

The Responsibilities of the Cinematographer

Thanks to John Hora ASC who drew up this list for publication in the 'American Cinematographer' **Jan. 2003 VOL 84 N.1** magazine.

PRE-PRODUCTION

(a). Conceptual Research and Design Discuss all aspects of script and director's approach to picture in preliminary talks with director

- Analyse script as whole
- Analyse story structure
- Analyse characters
- Research period, events, general subject and appropriate design elements
- Devise style, visualise approach
- Continue talks with director on new ideas
- Come to agreement with director
- Discuss and come to agreement with production designer
- Discuss and research with technical advisor

(b). Practical Research and Design

- Ascertain or find out budget requirements
- Recce and approve locations
- Plot sun position for locations
- Check local weather
- Check tide tables near ocean
- Review, discuss and approve set plans

- Review and approve props, action vehicles, aeroplanes, boats, horse-drawn vehicles, mock-ups and miniatures

(c). Technical Research and Design

- Visit laboratory to calibrate, customise and evaluate exposure system for any combination of electronic or chemical image capture; and establish developing, printing, set timing and transfer protocols
- Visit rental houses
- Explore new equipment
- Learn how new equipment works
- Invent (or cause to be invented) special equipment or techniques for show
- Standardise and create effects bible for show
- Help create and approve any story boards
- Design (or cause to be designed) and approve any built-in or practical lighting fixture
- Design lighting-plot plan and rigging for stages and locations with gaffer and key grip

(d). Quality Control

- Choose and approve crew, film stock, lab, equipment, second-unit and visual-effects crews
- Supervise manufacture and testing of new or modified equipment
- Visit sets under construction
- Approve wild walls, ceiling pieces and any moving set pieces
- Check lighting-fixture crew
- Walk locations and stages with all departments to discuss requirements
- Approve set colours and textures
- Approve costume colours and textures
- Approve makeup and hair
- Generate (or cause to be generated) and approve equipment lists for camera, electric and grip

- Check rushes screening rooms for correct standards and/or check quality of rushes telecined to tape.

(e). Implementation

- Approve stand-ins
- Train crew to use any new equipment
- Walk locations and stages with director and devise shooting plan
- Make list of special equipment for production manager and indicate number of days required
- Work with assistant director on shooting schedule (order of and days required for each scene)
- Estimate and order film stock (type, size and quantity)
- Generate (or cause to be generated) and approve rigging and shooting manpower and man-days
- Assist other departments in getting required equipment, manpower and tests
- Maintain regular contact with other department heads.
- Mediate any problems between departments
- Check loading of production trucks or cargo containers for location or international shipping
- Visit cast run-throughs and rehearsals
- Advise and back up director on any problems
- Help producer or studio solve any production problems

(f). Testing

- Shoot tests for style
 - Shoot tests for lab
 - Shoot tests for lighting of principal actors
 - Shoot tests for camera and lenses
 - Shoot tests for wardrobe and makeup
 - Shoot tests for any special effects processes, unusual rigs, props or methods
- II.

SHOOTING

(a). Planning

- Check and approve all call sheets and shooting order of the day's work

(b). Blocking

- Watch rehearsal of scene to be shot
- Devise shot list with director (coverage)
- Choose lens and composition; show to director for approval
- Make sure composition and movement fulfil scene task
- Work out mechanical problems with camera operator, assistant camera, dolly and crane grips
- Set any camera-movement cues
- Place stand-ins and rehearse, fine-tune
- Ensure proper coverage of scene for editor
- Work with assistant director on background action

(c). Lighting

- Design lighting to show set/location to best advantage relative to story, style and dramatic content
- Light each actor to reinforce and reveal character
- Make sure mood and tone of light help to tell story
- Design light for minimum reset time between set-ups
- Utilise standby painter for control of highlights, shadows, ageing, dusting-down of sets and props
- Set any lighting cues (dimmers, spot lights, colour changes and any pre-programming)

(d). Preparation

- Work out any sound problems
- Work out any problems with other departments
- Check, set and approve all stunts with stunt co-ordinator

- Set any additional cameras required for stunts
- Double-check safety with all concerned
- Show shot to director to make any final changes
- Get actors in for final mechanical rehearsal; solve any outstanding problems

(e). Photography

- Photograph scene
- Approve or correct take
- Check parameters and reset for next take
- Shoot any plates
- Shoot any video playback material
- Move to next set-up

(f). Administrative

- Define first set-up in morning and after lunch
- Make sure that stills are taken of scene
- See that "making of" and/or EPK crews get needed footage
- Make sure script supervisor has any special camera or lighting notes
- Check film raw stock inventory
- Try to shoot up short ends
- Check that camera logbook is being kept up to date
- Complete day's work
- Discuss first set-up for the next day
- Ensure that camera, electrical, and grip crews get all copies of equipment rental or purchase invoices and approve before accountants pay vendors
- Take care of any future or ongoing production issues
- Answer any questions about future problems
- Visit production manager and producer at end of day
- Check for return of all unused equipment

(g). Quality Control

- Call in for lab report

- View previous day's work in projected rushes with director, producer, editor and camera crew
- Discuss and approve rushes
- Consult with makeup, wardrobe, production designer and assistant director about rushes
- View, discuss, correct or approve second-unit or effects rushes
- Order reprints if necessary

(h). Training

- Teach beginning actors movie technique (hitting marks, size of frame, lenses, etc.)
- Train camera crew for next job up the ladder I. Contingency
- If director is disabled, finish day's shooting for him or her III.

POST PRODUCTION

(a). Additional Photography

- Discuss and be aware of delivery dates for all post-production
- Photograph or approve any additional scenes, inserts, special effects or second-unit footage.

(b). Grading (Colour and Density)

- Grade and approve trailer for theatres and TV
- Approve all optical and digital effects composites
- Grade the picture
- Regrade until correct

(c). Quality Control

- Approve final answer print
- Show to director for OK

- Approve interpositive (IP)
- Approve internegatives (IN)
- Approve release prints
- Approve show prints from original negative
- Approve all blow-ups or reductions

(d). Telecine / Colour Correction

- Supervise and approve film or digital original transfer to electronic or film media (Hi-Def, NTSC, PAL, Secam masters, digital intermediates, archival masters, etc.)
- Supervise and approve all transfers to and from digital intermediates
- Supervise and approve all letterbox, pan and scan or reformatting of film
- Supervise and approve tape-to-tape colour correction and VMS, DVD, digital projection media, etc.
- Show electronic transfers to director for OK

(e). Publicity

- Do any publicity (newspaper, magazine, Internet, radio, TV, DVD commentary, etc.)

(f). Restoration/Archival

- Be available for any future reissue, archival reprint or electronic transfer of film

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