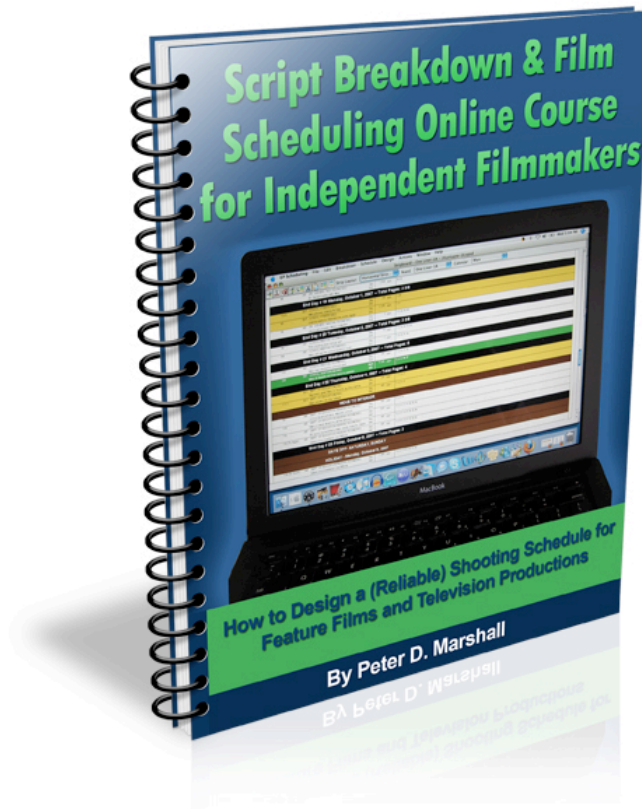


**Thank you for downloading your free copy of
the **first 30 pages** of this 165 page Online course.**



**Script Breakdown and Film Scheduling
Online Course For Independent Filmmakers
- Part One -**

*How to Design a (Reliable) Shooting Schedule
for Feature Films and Television Productions*

Updated - April 3, 2013

Peter D. Marshall

<http://actioncutprint.com>

pdm@actioncutprint.com

**Peter D. Marshall has worked (and survived) in the Film and Television
Industry for over 38 years - as a Film Director, Television Producer,
First Assistant Director and Series Creative Consultant.**

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(1)

- PART ONE -
The Script Breakdown and Film Scheduling
Online Course For Independent Filmmakers



Dear Filmmaker,

I would like to thank you very much for purchasing “The Script Breakdown and Film Scheduling Online Course For Independent Filmmakers - Part One *How to Design a (Reliable) Shooting Schedule for Feature Films and Television Productions.*”

In 1985, I got my first professional job as an Assistant Director when I was the 2nd AD on the 13 x half-hour Television series called “*The Hitchhiker.*” A year later, I became the First Assistant Director on a small Canadian TV series called “*Hamilton’s Quest.*” I’ve not looked back since!

About 19 years ago, I created a 2-day workshop called “*How to Design an Accurate Film Shooting Schedule.*” As the film and television industry changed and grew over the years, I modified the content of that workshop to keep up to date with all the new filmmaking techniques I was learning. That 2-day workshop has now become the model for this Online course.

I am very excited about the quality of the content I’m going to share with you throughout this 165-page course. Even though the title says “Script Breakdown and Film Scheduling,” this course is much more than that. When you are finished, you will have gained in-depth industry knowledge of the entire pre-production stage of making an independent film or TV series.

And one more thing - this course is not just for Assistant Directors. It was also written for Directors, Producers, Production Managers and any other filmmaker who wants to discover the proper steps involved in breaking down a script and creating a realistic film shooting schedule.

Peter D. Marshall
Vancouver, Canada
April 3, 2013

- Part Two -
**"Creating the Daily Prep Schedule
for Feature Films and Television Productions"**

To complement Part One of this course, I created another ebook called *"Creating the Daily Prep Schedule for Films and Television Productions"* which adds an important dimension to the pre-production part of this script breakdown and film scheduling course.

What I did was choose the actual Daily Prep Schedules from 11 Feature Film and Television productions I worked on as a First Assistant Director: 3 Feature Films, 2 Television Movies, 2 Television Pilots and 4 episodes from two Television Series.

I then created 11 finished prep schedules (without using actual crew names or the production title) that show you step-by-step, day-by-day, meeting-by-meeting, what "actually occurred" during prep on these real film and TV productions.

