

# Capture the Great Dialogue Moments

## Keeping Quiet on the Set

by Bryant Falk

In almost every movie you watch there is a club, party, or large group scene. Getting the audio you need from such a shoot can be a daunting task. Let's take a look at a few techniques that can help you capture that great dialogue moment and other audio that will be crucial in the edit suite.

The first important issue is, what is most important? Usually, the leading actor's dialogue is key. So just keep the set quiet while they are talking, right? *Easier said than done.* For example, everyone stops talking but one guy gets out of his chair and, ... *Screeech!* The chair legs become a nails-on-the-chalkboard experience.

Here are a few tips and elements on the set to hush up before a large group shoot.

- (1) The Extras: *Pretend talking with no talking!*
- (2) Cut the music just before shooting.
- (3) The A/C or room fans.

- (4) Glasses or silverware.
- (5) Chair and table legs: Attach soft pads.
- (6) Foot stomping: Attach foot pads where necessary.
- (7) Squeaky floor boards and entrance doors.
- (8) Have a designated coordinator handling all the group directing needed (usually the AD).

One of the biggest issues with cutting the music in a club is people start dancing off beat. This can look pretty silly sometimes. A trick is to have a music track with a low clean tone playing underneath. When you are about to shoot, shut off the music but keep the low tone. First, the tone will be below the actors' frequency range. And second, you can flip the phase of the original tone (on a separate track) and cancel out the tone completely on final mix. A sample tone could be a 50Hz sine wave, very clean and very low. If

your actor has a deep register, this may not be an effective tool.

Also, make sure to capture some crowd walla while you have them. This means without the leads talking, have everyone behave as if they were at the real event. Having this to mix in after will be a great way to add believability in the final mix, as the room size and tone will match the lead dialogue audio tracks. This is, of course, just the tip of the iceberg when recording large groups. Also, having someone with previous experience in such situations can only help get you better material!

Bryant Falk has been a producer and engineer for over 12 years working with such clients as *The Ricki Lake Show*, Coca-Cola, Sports Illustrated, Valley National Bank, and MTV's *The Shop*. His company Abacus Audio ([www.abacusaudio.com](http://www.abacusaudio.com)) handles many aspects of the audio production field from creative and production to mixing and final output.

# What Are 3 Ways Networks Acquire Programming?

## Here's a Fast Look

by Stacey Parks

- (1) They acquire a finished program. This is usually the least expensive option for a network, and where you, the producer stand to receive the lowest acquisition price (the exception being if you're a Sundance Film Festival winner or something like that). Networks acquire their programs at both film festivals and film markets like AFM, Cannes, MIPTV, and MIPCOM.
- (2) They commission a program. This is the option they go for when they want to own the film or program out-right. You become a hired gun, and create the program to their specifications. A&E only does business this way for example.
- (3) They engage in a co-production agreement. This is actually the most common way a network acquires it's content.

As you can see, worldwide cable and broadcast distribution is its own beast. I specialized in it for many years, and to tell you the truth, actually prefer it over other areas of distribution. Why? Because the television business is a real "business," and broadcast buyers are eager to spend money to fill their programming slots. It's much more cut and dry than the theatrical distribution world, and a much easier sell most of the time.

Stacey Parks is the author of "The Insiders Guide to Independent Film Distribution" (Focal Press). Her website is [www.filmspecific.com](http://www.filmspecific.com).

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