



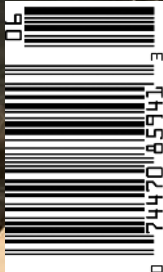
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CAMERA OPERATOR

VOLUME 22, NUMBER 2

SPRING/SUMMER 2013



Features

Camera Operator of the Year

The winners and nominees for 2013—who they are and something about the feature film or television series for which they were nominated



SOC Awards 2013

by David Frederick SOC and Lynn Lanning
Highlights of this year's award show



Cover



A Lasting Legend: The Making and Meaning of '42'

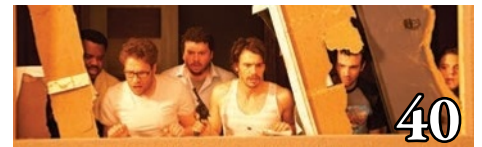
by Matthew Moriarty
Bringing Jackie Robinson's story to the screen.



David Luckenbach SOC films *The Lone Ranger*. Photo by Peter Mountain. © Disney Enterprises, Inc. and Jerry Bruckheimer Inc. All Rights Reserved.

This Is the End: An apocalyptic comedy

by Grayson Austin SOC
Six crazy guys survive the apocalypse—but will they survive the aftermath?



The Lone Ranger rides again!

by Martin Schaer SOC and David Luckenbach SOC
The masked hero is brought to life through new eyes.



Departments

2 President's Corner

by Chris Tufty SOC

4 Editor's Note

by Jennifer Braddock

8 News & Notes

What's happening with members and in the industry

58 Hi Def with Jeff

by Jeff Cree SOC

61 Transitions

63 Last Take; Advertisers' Index

64 Roster of the SOC

as of 5/19/13

The Joys of SOC

One of the many joys of the SOC is being able to fraternize with fellow camera operators when you're NOT on a set. Being able to chat casually about what jobs you're working on, what you've just left, how the wife and kids and house are, is simply a wonderful way to socialize with your peers.

We camera operators usually feel all alone with our camera out there under the glare of the lights and scrutiny of the DP and director. It's great when we nail a shot and self-effacing when we blow one ... but there's really no one else to share it with but us other camera operators who can empathize with our joys and sorrows. We are a unique combination of technicians and artists that have to physically move a machine thru a three dimensional world in an evocative fashion, tell a story through our lens, and visualize the final cut, and not too many people understand that scenario.

How great is it that the SOC has gatherings with several hundred members that have all experienced the same pressures and joys of working on a set in the Motion Picture and



BACKCOUNTRY PICTURES

Television industry in a social or learning environment? I love describing a particularly difficult shot that I've done to fellow operators and then listening to one of their favorite stories! And that's only one of the reasons the SOC has workshops, meetings, award ceremonies, and social events.

Also enjoyable is the knowledge that you can then recommend any one of your fellow SOC members as an additional cameraperson for a job when production calls for them! You already know them, like them, and trust them! It's the camaraderie of the Society of Camera Operators that inspires me to honor and admire my fellow peers who work their magic on the set when I've been called upon to be that additional cameraperson!

*Chris Tufty,
SOC President*

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Springtime changes

Greeting from Shreveport, Louisiana. It's definitely summer here; you can cut a knife through the humidity and the bugs are running rampant. I'm waiting for my computer and hard drives to burst into flames. But these times I always know I can escape to the theater for a cozy air conditioned presentation. And this is the best time of year to catch all the blockbusters and even the smaller films.

The SOC has just voted to have Associate members on the Board of Governors—up to five, out of the total 25 board members. So yours truly has officially been elected to the SOC Board of Governors. Guess I'll have to check out how to attend meetings via computer—and hope I have internet access when I need it.

I'm on location now with no internet at the place I'm staying, which has made it especially challenging to get this issue of the magazine finished. Most of the work is emailed back and forth with no problem, but it's hard to read a two-page wide multi-page pdf on an iPhone! And definitely impossible to edit Word docs that way. So I've had to track down nearby places that have wifi—not easy to do when you don't have the internet to help you! (There's probably an app for that.)

Back to the SOC elections: Chris Tufty is continuing as president (brave man). David Frederick, Michael Scott and



HOPPER STONE

Mark August are supporting him as vice presidents. Some long-time board members have dropped off for various reasons; some former members are back. Hugh Litfin has been elected to the board; he's in the San Francisco Bay area, so like me, he'll need to telecommute. The board is looking for a new East Coast rep; maybe you or someone you know would be available for that.

Congratulations to all the board members, old and new. May this be a wonderful and productive year for us all.

Jennifer Braddock

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Vice President
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Meet our Gizmologists!

When you need a custom gizmo, or anything technical, these are the "Go To Guys", Alan Albert and Tom Boelens. Both have been with Clairmont since forever and absolutely know every last detail about every piece of equipment we own. They are also responsible for many of our unique designs and enhancements to our gear. If you don't already know Alan and Tom, come on over and meet them; they will expand your creativity!

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CORRECTION

In the previous issue, the photo in the top right corner of page 44 is of Danny Cohen. We regret the misidentification.

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SPRING/SUMMER 2013**

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SOC gets involved in a special film



PHONE PHOTOS BY TONY COBBS, SOC

The crew in the photo was filming a micro budget, SOC-supported feature film, *Between the Fall and Rise*, about LA's homeless, addiction and police officer suicide awareness.

The two Canon C300PL cameras were graciously provided by Canon USA, the Cooke S4 prime lenses by Panavision and the support gear packages from VER, all valued SOC Corporate supporters.

The film project and its production team have recently received very favorable press in the *LA Times* and support from the Mayor's office for its positive awareness outreach into a very troubling aspect of our community.



Script supervisor Casey Reiboldt, 2nd AC Christian Coldea, SOC members 1st AC Rachel Hudson, 1st AC Kimberly Palmer, DP Dave Frederick and Tony Cobbs, SOC

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News & Notes



COURTESY OF MICHAEL FREDIANI SOC

SOC Past President Michael Frediani (left) was delighted to finally be able to present in person his 2012 President's Award to Phil Radin at Panavision. Phil was in hospital at the time of the 2012 SOC Awards.



MICHAEL FREDIANI SOC

Liz Radley has offered to catalogue, digitize and eventually edit our media from past Lifetime Achievement Awards for viewing on our website. This is the first carload of material delivered to her, by past president Michael Frediani SOC.

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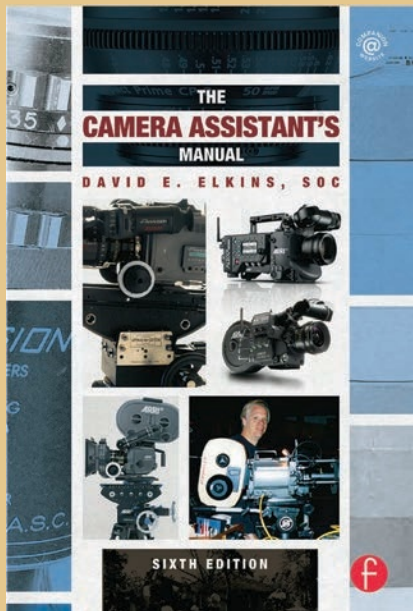
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News & Notes



Camera Assistant's Manual now in its 6th Edition

David E Elkins SOC has printed his sixth edition of *The Camera Assistant's Manual* through Focal Press. The manual covers the basics of cinematography and provides you with the multi-skill set needed to maintain and transport a camera, troubleshoot common problems on location, and work with the latest film and video technologies. Illustrations, checklists, and tables accompany each chapter and highlight the daily workflow of a camera assistant.

Considered a "bible" and "must-have" for camera technicians and aspiring assistants, the newest edition has updated information in both digital and film production, and includes a companion website with extensive forms, charts, and camera illustrations to print out and use along with links to cinematography related websites.

Please visit www.cameraassistant-manual.com for more information.

From everyone at Camera Operator, congratulations, David on your continuing success and dedication to education. —Jennifer Braddock

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CAMERA OPERATOR OF THE YEAR Winner ~ Feature Mitch Dubin SOC for *Lincoln*

Mitch Dubin says: “I have been fortunate through my career to have worked on some great movies with exceptionally talented filmmakers. I love working and collaborating with the other crafts on the set. I love sitting in the hot seat and working with the director, sharing his vision. I can’t imagine anything else I’d rather do. Through all the years I have spent behind the camera, the films I have done with Steven Spielberg have been the most challenging and the most rewarding. He is a master storyteller and a remarkable artist with the camera.

“*Lincoln* was different from any other film I’ve done with Steven, because of Daniel Day-Lewis. Daniel is such a method actor and was so much into the part of Lincoln that it created a very different environment on the set. It was a very quiet set. Very few people were allowed to be on the set. We had to address Daniel Day-Lewis as Mr President. We treated him as if he *was* Abraham Lincoln. In the end it created a very different process of filmmaking that I’ve never experienced. But it was an honor as camera operator to sit behind the camera and witness an incredible performance. It was really a rewarding project on that level.

“Steven wore a suit and tie every day to work. He never does that, but he did it out of respect for ‘Mr President,’ for Abraham Lincoln, for the movie. It was interesting to see Steven in a suit and tie every day.

“It was an incredible cast. Everybody wanted to be in the movie, even in a cameo. I’d like to say that method acting can become contagious, and whenever someone was working with Daniel directly, they all became method actors as well, although to a little bit less degree than Daniel did.

“David Strathairn, who I had worked with years ago on *Matewan* (1987), is a lovely man. When he wasn’t working, he would come to the set just to watch. He would hang out with Steven back in video village, or he would hang out by the camera, because he was fascinated by the process of how Steven makes his movies or in awe of watching Daniel perform. He’s a great guy, a wonderful actor, fun to have

around even when he wasn’t working that day.

“All the actors were great. Tommy Lee Jones—I’d heard stories about how difficult he is. He was wonderful! Sally Fields played a very emotional role in the film and so she was very much like Daniel, so immersed in the part that we really didn’t have a whole lot of interaction with her.

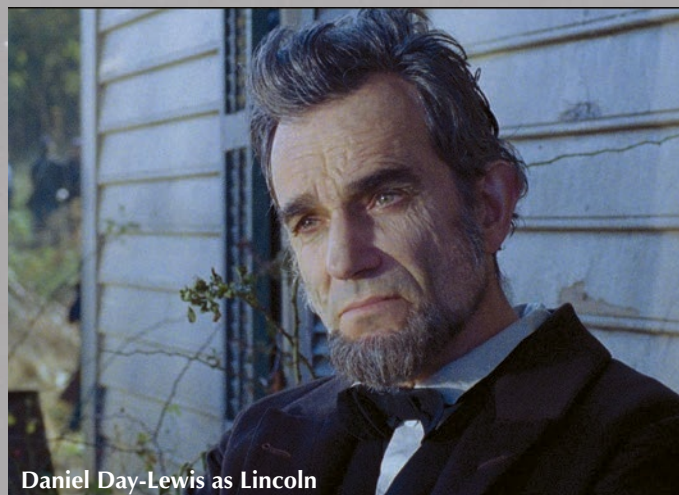
“With all films that Steven directs, the camera is an active participant. The camera is an integral part of telling the story,

as if it’s another character in the film. That’s always the challenge as a camera operator, to be able to realize Steven’s vision for the camera. To create the right shot, we all need to work together. But I’ve never before worked with an actor like Daniel Day-Lewis, who’s so intently immersed in his part that we didn’t have much dialogue with him. There wasn’t really any collaboration involved. Daniel showed up on the set as Abraham Lincoln, clearly professional. There were very long dialogue sequences, and he never faltered. He never missed a line. We were there to witness it and to record it, not to collaborate with him. We would never even imagine asking him to do something in a way that would sit better for the camera. Steven and Daniel had the relationship, and they had their dialogue, and then we would just film. We didn’t even rehearse. Everything that had to be done to capture the performance had to happen quietly. It had to happen around Daniel’s performance. So it was a very different process of filming. At times it was frustrating. I really do enjoy collaborating with the actors and being a part of that process, but in exchange I was witness to an incredible performance, to have the front row center seat of an incredible actor becoming Abraham Lincoln.

“*Lincoln* is a serious film. It was 140 page script. I remember reading it and thinking, ‘Wow! This is huge! How are we going to film all these words?’ When we were filming there were times I would get lost in the complexity of the words. When I saw the film, I was just blown away with how interesting it was, and how absorbing, and how well it flowed. Personally I am very proud of the film. *Lincoln* is a 140 page dialogue driven, beautifully written script by Tony Kushner, but it still feels cinematic, it still feels like a movie. It’s not a series of close-ups of people talking. The movie has a wonderful flow. The camera moves effortlessly without a lot of notice, but it’s an integral part of the story. As opposed to movies like *Saving Private Ryan* or *Minority Report*, the



Mitch Dubin SOC



Daniel Day-Lewis as Lincoln



Steven Spielberg

camera work in *Lincoln* is just as relevant and story based, but it is more subtle and more restrained. Faced with the immensity of the script, that was not an easy task and is why I am so proud of this movie.

“We are so

accosted by media that is action based, fast-paced, quick cuts. I’m not dismissing them, they have their place in our cinematic world—but here’s a movie that’s about words that is so beautifully done, and tells such a poignant and relevant story. It is very disappointing when the critical comment I hear is that people say they were bored because they don’t have the patience or the attention span. So the movie takes a little effort on the viewer’s part. I think it’s one of the best movies Steven’s ever done. But I’m sure I’m prejudiced about it.

“*Lincoln* takes place towards the end of the Civil War. We only show one battle scene, which is the opening scene in the movie. Filming that scene was gruesome, because we were all literally in the mud, in the rain. The entire movie was shot in and around Richmond, Virginia. We found a location outside of Richmond, about a half-hour away in a swamp. It was raining while we were filming, and it was miserable. We were all drenched and muddy, and slipping all over the place trying to film this horrific battle scene.

“We used the State Capitol of Virginia for the White House. It’s ironic because the Virginia State Capitol was once the Capitol of the Confederacy. Richmond was great. Everyone was very nice. We certainly put our footprint there, while we were filming. *Lincoln* was a very large endeavor. Doing anything period takes a lot of work. All the streets had to be covered with dirt; costumes, wardrobe—it’s a lot of work to do a period film accurately, and historical accuracy was extremely important for Steven and for Rick Carter, our production designer.

“Abraham Lincoln wanted the 13th amendment passed, even to the point that he refused to negotiate with the Confederacy. He could have negotiated peace months earlier, and saved thousands of lives, but he chose not to, because he knew how important it was to have the 13th amendment passed. That’s a pretty gutsy call. He was so passionate about the concept of freedom and equality. While we were making the film I wondered if the dilemma that Lincoln faced would be treated sympathetically or whether he would seem like a tyrant. Thanks to the beautiful writing of Tony Kushner, the delicate directing by Steven, and the amazing performance of Daniel Day-Lewis,

I thought the problem was resolved beautifully.

“The scene I think is really moving is at the end of the movie when Abraham Lincoln is riding through another battlefield among the scores of dead. It was a tremendous amount of work by the assistant directorial department to fill those fields with dead soldiers, but it was a really beautiful shot.

“One difficult shot I remember is in the montage sequence of the lobbyists hired to convince the Democrats to vote for the 13th amendment. In the shot that Steven designed, I have to follow the actor (Tim Blake Nelson) up the stairs, bring him to the door, which is at least a 180° pan, and inches from the lens. As he gets to the door, the disgruntled congressman slams the door in his face. When the door slams, I need to follow this picture falling to the ground. It’s a very difficult shot, to follow something falling to the ground, not knowing when it’s going to happen or where it’s going to stop. We did it a few times and there was always something a little bit wrong with each take. The best one got ruined when one of the grips stuck a flag in, trying to help the lighting. Then the picture sort of got stuck on the door and wouldn’t fall off, so someone advised the actor—unbeknownst to me—to slam the door harder. All of a sudden the picture is flying off the door and landing literally at the wheels of the dolly. I’m tilting almost more than straight down and I’m going crazy because I can’t get the shot. And Steven’s getting serious. ‘Mitch! I can’t believe you can’t do this shot! What’s wrong? You’re not up to this any more?’ He goes on and on like that, and I’m dying. I had no idea what was even going on, why this picture was flying so far. Finally at one point Steven says, ‘I give up! We’re going to move on.’ And he says, ‘Mitch, you’ve lost your touch.’ Of course, those words hurt, even to this day. I’m sure if I went up to Steven today and reminded him of it, he wouldn’t remember saying a syllable of it, but it’s something that just goes straight to your heart. So when I sit down to see the movie for the first time, I’m looking for that shot. I’m going to see if he even used the shot in the movie. Maybe he decided he didn’t need it, but I was afraid he didn’t use it because I wasn’t able to get the shot he wanted. I’m watching the movie, and the shot comes up. He didn’t use the whole shot, but he certainly used the part where the picture falls off the door and lands on the porch, and it was perfect! And I’m going, ‘Why did we do so many takes? That one was perfect!’”