And the best part of "Creating the Daily Prep Schedule for Films and Television Productions" is that you will be able to use each of these 11 prep schedules as actual templates for your own films or TV productions.

Not only can you use these 11 Daily Prep Schedules as valuable reference tools to print out and study, but you can also use each of them as actual templates to help you better organize and schedule the daily meetings and scouts for any movie or TV show during prep.

To find out more about Part Two of this course, "Creating the Daily Prep Schedule for Feature Films and Television Productions," please click here: <http://www.actioncutprint.com/dps/dailyprepschedule.html>

BONUS - I have also included one Feature Film Prep Schedule Template at the end of this course for you to look at. (Page 152)

"The Script Breakdown & Film Scheduling course itself was already a great help to my filmmaking career. Now that I have these Prep Schedule templates, it makes my understanding of the whole process a lot clearer than before." Max Marois, Vancouver, Canada

Website Links, Audio and Video Files

**(Pages 4 - 7 contain the website links, audio files
and video files for the entire 165 page course.)**

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(1) Foreword by Producer David Roessell

<http://www.imdb.com/name/nm0736462/>

When Peter asked me to write the foreword to his Script Breakdown and Film Scheduling course, it came as a surprise: not so much that Peter would ask the favor of me, but rather that anyone would think I had something to say on the subject.

But Peter's request made me think about the time I've spent working in the entertainment business and the undeniable and extensive experience that has resulted. I've been a producer for over 20 years and have participated in hundreds of hours of film and television productions.

I'm a "nuts and bolts" producer, usually hired by a studio, television network or Executive Producer to administrate and guide the day to day production of the project, from the initial budgeting through the final delivery.

The physical production of a film or television program is expensive and complicated. Every project requires the establishment of a temporary infrastructure to administrate the process and establish a plan by which the script will be realized into a finished entertainment.

At the commercial level, the production process typically involves hundreds of people with a diversity of specializations: producers, directors, writers, artists, technicians, actors, accountants, drivers, carpenters, lawyers, insurers...the list goes on and on.

Key to this process is the core production management team, usually consisting of a producer such as myself, a production manager, production coordinator, accountant, staff and, critically, the assistant directors.

The role of the assistant director is not generally well known or understood outside of the production environment. Typically, the Director is the most important creative individual on any project, working with the producers, writers, artists and crew to visualize the script and transform it into an entertainment. The assistant directors are the instrument by which the director's creative vision is quantified and interfaced with the rest of the staff and crew.

The First Assistant Director heads the AD Department, is the right hand of the Director and, more than any other single individual, sets the tone and pace of the production. As the Director's right hand, the First AD is responsible for scheduling the director's time during the preparatory period, breaking down the script into a shooting schedule, coordinating the efforts of all of the individual departments and running the set during principal photography.

It is the duality of the AD position that makes it so essential and so interesting(.) In addition to being the right hand of the director, from my perspective, the AD is also the right hand of the producer(.) It is the frisson that is created between the mutually exclusive creative demands of the Director and the practical and financial demands of the Producer that are the rock and a hard place between which the ADs often find themselves.

The best Assistant Directors serve "the production," realizing that the entire project cannot remain viable if only the creative vision of the director is served. Similarly, a project that is "on time and on budget," but is creatively lacking and doesn't entertain won't succeed. The best and most successful commercial films and television projects do both and the Assistant Director's contribution is often key.

I've been fortunate to work in locations all over the world and with a multitude of Assistant Directors of differing styles and nationalities. Peter Marshall is my favorite Assistant Director, anywhere. Some of my fondness is just personal...there are always dozens of people who are qualified for every position on a film crew...so one of the questions you ask yourself is, "who do you want to spend 18 hours a day with," and Peter's name is always first on my list.

Peter has a great talent for navigating the challenging waters of empowering the director while remaining sensitive to the fiscal realities of the producer. He has an extraordinary grasp of the challenging task of scheduling a production and does so with an eye not only to the demands of the director's vision, but with a nearly prescient ability to factor in all of the unpredictable variables that characterize a film production.

Peter is a renaissance man, bringing to any production not only the skill set of a seasoned professional, but also the life experience of a dimensional person, the enthusiasm of a film student and the good humor of an old friend.

I remember the last day of filming on location in Rome, Italy on “The Lizzie McGuire Movie.”

Peter had brilliantly and daringly scheduled three weeks of exterior, daytime filming in the Italian Capitol without a single day of weather cover. After 2.8 weeks of sunshine, on the final day of filming the skies opened up and the entire crew spent most of the morning hunkered down in cafes downing espresso.

