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DIRECTOR'S CRAFT

Master the art of directing actors and the camera



EMMY-WINNING DIRECTOR

Jason J. Tomaric

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How to Shoot a Scene

STARTING PRODUCTION

Once all the preparations have been made, it's time to begin the process of physically making the movie, called production. Production begins once the camera rolls on set, either in the studio or on location, and continues until the final shot is in the can.

Production can be divided up into two categories:

- **Principal photography** – Principal photography is the shooting of any scenes that involve the main actors. The majority of the movie is principal photography and involves the director and the first unit crew, that is, the primary director of photography, department heads, and crew.



The 1st unit camera crew shoots the main actors in the majority of the dramatic scene while the 2nd unit handles insert shots, visual or special effects sequences, and stunts.

- **Second unit** – Second-unit photography is a separate, smaller crew headed up by a second-unit director and second-unit DP that shoots insert shots, establishing shots, plates for visual effects, stunts, and any other sequences that do not involve the main actors. Shooting second unit allows the first unit crew to focus on the performance and maximizes the actors' time to be working on set instead of waiting around for complicated set-ups to be completed.

When it's time to enter the production phase, every department should be clear on what they need to do each day, what elements and equipment are needed, and what each person's job is. Every aspect of the production should be ready to go and no creative idea left undiscussed or unplanned.

A Day on THE SET

4:00am – The location manager arrives to secure access to the location, ensure the parking is available to the cast and crew, make contact with the location owner and prepare to direct the cast and crew to the parking and staging areas. Although the location manager has already visited the set and worked out the logistics, he now directs the grip trucks, hair and make-up trailer, portable restrooms, art trucks, and cast and crew to the appropriate staging and parking areas.

4:30am – The craft services and catering department arrives and begins setting up food and putting the coffee on so it's ready when the crew arrived.

4:30-5:00am – The crew begins to arrive. Even though the crew's general call time is 5:00am, the crew will always arrive early. Remember, the call time isn't when the crew is supposed to arrive, but when they are supposed to begin to work. Arriving early gives the crew time to enjoy coffee and breakfast from craft services before working.

5:00am – This is the official call time and the crew is now ready to work. The director and cinematographer will begin talking over the first scene while the crew begins unloading the equipment and prepping the trucks. The 1st assistant director is busy coordinating all departments to ensure everyone has what they need.

5:00am – 7:00am – The crew begins setting up the lights and camera while the art department dresses the scene for the first shot. The stand-ins have arrived to help the DP light the scene.

6:00am – The actors arrive and after checking in with the 1st assistant director head to hair and make-up.

7:00am – The scene is lit, the camera set-up and the actors are in their make-up and wardrobe. The director rehearses the scene and the crew should be ready to roll the first shot.

11:00am – Shooting continues until the 6 hour mark when the cast and crew break for lunch. On union shoots, the production can be penalized for shooting past the six hour mark, paying a meal penalty to the cast and crew.

noon – Lunch typically lasts either 30 or 60 minutes, and the 1st assistant director begins the clock from when the last person

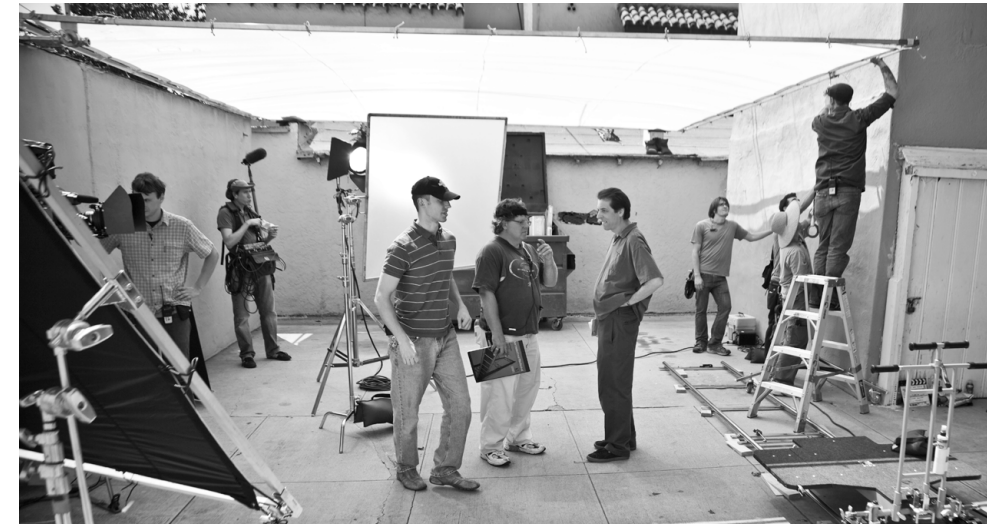
in line gets his food. The 1st assistant director will announce the ten and five minute warnings as the lunch period comes to a close.

noon – 4:00pm – The crew continues shooting the scene.