David Strathairn, Tim Blake Nelson, John Hawkes, James Spader

CAMERA OPERATOR OF THE YEAR Winner ~ Television

Andrew Voegeli SOC for *Breaking Bad*

As far back as he can remember, Andrew Voegeli has loved film and TV. When he was 12 years old his mother gave him a 35 mm camera, and since then photography has been a way of life. In 1995 Andrew moved to NYC and started working as a production assistant. He joined the camera department as a loader, working up to 1st assistant camera on episodic television, feature films, commercials, and music videos. In 2006 Andrew was given his first job as “B”/Steadicam Operator on the ABC show *Knights of Prosperity* by Dickie Quinlan. In 2008 he landed his first job as “A” camera Operator on the iconic AMC show, *Breaking Bad*. In addition to *Breaking Bad* Andy has worked as camera operator on *Fringe*, *Royal Pains*, *Rubicon* and *30 Rock*. He resides in NYC with his wife and daughter.

“I had been operating for about 2 years, on episodic TV mostly, as a ‘B’/Steadicam operator when Michael Slovis offered me the ‘A’ camera position on *Breaking Bad*. My life changed a lot with that show—I had to move away from home for 6 months at a time, I got married during my first season there (season 2), my amazing wife Amanda gave birth to our beautiful daughter Alexa during episode 1 of the next season. So for me, *Breaking Bad* was a life changer—it was a lot to handle all at once, but everyone there made it very easy. It was written so well and acted so well, and Michael Slovis’s cinematography is so stunning, it made it easy to make nice compositions. *Breaking Bad* has been a fantastic experience in my life. And most importantly, I grew as a camera operator.

“*Breaking Bad* has been a huge success, a critically acclaimed show, and fantastic to work on. The people involved are all incredible—Vince Gilligan the creator and his staff of talented writers, all of the actors, an incredible crew of hard working technicians. Every day there’s a new difficulty and usually a simple resolution. For instance, our first season there, we did a shot of Aaron Paul, who plays Jesse on the show, lying in bed

with his girlfriend Jane (Krysten Ritter). He does heroin for the first time. He falls back onto the bed and begins to ascend from the bed up to the rafters, up beyond, well above the set.

We did this shot on a chain hoist, what they would use to put up the grid. They built a platform that Aaron lay on—it was hidden behind his shoulders and down his back. But on the first take, the chain motor had a mechanical hiccup and it started to get this repetitive chug-chug-chug. And we went, ‘Oh no! That’s not going to work!’ We’re a modest cable television show, so we don’t always have big budgets for special equipment that makes shots easier to attain. But our fearless leader, Michael Slovis, had a marvelous idea. Just as the machine started to lift, he gave the platform a little push. It swayed like a falling leaf and totally hid the mechanical chug, and it turned into a magical shot. Shots like that are a very collaborative effort on *Breaking Bad*. We’ve had lots of fun shots and lots of great suggestions from people.

“We have an incredible cast of actors. You can ask a Bryan Cranston or an Aaron Paul to take a step to his left at this moment, or weight his right foot at this moment to help me not see a light or a flag that is just out of frame. In serious scenes where they’re emotionally vested in the moment, our actors are able to do these things and work with you to get the shots.

“I was asked if I could remember any particular shots that were difficult to get or especially hard. I can’t recall the season but there is a scene when Hank, played by Dean Norris, was experiencing some post traumatic stress. He was in the middle of a shower and thought he heard some noise coming from the garage. The shot started in a close up and traveled from the shower in the master bedroom down some hallways,



CRAIG MATTHEWS



Anna Gunn and Bryan Cranston



Krysten Ritter and Aaron Paul

through the living room and another hallway into the garage, and ends with him pointing the gun at his wife Marie (Betsy Brandt). Johan Renck, who is an incredible talent, was directing this episode and thought it would add to the tension if Dean and I were tied to each other. Now I wouldn't necessarily call this difficult or hard, but it could be quite challenging being tied to a naked and wet Dean Norris.

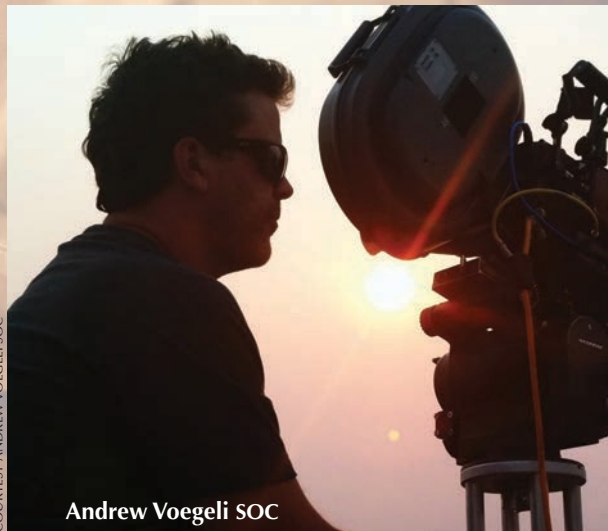
“The show has been tough physically. I'd say it's around 85%–90% handheld, 10% dolly, and about 3 days of Steadicam per episode. Physically, the show was very grueling. It didn't help that my other show between seasons of *Breaking Bad* was *30 Rock*, another handheld show. I do love operating though. I think it's what I'm born to do; I'm built for it. I enjoy telling stories. Something magical happens when I have a camera and I'm in a room with a director and some actors. It's not just used as a recording device. In shows like *Breaking Bad*, you can't help but give all of yourself to the shot and be emotionally vested in what's going on 100% of the time. It's been an incredible experience.

“The show ran its course. Vince Gilligan always had it in his mind that the show would have a beginning, a middle, and an end. Vince ended it on his own terms, and it was an unbelievable adventure. I'm very proud to be a part of it.” 🍷



Dean Norris (standing) and Aaron Paul

PHOTOS BY URSULA COVOTE © AMC



Andrew Voegeli SOC

COURTESY ANDREW VOEGELI SOC



Bryan Cranston as Walt White watching his workers.

CAMERA OPERATOR OF THE YEAR Nominee ~ Feature Colin Anderson SOC for *The Master*

After working in the South Africa film industry for eleven years, Colin Anderson moved into assisting in Los Angeles. His early career as a 1st AC included such films as *Stargate*, *Tank Girl* and *Species*. Since then, he has operated cameras or Steadicam or both for such films as *Rush Hour*, *The Haunting*, *Daredevil*, *The Rundown*.

Soon after making the leap to operating, he worked with DP Robert Elswit on *Syriana*, *Good Night and Good Luck*, and *There Will Be Blood*, for which he also received a Camera Operator of the Year Nomination. Most recently, Colin has worked on *Star Trek*, *Ironman II*, *The Town*, *Super 8*, *Argo*, and *Star Trek Into Darkness*.

“I think that any time anyone gets an opportunity to work with Paul Thomas Anderson, you have to grab that with both hands. In my opinion, he’s one of the best directors we’ve had in the United States for the last couple of decades. He’s absolutely brilliant. The chance to work with him is something that just can’t be passed up on.

“Paul is incredibly involved in every aspect of the process. He has his fingerprints on every frame of the film: lighting, camera positions, set design, wardrobe, makeup ... you name it, he gets involved. He’s one of those filmmakers who is just so hands-on.

“One of the things I love most about working with Paul is that the set is so small and intimate. When I say small, I mean that there’s just nobody around. He likes a very empty set, so there’s normally only about 5 or 6 people on set at any time when we’re shooting, which makes for a very, very intimate and close environment. Normally it’s just the camera operator, the first AC, the dolly grip, the sound—the boom swinger, and him. There’s no hair, makeup, wardrobe allowed near the actors once they step onto set. It’s very efficient filmmaking. I think the actors get a lot out of it, because there’s not that huge breakdown after every take with everyone rushing in and doing their tweaks. It makes for very efficient concentrated filmmaking.

“It was almost exclusively a one-camera show. For Paul, this is his usual procedure. Every now and again, he will use another camera, but I would say that 90% of the time he just uses one because he’s so specific about the lens and the shot and the angle. If there’s the faintest sniff of compromise with the second angle, he won’t do it.

“We started out shooting *The Master* on 35mm, with specific scenes planned to be shot on 65mm. After the first week of photography, Paul fell so much in love with 65mm format that he decided to shoot the entire film on the larger format—much to the producer’s horror. Personally, I was thrilled to be shooting on 65mm, especially with the entire industry heading toward digital. It was such an amazing opportunity to be able to use a format that we all thought had died.

“The scene where Joaquin is running across the fields was one of the only shots in the movie that was 35 mm and Steadicam. We had planned to do a lot of Steadicam on the film, because Paul likes the Steadicam, and is known for his long Steadicam shots. We did quite a few of them on *There Will Be Blood*, and if anyone has seen *Magnolia* or *Boogie Nights*, they’ll know that he has these epic Steadicam shots. When *The Master* went from 35mm to 65mm, it almost took the equation. Panavision’s system is just too heavy to put on a Steadicam, even their so-called lightweight version. So we couldn’t do Steadicam on the film, but there is one particular shot where he’s running away across the fields that needed a long tracking shot in profile, so we compromised and did it on 35mm with a Steadicam.

“With Paul being such a leading light in our industry, I think a lot of people have decided to follow his path. I have heard talk of several other films being shot on 65mm. Maybe it’s not the death of it. Just when you think you’re heading in a certain direction, things turn around. So, I just may not go down in the history books as the last person to shoot on 65mm.”



Director Paul Thomas Anderson checks a shot while camera operator Colin Anderson SOC (right) stands by

PHOTOS BY PHIL BRAY © 2012 THE WEINSTEIN COMPANY

CAMERA OPERATOR OF THE YEAR Nominee ~ Television Nicholas Davidoff SOC for *Homeland*

You might say filmmaking was ingrained in Nicholas Davidoff's DNA. Nick's father was a cinematographer, and his mother, an actress; both emigrated from Russia in the '70s to pursue the American dream. So Hollywood became Nick's hometown. "Growing up in LA, I'd always get so excited whenever I saw a film being shot. It was like some magical circus. I always dreamed of being a part of it. I never really had a job that was outside the movie business. Even my very first job, at 16, was selling Star Maps on a Sunset Boulevard street corner."

Out of high school Nick was already working small jobs on various camera crews; nevertheless, he decided to make a commitment to go to film school. Near the end of his second semester, Nick got a call from his original mentor, 1st AC Gary Ushino. Gary offered Nick a job as the loader with DP Mark Irwin on a little comedy called *Dumb and Dumber*. It would be Nick's first union picture. After some deep deliberation, Nick took the plunge.

He worked as a camera assistant in features, TV, music videos and commercials. All the while, he paid special attention to the camera operators. "Of all the people on a production, I was fascinated by these guys the most, especially the Steadicam operators. This machine just mesmerized me. I watched the operators closely, like a sponge, absorbing whatever knowledge and techniques I could." Eventually Nick dipped into his savings, purchased his first Steadicam rig, and has never looked back.

"*Homeland* is a show that challenges the camera operator daily. One shot I remember was particularly challenging, fun and crazy all rolled into one. It was one of our popular handheld tracking shots. On this hot summer day in Charlotte, we were shooting at a city park. Our lead character Brody is all wound up, on his way to a secret rendezvous. He rushes through the park, cornering through rows of bushes, circling a

fountain, up a few stairs, winding through narrow walkways, whizzing past joggers, bicyclists and frolicking children. Brody was moving at an energetic clip and we all had to keep up with him. Following him was easy. But then leading him, navigating blindly, backwards, through all the twists and turns of the terrain proved to be quite a feat. I laid a bunch of little tape markers and edge lines on the ground to help guide me. But without the brilliant spotting work of my dolly grip Cale, the shot would have been impossible. We did a handful of high speed dry runs with no camera, to get the maneuvering down. And then we went for it. It was quite a mental overload to say the least, rushing backwards, blind, at near jogging speed, camera on the shoulder, one eye on the monitor keeping the frame, the other eye watching the guide markers whip-ping past. Cale tapping my shoulder every three seconds indicating a hard change of direction. I had the turns half memorized. Left, right, left, left, two steps, bushes, right, left, nasty stone pillar, left, big pothole, right, low overhead tree, hard right, left, stop! And in the end, we somehow pulled it all off without anybody eating dirt. Cut. Print. Next scene. Brody's meeting ends in a heated argument and he charges off, back the way he came down that tricky, winding pathway. Once again, we're gonna lead him! Aaaaall the way back. Even faster this time! And this version will be on Steadicam! Boy do I love my job!"

"*Homeland* is an amazing experience, to be a part of this brilliant group of creative professionals who are simply the best of the best. The shooting style is this energetic mix of handheld, Steadicam and dolly. Unusual framing and exciting, off-the-cuff documentary shooting are a staple of our style. As an operator it's been hard work but worth all the effort. One thing my father always instilled in me was to strive for excellence in whatever I do. So it really meant a lot to be nominated for operating excellence by the SOC."

PHOTOS BY KENT SMITH © SHOWTIME 2012 -3



Morgan Saylor, Claire Danes and Damian Lewis



Nicholas Davidoff SOC

CAMERA OPERATOR OF THE YEAR Nominee ~ Feature

Lukasz Bielan SOC for *Life of Pi*

“I came up through the ranks—camera trainee, 2nd AC, focus puller and operator. I had the great privilege of working with some of the best people in this business, including Sven Nykvist who was my true mentor and a father figure. I worked on 9 of his pictures, which is a fraction of the over 130 films he has made. But we became very close. He taught me a lot about filmmaking and lighting but above all, how to be grateful and understanding—how to be a good person. I believe he was not only an outstanding cinematographer but also an amazing human being. He always said that the most difficult thing to achieve in one’s art, profession, and life is simplicity ... We seek for ways to be original, and ways to stand out, by over thinking and over achieving what really is in front of us. The simplicity is so obvious that it frightens us.

“In many ways, simplicity is the hardest thing to achieve, and once one achieves it, it’s an unbelievable art form. I think that’s what Ang Lee is so masterful at. He knows how to tell the story by means of simplicity.

“In film school, one of the first things I learned was that kids, animals, and water were the most challenging to work with. We had all three—and 3D on top of it! All my instincts, knowledge of anticipation, and pure feeling for my work as an operator were thrown out the window. *Life of Pi* was a true journey. We took on a story many thought was unfilmmable.

“There was a shot that we had to do with the main actor on a fluid head, where I had to whip tilt from his foot to his face very precisely so as not to cut his head—the 3D thing. With a conventional camera it’s not a big deal. With a 3D rig that weighs a ton, is longer in girth and size, and has a different momentum, it was a bit of a challenge. Of course we did it, but I learned a new thing about how to distribute power and how to handle momentum in tilting with a massive camera, tilting with a great 3D beast.

“We had a handheld sequence of kids playing soccer in the schoolyard, with the rig weight over 120 pounds, but I love doing stuff like that. It still makes me feel like a kid playing with his toys. I get a lot of complaints from my peers saying that I should not do that kind of stuff because then it will be expected of them! Weight matters least for me; it is more about the distribution of it that takes the toll on my body, so sometimes I actually add more things on the camera so it balances properly and the weight is distributed mostly to my core.

“I do believe through years of experience that the natural progression for a camera operator is in fact directing. We are the last humans between the lens and the actors, and actors very often personalize the camera with who is behind it. Many times after getting the thumbs up or down from the director, they will double check with us for reassurance. On occasion, we sometimes whisper to the director about some imperfections of performances that we notice within the scene. We must know about editing, how the scene will or will not cut, and creating a work environment that is suitable for the cast.

“As a camera operator, I know how to adapt to each new project. Every director has a different vision, idea, procedure and personality. For me the great thing of filmmaking is that you always learn, no matter how big the project, be it film, TV, commercial, or music video. I believe that the moment you stop learning, you must change your occupation because you get stale and lose interest.”



Lukasz Bielan SOC

curmudgeonly

misanthropic

pertinacious

CAMERA OPERATOR OF THE YEAR Nominee ~ Television

Tony Gaudioz for *House MD*

pessimistic

rancorous

manipulative

unfaithful

hubristic

bitter

deceitful

irreverent

shot required individual solutions. The biggest challenge was to creatively change composition and choice of lenses to

Tony Gaudioz began his career at age 15 in 1964 as an apprentice at Keith Ewart Studios in Chelsea London England. Ewart produced many commercials from the '60s to the '80s, some days completing two on the same day.

try not to duplicate ourselves in

domineering

overemotional

After 3 years there and having gained Union membership Tony went

the same rooms day after day. House's outer office was the most challenging of all, as a large percentage of every episode was scripted there with the

freelance. Whilst on a commercial he met Chic Waterson, Dougie Slocombe's long time operator who asked him to join them on their next film *The Italian Job*. Tony spent the next 8 years with them working on 15 films including *The Great Gatsby* (1974), *Jesus Christ Superstar* and *Rollerball*.

team. Gregg Yataines our Executive Producer/Director had many of the walls put on chain motors to rise up quickly to streamline

In 1977 he became a 1st assistant and worked with Ted Moore ASC on *Clash of the Titans* (1981) and with Michael Mann on *The Keep* before deciding to become an operator in 1982.

shooting. He was extremely supportive with anything suggested to improve efficiency.