A rain tarp had blown free of the expensive prototype automobile that had been loaned to the production and it was filling up with water in the picturesque square. I ran out to wrestle with the flapping vinyl, cursing my choice to work in a creative profession, when who should join me but Peter Marshall.

Lending a hand in that moment was a simple gesture...but it said so much about Peter's professionalism, priorities and humanity. Every time I work with Peter, I'm reminded of these unique qualities and how they are a defining element of how he approaches his life and work as a filmmaker.

Every good wish,

David Roessell
Auckland, New Zealand

(2) My 40 Years in “The Business”

I have a passion for making movies.

I first started making films (on Super 8 no less) when I was 16 years old. I'd make movies of our high school parties, film my friends as they drove around in their cars and created pixelated animations with model race cars in my basement.

After graduating from Grade 12, I spent three years in film school in Toronto (1970 - 1973) and then hit the streets looking for THE job that would kick-start my filmmaking career.

My first professional film job (which meant I finally got paid!) was on a Carts commercial in 1974. I was the PA holding a brown paper bag just under the camera so when the director called "Cut!" the actor could spit out his candy into the bag I was holding.

Yes... those were the days!

During my 40-year career, I have worked as a PA, dolly grip, electrician, assistant cameraman, commercial production manager, first assistant director, TV series creative consultant, television producer and director.

I have had the opportunity to work on many different types of productions, from industrial films to documentaries; television commercials to music videos; Emmy Award nominated TV series to Hollywood feature films.

I have directed over 30 episodes of Television Drama and written, directed or produced over 50 hours of documentary and educational programs. (My documentaries and dramas have won, or been nominated for, 14 International film awards.)

As a First Assistant Director, I have been employed on 13 Hollywood Feature Films, 15 Television Movies, 6 Television Series, 4 TV Pilots (all of which went to series!) and over 20 Commercials.

I have worked for directors such as Zack Snyder, John Woo, Ed Wick, Phillip Noyce, John Balham, Roger Adam, Anne Wheeler, Bobby Roth and Kim Manners.

I have also worked with such amazing and talented actors as Michelle Pfeiffer, Kevin Spacey, Morgan Freeman, John Travolta, Mel Gibson, Kathy Bates, Adam Sander, Halle Berry and Peter O'Toole (Yes! I even got to work with "Lawrence of Arabia!")

I have spent my career in the "trenches" of the film and TV industry. I've had the chance to co-ordinate huge WW1 battle scenes, to plan complicated visual FX scenes, manage large groups of extras and direct intimate emotional scenes between two actors.

By having this unique opportunity to work as both a Television director and a Feature 1st Assistant Director, I have been able to get "up close and personal" with major Hollywood studios and producers, exciting and imaginative directors and Academy Award winning actors.

Starting as a 1st AD

The first major TV series I worked on as a 1st Assistant Director was a Steven J. Cannel production called "*Stingray*" in 1986. I had been the 1st AD on a small Canadian TV series called "*Hamilton's Quest*" before that, but "*Stingray*" was my leap into the "big times."

Needless to say, I was a little nervous going onto a big American TV series. I remember my first day on the set. We were outside, in the winter, beside a huge ship on one of the many docks in Vancouver.

Not only was I nervous, but I also had a cold. The end result was that I eventually lost my voice as the day progressed. So I asked the props department for a megaphone which I then used to relay my instructions.

Well, as you can appreciate, the crew took great exception to this "sound invasion", and at every opportunity, they would hide the megaphone from me somewhere on the dock. Lesson learned!

After "*Stingray*" I worked on several more TV series with Cannell until I became one of the 1st AD's on "*Wiseguy*." I worked on this Emmy nominated TV series for two years and for the first time, it gave me an inside look at how the cast and crew on a TV series could become a family.

I remember we used to have "career days" which happened when were ahead of schedule and in the studio on a Friday. This was when most everyone on the crew (and some cast) would switch jobs for an entire scene.

It was very interesting to see an actor pushing a dolly, a focus puller doing makeup and a 1st AD (me) mixing the sound! It gave us all a sense of camaraderie - and boy did we learn to respect other departments.

I also got my first big directing break on “*Wiseguy*” as well. This is something that happens occasionally on a TV series when other department heads get an opportunity to direct.

Writers, producers, DOP’s, actors, editors and 1st AD’s sometimes get a chance to direct at least one episode of a long running series. I ended up directing two episodes of “*Wiseguy*” and it helped open the doors for more directing assignments for me later on.

