

Questionnaire for Each Student of Class 3175.
Answer each question (as applicable) to best of your ability.
Value: 5%
Deadline: April 1st (Midnight) via email to: punkfilms@gmail.com
There will be no reminders.

TITLE OF PRODUCTION(S) YOU WORKD ON

Soft Cycle

SHOOT DATES Feb 28th-Mar 2nd 2014

YOUR NAME Steven Czikk

ROLE(S) Production Manager and DIT

Answer in succinct point form (one word answers are sometimes appropriate!). Most important: Be VERY detailed! DON'T generalize -- much more useful to have very specific stories of things that happened.

PRODUCTION MANAGERS

PREP

What was the best thing you did in prep?

Made thorough cast/crew contact sheets and shared amongst the keys.

What did you forget to do in prep?

Get contact info for the homeowner of the place we shot at (was handled through Julian.)

What software did you use for scheduling, budgeting, script breakdowns?

Microsoft Word and Excel

Anything you should have done on the tech scout but didn't?

Nothing.

Any specific insurance issues?

None.

BUDGETS & COST REPORT

What was your projected budget:

~\$3300

What were your final costs:

~\$3107

What was the division of the finance:

55% Director, 20% DOP, 10% PM, 5% Editor, 5% Sound

Anything you forgot to budget for? This is crucial – make this a definitive list.

Road salt, cleaning supplies, mostly just didn't budget enough in some areas

Biggest regret, budget-wise?

Hugely unhappy with money spent on steadicam op. Next worst was bloated food budget.

With parking tickets by cast/crew, who paid?

N/A

CREW

Which crew positions were hardest to fill?

Makeup/hair, DIT, and steadicam op.

York Crew: any specific crew members who did a fantastic job and who you'd recommend?

Julian did a great job as director, and Ryan put in a lot of legwork too. Eric also helped as AD in a pinch.

In hindsight, which crew members were you missing?

DIT - I had to do it. Otherwise, we were over-crewed at some other points.

Which departments were strong? Which were weak?

Grip team was very strong, so was camera. Our production designer and art team wasn't quite up to snuff.

Describe 2 specific crew/production conflicts/problems/mess-ups (major, minor) and how they were resolved? And... in hindsight, how you'd help to resolve it differently next time.

Our production designer wasn't good at telling me what she needed, and would give me night-before notice if she needed transportation or props. I needed to keep tabs on her more than some, and should have identified the problem sooner and initiated regular communication. There was also miscommunication between me and the craft person - she believed that she needed more money for food and spent that amount on the director's card. I should have been more firm and direct about how much she could spend, and given her petty cash as a leash.

What made the crew efficient?

Time, and our AD. We knew we had a lot to cover, and so we worked fast. Eric was a good AD and knew how to keep things moving.

What made the crew slow down?

Cold. Our one night shoot was terribly slow. It also suffered from poor planning for equipment/power.

What made the crew grumpy?

Again, cold, but not even that so much. They were well-fed and given handwarmers so that helped.

What made them happy?

There was more than enough food to go around and we were mostly in one location, with later call times.

EQUIPMENT

Best equipment decision.

Mats for the floors.

Worst equipment decision.

Not enough mats for the hardwood floors.

What got broken? Lost? Stolen?

One mic clip went missing, but it was recovered. Sound equipment was bad when we got it.

Night exteriors: equipment advice?

Avoid them in the winter on a snowy public sidewalk - led to most of our slowdown and grief.

Small interiors: equipment advice?

Didn't really have that problem, but I suppose staging unused equipment in another room or in the truck.

Car rig: advice?

N/A

Steadicam: advice?

Very expensive - learned that the going rate is \$60/hour and \$1000/day for their kit/equipment. We got a discount, but man, definitely work around it if you're short on cash.

Dolly: advice?

Can be hard to maneuver up flights of stairs.

Genny: advice?
N/A

HMI's: advice?
None

Favourite new production equipment toy!
Probably lenses - Ryan used them to get a soft glow on all of our raw footage.

FIRST AD'S (I answered this section even though I didn't AD because I did do 1st + 2nd day call sheets and helped
PREP Eric with covering Dylan's absence on set)

How many days before shooting did you lock your schedule? Was it soon enough? What caused the delays?

No. I wanted to shoot 3 full days, Julian and Ryan liked 4 lax days, and Dylan went along with it. Shots/scenes were roughly planned, but they only condensed everything into 3 days the week of the shoot.

Tech survey: detailed schedule – what day, who attended, how much time per location.