After moving to the US in 1985 he worked on *Runaway Train* with Don Burgess and Tom Priestley. Since then he has completed 30+ films as an "A" camera operator. In June 2006 Gale Tattersall asked him to operate on *House MD*. They completed 177 episodes together, on 9 of which Tony was the DP, before the show ended after 8 seasons in April 2012.

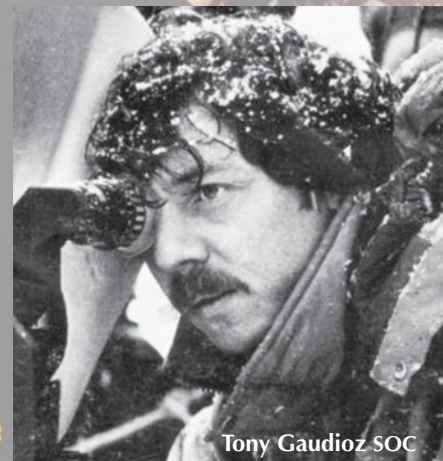
"We were blessed to have such great scripts and Hugh Laurie's passion for every aspect of the show, in

Tony has two children: Ben, 20, is in his 3rd year at UC Santa Cruz studying Film Production, and Annie, who has just been accepted to NYU's Tisch Performing Arts Program.

addition to his brilliant portrayal of Gregory House, which made Gale and me want to give 110% to compliment their work.

"*House MD* was a very challenging yet rewarding show to work on. Many changes were made to the sets after Gale Tattersall offered me the position as operator at the start of Season 3. The composite sets on Stages 14 and 15 at Fox had many glass walls and partitions, which meant multiple problems with lights, microphone booms and cameras/crews being reflected. Almost every

I feel very proud to be one part of the process." 🐼



Tony Gaudioz SOC

COURTESY OF TONY GAUDIOZ



Hugh Laurie



PHOTOS BY ADAM TAYLOR/FOX ©2010 FOX BROADCASTING CO

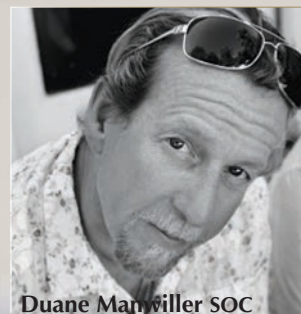
CAMERA OPERATOR OF THE YEAR Nominee ~ Feature Duane C Manwiller for *The Hunger Games*

With over 25 years behind the camera, Duane has been fortunate enough to work with some of the best cinematographers and directors in the world. This includes 17 movies with cinematographer Dante Spinotti, ten with Steven Soderbergh and four with Michael Mann.

Although Duane travels quite extensively, he bases himself out of the Southern California area where he lives with his wife Electra, and his two daughters, fifteen year old Ariel and twelve year old Zoe.

“Working on *The Hunger Games* is truly one of the best experiences I’ve had on a film set in almost 25 years. From the first time I met Gary Ross he had a concept for the look of *Hunger Games* that he meticulously followed to a tee and never wavered from. During our first week of prep in Ashville, Gary invited myself, Tom Stern the director of photography, and Maurice McGuire the “B” camera operator over to his apartment to bond as well as to watch a film that would turn out to be truly inspirational in many ways. Gary was very into the way that the camera moved and became more like a character in the film than just an object recording what was in the viewfinder. This is perhaps another reason that Gary went on to hire Juliette Welfling as one of the editors for *Hunger Games*. We watched a French film called *A Prophet*, directed by Jacques Audiard and edited by Juliette. After we watched the film and listened to how Gary wanted to shoot the film, I got it 100%. Mostly handheld but more than just putting the camera on your shoulder and pointing it at the subjects. Steadicam was not used much. It was an eye opener. Gary was very passionate about the way he wanted his film shot, and never wavered.

“Obviously the locations that were chosen made the film one of the biggest challenges overall. Some locations in the woods were not only remote, but quite a challenge to just get the gear into. Grips and Electrics were under some extreme challenges as well. Key Grip Guy Micheletti worked magic building cranes and rigs in some of the craziest places I’ve ever seen. From the tops of trees to steep hillsides he did it all. In the scene where Katniss climbs the tree and cuts down the



Duane Manwiller SOC

COURTESY OF DC MANWILLER SOC

Tracker Jacker nest, Guy and his team built a 50’ tall scaffold with a staircase that we were able to actually put a Technocrane on as well as cast and crew. Quite a sight to see all that going on 50’ above the forrest floor.

“Gary embraced his crew as well as their families and openly invited them to come and visit. From Gary to the producers to all the crew, everyone was super friendly and open to all family visits. It’s the first show I’ve ever worked on that my two girls were completely excited to come and visit the set. They would have come out every day if they could have. They even came for some all nighters and saw the sun rise on more than one occasion with the cast and crew.”

PHOTOS BY MURRAY CLOSE © 2012 LIONS GATE



Jennifer Lawrence and Liam Hemsworth



Elizabeth Banks and Jennifer Lawrence



Lenny Kravitz, Woody Harrelson, Josh Hutcherson

CAMERA OPERATOR OF THE YEAR Nominee ~ Television

Jeff Muhlstock SOC for *Smash*

A film major and graduate of The School of Visual Arts in 1985, Jeff pursued a career as a camera operator and DP. The camera movement and musicality of shooting documentaries and becoming a regular operator during the infancy of MTV caused him to take on Steadicam. With the aid of Garrett Brown's workshop in 1990, Jeff's career expanded into mainstream production. The last 20 years have generated versatile credits that include a long list of commercials, feature films, music videos and scripted television. Jeff has received three Emmy Awards and a total of 8 nominations for his work on live television. Additionally, he has received three George Foster Peabody awards.

As the "A" camera operator on the second season of NBC/Dreamworks *Smash*, Jeff found the perfect fit for his style, skillset and experience. Throughout his career, Jeff has continued to stay active in a director/producer role for independent and corporate production. He is co-owner of Inalex Productions, an independent production company specializing in short subject documentary films. He and Helene have been married 24 years and have two children.

"With dance, such as we have on *Smash*, we want to show the entire stage as if the viewer was in the live theater audience. It's nice to be wide enough to let the dance play the frame. It is also important that we give a view from within a performance. Seeing into the wings and the lights makes it almost a behind the scenes view from the performer's perspective.

"There was one performance number in the 'Hit List' show where two of our leads sang on top of two separate small rolling stair rigs that get rolled 360° within the dance and song. I thought it would be a great shot if I were able to ride with them as the dancers pushed both platforms around the stage interacting with each other—ideally, shooting over each other and close ups with the opposing character on the other rolling rig flying by in the background. The platforms were too small and not stable enough to safely support the Steadicam and the actors, but the grip and construction departments built a new larger platform that could hold me, the Steadicam and the actors. It was a 6x6 platform with safety speed rail all around. I was able to harness in and have the platform pushed around by the grips and the dancers to match our wide coverage of the choreography.

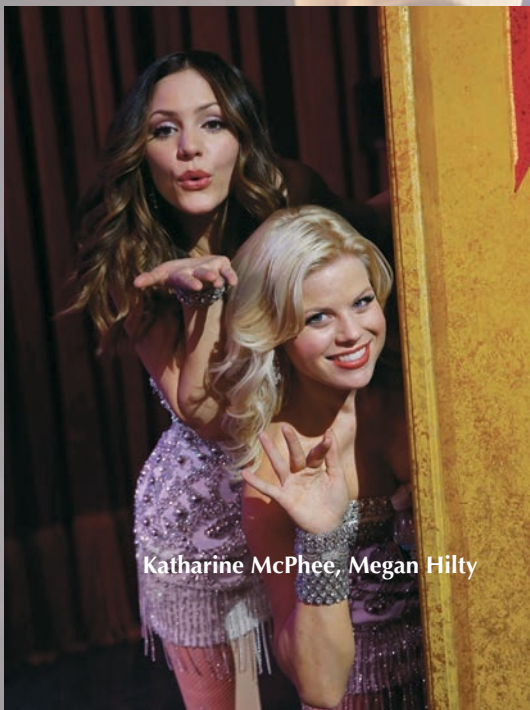
"The shots worked great and we simply switched out the actors to shoot their opposing shots on the same rolling rig platform. This made for some very exciting

close-ups with great movement in the background, very dynamic shots to take the audience into the dance number. It's what *Smash* is all about!

I try and create a musical rhythm with the camera moves. I'm always thinking, music and pace. I want to give the show a flow as if the entire episode is a music video. Even in dramatic moments, I am always pushing for movement (even just pan and tilt). My feeling is that it helps the rhythm and pace of the entire episode, not just the musical segments.

"The degree of my involvement in the process is what makes this job so great for me. Every show has its own dynamic with personalities and working methods of the DP and operator. David Mullen is a lovely guy and an incredibly talented DP. He is also a great collaborator. We discuss every shot and all our coverage; it's a true team effort. We try our best to create interesting camera angles and moves in the time allotted. On a TV schedule, we make lots of compromises, but generally David is able to maintain a very high quality of lighting without giving up interesting photography.

"My work in live TV has really paid off in terms of learning choreography and understanding where to place cameras and where to be at the right times."



Katharine McPhee, Megan Hilty



Jeff Muhlstock SOC

CAMERA OPERATOR OF THE YEAR Nominee ~ Feature

Peter Robertson ACO SOC for *Anna Karenina*

Peter was born and educated in Newcastle-upon-Tyne in the Northeast of England where his two main interests in art and sport gave him an early grounding for life as a camera operator. In 1974 he left Newcastle to study at the Slade School of Fine Art, University College London where he was exposed to photography and the rudiments of motion picture 16mm and 8mm shooting.

After college, in 1979, Peter began shooting art installations, working as a camera assistant on various commercial projects, and shooting documentaries and arts programs for television. When he first discovered the amazing work of Garrett Brown and his new fangled device, the Steadicam, he was immediately smitten and started a lifelong love/mild hate relationship with the “immaculate contraption.” This interest in a new way of moving the camera shifted Peter’s focus to narrative drama and camera operating for cinema features.

Peter Robertson’s work has spanned small indie to large blockbuster, historical costume drama to modern action thriller, from the likes of *Harry Potter*, *James Bond*, *Pirates of the Caribbean* to *In Bruges*, *Hot Fuzz*, *Atonement* and *Anna Karenina*. Common to all is his concern for the mechanics and storytelling qualities of the camera operating. Whether via handheld, Steadicam, dolly or crane, Peter feels that his “job as the operator has always been to help blend the vision of the director and cameraman with the demands of the narrative, a process which, I consider, reached its peak in my collaboration with Seamus McGarvey BSC ASC in 2007 on Joe Wright’s *Atonement* and in 2012 on Joe Wright’s *Anna Karenina*. The former film includes the 5 minute Steadicam Dunkirk beach shot which has now become a much studied and admired historical cinema shot” and for which he received the Historical Shot Award from the SOC this year.

Peter is the secretary of the ACO (Association of Camera Operators), the UK based association established to promote the art of the camera operator. He also serves as Steadicam instructor on many international workshops, and currently lives in North London with his wife and two children.

“To achieve the flow and blend of the artists’ performance on *Anna Karenina* with the set’s architecture we employed

cranes, dollies and Steadicam—and not a handheld camera in sight! I often dolly mounted the Steadicam with gyros to create extra stability. This allowed me to travel long distances across the wooden stage floor without being restricted by tracks and dance floors whilst keeping the sinuous qualities of the Steadicam to compliment the dance-like movements of the actors.

Joe Wright was quite keen not to have a ‘Steadicam’ look but to hold a solid ‘heavy’ horizon that blended seamlessly with dolly and crane moves, mainly on geared and remote heads. The architecture of the set with its pillars and proscenium arch was always there to show up any flaws in technique and Steadicam level.

“One of our more challenging shots was during the pivotal dance sequence when Kitty first sees Anna and Vronsky dancing together in an overtly intimate manner. The idea was to develop a tension with a series of whip pans to and fro across the dance floor going off the looks of our protagonists as the music and dancing slowly pick up tempo, ending by whipping across the disapproving faces of the onlooking crowd. Joe wanted the whips to be in camera rather than joined by sleight of hand in the editing, although some eventually were. This posed the problem of panning around to find the artists on their own trajectory independent of the camera. The dancing couples were often on completely opposite sides of the dance floor, which involved a 180 degree pan. I decided that looking down the eyepiece and walking around a dolly would be too disorientating for me to operate.

“In conference with Gary Hutchings, our trusty key grip, we decided to go on a wireless remote Libra head mounted on a tripod and rolling spider. I operated from the balcony of the theatre which allowed me to see the geography of the artists and the camera whilst Gary could dance his partner, the tripod and Libra head, around the ballroom staying out of shot during the whips. My ‘third’ eye was provided by Seamus McGarvey, who sat alongside me studying the performance of the artists, trying to predict when they were going to throw their looks. He would nudge me and shout ‘aand pan’ at the key moment. Amazingly, after a few rocky moments, the rhythm of the music and the dancers started to determine the moment for the camera move and we all started working in sync.”



Aaron Taylor-Johnson and Keira Knightley

Peter Robertson ACO SOC

CAMERA OPERATOR OF THE YEAR Nominee ~ Television

Chris Murphy SOC for *Newsroom*

After seeing *Star Wars* at age 5, Chris Murphy knew he wanted to work in the film industry. A graduate of Penn State University with a BA in Film, he was selected for the prestigious Academy of Television Arts & Sciences internship, which placed him on *Lois & Clark: The New Adventures of Superman*. Mentor James “Baggs” Bagdonas ASC not only provided guidance but also valuable experience after the internship. Chris finished out that season as the “A” Camera 2nd assistant and continued with Baggs to his next project, *Chicago Hope*. Under Baggs’ tutelage, he would eventually transition to 1st AC and ultimately to camera operator on *Boston Legal*.

Throughout his career, Chris has been fortunate enough to operate on successful shows such as *Lincoln Heights*, *Men of a Certain Age*, *Law & Order: LA*, and *Prime Suspect*, while also day playing on hit shows such as *The West Wing*, *Eli Stone*, and *House MD*. His current project, *The Newsroom*, takes up much of his time, though weekends are strictly reserved for his wife Jennifer and two sons Aidan and Lachlan.

“Aaron Sorkin’s intelligent writing has once again set the stage for an incredible collaboration of talent on *The Newsroom*. DP Todd McMullen and Alan Poul (director and executive producer) have given me the freedom to find shots that express the scene in the best possible way, while also incorporating their own creative suggestions to the visuals. I strive to capture the energized environment showcased by our extremely talented ensemble cast—I’m constantly awed by their performances while looking through the lens! And I couldn’t imagine working with a better crew



John Gallagher Jr. and Emily Mortimer;
background: John Gallagher Jr. and Alison Pill

PHOTOS BY MELISSA MOSELEY, SMPSP © HBO

from my 1st AC, Sean O’Shea to my dolly grip, Chris Scurria. Of course, I’d like to recognize our ‘B’ camera operator, Gerry O’Malley who deserves this nomination just as much as I do.

“For the most part, this is all on the dolly, usually long lens. Handheld and dolly—they both have pros and cons. I do enjoy handheld—you don’t need to tell anybody where to go or what to do or when to drop or when to move, you just do it, you feel it out. But then on the flip side, it was nice to have the camera off my shoulder.

“There are some locations that are especially challenging to film in, one of them being our main conference room that is all glass, 3 sides of glass, so that’s a nightmare, and you usually have the whole cast in there for a huge meeting. You’re always moving. Thankfully, all that glass pivots, but usually if you pivot one way you see another camera, and if you pivot the other way you see a boom guy. That in itself is really challenging, on top of all the dialogue that you then need to memorize—4, 5, 6 page scenes with 9 people talking—coordinating the dolly moves, clearing people from the shot, setting up your route for the course you have to have, and setting up the foreground.

“This experience has been so rewarding and I’m looking forward to many more seasons on *The Newsroom*.”



