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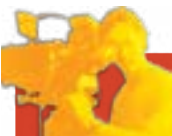
It Ain't Rocket Science

3D Filming Wild Horses in the Gobi Desert

Spider-Man is Amazing Again

It's a Great Time to Write for Television

Canon EOS C300 on the Run



The summer continues to be filled with exciting back-to-back industry tradeshow and conferences, workshops and seminars, and other great educational, networking and inspirational opportunities. Students, Teachers & Faculty, and Schools, *are you ready for Back to School?* The Back to School section in this issue gives you a preview of new film and video making solutions.

Check out the article, "NightLights," by William Donaruma and John Klein. The feature was shot using RED MX, Panasonic AF100, and DSLR cameras. In "Filming Wild Horses in the Gobi Desert," Al Caudullo shares his experience shooting a 3D documentary with Panasonic AG-3DA1 cameras. While filming around the globe with his new C300, Carl Filoreto goes more in-depth about his first impressions of the C300 in the article, "Canon EOS C300 on the Run."

StudentFilmmakers.com and *StudentFilmmakers Magazine* returns to Hollywood, California, to exhibit at WEVA 2012, the Expo for Wedding & Event Film/Video Professionals. You might be browsing and visiting exhibits at WEVA with this very edition in your hands as we speak! Check out the article in this issue, "Solo Shoots," by Patrick Moreau. Don't forget to stop by the StudentFilmmakers.com Booth #104 at WEVA, where you can pick up complimentary print editions and free DIGI subscriptions.

I hope that all of the articles in this wonderful edition will help you get warmed up, excited, and inspired for Back to School. We invite all of you to attend our continuing education workshops held at *StudentFilmmakers Magazine* headquarters in Manhattan, New York City. New Yorkers, come meet other New York filmmakers and videographers at the workshops. If you're not from New York, well, it's one of the many perfect reasons to come visit the Big Apple. www.studentfilmmakers.com/workshops

Enjoy the magazine!

Truly,
Kim E. Welch
Publisher/Editor-in-Chief

studentfilmmakers

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StudentFilmmakers Magazine, established in 2006, is published in New York by StudentFilmmakers.com. Opinions are solely those of the authors. Letters, article queries, photos, movie stills, film submissions, and unsolicited manuscripts welcome, but returned only with SASE. Submissions are subject to editing for style, content, and to exclusive rights provisions in this publication. Advertising: Rate card upon request.

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Printed in the USA. Postmaster: Send address change to
StudentFilmmakers, Magazine
1123 Broadway, Suite # 307, New York, NY 10010.

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On the Cover:

Carl Filoreto (center) shoots on location in Accra, Ghana.



Law # 1:

It Ain't Rocket Science

Composition is Brain Surgery

by David Lent

How to *think* about a camera is as important as knowing how to use it. Mastering camerawork begins with understanding the medium and the relationship between a camera and the viewer.

- (1.) Think of the video camera as a *microphone for your brain*, transmitting what's on your mind to other minds. Every shot becomes a statement about who you are, what you have to say and how well you can say it.
- (2.) Think of the camera not only as your 'microphone', but as *the viewer's brain*. Cradled in your hands, this brain wants order, clarity and meaning in an image. Composition - *an operating procedure performed on the viewer's mind* - is as much a form of brain surgery, and no less invasive, as the kind performed with a scalpel.

According to Marshall McLuhan, "All media are extensions of some human faculty - psychic or physical." In this sense, the video camera is an extension of the brain, enhancing all of our senses. Think of it as a *tactile* medium rather than a visual one. Not "tactile" as in touching an object with your fingers, but the feeling we have when the senses are working in harmony—being *in touch*. By manipulating a video image, you are rearranging the order of another person's perceptions. Viewers may be thousands of miles away and exist in the present or far into the future, but your work takes place as much in their brain as it does in your hands.

Beams of light are translated by the lens and camera and displayed as video images. These images are received by the eye and focused on the retina. There, millions of rods and cones translate these beams into neural impulses. Using dozens of processors, the brain interprets these impulses, allowing it to understand what it is seeing. The result of this blend of

camerawork and brainwork are new perceptions, new emotions, new thoughts.

Rules of thumb.

The business end of a camera is the lens. The skill with which you use it to shape an image can set your work apart from the crowd. Get the best glass you can afford, find its strengths and weaknesses then use it to do what it does best.

Put the viewer on solid ground. Painters and photographers call it the Figure/Ground theory. The *figure* is the essential subject or object of the frame, such as a person's face. The *ground* is what is behind or in front of the subject that allows perspective - the illusion of a third dimension. Suppose, for example, you're shooting an interview with someone in the crowd at a political rally. If you place the subject - *the figure* - to the side of the frame, revealing the stage and part of the crowd - *the ground*, you give the viewer a sense of where they are and how it *feels* to be there. When interviewing someone on the street - the figure - you can provide the ground by revealing all or part of the person asking the questions.

Make some space. In an interview, the subject's face is the center of interest - the "star" of the frame. Unless speaking directly to the camera, a human subject should rarely be in the center of the frame. Add logic (ground) to the frame by creating *negative space* - the side of the frame where the interviewer is positioned (if the interviewer is on your left side, frame the subject on the right) - or an object of interest that adds meaning to the content of their comments. Eliminate distractions at the edges and make sure nothing appears to be sprouting from the subject's head.



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Experiment. Look at a wide, medium and close shot of a subject. What is unobtrusive or appealing in the wide shot may be distracting or confusing in the medium or close shot.

Use the lens as a telescope. Objects or people unremarkable at first glance can be captivating in close-up, or in composition with something else. The telephoto end of a lens allows you to privately explore your surroundings without pressure to shoot.

The rules for effective writing are as relevant to the video image as they are to a sentence, paragraph, drawing or machine.

Omit needless information. Composition is as much an *eliminative* process as a creative one. The less unnecessary work for the viewer's brain, the more accessible is the image. What is essential in the frame? Emphasize or exaggerate it. What is obvious or irrelevant? Leave it out or make it vague.

Eliminate excess headroom. Unless the space above a subject's head is essential, eliminate it. On a wide shot, consider including a *grounding* object in the foreground to create perspective and depth.

When in doubt, pull out. I usually stay wide when I'm handheld but I will zoom to various compositions - especially to shoot groups of people and faces without being noticed. Often I'll walk in with the camera for close compositions or move away for wide ones. I'm steadier and more versatile this way and don't have to think so much about focus or steadiness.

Include body language. When shooting the performance of an athlete or dancer, include the *entire body*, so the viewer won't miss something that you might not have anticipated. Check out Ginger Rogers/Fred Astaire dance scenes. Astaire understood this concept and insisted that no part of his body, during a dance scene, be excluded from the frame.

Apply the golden triangle. During an interview, a viewer's eyes move between the subject's eyes and lips. On a close shot, the triangle formed by the eyes and lips should be the *horizontal center* of the frame. It may sometimes be necessary and appropriate to cut off the top of the subject's head.

Frame the master shot - the one you'll stay with during most of the interview - *no wider than head and shoulders*, but not so close that the viewer feels forced into intimacy. We've all seen

interview moments when the shooter zooms in to a tight shot of a weeping face. I turn away - not because I feel the subject's personal space is violated, but because *mine* is.

When the destination of your video is a computer monitor, frame an object or interview subject more tightly than you would for a large screen.

Add tension to the frame by including something the viewer can identify but not see entirely. Suppose you've composed a 2-shot in which one person is doing most of the talking. Frame off *part* of the silent one. This composition will help focus the viewer's attention on the person doing the talking and also provide visual context (ground). Conversely, widen out to reveal things in the environment that are relevant to the scene or the story.

Be opportunistic. Often, you'll find yourself in an environment where people are hypersensitive or even spooked to the presence of a camera. Set up the camera and compose a shot - not from a tripod, which will draw unwanted attention, but cradled in a ShotSpot or another unobtrusive camera support. Press record, then, walk a short distance away from the camera for a few minutes - *never letting it out of your sight*. Because it appears to the subjects that no one is shooting, they ignore the camera and resume behaving naturally.

Trust yourself. Unless you are being directed, you are the ultimate authority on how you shoot. So if *you* don't like the shot, chances are nobody else will either. Are you bored with the image? Try something different. Do you sense that this person is not concentrating on what he or she is saying? Stop recording and talk about it.

Camera Movement

Advanced biology. Viewing an image from a black and white viewfinder involves only the peripheral vision, the part of the eye that processes changes in movement. Black and white vision wants movement or it gets bored. This helps explain why so many shooters, looking at a black and white viewfinder, zoom, pan and tilt excessively. The viewer, however, is looking at a color image. Color vision is processed by the macula, which is concerned with changes in hue and texture. Color vision prefers gentle

movement or, better yet, no movement at all; it has enough on its plate already.

When the camera moves, shakes, tilts, pans or zooms the brain engages in a lot of rapid-fire computing to process a constantly changing image. Excessive camera movement overloads the brain as it struggles to process not only movement, but changing hue and texture. Steady, graceful moves are easy on the brain, allowing the mind to be fully present as the story unfolds.

Visualize the outcome. Make camera moves *with intention*. What do you intend to say with the shot? What kind of camera move will help you say it clearly or dramatically?

Help the editor. Make camera moves of editable length. Meandering pans and endless zooms are needless interruptions to the viewer and a waste of the editor's time. Offer choices; do the moves in and out, right to left, left to right, up and down,

down and up. Snap zooms and swish pans can be helpful to the editor as *intervals* between shots that don't cut well together.

A graceful camera move is like a good speech. It has an attention-getting open and memorable close. Before you pan, tilt, dolly or zoom, decide on a beginning and an ending composition, then practice until you get it right. Camera moves should be concise and at a pace that allows the viewer's brain to process a compact, changing mosaic.

Zooming

Experiment with your lenses so you'll know what each can and cannot do, allowing you to see a composition with your mind's eye. You'll often see fleeting opportunities that depend on you getting to the composition fast, so set your zoom control on its highest speed so you can zoom in quickly, focus, and then pull out to the desired composition.



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Leave no fingerprints. The best camerawork draws no attention to itself. Zooming emphasizes movement and, when used too often or with a heavy hand, pollutes the viewing experience. The viewer is distracted but may be unable to articulate why.

Respect the listener. Zooming while an interview subject is speaking diverts the listener's attention in order for the brain to process the changing image. During a zoom, little of what is said is retained. Use a purposeful zoom – at a speed consistent with the style of the program – only to change the composition.

Drive carefully. Zooming takes the viewer for a ride, so make it bold and graceful. If you're happy with the composition of a shot, a zoom is unnecessary – except to get to the next composition.

Storytelling.

Hold the shot. You're shooting not only for yourself, but also for a producer, reporter and/or editor. When shooting B-roll, hold shots for at least 8-12 seconds. If action is developing in the frame, keep rolling.

Create a sense of place. Storytelling involves creating visual and audio context for the viewer. Suppose you're shooting an interview in a small town in the rural Midwest. Shoot scenes of the town, the neighborhood and the home of the subject. You might get lucky and see a tractor rolling along a country road – a shot that says 'farm country'. Maybe there's a diner where locals hang out. Shots of people sitting at the counter, a dog sleeping on the porch or snarling behind a fence. A decorated or neglected mailbox, a piece of loose aluminum siding rattling in the wind or a rusted car on the front lawn. These images help complete the picture, in the mind's eye and among the senses, so the viewer knows where s/he is, how the place looks, how it sounds and feels.

While wrapping up a short documentary about gun violence in Washington DC, I was asked by the client to get b-roll of a security guard at a downtown office building. The guard's son had recently been murdered and we'd shot an interview at her home. As a setup shot for the interview, my reporter wanted a sequence of the subject

walking into the building and taking her post behind a security desk in the lobby. Before shooting, I took a few minutes to study her routine, which consisted of sitting at her guard desk, looking through the glass doors at passersby on the sidewalk, and keeping an eye on the security monitors beside her. Ignoring my client's instructions, I shot a couple of minutes of this woman staring out the glass doors, a terminal sadness etched on her face. The image spoke volumes about her sorrow – far more poignantly, I felt, than an impersonal – however serviceable – walking shot. My correspondent was annoyed and didn't use the shot. Once again, the call of my instincts had drowned out the voice of my professional good sense. Still, the satisfaction I get from being loyal to them is almost always greater than the price to be paid. —DL

The shooters I know who are at the top of their game approach camerawork more intuitively than technically or intellectually. Like an old master on a tennis court, they don't need to run fast because they know where to be. Through long experience the best shooters are attentive listeners, with highly evolved instincts for creating meaningful images and stories. With steady hands they set the stage and, with composition, draw the crowd.

David Lent's career in television spans thirty-five years. David co-produced and shot the critically acclaimed PBS special, "Life Without...Inside San Quentin." With Susan Burgess-Lent, he co-produced the documentary feature, "Staying Alive," based on Studs Terkel's bestseller, "Working." David currently works as a news and documentary cameraman for numerous domestic and international clients including BBC, CNBC, BRAVO, FOX News, MTV, GRANADA, TV ASAHI, YLE, ARD, and ORF. David is the author of "The Laws of Camerawork" and soon to be released book, "Video Rules."

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Filming Wild Horses in the Gobi Desert

*Shooting an effective 3D documentary
in a place filled with sand.*

by Al Caudullo

I am jolted awake by the sound of rain hitting the tent. At first I think, wow, it's my first night in the Gobi desert and a light rain will keep it cool for sleeping. I nestle back down next to my sound-asleep wife, Bee. Then I remember that that our pack is outside and the thought of wet clothes in the morning is not so appealing. I get up and sleepily unzip the tent, to be greeted by a blast of sand in my face. It's my first sandstorm. Welcome to the Gobi, Al.

Quickly recovering from the jolt, I wrestle with the pack and drag it under the flap of the tent. I plop back down inside and think about the recent course of events from a short time ago that brought me around the world on what must be one the most unusual 3D documentaries ever to be produced.

The Origins of the Project

Just about two months ago, I met Dr. Siraya Chunekamrai and first heard of the Lampang Pony Welfare Foundation. I had been to Chiangmai in Northern Thailand before and seen the cute ponies pulling carts of tourists but had little thought of what had brought them to the land of elephants.

Cross breeding and improper care have drastically reduced their numbers. During the course of treating these horses, Dr. Siraya discovered striking similarities in the unique markings and stature between the Thai Ponies and Mongolian wild horses (also referred to as Przewalski's Horse), the last of the legitimate wild horses that still survive.