One day, after almost two years on the show, I got a phone call from the Production Manager who was working on a feature film called “*The Fly 2.*” He told me I was recommended by his Location Manager who used to work on “*Wiseguy*”.

The PM wanted to know if I was interested in coming in for an interview with the director. Of course, I jumped at the chance and ended up getting the job. So, in 1988, I left the TV series world (almost for good) and went to work on my first feature film!

The learning curve: there IS a difference between shooting feature films and shooting Television

In the script for “*The Fly 2*” we needed an interior office building where we could use the whole floor for a few days of filming. Several months before, I had worked on a TV episode in one building downtown. The floor had been repainted and several sets built. I mentioned that to the Location Manager. It was available. So off we went on our scout.

The director loved it immediately and I felt very proud of myself because this was one of my first scouts on my first feature film.

But my euphoria ended quickly.

The Production Designer went around the office pointing out all the faults in the design (such as the cheap wallpaper and the cheap paint job.) What he said next would remain with me for all my career. He said that “this location would work for television, but not on a 70 foot screen.” That was my first (of many) “Ah hah moments!” (Thanks Michael!)

I'll discuss later in this course some of the differences between television and feature films, but I started my learning process on that subject on "*The Fly 2*," and I thank the Production Designer for that.

Ups and Downs

Like anyone else in this business, I've had my share of unpleasant shows. I've worked with Directors who are abusive bullies, DOP's who like to "have AD's for breakfast" and Production Managers or Producers who will "tear out your soul" if the show is falling behind.

But I've also been blessed during my career to have worked on a great many wonderful productions which has enabled me to spend time with some very bright, talented and compassionate filmmakers.



"*Happy Gilmore*" for instance. I call this my "100% show" because every single member of the cast & crew showed up to do their jobs - and have fun..

The interesting thing about this movie, was that some days it was a little harder for me to do my job. Everybody was laughing and joking but someone (me of course) had to get everybody back to work. I like to have fun like everyone else, but alas, someone had to crack the whip!

All things considered, the majority of the people I have worked with in this business were (and are) wonderful. Making a movie is like belonging to a big family - but only for an intense and short period of time. And like any big family, some members just can't get along with the others.

As a filmmaker, I've been fortunate to have traveled around the world and witness events that most people don't get to see. If there is one wonderful result of my career, it is all the fabulous stories I can get to tell! And now I can tell stories and share my filmmaking experiences with you in this course.

(3) The 10 Commandments of Filmmaking

How to Work (and Survive) in the Film and Television Industry.

My years in the film and TV business have taught me many things, but the main thing I have learned is to “remain human at all costs.” By this I mean to simply “treat others as you would like to be treated yourself.”

Making a film is a stressful job. You have to remember that there is a great deal of money and hundreds of careers on the line everytime the camera rolls. It isn't just about you and how much you get paid.

When you enter this business, you step into the world of “entertainment.” Television and movies are just one part of this “make-believe” environment - dance, theatre and music are some other examples.

This is a business of artistic expression, massive egos and huge amounts of cash - a recipe for disaster if I ever saw one! It is also a business where you can lose your soul if you're not careful.

Remember the often cited (and industry changeable) quote of Hunter S. Thompson: *"The (television) business is a cruel and shallow money trench, a long plastic hallway where thieves and pimps run free, and good men die like dogs. There's also a negative side."*

With that in mind, I've created the following list of “Ten Commandments of Filmmaking” which is my way of showing how anyone can (and should) work and survive in this business - without getting OR giving ulcers!

This list also gives you some insight into my own personal philosophy and work ethic which I also discuss throughout this course. So here now are my “Ten Commandments of Filmmaking”:



1. It's only a movie - no one should get hurt
2. Ask lots of questions and never assume anything
3. There are no rules in filmmaking - only sins!
4. Listen to the people who know more than you do
5. You have to EARN respect - not demand it
6. Don't abuse your power - use Power Through not Power Over
7. Don't be afraid to change your mind
8. A healthy Ego is necessary - self importance is unnecessary
9. Have a sense of humour – and learn to laugh at yourself
10. Take 10 at lunch – and change your socks and shoes

Okay, let's go through each of these "rules" one-by-one.

C1. It's only a movie - no one should get hurt

This one should be obvious. Making any kind of film or TV production can be risky because there are so many natural hazards on a film set: crew members can trip over cables, fall off platforms, equipment can tumble on them, they can burn and cut themselves and they can slip down stairs.