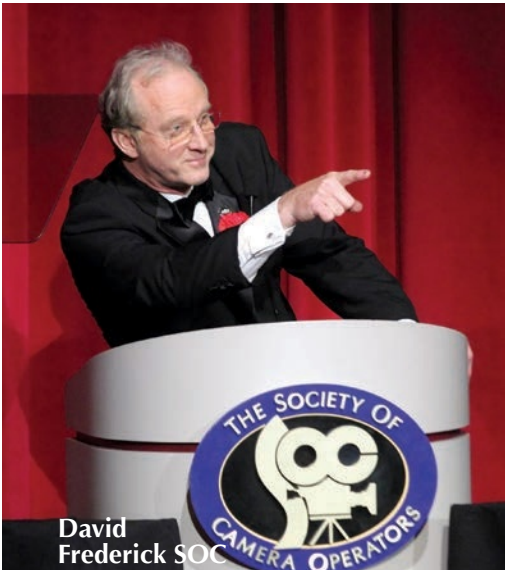
Sam Waterston



Jeff Daniels



Chris Murphy SOC



David Frederick SOC



Penny Marshall



Jake Jones



Ann Cusack



Melissa Moseley SMPSP



Peter Robertson makes a point



Kyra Sedgwick



Chris Tufty SOC



Baird Steptoe



Brad Rea



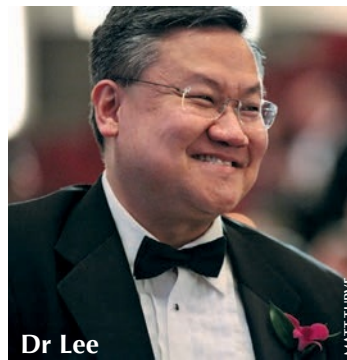
Woody Omens ASC



Colin Farrell



Bruce MacCallum SOC



Dr Lee



Seamus McGarvey BSC ASC

Another Gala Awards

by David Frederick SOC and Lynn Lanning
photos by Craig Mathews

From the opening video tribute to Women in the Industry, through Governors Award recipient Penny Marshall's heartfelt appreciation that camera operators really "get" her, and presenter Colin Farrell's comment that "an actor without a cameraman is like a tree falling in the forest with no sound—and a cameraman isn't much without an actor!" it was a magical evening.

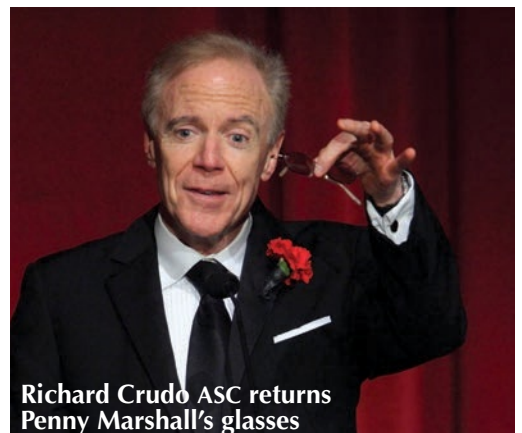
The SOC awards event is a night of appreciation, celebration and recognition of professional accomplishment. It was held on Saturday, March 9, 2013 at the Academy of Television Arts and Sciences Goldenson Theater in North Hollywood, CA.

The event has its own soul now. Our audience knows what to expect: superior fellowship within a comfortable yet elegant setting, sumptuous food, plenty of drink, an exciting lineup of inspiring speakers who pull at the heartstrings and make us all feel proud to be a part of such a magnificent undertaking. Most importantly, it is the elegant and graceful recognition of the humble workers behind the scenes that makes it a very significant evening in the lives of these honorees.

One of the favorite parts of the evening—and what is truly the capstone of our recognition—is when the lights go out and we watch the work of our honored colleagues on the big screen. This element is precisely why we are



Emily Mortimer



Richard Crudo ASC returns Penny Marshall's glasses

Woody Omens ASC, Florence Omens,
Vickie Falcone, Paul Babin SOC



Tim Wade, Frank
Kay, Dan Gold SOC



Chris and
Margot Tufty,
Andy Sydney



Greg Collier SOC
and his wife Sondra



Howard Preston, Garrett
Brown, Haskell Wexler



Larry Parker



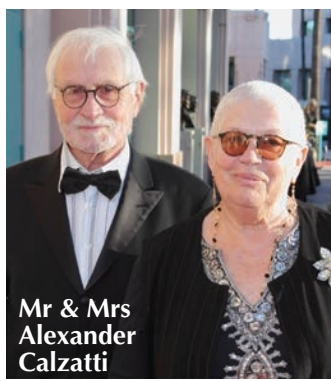
The Kirklands, the Posters, Andy Romanoff



Ron Vidor SOC
and Towie Bixby



Mr & Mrs
Alexander
Calzatti



Rebecca Olkowski, Douglas
Knapp SOC, Denny Clairmont



Nicole Fleit, Jessica Lopez, Rochelle Brown,
Brad Greenspan, Rachel Hudson, Nicki Fuchs



Russ Norstadt, Jake Jones, Thom
Davis, Brad Rea of Local 80



gathered, why we love to go to a theater to experience cinema and why we do what we do for a living. Video editor Bob Joyce and his team craft each of these with consummate artistry and skill.

Being honored by your peers is always special, and that's how Baird Steptoe (Camera Technician), Brad Rea (Mobile Camera Platform Operator), Melissa Moseley SMPSP (Still Photographer), and Bruce MacCallum SOC (Camera Operator) felt about their Lifetime Achievement Awards.

Brad held up his Cammy and said it was amazing that pushing grocery carts for his mom at Gelson's as a child could turn into this.

Presenter Emily Mortimer, one of the stars of *Newsroom*, explained that the "still photographer has to create a photo that tells the story but leaves you wanting to know more," as Melissa is so expert at doing.

SOC President Chris Tufty gave his President's Award to the woman whose work he spent seven years capturing in *The Closer*, Kyra Sedgwick, who reminded the audience that it's good for actors to be friendly with their camera operators.

Woody Omens ASC, accepting his Distinguished Service Award, pointed out that experienced people should in turn become mentors. His advice for working with newbies is, "Don't give them answers. Help them ask better questions."

The historical shot was from *Atonement*. The film's director of photography, Seamus McGarvey BSC ASC, presented the award to camera operator Peter Robertson ACO SOC, commenting that "the director asked for Peter even before the cinematographer was hired."

Tim Smith, Pro Market Rep for Canon, accepted the Technical Achievement Award for their C-300 and C-500 cameras from presenter Richard Crudo ASC. David Eubank received his Technical Achievement Award for his pCam Film + Digital Calculator from Patrick Rousseau ASC.

Camera Operator of the Year honors, presented by Stephen Lighthill ASC, went to Mitch Dubin SOC for the film *Lincoln* and to Andrew Voegeli SOC for the TV series *Breaking Bad*.

Dr Thomas Lee of the Vision Center at Children's Hospital Los Angeles acknowledged the latest SOC Vision Center film. A support check from the SOC fundraising efforts is forthcoming. He spoke of being able to diagnose in remote locations via camera, no matter how far apart the doctor and patient might be.

The SOC thanks Jessica Sitomer for emceeing the event, and the presenters already mentioned in this article, as well as these additional presenters: Ann Cusack, Tim Wade, Jake Jones, Paul Babin SOC and Alexis Ostrander-Korycinski. John Storie provided the music and Amy Melin wrangled the Cammys and plaques.

The SOC also thanks all the sponsors of all categories and all levels for the support that



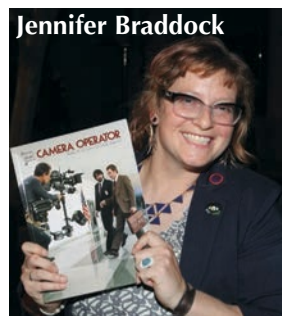
Amy Kawadler, Tim Smith, and Steven Inglima



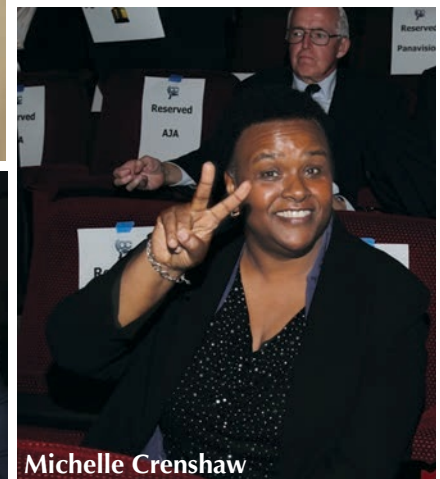
David Eubank



Congrats, Baird



Jennifer Braddock



Michelle Crenshaw



The Robertson clan



Nominee Jeff Muhlstock SOC and son



Camera Operators of the Year Mitch Dubin SOC (left) & Andrew Voegeli SOC



Michael Frediani SOC & Nominee Nicholas Davidoff SOC



Nominee Chris Murphy SOC and his wife Jen



Nominee Duane Manwiller SOC & his wife



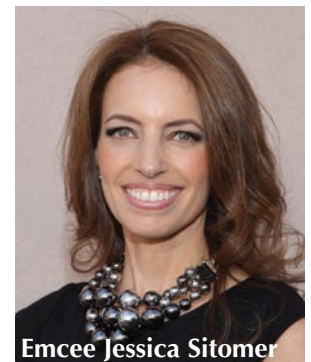
Nominee Peter Robertson ACO SOC congratulated by his wife for his Historical Award

made it possible to have this event. Whether it was money or equipment, the SOC is truly appreciative and grateful.

The Executive Producer, David Frederick SOC, extends warm thanks to all the behind the scenes people who made the event possible. Many of them were mentioned by name in his recent article in the SOC newsletter in late May.



Patrick Rousseau ASC



Emcee Jessica Sitomer

The new Cammy Award vertical banners, as well as the invitations, were designed by Elke Weiss. The tribute book filled with sponsored photographs was assembled by Lynn Lanning, with considerable input from Douglas Knapp SOC and editing by *Camera Operator* editor Jennifer Braddock. The



Dr. Mark Borchert, Dr. Thomas Lee and Alexis Ostrander-Korycinski

latter also handled the details of the silent auction of Melissa Moseley's photos to raise more money for the Vision Center at Children's Hospital Los Angeles.

Denis Moran SOC ably seconded Dave as his associate producer; Brad Greenspan handled online streaming; Bob Fisher once again filmed all the interviews. Among her many duties, Rochelle Brown oversaw gift bags for presenters and Camera Operator of the Year nominees. This is only the tip of the iceberg; SOC volunteers took care of almost everything for the event.

The 2012 DVD is available now. Check www.soc.org for details. The 2013 awards DVD will be available soon.



Nominee Lukasz Biel SOC

Stephen Lighthill ASC



Michael Scott SOC

Nominee Tony Gaudioz SOC



Kyra Sedgwick and Chris Tufty SOC



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ARRI 

A Lasting Legend

The Making and Meaning of '42'

by Matt Moriarty
A Camera / Steadicam Operator

Photos by D. Stevens and/or courtesy of Warner Bros Pictures
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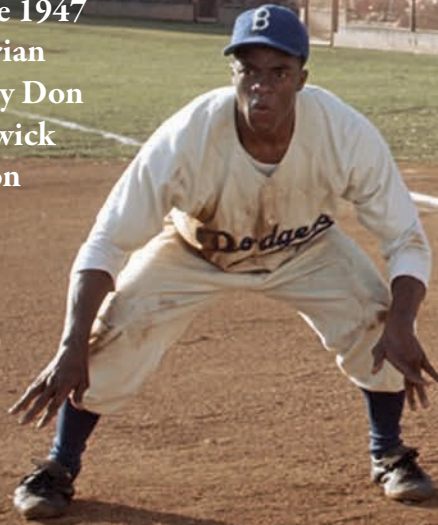
Chadwick Boseman as Jackie Robinson



It is said that baseball's proudest moment happened on April 15, 1947, the day Jackie Robinson first set foot on a Major League Baseball field and broke the color barrier in the sport forever. Jackie Robinson's number, 42, has been retired and April 15 is celebrated as "Jackie Robinson Day" at all MLB games, with every player, coach, manager, and umpire wearing 42.

'42' is the story of Jackie Robinson, the first African-American player to sign with a major league baseball team, and how team executive Branch Rickey of the Brooklyn Dodgers made it happen during the 1947 season. Written and directed by Brian Helgeland, with cinematography by Don Burgess, ASC, the film stars Chadwick Boseman as Robinson and Harrison Ford as Rickey.

"A" Camera / Steadicam Operator Matt Moriarty (*Up in the Air*, *500 Days of Summer*, *The Muppets*) writes about his memories of creating the movie, why it resonated with him and should be important to viewers, and the value of camera crews.



A Family Affair

'42' struck a chord with me that resonated through multiple generations of my own family history. My great-grandfather, George Moriarty, was a major league umpire and played many years for the Detroit Tigers. His nickname was "Never Die on Third Moriarty" and to this day, he's tied for 28th in all-time steals of home plate, not too far behind Jackie Robinson. As an umpire, "Big George" made quite a splash for his stance against religious bigotry. During the '35 World Series, a few Cubs players and their manager had been hurling religious slurs at Hank Greenberg and my great-grandpa threw them all out of the game. He and Greenberg became friends and there's a whole section on him in Greenberg's biography. In addition to that, both my father and his father have baseball connections so I was probably due for my own foray into that mythology.

Our little squad with Don Burgess is also a bit of a family, having worked together on and off for more than a decade. From Donny Steinberg (A camera 1st AC) and I (who both first worked for Don as 2nd ACs on *Cast Away*) to our DITs to Grip and Electric, to Michael Burgess shooting the 2nd Unit, there was a ton of genuine history within our crew, which I think gave Don tremendous confidence in what we could pull off. We knew each other's rhythms; we sort of

finished each other's sentences. Those relationships, coupled with the fact that we were all completely honored to be part of this particular film, made each day unusually joyous.

So '42' was a family project on multiple levels—both the camera family I've been part of with Don over the years and my actual Moriarty roots in baseball, specifically baseball as a testing ground for social advances.

The B-camera team (as well as the A & B teams on the Baseball Unit) came from Atlanta and we were lucky to have them: focus pullers Jeff Civa, Suzanne Trucks and Lee Blasingame; 2nd ACs Trey Twitty, Dwight Campbell and Saul McSween. The only non-Atlanta guy I can recall on the 2nd Unit was operator Bob Scott, who comes from NFL Films and who can follow a ball like some kind of automated NASA tracking device. Scary good, that guy.

The cast was uniformly camera-savvy across the board. Chad had a great "big picture" sense of the visual aspects of his performance and he has a very bright future. (As I write this, I'm working with him again on a football movie, *Draft Day*, and fame hasn't changed him a bit. He's still hard-working, prepared, charming, lovable. He's a gem! And he really enjoys tackling people.)

On top of that, we had four weeks with the poster-child for camera-savvy, Harrison Ford. That guy could do anyone's job



on the set and, when it's "all hands on deck," he actually will. We had a frantic turnaround one day, chasing the sun, and there was Harrison, in his Branch Rickey fat-suit, pushing a taco cart out of the next shot all by himself. He asked what lens we were going to use and I yelled "28" and I swear he landed that cart exactly five feet outside the frameline before we even had the camera up. The guy's amazing.

Epic choices

We shot with the RED Epic and as far as digital cameras go, I find it pound for pound the most capable thing out there. Resolution, frame-rate, latitude, weight, size, ability to shoot RAW without spending three grand a week on a Codex—the total "package" of that camera is hard to beat, in my opinion. But because the Epic comes out of the factory as nothing more than a little box, and needs aftermarket brackets and little add-ons to make it film-friendly, the Epic is not exactly a favorite with assistants. There's also this fear of encountering the workflow issues associated with the original RED.

This is where Donny Steinberg has worked wonders. The Epics we use on the Don Burgess pictures are so movie-friendly, with multiple



Andre Holland (center) as Wendell Smith, sportswriter



Harrison Ford as Branch Rickey

video outs and DAs and proper bracketry that they're just a dream to work with. Donny did all that legwork and probably knows more about that camera than any assistant around. As far as workflow goes, we had up to seven little Epics going at any one time and I don't think we had a single lost clip or a crash or even a stuck pixel in hundreds of hours of footage. And as far as I could tell, the editors

were perfectly happy.

I also feel like the resolution of the Epic will give those who see '42' in 4K projection their money's worth. We have huge stadium shots with tons of high-frequency detail and the 5K capture really preserves all that information on a big screen.

Photography and Philosophy

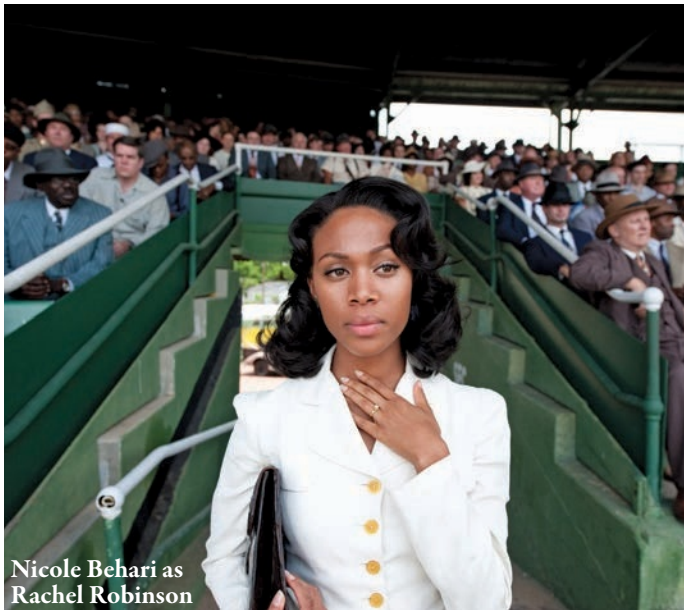
From what I can tell, Don's cinematography in '42' is getting attention. People are talking about the lighting and richness of the period look and the camera movement. But on an unconscious audience level—a "story" level—I think the most important visual

aspect of '42' will be camera placement.