Thai Pony DNA



Curiosity arose about the Thai Pony DNA. Dr. Siraya and her team started collecting DNA and blood samples to test for 13 important infectious diseases in horses to see if they were present in Thailand, as these were truly 'native' ponies. The amazing find was that they showed evidence of being exposed to many deadly diseases such as Japanese encephalitis and West Nile virus, but none showed clinical signs, which was remarkable. The Maxwell Gluck Center, University of Kentucky, commented on this, and suggested we find out more about their genetic makeup. The UC Davis analysis that showed them to be a natural breed means that they have evolved naturally to fight hardships of the climate and terrain and resist diseases. Incidentally, this opens the door to more study to find out how such resistance could apply to humans.

Creature Comforts in the Desert

Morning comes and the sandstorm is long gone. My international 3D crew is rising and we ready the gear for another day of 3D filming. Thanks to my wife, I get to have a fresh cup of Starbucks coffee from the French coffee press and ground coffee that she has brought along and surprised me with. We may not have running water or standing toilets or showers, but we have Starbucks coffee! I may survive this after all.

The 3D Kit and Crew

Our video gear consists of two Panasonic AG-3DA1 cameras with Convergent Design's nano3D, recording raw .mxr at 180Mb/s, 10-bit 4:2:2, powered by Anton Bauer Dionic 90 batteries. We have also been using the GoPro Hero 3D system to get some amazing point of view 'HorseCam' shots. A one kilowatt generator acts as our recharging station. No frills here.

Besides me and my wife Bee, my crew consists of veteran Thai director and cinematographer, Dorn Ratanathatsanee and an intern from Pace University, Sierra Chandler.

The First Stop

The project offered some very unique challenges in trying to shoot an effective 3D documentary in a place filled with sand, with no electricity and only dirt trails that we are making along the way, since the paved roads ended 50km outside the capital city of Ulaan Baatar. Even though it's a desert, the Gobi is only 4% sand; the rest is an amazingly varied mix of fertile plains and mountains with fields of wildflowers that stretch as far as the eye can see.

Our caravan of adventurers occupies two four-wheel-drive vans loaded with a curious combination of 3D video equipment and scientists. Luckily, our guide, Gans, is a seasoned veteran, working with National Geographic most recently. But he hasn't encountered the demands of a 3D documentary crew.

Our first stop will be the summer camp of Dr. Baatsu. He meets us there, having come from Ulaan Baatar several days earlier. His family consists primarily of nomadic herdsman and he returns from his duties in the city as often as he can. He seems equally at home on horseback as in a four-wheel-drive truck. His 90-year-old father and mother have joined us at the camp of his brother and his family. His father is still a horse trainer and is strong and alert.

Hospitality

During our ceremonial greeting inside the Ger, a felt-lined tent, Dr Baatsu is the first to introduce me to the ritual of the snuff bottle. He reaches into his Mongolian boot and retrieves an ornate pouch containing his most important family heirloom. There is a very exact procedure for receiving the bottle in your right hand and, if you have one, exchange your family snuff bottle



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with his. You then open the bottle, using the spoon built into the cap, take out some snuff, take a pinch and sample the aroma. This is all handed down from generation to generation as part of the proud history of these people.

Of course this comes after the offering of mare's milk, a sour-tasting naturally-fermented yogurt brew that is the national drink of Mongolia. There are many offerings presented to visitors. For example, there is a curd, made from the mare's milk along with thick cookies and some hard candies. But there are no words I can think of to adequately describe mare's milk. It is unlike anything that I have ever tasted. The Mongolians even make a Mongolian version of vodka from it.

Filming

In the days that follow, we get some amazing 3D footage, all while travelling by both camel, horseback and motor van. Meanwhile, Dr. Siraya collects her samples from the Mongolian horses. After days of travelling, our final stop brings us to the Khutsai National Park. This is home to the Przewalski's Horse, and we hope to shoot the first ever 3D footage of this breed brought back from near extinction.

Gans consults with the biologists at the research station and together they go over the maps and chart the sightings of the herds. Almost an hour later, we succeed in spotting the first herd: a group of one stallion and five mares. The late afternoon sun is setting and the herds have come down from their mountain grazing, but our light is fading quickly.

Horses spook easily and these ancient cousins are no exception. They are truly wild and cannot be domesticated. One wrong sudden move will see them galloping away. Luck and patience prevail, and Bee and I creep slowly ever closer to get within 15 feet of them. Occasionally a head will pop up in curiosity, but they stay in place. Dorn and Sierra don't manage to get as close, but still get great shots.

Reviewing the Dailies

Ecstatic, we head back to our Ger Camp to watch footage on our LG 24" Cinema 3D monitor connected to the AJA Hi-5 3D HDSDI to HDMI converter. This passive system is lightweight and well-built for our rugged shoot conditions. With our Polaroid 3D glasses, we have been able to review dailies with no problems.

Next morning the shoot yields equally stunning results and we are treated to a foal frolicking with his mother and a herd of around 12 horses. There is hope in these shots. Hope for a future where this unique breed of ancient horse will see its numbers increase.

Mission Accomplished

Our mission is complete. We head out, and a few hours later arrive in Ulaan Baatar to the relief of warm showers and soft beds. At our crew dinner that night we toast our success with, appropriately, Chinggis Khan Vodka. Our equipment and crew have proven themselves, and our hard work has been rewarded with four hard drives full of great 3D footage!

Al Caudullo is Chief Cook and Bottle Washer, 3D Evangelist, Producer, 3D Stereographer and Editor for 3DGuy Productions. Al has won the Association of Virtual Worlds award for 3D Excellence, and has used his thirty plus years of video production experience as a foundation for stereoscopic image capture. As principal of 3DGuy Productions, Al served as 3D Stereographer and 3D Editor many on projects including film, TV and corporate production. Clients include Panasonic, Hitachi, Imagimax Studios, 3DeeCentral, Polaroid, Spatial View, Toyota and many others. www.3DGuy.tv

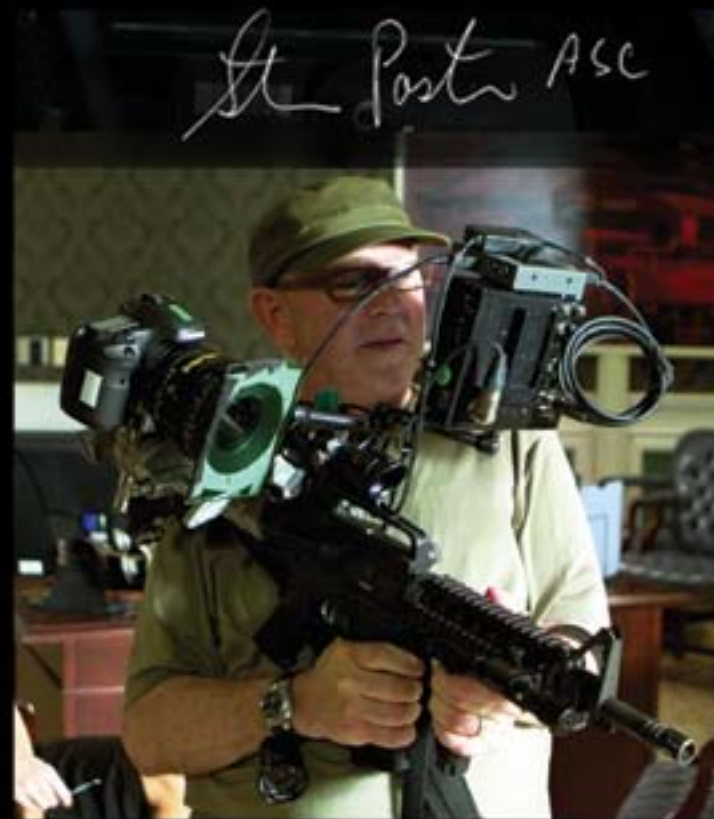
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After Casting

How to be effective, and build trust and respect.

by Peter Kiwitt

While it has been said that 80% of performance is casting, the last 20% is still crucial. Although you should always be open to change, with relatively little rehearsal time, working with actors should generally be a time of exploration for them, not you. To be effective, and build trust and respect, you should ideally have a full understanding of the script and each character before the first read-through.

Script Read-Through: Don't ask or push for acting, especially during a read-through, because that's what you might get. "Acting" not behavior. In terms of performance, the read-through is a time for listening. More broadly, use it as an opportunity to infect your cast with your broad vision of what the story is about and, perhaps, how it will feel or look. Talk about what excites you and what they can expect working with you instead of trying to give direction.

Actor Prep: This includes physical and/or skill training, if needed, and research. This can be initiated by actor or director but, if initiated by director, must be mutual because it cannot be required of the actor unless paid for. Research — everything from reading books to riding on patrol with police or going through boot camp — can help ground the actor in reality.

Discussions: Different actors respond to different things. Some may benefit from deep discussions of character and theme, some might respond better to general comments. Besides getting a sense of how to best communicate with an actor, discussions during pre-production potentially allow you to shape an actor's performance more generally and deeply, and to build trust away from the pressures of production. It also gives actors an opportunity to internalize an understanding of their character so when it is time to shoot they can just "be."

Pre-Production Rehearsals: Here and at every stage, try to lead or shape a performance with the lightest touch possible. Rarely, it may be better to recast a role during pre-production, when possible, rather than try to resolve interpretation or personality conflicts.

The purpose of early rehearsals is not to get a perfect take (i.e., a full and final performance), but to map out the "sound of the symphony"— to give the actors an understanding of the parameters and structure of the scene you are trying to conduct. What is the subtext? What and where are the moments? What is the rhythm?

Even when rehearsals are possible it is unlikely there will be time to rehearse every scene. Focus on those that form the spines of your character arcs and plot lines (which include the relationships between characters).

Set Rehearsals: Whatever the chaos and tension of production, when the actors step onto the set you must work to create a relaxed but focused environment that allows them to do their best work. The time for heady, long-winded discussion has past. Now is the time for shaping the foundation you have built up with them.

Regardless of the visual concepts you may be working toward, you need to ensure that the narrative concepts you should have worked hard to hone in the script are properly dramatized in the choices made by and for the actors. If you start with an engaging, well-crafted script, cast appropriately, and make performances a priority, even the most basic design and cinematography can still lead to a successful production. Conversely, the greatest design and cinematography without a strong narrative and performances will always fall short.

Peter Kiwitt has a M.F.A. from the American Film Institute and years of professional experience in "Hollywood" as a writer, producer, director, editor, and executive. He has worked in shorts, television movies and series, and features in the academic, independent, and studio worlds. He is a member of the Directors Guild of America and, as a cinema professor, developed original theories about cinema. <http://peterkiwitt.wordpress.com/bio/>

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VRRR-Zoom! The Sound and the Fury of Next-Gen Cars in Hollywood Film

by William F. Vartorella, Ph.D., C.B.C.

To paraphrase Sir Jackie Stewart, a car is the closest machine there is to being human.

If we explore the traditional seven characteristics of life, cars nearly qualify: discrete systems (cells) working together, organizational hierarchies, energy consumption, environmental response, growth and reproduction, adaptation to their environments. We, humans have an estimated 3,000 thoughts/day. The modern automobile has 125 million inputs/second.

And in “I, Robot,” the line of demarcation narrowed in real-time, with the **Audi RSQ** concept car not merely “injected” into the film as product placement, but purpose-built for the movie. This wasn’t a passive “stunt double,” but a design-studio, futuristic, next-gen vehicle with butterfly-action doors, spherical wheels, a chameleon luminescent paint job, and all the bell-and-whistles associated with a young, hip car culture in 2035.

Cars are iconic in their own right. “The Beast” in “The Fast and the Furious.” “Eleanor” in “Gone in 60 Seconds.” Or “The General Lee” in “Dukes of Hazzard.” They are a tool of the anti-hero: Popeye Doyle in “The French Connection.” We are a car culture. We are a film culture. It’s all *Zen and the Art of*

Motorcycle Maintenance, with Italian cars the romantic world view and German cars, the classical view—art vs. science. But the love affair with cars, film, and the global automakers mirrors our own lives. We go to film to embrace the mistress; to the dealership to fondle the sports car and buy the micro-van. The parallels are there. And the cost to the automaker *just* to get you into the showroom to lust after the true *fem fatale* is estimated at \$500 for that fling behind-the-wheel that might lead to a sale. Hollywood would have you believe that the love affair with the electric car is over; that hybrids are slow, clunky, design nightmares. And that the very nature of the Internal Combustion Engine (ICE), availability of relatively cheap fuel, and ear-seizing screams of tires and engines in full song are the essence of filmmaking. They are. We agree. But cars and car culture are changing.

Here’s the reality. Hollywood needs the youth market—Y Generation—which personifies cool, next-gen vehicles that evoke individuality and lifestyle. Studies by Deloitte (U.S., France, Germany, U.K., China) demonstrated that tech-savvy “Ys” want fuel-conserving or alternative power cars. Some 57% preferred hybrids capable of using both electricity and petroleum, plus touchscreen control (73%). They may wear a pork-pie hat like Popeye Doyle, but the ride has to

be rad. **Chrysler** figured this out with its recent Super Bowl, “Imported from Detroit” commercial that had a hip, dark underbelly vibe, *film noire* lighting, and Eminem.

And automakers recognize that the old motorsports model of “Win on Sunday, Sell on Monday” is more complex now and that they need film, social media, and a viral buzz to get new buyers into the showroom. We’re “Back to the Future” but, as Yogi Berra quipped, “The Future ain’t what it used to be.” This is especially true for “car chases,” whose Golden Age was likely the late ‘60s, early ‘70s when the “wow factor” was a high-octane cocktail of freeway mayhem, stunts at the edge of adhesion, and a penchant for mechanized “death.” Lest we forget, Philip D’Antoni went from “Bullitt” (1968) to produce “The French Connection” (1971), which puts him on the set of unquestionably two of the Top 10 white-knuckle car chases on anyone’s list. Then, there was former amateur racing driver John Frankenheimer, whose 1996 “Grand Prix” is still *the* racing movie standard. And his “Ronin,” whose last car chase was through the streets and tunnels of Paris employing some 300 or so stunt drivers. What makes “Ronin” especially poignant in the current context is the marques used (**Audi**, **BMW**, **Mercedes-Benz**) are all next-gen “green” car players, primed for the next big action-adventure.

Director Ron Howard has been tweeting triumphant, re: his upcoming F1 paean to the 1976 Formula One season, “Rush,” which he described at Monaco in May as an alternative to a five-year television series. But to set the record straight, “The Blues Brothers” (1980) has allegedly the most expensive car chase ever, although Jake and Elwood apparently aren’t talking. The days of the sports car going over the cliff and becoming, almost by magic, your Dad’s ancient Impala, minus the engine, when it hits the rocks and bursts into flame are long gone.