1 1/2 locations (exterior on street). PM, Director, and DP attended over 2 months ahead, and Director and DP revisited multiple times after. Production designer also surveyed the place ahead of time. Probably 20 hours all said and done.

Did you review blocking/coverage of each scene with DOP, 1st and Director?

No - I didn't think I needed to, but I really should have, especially when we lost Dylan. I felt out of the loop at that point.

Did you do a script reading? Was it useful?

We did with key crew and with actors. It definitely helped plan some things on production and I know Julian made some changes based on suggestions.

One-line: did you thoroughly discuss each scene/production day?

No - lost in translation once we had Eric on-board and picking up the pieces.

Most productive thing about the production meeting?

Finding out last-minute availability from unresponsive crew. Very valuable on my end.

Things you'd change about the production meeting next time?

Well, I'd have our 1st and 2nd AD be there, but given Dylan's sickness he gets a pass. Our 2nd was brutal, though.

ON SET

What caused your day to go overtime/undertime?
Cold weather caused us to go over. We didn't go under, but none of our days exceeded 12 hours.

What did you compromise on?
The exterior scenes (in the cold and at night didn't work well)

Best thing that happened on set...?
Great actors and competent crew made light work of the material we had to cover.

Did you, your director, your DOP and crew follow SPLURTS? (Set dec, Private block/block, Lighting, Update, Rehearse, Tweak, Shoot)

(I don't think they did, tweaks were kinda handled haphazardly and whenever they wanted)

Walkies? How many? Where'd you get them from? Who was in charge of the walkies?

We had York walkies. I was kinda in charge of them because our 2nd AD was poor. We had 6.

Daily lunch meetings to revise the sched? With DOP and PM? Meetings at wrap? Meetings before call?

These weren't strictly followed. We did hold lunch meetings and had one pre-call meeting (first day) and two post-call meetings (first and last days)

Describe 3 specific bad moments on set that you experienced as AD – and identify solution.

Can't answer

Describe 3 specific good moments – and make recommendations based on same.

Can't answer

How did you control crew chatter/and use of cell-phones (ie. texting on set)?

Wasn't really controlled, but walkies were sporadically used to convey information ie noise, takes)

ACTORS

3 happy anecdotes about AD's and actors on set.

1st AD helped keep us on schedule; actors were both phenomenal and fun; good camaraderie between everyone

3 'difficult moments' on set involving actors and ADs.

AD was impatient with actors; actors could be slow/chatty; actors kept out in the cold when they didn't need to be.

What you'd do differently next time with your actors...

Have them called later. They were in too early on two days.

CATERING & CRAFT

What did you budget for lunches? (# of people X cost per person X # of days)

\$400 - originally 4 days x 20ish crew x \$5 per head

Who cooked lunch? How did they shop? How did they get the food to set? How did they keep it hot?

Gabby Bleyendaal. She went shopping with the director. He drove her food to set. We had access to a kitchen all weekend so we didn't have to worry about storage/temperature.

Any pre-cooked lunches? (e.g. Loblaw's frozen lasagna)?

Not really - some pre-made pulled pork, but it was cooked with extra sauce and fresh buns.

Was there vegetarian option? Was there salad?

Yes and yes

Was there dessert?

Yes - plenty

Best lunch you served your crew:

Probably spaghetti, chicken parmesan, and salad

Worst lunch:

There wasn't really one, but a lot of people didn't eat their pulled pork, so maybe that isn't popular

What did you provide for breakfast?

Nothing cooked, but lots of muffins, bagels, yogurt, granola bars, fruit, and juice boxes

Did you have one dedicated person doing craft?

Yes

IF YOU WERE A PC – please answer these questions: (I didn't have one, so I'll answer this too)

UNIT

For each location, list your solution for: green room, washrooms for cast/crew, lunch room, kitchen facilities, make-up room (share with green room?), costume room (share with green room?), unloading-off-the-truck storage for equip, AD/PM office (share with green room?)...

2nd floor bedroom was a green room, 2nd and 3rd floor bathrooms, 2nd floor living room for lunch/crew space, 3rd floor and 1st floor bedrooms for equipment storage, kitchen on 2nd floor, PM/AD office in lunch room, makeup/wardrobe shared in green room

List each Unit rental item (these could include tables, chairs, traffic cones, porta-potties, tents, heaters, green boards, plywood sheets, etc.), followed by: cost, supplier (name, address, phone, email)...

20 chairs, 2 folding tables, 4 floor mats. Tables were free, total cost for the mats and chairs for 5 days was 101.70

How did you protect floors in your locations (greenboard, booties, cardboard, etc.)?