Then there are the added hazards that are specific to our industry: breathing atmosphere smoke for long periods, accidents involving insert cars or process trailers, accidents involving stunts and special effects and noise hazards such as loud explosions and gunfire.

All crew members should be aware of the safety issues of working on any set. If you have any concerns or suggestions, talk to your shop steward, union representative or the First Assistant Director who, on most productions around the world, is the Set Safety Supervisor.

C2. Ask lots of questions and never assume anything

Don't be afraid to ask questions. Like the expression says, "The only dumb question is the one that was never asked." As an AD you have to listen and you have to ask questions. If something doesn't feel right, or it doesn't ring true, or it doesn't make sense, ask questions. Solve it now.

Assuming it will all work out or be "ready on the day" is wrong. If something in the script doesn't make sense, or you feel something is not working, deal with it right away. Because if it doesn't work in the script, it sure won't work when you are on set. This attitude of "it will be alright when we shoot," will come back and haunt you 9 times out of 10.

Never assume anything. Never!

Fix it, change it, eliminate it, solve it, get rid of it. Whatever IT is, do something about it before you go to camera.

C3. There are no rules in filmmaking - only sins!

This is probably my best piece of advice. It's not original - it's a quote from the legendary film director, Frank Capra: "There are no rules in filmmaking. Only sins! And the cardinal sin is dullness."

I want you to always remember this quote, and as you get up each morning and walk onto that set, refer to it often!

C4. Listen to the people who know more than you do

When was a Second AD on the TV Series "*Hitchhiker*" in 1985, I had to run the set for the first AD while he did some scheduling. Well, after a bit I got a little flustered, as this was my first time running the entire set.

Suddenly I heard my name. When I turned around, the dolly grip was waving me over to him. As I came closer, he smiled and said, "Peter, it's block, light, rehearse, tweak, shoot!" Words I will always remember. (Thanks Mike!)

The crew work on the set - all the time! That's what they do. They see directors and First AD's come and go. They know more than you do. Always will. Listen to them and you will become a better AD.

C5. You have to EARN respect - not demand it

The hierarchy of a movie is very much like the hierarchy of the Army: General's at the top and Privates at the bottom. And just like the Army, there are certain people in the higher positions that you won't like or you are unable to get along with.

Directors, 1st AD's and DOP's form the "Triumvirate" of any movie set. They are the people in charge. And many times you will be faced with the difficult task of working for months with one (or more) of these people who are egotistical, abusive, or sometimes, incompetent at their job.

In my experience (35 years on set & 58 years of life) I believe that the majority of cast or crew who act up on set are just insecure. And because they are in a position of authority working in a "creative environment," they feel they are "allowed" to have temper tantrums and yell at people.

This will always happen - and sometimes it happens a lot. How I deal with this, and suggest you do the same, is to remember this military expression: "You need to respect the Rank - but you don't have to respect the person."

C6. Don't abuse your power - use Power Through not Power Over

I alluded to this in #5. As a First AD, you have a very powerful position in the film industry. The Director hires you for your organizational skills and your command of the set; the Producers look to you to make sure the movie comes in on time and on budget; the crew look to you for leadership.

The "rank" of 1st AD means you get to carry "a big stick". But a lot of AD's will abuse this power and yell and scream and make everyone's life miserable. In other words, they will take advantage of their position and take power over people.

Here's a good thought...let's yell and scream at everyone and maybe they will work harder! NOT! I remember another dolly grip (gotta watch out for these guys!) who said to me early in my career, "If you don't like this speed, you're going to hate the next one."

My philosophy is to take the other route. In other words, use "power through." What this means is to work with your crew and bring them all together as a team and work it out together. The crew know you are in charge. You don't have to flaunt it.

C7. Don't be afraid to change your mind

I read a self-help book once that also had a set of ten commandments and one of them was "It's okay to change your mind."

This makes a lot of sense, especially when you are a First AD because you are making decisions all the time. Some of your decisions may need to change after you get more information from other people. The problem happens if your ego gets in the way.

I did that once. I thought I had the right answer and I didn't want to change the schedule even though the Director and PM thought we couldn't make it.

Well..we didn't and I cost the production money. All because I didn't want to do the extra work and also because I didn't want to change my decision for fear that others would feel I didn't know what I was doing (which turned out to be correct in this instance anyway.) Lesson learned!

C8. A healthy Ego is necessary - self importance is unnecessary

There is an important distinction between Ego and Self-importance.