In March, the author participated in an unprecedented global automotive event in which 600 of the best-and-brightest engineers, policy wonks, industry executives, and green gearheads met for five days to thrash out next-gen electric vehicles, as well as the continuum/interface with hybrids. Embedded was a “ride-along” mystery event at an abandoned airstrip with plenty of run-off space for a casual introduction to new, disruptive automobiles. *The Hollywood Reporter*, *Variety*, and other tony film mags weren’t there. What was there were “the Beasts.” We aren’t talking about Grandma’s “pretty-in-pink” Prius. To get to the sign-in tent you had slink past a black, bad-ass Tesla. Then you strapped into, say, a hybrid **BMW** with a test driver in livery who, after the safety credo, asked if you had “a need for speed.” After a mind-numbing skid-pad demonstration, high “g-force” cornering with the scream of tires and acrid whiffs of burning rubber, the car accelerated to 148 mph. Pressed against the luxuriant leather, a voice said, “We can go to say, 160, but the braking will pin you to the belts more quickly than you may appreciate.” Discretion being the better part of valor, 148 seemed a nice compromise. And the film trades pontificate that the next-gen vehicles are boring, that the love affair

is over? Bull. F1 Champion Sir Jackie Stewart said it best: “Cornering is like bringing a woman to climax.” As Steve McQueen once quipped, “Life takes on meaning at 160 mph.”

And that’s what Hollywood film and next-gen cars are about: it’s pushing the love affair to the boundaries, bringing passion back into the car chase without gas-guzzling dinosaurs polluting the environment. It’s about attracting a whole new generation of filmmakers and *aficionados* who are lean, green, brash, early-adopters who can find the cars in their garages mirrored on the Big Screen (or as close as their cell phone). Hollywood would have us believe that “performance anxiety” crosses the aesthetic boundary from the bedroom to the “distance anxiety” of electrics looking for a charge or the ego-boost of raw, visceral, sound-surround beating against your chest.

Time for a reality check: second-unit pros use every trick of the trade to “convince” us that we’re somewhere we’re not, playing “whup-ass” with a car with a \$100K drive train, at speeds we can’t attain, with skills we don’t possess, and with testosterone or estrogen levels only super-heroes inherit. It’s rarely about stuntmen anymore: CGI and risk-

adverse insurance rates have nearly killed the traditional car chase. “Date Night,” for example, in April, 2009, took several days to shoot a nine-minute sequence with an **Audi R8** and a **Ford Crown “Vic”** taxi in short, multi-second bursts to achieve a three-and-a-half minute hair-raiser. Cost: insiders say \$1-\$2 million. Actor-racers like the late Steve McQueen (“Bullitt”) or Paul Newman (“Winning”), and James Garner (“Grand Prix”) actually had the skill-sets back in the day.

Inside the Mind of the Grand Prix Driver by Christopher Hilton makes the case that drivers of all stripes and persuasions have psychological speed barriers that determine their skills and tolerances. 148 mph, for example, is very close to one of those barriers and is the limit the present author is prepared to tolerate. OK, so for the Hollywood film buff, like the NASCAR fan, it isn’t about “death,” but “death-defied.” There are two famous instances of high-speed octane shot on open city streets, without the requisite “permits.” The elevated train scene/car chase in “French Connection” and the mind-numbing, nine-minute adrenalin-junky escape flat-out across Paris—“C’était un Rendezvous.” Get a legal copy of this short, rack it up before you read the back story of how Claude Lelouch made

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this classic—and his arrest. The point here is it was shot on open city streets, in one take with the driver pedal to the metal (average speed 78 km/h) in a **6.9 litre Mercedes**. In post, a throaty **Ferrari 275 GTB** soundtrack was superimposed to give the short its primal scream and illusion of much higher speeds (85 mph, max?). Why this example? We asked Christian Ruoff, publisher of *CHARGED Electric Vehicle Magazine*, who also was at the ride-along event described earlier.

WFV: Next-gen vehicles, especially the electrics, are perceived as boring, clunky, hardly emoting edgy style and street cred. If you were advising the helmer of a new film, what would you suggest?

CR: The Tesla Model S and Fisker Karma are obvious choices. Both are stunning, really fast and ooze elegance.

WFV: Fine, but these are hardly tuners with some hot rod DNA.

CR: I think it's important to choose the right car for the plot. I was recently watching the FOX TV show "Fringe," where the main characters were driving a Nissan LEAF. In one scene they mentioned that they had 40 miles of range left, and I thought to myself "FBI agents would never drive that car." The 80-100 mile range makes the LEAF a great car for the majority of us who drive to work, the store, and our friend's house every week. It wouldn't work very well for chasing murder suspects all over the tri-state area. A better choice would have been the Chevy Volt, about 40 miles of all-electric driving before the gas-powered range extender turns on.

WFV: I apparently didn't get the "memo" that the Volt was wickedly quick and responsive, which the professional driver

demonstrated easily, when I saw you last. What specific advice would you give to filmmakers, especially considering that EVs are "quiet, stealthy"?

CR: Modern electric vehicles are the opposite of boring. They are powerful and unbelievably fun to drive. The acceleration reminds me of those roller coasters that are suspended on magnets. Instantaneous silent acceleration, without the gear-shifting. It's hard to understand until you've driven one.

WFV: The great French short, "Rendezvous," switched from a Mercedes to a Ferrari "soundtrack" in full song to get the ear-splitting, visceral effect of a monster machine driven by a madman rushing headlong to meet his mistress at dawn in Paris. The sound is important.

CR: I suppose silent doesn't work well in [modern] film.

WFV: Well, Charlie Chaplin might not agree. Also, with respect to hybrid supercars—the Jaguar C-X75 or the Porsche 918 Spyder -- Hollywood could easily add exhaust notes timed to engine speed and acceleration. Carmakers have been debating quietly for some time about the need for interior and exterior speakers to "enhance" the driving experience ("dynamics") for the car nut. Decibels in film are part of the arc of the character—especially when a car is the star, like in "Bullitt" (1968 Mustang GT 390 Fastback) or "Smokey and the Bandit II" (Pontiac Trans Am).

CR: I suggest the burst of wind sound effect used when Superman leaves the room in hurry.

Lest we forget, as few as five years ago, the average new car in America

was getting fewer miles to the gallon than **Henry Ford's Model T** got when it was introduced. During the same time-frame, BMW was working to nudge its **H2R Hydrogen racecar** using a non-boosted 282 hp, 6.0L V-12 to rocket to speeds above 186 mph. That gives Hollywood electric vehicles, maybe a cameo appearance with a high-speed hydrogen, plus the growing fleet of hybrid "tuners," where a kid with a wrench, time, imagination, and Mommy-dearest's credit card can build a rat-rod that is higher tech than the engineering of the U.S.-Soviet Space Race. We've come a long way, baby, since The Keystone Kops "invented" the genre or multiple generations of "Bond. James Bond" haulin' ass with the bad guys. And once gasoline prices stabilize at \$4/gallon, a paradigm shift occurs in the automotive industry, as while not everyone believes in "Peak Oil" (because of advances in extracting and producing petroleum products), "carbon neutral" is the new mantra, the "new black."

So, if we were casting next-gen cars for a sequel to "Miami Vice," "Tron," or the next "Fast and Furious" franchise film what would we choose, in addition to the Tesla Model S and Fisker Karma? Cinch up your racing belts and think way, way outside-the-box for these "Magnificent Seven Rides."

The **300-MPG-E** classroom stunner, penned by a group now called "Minddrive": Developed by seven high school students + adult mentors in Kansas City, MO, this high-tech, stylish roller is based on an old Lola Indy-car chassis, looks like a LeMans racer and can achieve 42 mph—which gets it into the bottom range of "The French Connection" (the speed of the elevated

train was roughly 55 mph). When tested at Bridgestone's Texas Proving Grounds, it posted an equivalent of 300 mpg.

The **Italdesign Quaranta** from 2008. This four-year-old hybrid concept is a single design line from nose-to-tail, coming close to achieving a slight curve over a straight line. This car, as noted by the critics, departed from the **Lamborghini Gallardo** that Fabrizio Giugiaro also designed and shares the DNA philosophy with **Toyota's Prius**. It will do 120 mph and is roomy enough for a tight camera setup in the three-across cabin. 0-60 in less than six seconds. Great choice for any film depicting hedge-fund pirates, starring Don Johnson, or feckless Internet raiders.

Carbon-inspired bionics: take the lowly boxfish, for example. Mercedes-Benz engineers examined the shape of the boxfish in wind tunnels and water channels, exploring the traditional "water drop" shape which aerodynamicists gush over. With a "cd" of 0.06, experiments showed tiny vortices formed to stabilize the structure even in high turbulence zones. The concept vehicle had a top speed of nearly 120 mph, with a 0-60 in less than eight seconds, plus approximate fuel consumption of 70 mpg.

The rise of the machine and "personal-mobility," "car-sharing" activities, and "The Internet of Things." Bill Ford, Jr. embraces the view that all objects ultimately could be connected to the Internet, blurring the distinction between objects and subjects. Ford's vision is an exploration of vehicles on the road in the same way we look at tablets and smartphones—as part of a target-rich, globally connected telecommunications and transportation network. These will be intuitive cars, rushing to achieve Sir Jackie's vision of the car as alter-ego "human." Ford's just-

unveiled "**B-MAX**" was the first car to launch at the Mobile World Congress. This "micro-van" celebrates interior space and functionality. Great for the next European "heist" movie, where the arch-villain needs plenty of room for his Buck Rogers "ray gun."

Grow-a-Car: for all the sod-busters out there, revisit Henry Ford and his soy bean car creations. Bill Ford made news in the European trades, when he indicated that the car as we know it will change and become highly-configurable. In short, using a skate-board chassis and Hollywood creativity, there's the potential for "Transformers-meets-High Noon," with some dystopian hero creating chameleon cars in real-time to take on the galactic gunslingers. And the cars will be recyclable. Great for that "coming-of-age" film, where the hero goes from the hot rod to the personal mobility vehicle all "wrenched" in her garage using the skate-board chassis.

Transportation credits as next-gen currency. With some seven billion humans on Planet Earth, there are an estimated one billion cars. With a projected nine billion residents by 2050—70% in urban settings—four billion cars will be the norm. The result: congestion, regardless of wired solutions. This author projects the rise of a *new unit of currency*, "transportation credits" that will be traded internationally as a form of access to whatever passes for modernity in 40 years. CGI take note. Virtual Vehicles thundering through Cyberspace on financial "missions" become the futuristic vision of "Around the World in 80 Nano-seconds." This is "Tron" on steroids.

With homage to Edward Bellamy's book, *Looking Backward 2000-1887*, the final next-gen vehicle for film is an update of the 1910 *Tom Swift and His Electric Runabout* by "Victor Appleton".

In this classic children's novel, Tom Swift invents a disruptive, new rechargeable battery with half the recharge time—enabling Tom to vanquish the other battery-powered race cars at the track. His EV was designed for speed and performance—100 mph and a range of 400 miles on a single charge. Tom's aerodynamic convertible was painted a glossy, in-your-face purple. This was the vision for EVs 100+ years ago and deserves revisiting.

In a prescient essay, Arthur B. Evans has written about "The Vehicular Utopias of Jules Verne" (1999). In it, he articulates Verne's penchant for what we here have called the next-gen vehicles. Film, an illusion as bold as any utopia, would not have ruffled Verne. And his next-gen Hollywood vehicle?

"I believe that water will one day be employed as fuel, that hydrogen and oxygen which constitute it used singly or together, will furnish an inexhaustible source of heat and light, of an intensity of which coal is not capable." *The Mysterious Island* (1874).

In addition to film interests, Bill Vartorella writes on automotive technology trends, carbon offsets, and next-gen motorsports. Recently, he served on an electric vehicles (EV) start-ups panel at the IEEE first international EV conference. Bill's activities include the Electric Vehicular Technology Society, American Auto Racing Writers and Broadcasters Association, and the "Chowder Society." He has had stints doing "pace notes" for an amateur rally driver and as corporate associate sponsor of an electric, open-wheel race car. Bill is a past presenter at Grand Prix Business's global sponsorship symposium. He is the co-author of Funding Exploration, the standard reference for non-governmental financial support for science and engineering projects.



NightLights

Feature Film Shot Using RED MX, Panasonic AF100, and DSLR Cameras



NightLights is an independent, Chicago-based film production, which depicts the poignant story of a young woman, Erin Logan (Shawna Waldron), as she strives to care for her twin brother, Jacob (Stephen Louis Grush), who is severely affected by autism. When the possibilities of love and friendship open up in her life, she must deal with how to create a home for herself and her brother at the same time.

Executive producer and director David Midell brought this story to the screen through his company Play On Productions, which dedicates itself to presenting inspiring stories about individuals with special needs and their families. Early on in the process, John Klein, also a Chicago-based cinematographer, was brought on to help create a visual aesthetic in bringing this story to life. “During our initial discussions,” Klein said, “Dave and I, along with production designer Megan McDonough, agreed that the camera should function like an ‘unobtrusive observer,’ with only a few stylized elements. This film lives and thrives because of its characters and performances, and we all wanted to highlight that first and foremost.”

They had to weigh that aesthetic with producers Adam Dick and Keaton Wooden’s requests to capture the best possible image quality for their low budget, and considered a variety of camera options to lens the movie before finally gravitating to the RED MX. “4K resolution was a must for us, and given our locations and lighting limitations, the RED’s latitude in bringing back color information in post-production would be essential,” Klein said. “We loved the look and feel the camera and the Red Pro Primes gave us, and we were eternally grateful for the flexibility it gave us later in color correction.”

To add a little spice, Klein also opted to use his Panasonic AF100 along with a LensBaby Composer to acquire POV shots

of Jacob, to reflect how an individual with autism such as Jacob might see light and color in a distinctive way. It also allowed the filmmakers to use the lightweight camera in a variety of positions that were not possible with the RED. A Canon 7D DSLR was also used to capture a few night and sunset exteriors after the production officially wrapped. Despite the color and resolution differences, the mixture of formats proved to be both technically compatible and artistically beneficial for *NightLights*.

Klein’s longtime friend and collaborator on past productions, William Donaruma, was then brought in as camera operator along with his RED camera package. The opportunity to work together on a long-term project was a blessing. “John and I have a very cooperative relationship when it comes to vision, no matter who is calling the shots. It was such a joy for both of us to be able to concentrate on one job at hand while making the film. We’re used to wearing multiple hats, so this was a very efficient and dynamic way of working for us, which kept the days on track.” With multiple slider and handheld shots, the camera crew of Donaruma, 1st AC Justin Cameron and 2nd AC Mitchell Tyrer were able to set up quickly, have monitors up for preview and rehearse for final adjustments while Klein could concentrate solely on lighting the scene and the actors. “The operator often gets overlooked as a separate position, especially on lower budget productions where the DP will fill that role,” comments Donaruma, “but I believe this way of working really allowed us to move quickly and efficiently to maximize our set ups each day. 1st AD Michael Chandler was pretty happy with our pace.”