Both Brian and Don are firm believers that the camera is the audience's surrogate and that the camera must be where the audience needs to be at any given moment. If Robinson is running and it's his moment in the story, the camera is right in his face, running with him. If there's an aside in the stands between Rickey and Parrott, we're with them, nice and



2nd unit at work



Nicole Behari as Rachel Robinson

close on a 28mm. But when they refer to someone on the field, we'd shoot whoever they're referring to from their position, on a 100mm or longer, because we're still in Rickey and Parrot's world and it's them seeing, or referring to, someone else. Once we put the audience "with" a character (thereby signaling to them whose scene it is), we were very careful to respect their stake in the action with the rest of our choices in that scene. No dropping back over the shoulder of some distant character simply because it looked cool.

It may seem old-fashioned and there are certainly some very successful filmmakers who don't subscribe at all to this philosophy—those who absolutely depend on long lenses with an out-of-focus shoulder or some kind of foreground element to "dirty up" every single shot and erase any sense of where the camera is. But with Don and Brian we had none of that. No set dressers running around creating piles of cool shadowy gak to track through in the foreground, because the important question was always, "Where does the audience need to be at this exact moment?" I'm interested to know how others perceive the impact of our approach on '42'. I, for one, am a total believer.

Shooting this way does, however, require discipline. It takes time and energy to put a camera in front of a guy running bases at top speed. It takes effort to light and set hundreds of extras for large stretches of real estate covered by a moving camera on a wide lens. Moving the camera, in general, takes more effort than a static shot and when time gets tight, there's always a temptation to "hose it down" on a long lens from wherever the

company happens to be planted. But we never did, including Michael Burgess who did a wonderful job shooting the Baseball Unit. He had the audience right there in the middle of the plays and I think the movie—especially the baseball action which makes up about 50% of the film—is quite remarkable for its faithfulness to the audience.

Collaboration

Don Burgess is tremendously supportive of both me, and the operator position in general. Like so many great cameramen, he considers it his job to "direct the photography." Having an operator he trusts, with whom he's had a long relationship, helps him do that.

'42' was my eighth film with Don, my third as his operator, and one of my favorite aspects of working with him is the stuff we do on the crane. It's an absolute team sport because there are five of us on headsets and when we're losing the light and there's no time to lay marks or plan out a shot, he can talk us through a very elaborate move on take one—completely on the fly, four supporting players just following the bandleader—and you get this free-flowing shot with a beginning, middle and end and we snuck it in in the last few minutes of sunlight having no real idea what it would be until the word "cut."

I had never worked with Brian Helgeland before, but the way Don works, we do actually sort of get to know the director during the prep. As he and the director work out their approach, Don pieces together his "bible," which is a scene-by-scene breakdown of his plan for the movie, and he distributes it to everyone who works under him. For '42', he added many of Brian's notes to each scene entry in the bible, so that by the time we started shooting, we had a great sense of Brian's taste and even some of his personality. ⇒



Harrison Ford with director Brian Helgeland

Jeff “Moose” Howerly (2nd Unit Key Grip), Jimmy Hendrix (Golf Rocket driver), Matthew Moriarty (camera operator), Suzanne Trucks (1st AC)



camera platform with complete freedom in every axis. On ‘42’ we did a number of classic moving masters, just as if we’d built a huge dance floor, but on the crane we can pass over the desk and push into a closeup and on the actor’s look we can throw focus to the radio and push in on it ... there’s almost no limit. And if some bit of inspiration pops into our heads, we just whisper through it on the fly, during the

Don also gives us “homework”—movies to watch, concepts to brush up on. We looked at *Chinatown*, of course, for a period approach that was both classical and raw, like ‘42’ was going to be. The big one, though, was *Cool Hand Luke*. Thematically, of course, for the tale of the iron-willed loner among a gang of hostiles. Visually, for the arrangement of layers of men in a widescreen frame. In ‘42’ we had big masters that involved a number of speaking actors and we always tried to layer them. One, it just helps fit them all into a frame, but two, it gives you depth and helps emphasize the character you want the audience keyed into. Having spent much of my career in anamorphic, the style felt like home to me. I also love the discipline—shooting wide enough to see the sets, letting actors perform with their whole bodies, trusting the audience to look where you want without jamming into a closeup. Brian was very courageous and really shot very minimal coverage, putting tremendous faith in Don’s ability to make a shot work in one.

When Brian would watch one of the masters in dailies and yell “Why would you cut outta that?” we knew we’d done our jobs.

Incidentally, Brian is the kind of director for whom the crew would walk through fire. He could have turned to any one of us and asked for something completely absurd (which he never did) and we would have busted ass to make it happen. He’s the gentlest soul I think I’ve ever encountered in the movie business but he’s also tenacious. He knows exactly what matters and he won’t budge until he’s got it.

Technique

When it comes to the technique of operating, I get asked about three things frequently: the crane, handheld and Steadicam. As far as the crane goes, I have to say Don doesn’t really think in terms of “crane shots” because we’re on the thing every day. We put our little Felix crane on some track and we can get literally every setup in a scene from one

take. It’s second nature to us because we’re doing it all day, every day and it’s an absolute joy to be part of—a classic example of an entire department working together.

We had quite a few of these “crane quintet” improves on ‘42’ because of our very tight schedule. During Harrison’s last week we had a day of 7 pages, so whatever we were going to get, we had to get it fast. The crane approach Don uses paid endless dividends. Of course, to work that way you need a world-class dolly grip and I’d like to make sure that the contribution of Sean Devine gets noticed. Running the crane for Don Burgess, the dolly grip is a storyteller and I fully imagine that Jack Robinson is smiling down with a wink and a “thank you” to both Sean and his chassis-man, Danny Eckler, for their magnificent work on ‘42’.

As far as handheld goes, I don’t really have an “approach,” other than the fact that I can’t use the digital eyepiece. Epic, Sony, Alexa ... I can’t see focus and they all give me a headache, so I use the monitor, even handheld. Digital cameras also have a slight—and occasionally a drastic—delay in the finder/monitor, and I find that without the benefit of your peripheral vision, you’re going to miss the fast action, which we certainly had on ‘42’.

I know many operators use the digital eyepiece out of habit or maybe because anything else feels wrong, but I’ve been doing Steadicam long enough that operating off a small monitor doesn’t bother me. I do, however, love the eyepiece on a film camera. There’s a certain magic to the little “movie hole” that I definitely do miss working in digital.

Regarding Steadicam, I got into it because I liked it and because I thought I could one day be good at it. By no means do I consider it essential to having a career. Some great operators with great careers wear a Steadicam, some don’t. It’s a personal choice.

The best advice I can give to prospective Steadicam operators is to become an operator first. The sled is simply a tool and with the use of any tool in movies there is really

only one objective: to tell the story the best way possible. Operating is the act of making 24 choices per second. Even the long elaborate Steadicam shot is 90% mental. Doesn't matter how fast you can run or how strong your back is, you still need to be an operator and make the highest percentage of good choices possible. Getting operator experience—especially if you can come up under a master DP who will teach you, as I was lucky enough to have with John Bailey—is essential, because only that experience will allow you make those good choices.

My only other advice to any young or aspiring camera operator, Steadicam or not, is simple: be a storyteller! Learn film storytelling. Learn about acting and performances. Learn how things cut together. Watch great movies. Take Bob McKee's story seminar. Don't talk about headroom and whip pans and cool shots. Be a storyteller.

Movie Magic

If I had to pick just one memory from '42' to talk about, it's probably the sequence we did at the train station. There's a young boy, Ed Charles (who actually grew up to become a major leaguer himself), who's hanging around the train station with his pals, hoping to catch a glimpse of his hero, Jack Robinson. The players quickly depart with Robinson tossing the kid a baseball as the train pulls away. Little Ed Charles runs after the train and as it disappears into the distance, he puts his ear to the track, listening to his hero rumble away, and yells to his buddies: "I can still hear him!"

I get misty even describing the scene because it so powerfully sums up the importance of heroes, especially to young black men of the day who had an entire society telling them

they'd never amount to anything. But I mostly remember the scene for the amount of "free magic" we got shooting it—little miracles that are completely unplanned and only come as gifts from the Movie God.

We'd been rained out during a prior attempt at the sequence and when we came back a week later, the sun had popped out and was skunking us in two directions—smack in the frame pointed east, camera shadow pointed west. Steve Smith (the key grip) had ordered up a little pump trolley to use as a dolly on an adjoining train track and I kind of looked at it, then looked at Don who was also kind of looking at it and, almost in unison, we said, "While we're waiting for the sun, let's jump on that thing!" I grabbed the Steadicam and Sean (Devine, "A" dolly grip) strapped me down and a few minutes later we got one of the most iconic shots in the whole movie—a wide tracking shot of Ed Charles racing alongside the train, leaving his buddies in the dust, that gradually tightens into a full-figure (because Movie God just happened to lay the train track that way) as he presses his ear into the rail. The shot plays in the movie almost in its entirety and literally wouldn't exist if the sun had cooperated that morning.

Usually on a movie you get free magic once or twice a week. On '42' we got it probably once or twice a day. My friend Donny Steinberg and I have talked about it at length and we both agree that '42' was, hands-down, the most professionally satisfying experience we've ever had. The people, the material, the quality of work we managed to do with very limited time and money, the collective sense of duty we all had in telling that story as well as we possibly could—truly a once-in-a-lifetime gig. ⇒



Don Coufal (boom), Eric Heffron (AD), director Brian Helgeland (facing away on cart), Sean Devine (driving), Matthew Moriarty with Steadicam, Chadwick Boseman as Jackie Robinson, behind the grip with bounce card

We're Not Just Making a Movie Anymore

The racial aspects of the film were a great lesson in the power of cinema because you read the stuff on the page—and I'm talking for example about the scene where Phillies Manager Ben Chapman taunts Robinson at the plate with all manner of racial slurs—you read it on the page and you're thinking, "Wow, this is ugly."

But then you actually go to film it, and you're framing up a shot with Chad Boseman in the foreground—a saint of a guy you've already spent weeks with and whom you've come to adore—with some white dude over his shoulder in the background literally yelling the "n-word" in front of thousands of people in broad daylight and nobody, not a single soul, is doing anything to stop it, and the words keep coming and Chad has to stand there and take it and you're getting this nauseous feeling and you realize that every last bit of this actually happened to a real human being who somehow got through it to become a hero for all humanity and you're thinking: "My God ... what we're doing here is so f***ing important." The words Brian had written on the page had been amplified a thousand-fold and I think I speak for everyone on the field when we shot that scene—from Brian Helgeland down to the background lady next to the blowup dummy in the upper deck—that there was this overwhelming sense of us being there to help bear witness. It was like a thousand people in church. Everyone quiet, focused, reverential.

Huge props of course to Alan Tudyk, who's a wonderful guy who probably bought himself a decade of psychotherapy playing Chapman, but who delivered such an amazing performance because he bore witness. He told the awful truth.



Phillies Manager Ben Chapman hurls racial epithets at Robinson during a game.

Memories

I'd have to say the most challenging part of '42' for me was the fear of not doing justice to it. Every shot was precious to me. In fact, Eric Heffron (1st AD) nicknamed me "Precious" on the film and he was probably spot-on. What can I say? We shot it in a very naked way. It's clean. It's smooth. There's nothing to hide behind. Long takes done in a continuous camera move with no cutaways. No "aww, that rough bit there ... we planned that." One tiny little thing you do wrong will stick out like a sore thumb so you just kill yourself to maintain the standards of whatever you saw in dailies yesterday and there's a real fear that maybe today's the day you'll screw the pooch—on a movie about one of the most important American figures of the 20th Century. I mean, we all wanted to do right by the memory of Jack Robinson.

Of course, seeing it there are probably 100 things I'd like to do over, choices I would have made differently, "oh no, they used that take??" etc. I think we all probably beat ourselves up to a certain degree watching our own work and, at least for me, you never do quite as well as you hoped you would. Nobody bats 1000 in a two-hour movie with 750 setups. But you do hold onto the hope of one day doing it and that's what keeps every shot precious, at least for me. And beyond all the

technical stuff, it's the story that matters and if you've done well by that story, everything else is ego.

Sure, there were challenges. We had heat and rain and a tight schedule and moving hundreds of blowup dummies from one part of the stadium to the other and one night I woke up with my calf cramped up so bad it went in front of my shin. But honestly, I hardly remember that stuff.

'42' is and always will be one big wonderful memory.



Lucas Black as Pee Wee Reese and Chadwick Boseman as Jackie Robinson.



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This Is the End: An apocalyptic comedy

by Grayson Austin SOC

Photos by Suzanne Hanover
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Grayson Austin filming a scene.





Imagine if you will ... James Franco decides to throw a massive housewarming party and invites his friends and a host of celebrities. Seth Rogen, Jay Baruchel, Michael Cera, Rhianna, Aziz Ansari, Mindy Kaling, Danny McBride, Craig Robinson and Jonah Hill are just a few of the guests. Now imagine, in the midst of celebration and debauchery, that a series of strange and catastrophic events devastates Los Angeles; it seems as if the end of the world has come and the only way to survive is to party like there's no tomorrow.

The good news is you don't have to use your imagination too much, thanks to the creative minds of Seth Rogen and Evan Goldberg, who have brought to the big screen such comedies as *Superbad* and *Pineapple Express*. They have teamed up once again to write and direct the apocalyptic comedy *This Is the End*. As the world is falling apart around them, Seth, Jay, James, Danny, Jonah and Craig Robinson (all playing themselves) face dwindling supplies and cabin fever, and are soon forced to confront the destruction going on around them. "B" Camera/Steadicam Operator Grayson Austin SOC (*Monster*, *Everybody Hates Chris*, *Memphis Beat*, *The Butler*) reflects on his experience with this young group of all-stars.



James Franco, Jonah Hill, Craig Robinson, Seth Rogen, Jay Baruchel and Danny McBride

Hell or Highwater

I've never seen the inside of James Franco's house, but we re-created it on set. The premise is that Jay Baruchel has come for a weekend to visit his friend Seth Rogen (which is basically real life because they're good friends). While he's visiting, Seth tells him that James Franco is having a housewarming party for this new house that he's had built. Jay is a little reluctant to do so, but he goes along to it. In the process of this housewarming party, the apocalypse happens. At first

everyone assumes it's just another Los Angeles earthquake, and James Franco assures everybody that his house has been built to maximum specs and they are safe. Then literally all hell breaks loose, complete with (spoiler) dozens and dozens of celebrities dying within a few minutes of the movie starting, at which point it becomes a comedic survival movie.

This Is the End is a pretty heavy visual effects show, but at the same time it's a comedy with so many actors in it. There was a lot of free-form improv. Being a camera operator,

especially when you're right in the middle of an improv scene with the actors—I mean, you really are part of the scene, another player in the scene. We ended up doing a lot of handheld work, just to let the actors go where they wanted to go with the scene, and play off some of the jokes. It was really fun to watch and to be there in the middle of everything.

Improv combined with handheld and then at times a lot of visual effects work was kind of a tough thing to deal with. Our visual effects guys from Sony were extremely helpful; they had a lot of the scenes pre-visualized so well. We basically already knew where we needed to be at particular times for the shot, so at least we had a sort of framework of what we needed to get, and that made it a lot easier to let the actors sort of play, knowing the cameras needed to be here, here, and here at particular times in a scene for a visual effects element. Then we had a lot of physical effects stuff as well like mechanical creature effects, smoke, fire, and all the other things that make it more difficult to deal with. But in the end, it wasn't as brutal as it could have been.

