacademy.com



Scott McConnell

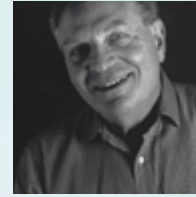
is a writer/script consultant/editor in Los Angeles and Melbourne, Australia. His reviews, film & play analysis and articles on writing have been published in America, Australia, and England and can be read here: www.linkedin.com/in/scottamcconnell/detail/recent-activity/posts/; www.linkedin.com/in/scottamcconnell/



MANY THANKS to Our Awesome Writers

Michael Halperin

is Executive Story Consultant, 20th Century-Fox Television; Story Editor, Universal Television. He also writes novels and plays. www.michaelhalperin.com



Bryant Falk

Producer & Engineer Bryant has been a corporate producer, director + pro voiceover/on-camera coach for decades. He delivers pre-packaged onsite shoots, from live shoots to green-screen settings. Bryant connects with your ideas. When he works with students, He brings engineering insight and booth skills directly to talent.



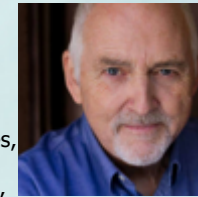
Bilingual actress Sara Sue Vallee

is a graduate of the prestigious Lee Strasberg Theatre & film Institute and NYCDA. Some of her Film/TV credits include *Spice it Up*, *On Parle de Sexe*, *The Truth about the Harry Quebert Affair*, *Edgar and Away from You*. Her first self written and produced short film, *Away from You*, is currently running the film festival circuit.



Bruce Logan, ASC

is a member of the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences, the Directors Guild of America, and the American Society of Cinematographers. Bruce was born in London and was hired by Douglas Trumbull to work on Stanley Kubrick's *2001: A Space Odyssey*. He came to California in 1968 and worked as a DP on over a dozen films, including *Tron*, *Star Trek*, *High Road to China*, and *The Incredible Shrinking Woman*. He has directed and shot commercials for Pepsi, GE, Visa, Chevrolet, Pontiac, Amtrak, Suzuki, and many more. He has shot music videos for Prince, Madonna, Rod Stewart, Aerosmith, Glenn Frey, The Go-Gos, Karyn White, Tevin Campbell, Hank Williams, Jr., and Michael Cooper. Bruce has been writing screenplays for 25 years and recently produced, wrote, and directed his own feature film, *LOST FARE*. The movie is approaching 10 million streaming minutes on Amazon Prime. Trailer: <https://amzn.to/2QkxyY4>



Michael Skolnik

's background entails camera/editing for television broadcasts such as MSNBC, The Peoples Court, USA Live, Madison Square Garden-Sports Desk, New York Knicks, New York Rangers, New York Yankees, MLB World Series, ALCS Fox Regional Sports and 100's of social events. Some of which include weddings, sweet sixteens, bar/bat mitzvahs, dance recitals, and other live events. www.mjvideoproductions.com



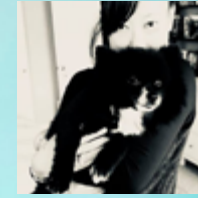
Scott Essman

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



Jody Michelle Solis

enjoys content creation, shooting/editing video, and teaching dance/yoga. She serves as associate publisher of flagship publication, *StudentFilmmakers Magazine* (studentfilmmakers.com), and sister publications, *HD Pro Guide Magazine* (hdproguide.com) and the new *Sports Video Tech Magazine* (sportsvideotech.com).



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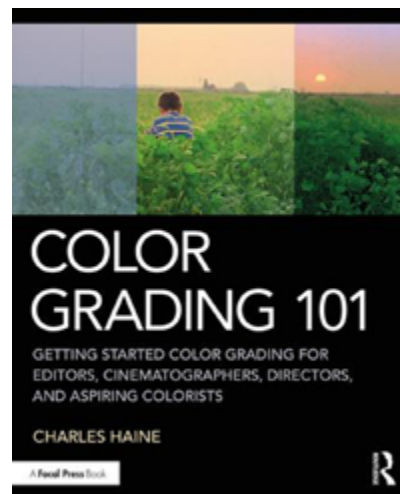
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