Klein agreed, saying, “Beyond the creative freedom afforded me by having a camera operator, I don’t know if I could have physically handled the rig as well as Bill!” With the fully loaded RED MX rig coming in at 38lbs for handheld work, Donaruma was getting a work out. Compounding that was the 100-plus

degree days during a freak Chicago heat wave last summer. Production was tasked with making sure everyone was well-hydrated throughout the day. Inside the apartment set, it was determined that the temperature was reaching in excess of 110 degrees at times, because the air conditioning could not run for sound recording. “We would come outside for a breather and it felt really nice in the evenings. Later we realized it was still in the 90’s outside and that was cool to us,” Donaruma recalls. While there always seems to be concern about the RED overheating, the camera crew didn’t have any problems with the gear under those conditions.

The production shot primarily with RED drives, swapping them out at the lunch break for off-loading and switching to CF cards towards the end of the day to speed up the transfer process when everyone wrapped. Editor Kat Thomas would then take one of the two drives and begin transcoding to ProRes LT files for off-line editing and dailies during the production days. “We tried to treat the RED as much like film as possible, making sure we had what we affectionately referred to as a BFN – a big fat negative,” Klein said with a smile. “That extended to a workflow of dailies via a kind of ‘one-light’ processing through Kat’s transcodes. It was immensely helpful to see our work even in an uncorrected format, just to make sure we weren’t missing anything!”

When production wrapped the 17-day shoot and Thomas completed a cut of the film, associate editor Mike Molenda took over for some fine tuning and post-workflow. Some color testing was done with the RED Raw files in Apple Color, but the final color correction was done by colorist Bob Sliga with DaVinci Resolve, and the results were luminous. “Dave wanted the color scheme to reflect the emotions of the characters at any

given moment,” Klein reflects, “allowing for more saturation in moments of extreme happiness or more of a skip-bleach, cool look in moments of anger or pain.” In keeping with the visual methodology, this was meant to enhance the performances ever so subtly, rather than trying to over-process for the sake of style.

As of now, the film is currently in the final stages of sound mixing, and the camera crew is eager to see their finished work on the big screen. “I think *NightLights* has turned out beautifully,” Klein said, “and to be a part of a story that means so much to so many people is an honor.”

William Donaruma has years of production experience having worked for Universal Studios as well as a variety of production companies and major television networks in film and video production. Returning to Notre Dame to teach production courses, he has won the Kaneb Teaching Award and was granted a fellowship at the Academy of Television Arts and Sciences. www.nd.edu/~wdonarum

*John Klein is a freelance director of photography based in Chicago. He has traveled around the world and back for his craft and has shot dozens of projects, ranging from award-winning short and feature films to music videos, web series, and documentaries, but considers *NightLights* one of his crowning achievements. When not shooting, John also serves as producer of Glass City Films, through which he has overseen as producer and lensed the short films *Rendezvous*, *Hangers*, *The Sleepover*, *Under The Table*, and *Honeybees*. He has also produced a trio of feature films in Glass City, *Happily After* (his directorial debut) and *Separation Anxiety*, in addition to several music videos and side projects. For more information, check out www.windycitycamera.com and www.glasscityfilms.com.*





It's a Great Time to Write for Television

by Pamela Douglas

Opportunity is spelled TELEVISION because today's TV series are:

1. T = Timely

TV is fast. If you're on top of your writing craft and can deliver a script quickly, you'll be able to deal with what's happening in the world and on your mind right now. Current subjects – our hopes, fears, and pressing issues – reach your viewers with immediacy. You'll also have the satisfaction of seeing your work on screen mere weeks after writing “The End.”

2. E = Energized

Excitement and a sense of exploration infuses much of TV. Long gone are the days when TV was limited to 3 networks with their predictable and imitative shows. Of course they're still around, as are some mind-numbing series and reality shows that are “cheap” in every sense of the word. But anyone entering TV today can find new outlets on cable and new media, and a hunger for fresh material. Despite the dross that also fills the airwaves, a sense of growth abounds.

3. L = Long

Never mind the half hour or hour length of episodes. TV series offer the

largest story-telling arena in history. Successful shows may have 100 hours of characterization and plot development and some shows have gone on for more than a decade. Compared to TV, ancient Greek plays that lasted for several days are what we'd call mini-series.

4. E = Entertaining

The audience for television shows keeps growing despite doomsayers who thought new media would wipe it out. That's because people want to be entertained in their homes by fare they can relate to. At the end of a hard day or in hard times, people want to kick back and watch effective stories told with casts they care about.

5. V = Vigorous

The amount of writing and production needed each television season is difficult to grasp if you include all the venues – basic cable, premium cable, internet, mobile, web and other off-broadcast shows, as well as local and international projects. And behind what is visible on screens are armies supporting each venture including multiple staff writers and writers who are creating pilots for new series. People who work in television have to work hard to keep up, and that's a sign of the potency of the medium.

6. I = Internet-savvy

All current shows have applications online. These may include webisodes, mobisodes, interactive games, blogs, fan-sites, graphic novels, a social networking presence and anything else you can imagine. Beyond the advantage of staying in touch with viewers and promoting their series, the expanding online presence creates potential jobs: someone has to write all that. As the line between TV and computer screens continues to dissolve, and both TV and Internet delivery systems cross-pollinate, both will continue to grow.

7. S = Salable

The market for theatrical feature scripts has shrunk and many former financial sources have backed away from independent films. But excellent TV pilots that are professionally crafted are launching writing careers and occasionally being bought for new series. For those who approach filmmaking as a personal art form, or who have the funds to make their own movies, a career writing TV series may not seem appealing. For everyone else, TV is the place to work.

8. I = Innovative

Any genre that has ever existed in any time or place can be found among a thousand TV channels. Beyond the plethora of choices, creative re-interpretation is challenging prototypes on HBO, Showtime, AMC and elsewhere. Franchises like western, medical, legal and family dramas are new again in attitude, narrative style and

characterization. Though the re-hashed action-hero tropes that are familiar in big movies do still appear in places like the Syfy channel and on some network shows, the general trend is towards extending and bending old franchises.

9. O = Omnipresent

In 2010, the debut of AMC's series *The Walking Dead* was seen

simultaneously in 120 countries in Europe, Latin America, Asia and the Middle East, carried in 35 languages. Meanwhile Americans viewed the show across all platforms including on-air, online, on demand and mobile. That doesn't even count subsequent DVDs or web streaming. And that's just one show, and only on basic cable. Around the globe, the most-watched show is *House*. *Law and Order* is being made in many languages throughout Europe. Currently, China is re-making *Little House on the Prairie* into *Little Yurt on the Prairie*. No kidding. So if you as a writer really want to reach people, TV (with its internet apps) is the way.

10. N = Now

For ground-breaking, insightful literature, the most innovative stories and characters, the largest reach, and the bravest content in shows like *The Wire*, this is the time to write for TV. More opportunities exist than ever before because of the multiple outlets and the need for product. First, polish your craft. Then if you have contemporary stories to tell, the time to go for it is now.

Pamela Douglas is the author of “Writing the TV Drama Series,” now in its Third Edition. She has numerous screenwriting awards and nominations including The Humanitas Prize, the Writers Guild of America, American Women in Radio and Television, and Emmys. She has been a member of the Board of Directors of the Writers Guild of America, and is a tenured professor in the USC School of Cinematic Arts.

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The Lure of the Dark Side

Ways to Send Your Characters Down the Left-Hand Path

by Pamela Jaye Smith

Your audience wants to find out *how* people and things go bad. Here are some ways to send your characters down the left-hand path.

Sleeping with the Enemy

Since Adam took a bite from the apple Eve offered, humans have done all sorts of bad things because of love, lust, and sex. People break society's rules, leave jobs, abandon families, betray countries, lie, steal, and kill for love, or some version of it. Some relationships are so torrid-and-troubling, so love-hate it can feel like the Stockholm Syndrome where hostages actually bond with their captors.

It's not unusual to hate the person you passionately desire — they make you feel weak and addicted. Abuse and stalking can result, as well as torture and death. *Double Indemnity*, *Body Heat*, *Fatal Attraction*, and *Dangerous Liaisons* revolve around desire gone bad.

Seemed Like a Good Idea at the Time

The road to hell is paved with good intentions. It's the Law of Unintended Consequences, when one seemingly good thing causes something else to happen, and that leads to another, and to another, and the eventual outcome stinks.

In *Finding Nemo*, the well-meaning dentist crowed that he had found Nemo struggling for life and saved him, but the little fish was effectively kidnapped, and both he and his dad had to brave many dangers to get him back home.

The Slippery Slope

From the little white lie to Hitler, from the Prince of Dimness to Darth Vader, once you set foot on the Left Hand Path, it's a slippery slope with little hope of return. Most cautionary tales begin with the single mis-step; usually the audience knows it's a bad idea but the protagonist either doesn't know, thinks it's inconsequential, or is in a state of denial.

This downhill ride can be quite hypnotic. It begins with the initial bite, then the denial, the larger crime, the cover-up, the grip of guilt, giving up any remaining inclination to do good, hardening the heart, and embracing evil. You can create effective drama by focusing on three or more of these steps.

Power Corrupts

Julius Caesar, today's news, your big brother, your bitchy boss — we've all seen lots of examples of power getting out of hand when in the wrong hands. Sometimes the corruption is petty, like security guards with badges and guns. Sometimes it's deadly, like tribal warlords.

There's a little something in all of us that wants to be right, to be in charge, to be in the spotlight. The more we feel wronged or ignored, the more desirous we are of power to balance that out, and the more dangerous we are if we actually get that power and there's no one around who can or will stop us.

Show a character flaw that isn't so awful, mostly because they don't have the opportunity to pursue it, e.g. fine food, kinky sex, fast cars. Once they gain power the character swells with explosive self-importance and the flaw goes wild, like plugging

a toaster directly into a power pole, the overload bursts through those weak spots and wreaks havoc.

Violence

Abuse breaks something in the human soul which once broken, can seldom be repaired. The Dark Side uses those sharp fragments to create more pain by harming others, passing on the pattern to one's children, or turning on one's self with disgust, shame, or the desire to escape at any cost.

Sometimes instinctual blood-lust kicks in like in *Bloodsport* or *Fight Club* (or self-defense like in *Carrie*), but often it's a cold-blooded fixation. Different from the Slippery Slope paradigm, this is more a hunger-for-more. Talk to anyone who'll admit having done something bad while knowing it was bad but keeping on with it, and you'll pick up a fascination for the lure of power and pain. Investigate China's Cultural Revolution, *The Killing Fields*, *Kiss of the Spider Woman*, and the TV series *24* for more details.

The Dark Side has many devices to lure people onto the Left Hand Path. When you consciously select and develop one of these Lure processes you can add even greater depth to your villains, pathos to your heroes, and danger to your story situations.

Pamela Jaye Smith wrote "The Power of the Dark Side," "Inner Drives," "Symbols-Images-Codes," and "Beyond the Hero's Journey." She is a writer, international speaker/consultant, and award-winning producer/director. Credits include Paramount, Universal, Disney, Microsoft, RAI-TV Rome, and many others. Pamela attended film school at the University of Texas Austin, recently taught at the Minneapolis MCTC film program, and will teach at the National Film School of Denmark this fall. She consults with media-makers to help bring the power of myth to their stories. pjs@mythworks.net 323-874-6042

On Campus

The Department of Communication at The University of Memphis

Bachelor of Arts and Master of Arts Degree Programs in Communication With a Concentration in Film and Video Production

The Department of Communication at The University of Memphis offers both a Bachelor of Arts and a Master of Arts Degree in Communication with a concentration in Film and Video Production. These concentrations combine technical instruction with courses in motion picture studies to provide students with the skills necessary to function in the multifaceted world of audiovisual production. The school's approach to media practice is broad enough to address the needs of the independent artist as well as those who wish to enter the industry, and the program is small enough to ensure that each student receives personal attention from the faculty.

Facilities

The Department provides production equipment and facilities for beginning to advanced students. These include: high definition digital video and 16mm motion picture cameras, professional lighting and sound packages, non-linear video editing stations (Final Cut Pro), audio labs equipped with Pro-tools digital workstations, film editing rooms, a fully equipped television studio, and a 25,000-watt FM radio station. The College of Communication and Fine Arts also houses a 24-track digital recording studio and a computer graphics lab.

Faculty

The faculty is comprised of experienced, academically and professionally trained filmmakers and scholars whose work has been broadcast nationally on ABC, CBS, NBC, PBS, the A&E Network and Court TV, and has won numerous awards, including; three Peabody Awards; two duPont Awards; five national Emmys; seven regional Emmys; the Erik Barnouw Award; eight CINE Golden Eagles; a Writers Guild Award; an Edward R. Murrow Award; an NAACP Image Award nomination; and many festival awards and screenings.

Visit www.memphis.edu/communication.

Spider-Man is Amazing Again

Editors Alan Edward Bell, Michael McCusker, and Pietro Scalia.

by Scott Essman

Though the three *Spider-Man* films helmed by Sam Raimi are all less than a decade old, Sony Pictures is reinventing the franchise with an all new 2012 film, *The Amazing Spider-Man* which features an entirely new cast and crew, plus a fresh approach to the comic book legend. Given its massive scale, the production required the services of three top-flight editors to realize its many scenes and action aspects.

Pietro Scalia was involved as an editor on *The Amazing Spider-Man* from the beginning of production through principal photography up until the main unit went to New York for location shooting. At that point, he left *Spider-Man* to move onto *Prometheus* which he edited for longtime collaborating director Ridley Scott. Of note, when Scalia came onto *Spider-Man*, *Prometheus* had not yet been green lit. Since that time, Scalia has been involved in *Spider-Man* on and off, seeing cuts and screenings, consulting and assisting. “It’s really exciting at the beginning of a film such as *Spider-Man* with its franchise,” he said. “For me, it was the approach in looking at the film and discovering these characters for the first time. That was my main priority, and to have young new actors Andrew Garfield and Emma Stone [involved].”

For Scalia, especially with his being involved at the outset of footage coming into the editing room, *Spider-Man* was a discovery on many levels. “As the material comes in, building the scenes is a very exciting part,” he explained. “I loved being able to discover the characters for myself and shape them. That was my guiding principle at the beginning – deciding who this new Spider-Man was going to be. The character is an awkward kid, but there was a mischievous rascal in Andrew that I really liked.”

With Scalia involved as key editor at first, all of the incoming scenes were cut as they were shot during his tenure. “Two-thirds of the film was in an assembly form,” he stated. “A lot of the big scenes still needed to be shot including the finale and there were still exterior New York shots — still a lot of material needing to be picked up.”

Due to the heavy amount of visual effects in the film, Scalia was given detailed previzualizations. “The reels were built with scenes that were cut, but it wasn’t a completed film,” he said of the early stages of editing. “There were different scenes with really early previz that would be revised and changed. We were shooting with the Red Epic camera in 3D, new cameras that haven’t been used before.”

