

A photograph of a camera on a tripod in a workshop. The camera is a DSLR with a large lens, mounted on a silver tripod. The background is a wall of oriented strand board (OSB). To the left, there is a green plastic crate with some equipment on it. The floor is concrete. The text "LOW-BUDGET FILMMAKING" is overlaid in the center in a bold, black, handwritten-style font.

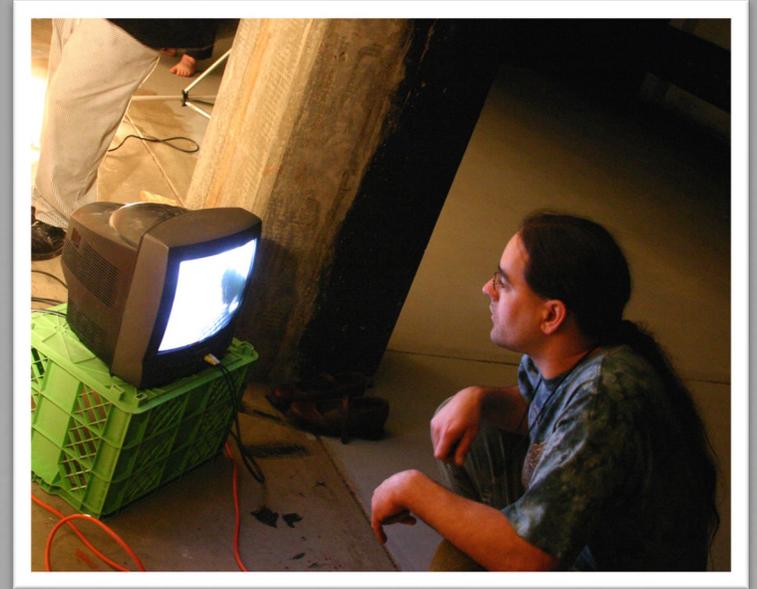
LOW-BUDGET FILMMAKING

Making movies on a budget so low even a shoestring would be embarrassed.

WHO AM I?

Edward Martin III

- Screenwriter/Director
 - Four feature films
 - 40 short films
 - 7 web series
- Novelist/Writer
 - 2 novels
 - 19 story collections



OUR "LET'S MAKE A MOVIE" WORKSHOP

- 2-4 days long
- Part of an existing event (usually fan conventions, etc.)
- Next one: Norwescon.org





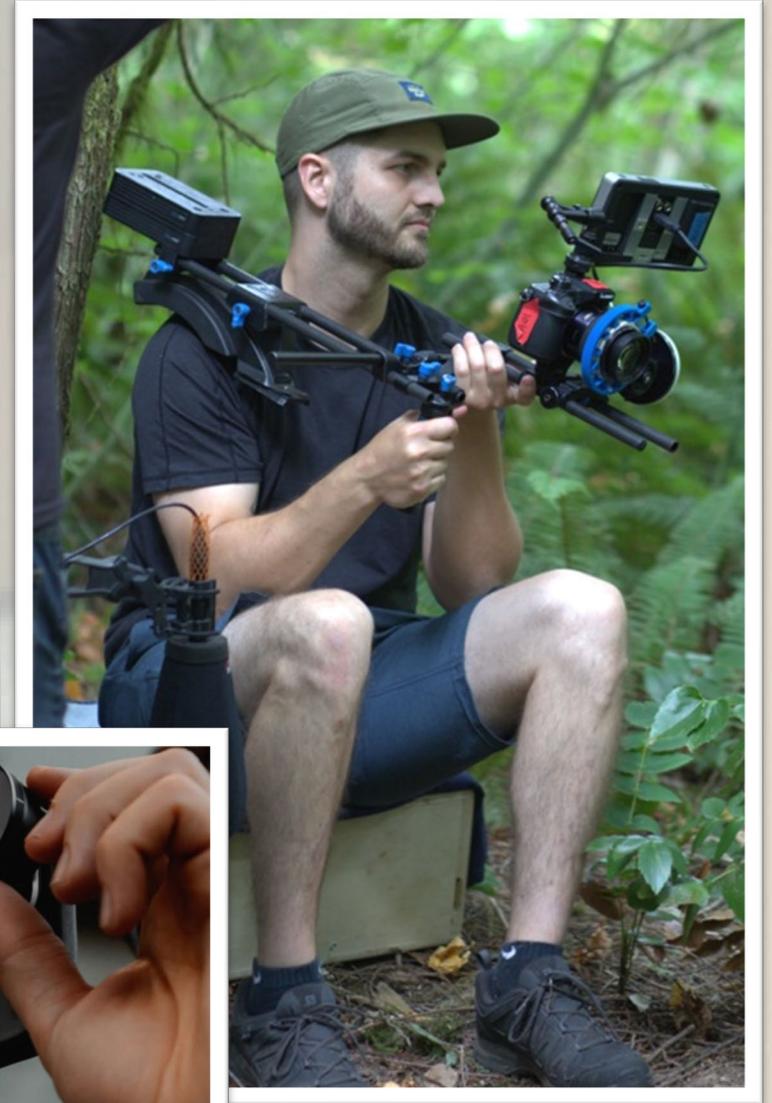
TOOLS, GIZMOS, AND WHAT(HAMA)CALLITS

- Camera
- Microphones
- Tripod
- Lights
- Props
- Location



CAMERA

- Digital (unless you have tons o' cash layin' around for film)
- Microphone input(s)
- Headphone jack
- Digital output or card/chip
- Borrowed is a great price!
- What about your iPhone?



SIDE NOTE FOR CELL PHONE CAMERAS

A powered gimbal, a wired microphone, and a couple specialized lenses designed for an iPhone.



CHEAT SHEET FOR CAMERA SETTINGS

Exposure, Aperture, Shutter speed, and ISO are camera settings that can help you fine-tune the exact look you want for your video.

These are often digitally simulated, but knowing them and their effects helps you better understand how to create the image you want to create.

EMANUELCARISTI.COM

PHOTOGRAPHY CHEAT SHEET

MANUAL MODE

EXPOSURE

KEEP THE LIGHT METER AT "0" FOR A BALANCED EXPOSURE
EXPOSE FOR THE LIGHTS TO NOT BLOWN OUT THE WHITES

SHUTTER APERTURE
THIS IS ALL YOU NEED TO KNOW
ISO

OPTIMAL EXPOSURE
UNDEREXPOSED
OVEREXPOSED

APERTURE

SMALLER f/STOPS REPRESENT LARGER APERTURES, MORE LIGHT THROUGH THE LENS AND SHALLOWER DOF

f/1.4 f/2 f/2.8 f/4 f/5.6 f/8 f/11 f/16

SHALLOW DEPTH OF FIELD BRIGHTER
DEEP DEPTH OF FIELD DARKER

SHUTTER SPEED

THE LENGTH OF TIME WHEN THE DIGITAL SENSOR INSIDE THE CAMERA IS EXPOSED TO LIGHT

1" 1/4 1/15 1/60 1/125 1/250 1/500 1/1000

LONGER EXPOSURE BLUR ACTION / BRIGHTER
SHORTER EXPOSURE DARKER / FREEZE ACTION

ISO

THE SENSITIVITY OF THE IMAGE SENSOR OR THE FILM TO THE LIGHT
LOW ISO TO USE DURING DAY TIME - HIGH ISO DURING NIGHT TIME

100 200 400 800 1600 3200 6400 12800

LOW SENSITIVE TO LIGHT LOW NOISE / HIGHER QUALITY
HIGH SENSITIVITY TO LIGHT LOWER QUALITY / HIGH NOISE

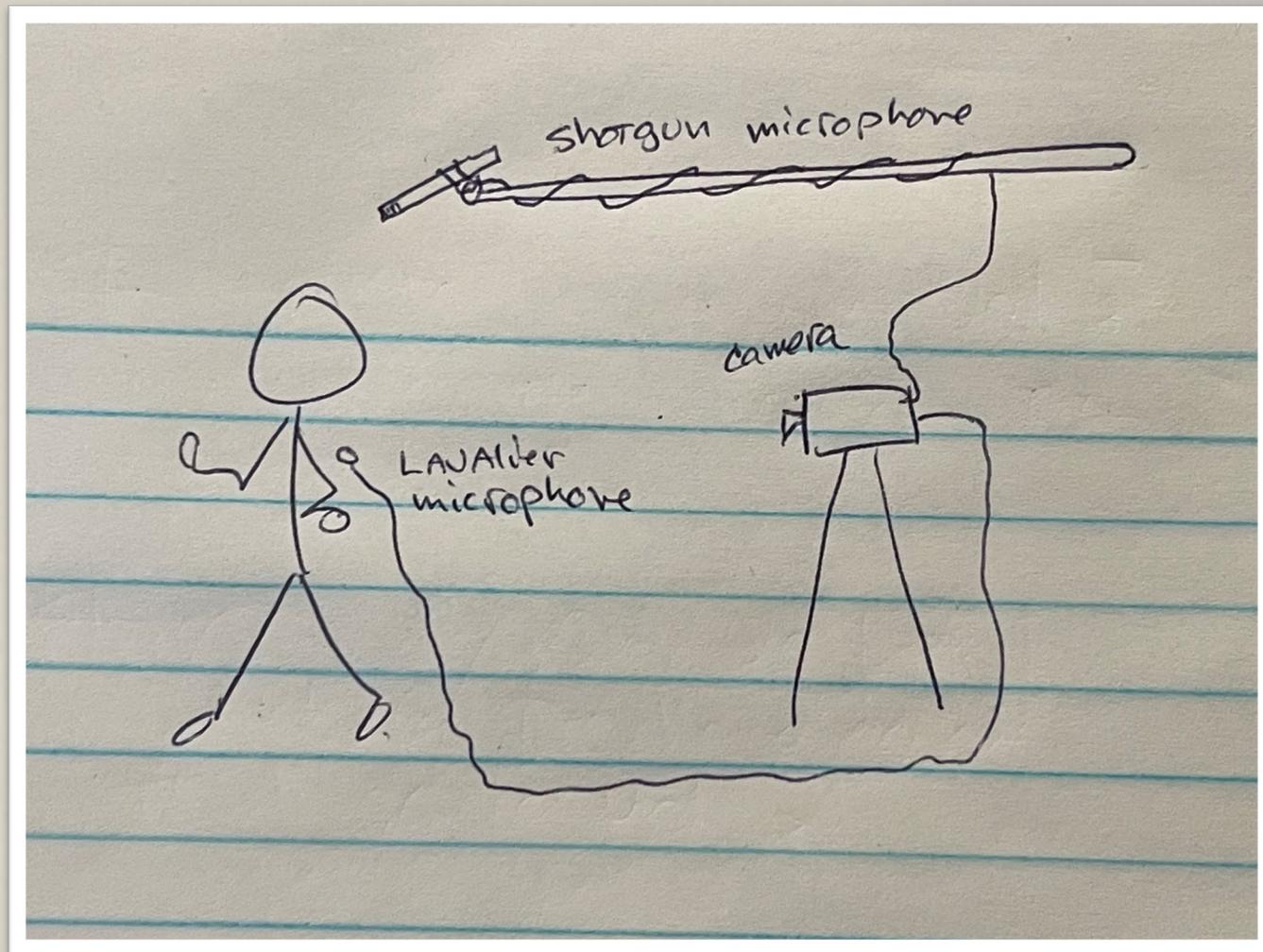
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MICROPHONES AND MICROPHONE INPUT