We used scrap cardboard and the large rental mats to protect the floors.

Hand warmers: brand (e.g. Hot Snapz), source (e.g. Costco), price, how many did you buy for your crew?

We bought handwarmers/footwarmers from Canadian Tire. Bought 40 pairs, cost about \$1 per pack

On set safety: what did you have? (Fire extinguisher, caution tape, first aid kit etc.) What should you have had?

I had a set safety kit, including first aid, tapes, cleaning solutions, and signage. The location had 2 fire extinguishers.

Night shoots: any special unit items? Flashlights?

Aside from hand/foot warmers we also needed salt for the sidewalk due to slipperiness/low visibility.

ACTORS

Any advice/aneccdots about working with ACTRA?

Didn't have to use them - neither actor was unionized

On set, did director rehearse with actors while DOP was lighting?

Yes, thoroughly and frequently.

Directing them on set, did Directors use motivations/action verbs, adverb adjustments, as-ifs – or were there scenes/shots where there was result-based direction? (sometimes you have to!)

He occasionally used result-based direction, but often used descriptive language and verbs rather than manipulating their performances

Describe 3 times where director gave an effective direction and it really helped the scene/performance.

Julian diffused the weird delivery on the long exterior scene from his actress; helped our extra understand the intent of his character; also helped the main actor understand the kinda flirty relationship his character had with the female lead

Describe 3 times where director got stuck, and couldn't communicate what they wanted (or where the actor wasn't understanding) – and describe the solution.

Some of the exterior stuff still seems stiff, otherwise I think he was well-prepared. Honestly, I think the problem in this scene was that he didn't write it very well.

In production, how did your actors travel to set?

They had their own transportation.

What made them happy/grumpy on set?

The cold was a wet blanket, but otherwise they were very content.

How will you treat them different next time?

Maybe give them more appropriate call times?

What slowed things down? What was efficient?

Makeup- actors took forever in hair and makeup because the girl I ended up getting was inexperienced and doing me a favour

Any nightmares/headaches? Parents of child actors?

Nope!

DESIGN SETS & PROPS

Where did you find your designer?

She was a former York student and friend to Ryan, our DP.

How many people on the art dept crew (list positions)?

1 Production Designer, 2 Art Directors, 1 PA

How many would have been best?

This was a good amount, but we did need more for pre-dec as our Production Designer didn't communicate with her team when she needed their help.

Where did you get your props/set dec? (%): Your own 20%, Borrowed 10%, Rented 50%, Bought 20%

Many props were bought but returned, so I counted them as "rented"

Favourite art dept stories: at least one happy and one sad.

Good: I finally visited IKEA for my first time to pick up end tables

Bad: It was out of the way, I had to drive the director's car alone, I didn't know where I was going, and the production designer already had these tables but bought the wrong colour

Favourite clever art department tricks

Wood stain pen! Useful for covering the nicks that we made in the hardwood floor

Things which didn't work technically.

The brick wall that everybody loved for one scene was terrible to hang a painting from.

Things which didn't work aesthetically.

The living room set up was very staged and not homey at all. The kitchen didn't work either - nothing felt lived in because so much stuff was just bought.

COSTUME, HAIR & MAKEUP

Where did you find make-up, hair, costume crew?

I used my contacts; makeup was the hardest to find. One friend owed me a favour.

Did you need more people? Less?

We had the right amount.

Costumes: where did you get your rentals?

We didn't - we used actor's clothing or things Julian had at home.

Where did you purchase any costumes?

None purchased.

Best tip for sourcing costumes:

Use what you have!

Did you create/build any costumes? Details please.

Kind of - Julian put together the look for each character

What sort of change room on set?

Bathroom attached to actor's greenroom

Any hair/makeup/costume triumphs?

We actually found someone to cover makeup!

Disasters?

No disasters, but I wanted our hair/makeup person to move faster.

Continuity mess-ups?

Nothing major was noted.

FINAL QUESTION:

Now have you finished this year. WHAT WOULD YOU REALLY LIKE TO LEARN IN 4th YEAR?

How to get money up front without everyone making a fuss; how to land major awesome locations, as well.

ANY OTHER THOUGHTS OR COMMENTS?

I definitely needed to communicate better with some crew, and there were a couple of times where I should have been more proactive than I wanted to be. I was the one everyone turned to, and that could be exhausting/stressful. I also needed to be more firm on expenditures up front, because the food went over and the exorbitant cost for the steadicam guy pushed well over the \$3000 we had initially hoped to spend in early talks. Otherwise I think it was a good experience and I am proud of what we accomplished.