Of note, the 3D process necessitated a learning curve of sorts for Scalia in terms of how the cutting room was going to be set up, organizing the digital workflow shooting on the lot at Sony Pictures, and getting the data via dailies which he would view in 3D with polarized glasses on. “Knowing that there were new cameras, there were technical problems, but with the new digital data management, we made it work,” Scalia described. “My assistant Bob Mead assisted in making a full digital cutting room going. Having had that experience, going onto *Prometheus*, it was an evolution of the format. By the time we set up *Prometheus* in London, [cinematographer] Dariusz Wolski had already done 3D shooting with the Epic on *Pirates of the Caribbean*. I took what we learned on *Spider-Man* and how we ran the cutting room, and implemented it on *Prometheus*.”

Cutting in 3D was beneficial to Scalia in a creative as well as technical sense. “3D affects your emotions of the shot, so it determines the selections and how you build the scene,” he said. “What I noticed early on was that some of these scenes, because your eye needs adjusting, it was cut at a slower pace. I was very aware of not cutting and straining the eye, but the eye settles in from one shot to the next. Looking back at certain scenes with the glasses off, you would feel that a scene should move slightly quicker. Some people will shoot by pulling convergence on the set but it’s very time consuming. With a somewhat fixed convergence, the subject is fixed in a temporary way, but that could later be adjusted in post-production.”

Scalia further elaborated on the 3D process as a tool which filmmakers can manipulate. “When I experienced the first 3D

with these cameras, it has the same effect as color timing or camera movement,” he commented. “It was important to use it as a storytelling device. It only hurts if the 3D is off — I would send it back and try to get it fixed.”

When *Prometheus* finally got its green light, Scalia made the hard decision to leave *Spider-Man* and join the prequel to 1979’s *Alien*. “When you work on something and build characters, it was very hard for me [to leave],” he said. “You have to let it go, but it was in good hands. I was a whole year on *Prometheus*, but they [Webb and Bell] have been great with me, keeping me in the loop and inviting me to screenings and hearing my feedback.”

Though his time on *The Amazing Spider-Man* was cut short, Scalia relished the experience. “I went into it fresh and learned about the myth of Spider-Man and looked at it as a character piece – a teenage kid who has suffered a huge loss and how does he mature?” Scalia remarked. “That is what appealed to me — that transformation. At the same time, you make sure that the film is going to be special — looking at a new hero.”

Editor Michael McCusker came onto the film midway through the process. “I heard about it when it was announced,” he said. “I knew that Alan Bell would probably be involved in some way because he had worked with the director. I came on during the first week of June in 2011. Alan had been on a couple of months before me when Pietro left to do *Prometheus*. At that point, they had finished shooting and had a movie that they needed to get prepared for the studio.”

Joining the team came naturally to McCusker. “Alan asked me to help out for a couple of months, and I agreed to do that,” he said. “We had been trying to work together for years. We both respect each other’s work — it was a great situation.”

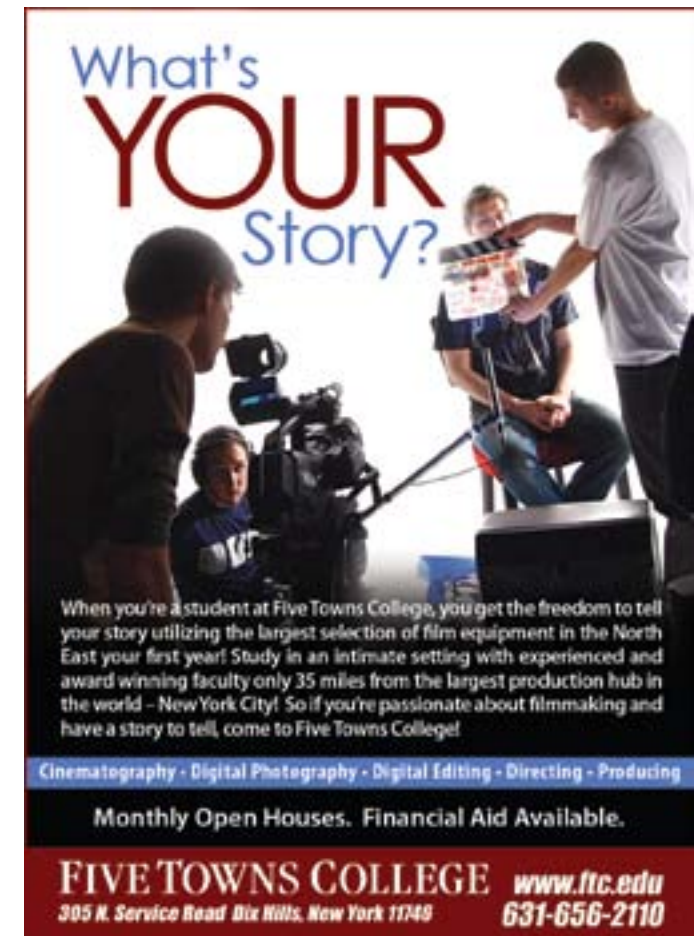
McCusker worked longer than anticipated as he remained with *The Amazing Spider-Man* until January of 2012, and he was glad to do so. “Alan is not only a great editor but a gracious guy,” said McCusker. “He treated me like an equal partner. My role on any movie of that size when you get into trying to get to the end, there are always sequences that are up for grabs, trying to figure out how it was going to fit together. I brought some cohesion to it.”

Explaining the division of work, McCusker noted that it came naturally to the two editors on the show during his time with the film. “Alan was perfectly capable, but there are so many other mandates for his time, I do the exploration job working out these complicated sections, hacking at it until you get something that

people are happy with,” McCusker detailed. “I started getting scenes to rework, all in an effort to get the movie to a good place. The original intention was two-to-three months, but it grew from there.”

Just how does a two-three month job expand into one that lasts seven months? McCusker explained it democratically. “Editing is a funny gig – I love it, but everybody gets possessive of their work,” he said. “When I was showing my work to Marc and Alan, they were happy with what they were seeing and liked the progression, and started giving me more stuff to do. I realized it would be a bigger, longer job.”

As such, McCusker worked naturally and fluidly with both Bell and director Webb. “They both liked the situation because I was able to go into my room, work stuff out, and present it to them,” McCusker stated. “It was decided for me what sequences I was going to edit. They had an initial mandate for me to work on certain sections. From there, it ballooned out into other scenes. As we screened stuff, we would start talking about stuff that needed work. I would rework stuff and show it to them.”





Though the film represented McCusker's first experience with Webb, it worked well for the film. "I like Marc a lot – he is a gracious guy and smart," McCusker described of the relationship. "Nobody's ego came into play. There was a free flow of critiques and ideas. I felt very lucky to be involved in that. I think it was a really great way to work."

When McCusker got into the work and more was given to him to edit in summer and fall of 2011, new mandates came to fruition. "They felt like there was a chunk of the movie that was sagging a bit in terms of pacing," he stated. "They wanted a sharper focus and more efficient edit. They had to concentrate on getting other scenes in shape for visual effects. They had a lot to do with CG and action- related scenes. They would have fallen behind on other scenes."

Regarding an effects-laded film such as *Spider-Man*, McCusker explained his position logically. "I have worked on some large movies with a lot of previz," he said. "You make the movie work with the footage you have. A lot of the process is developing story and visuals as you go along. For a character like Spider-Man who is doing these actions bits, previz plays a big role. You have to reset yourself for having a whole lot of tools at your disposal."

He further denoted how an editor works with both previsualization and computer-generated imagery. "You can get some previz to fill in an idea to see if it works and progress from there," McCusker said. "It's only challenging to see how far your imagination can go. There are many ways to solve problems with the resources to do so. You might pitch an idea and go to the director. Marc would come in and like it or not and he makes the call. I might pitch an idea, but it might become a brainstorm session with me and Marc or Marc, myself and Alan. Somebody initiates an idea and comes up with a concept. It happens several times over the seven months I was there. Alan encouraged it — he was very gracious in allowing me to be part of that team in that communications circle."

In the end, though Spider-Man is a huge project, McCusker stated that his job is essentially the same as one on a smaller film. "When I'm an editor, whatever the size of the film is, I always maintain the position of the audience," he said. "When you view moviemaking in those terms, it becomes very simple. I try not to overcomplicate it. I try to keep to the basics: how do I support the main character and the story through the main character — I make creative decisions that way. When you feel like you are

stuck and painted into a scene, think of the character. Try to cut from that place. "

With Scalia leaving in February of 2011 to work on *Prometheus*, Alan Bell came in as the key editor on *The Amazing Spider-Man*, including a short overlap with Scalia. Though the picture was two-thirds assembled, Bell described the remaining job ahead as a "huge undertaking – an awful lot of work to be done."

Of his work on Spider-Man, which will total some 16 months, Bell described the reimagining of the franchise as "definitely different than the previous style. It is more character driven. That's the thing that I think people will take out of this."

Significantly, Bell had edited *500 Days of Summer* for director Marc Webb who has hired to direct *The Amazing Spider-Man*. Naturally, he brought in Bell when the editor's schedule made him available. "Marc comes from a solid grounded way that his actors connect," Bell said. "In *The Amazing Spider-Man*, there is a strong rapport between Peter Parker and the love interest. I personally think that a lot of the scenes resonate on an emotional level more than in the previous *Spider-Man*."

In addition to the emotional ties among the actors, this *Spider-Man* has no lack of action beats. "We have huge sweeping action scenes that are definitely things that you haven't seen before in *Spider-Man*," said Bell. "He can't spin his own webs — he has mechanical web-shooters; it's more realistic. You have a different set of rules than if he can spin webs on his own."

Of course, the film is entitled *Spider-Man*, so, as such, the story is focused on the title character. "Very much like Batman as a human, Spider-Man is everyman's hero," Bell claimed. "The thing that resonates with me is the idea that that could be me. What would I do in that situation? How would I behave? We try pretty hard to say what would happen if you put a kid into these extraordinary circumstances."

To actuate a film that has been on screen thrice within the past ten years, the filmmakers were aware that certain aspects of the legend must remain intact, while others needed to be wholly apart from the previous films. "Everybody is cognizant of the fact that we are taking a story that people are familiar with," Bell stated. "That story has been told already. There are certain things that have to happen in a Spider-Man story. Those things you have to find a fresh new way to tell them hopefully. I think that we have

all been very aware that we have to attempt to do it differently and update the story and characterization of the various themes in the previous ones."

Bell continued that as an editor, the film constantly went back to his focusing on the main character as its center. "It makes it a lot easier and more poignant as an editor to identify with the character more," he stated. "You take the movie home with you. Some of my best work is done at night when I'm sleeping!"

With the widely disparate projects of *500 Days of Summer* and *The Amazing Spider-Man* behind them, Bell spoke reverentially about his collaboration with Webb. "He allows me a level of creativity that I really appreciate," Bell said. "I am an accomplished compositor, so that when I look at scenes, and need to fix something, I tend to look at footage differently than others. I don't have to wait to send a shot out to a VFX company. I can do it right in the Avid or in a compositing app on another desktop."

With his compositing background, Bell had input into every one of the 250 visual effects shots in the film, including opticals such as split screens. "There were many performance-enhancing elements," he elaborated. "Face replacement and arm additions using Combustion and Nuke. Now I am using Fusion which is basically like Nuke. On a movie like this, I am doing shots that progress the story. If I have an idea and put it in the movie and it plays, Marc can see it, approve it, and it gets done. I'll have the idea and be working on a scene and I'll do it all at home. I simply do the temp and pass it down the chain and it gets done by a whole host of other people. I have been collaborating quite a bit with the visual effects supervisor on the show. He appreciates the give-and-take. Sony Pictures Imageworks is doing all of the critical character animation and the lion's share of the VFX.

On a project as huge as *Spider-Man*, the post-production team, especially including SPI and other effects vendors, is substantial. "There is a whole team of people constantly following the cut," said Bell. "Somebody has to go behind me and redo [my temp effects]. You do it and these people are scrambling to figure out what you did, and it is submitted and changed. There is a constant treadmill of shots coming and going. It's such a big machine, there is an army of people doing things all around you."

One memorable scene set in a New York subway was shot on a stage with a green screen background and involves a wide array of elements. "With this type of filmmaking there are so many layers, and you get the lot – one element shot against blue, one element shot against green, the clean pass, the CG character, the

stunt guy," Bell explained. "There may be eight elements in one shot. You are layering that together to make it work. That's the biggest challenge."

On a March day, Bell is getting very close to locking picture and finalizing visual effects. "Significant numbers of visual effects shots are done. As visual effects need to be cut in, there are tweaks that need to be made, and there is mixing, color timing, 3D conversions, and deciding where we want things placed in frame. Also, since the movie was shot in 3D, you have to smooth out the inter-ocular and convergence. They are very good at SPI knowing how much we need and what we are going to get."

Since the mid-1980s, Scott Essman has been writing and producing projects about motion picture craftsmanship. He has published over 350 articles as a freelancer and has produced over twenty publicity projects for Universal Studios Home Entertainment where he made video documentaries and wrote publicity materials. He published his first book, "Freelance Writing for Hollywood," for Michael Wiese in 2000, and has a new book about Tim Burton.

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Canon EOS C300 on the Run

First Impressions

by Carl Filoreto

It's not how I pictured it. When I decided to take the leap and get out in front of the Canon EOS C300 hype, I imagined the camera sitting elegantly on a tripod, adorned with the latest tech wizardry. Its home would be mostly in well-crafted interview settings complemented by sculpted light and clever backgrounds.

Nice thought. Reality, though, can change your vision as quickly as the annoyingly penetrating bark of an oh-dark-thirty wake up call. So say goodbye to all those lovely chimeras, ellipsoids and matte boxes and embrace the idea of creating video at a rapid pace while working in a seemingly endless stream of often gritty food markets and perpetually hot, steamy kitchens around the world.

Let's set the scene. Shortly after taking ownership of one of the first C300's that made it to the open market, I received the plum assignment of working on two international food based shows that would air on the Travel Channel. One program takes a look at street food served across the globe, while the second would examine the nuances of fast food in different countries. Material for each show would be gathered in six cities in six different countries. Every fourth day the traveling production team would pick up stakes and move to a new city. Besides me, the production team for this trip consisted of producer extraordinaire Patrick Weiland, DP Mike Simon, and audio engineer Lance Lundstrom. Fixers, productions assistants and security folks were hired in each country.

Instead of enjoying a graceful introduction to this new piece of photographic wonderment, I was plunged into an acid test immersion course with the C300. This article is an unvarnished, unendorsed and in regard to some techy fine points, an uneducated first look at the pros and cons of using the Canon



EOS C300 in the field under often tough conditions. In a future article, I'll take the time to talk to the folks at Canon and to other users about the camera. But for now, I'll provide you with initial impressions. And by the way, I bought the EF version of the camera and used five Canon L series lenses on the shoot, as well as a Canon 2x tele-extender.