- *Sound quality is mission-critical!*
- Having a dedicated recordist and sound-mixer (awesome)
- Not having a dedicated recordist and sound-mixer (still workable)
- Never use the camera's "onboard" microphone.



MICROPHONE DIRECTLY ATTACHED



Shotgun microphone or lavalier microphone, or some other microphone directly connected to the camera's MIC IN line.

Advantage: synced sound

Disadvantage: can't mix before committing to file

EXAMPLE WIRED MICROPHONE



- Lavalier microphone
- Very long cord (6 meters)
- Lightning plug (iPhone)

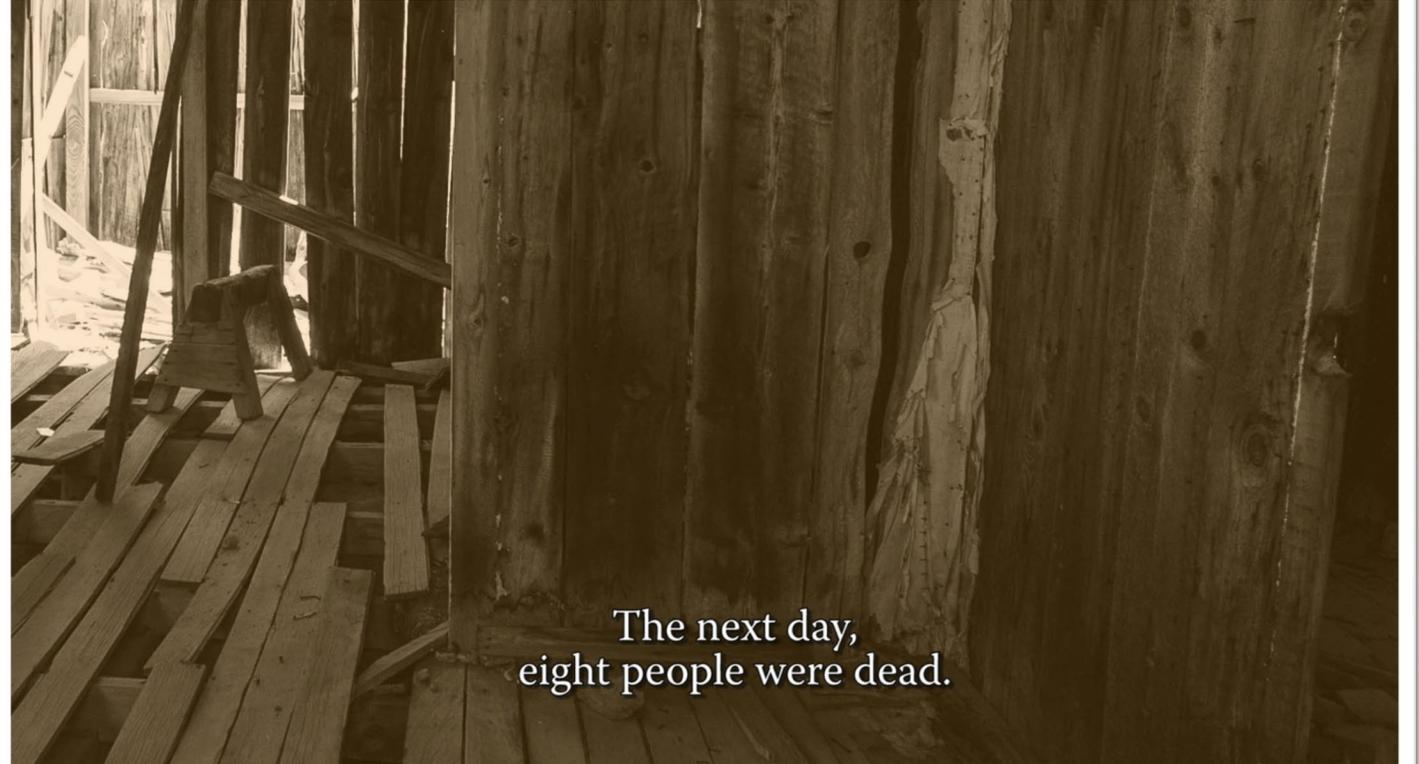
WIRELESS MICROPHONE EXAMPLES

Wireless USB-powered rechargeable lavalier microphones.



(REACTIVE IDEAS)

- Audio that is unsynced intentionally
- Music video style
- Documentary style



TRIPODS

- Keeps the camera stable
- Stable is good.



Manfrotto MVT502AM Video Tripod with Telescopic Twin Legs (Black)
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Quantity: 1

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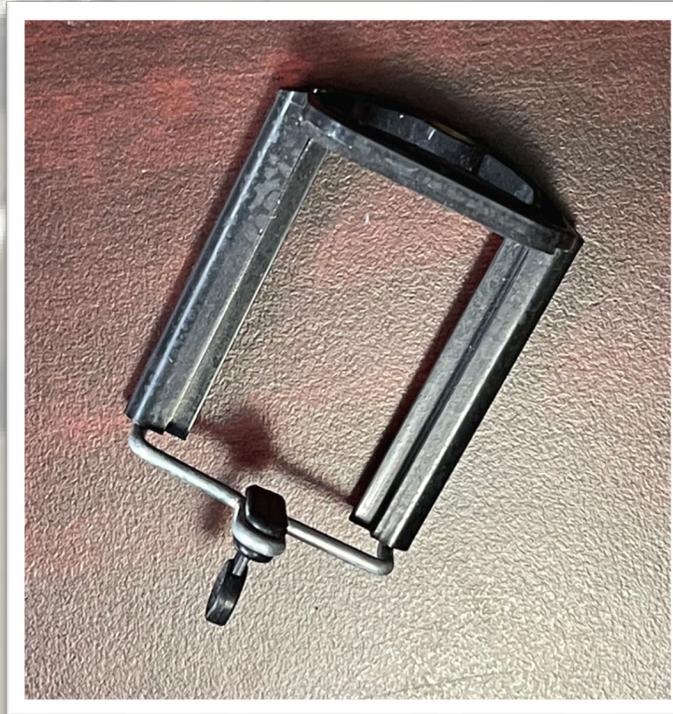
Ships from Amazon
Sold by Manfrotto US
Returns FREE 30-day refund/replacement

FREE 30-day refund/replacement
This item can be returned in its original condition for a full replacement within 30 days of receipt.

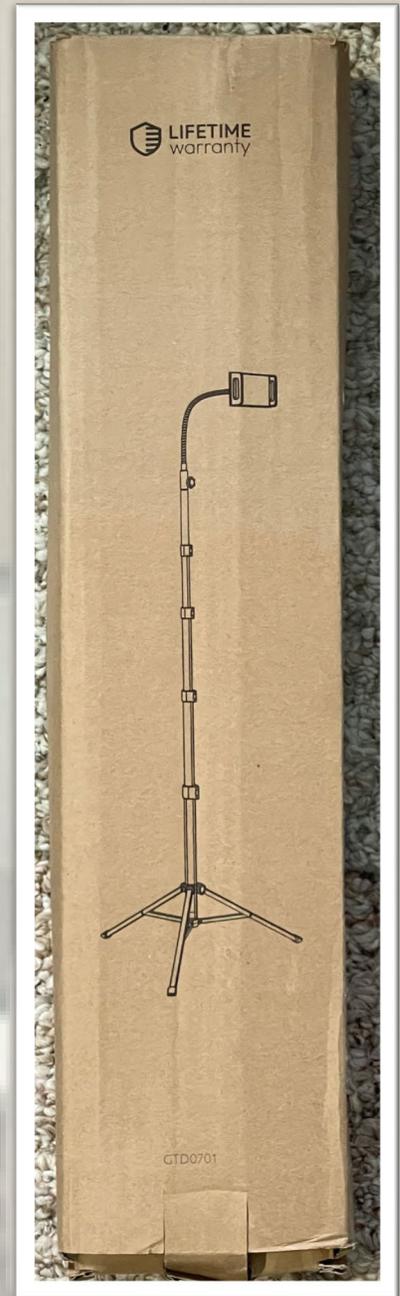
About this item



ADDITIONAL TRIPOD IDEAS



Some selfie sticks can stabilize, and a simple cell phone pressure connector can attach to any phone and any tripod.



IF YOU DO GO HANDHELD, THOUGH...



Electronically-stabilized gimbal appropriate for small things such as cell phones.



LIGHTS

- Lighting is how you create dimension and add mood to a shot.
- Lighting is not necessarily meant to be “realistic.”



Where's all that light coming from? It ain't the lantern!

WHAT KIND OF LIGHTS?