4:00pm – 6:00pm – The crew finishes shooting, wraps up equipment, packs the truck, restores the location to its original state and heads home. The crew has just completed a twelve hour work day, not including lunch and will have a twelve hour turnaround time between now and the next day's call time to get a good night's sleep.

6:00pm – If the shooting continues, a second meal is served, as it is now six hours since the last meal. Overtime pay begins for the crew.

Wrap –Once the shooting day is done, the crew goes home, only to start over again in 12 hours.



Getting Ready for Production

Shooting a movie is a very demanding yet exciting culmination of months of work and preparation. When getting started in the production phase of a movie, be ready for what awaits you, both mentally and physically. Not only are the demands of production artistically taxing, but they will also push you physically, so be prepared and take care of yourself.

- **Long hours** –Shooting a movie often leads to long, tiring hours. Be sure to eat healthy food and get enough sleep before the production begins. You'll need as much energy as you can muster, so avoid sugary junk food from the craft services table, opting instead for solid meals to help carry you through your day.



- **Stress** – Be prepared for problems and stressful situations on set – equipment will break, actors will have bad days, locations will fall through, it will rain and you will go over schedule. The better organized you are in preproduction, the easier it will be to overcome problems as they arise. Remember Murphy's Law: If something can go wrong, it will. Assume there will be problems, keep a professional, level head, and rely on your crew – everyone on set has the unified goal of producing the best movie possible.
- **Keep organized** – The secret to a smooth-running production is to be as organized as possible during the entire shoot. From organizing the equipment to keeping the office paperwork in order, always maintain a clean, safe work environment.

WHAT'S HAPPENING ON SET

Given that the proper preparations have been done – shots were planned, actors were rehearsed, the department heads had a chance to visit each location to determine the shots and lighting, locations were dressed, parking and transportation had been set-up and the cast and crew are on their way, the process of shooting the movie begins.

Once the crew arrives on set, the grip and lighting trucks have been parked and the location manager has made contact with the location owner, the crew will generally make a beeline for the craft services table to grab a cup of coffee and a bagel. Professional crew members arrive early to set, well before their call time so they can eat and be ready to begin work exactly at call time.

At the beginning of every shooting day, I walk the entire crew through the schedule, the scenes we're shooting, any special shots or sequences and my overall creative thoughts on our approach to the day. Taking a few minutes to brief everyone helps the crew understand and anticipate the day's requirements.

On the set of "Fred and Vinnie," director Steve Skrovan discusses the scene before the cast and crew begin any work. This is critical to ensure everyone understands the nature of the scene and the director's goal. Think of this meeting as being the 30,000 ft overview.

Begin the production day by going over the plan and logistics for that day of shooting – what scenes will be covered, where at the location shooting will take place and how the location can be used. The first assistant director should point out the restrooms, what parts of the set are off limits, where craft services, hair and make-up, and equipment storage is located, where the designated parking is, and all other location-specific details.

Then, it's your turn to walk the crew through the scenes you are going to shoot. Explain what the scenes are and how they relate to

the overall story, where they will be filmed, and how they fit into the production schedule. If the entire crew understands the shooting schedule, they will be much more invested in the day of shooting, feeling a part of the creative process rather than grunts moving and setting up equipment.

Once the briefing is done, you can begin to work on the first scene of the day. Each crew person will go to his or her department head for direction, the actors will already be in hair and make-up, and your production day will begin.

The process of shooting a scene can be broken down into five distinct – and equally important – steps: block, light, rehearse, tweak, and shoot. Although we will discuss each of these briefly in this chapter, I've written a separate chapter for each step to take us even deeper into the process.

Step 1: Block

Once the production team begins a new scene, the very first step is for the 1st Assistant Director to bring all essential cast and crew members to the set so you can walk through the entire scene. During this walk through, block the actors, or determine their position and movement within the set. Usually, you should have spent significant time on set before the shoot to determine the blocking, although sometimes if a location is not available, you may figure out the blocking the day of the shoot. Ideally, storyboards have been created which illustrate the actors' movements.

I'll be honest with you – after working well over a thousand days on set in my career, you can always tell how well a shoot will go on day one. When I'm working as a DP, if the director knows what he wants, the crew is professional, the day is logically scheduled and the food is good, I know it will be a good shoot. But the second the director hesitates when I ask him how he wants the next shot, I know it's going to be a very, very long day.





Part of good blocking is understanding the camera angle and frame size. Always communicate this to the cast and crew.