To rig or not to rig. The C300 invites the same basic questions that crop up with almost any smaller format camera. These always center on what's the best way to configure it. How do I get the accessories I need on it and still keep it workable and functional, and how do I use it in hand held situations? In this case the essential, no compromise additions included a high end shotgun microphone, in this case a trusty Sennheiser MKH-416, as well as a Lectrosonics SR two channel wireless receiver.

Since I was ahead of the curve in getting the camera into the field, I quickly realized that while some manufacturers had a smattering of base plate, rod based rigs on the market, there's certainly going to be many more entrants in the field in the coming months. I was hesitant to spend a sizable amount of cash on a rig or a cage, and then find something superior for my needs three months from now. Complicating the decision was time – and the lack of it. I didn't have a great deal of time to figure things out before I hit the road.

A piece of advice from a good friend and excellent DP, Ben McCoy, resonated with me. Keep it simple. Ben works as a DP for many Frontline docs, and he too had already taken possession of a C300 and had a couple of shoots under his belt. The more I thought about it, the more it made sense. So I mimicked his setup. The primary problem is the wireless receiver... Where do you put it, and how do you power it? Normally, on my larger

cameras, I run power to my wireless receiver off an Hirose tap. That's not an option with the C300. Hmmmmmm.

The configuration I modeled from Ben puts the wireless receiver on the cold shoe at the back of the handle. The monitor unit then mounts on another cold shoe at the front of the handle. To power the Lectrosonics SR, I purchased their battery sled kit, which allows the receiver to be powered with a small rechargeable NP-F series battery. I used their mounting sleeve to adapt it to the cold shoe.

Is this ideal? No. It's another item on the checklist... Must remember to power up, and power down. I should add that the receiver will operate almost all day off a single battery. The receiver partially blocks me from cleanly grabbing the handle, and it sometimes bangs into my forehead when I press my eye to the viewfinder. It's a bit unwieldy, but it works. Since I'm using the camera on food shows, one of the keys is to get candid shots of people eating food. Simple concept, but not always easy to execute. By maintaining a small camera footprint, I was often able to work in a crowd virtually unnoticed, which can be a trick as I'm well over six feet tall. I discovered I could capture some great up close images of people happily powering down the local delicacies.

Going forward, I think I'll adopt a 'rig it the way you need it' philosophy. At times I'd like to be able to mount a matte box, a longer heavier lens, and also have a place to put a wireless receiver. An additional source of power would be helpful, a means of mounting another EVF, and a comfortable shoulder mount are also on the "things I'd like to have" list. So far I haven't been blown away by anything I've seen in the aftermarket for these products. Hopefully that'll change soon.



Electronic viewfinder. So why do I think another external viewfinder is a near necessity? Well I'm sure Canon has its reasons, but placing the viewfinder dead center in the middle of the camera creates some inherent problems. First, if you already own a shoulder rig of some type, you'll need to offset it, as the viewfinder isn't in the customary position. Take one step to the left please. And the viewfinder doesn't tilt down. That's not a problem until you set the tripod at six and a half feet and realize you need a step ladder to see the viewfinder. I found myself balancing on empty cases, nearby pallets, and boxes just to get to the viewfinder. Sure you can try to operate off the LCD, but critical focus is tough and in bright daylight it's impossible. So I'm going to be on the hunt for a way to conveniently mount a more versatile EVF.

The viewfinder generally earns good grades. It's better than most on camera EVF's that I've used to date. Its magnification factor is very good, and the ability to detect and keep focus gets high marks. A viewfinder is a very personal affair, but for me, I'd like to be able to get better blacks in it which would improve the image a great deal. Perhaps there is a way to do just that, but I haven't discovered it yet. The LCD screen is excellent, but it's virtually worthless outside in the daytime. I'm old school and my preference is to get up close to a viewfinder when composing my shots. If you're a shoot from the screen type, then a word of warning... you're not going to maintain critical focus outside on a blue sky day with the LCD screen. It's like any other camera with an LCD screen. It's a nice aid, but if you want to be sure of your shot, then you need to use the viewfinder.

I spent a lot of time trying to get the viewfinder, the LCD screen and a trusted monitor to all display basically the same





colors in an image. I'd encourage you to go through the same process when using the camera. They can get reasonably close, but I wouldn't entirely trust the viewfinder in an extremely critical situation. If in doubt, get a monitor. If time isn't an ally, go with your gut.

Crop factor and lenses. When choosing lenses for the C300, you must be aware of its crop factor. The issue of crop factor can comprise an entire article, but suffice it to say it concerns the relationship of the camera's sensor size, the lenses placed in front of that sensor and the distance between the lens and the sensor. The C300 has a basic crop factor of 1.6. This means that the cool 16-35 mm zoom lens you're using on your Canon 5D Mark III is now essentially a 26-56 mm lens, and your 35 mm prime lens is now effectively operating as a 56 mm prime lens.

Crop factor isn't so much of an issue with the C300 as it is a realization of what type of lens you need at any particular moment in order to accomplish your objectives. On the food shows, the C300 has been anointed the primary interview camera. This is due to the spectacular depth of field flexibility the camera can provide with the right lens. I've settled into using a Canon 50mm f1.2 L series lens for interviews on these shows. Regardless of the location specifics, I tweak the settings so that I can move the lens as close to that lovely wide open f1.2 aperture as I can get it. The resulting bokeh it produces is mesmerizing. Due to the crop factor, I'm now considering buying a Zeiss Distagon 35mm f1.4 prime lens and using it together with the Canon 50mm f1.2 as my primary interview lenses in one camera settings.

One of the primary strengths of this camera is the ability to produce a shallow depth of field in almost any lighting condition imaginable. I've been able to use the longer Canon 70-200 mm f2.8 to create stunning images where the subject is in perfect focus, but the foreground and background both fade into a lovely blur. It creates sort of a visual exclamation point in pushing the actions of the subject in the frame into prominence. Amazingly, I can also stand an interview subject directly in front of their store, or food cart, or whatever, use a Canon 16-35mm f2.8 lens and still pleasantly push the background into a soft depth of field. Incredible. It's worth the price of admission.

You're probably not going to want to shoot every last frame with a shallow depth of field, but when you make that choice, quickness matters. A lens rated at f2.8 can create images that a lens rated at f4 simply can't. And a lens rated at f1.2 or 1.4 moves



you into a league where you're now driving a Ferrari – it can be a little twitchy but it can take you places in a way that nothing else can.

So that quickly covers the big topics. Here are some random observations listed in no particular order of importance:

The ways to move between white balance settings is clever, but can sometimes be confusing. I love that you can easily dial in a white balance, but in my pure subjective experience, it often seems the image looks better when white balanced.

The ability to quickly move between white balance, ISO and shutter settings is easy and appreciated.

The BNC covers are not designed to be in this world for a long time. My first set of twin BNC caps ripped off by the second city. They're not particularly necessary but they do help create a more pleasing aesthetic. Maybe Canon can simply make a strip that would cover all the caps. When using the BNCs, you would take it off and stow it somewhere. At the end of the day you could put it back on the camera.

The external mic holder seems a bit flimsy. I bought a new lighter, smaller Sennheiser 8060 shotgun mic for my next trip. Maybe the mic holder will stand the test of time, but I'm not sure it was designed to accommodate workhorse higher end shotgun mics.

The longer shotgun mic also got into my shots when using the Canon 8-15mm fisheye lens. Every time I used the lens I had to dismount the mic. That's cumbersome. Maybe it's already out there, but a quick release type mic holder would be very handy.

Canon specifically warns you to never change a lens while the camera is powered up. I was good with it the first one hundred times, but on the one hundred and first, I forgot to turn the power off. Nothing happened. But you never know.

I'm wondering if the iris thumbwheel is going to wear out over time. I've set the thumbwheel on the trigger as my primary iris control, and it gets a workout. I'm also hopeful that a firmware update can solve visual effects of the nagging, visible click through iris control. Even on the fine setting, you move the iris control one click and the result is obvious and jarring. If Canon can get a seamless iris control, then the camera will take a giant step forward.

I'd really like to see a relatively small cage or rig developed for the camera that will solve the riddle of the camera's quirky ergonomics. One pet peeve I have is aimed squarely at aftermarket solutions comprised of a rig/cage with two handles. I'm sorry. I don't get it. I use my left hand to focus and operate a zoom if it's available, and the right hand for iris control. What am I supposed to do with two handles? I've seen a rig or two that puts the trigger on the right handle, which makes a great deal of sense. I'm wondering, though, how those rigs accommodate a move off the shoulder where you hold the camera on your hip or the ground.



And finally, for now, the creation of an affordable, non-ramping servo driven lens would be invaluable.

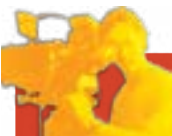
The overview. This camera is a powerful tool, and it's one that I hope to use for a long time. I'm very happy I bought one. Its shallow depth of field capabilities, the ability to record a 4:2:2 image at 50 mbps natively onto a CF card mounted in the camera, and the ability to choose between a wide variety of lenses that will work effectively with it, make it a winner in my book. Oh, and it weighs less than five pounds. Nice!



I've seen a lot of negativity concerning the C300's inability to record 4:4:4 and that it's an 8 bit platform. To me, it's groundless. I work on a lot of national shows, and they are all very happy with video recorded at 4:2:2, 50 mbps. I don't have to look for ways to mount an external up conversion drive somewhere, and the workflow is quick and painless. Of course, the release of the C500 directly addresses all those issues.

The possibilities the C300 unleashes in the art of image creation are amazing. Sometimes I look in the viewfinder and just smile, because it's something I truly haven't seen in the viewfinder of a video camera before owning the C300.

Carl Filoreto is an award-winning DP, and his company is Elk Run Productions, Inc. (www.elkruntv.com), which has a roster of clients that spans corporations, production houses, crewing agencies, and broadcast and cable networks, including Dateline NBC, The Food Network, and The Travel Channel. Prior to starting his business, Carl won seven regional Emmy awards, numerous national and regional National Press Photographers awards, and multiple awards from Colorado Ski Country and the National Snowsports Journalists Association, while working at KMGH-TV in Denver, WTNH in New Haven, and WGGB in Springfield, Massachusetts.



Reaching the Audience Event Horizon

Do's and Don'ts for the Start-Up Filmmaker

by Sky Crompton

So you are back from the summer break, and back to school [or back to work], and you see your similarly crazed filmmaking friends who wave you over and the first thing you say is, *'I've got this great idea for a script'*.

Stop. We have all done it, and will do it again. Sometimes it will be a good idea; many times it will prove to be one of the worst ideas of your life. I have seen top producers and directors produce such misshapen ideas and have a number in my own achieves; it is human nature to be excited by your own ideas. But the key question is, *'Are they exciting to others?'*

Filmmaking, like no other discipline, has a critical mass of logistics and expenditure to use up before ever reaching an audience. So before you go ahead and expend time and effort on your great idea, let's clear the fog that obscures our audience that awaits us in the future.

I'm going to start with the 'don'ts'.

Don't make films for your peers. Okay, you want their respect? Get it with an Oscar. Your peers are a limited audience and are not who you want to be impressing because, believe it or not, most of them are so narcissistic that most will, if you make a good film, hate you till they make a good one.

Don't make a film about anything you know *nothing* about, i.e., the mafia, building an atomic bomb, having children, etc. I put two caveats on this one. If you are experienced enough to do extensive research to get you across the believability line that experienced writers, directors and producers regularly achieve for a comedy, for example, if you are lampooning something, you could well succeed. But, be warned time after time. I have seen short films made by people who have no idea of the subject matter, and they are creating beyond what they see in films and TV series, so it is a copy of something that is already a caricature or imitation of reality. Very rarely does the underlying story information from these reference-films crossover in the subsequent imitating short film.

Now some do's. Do make a film you know something about. Do make a film that informs and entertains with its themes and characters.

After, *'I've got this great idea for a script'*, comes, *'It's amazing and universal; everyone will want to see it.'* Stop again. Okay, yes, universal themes are in a number of films regularly and are highly sought after. But will everyone really want to see it?

This brings us to the realisation that to be successful in getting an audience you need to know *who* they are. Before

you get too far down the path towards shooting your masterpiece, *stop.* Stop and ask yourself the following questions: *Who is my audience? What do they expect from a film? What do they need in a film that I need to give them?*

Let's start with the first questions, *who* and *where* is my audience? I, personally, I'm so old that I can remember short films such as the *Red Balloon*, which played around the world and made a return for the filmmaker. Short films were not only a valid form but payed. Then cinemas realised that if they cut the shorts, they could run another feature and thus make more revenue.

So guess what? Unless you are one of the very fortunate few to get picked up for screening on the in-flight viewing of your favourite airline, or one of the few niche shorts distributors, festivals are where you are going, and there are a lot of them in fact. I would go to say that there are more types of festivals than there are genres of films.

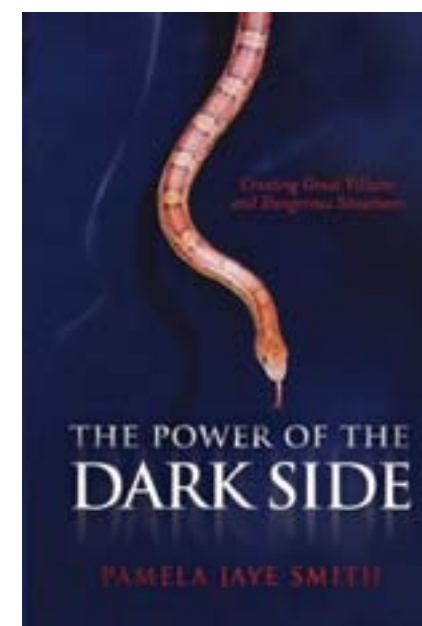
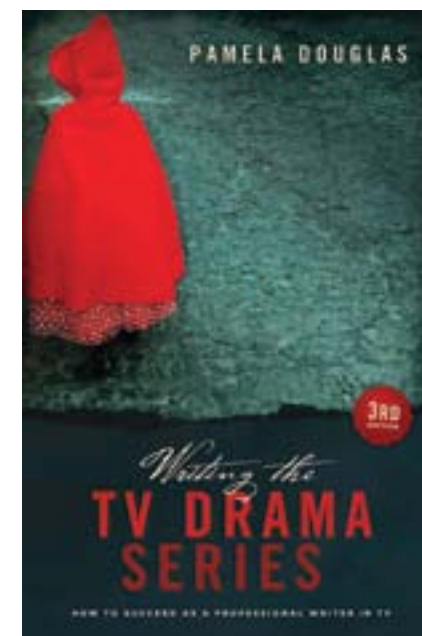
Once you have come to terms with this fact, do some research and make a list of festivals that screen the types of films you want to make, and then see what films got in, take a look at the films' production values, and see what the stories were like.