- Fancy movie lights
- LED lights
- Work lights
- Flashlights
- Photofloods
- House lights
- Weird lights

Lowel Dp Light D2-10 w/Barn Doors



The DP is a long time Lowel workhorse. It's a powerful key, backlight or background light. Add an umbrella or diffusion for soft key or fill light, swap to the super-spot reflector for long throws, or customize with a variety of other accessories. The DP is built for a long multi-use life. Peened, parabolic reflector provides non-crossover beam with axial filament orientation for improved shadow pattern and gel life.

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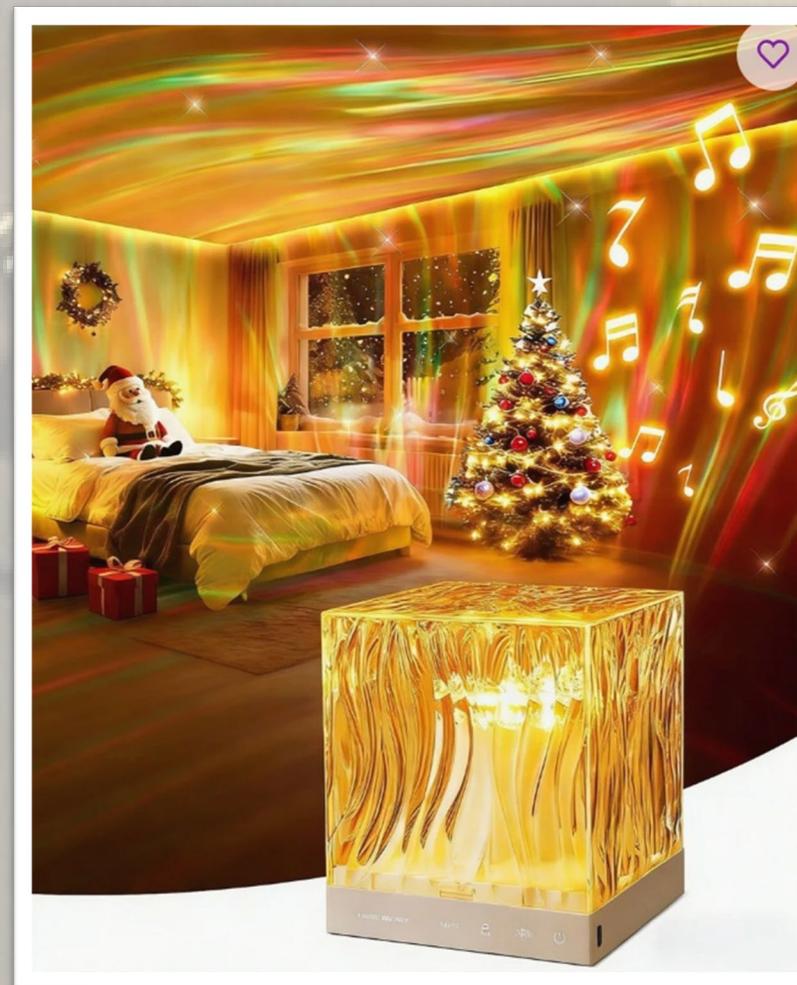
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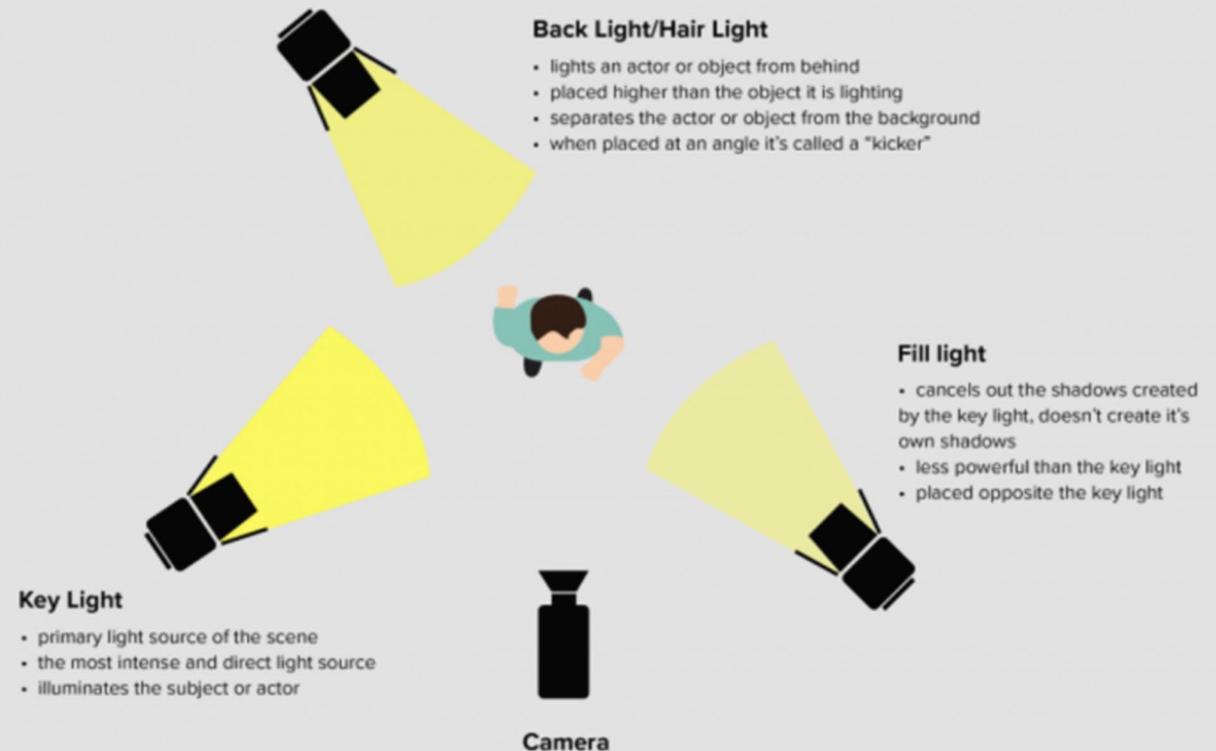
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BASIC THREE-POINT LIGHTING

- Key: primary light
- Fill: softens shadows
- Hair (aka Back, or Rim):
Creates edge border

3 POINT LIGHTING



LIGHTING "(HEAT-CARD)"

- So many different ways to light things!



LIGHTING GUIDE

MASTER PRO PORTRAIT LIGHTING WITH THESE 24 ESSENTIAL STUDIO SET-UPS

<p>REMRANDT WITH A SOFTBOX</p> <p>KIT: One strobe, one lightstand, one 20-inch softbox. Position the light to the side and use a softbox to create a triangle of light on the model's forehead. The softbox should be angled towards the edge of the face. The softbox creates a soft, directional effect.</p>	<p>REMRANDT THROUGH A BROLLY</p> <p>KIT: One strobe, one lightstand, one silver brolly. Position the light to the side and use a silver brolly to create a triangle of light on the model's forehead. The brolly should be angled towards the edge of the face. Shooting through a brolly creates a similar effect to a softbox.</p>	<p>REMRANDT WITH A HONEYCOMB</p> <p>KIT: One strobe, one lightstand, one honeycomb grid attachment. Position the light to the side and use a honeycomb grid to create a triangle of light on the model's forehead. The grid should be angled towards the edge of the face. The honeycomb grid creates a similar effect to a softbox.</p>	<p>REMRANDT WITH A SILVER BROLLY</p> <p>KIT: One strobe, one lightstand, one silver brolly. Position the light to the side and use a silver brolly to create a triangle of light on the model's forehead. The brolly should be angled towards the edge of the face. The silver brolly creates a similar effect to a softbox.</p>
<p>REMRANDT SHORT</p> <p>KIT: One strobe, one lightstand, one 20-inch softbox. Use the principles of Rembrandt lighting to create the triangle of light on the model's forehead and light from the opposite side. The softbox should be closer to the camera than the strobe.</p>	<p>REMRANDT BROAD</p> <p>KIT: One strobe, one lightstand, one 20-inch softbox. Use the principles of Rembrandt lighting to create the triangle of light on the model's forehead and light from the opposite side. The softbox should be closer to the camera than the strobe.</p>	<p>SPLIT</p> <p>KIT: One strobe, one lightstand, one 20-inch softbox. Position a light to the side of the model and use a softbox to create a split effect. The softbox should be angled towards the edge of the face. The softbox creates a soft, directional effect.</p>	<p>SPLIT WITH FILL</p> <p>KIT: One strobe, one lightstand, one 20-inch softbox. Position a light to the side of the model and use a softbox to create a split effect. The softbox should be angled towards the edge of the face. The softbox creates a soft, directional effect.</p>
<p>SPLIT/SHORT</p> <p>KIT: One strobe, one lightstand, one 20-inch softbox. Use the principles of Rembrandt lighting to create the triangle of light on the model's forehead and light from the opposite side. The softbox should be closer to the camera than the strobe.</p>	<p>SPLIT/BROAD</p> <p>KIT: One strobe, one lightstand, one 20-inch softbox. Use the principles of Rembrandt lighting to create the triangle of light on the model's forehead and light from the opposite side. The softbox should be closer to the camera than the strobe.</p>	<p>KEY WITH A CLOSE SOFTBOX</p> <p>KIT: One strobe, one lightstand, one 20-inch softbox. Position the softbox above and to the side of the model for a close key. The softbox should be angled towards the edge of the face. The softbox creates a soft, directional effect.</p>	<p>KEY WITH A FAR AWAY SOFTBOX</p> <p>KIT: One strobe, one lightstand, one 20-inch softbox. Position the softbox above and to the side of the model for a far key. The softbox should be angled towards the edge of the face. The softbox creates a soft, directional effect.</p>
<p>LOOP</p> <p>KIT: One strobe, one lightstand, one 20-inch softbox. Position the light to the side and use a softbox to create a loop of light on the model's forehead. The softbox should be angled towards the edge of the face. The softbox creates a soft, directional effect.</p>	<p>BUTTERFLY</p> <p>KIT: One strobe, one lightstand, one 20-inch softbox. Position the light directly above the model and use a softbox to create a butterfly pattern of light on the model's forehead. The softbox should be angled towards the edge of the face. The softbox creates a soft, directional effect.</p>	<p>FLAT LIGHT</p> <p>KIT: Two strobes, two lightstands, two 20-inch softboxes. Use a simple loop or Rembrandt lighting to create a flat effect. The softboxes should be angled towards the edge of the face. The softboxes create a soft, directional effect.</p>	<p>BADGER</p> <p>KIT: Two strobes, two lightstands, two 20-inch softboxes. Use a simple loop or Rembrandt lighting to create a badger effect. The softboxes should be angled towards the edge of the face. The softboxes create a soft, directional effect.</p>
<p>CLAMSHELL</p> <p>KIT: Two strobes, two lightstands, two 20-inch softboxes. Position one softbox above the model and one softbox to the side of the model. The softboxes should be angled towards the edge of the face. The softboxes create a soft, directional effect.</p>	<p>LOOP WITH A BACKGROUND LIGHT</p> <p>KIT: Two strobes, two lightstands, two 20-inch softboxes. Use a simple loop or Rembrandt lighting to create a loop effect. The softboxes should be angled towards the edge of the face. The softboxes create a soft, directional effect.</p>	<p>LOOP WITH A RIM LIGHT</p> <p>KIT: Two strobes, two lightstands, two 20-inch softboxes. Use a simple loop or Rembrandt lighting to create a loop effect. The softboxes should be angled towards the edge of the face. The softboxes create a soft, directional effect.</p>	<p>HIGH KEY</p> <p>KIT: Two strobes, two lightstands, two 20-inch softboxes. Use a simple loop or Rembrandt lighting to create a high key effect. The softboxes should be angled towards the edge of the face. The softboxes create a soft, directional effect.</p>
<p>KEY AND FILL</p> <p>KIT: Two strobes, two lightstands, two 20-inch softboxes. Use a simple loop or Rembrandt lighting to create a key and fill effect. The softboxes should be angled towards the edge of the face. The softboxes create a soft, directional effect.</p>	<p>KEY, FILL AND HAIR LIGHT</p> <p>KIT: Three strobes, three lightstands, three 20-inch softboxes. Use a simple loop or Rembrandt lighting to create a key, fill, and hair light effect. The softboxes should be angled towards the edge of the face. The softboxes create a soft, directional effect.</p>	<p>HARD KEY WITH KICKERS</p> <p>KIT: Three strobes, three lightstands, three 20-inch softboxes. Use a simple loop or Rembrandt lighting to create a hard key effect. The softboxes should be angled towards the edge of the face. The softboxes create a soft, directional effect.</p>	<p>COLOURED GELS</p> <p>KIT: Four strobes, four lightstands, four 20-inch softboxes. Use a simple loop or Rembrandt lighting to create a colored gel effect. The softboxes should be angled towards the edge of the face. The softboxes create a soft, directional effect.</p>