Ego can be defined as "your consciousness of your own identity." You need an ego in this business because Ego is important for your survival. Ego helps you to believe in yourself, it helps you to get up in the morning knowing that you still have things to learn but you are good at your job and you will get through your day by being fair and respecting others.

On the other hand, self-importance (or what I call "misplaced ego") is "an inflated feeling of pride in your superiority to others." I believe it is this trait (more than anything else) that makes working and surviving in the entertainment industry harder than it has to be.

Here's my formula for knowing when you are working on a bad set:
(Insecurity + self-importance = people we all hate to work with)

C9. Have a sense of humour – and learn to laugh at yourself

This rule should probably be #1 on this list.

In my experience, the best film sets are the ones that have a relaxed and professional atmosphere presided over by a creative director with no insecurity issues; an experienced 1st AD with no attitude problems; and a DOP who loves the collaboration process and realizes that “making a film is not all about the lighting!”

Making a movie is hard work, and the occasional break from the stress and intensity of it by a film crew having a laugh pays for itself many times over.

I have found that my sense of humour (and my large repertoire of bad jokes and puns!) have gotten me through some very difficult times. Also, I think it is important to feel that you can say to the crew, “I don’t care whether you laugh at me or about me, as long as you laugh!” Kind of refers back to #8 doesn’t it?

C10. Take 10 at lunch – and change your socks and shoes

As a First AD you stand on your feet all day. Taking a moment after lunch to change you socks and shoes is a blissful moment – it actually re-energizes you. There is probably some psychological or chemical reason for this that I don’t understand, but whatever it is, try it because it does work!

I like to take about 10 - 15 minutes on my own somewhere off set during lunch to have a quiet time. This is where I can “recharge my batteries.”

As an Assistant Director, you have to be on your game all day and make hundreds of decisions with the crew constantly asking you questions. Taking time some time for yourself is really, really important to keep your body relaxed and your mind sharp.

One extreme example of this was the time we were shooting “*The Lizzie McGuire Movie*” in Rome. The scene we were filming took place at the Trevi Fountain and it involved our main actors and over 100 extras.

But here’s the “best” part. In order to shoot at this location (one of the most famous in Rome) we could not disrupt or hold back the tourists, which meant we had to shoot this long scene with not only our crew, cast and extras, but with thousands of tourists crowding us on all sides.

Add into this mix the fact that we had not only Italian extras and an Italian crew with our Italian First AD translating everything, but we also had to deal with the fact that the Trevi Fountains were loud. VERY LOUD!

When we broke for lunch, my ears were ringing.

Fortunately, they have one hour lunches in Italy (not like the half-hour lunches in North America.) After I ate, I excused myself from the restaurant and found a deserted doorway where I could sit and escape the crazy film world for a much needed 10 minutes of solitude. That few minutes (and a chocolate gelato) got me through the rest of the day.

Here are Three Golden Rules every director must know to survive in the Film & TV business today!

<http://actioncutprint.com/rules>

Will This Industry Eat You Up?

<http://filmmakeriq.com/2009/03/will-this-industry-eat-you-up/>

How to Survive the Movie Business

<http://www.filmmakingstuff.com/how-to-survive-the-movie-business/>

How to Break into the Film Industry

http://geniustypes.com/how_to_break_into_the_film_industry/#

Getting a Lucky Break in the Film Industry

http://www.skillset.org/film/jobs/article_3688_1.asp

Ten Steps (Plus One) For How To Survive The Current Indie Producer Hell

<http://trulyfreefilm.hopeforfilm.com/2009/09/ten-steps-plus-one-for-how-to-survive.html>

Jobs in Film, Television, Video and Digital Media Production

<http://www.productionhub.com/jobs/>

Film/TV Careers: Assess Yourself

http://filmtvcareers.about.com/od/gettingthejob/a/GJ_Assessment.htm

Film/TV Careers: Helpful Resources

http://filmtvcareers.about.com/od/helpfulresources/FilmTV_Careers_Helpful_Resources.htm

Find a Job in Film TV - Employment Broadcast Recruitment

<http://www.mandy.com/1/filmtvjobs.cfm?jt=zzz>

Film Jobs, TV Jobs Feature Film and Television Production Jobs Crew Jobs

<http://www.entertainmentcareers.net/jcat.asp?jcat=109>

(4) Personal Observations

I've been working in the film and TV industry for over 35 years and during that time I've had many young filmmakers ask me these same five questions:

1. How do I get into the film and television business?
2. How do I get people to notice my "obvious talents"?
3. How do I become a 3AD, 2AD, 1AD, PM, Director?
4. What are the tricks to getting work and surviving in this business?
5. How do I become successful?