Then you can tackle the question of *'What does the audience expect?'* Most festivals give you their mission statement [read addenda, festivals can be big money and very political]. Then look at the films that got into the festivals you have chosen, and make a list of the key attributes that they demonstrate in the following areas: Genre/Style, Characterisation, Performance Quality/Level, and Production Values. Also take note of how long the films are and put yourself in the middle of that scale, so if the films ranged from 7 to 13 minutes, you're making an 8- to 9-minute film.

Now you have cleared some of the fog and can see a potential end point in sight. Finally you have some foundation to reach the event horizon of your audience, and you can start to write a story that is still unique but now has the audience in sight.

Sky Crompton is a Producer/Director/Writer and film scholar with over a decade of experience teaching film, TV, Animation and interactive media. His feature film, "Citizen Jia Li," has screened internationally. Academically his research includes Asian Screen and transmedia. He has given papers at media conferences in Australia, Europe and Asia. Having developed animation and film courses his students have won numerous short film awards internationally. He can be contacted via twitter at:

<http://twitter.com/#!/gunghoscreen>





Filmmaking Back in the Day...

...And What's Possible with Today's Technology

by David Worth

Hopefully you will never take the amazing technology that you have at your fingertips today for granted. The reason that you, today's filmmakers can capture on the RED or the ALEXA or DSLRs and routinely shoot at ASA 800, 2000 or 6400 and beyond, is because of all of the outstanding advances made by the visionary directors and cinematographers of the film industry for the past 100 years!

The groundbreaking films by cinematic giants like D.W. Griffith, Abel Gance, and Orson Welles, as well as Vittorio De Sica and the Italian New Realists, Jean-Luc Godard and the French New Wave, John Cassavetes and the American Independents and especially the New Paradigm that began to take hold in the late 1990's, all made it possible for today's filmmaking to be totally democratized and for today's filmmakers to be able to make their films *anytime, anyplace and anywhere*.

Just as an example, let me take you for a trip down "memory lane..." and graphically demonstrate the difference between creating a "Demo Reel" back in the day and doing one with today's technology.

Back in the day, long before any thought of digital capture or non-linear editing, films were always and only shot on film, preferably 35mm film and not that "low budget, underground knockoff" 16mm film.

If you wanted to make a "Demo Reel" or a 15 or 20-minute short film, here are the steps that you had to go through:

Buy short ends of 35mm film and ¼ inch sound tape.

Find enough friends or young hopefuls to work as your cast and crew.

Make sure that you had all the camera, sound, lighting and grip equipment.

Only shoot on weekends so that you could rent the equipment on Friday afternoon, shoot Friday night, all day Saturday and Sunday, then return the equipment on Monday morning and only be charged for one day's rental.

Shoot your 35mm film negative and ¼ in sound tape to capture your film and be sure to print everything.

Send the film to the lab to be processed and make a one light work print.

Transfer the ¼ inch sound tape to 35mm mag stripe.

Place the 35mm work print and 35mm mag stripe in your upright Moviola and mark all of the picture and sound slated sync marks.

Place the 35mm work print and 36mm mag stripe on split reels on the editing table and run them through a synchronizer cutting out any excess sound so that now you have dailies that can be viewed and projected in sync.

Place each 1000 foot roll of sync dailies onto a coding machine and print a number on every foot of picture and sound so that you can maintain sync while you are doing the editing.

Now you can screen your dailies. Select your best take or takes, break down the 1000-foot reels into separate shots and begin editing.

Do your rough cut, fine cut and final cut make any necessary changes then lock the picture.

Screen your final locked cut for the people doing your music, sound effects, loop lines, as well as the special effects house, title house, etc.

Make black and white dupes of your locked final cut and give these dupes to your composer, sound effects, loop lines department, special effects house, title house, etc.

Send the color work print to the negative cutter to have the scenes pulled for special effects or main and end titles and to conform the negative to your work print.

Have the lab take the cut negative and begin to do silent color corrected prints.

Prepare your 35mm mag stripe dialogue track for the final mix by placing each actor's lines on a separate 1000 foot roll with fill leader between their lines.

Have your finished main and end titles and special effects cut into the negative at the lab and color corrected.

Do a pre-mix and a final mix of dialogue, sound effects, and Music using your color corrected silent first trial print.

Make a 35mm sound print master (and do "pull ups" for the head and tail of each 2000 foot reel, if necessary).

Make an optical sound negative.

Make a first trial sound and color timed print from your color timed negative and optical sound negative.

Make any additional color corrections...

Have a screening at a 35mm screening room and hope that enough of the producers that you invited will show up to offer you a job...

If not, then you have to continue to have more and more screenings in screening rooms...

By the way all of these steps, all of this work took anywhere from three to six months or longer to complete and at a cost of tens of thousands of dollars...

Today you are able to do it like this:

In 2008, a professional New York photographer, Vincent Laforet, managed to get his hands on the new Canon 5D in order to "test" it on the weekend. He and his wife put together a small crew, hired two models, rented a car, some car mounts and a helicopter.

They shot, edited and completed this short film, *Reverie*, on natural locations and with mostly available light over the weekend and posted this "demo reel" online. Before the end of the first week, Mr. Laforet had a new \$50,000 commercial account, because the client was impressed by the creativity and versatility of his short demo reel!

To view the "demo" video, go to: http://www.learn.usa.canon.com/galleries/galleries/sample_videos/reverie.shtml

That is the difference between filmmaking "back in the day" and what's possible with today's technology. Remember, *Reverie* was done with one of the first 5Ds nearly five years ago and as of 2012, Canon introduced the new C300, a professional filmmaking tool that was introduced to Hollywood by no less of a directing icon than Martin Scorsese, that happens to shoot at ASA 20,000!

Get your friends together and make movies!

David Worth's credits include being the Director of Photography on two Clint Eastwood films, "Bronco Billy" and "Any Which Way You Can." He was also the DP of the original, "Bloodsport" and the Director of the original, "Kickboxer" starring Jean-Claude Van Damme. He directed the thrillers, "Time Lapse" with Roy Scheider and "The Prophet's Game" with Dennis Hopper and his most recent production is the horror/thriller, "Hardhat." David's book, "The Citizen Kane Crash Course in Cinematography," can be ordered from www.amazon.com. Read it and feel free to contact David if you have any questions at davidworthfilm@gmail.com. www.davidworthfilm.com



Solo Shoots

Push yourself to be a better storyteller.

by Patrick Moreau

Shooting solo is definitely a daunting task, but it is far from impossible. It takes a special sort of person and outlook to try and tackle a shoot often needing 2-3 people with only one. That doesn't mean that makes it a bad idea, it means you need to be prepared to put in a little more. Some of our best work has come from weddings shot with one person or shoots on "A Game of Honor" where only one person was there. Sometimes it takes a little luck, but shooting solo will really push you to know what you want out of a scene and will push you to be a better storyteller.

Simplify

One of the best examples of a wedding that was shot solo by us would be JC and Esther (<http://vimeo.com/6496808>). At over 200k views on Vimeo it became our most viewed wedding film to date. With most of our weddings shot with 2-3 people and dozens of lenses, I learned a lot in approaching a story with one person and needing to really simplify things. The first thing to go was...

...The gear, just so it could become more manageable for one person. I brought two bodies, 4 lenses, a tripod, a monopod and a slider (plus audio gear). It was a

very manageable setup that allowed me to carry everything in one trip. It also meant less decisions every step of the way allowing me to be much more present while things were happening.

Four lenses are a great number as three fit into a shootsac plus one on your camera body. I would choose the lenses you do bring based on the story you are trying to tell. The more you know your characters, the better you can pick effective focal lengths and really be okay at leaving others behind. Our lens selector tool in SMAPP was built around the idea of picking effective focal lengths and we believe it will really make this process easier. We would then recommend picking a couple camera tools that best fit the story. For this wedding we left the steadicam at home as it didn't really fit JC and Esther, but for others it may make more sense to bring a handheld stabilizer and skip the slider. The key is to make more decisions up front to really lighten your load, keep your speed up, and allow you to get more with the time you have.

Trim the Fat

Look at how you normally cover an event and see if there is anything you don't really use, don't really need, or perhaps has a high time input for a low return. This is a great exercise for any shoot you do, but especially when you only have yourself to get things done, you want to make sure everything is essential. A third angle at the ceremony is a great example. We used to setup a tripod with a super wide as a



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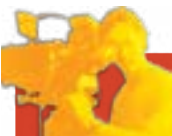
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safe angle. It required setting up another tripod, camera, lens, getting the angle, composition, and exposure all set. The return was often less than a dozen seconds in the final piece. By cutting it, it meant that we lost our safety net, but maybe that is not such a bad thing anyways. You're less likely to fall if you know you have no net to catch you.

When you are looking at trimming the fat, think about shots or angles you might not need to get, things during the event you might not need to shoot, and gear you may not need. Cut out everything not essential and focus on the essence of what is.

Scout, Plan, Cheat

The value of scouting your locations and really storyboarding your ideas is so important on a commercial shoot yet it is often overlooked on a wedding. Our wedding films are so little about the day and so much more about the couple that we rarely scout location, but what we do is really, really know the people and the story so that we can know what we need and plan for that. As you look at your films and your style, think about whether scouting the location will help you. In addition to that, get as much information as you can and really plan from there. That could mean storyboards, but more often it just means shot lists and ideas of what you want to get when.

The processional for JC and Esther is a great example of this. I knew the exact shots I wanted, the shots I needed for the story, and I found a way to make those – and nothing more – happen. I had a slow slide at the back of the ceremony as Esther came down the aisle. I already had the

lens chosen and the position picked out. I left the slider in the ground exactly where it needed to be, I had the quick release on the tripod head loose, and even had the slider in the right position. When the processional came around, I slipped the camera in and without even tightening the plate down, slid the camera once across the length of the slider, pulled it off and was already on my way up to the front with my monopod. I was able to beat Esther there and get a completely different perspective a few seconds later. All of this was possible only because I knew exactly what I needed and had it planned so precisely that it left so little room for anything to get in the way.

When you are shooting an event, things only happen once. If you're like us, you need to make the most of that as there are no re-dos, slowing down, or pausing. *But* that doesn't mean you can't cheat.

Cheating is a term more often used in a commercial production and refers to manipulating the set or environment for one shot in a way that is different than another shot but rarely noticed when cut together in the final scene. Sometimes it means getting shots for the same scene at a different time or location. When put together, the power of context really leads the viewer to think it was all done at the same time and it means you can get more coverage for your story at different times. Applying this idea to weddings, that means always looking for reactions before or after something happens and then using those during the actual event. You might get a tight shot of a bridesmaid laughing hours after something happened but you can cut it in with a funny event from much earlier and it will feel like it happened together (and it often did

happen in a similar way, you just don't have the ability to cover everything at once). Look for reaction and moments before and after your big events to give you more of an ability to cheat those shots in during the big moments. For JC and Esther's first meeting, everything happened in real time. However, JC had a good couple minutes while he waited for Esther. Every second counts, so I took that time to get some tights of him standing there as well as a slider from behind as he stood there waiting. If you look at the final sequence of their first meeting, several of the shots in the middle of the sequence were actually from before anything happened, but with the power of context it all feels like it happened in the order shown.

Follow What Excites You

Probably the biggest tip we can suggest is to really follow the story you want to tell. When you only have one person to shoot that leaves less room for the fluff. Hair and make-up are one of those things at a wedding that are often quite meaningless yet many people still cover. To be an effective shooter all alone, you need to be okay saying this is what I want, and I am okay missing everything else. Like the point above, this comes down to really planning things out and having an idea of what you want to cover. It always requires the trust in yourself, and the trust from your couples/clients, to follow what you believe and feel more than anything else. Put another way, would you rather have a lot of average coverage with little story, or a much footage that has really strong story? Put yet another way, if you look at a film like JC and Esther or Veronica and Dan, dissect it shot by shot and see just how many have no purpose

for the story. If every single shot in your story has a purpose, which it should, then there is no need to get coverage that doesn't add to your story. It takes time to be okay with that, but the sooner you are, the more you can really get down to telling stories and not just covering everything around you.

Safe Doesn't Work Here

If you have an excess of resources you have the ability to play it safe, get extra coverage, hold your shots longer, and cover things you may not need. If you have few resources, such as shooting by yourself, you need to resist the pull to play things safe and really push extra hard to make something more. Your first instinct is often to shoot wide, hold shots longer, and really get a lot of coverage. We can get so worried about getting so little because we are by ourselves that we then play it safe for anything we do get. The only problem with this approach is that playing too safe doesn't make a good film or a strong story. Get in there, make effective lens choices, and push yourself to catch things before they happen. It won't always work, you will miss things, there will be times you will probably wished you had played it safe, but the more you put yourself out there the further you can push what you can do with one person. If you find yourself often shooting with one person, you already have a limitation of resources and that likely isn't your fault, but it is all on you if you allow this limitation of resources to also hold you back from telling strong stories.

Patrick Moreau is one of cinema team leaders at StillMotion (www.stillmotion.ca). Over the years they have shot weddings from Japan to London, as well as work for commercial clients such as Canon and IBM. "A Game of Honor" is StillMotion's three-time Emmy winning documentary for Showtime, including best sports documentary for 2012. Patrick will be on the road as an instructor for KNOW. Visit www.knowbystillmotion.com.





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“G-Technology is proud to support the creative process of today’s and tomorrow’s filmmakers and content creators. Through this contest, you’ll have one website to see creativity through the eyes of multiple, talented and unique artists. We look forward to showcasing their work,” said Mike Williams, vice president and general manager, HGST Branded Business. “As we build new relationships with these entrants and encourage new paths of creativity, G-Technology wants to be the storage go-to resource for all content creators as we strive to provide

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Announcing AtomicMe.com, the New Revenue Sharing Social Network

Free to Enter. Your Short Film Could Win \$1000.

Interview Jeremy Jason, Founder of AtomicMe.

What is AtomicMe.com?

Jeremy Jason: AtomicMe.com is a brand new social network that gives people with a large social following the ability to make money simply by maintaining that social following on their AtomicMe page. AtomicMe users have the ability to load videos, photos and music - everything that you’d expect to be able to put on your social networking page, and it’s all free to use.

How did the idea for AtomicMe.com come about?

Jeremy Jason: The idea came about for AtomicMe.com when I was listening to the radio while driving

to work and Kevin Nealon was the guest on a morning show. Mr. Nealon mentioned that he had a million twitter followers, and the question flashed in my head, “How much does he make from that...from him just having those followers? And what if it was Facebook and not Twitter where he had a million followers? Is there any social network available where he could make money based on the people that he’d attract to his page?” Once I researched things and found out that no such site exists, then, I knew I had to start one.