Working Environment

This easily could have been a mess, with all these comedic actors all over the place—but it wasn't at all. Seth was directing as well as acting in the movie, and both he and his directing partner, Evan Goldberg, were really great about

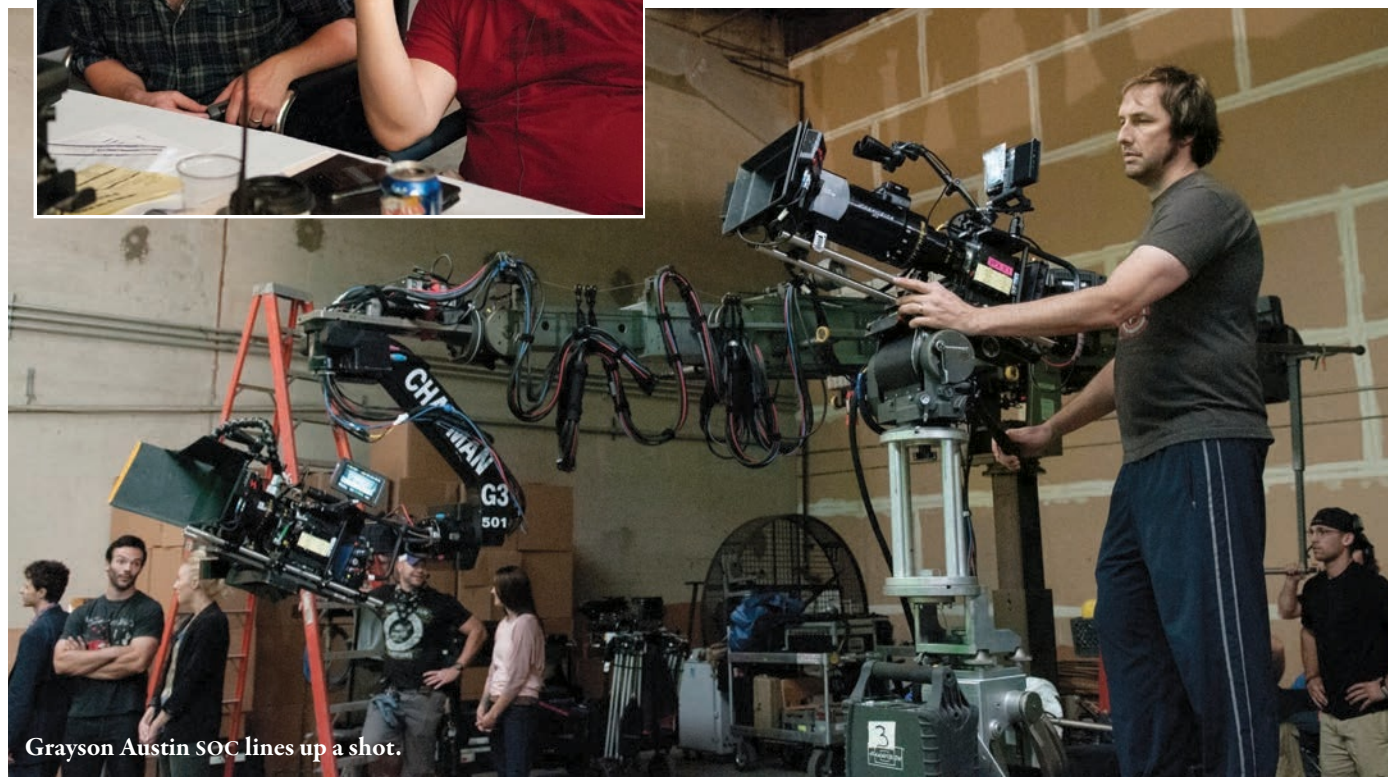


Co-Directors Seth Rogen, left, and Evan Goldberg

giving us feedback and information about what needed to be happening at any given moment. It was so much fun, and we never felt like we were lost in a scene. I was fortunate to have as “A” camera operator, Michael Applebaum, whom I've worked with for years in New Orleans, and he's one of my best friends. It's always great to have somebody along with you that you know really well. We don't get in each other's way. Nobody was fighting for a good angle—we were both helping each other get the best shot. We did so much handheld on this movie, that can really start to grate on your whole attitude; just holding a camera for long periods of time can really tend to make you a bit grumpy. I think we did pretty well at getting what we both needed to get and helping each other find the good spot, and our DP, Brandon Trost was really great about that too.

Brandon is so low-key and so sweet about everything. He was really open to letting us do what we do, not micro-managerial. He still had a really solid plan for where he wanted the shots to be and how things should proceed, though. I know people say all the time, “He was so great to work with!” but he really was! He's just a super nice person, even under pressure. I swear I never heard him raise his voice or anything, so he's just another one of those added-in factors that made the whole process really pleasant.

Our camera assistants were all fantastic. My focus puller, Joe Waistell, on the “B” camera was great, as well as the “A” camera 1st, Markus Mentzer. Because of the way the scenes were played, you don't know exactly where everyone's going. The guys did a super job pulling focus on funny moving targets. That's a really liberating kind of thing, when you don't have to worry about your focus puller—it lets me be free to operate and go where I need to go, not worrying about them. ⇒



Grayson Austin SOC lines up a shot.

When we did have dolly work, we had good grip support as well. To me it's really important, because every dolly grip I work with, I let them know that to me they're a camera operator, and I treat them as such. They need to understand framing, and where the camera should be at any given time, and how to anticipate, so to me, they're not just a person pushing a heavy piece of equipment, they're an operator just like I am. I think a lot of them don't get treated that way, and

sometimes things start out great, but by the end everybody's at everybody's throats. It wasn't like that. We had a good time. I think—and I've always felt this way—that the attitude on set as you proceed translates and infuses into the project. So, especially if you're shooting a comedy, it wouldn't help for everyone to be grumpy and angry and frustrated. I think that works its way into the project, especially if you have a director who's also acting in the project. Fortunately, that was never a problem here!



Craig Robinson, Seth Rogen and Jay Baruchel

so when they do, it really makes them more a part of the camera team. It's good to include everybody in what's going on, so that they know they're just as important a part of it as I am, maybe more so in certain circumstances. A really good dolly grip is handling the bulk of some shots. I'm just sort of tweaking things a little bit as we go. The dolly grip has the hard part, comparatively. I had a great dolly grip, Marvin Haven, who I've worked with a lot over the years. I don't have to say much of anything, especially during a shot—maybe a hand motion or a finger twitch at the appropriate moment, something like that—and he understands my strange sign language of what I want—I don't know how, because I'm sure it looks ridiculous—but those are important things to me.

Everyone was so nice and so cooperative. Seth Rogen was great to be around, and just really open to suggestions, and good-natured about everything. I'm sort of a comic geek, and so were he and Evan, so we would have conversations about comic books and whatnot. It was a really nice group of people to be around. Whether you were shooting a movie or not, it was like a group of people you would want to hang out with, and that sort of kept going throughout the whole shoot. You know,

Who gets the last laugh?

We laughed a lot—which was probably the worst part! Michael and I would be shooting a scene in which we didn't know where the actors were going to go dialogue-wise. Unfortunately, there were quite a few times where somebody would crack out a great line and *EVERYONE* would start laughing. Takes were busted just because of that. And it wasn't just me and Michael. The actors were busting each other up to the point where they couldn't continue the scene. It's a double-edged sword. You get great improv, but at the same time, if you're not expecting something really ridiculous to come out of somebody's mouth, then you could get hit by a great joke, and bust. We had to deal with that a bit, but it was worth it, even if we had to redo a few things here and there, just to be around those guys and watch them have fun with the scene.

They started trying to bust each other up. If you can make Danny McBride laugh, you've done something right. The guys were really putting on the pressure to make each other laugh. And in the end, the scenes are so good. I honestly think their biggest trouble will be choosing which takes to edit because there's so much great stuff in it. It's a really ridiculous kind of movie, but it's so much fun. I can't say enough about how much fun we had, which is really a rarity. That, I am really thankful for.



Grayson Austin SOC with an Easy Rig.



James Franco, Danny McBride, Craig Robinson, Jay Baruchel and Seth Rogen

Regardless of how funny the material was, it's fatiguing for the camera operators. We would have to find other avenues to get through long scenes, which we ended up doing by sort of a mixed process. There's a lot of traditional handheld, but we managed fake handheld whenever there was space. We would bring in the dollies, and even if it was just putting a sandbag on top of the camera mount on the dolly and adding life to the camera for extra-long scenes where the camera wasn't really moving, we would do that. Or whenever possible, we would use Easy Rigs, some sort of handheld assisted body mount—we implemented that kind of stuff a lot too. It's kind of a mixed bag of operating styles on the movie—literally a little bit of everything—Hydrascope, telescoping crane stuff with remote heads that Michael operated beautifully, some traditional dolly work, a healthy amount of Steadicam, traditional handheld, and quasi-handheld as well.

That's another one of those aspects of operating—you have to be ready to jump from one mode to another quickly, and be able to accomplish a shot. If it's not quite jibing in one mode, you've got to be able to get off that and jump to something else. Again, I have to give credit to the assistants for quickly going from one mode to the other, getting cameras stripped down and rebuilt time and time again for us. They did fantastic work at keeping everything going, and not wanting to kill us when we decided to change modes.

Survival Tools

We shot with Red Epics. Selfishly, I like them because they're small and they're lighter weight. They were Panavized

Epics with anamorphic lenses which tend to be bigger and heavier, so anywhere you can shave off a little weight is great with me. We had really good support from Panavision with our equipment. I tend to forget about stuff like that, because the assistants have to deal with all the headaches. But Panavision New Orleans is right there. They're very close to where we were, so honestly, I never remember a time where we had an issue.

We had some crane work within the stage, because there's a scene where a large number of celebrities who are at James Franco's house for a housewarming party all die within a few minutes. In this scene all of these people are sort of stepping over one another to save themselves. We had a couple of walls built, and there's a gigantic hole that opens up in the ground in front of Franco's house and a lot of people fall into it. But some of them are sort of hanging from the edges—they've fallen in, but they've managed to grab hold, so there's some great scenes, some really funny scenes between several actors who are hanging on for dear life on this wall. It's a horrific situation combined with ridiculous comedic dialogue. We used Hydrascope telescoping cranes from Chapman and we did a lot of the work like that, because we could get the camera where we wanted it to be, and the actors only had to spend a minimum amount of time in climbing harnesses. We had great stunt crew for all the stuff that the actors couldn't do, but when the actors had to be involved, they were fantastic. Production kept everybody safe, and we had the cranes available to us, not necessarily to do these big giant overcomplicated moves, but really just to put the camera

where we needed it to be, and do it quickly so that the actors didn't have to spend a whole lot of time in tight uncomfortable climbing harness, which I'm sure they appreciated. It's important that everyone remember that, even though everyone's having a lot of fun, the safety aspects have to still be there all of the time. Everybody has to be aware of what's going on and what we're about to do, and I think we did that really well.

Getting to know you

The actors were so good with us, so cooperative, so genuine as people. It was just a group of guys getting this thing done. I spent a lot of time when we weren't shooting having some great conversations with the guys. I became really good film friends with Jay Baruchel, who is just a lovely person. When you really develop a friendship, you tend to personalize things more. You understand them more. As an operator, you have to do this anyway. You have to observe their mannerisms and the way that people move. All of those things help you in the end, because they give you a great sense of how this person reacts to things, when they're going to give you that moment of reaction within a scene that you want to get. Again, from that standpoint of being an operator, it's like, the more you understand a person, not just the superficial, the more you have a closeness with them, the better off you are, being in the right place at the right time to capture

something that might not happen again, especially when there's so much improv going on. A lot of those lines are only going to happen once. We can repeat the shot, but it's not exactly the same the second time around.

Seth and Evan were really open to keeping Michael and me in the loop as to how the footage was looking, and would constantly drag us into the edit room. The editor was right there on stage with us, so, in between setups, we would all walk into the edit bay and look at the previous shots or the previous scenes, how this scene was going to tie into the next one, and what kind of transitions we might need. It seems like a no-brainer, but it doesn't actually happen very often. It's amazing how helpful that is, just to be able to see where we've been, refresh ourselves about what we shot and know what we need to get now. I have to give them real kudos for including us so heavily in all of those aspects. It just proves to me that they really wanted this to be special.

At least three or four times in the course of shooting, they would plan a lunch screening where they would bring a big screen monitor in and play some scenes or some clips that had been roughed in for all the crew to see. We'd come away from having seen bits and pieces and having a laugh and really wanting to jump back into it. I think that translates! I think that all infuses itself back into the process.

I can honestly say that this was the most fun I have ever had during a world ending apocalypse.



Michael Applebaum and Grayson Austin SOC in position for a shot.



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THE LONE RANGER RIDES AGAIN

by Martin Schaer SOC
and David Luckenbach SOC



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Tonto (Johnny Depp) and the Lone Ranger (Armie Hammer)



A fiery horse with the speed of light, a cloud of dust and a hearty “Hi Yo Silver!” With his faithful Indian companion Tonto, the daring and resourceful masked rider of the plains led the fight for law and order in the early West. Return with us now to those thrilling days of yesteryear. The Lone Ranger rides again!

But this is not the radio or TV show. It’s a movie with Johnny Depp as Tonto and Armie Hammer as the title hero, and directed by Gore Verbinski. Bojan Bazelli was the cinematographer.

Camera operators Martin Schaer SOC (the *Pirates* movies, *Unstoppable*, *Rum Diary*, *Rango*, LA parts of *Girl With the Dragon Tattoo*, *Broken City*) and David Luckenbach SOC (the *Pirates* movies, *Walk the Line*, *3:10 to Yuma*, *Girl Interrupted*, *The X-Files*) compare notes about this modern take on the timeless tale.



Visual approach

Martin: Gore and Bojan set the style of *Lone Ranger*. I was involved in 5 weeks of preproduction; Gore and I talked a year ahead. I’ve done 5 movies with him already as well as other projects, and we became personal friends. We met on *The Mexican*. He and I are both big Sergio Leone/Sam Peckinpah fans. After *Rango*, which can be considered an animated rehearsal, he wanted to do a live action Western. *Lone Ranger* was to become the epic spectacle. This was his baby. A very familiar studio attached, including Johnny Depp, so he knew from the beginning he had to incorporate some exciting elements. As the director, he wanted to take it passionately to another level.

Gore talked to us about the style. He wanted to incorporate spaghetti Westerns, Sam Peckinpah, Sergio Leone, classic Westerns like those of John Ford; composition in anamorphic widescreen with open desert, powerful skies, the American Southwest; locations that would provide strong imagery. At the same time, it also needed to be dirty, dusty, rough, steamy and sweaty. Camerawise, it would have to incorporate strong foregrounds and group shots precisely composed to camera—whether it was a master, a close-up, or augmented in conjunction with lighting or set dressing, after all, the story is what matters most.

Dave: Gore really wanted to make an epic Western with a modernized classic look. I say “modernized” because with all the filmmaking tools available today compared with what was available at the height of the Western film era, you can construct a much more visual story now. You can have a lot more fun telling your story today than you could with the

technological restrictions of that era. So the film was shot widescreen, anamorphic 2.35. Gore and Martin paid a lot of attention to blocking the scenes for the aspect ratio, making sure they used the full width of the screen. Staging actors in foreground, mid ground and deep background, using wide lenses both for vistas and for close ups, all helped keep us on track toward a classic Western look.

Martin: The Technocrane and Libra combo was our best tool and friend. We used it extensively around trains, in trains, on trains and on the track. It was the only way we could move from the side to the top of locomotives and cars. It was important to work out how to move the Techno, how to track next to the train, how to move parallel. We also used the Russian arm (EDGE) along the train. In the old days it would have been an insert car, but now you have all these gyro stabilized toys on the arms, which then have their own specialized operators, hence an amazing flexibility and creativity.

Shooting train cars and locomotives and their interiors needed a lot of attention to detail. I happen to have a passion for it. As an operator, I could go to Gore and make him aware of aging on windows, or paint, dust, smoke, etc. As a director, when you have a film of this scale, when there is an army of actors, so many horses and stunts, so much train and dialogue, so many budget issues—things can go by the wayside. That’s where I think an operator can and should come in, as a reliable extra pair of eyes. Over our years together, Gore knows that if I see something, I’ll say something, and he is very appreciative. Since we are both film buffs, we know how it’s supposed to look, what looks real, what looks fake, on the big screen.

Getting technical

Martin: The choice and mix of cameras was a bit unconventional. We used Panavision film anamorphic on all day exteriors. On interiors or night exteriors, we used Alexa anamorphic. With film, we shot low ASA and pulled it one stop, so we got very low grain. Gore and Bojan liked the way it held the highlights.

But for nights and interiors—in these marginal situations, when you need to reach a bit, with Alexa you just have such a dynamic range. Even for day interiors, like a prison car, slats of light, thin rays and flares of light coming through, enhanced with fine dust, shooting digital gave you flexibility and detail. The walls retained very rich blacks.

We shot about 75% film and 25% Alexa. It was a smart choice to mix analog and digital. It was easier to work under adverse conditions with film, more familiar and compact cameras. I appreciated the much better image quality on remote heads shooting with Alexa, in contrast to the “ordinary video tap.”

It was an extremely physical movie. We were out there with the elements, but we all know how to handle film—that’s how we grew up. We know how to protect film stock so it doesn’t get hot, how to protect the cameras so they don’t get dust. Plus we had Panavision techs who, every night when we went to sleep, came in and cleaned all camera bodies and lenses.