Many novice directors, especially when under a time crunch, may elect to forgo the blocking and rehearsing phase, choosing instead to immediately shoot the scene. Choosing to shoot without the proper rehearsals means the actors may not know where their marks are, the 1st assistant cameraman will not have an opportunity to set focus marks, the dolly grip will know neither the stopping and starting points of the camera nor the speed of the dolly, the boom operator will not know where the frame line is increasing the risk of the microphone dipping into the frame. When the cast and crew is not clear on what is happening in each shot, you will have no choice but to shoot take after take, adjusting each time. This approach ultimately ends up costing more time than if you had simply blocked and rehearsed for everyone before rolling the camera.

The blocking process includes:

- **Determining the starting and stopping points for each actor** – The 2nd assistant cameraperson will use paper tape to set marks on the floor to designate the exact positions for the actors, enabling the camera crew to set focus marks, the gaffer to focus the lights on the right spots, the DP to choose the correct lens, and the Production Designer to dress the appropriate parts of the set.
- **Determine the camera coverage** – During the blocking process, the DP will work with you to determine the placement of the camera and frame size. Usually this is worked out in advance – for example, a simple dialogue scene may consist of a master shot, close-up coverage of each actor, and any necessary inserts. Scenes with more elaborate blocking may require more intricate camera moves, so work through each camera position with the DP to ensure proper coverage of the scene.
- **Determine the lighting** – During the blocking process, the DP is discussing the lighting requirements with the gaffer and key grip – figuring out where to place the key light, accent lights, hair lights and broadly designing the cinematic look of the scene.
- **Dressing the set** – Once the production designer understands the blocking, she will begin determining which parts of the set need to be dressed for each camera angle.

Step 2: Light

Once the scene is blocked, the actors are taken to the wardrobe supervisor, hair stylists, and make-up artists. The 1st assistant director gives the DP control of the set where the electricians and grips begin hanging lights, setting up reflectors, laying dolly track, running power to the lighting fixtures, and lighting the scene as completely as possible. Concurrently, the 1st assistant cameraman will be setting up the camera, moving the monitors at video village and prepping the appropriate lens per the DP's orders.

- **It's important for the DP to communicate clearly with the 1st assistant director when giving time estimates for lighting a scene** – Most often, the day's production schedule has already been developed accounting for the time needed to light each scene. Although pre-planning is important, factors such as weather, unknown locations, changes in blocking and scheduling issues sometimes force the DP to change his lighting plan. Therefore, it is extremely important to give the 1st AD accurate estimates so the 1st AD can coordinate with all the other departments.
- **Stand-ins** – Ideally, while the DP is lighting the scene, the crew will need to see the actors in position so they can focus and tweak the camera angles and lighting. Because the actors are in hair and make-up, studying their lines and preparing for their upcoming shots, stand-ins (people who bear a similar height, skin tone, hair color and look to the main actors) are used so the DP can continue working. Low budget movies may require the actor to return to the set and stand in position. This can be both fatiguing and frustrating, as it prohibits him from doing his work. Try to avoid using your actors on set to stand in whenever possible.

While the actors are in hair/make-up and costume, the grip and electric crews begin lighting the scene.





Hurry Up and Wait

The first time I ever visited a professional set when I was 18, I was shocked to see how many people were standing around. It seemed as though only a handful of people were actually working, while the rest congregated around the craft services table. What I later learned is that the people standing at crafty had already performed their jobs and were waiting for the camera crew and director to complete a series of takes so they could rush in and set up for the next take. If correctly organized, production is an extremely

methodical, calculated process, with each person understanding his or her job and helping the machine move forward. Every camera setup is meticulously lit, the camera is prepped, the makeup and hair are touched up, the set is tweaked, props are placed, and a myriad of other processes occur for EACH AND EVERY TAKE.

This type of organization and on-set rhythm is how movies get finished on time and on budget.

- **Rehearse moves** – During this process, the DP will have the stand-ins walk through the blocking so the dolly grip and camera operators can rehearse the shot, working out any problems that may arise.

Step 3: Rehearse

Once the set is lit, the camera is in position and the actors are ready, they are brought back on set to rehearse the intricacies of the scene. Whereas the scene was roughed in during blocking, the rehearsal phase gives the director and actors a last-minute opportunity to work through emotional details of the scene. Usually most of this emotional work has happened weeks before the shoot, but given this is the first time the actors have seen the location, they need a little time to adapt their performances to the real space of the set.

Step 4: Tweak

During the technical rehearsal of the scene, the director may make last minute adjustments to the actors' performances, the DP is carefully watching the scene to ensure the lighting is correct, the camera operator minds the frame, making small adjustments to the elements in the frame to ensure ideal composition. The tweak stage is the final opportunity to fine-tune every aspect of the frame before rolling a take.



The cast and crew shoot the first take from a scene in "Currency."

The Order of ON SET COMMANDS

Before every take on a sync-sound production, there is a series of commands that ensures that the set is quiet and every department is ready to roll. This helps keep everyone on track with what is happening.

