

PART 7: PRODUCTION

Chapter 26 - Developing a Production Crew

- Select principle crew carefully, because they are your creative collaborators and will also establish the work environment.
- Check creative reels to determine competency, aesthetic and conceptual approach and flexibility.
- Check reputation in previous collaborations.
- Assess flexibility, dependability, and commitment to project.
- Shoot tests even with experienced members.
- Inquire into crewmembers' interests and values for compatibility with the project.
- You will select the rest of the crew with the help of the department heads.
- Clearly delineate roles and reporting lines.
- Begin crew relationships formally. You can become more informal later.

Chapter 27 - The Director and Production Tech

- The director does not need to be expert on all of the technology employed on a set or in post-production. Cinema is a collaboration between a team of diverse experts in their relative fields.
- However, a director should know enough about the essential technology of film to understand the creative and aesthetic capacity of their cinematic tools.
- Chapter 27 explores some of the most important technical concepts that inform the visual and aural approach to any film on every level.
- Depending on the requirements of the project, a director may need to do further research into specific technical areas in order to guide the creative efforts of the crew with authority. For example, if a film requires extensive green screen and CGI effects, then a director must look into these processes to know what is creatively possible and how they can elevate the film.
- Do not overlook the audio component of your film. Collaborating with and considering the needs of your sound crew will assure that you will have useable audio in post-production.

Chapter 28 - On Set: Production Begins

Before the Camera Rolls

- Make crib cards of your scene's important points.
- Have your act together. Your leadership and leadership style set the tone for the shoot.
- Make sure all production paperwork is ready for the shoot (script sides, shot lists, overhead diagrams, storyboards, log sheets, etc.).
- Follow the standard procedure in standard order for setting up the day's shoot:
 - Art Dept. preps the set.
 - Crew loads in equipment.
 - Camera and electric depts. rig the stage.
 - First line up (rough placement of camera, lights, sound based on anticipated blocking and camera angles).
 - Blocking and tech rehearsal.
 - Wardrobe and make-up while crew fine tunes set-up.
 - Dress rehearsals and final tweaking.
 - Take the first shot.

Roll Camera

- Follow standard procedure for slating, calling and logging every shot (see page 387).
- Decide on a further take quickly so that everyone stays focused.
- Confer with DP on changes to camera angles or movement and confer with cast for adjustments to performance for subsequent takes. But do so efficiently.
- You can refer to recorded takes to determine if a re-take is necessary, but again, do not allow your shooting pace to get bogged down with re-watching footage.
- Script supervisor keeps strict watch over coverage and continuity matching.
- Do not leave a set-up without knowing that you have what you need to cut a scene together including reactions and cutaways.

- Sound recordist must remember to record one minute of ambient sound at the end of shooting at each location.
- Script supervisor must maintain continuity reports.
- Camera and sound departments must maintain logs.

Chapter 29 - Directing on the Set

Directing Actors:

- Give actors private, personal feedback and encouragement.
- Be egalitarian toward your cast, and let no preferences or aversions show.
- Make each character use his or her surroundings.
- Make sure each character always has work to do, externally and internally.
- Film is shot piecemeal, so remind cast regularly where their characters are coming from, emotionally and physically.
- Make sure each beat is clear, and scene dialectics evident.
- Be sensitive to the scene's hidden meanings and energy, and let these exert due control.
- Examine the imprint a take just left on you: what subtexts emerged?
- Was that the scene's actual subtext, or only what you want of it?
- Refer to your scene crib sheets.
- Make interesting demands of your cast—they love to grow in their craft.
- Direct by supporting, questioning, challenging.
- Feed in the unexpected, and side-coach when a scene needs refreshment.
- Keep all dissent away from actors, who are hypersensitive to it.

Directing the Crew:

- Your first priority is to communicate your ideas for each shot and every scene clearly and efficiently.
- Allow your DP and AD to run the set as much as possible so that you can work with the actors unimpeded.
- Look through camera often to check framing, composition, and image size.

- During shot, stand close to camera or watch the monitor so you see as nearly as possible what it is seeing.
- Be flexible and respond to new ideas and chemistry on location.
- Be prepared to adjust action and blocking to accommodate location and production realities.
- Discuss adjustments to the shooting script (shot sizes, camera moves, coverage, etc.) with the DP and the script supervisor along the way.
- Have personal exchanges with all crew members so you are seen as a personal friend
- Always give credit when credit is due.
- Conserve time and energy by using the simplest means to achieve an effect.
- Stay focused and efficient.
- Cover anything important in more than one way to give yourself choice later.
- Leave hefty overlaps between matching shots, to give editor leeway.

Chapter 30 - Monitoring Continuity and Progress

Script supervisor:

- Make prop and costume list for each scene and liaise with assistant director (AD), props, and costume people to ensure right materials are on hand for each sequence.
- Know your story's chronology and pre-production shooting plan so material cuts together well.
- Know that shot priorities makes that scene hold together.
- Maintain close watch on what has and hasn't been shot.
- Observe action from beside camera.
- Keep track of all shots actually taken by lining the script and number of takes.
- Make notes on shot timing, actions, movements, errors, and so on.
- Keep a keen eye out for all continuity issues (axis, props, hair & make-up, movement, lighting, etc.). Take notes and photos.
- Watch how and where actions take place so there will be no matching problems.
- Note all dialogue variations in case they lead to matching problems.
- Watch handling and placement of props and other objects so shots will match.

- Regularly check supervisor's notes against camera and sound logs.
- Confer with director on shooting options if time becomes tight and cuts to the shot list must be made.
- At the end of each day fill out a report that will follow the footage to the editorial team.
- Directing is like juggling. Expect to drop things without noticing. What was it this time?
- Use your crib card to see what you covered and what still needs attention.
- See rushes as soon as possible and more than once. Go passive and let the material act on you, as it will act on an audience.
- Make sure costs are being monitored and that you are keeping up to schedule.
- Confer with script supervisor and principle crew on your progress and the tasks for the next shooting day.