CAMERA
 MODEL
 GREY BACKGROUND
 STROBE WITH REFLECTOR
 STROBE WITH HONEYCOMB
 STROBE WITH SHOOT
 STROBE WITH SOFTBOX
 SILVER REFLECTOR
 SHOOT-THROUGH WHITE BROLLY
 SILVER BROLLY

www.digitalcameraworld.com

QUICK LIGHTING EXAMPLES



Keylight on right side of face.
Traditional.



Keylight underneath face.
Sinister?



No keylight, small fill, hairlight
showing texture on edge.
Menacing.

SPECIAL TRICKS

- Color filter
- Cookies
- Front- or rear-projection



SPECIAL TRICKS

- Color filter
- Cookies
- Front- or rear-projection



SPECIAL TRICKS

- Color filter
- Cookies
- Front- or rear-projection



LIGHTING EXAMPLE

1. Actor lit by keylight.
2. Blue hairlight outlining his head.
3. Spinning starfield front-projected by toy.
4. Moon front-projected by separate projector.
5. Eagle lander added and animated in post-production.





PLANNING, AKA WITCHCRAFT

- Script
 - Storyboards/pre-viz
 - Layout
 - Location
 - Cast
 - Crew
 - Food
 - Scheduling
- 

SCRIPT

- Good storytelling
- Readthroughs
- Edits
- Tools

The screenshot displays a script editing application with a two-column layout. The left column shows the script text, and the right column shows a summary view. The script text includes dialogue between characters like ERICK, KATHERINE, HERBERT, LINDSEY, and KATHERINE. Scene changes are highlighted in yellow, such as "84. INT. HALLWAY - NIGHT" and "85. INT. LINDSEY'S QUARTERS - NIGHT". The interface includes a toolbar on the left with icons for navigation and editing, and a right sidebar with a page number indicator (71) and search icons.

Manhattan, so it's just numbers to me. But you did. And if your weight is anything like my weight, then I feel sorry for you, too.

Katherine? ERICK

Erick? KATHERINE

When this is all over-- ERICK

Don't finish that. Not yet. When it is over, really over, then we can talk. But not now. Not in the middle of it. Hope's overrated these days. KATHERINE

HERBERT
This is very unfortunate, Major Vaas. You're heading right for each other.

Checks his pistol.

HERBERT
(continued)
I'm afraid I'll be too late to save you.

Leaves the room.

84. INT. HALLWAY - NIGHT

Katherine walks over to another doorway and KNOCKS.

REV: October 31, 2004 70.

Come in. LINDSEY

85. INT. LINDSEY'S QUARTERS - NIGHT

Lindsey's quarters are more spartan than Katherine's, but there are a few stuffed animals in a corner.

Lindsey sits on her bed.

Her eyes are puffy.

Honey... KATHERINE

It's not going to stop, is it? These things are just as bad as Herbert says they are. We're screwed, aren't we? LINDSEY

Katherine sits next to her.

I don't believe that. We're smarter. KATHERINE

Maybe. I guess all they have to do is eat our brains, huh? LINDSEY

Katherine nods.

There's a lot we don't know. But I don't think we're exactly looking at mankind's twilight if you know what KATHERINE

REV: October 31, 2004 71.

Or murderous trucks. LINDSEY

They're just people, like us. They can be killed, just like us. They're just... deader than us. KATHERINE

Living impaired. LINDSEY

Living impaired. KATHERINE
(nods, smiling)

She pats LINDSEY on the leg.

We've got something to do, you and I. KATHERINE
(continued)

I haven't wanted to. LINDSEY

I'm sure he would have liked you to be there. KATHERINE

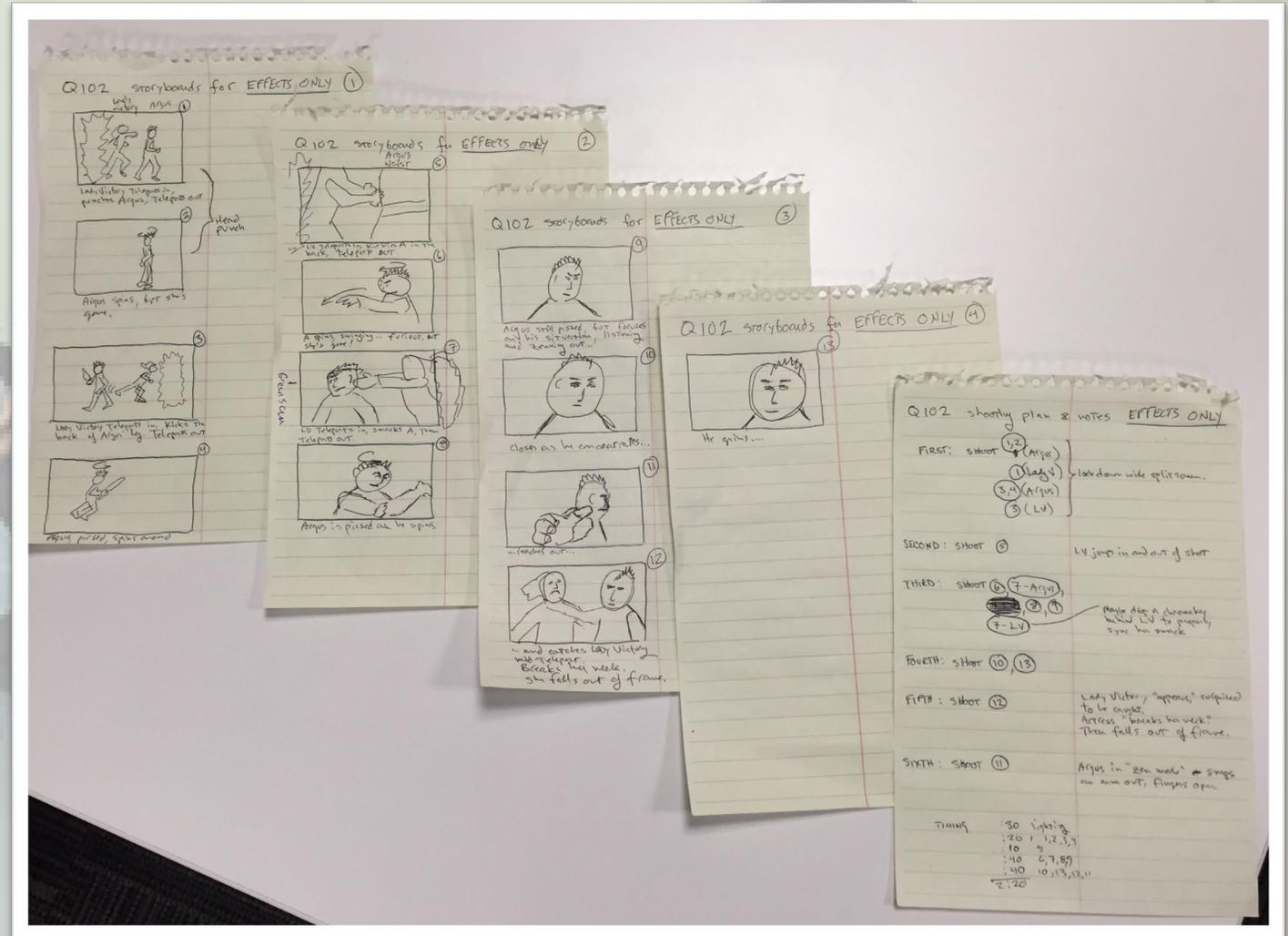
Let's go. LINDSEY
(nods)