Well, as you have probably guessed by now from your own experiences, there is no right answer - no one answer – no special secret! Yes...we all need to find our own way in.

But to guide you along the right path, I've come up with ten "factors" that I believe you need to have, learn or nurture to help you pursue your dream of working (and making a living) in this business:

1. Experience (make videos; go to film school; work for free)
2. Luck (being at the right place at the right time)
3. Connections (who you know)
4. Passion (if you don't have this, give up now)
5. Determination (believe in yourself)
6. Creativity (we are all born with a special gift. What's yours?)
7. Business (learn the steps on how to run a business)
8. Marketing (learn how to market and promote yourself)
9. Politics (understand the "unspoken rules" of the film world)
10. Win the lottery (or have a rich relative)

So what does all of this have to do with being an Assistant Director?

Everything!

I believe that to be successful in this business means:

1. You have to have an understanding of the POLITICS OF FILM!
2. You have to have a knowledge of who the POWER PLAYERS ARE AND HOW TO DEAL WITH THEM!
3. You need to know as much as you can about EVERYONE ELSE'S JOB!
4. You need to have a KNOWLEDGE OF YOUR CRAFT!
5. You need to know what is expected of you when you begin pre-production and when you step on the set
6. But most of all, you have to have PASSION! (Because some days that may be the only thing that will keep you going.)

As you read through this course, I would like you to remember that many of the techniques I talk about are based on my way of doing things - it is not the only way.

Keep in mind that as you advance in your filmmaking career, you will discover what works best for others - but then, and this is the important part, you must find out what works best for you.

The Business - Understanding Film

<http://www.skillset.org/film/business/>

Film Biz 101

<http://www.filmbiz101.com/>

Breaking Into The Film Business

<http://www.discoverfame.com/business/film-business/>

The Business Of Film and The Business Of Film Daily

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

This Business of Film: A Practical Guide to Achieving Success in the Film

<http://bit.ly/AF9WdV>

(5) The Differences Between Feature Films and Television

As I mentioned earlier, there is a big difference between shooting a Television episode and shooting a feature film. What I am mostly referring to here, is the “industry politics.”

For the following exercise, I am assuming that both the TV program and the Feature Film are dramas and that the TV networks are commercial in nature.

1. Here are some differences:

In Television you have a Network (CBC / ABC / NBC /Fox).

In Film you have a Studio (Paramount / Universal / Lions Gate).

In Television you have a small screen.

In Film you have a large screen.

In Television you have commercials interrupt the program.

In Film you have a no interruption of the film.

In Television you have network license fees.

In Film you have studio or private financing.

What are some more differences that you can come with?

Another Difference Between TV and Film

<http://funjoel.blogspot.com/2007/01/another-difference-between-tv-and-film.html>

What Is The Difference Between TV And Film?

<http://www.blurtit.com/q593598.html>

Is there any technical difference between TV serial shooting and Cine shooting?

<http://sawaal.libibo.com/movies/technical-difference-between-tv-serial-shooting-cine-shooting-224294.html>

The Relationship Between Film and Television

<http://www.filmreference.com/encyclopedia/Romantic-Comedy-Yugoslavia/Television-THE-RELATIONSHIP-BETWEEN-FILMAND-TELEVISION.html>

Screenwriting: The Difference Between a TV Script and a Movie Script

<http://www.steves-digicams.com/knowledge-center/how-tos/filmmaking-tips/screenwriting-the-difference-between-a-tv-script-and-a-movie-script.html>

2. Now here are some similarities:

Both need time and money to produce

Both require scripts

Both require actors

Both require (what else...?)

3. But the #1 difference between TV and Feature films is this:

Television is a **Producer's Medium.**

Feature Films are a **Director's Medium.**

This fact alone will give you a distinct advantage when it comes to surviving in the film and TV industry.

Need some proof?

Here's a short exercise I would like you to do.

Look at the following two lists. Write down the name of a director or a producer who you feel had the most influence on the creation of each project:

List A

Black Rain
Raging Bull
Once Upon a Time in the West
The Godfather

List B

Hill Street Blues
Miami Vice
Wiseguy
Law and Order

The names may vary slightly, but List A are Feature Films and the names you probably came up with were the directors.

List B are Television Series and the names you probably came up with were the producers.