Dave: Arri had just incorporated a full size sensor into the Alexa which made it possible to use anamorphic lenses on the camera. The Alexa is a great digital camera but I felt that its new optical eyepiece was really not ready. It seemed to me it was at least a stop darker, which could be an issue when operating a night scene. I had to use a monitor most of the time at night, which I don’t like. I know that seems strange coming from a Steadicam operator, but for me there is a

disconnect regarding my physical relationship with the camera when I operate off a monitor. When I look through the eyepiece I become part of the scene being filmed; when using a monitor I am just observing it. Also when you’re on “B” camera you’re usually on longer lenses. Operating from a monitor with longer lenses is a recipe for disaster.

When Alexa was on the Steadicam, I wasn’t pleased with how heavy the rig became. Since we were shooting anamorphic, there was a large amount of digital information coming off the sensor. It could not be recorded on cards in the camera, so an external mounted Codex recorder was used. This added about 4 pounds of weight to the rig, and it became somewhat of a beast to lug around. We also hard-wired video from the cameras to the video assist station while filming. Cabling from the Steadicam usually doesn’t bother me unless it becomes tricky to wrangle, but it’s one more thing to deal with in the digital age.

Martin: With digital, there were more cables, an umbilical cord, battery, and so on. Luckily, Trevor Loomis, my 1st AC, a very fast and meticulous guy, has that system down and runs a tight ship. It was as smooth as it possibly could be. Still, today’s digital technology has to adapt and simplify. Eventually cables should be eliminated, better eyepieces designed, onboard batteries made lighter, etc.

Dave: Trevor takes immense pride in his work both as a focus puller and manager of the camera equipment and crew. On a film of this magnitude, with its daily location moves down washboarded dusty pothole-riddled dirt roads, with erratic weather patterns resulting in dust storms that shut us down at times, and of course the ever present pressure on film sets today to move quickly, he and the other camera crew members always managed to have everything ready to go, when and where it was needed. ⇒





Filming one of the trains built for the movie.

The camera crews also included 1st AC James Goldman, 2nd AC Walrus Howard, 1st AC Kim Guthrie, 1st AC Tony Nagy, 2nd AC Dennis Geraghty, Loader Nathan Hiatt, Camera Tech Daryl Hambleton and of course our much loved good spirited still photographer Peter Mountain. We also had Libra techs Chris Bangma and Jason Hibarger, Technocrane techs David Haeussler and David Hammer, and the grip crew headed by Key Grip Mike Popovich.

Getting the Shot

Dave: No matter which camera you're on, it's of the utmost importance to know the story, to know what elements are important to the scene. That way you can look for those things and compose for them. An extra cutaway, close up or insert is very helpful to an editor. At times "B" camera became its own little guerrilla unit, silently stalking the set looking for "targets of opportunity." I have worked on all the *Pirate* movies that Gore directed, so with that history he trusts me to find a shot while he concentrates on the "A" camera setup.

His acronym for "B" camera is A-B-S—"Always Be Shooting"—so he would just smile at me in passing and say "A-B-S." He also likes the quote, "It's better to beg for forgiveness than ask for permission," which means he wants you to be constantly working at coming up with a shot even if it results in failure.

For example, during an "A" camera setup I found an additional angle on our actress drinking water out of a well at magic hour. As usual we didn't have much time, so we scrambled to get the camera in place. But the only way I could get the shot was with the Panavision 11-1 zoom lens, set around 180mm. In the end Gore didn't like it, not because it was a bad shot but because the focal length and *f*-stop rendered the background too out of focus for the look he wanted.

Martin: There were some difficult conceptual shots. There was an opening shot which had to be mapped and pre-vised because it was precisely choreographed—San Francisco at the 1870 Fair. We had to move the Techno and lights from one guy to another, turn 180°, find certain actions at precise moments, with the big city in the background. It's the kind of shot that takes the entire night to make it work—and you do 30 takes.

We also used cable cam shots and spidercam. All these rigs had to be carefully planned. When they were technically complicated, we usually planned them out a day or two ahead so the grips and camera crew could work out the kinks. The first half of the movie was technically conceptualized in preproduction. After that we had to fly by shot-specific meetings.

Gore personally lensed most storyboards with a viewfinder a year ahead: stunt sequences or what led into them, tricky effects and CG rich sequences,



Johnny Depp as Tonto

interior/exterior train if they involved a lot of visual effects, or where he wanted CG towns, mountains or railroad tracks added. A lot of sequences on trains were boarded, so all the departments could visualize their needs and be prepared.

Locomotion...

Martin: Special Effects built two locomotives from scratch. We had our own train cars built, using the chassis of existing freight cars and locomotives. We laid our own tracks as well. We had a setup out in the desert of something like 6 miles, double circles and switcher tracks, so we could turn trains around for control over lighting directions. The story called for a chase sequence of the train with horses running next to it. This had to be carefully prepped. You can't have cactus and rocks and horses running and open doors, doing

train to horse transfers. It's tricky to begin with to shoot these sequences in Westerns. Traditionally in the past, Westerns—especially horse-stunt intensive Westerns—were always very accident-prone. Production and the Stunt Department had to make sure it was reasonably safe and efficient.

The Art Department had their work cut out for them on this movie. They built the station and town twice—in different states—for the reverses, and often needed matching sets in the studio. They had to do the interiors of the train cars. Fortunately Gore is a good multitasking director, so right from the beginning he would give them notes like, “When you lay down this track, the ties have to be oiled or steamed or aged. This wagon has to be a little rusty and battered,” things like that.

Since we built our own railroad, we didn't have physical limitations with bridges and poles, and when we set poles or structures, we made sure that they were 8 feet away from the track, or movable. That allowed us to offset steel decks, put the Techno and crew on, and go to the side, inside, top or underneath. Of course all of that required shot-specific efficient reconfiguration. Because the cars were designed for us, Key Grip Mike Popovich equipped the sides with steel square tubing, so he could simply slide in support beams for the decks. You want “A” camera here? Come back in a half hour, and we could have three cameras there. We could do some big setups and make changes in a relatively short amount of time. Again, that was because we designed our train, which was a blessing.



Director Gore Verbinski, “A” Camera Operator Martin Schaer SOC and Director of Photography Bojan Bozelli

The Special Effects guys equipped the tender of each locomotive with a massive diesel motor to directly drive and pull the train. A fake steam boiler was added to give the look of a steaming Iron Beast. The diesel hydraulic thing never worked the way we wanted it to. Only the slow sequences could be done with the diesel motors installed. We eventually had to bring in a regular full-scale diesel G locomotive to push and pull the train for the fast stuff. Since we had our own tracks an hour outside Albuquerque, this contemporary locomotive had to be brought in by road on a monstrous 56-wheel flatbed trailer, a spectacle by itself! ⇒



“A” camera operator Martin Schaer SOC

...and Camera Motion

Dave: We shot on real trains, train cars mounted on semi trailers being driven down scenic highways in Moab UT, Creede CO and Angel Fire NM, and train cars against blue screen in the parking lot at Santa Anita Race Track in Arcadia CA.

The Steadicam was often the only way to move the camera in the limited space inside the trains. On the moving trains the challenge was trying to execute a fluid shot with the G forces produced from traveling down a winding mountain road at 25 or 30 mph. We didn't use special rigging. I was blessed to have "A" Dolly grip Jason Talbert spotting me. He used brute force and his athleticism to keep me on the right path and literally on my feet. He was also the point man when it came to using the Technocrane on the film. The crane and grip crews did an absolutely amazing job under extreme conditions. I have never seen a grip crew work so hard for so many consecutive days.

We did some handheld on the show, but not a lot. Usually it was dictated by space limitations, getting the camera into a position to shoot from which you could not do any other way. It could be as simple as sitting on an apple box with a rolled up furniture pad "burrito" to rest your elbows on. People think of handheld as walking with the camera on your shoulder, but most of the handheld we did was stationary, just panning and tilting a little bit in the scene, and if you lock yourself in right it really doesn't look handheld at all.

Martin: We preferred to use handheld only in rough action scenes, to mess things up, chaos etc. In anamorphic, when the track is moving and the whole horizon shakes, handheld very seldom works. If you exclude the horizon, say inside the locomotive, nobody notices. But if you see the horizon and it wobbles, you tend to lose the sensation of being on rails.

If you do handheld, the camera has to level itself off again. You try to brace your body and arms to limit the movement of the camera. That's why with all the tools we used, a lot of the times we went with the Libra, to eliminate the high frequency jitter.

Dave: I think, when this film has all been cut together, nobody will notice a handheld shot. I used to hold the matte box when operating handheld, but I noticed that sometimes a rigidness would come through on my shots. I've been using handles more and more—it takes that rigidness away, makes things a little smoother, and adds a cushion between you and the lens. There are still times when you're tilting straight down or up or having to be very aggressive with the camera that nothing beats grabbing the matte box and hanging on.

Location location location

Martin: The most challenging part for Dave, for me, and for many others is pacing yourself over a period of seven months. It's a long time to work 12 to 14 hour days without a real break. We worked five and six day weeks. We had Fourth of July off, but that was it.

We started in February last year, when it was still snowing in Albuquerque, and plowed through cold snaps, wind and snowstorms, into the summer fire season in most of the hottest places in the American West. We shot in New Mexico, Utah, Arizona, southern



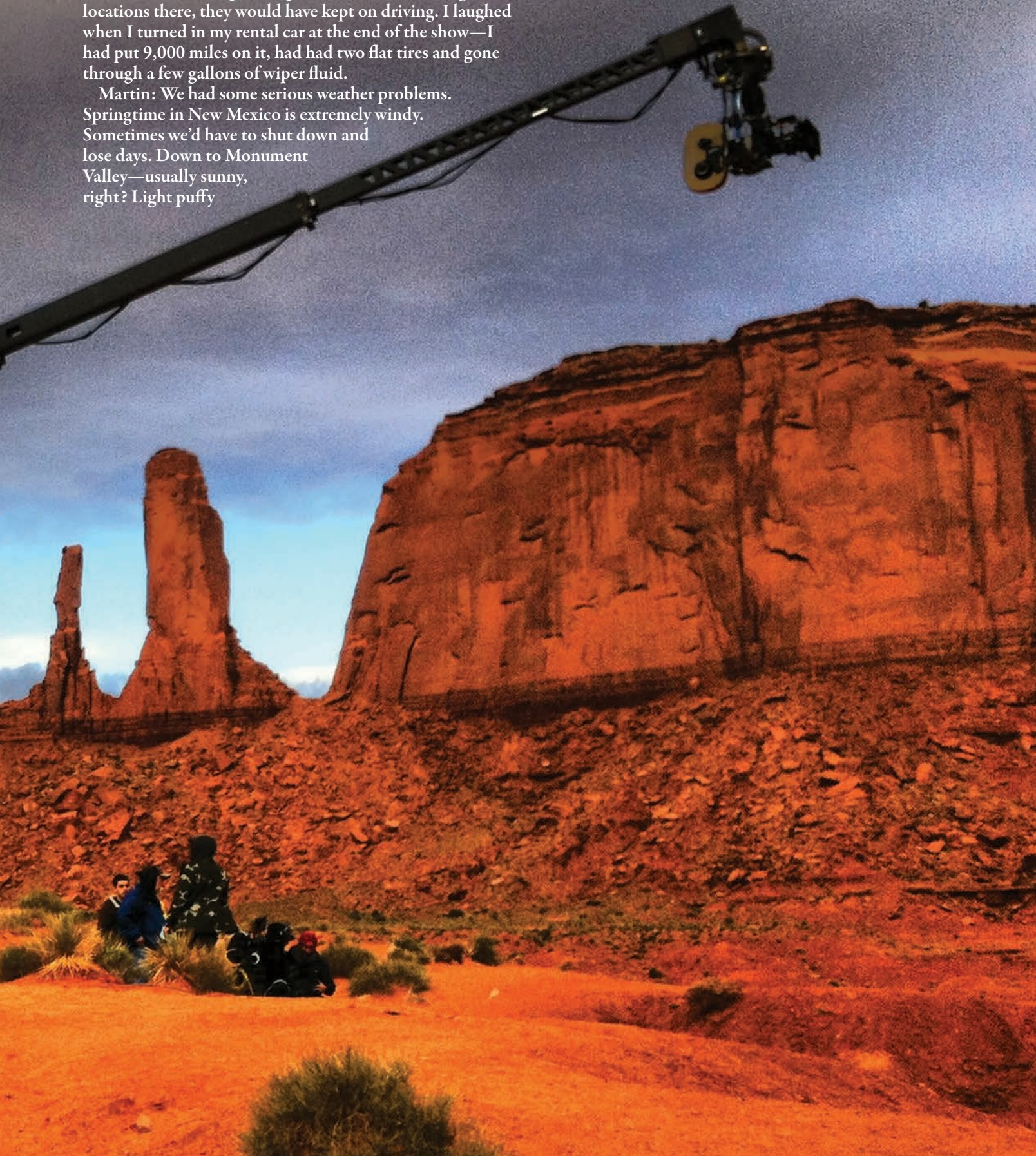
Technocrane at Ford's Point, Monument Valley. Photo courtesy Martin Schaer SOC.

Colorado—the elements were a challenge.

Dave: When I think about those months on location, what always comes to mind is trying to work through the many dust storms we experienced while shooting in Albuquerque. We joked on the crew that if one of these dust storms had kicked up when production was scouting locations there, they would have kept on driving. I laughed when I turned in my rental car at the end of the show—I had put 9,000 miles on it, had had two flat tires and gone through a few gallons of wiper fluid.

Martin: We had some serious weather problems. Springtime in New Mexico is extremely windy. Sometimes we'd have to shut down and lose days. Down to Monument Valley—usually sunny, right? Light puffy

clouds? No. Rain. And dark clouds. We're out there with helicopters, 200 horses, Indians, cowboys, actors, 450 crew, 500 feet of dolly track, two Technocranes—a massive circus! When we moved to Canyon de Chelly, we finally got a break. ⇒



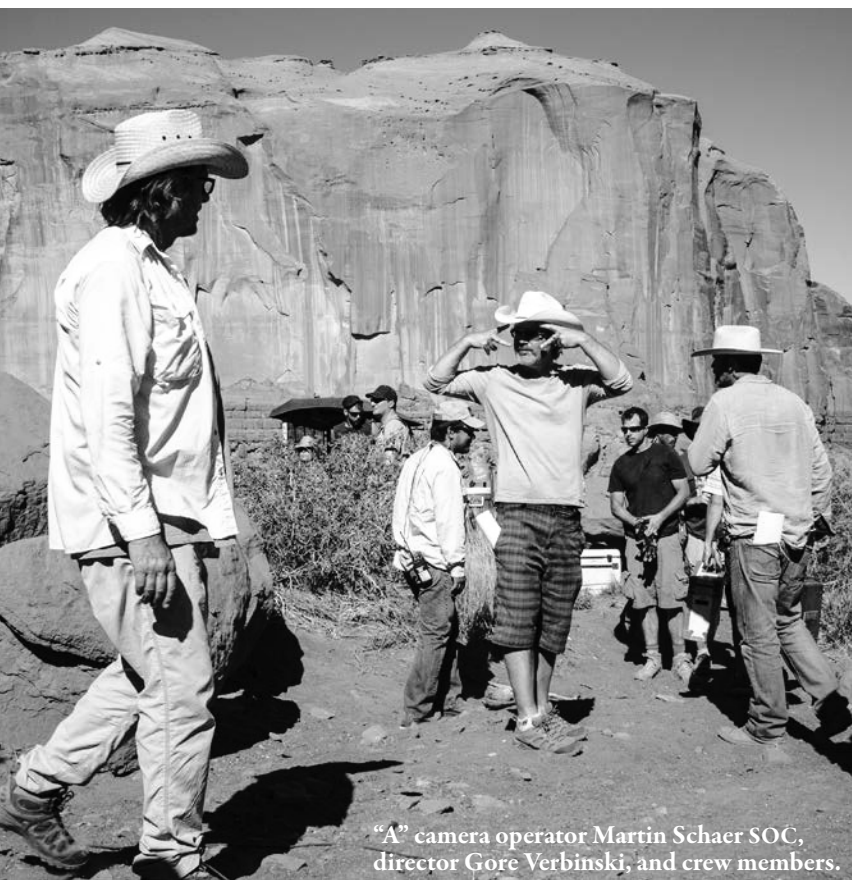


“B” camera crew dealing with the desert sun.

COURTESY DAVID LUCKENBACH SOC

Dave: Canyon de Chelly is one of the many really special locations we traveled to. It’s on the Navajo Indian reservation near Chinle, Arizona. Historically it’s where the Navajo made their last stand before being driven off their land. As a crew we were transported deep into the canyon to shoot. It was an amazing place to be. I think everyone experienced the spirituality of it, knew how fortunate they were to be there, and were thankful to the Navajo people for welcoming us and allowing us to film there.