86. INT. REFINERY LAB - NIGHT

No one's watching the monitors

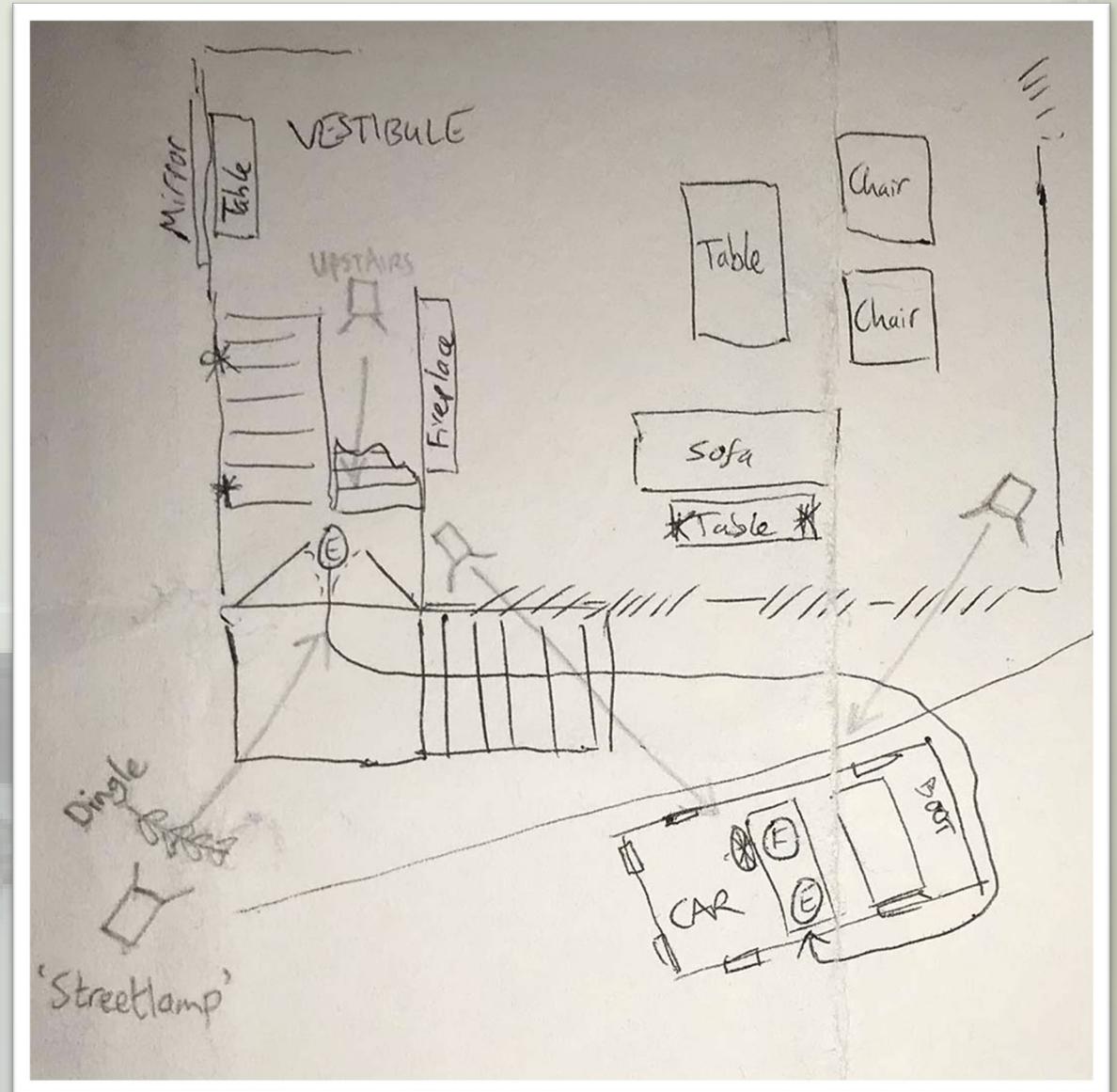
STORYBOARDS / PRE-VISUALIZATION

- They don't have to be fancy.
- The important thing is are they conveying enough information for planning?
- Pair with layouts to make your plan unbeatable.



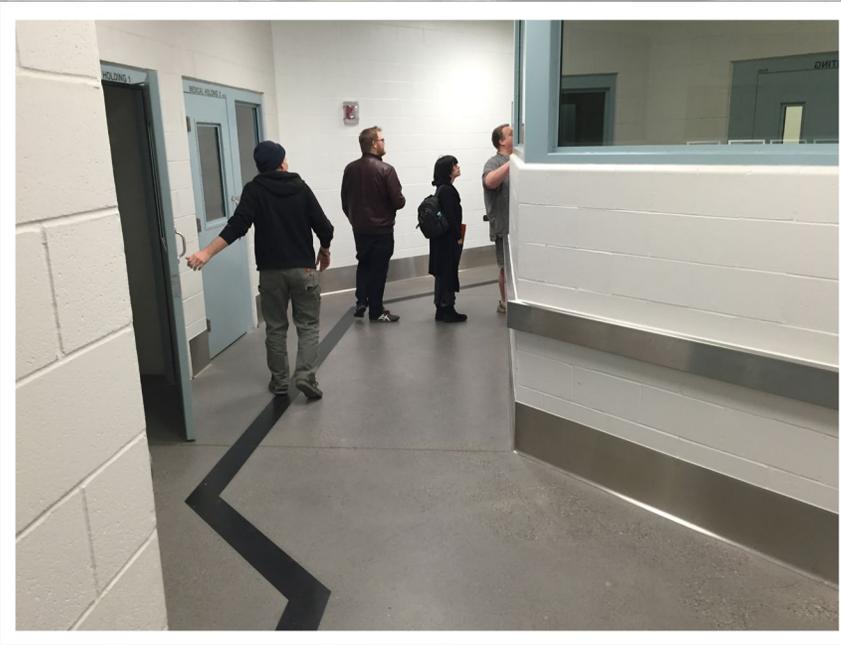
LAYOUTS

- Pair with storyboards.
- Identify different setups, so that all crew can move quickly into places.
- One of the most common failure points in planning, and also one of the most effective.



LOCATION

- All the main crew should review the location, so everyone has a chance to see if there's going to be an issue with their work.



CAST

- Cross-check costumes against “what day is it supposed to be.”
- Make sure cast stays in one area – no wandering around.
- Give them time to rehearse, and if possible, rehearse with them.



(REW

- Smaller is better, but don't shoot yourself in the foot.
- If they are new or still learning, be patient.



FOOD

- Always plan this.
- Include planning for pre-production meetings as well as production.



SCHEDULING

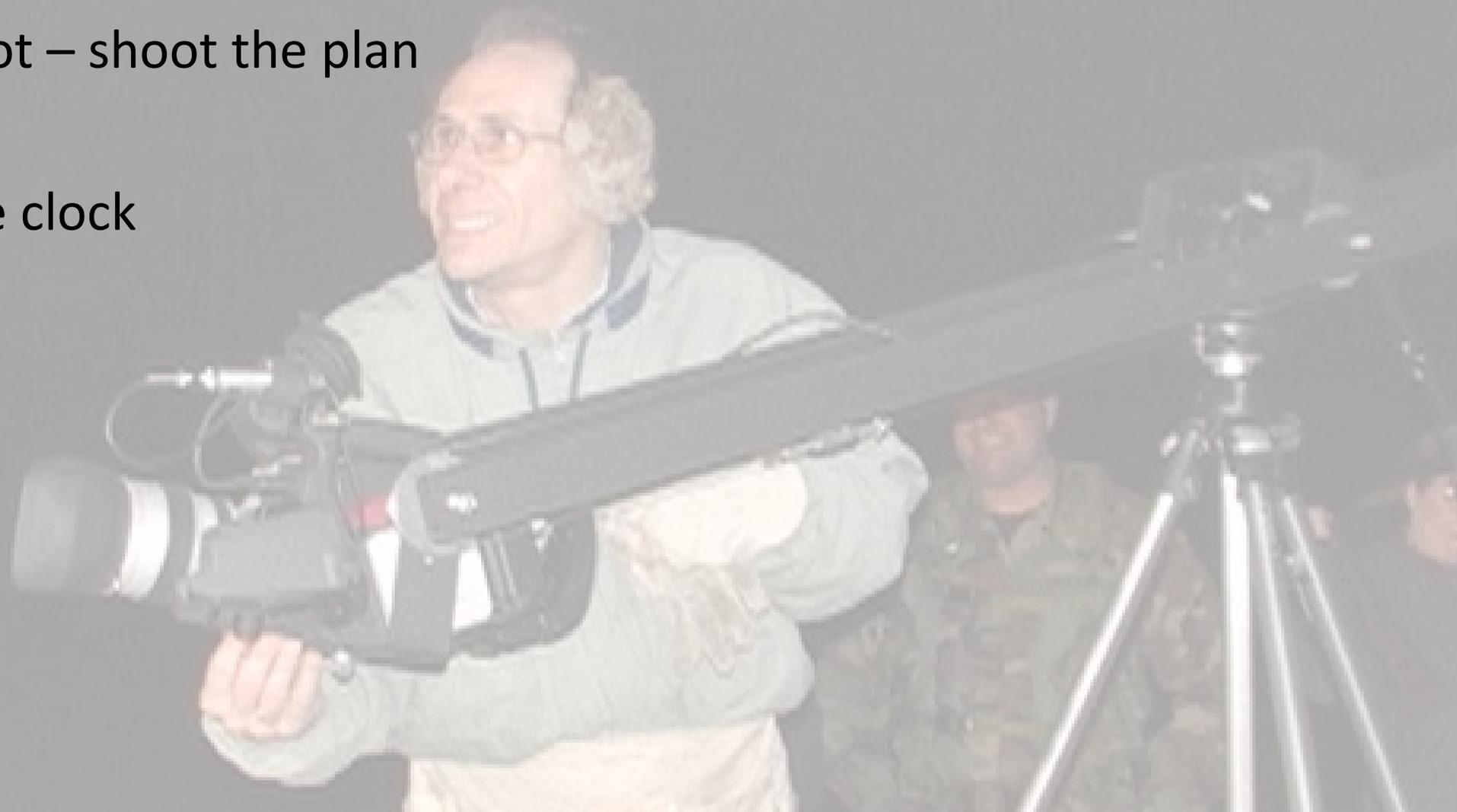
- Use tools that work for you and your crew.
- Cover as much as you can.
- Remember to keep track of all assets, including cast, crew, props, etc.