Here are the names I have used:

List A

Black Rain (Dir: Ridley Scott)
Raging Bull (Dir: Martin Scorsese)
Once Upon a Time in the West (Dir: Sergio Leone)
The Godfather (Dir: Francis Ford Coppola)

List B

Hill Street Blues (Prod: Steven Bochco)
Miami Vice (Prod: Michael Mann)
Wiseguy (Prod: Steven J. Cannel)
Law and Order (Prod: Dick Wolf)

Feature films are called “the big picture” because (theoretically) you get more time and more money compared to Television.

In Feature films you can have:

1. 1 set-up/day to 30 set-ups/day (average is 10-15 set-ups/day)
2. 1/2 page/day to 5 pages/day (average is 2 - 3 pages/day)
3. Very few location moves/day
4. 30 to 100 day shooting schedules (average is 40 - 60)
5. First AD Prep from 4 weeks to 12 weeks (average is 6 to 8 weeks)

Television is called “the sausage factory” because...well, it just is!

In Television you can have:

1. 20 set-ups/day to 50 set-ups/day (average is 25 - 40 set-ups/day)
2. 6 pages/day to 12 pages/day (average is 8 pages/day)
3. 1 to 3 location moves/day (average is 1 - 2 moves /day)
4. Half-hour dramas: 3 - 5 day shooting days /episode (average is 5 days)

5. One-hour dramas: 6 - 10 day shooting days/episode (average is 8 days)
6. First Assistant Director Prep is the same as the shooting days

NOTE: Here's a list of the most pages, set-ups and location moves I have ever had to complete in one day. (These figures are from three different Television shows I worked on.)

1. We shot 16 pages in one day
2. We shot 98 set-ups over 2 days
3. We had 3 location moves (that's 4 shooting locations on one day!)

As filmmakers, most of us aspire to work on big budget Feature Films, but the reality is, depending on where you live, you will probably spend most of your time doing episodic Television or low-budget indie films.

But this is not a bad thing!

Television and low-budget films are usually where we first discover the politics of the business. It's also where we learn to sharpen our skills, practice our craft and perfect our art.

Working on television series or low-budget films is also where we have a chance to rise up through the ranks and be noticed: the opportunity to be hired as the "First" in any department.

Here's a fact: if you can work and survive in Episodic Television, you can work easier in any other format (features, TV movies, commercials). In my experience, I find that it is much "easier" to move from Television to features than move from features to Television.

Why?

Understanding the differences and similarities between both Television and Film is essential to a successful and productive career in the film business because of one word: **POLITICS!**

Why?

Production Managers and Producers will contact each other for references and recommendations before hiring crew members. And like any business, what other people say about you is more important than what you can ever say about yourself!

So you need to always be aware of what the consequences will be if you are going to “burn a bridge” with any producer, director or Production Manager. In other words, before you say or do something that you may regret, ask yourself this question: “What is the short term benefit of my action going to be and what will the result of this action have on any future work.”

Remember, getting a job in this business is not just about how many credits you have. It is also about:

1. Who you know.
2. Who you have previously worked with.
3. Who you have upset (PM’s, Producers, Directors)

And sometimes, getting a job in this business is just about timing and good luck - being at the right place at the right time when the phone rings!

Movie Industry Politics

<http://articles.latimes.com/keyword/movie-industry-politics>

The Producer in Television

<http://www.museum.tv/eotvsection.php?entrycode=producerint>

Producing for TV and New Media: A Real-World Approach for Producers

<http://bit.ly/zzG9ea>

Creating Television: Conversations with the People Behind 50 Years of TV

<http://bit.ly/zar61j>

The Business Side of Film: From Start-up to Success

<http://michaelwiesefilms.blogspot.com/2006/03/business-side-from-start-up-to-success.html>

Movie Making Manual

http://en.wikibooks.org/wiki/Movie_Making_Manual

A Director’s Medium

<http://the-legend-of-decency.blogspot.com/2010/10/lazy-sunday-143-director-medium.html>

BONUS AUDIO FILES: The entire 165-page course is divided into 8 Sections and each Section has two mp3 files for easier downloading.

Here are the first two audios for these first 30 pages:

<http://www.actioncutprint.com/sbfs/audio/Audio1A.mp3>

<http://www.actioncutprint.com/sbfs/audio/Audio1B.mp3>

HOW TO GET THE REST OF THIS ONLINE COURSE:

If you are interested in finding out how you can get the rest of this course, including all 16 audio recordings and the 5 videos, please click here:

<http://www.actioncutprint.com/sbfs/scriptbreakdown-filmscheduling1.html>