Martin: Being in Canyon de Chelly or Monument Valley where you wake up really early—you get up at 4 and then the



“A” camera operator Martin Schaer SOC, director Gore Verbinski, and crew members.

sun rises, and you’re trying to set up these epic shots, long dolly tracks, big crane shots, and you have this environment, you have this world waking up—it’s not like this world we all know, cities and so on—it’s its own world, that landscape, it’s that old spiritual place. To actually be paid to be out there and to be able to work with so many people, to put something on film which hopefully will give pleasure to a lot of people, that’s kind of an amazing thing, just as a whole experience. These experiences can be very empowering—and overpowering too.

Family Life on set

Dave: Seven months of shooting on location, that’s a long time to be on the same film with the same crew. Martin has been operating “A” camera with me on “B”/

Steadicam since the first *Pirates* movie, *Curse of the Black Pearl*. This working relationship has developed into a good friendship so it was easy for us to be roommates during most of the shooting. It turned out that we could pool our housing money and get nicer accommodations than we could get on our own. Not to mention it’s great to sit down with someone at the end of the day and talk over the day’s events or what tomorrow might bring.

Martin: Dave is very low-key but he is also a strong man and has good suggestions. He’s a photographer himself and he has a good sensibility and good common sense, and he is the ever present quiet thinker. It’s a comfort to know that I never have an issue with him not finding a shot, and Gore likes that too. Crew-wise we were a well oiled machine, a family of good people and creative technicians who had worked together on many projects. Gore wanted to surround himself with people he already knew for this very demanding, very intense project. Trevor Loomis was my longtime, very savvy 1st AC. Gaffer Rafael Sanchez, Key grip Mike Popovich, with Jason Talbert on “A” dolly ...

I knew of Bojan Bazelli, the cinematographer. I’d never worked with him before. He did *The Ring* with Gore and they made it a very nice-looking movie. We met, talked about the movie, and found we had our European background and our passion for movies in common. Off we went and dove into the *Lone Ranger* pool.

Dave: The cast was great to work with, too, all of them. Johnny is always great. He’s approachable; he’ll stay on set and hang with the crew. People on the outside of the film business, family members and friends, always want to know how the actors are. The actors always talk about family—his kids, your kids, how they’re doing. Armie Hammer was the same way, a sweetheart of a guy.

Producer Eric McLeod was aware of the strain this kind of shooting schedule puts on families so he was open to having crew members’ kids on staff. My

daughter Lindsay, a Film and Digital Media student at SCAD in Savannah GA, got to work as a PA on *The Lone Ranger* for 5 weeks. We were roommates during that time, and knowing that in the fall she was going to start her freshman year in film school made it extra special. We were able to go out to dinner when we weren't too tired and talk about filmmaking, college and her life ahead.

Trevor's daughter was a PA with my daughter; gaffer Rafael Sanchez and Key Grip Mike Popovich both had sons on their crews. If you had a child of the right age and capabilities, the producers were open to having them come work on the show, so I am sure there were many more family members on crew than I was aware of. It meant a lot to everybody involved, as with all crews your family becomes their family.

There was also fun to be had, thanks to our grips. They have a long-standing tradition that anybody on the crew who's leaving the show early gets a pie in the face. They used a paper plate piled high with whipped cream, and usually had three of them ready to go, to make sure they'd hit their mark. They always got their man or woman, usually picking a opportunity to do it in front of the whole crew.

Being an operator

Dave: Once you've done the job for a while you learn that a lot of the operator's function on set is negotiation. You become the liaison between the director, DP, Set Dressing, Art Department, etc. Every crew person usually takes pride in their work and they are protective of their respective departments.

When that pride comes coupled with ego, your negotiation skills are put to the test. You have to be somewhat of a chameleon too, meaning you have to be adaptable to circumstances that you walk into or that are presented to you. Filmmaking and acting use the right side of the brain, the creative side, which brings forth a lot of emotion with it. You have to be tuned into what's happening on set, know when your opinion is welcome and know when it's best to keep quiet.

Martin: The operator is a kind of middleman, a diplomat of sorts between the director, DP and production designer, at times even between producer and actors.

Often the director, DP and production designer spend months dealing with script, storyboards and meetings. They can be almost too "close to the painting," so when it comes to the actual shoot with the actors on the set, the operator, as an additional eye in the moment, can be a "neutral wind of unbiased opinion" for the blocking of a scene.

Dave: You need to have a real



"B" Camera Operator Dave Luckenbach SOC finds a place to shoot from.

COURTESY DAVID LUCKENBACH SOC

passion for what you're doing, and a good sense of story. That's what excites me about operating to this day, and why I don't mind setting my alarm for 4:45 am, getting up in the morning and driving to work. It's all about storytelling. I read the script at least a couple of times and make notes to myself of certain aspects that strike a chord. Being familiar with the story means you have something to offer when you show up on the set. During a day of shooting, there are elements that are in your hands, factors you can influence to make things better. Other aspects might be out of your hands and you do the best you can. We are in the service industry; we serve the director, DP and ultimately the story.

Martin: I look at myself as a creative-technical servant to the movie and its story. I typically read a script once or twice and let it sink in. Then I show up, take in the location and set, watch rehearsals and listen to actors, the director and DP, and from there on I try to use my gut instincts. The camera should guide you through a story, a slice of life. It should be a mere form of transportation. The same with dialogue, music, rod design—if it's too "loud" it could destroy the fine web of the work as a whole. I try to create frames true to the story, the time and place. Frames should support the story, not distract. Often pretty pictures can take you out of the context, make you conscious of the process. It's a fine line. 🐾



WHO WAS THAT MASKED MAN?
Front row, "A" camera operator Martin Schaer SOC, director Gore Verbinski, DP Bojan Bazelli and "B" camera/Steadicam operator Dave Luckenbach SOC.

COURTESY MARTIN SCHAEER SOC



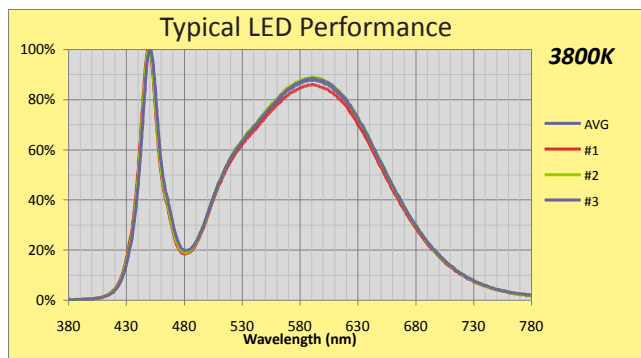
Hi Def with Jeff

LED Lighting Issues

By Jeffrey Cree SOC

I normally focus on the products and tools that we use from the higher end of the technology curve such as cameras and displays. During the recent NAB Exhibition I noticed a logarithmic growth in LED lighting products. Some of these products were very innovative in their design and performed as direct replacements for the tungsten and HMI lights that we have been using for years, others looked like they packaged as many LED lights as they could into a small space to act as a light source. I would like to focus on a few of the more innovative designs that I saw at the show and the issue surrounding the technology.

As with any new technology LED lights have had their growing pains and we are seeing many of the same issues with LEDs as we did with florescent lights during their introduction into the world of film and television. Color Temperature Consistence, Color Spectral Response and Light Uniformity were major issues with the introduction of the florescent lighting into this industry and LEDs have many of the same issues. Many of the LED emitters that are used in today's studio fixtures have very limited spectral patterns that affect the color performance. Likewise the bare emitter designs in some fixtures do not provide even lighting patterns of the newer LEDs that incorporate integrated reflectors. These reflector designs can develop their own issues providing multiple point light sources that will create multiple shadows if not corrected. So developing high light output, low power



lighting fixtures using LED technology is no easy task.

Our industries biggest issue LED lights is spectral response, early fluorescents provided spikes in each color range to provide an average color temperature that was OK but would make some colors look very unnatural. We have similar issues with LEDs; most LED emitters have a distinct spike in the blue area and then a nice lobe of response in green and into the reds. The drop-off in the red falls slightly short of the area where skin tones fall. This causes the total color output to be slightly plus green. This can be mitigated with proper filtering or by using active phosphor designs but these solutions affect the output performance.

The response issues are not a big problem when working with the group of high definition cameras that utilize ITU-709 color space. The limitations of the light source are hidden by the limitations of the color space. The introduction of the Sony F65 and F55, the Arri Alexa and other cameras using the new expanded color gamut make these limitations come into play. It is also an issue for those shooting film.

The one thing that is working for us to find solutions for these problems is the lighting portion of the LED industry is growing at a very fast rate. The technology keeps improving as the manufacturers look for lower cost high efficiency lighting sources for our homes. The demand for packaged LED lighting has grown from \$1.2 billion in 2010 to \$1.8 billion in 2011. Last year we saw phenomenal growth with \$2.9 billion in revenues for the year. Manufacturers such as Samsung LED, LG Innotek, Phillips Lumileds, Sharp from and around the world and Cree technologies from the US are spending great amounts of money in development to improve the performance of the LED light.

The common advantages achieved by using LEDs over normal tungsten or HMI light sources are long bulb life, low power consumption, low heat generations, no external ballast required and all lights are flicker free out to extreme frame rates. Some of the lights can work with either AC or DC power sources due to the low rate of power consumption. In the beginning most LED lights were fill sources but as you will see from my picks of the show that we now have PAR and Fresnel designs as well as much improved fill light sources. Here are my picks of the 2013 NAB floor.

AAdynTech Punch Plus: This is a large self contained

Daylight fixture that can be used as a source light or soft source depending on the lens that is installed in the unit. It provides 4044 foot candles of light at 10 feet while drawing only 4.8 amps, so we are talking a 2.5k HMI replacement. This is a big durable single source light that can provide Strobe or Lighting special effects and is fully dimmable with any visible color shift. It provides a remote user control as well as DMX capability. The universal power supply allows it to operate on 90VAC to 240VAC. This company is a US manufacturer that uses only Green



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Everything pictured here is available for purchase at Filmtools.com and available for rent at Filmtoolsrentals.com

(Except for the Jag... you can't have the Jag.)



Technology in the manufacturing of its products and uses US made Cree LEDs.

AAdynTech Jab Series: The Jab series light comes in Daylight, Tungsten and Variable color temperatures. The output is equivalent to a 575W HMI or 650W Tungsten depending on the selected color temperature while drawing only 1.78 amps. It has all the features of the larger Punch Plus in a smaller more compact package. They also make a weather proof version called the Jab Hurricane which is IP 65rated.



Arri LC-7 Series Fresnel Light: This series are direct replacements for the industry standard Arri 650w Fresnel fixture. The LC-7 comes in three versions: The LC-7C which is color controllable, the LC-7T Tungsten rated light, and the LC-7TT tungsten rated fixture that has tuneable color. All of these fixtures have an active cooling option for prolonged studio operation. Arri has gone to great effort to provide full color spectrum lighting and have done a very good job using LEDs to replace a tungsten source. The light is designed so that the controls and operation are as near the original tungsten Fresnel fixture as possible. These lights would be a good choice for those using a camera that provides a wide color gamut due to their full spectrum design. This series has a power consumption of 160W to 190W depending on the model with a maximum draw of 220W.



Lite Panels Inca Series: This series consists of a 4 and 6 inch tungsten rated Fresnel lights. These lights provide an 80% power efficiency over standard tungsten Fresnel fixtures. This correlates to a low heat envelope that will provide considerable reductions in studio cooling costs. The tungsten rated lights are designed for prolonged studio operation as direct replacements and allow for transitioning from your current tungsten environment to a long term LED solution. The 300W equivalent Inca 4" draws 39W while the larger Inca 6" 650W equivalent draws 104W. This series is designed to operate on 14-28 VDC or 100-240 VAC.



Lite Panels Sola Series: The Sola Series have most of the same characteristics of the Inca series lights but are daylight rated. This series consists of a 4 and 6 inch fully functional Fresnel lights. These lights are ballast free HMI equivalents. The Daylight rated lights are designed for heavy duty applications while weighing only 1/3rd of the traditional Fresnel light. The 125W HMI equivalent Sola 4" draw 39W while the larger Sola 6" 350W HMI equivalent draws 104W.



This series is designed to operate on 14-28 VDC or 100-240 VAC.

Fill-Lite 200, Fill-Lite Studio and Fill-Lite Wall: This series of soft lights comes from a new Oregon based company Fill-Lite. This series of lights are all based on 24" square non-specular panels that are less than 1/2 inch thick. They can be used as single panels with the power supply and controls designed into the yoke as with the Fill-Lite 200 or with 4 panels and a yoke in the Studio version. The most unique application is the wall configuration. The two panel frames can be attached to build as large a source as required for the application. The units then attach to a separate power supply



controller to complete the system. All the lights have DMX control and are Wi-Fi enable so they can be operated by a simple iPad application. These lights contain a patent-pending light guide diffusion screen that distributes the light uniformly across the panel providing a very pleasing soft fill source. Due to their very thin profile the Fill-Lite system can be used as wall lights, or ceiling lights in practical locations where other soft source lights sizing would be restrictive. They are available in 3500k or 5500k versions. They can be AC or DC operated to add to the versatility of the system.

These companies are using some of the latest LED technology to provide an efficient environmentally friendly light source for our production needs. Are they perfect, not yet, but they have improved greatly as the technology matures.

<http://www.aadyntech.com/>

http://www.arri.com/lighting/lighting_americas/led_systems.html

<http://www.litepanels.com/fresnels.php>

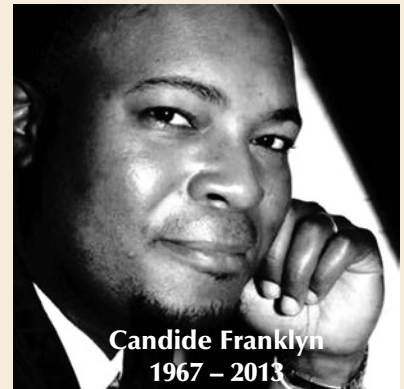
<http://fill-lite.com/>



TRANSITIONS

We are sad to have lost a brother and friend, Candide Franklyn SOC, who passed away on February 12, 2013. Candide began his career in Toronto, working his way up as a grip and then an expert dolly technician, to become a highly respected and sought after Steadicam operator in both Toronto and Los Angeles. In a career that spanned over three decades, he was loved and admired by many, and always gave back to those that touched him. Candide's long list of credits include *The DaVinci Code*, *A History of Violence*, *Cinderella Man*, *Hairspray* and *Jack and Jill*.

Candide is survived by his loving and devoted wife Leslie Whittaker and his mother Yolanda Franklyn.



On May 7, 2013, the filmmaking community said farewell to a wonderful and influential artist. Ray Harryhausen was a pioneer in stop-motion animation and visual effects who influenced filmmakers through several generations. Inspired by the work of Willis O'Brien in *King Kong*, Harryhausen embarked on a career in filmmaking in the 1930s with his childhood friend, writer Ray Bradbury. He enjoyed a lengthy career and was famed for creating his own brand of stop-motion model animation, named Dynamation. His most popular works include 1949's *Mighty Joe Young*, *Clash of the Titans* in 1981, the *Sinbad* franchise and *Jason and the Argonauts*.

"What we do now digitally with computers, Ray did digitally long before but without computers. Only with his digits."

—Terry Gilliam

"I think all of us who are practitioners in the arts of science fiction and fantasy movies now all feel that we're standing on the shoulders of a giant. If not for Ray's contribution to the collective dreamscape, we wouldn't be who we are."

—James Cameron



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♦ *Founding Fathers of the Society of Operating Cameramen (1979)*



CRAIG MATHEWS

Seamus McGarvey BSC ASC suddenly towers over 6'4" David Frederick SOC at the SOC Awards.

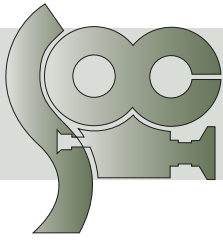
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Kim Palmer brings style to camera operating at the SOC Awards (note the heels)

MATT TURVE



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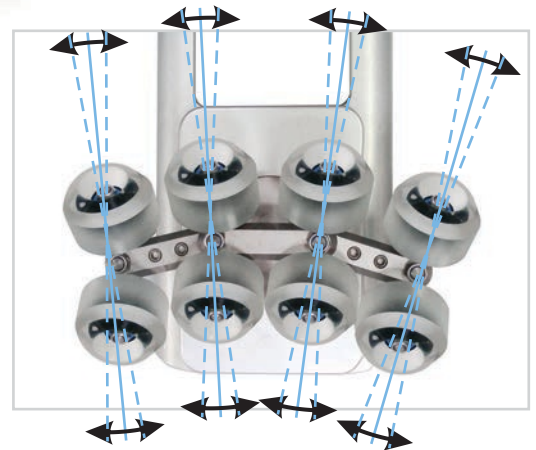
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