Shoot Name	Shoot Date	Location	Scenes	Required Actors	Required Props and Gear	Required Costumes	Makeup	Hair
2 Beach Pickups	29-May	Coastal OR, Mom's house	1, 2, 22, 23, 28, 47, 48, 49, 50, 51, 52, 53, 54	NONE	Blood Squibs Skull Seaweed Gull Bait Mom's house sunset?	NONE	NONE	NONE
3 Church Shots		Oaks Park Church	9, 10, 11, 12, 30, 31, 39, 40, 41, 42, 43, 44, 45	All extras, Officiant", "Craig", "Katherine", "Jennifer"	Flowers Bouquet Candelabras Wedding Decor Wedding Bands Innsmouth Altar Innsmouth INT netting Vox Piscea Church Hymnal Check for \$180 for church	Wedding dress Veil Shoes Tuxedo/suit Clerical robes Jennifer-as-Katherine dress Katherine-in-church clothes	Craig: Ordinary Katherine: Ordinary	
4 EXT Innsmouth Church		6th and Prescott	46	NONE	EXT Innsmouth Church Dressing	NONE	NONE	NONE
5 Offshore Shots		Coastal OR	55, 59	NONE	Underwater camera bag, wetsuits Bag of groceries The Letter Water for Jennifer Medicine cabinet contents Inflatable octopus pool toy Pencil cup & pencils Blank paper Butcher Block Sharp Knives Wedding Bands Fake Blood Car	NONE	NONE	NONE
6 INT Beach House		Our house	4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 14, 15, 16, 17, 24, 25, 26, 27, 29, 31, 32, 33, 34, 35, 36, 37, 38, 60, 61, 62, 63, 65, 66, 67, 68	"Craig", "Katherine", "Jennifer"	Bag of Groceries sunset? two old suitcases	Craig: Ordinary* Katherine: Ordinary* Jennifer: Bathing Suit	Craig: Ordinary Katherine: Ordinary Katherine: Scaly eye Katherine: Scaly fingertip Katherine: Webbed fingers	
7 Coastal/Actor Shoot		Coastal OR, Mom's inc. K)	3, 22?, 55 (closer to inc. K), 56, 57, 58	"Craig", "Katherine"		Katherine: Ordinary*		
8 Train Station Shoot		Union Station	18, 19, 20, 21	"Katherine"		old fashioned dress (Katherine)	Katherine: Ordinary	
13 COSTUMES						Katherine (Ordinary): Jeans, dark-colored turtleneck or other knit top, tennis-shoes Craig (Ordinary): Jeans, solid t-		



FILMING, AND OTHER MADNESS

- Plan the shoot – shoot the plan
- Bonus shots
- Watching the clock
- Food



PLAN THE SHOOT – SHOOT THE PLAN

- Get the shot!
- Keep everyone on task.
- Be flexible – things might not work out the way you planned.
- Take regular breaks for food, etc.
- The Director is the mood of the project, so if you're the Director, remain calm, remain cheerful, get your head in the game and keep it there.
- Thank everyone.



BONUS SHOTS

- It's okay to grab 'em, but don't get lost.



WATCHING THE CLOCK

- Time keeps on slippin'...



FOOD

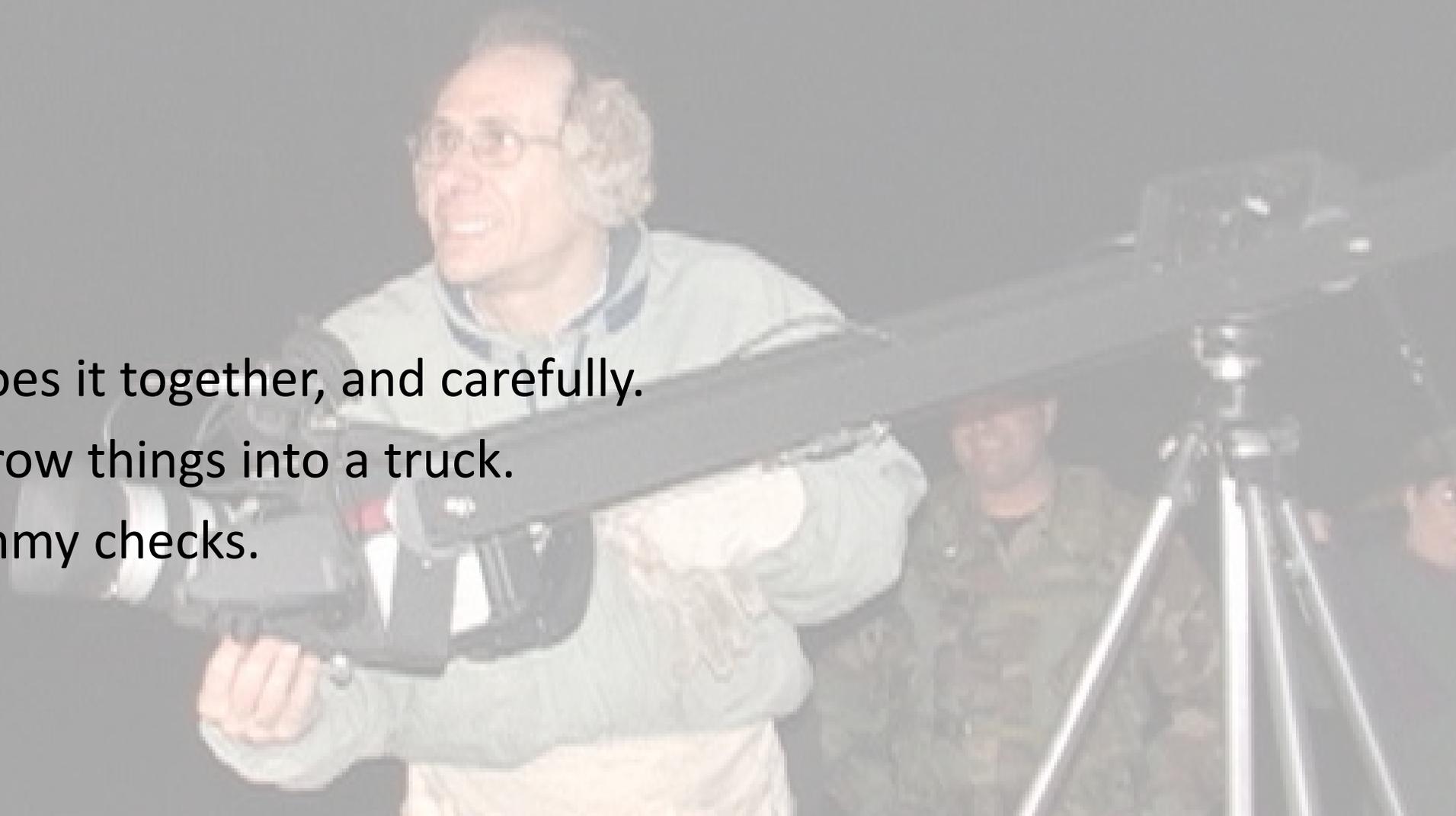
- Always take meal breaks.
- Make sure the food is good.





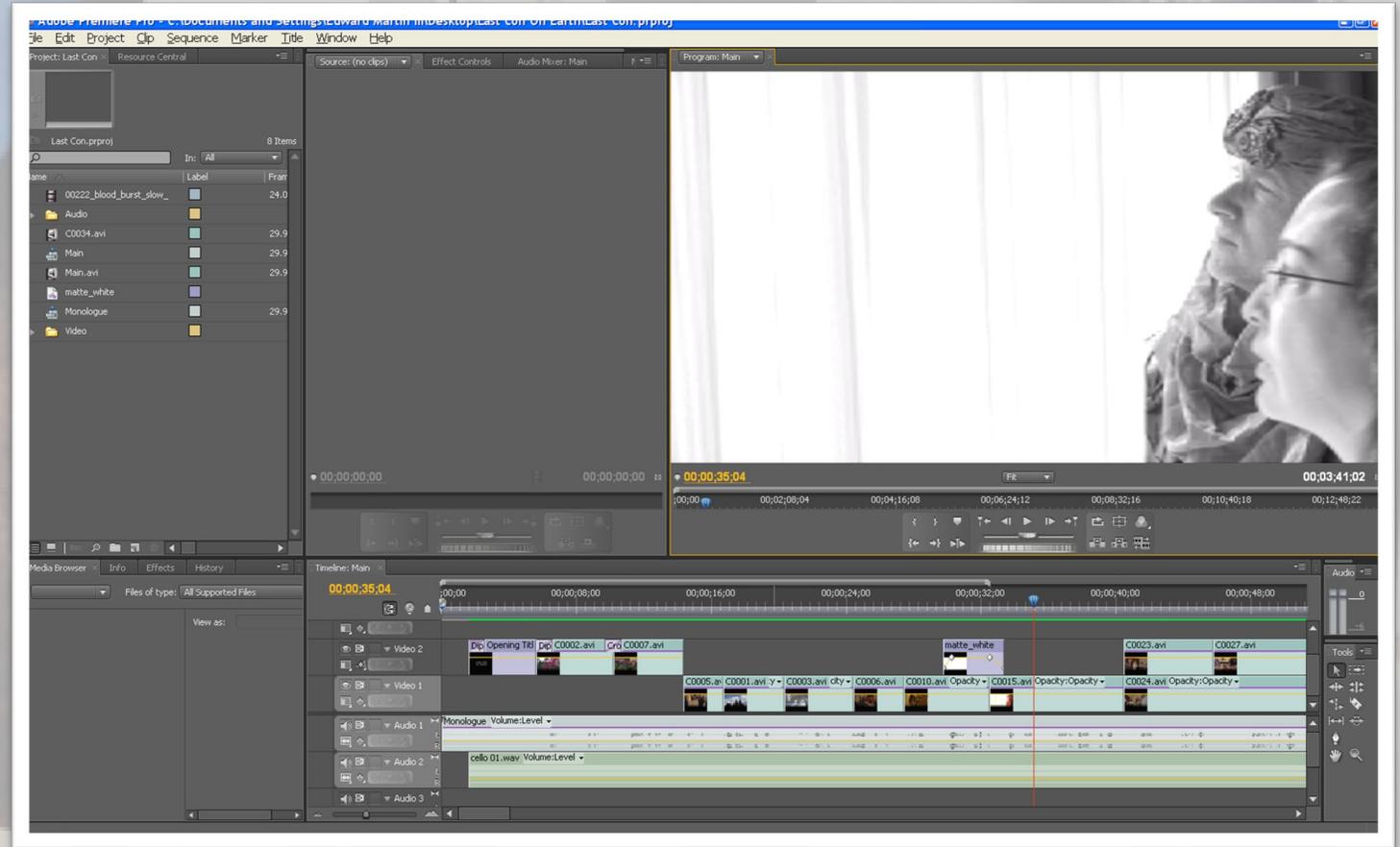
(LEANUP

- Everybody does it together, and carefully.
- Don't just throw things into a truck.
- Multiple dummy checks.