What issues does AtomicMe.com want to address and provide solutions for?

Jeremy Jason: I have a great deal of admiration for Facebook, however, I’ve talked to more than a few people that view Facebook as a “necessary evil”. It’s something that many people feel they have to use, but they don’t really like it, and there is no significant alternative that people have embraced.

AtomicMe is aiming to be that alternative. A social networking site where you don’t have to worry about whether or not your information is secure, where the privacy settings are infinitely simpler to use than Facebook and you don’t have to worry about site changes being implemented and forced upon you that you’re not really interested in.

In addition to all of this, users have an opportunity to support the causes that they are passionate about through social networking as well as have the potential to make money themselves, provided that they have a large social following.

Tell us about your new contest on AtomicMe.com.

Jeremy Jason: To launch AtomicMe.com, a contest is being held that will award \$1000 first prize to the AtomicMe page that gets the most votes between now and October 1, 2012. The contest is absolutely free to enter, so I encourage any-and-all short filmmakers and artists to participate.

What are some things you’re doing for education and student filmmakers?

Jeremy Jason: The contest provides an opportunity for student filmmakers to monetize their work. With a large-enough following, student filmmakers, and anyone else that can attract a social following, can make money on AtomicMe even after the contest ends. I love that we provide an opportunity for artists to profit from their art. I couldn’t be more excited about that part of AtomicMe.

What are some tips for getting started on AtomicMe.com?

Jeremy Jason: Step 1 is to go to AtomicMe.com, and sign up by creating a profile. It’s free, so that’s of course a good thing. Step 2 is to load your AtomicMe page with content that you’re proud of, short films, photos and/or music. Load anything that you’ve created that you feel people would like to see. Go nuts! Act with vigor! Be bold! And, Step 3 is to draw a crowd. Invite people to visit and vote for your AtomicMe page. It doesn’t cost them anything to do that, so encourage as many people as you can. If you load worthwhile content, then you’ll attract not only people that you know,

but you’ll also attract people that you don’t know, and these friends and strangers could help make you money.

What are some tips for building fanbases on AtomicMe.com?

Jeremy Jason: Get creative. Load the best content that you can. Invite people to visit your AtomicMe page and have them also invite the people that they know to go to your AtomicMe page, so those people can see your handiwork and vote for you.

If you could share a piece of advice with readers around the world in relation to networking, and the importance of networking, what would it be?

Jeremy Jason: You could create the most brilliant piece of art that any human being has ever conjured up, but if people never see it, then what does it amount to? Being an artist means showing people your art. It’s scary, but necessary. AtomicMe provides a platform for you to not only showcase your art, but also an opportunity to generate revenue if you’re able to attract enough eyeballs. AtomicMe is a level playing field for you to show off your creations. So be proud of what you’ve created and show it off!

Visit www.atomicme.com.



Get Ready for Back to School

Film and Video Making Tools and Solutions



Edelkrone Announces New FOCUS ONE PRO

Precise, Sensitive, Accurate.

Edelkrone announced their new FOCUS ONE PRO follow focus unit, which has reverse gear and a whip/crank port as well as still contains their innovative and awarded marker system.

FOCUS ONE PRO still follows the standards and directly compatible with standard 0.8 pitch. The reverse gear on the unit can easily be put on use to work with Nikon lenses, as well as other lenses with reversed focus direction. The unit only occupies one rod and it can be repositioned easily using the single adjustment knob. The focus marker which faces directly to the operator makes you feel more in control, and with the help of the manual position adjustment, you can focus without the need for a marker pen.

FOCUS ONE PRO is going to be one the most affordable follow focus unit in the market if you consider its amazing build quality, features and awarded ultra-precise marker system. Expected price is \$289.

Visit www.edelkrone.com/studentfilmmaker.

ATOMOS Announces Ninja-2

Field Recorder Now Shipping

New Weapon of Smart Production is now available.

Atomos, the creator of award-winning field recorders, announced the Ninja-2 is shipping through Atomos' sales partners. Priority sales will be given to pre-orders and registered users who have taken advantage of the loyalty offer.

"We are extremely proud of the Ninja-2. It is the culmination of all we have learned since releasing the first Ninja. Timecode trigger, higher resolution screen, pro monitoring and editing functions that save time and money are all included. Once you see the HDMI output of your Ninja-2 recordings on a big screen you will never use another device again. Customers all over the world have come to depend on their Atomos field recorders and the second generation Ninja-2 continues that line of pedigree at the same selling price" said Jeromy Young, CEO and Founder of Atomos.

Ninja-2 boasts HDMI output as well as HDMI input, which means it can be



used to record directly from the amazing new Nikon DSLR sensor (a feature of their new D4/D800 cameras) and the retina-display Apple iPad, really taking advantage of their stunning HD outputs. The Ninja-2 touchscreen has also been upgraded to an 800x480 pixel display, with a viewing angle of 170 degrees, both horizontally and vertically, with much improved visibility in direct sunlight.

The Ninja-2 ships with the latest AtomOS 3.21 operating system. This includes features such as SmartMonitor, which turns the Ninja-2 into a monitoring solution with Peaking, Zebra, False Color and Blue Only

functionality. It also includes SmartLog, a revolutionary feature that allows you to edit using keyword tagging, on-set on location or on the move. AtomOS 3.21 also includes XML support for Final Cut X.

Developed with approval from Apple, the Atomos Ninja-2 allows the recording, monitoring and playback of pristine, 10-bit uncompressed images straight from the sensor of your HDMI-equipped DSLR or camcorder, directly to inexpensive HDD or SSD drives (not supplied), recorded using the high quality Apple ProRes codec.

Visit www.atomos.com.

Studica Announces Exclusive Discounts and Back-to-School Deals

Students and Teachers: Save Big with Special Academic Pricing

Studica is the education source for software and technology products. Studica offers academic software at significant discounts to Students, Faculty and Schools.

What's New at Studica?

Studica's sizzling summer deals include: Autodesk Entertainment Creation Suite Ultimate, Adobe Creative Suite 6 Design Standard, and Avid Pro Tools 10 & Sibelius 7 Bundle. Autodesk Entertainment Creation Suite

Ultimate 2013 is a set of creative tools which are used by leading artists in game development, visual effects and 3D animation around the world. Adobe Creative Suite 6 Design Standard allows you to take on new design projects such as video editing with Adobe Photoshop CS6 and use your design on iPads and other tablet devices with Adobe InDesign CS6. Pro Tools 10 is one of the world's most advanced audio production platforms available. Sibelius 7 is the latest generation of the world's best-selling music notation software.

Studica has launched UnityEducators.org, a Unity Educators User Group, designed to help bring game design and

development to a classroom near you. This online community is designed specifically to be a resource for educators who are interested in teaching with the Unity Game Development platform. The game design industry presents great career opportunities and game design programs align perfectly with animation programs. Architecture and Engineering programs can also be enhanced with this technology.

Studica now offers education discounts for Mixamo.com credits, as well as unlimited character animations from the Mixamo Unity Asset store. Mixamo, the first online character animation service, changes the game development equation by providing game-ready motions which can be selected,

customized, and downloaded into a production pipeline at a fraction of the cost of other traditional techniques. Mixamo's growing list of features includes the first-in-industry Auto-Rigger service, an online service that automatically fits a skeleton and calculates skinning weights on an uploaded character model mesh. These rigs can be used for a variety of animation applications including game production, pre-visualization, film, simulation, design, and ergonomics.

Visit www.studica.com.

ALZO Video Announces New HDMI & Audio Stereo Cables

If you shoot video with a DSLR and an LCD MONITOR, then you need these cords.

When connecting a DSLR Rig to an HDMI monitor and mixer, you need short Mini HDMI and Stereo Audio cords. ALZO HDMI cords are the perfect length and because the mini-HDMI connectors are Right Angle, they leave the camera vertically. All other HDMI cords stick out to the left side of the camera causing camera operation interference and potential disconnect. These cords also include a side jog to prevent blocking other cord ports on the camera. Because all DSLR cameras do not have the same connector orientation, the 2 ALZO HDMI cords have right and left connector orientation. Therefore this cord set will work will all DSLR models.

ALZO HDMI & STEREO AUDIO CORD SET

- Perfect Length
- Right Angle Offset Mini HDMI
- Gold Plated Contacts
- Works with All DSLRs

PRODUCT FEATURES

- The 3 short cord set includes: 2 Right Angle offset HDMI cords, and 1 Stereo Audio cord with siliconized rubber jacket for superior flexibility.
- The 2 right angle offset HDMI cords have right and left mini-HDMI orientations allowing for compatibility with all DSLR cameras.
- HDMI cords are color coded red and white.
- The offset of the mini-HDMI connectors prevent blocked camera connectors.
- All cord contacts are gold plated.
- HDMI cords length = 21".
- Stereo Audio cord length = 18".

Visit www.alzovideo.com.



Beachtek DXA-SLR and DXA-5Da Adapters

Check them out at the StudentFilmmakers.com WEVA Booth # 104, Hollywood, CA

After featuring BeachTek's new DXA-SLR PRO adapters at Cine Gear Expo in Hollywood, California, ProFusion Expo in Toronto, Canada, and at the StudentFilmmakers.com Workshops in Manhattan, New York City, *StudentFilmmakers Magazine* returns to Hollywood, California to exhibit at WEVA 2012, the Expo for Wedding & Event Film/Video Professionals. This time, we will be featuring BeachTek's popular DXA-SLR and DXA-5Da adapters. Don't forget to stop by the StudentFilmmakers.com Booth #104, where you can pick up complimentary print editions and free DIGI subscriptions.

For those of you who are not yet familiar with these amazing audio solutions from BeachTek, here's a quick

byte on the audio adapters and the difference between the DXA-SLR and DXA-5Da.

The Beachtek DXA-SLR audio adapter gives you everything you need to connect professional audio gear to your camera to capture superb sound. The DXA-SLR is very easy to set up and use. Two XLR inputs with 48V phantom power and low noise preamplifiers provide clean audio to the camera.

Good/Peak signal indicators show the ideal input levels at a glance while the headphone output lets you monitor either recording or playback audio. The enhanced AGC Disable feature dramatically reduces camera noise during quiet moments of recording.

The Beachtek DXA-5Da is a robust, passive audio adapter that is ideal for wireless mics or as an interface for a mixing board. The level meters show the exact signal strength at a glance while the headphone output lets you monitor what you are recording. A unique AGC Disable feature controls the wild swings of the Auto Gain Control that plague many cameras. Passive circuitry provides unity gain and crisp, clean audio with very low power consumption. Fits neatly under any camera and can also be mounted to a tripod.

Visit www.beachtek.com.





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- Watch and Share Films and Videos, or Enter Contests.

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Join the discussions or Post your own topics

Barry Teitelbaum

Member Profile: BarryT315

Job: Filmmaker/Writer

Location: United States

<http://networking.studentfilmmakers.com/BarryT315>

Meal To Die For, shot with a Canon 60D and Carl Zeiss lenses (35mm/2.0, an 18mm/3.5, and a 50mm/1.4), is a short film that won three awards. *A Meal To Die For* is the story of a young Chef, Matt Moreland, whose career and quest to be a star has been derailed by several people in the industry. He has decided to exact revenge on two of them, a Restaurateur Pierre Strass, and a renowned local Food Critic, Sally Kendall. He has hatched a plan using his wife as bait to kidnap these two and coerce them to sign amended endorsements of his talents otherwise they face death at the hands of Nutmeg poisoning.

Barry Shares Contest Tips:

"...Looking at your idea and really asking yourself, how can I present this in a way that has not been overdone? Really look at every angle and put your personal stamp on it. I also think that often times contest submissions for young filmmakers will excel in one of two areas: Production Value or Story. I see a lot of films, including my own, that excel in one but not the other. You could have the most amazing production value, but if the story falls flat, you won't get far. For me, the story comes first.

As far as film racing goes, the best advice I can give is to make sure you have a tight crew with the right attitude and be sure to delegate. Whenever I try to do too much, it always backfires. And it really is okay if you don't have a big crew, as long as the crew you have is committed to the project. I would rather go out and shoot with five people with little or no experience but are focused and excited to be part of the film then to go out with 10 extremely talented crew members who didn't care about the project and couldn't wait to get out of there.

Finally anyone familiar with the exquisite hell that is film racing, knows how insane it is to try and make a movie in 48 hours. It really is the antithesis of how you would normally go about doing things, but one of the greatest takeaways is that you really don't have any time to over analyze things."

Photo courtesy of Barry Teitelbaum.



Going over the script.



Crew sets up.



Theresa Meeker Pickett. Photo by Beth Boldt.



Theresa Meeker Pickett. Photo by Elle Lee Batalon.

Theresa Meeker Pickett

Profile: theresapickett

Job: Actress

Location: Tennessee, USA

<http://networking.studentfilmmakers.com/theresapickett/>

SFM: What kind of role(s) do you want to do the most?

Theresa Meeker Pickett: I most want a role which permits me to reveal emotions that help me better understand the world around me. I want the roles I take to help me grow as an actress and become more worldly. Hopefully the roles I take will help an audience better understand the world around them as well, although my goal in acting isn't for me to get a certain reaction from an audience.

How much do you draw on your own experience when you act?

TMP: I do draw on my own experience to a certain extent. Often I try to really become the character and respond the way my character would react. I always have my character's backstory and objective in my mind.

What is your favorite character that you have portrayed so far?

TMP: My favorite character was playing a model in the short film *Look* by Ryan Pickett. I really enjoyed getting comfortable doing the most mundane tasks on camera, such as just sitting and holding a teacup. When I was working on *Look* I was happy to work on very small actions and to put my best effort into going about those actions the way my character would. Plus the art design for *Look* was really visually appealing. I was very inspired to be there during the shoot.

Could you share with us a unique scene that has really challenged you?

TMP: When I was working on *Look*, some of the scenes were really challenging because Ryan was shooting an experimental narrative. Initially I saw the script for *Look* and I just wasn't sure how everything would fit together. The dialogue is not the main focus of *Look*, which was challenging for me because most movies I had worked on relied significantly on dialogue to show the story.

If you could share three acting tips or techniques to aspiring actors around the world, what would they be?

TMP: Be careful about the types of roles you take when you are starting out. Some roles can come back to haunt you later in your career. Do student films only if you know they'll get entered into festivals. Get some training and education. Ok, one more - get an IMDb page and put some photos up. If you can't afford the monthly IMDb Pro price, get a director/producer to post stills of you in a movie you did.



Many Thanks



Carl Filoreto



Pamela Jaye Smith



Al Caudullo



Scott Essman



William F. Vartorella,
Ph.D., C.B.C.



William Donaruma



John Klein



Patrick Moreau



Sky Crompton



David Worth



Pamela Douglas



David Lent



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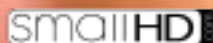
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