EDITING

- Tools
- Assembly cut
- Final cut
- Special effects
- Sound design
- Music



EDITING

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The DIY Video Editor

The Best Video Editing Software 2025

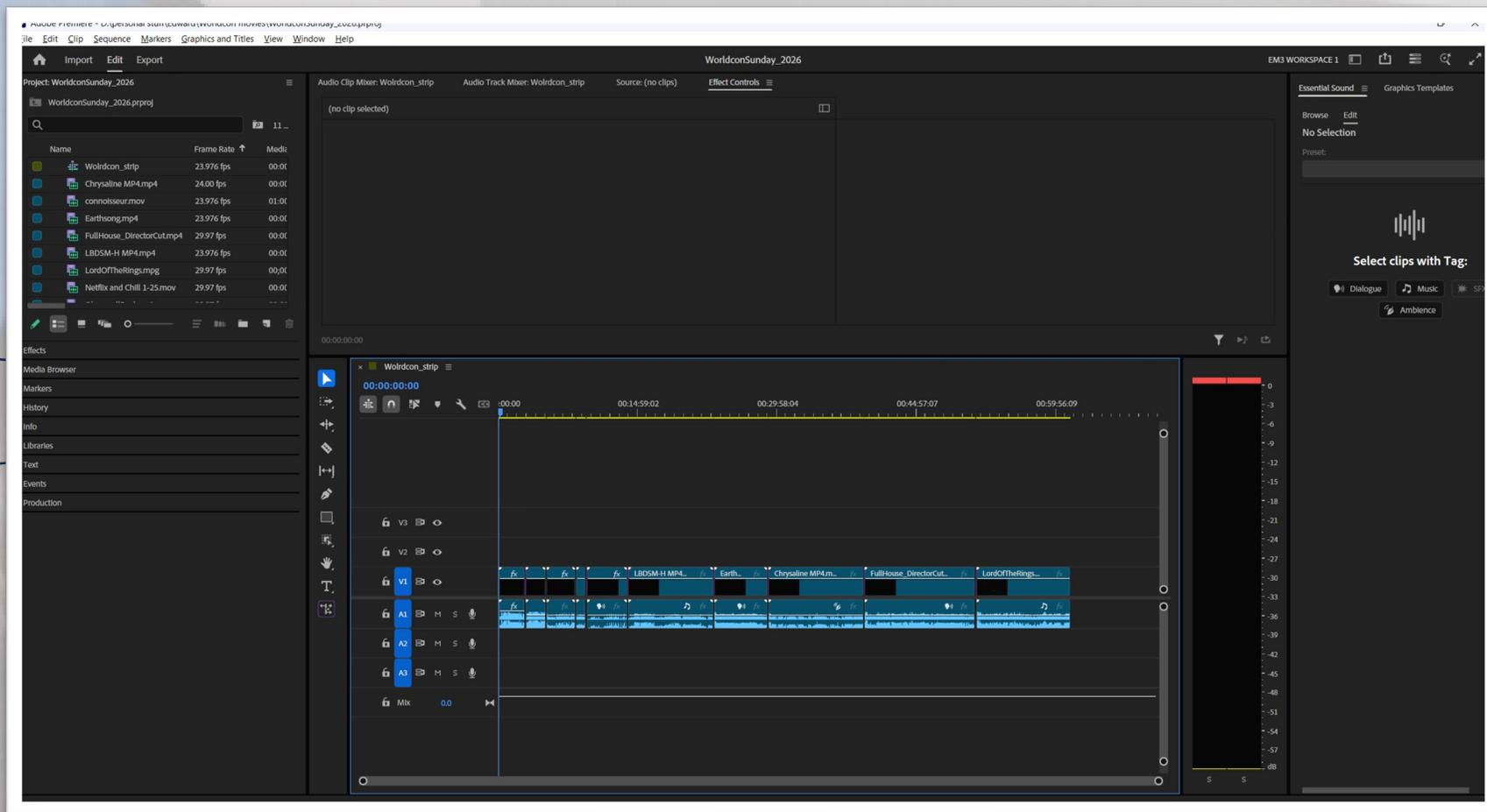


Answering the question of what is the best video editing software is a difficult task given that everyone will have different requirements as to what they want that software to do.

So at a bare minimum here's what I think needs to be covered.

EDITING

- Tools
- Assembly cut
- Final cut
- Special effects
- Sound design
- Music



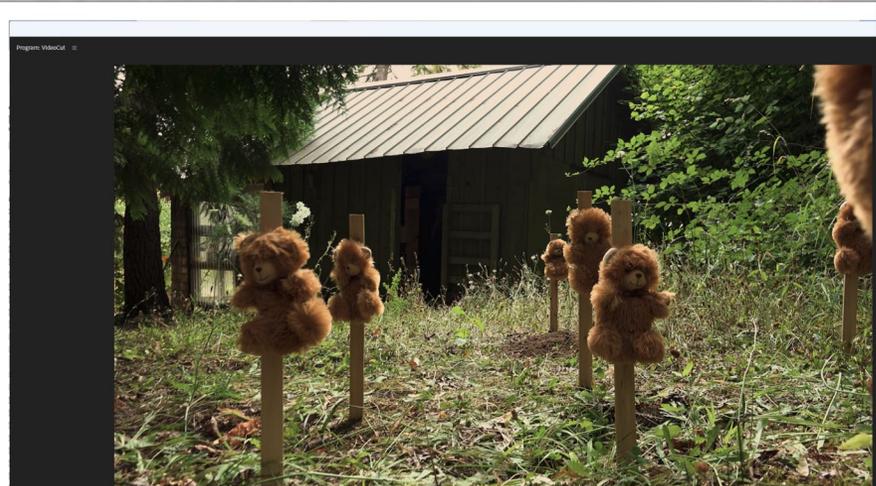
EDITING

- Tools
- Assembly cut
- Final cut
- Special effects

The screenshot displays the Adobe Premiere Pro interface for a project named "Seeds_2026". The top menu bar includes File, Edit, Clip, Sequence, Markers, Graphics and Titles, View, Window, and Help. The main workspace is divided into several panels:

- Effects Panel:** Lists various editing tools such as Media Browser, Markers, History, Info, Libraries, Text, Events, and Production.
- Project Panel:** Shows the project structure with folders for Audio, Black Video, Footage, and Music. It also lists video clips like "Seeds Linked Comp 01/SeedTracksho" and "Seeds Linked Comp 02/SeedTracksho" at 23.976 fps.
- VideoCut Panel:** The central timeline area showing a multi-track sequence. Tracks include V1 (Video), A1 through A8 (Audio), and various effect tracks. A blue playhead is positioned at 00:01:07:18. The timeline shows a sequence of clips, including a video clip "CO018.MP4 [V]" and several audio tracks with waveforms and effect markers.

The bottom of the interface shows a system tray with a weather widget (40°F, Mostly cloudy), a search bar, and various application icons.



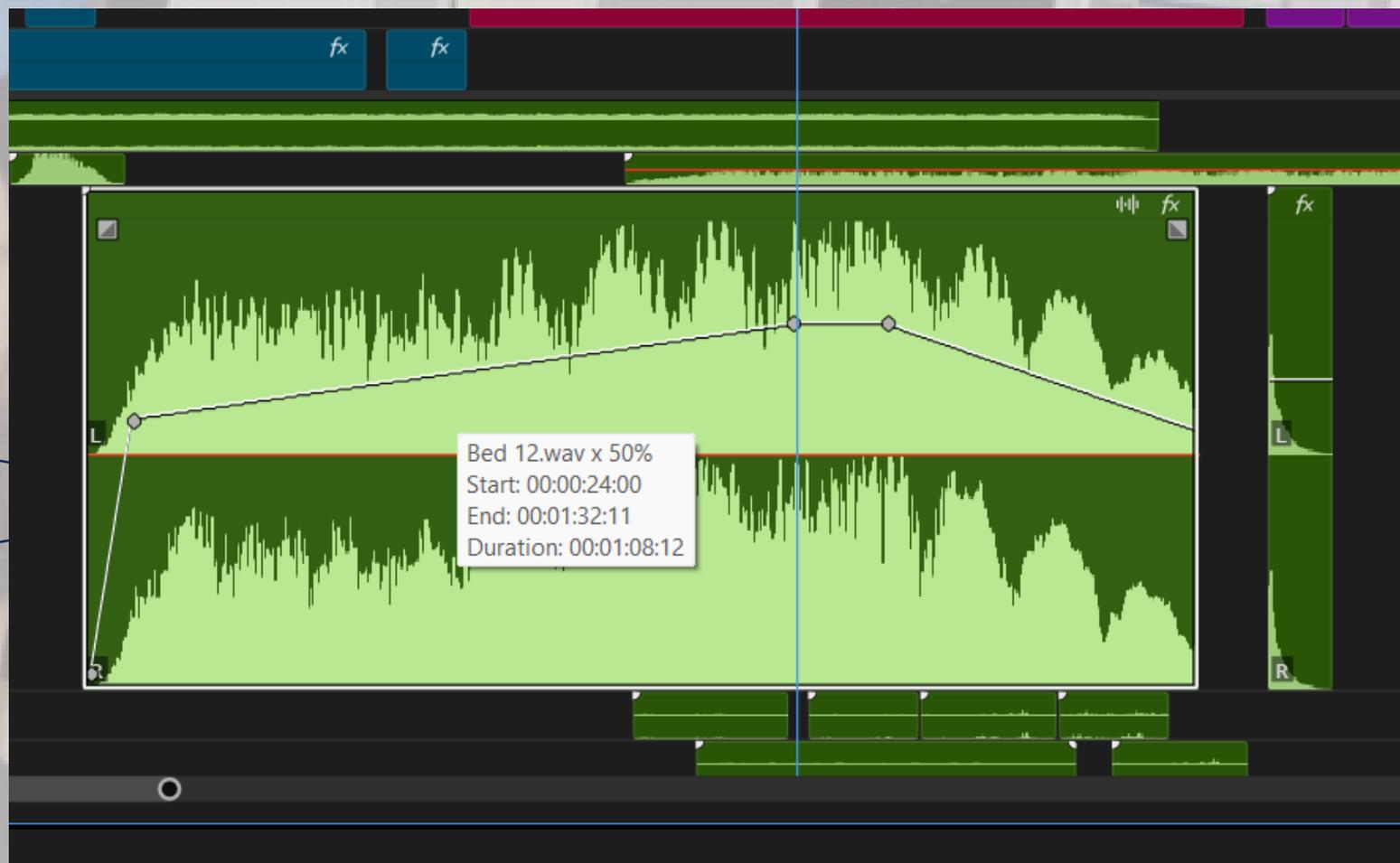
EDITING

- Tools
- Assembly cut
- Final cut
- Special effects
- Sound design
- Music



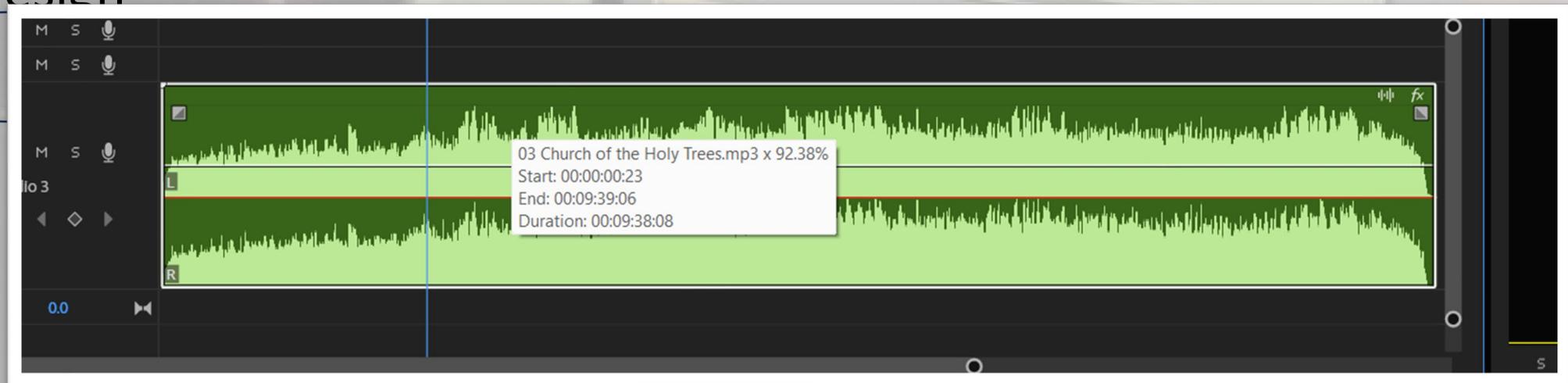
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EDITING

- Tools
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DISTRIBUTION - SHARING THE JOY

- Film Festivals
- Rent a Theater
- Digital streamers (Amazon, YouTube, Instagram, Patreon, Curios, etc.)
- Physical media

FILM FESTIVALS



Lots of fun, but can get expensive to submit, and for travel and lodging.

RENT A THEATER

Four-walling a theater can be scary, but also exhilarating.

Best for features.

Super satisfying, but also can be terrifying if it doesn't work.



DIGITAL STREAMERS

amazon

The Amazon logo, featuring the word "amazon" in a bold, black, lowercase sans-serif font. Below the text is a curved orange arrow that starts under the letter 'a' and ends under the letter 'z', pointing to the right.

 **CURIOS**

The Curios logo, consisting of a teal circular icon on the left. The icon contains a white shape that resembles a keyhole or a stylized letter 'C'. To the right of the icon, the word "CURIOS" is written in a bold, dark blue, uppercase sans-serif font.

You  **Tube**

The YouTube logo, featuring the word "You" in a bold, black, lowercase sans-serif font. To its right is a red rounded square containing the word "Tube" in a bold, white, uppercase sans-serif font.

 **patreon**

The Patreon logo, featuring an orange icon on the left that is a stylized lowercase 'p' inside a circle. To the right of the icon, the word "patreon" is written in a bold, dark grey, lowercase sans-serif font.

PHYSICAL MEDIA

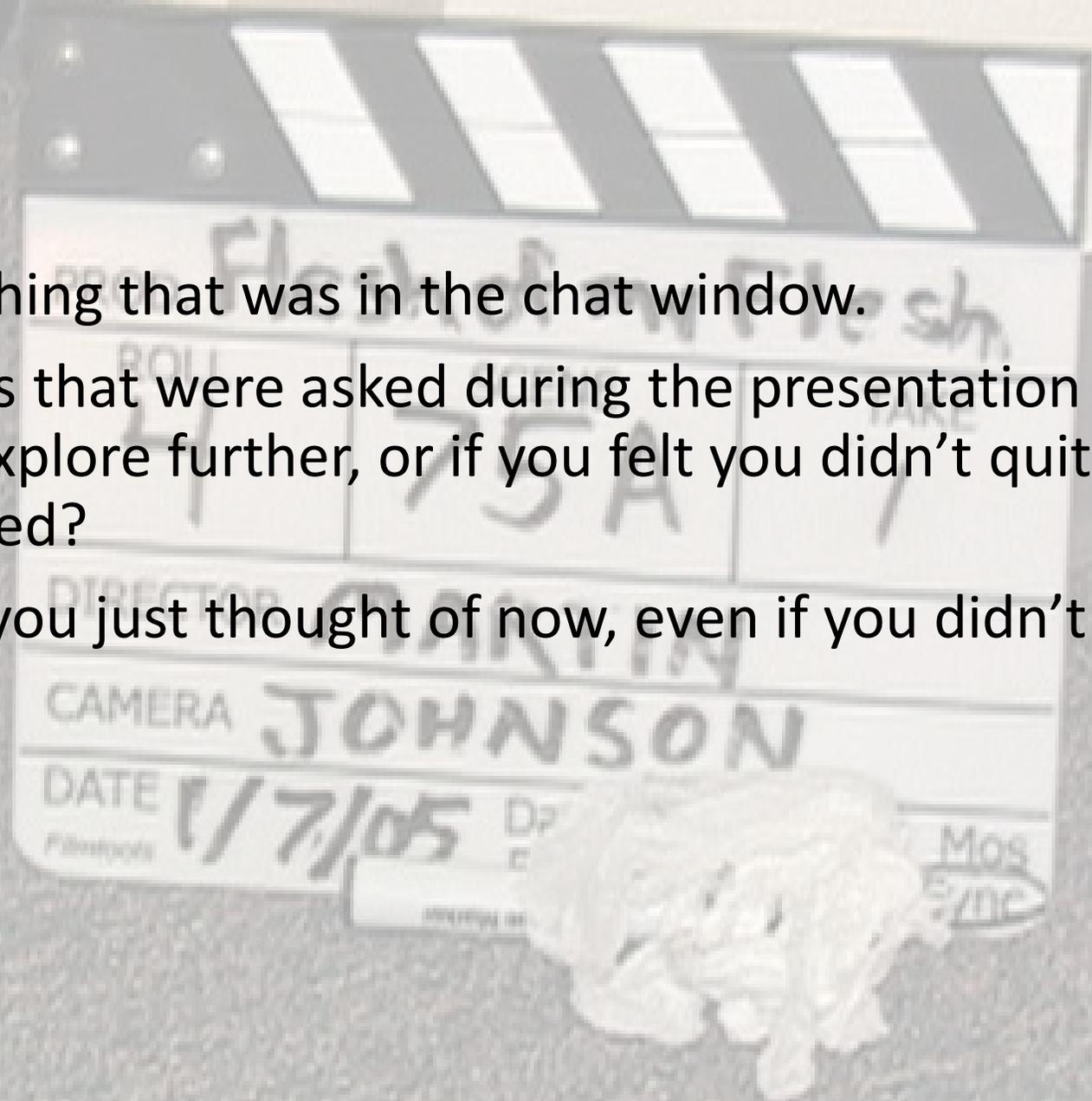
Creating physical media is a much larger collection of skills than filmmaking, including digital asset creation, menu design, graphic artist work, print-buying, and a fair amount of slick salesmanship.

Totally doable, but not for the faint of heart.



QUESTIONS?

- Let's see if we got everything that was in the chat window.
- Were there any questions that were asked during the presentation that you wanted me to explore further, or if you felt you didn't quite get the answer you needed?
- Are there any questions you just thought of now, even if you didn't think of them earlier?





THANK YOU!

- Thank you, Autism Empowerment!
- Thank you, Brian Tashima!
- Thank you, Gwyn LaRee!
- Thank you everyone still hangin' on!



JUST IN CASE...

If you want to visit my website, check out the stuff we do,
just point your browser to HellbenderMedia.com