1st AD: “Quiet on set, please! Camera ready?”*

Camera operator: “Ready.”*

1st AD: “Sound?”*

Audio mixer: “Ready.”*

1st AD: “Actors?”*

Actors: “Ready.”*

1st AD: “Roll sound.”

Audio mixer: “Sound is rolling.”

Second assistant camera: “Scene 46a, Take 4.”

1st AD: “Roll camera.”

Camera operator: “Speed.”

Second assistant camera: “Marker.”

(The 2nd AC then carefully closes the clapboard before pulling it out of the shot. The camera operator may then need to reframe the shot after the clapboard is removed.)

Camera operator: “Set.”

Director: “Action.”

* These commands are rarely called on a professional set as the crew is more than likely ready for a new take. In the event a department needs more time, simply tell the 1st AD to “Standby for 10 seconds,” fix the problem, then call, “ready.”

Step 5: Shoot

Now that the scene has been rehearsed, lit and the cast and crew are all clear on what is happening in the shot, it is time to roll the camera. The first assistant director will call for quiet on the set and will give the command to roll camera, roll sound, and mark the shot. After the second assistant cameraman marks the shot with the clapboard, you are free to call action.

- **Be sure to let the camera run for a few moments before calling action and after calling cut** – this extra footage will provide pad for the editor to work with when cutting the film.
- **During the take, watch the performances carefully on the monitor and look for authenticity, realism, and emotion from the actors** – Be aware of how the actors move around the frame and how well all the technical elements play together. Does the moment feel real? Are the actors over- or under acting? Does the blocking seem real and



Immediately after calling cut, I speak with actor, Julian Starks, about his performance, giving suggestions and feedback.

There is a definite camaraderie amongst the crew that grows stronger the longer you work together. I've worked with the same team for years, and we are like a family, going from one production to the next. The joy isn't just in seeing people you truly like each day, but knowing how each person operates – we have an almost subliminal communication where my crew can anticipate what I'm looking for on set and I trust them implicitly. This is how a good crew should work.

motivated? Is the scene full of subtext, character, and driving story elements? Watch carefully and make mental notes of what to change or adjust for the next take.

Cut

Once you call cut, go directly to the actors and talk to them about their performance. Be encouraging and suggest different approaches to take if you'd like to change a performance. While you are talking to the actors, the 1st assistant director should talk with the director of photography about the shot. Was it in focus? Was the frame clean of any stray equipment, microphone booms, and crew members or were there any other problems that necessitate another take? The 1st AD will also ask the same of the production sound mixer. Were there any problems with the audio – trucks or airplanes in the background, poor sound levels, actors turning away from the microphone?

After you talk to the actors and the 1st AD talks to the crew, the AD will notify you of any problems, at which point you decide if you want another take. If yes, the crew immediately resets and gets ready to do the process all over again. You can do as many takes as needed within the time the schedule allows.

After the first setup is complete and you are happy with the take, the cast and crew begin the process again for the next camera setup.

Normally, shooting is slow in the morning and picks up pace as the day progresses. It is not uncommon for the production to fall behind schedule by lunch time, which will require you to reassess the shooting schedule and possibly cut shots out of the scene to save time on set. This difficult task can be avoided by carefully pre-planning the day in preproduction, rehearsing the actors, and making sure the crew knows what is expected before the day of shooting arrives.

WHAT'S HAPPENING OFF SET

While the cast and crew are busy shooting the day's scenes, the production department – line producer, unit production manager, production coordinator and production assistants are all busy making sure the crew has everything they need to shoot the scene all while organizing the next day's shoot.



- **Paperwork** – There is a lot of paperwork generated during a production – from time cards for SAG (Screen Acting Guild) members and talent release forms, to insurance certificates

On the set of *Currency*, 1st Assistant Director Casey Slade and Producer Jerry Magaña review the schedule to ensure we don't go into overtime.

for locations and call sheets, to payroll, and accounting requirements, the production team is seemingly buried under what seems to be an endless amount of paperwork. It's very important to keep all documents organized and up-to-date as missing payment deadlines or failing to submit required union papers can result in costly fines and delays.

- **Damage control** – Regardless of how well organized a shoot is, problems always arise, making it necessary for the production department to constantly fix problems and avert potential disasters. Locations may cancel the day before the shoot making it necessary to line up a new location, or a vendor may not be able to deliver a prop or piece of equipment. You may change your mind about a scene making it necessary for the production to get the necessary materials in order to continue shooting, a crew member may get sick making it necessary to hire a replacement, sides (small copies of the day's scenes) need to be copied and distributed if there are changes to the script – just a few of the thousand of things that can happen on set.
- **Prepping for the next day** – The production team is always finalizing the details for the next day's shoot; from confirming locations to organizing the pick-up of set dressing, additional camera, grip or lighting equipment, renting additional transportation and anything else needed to make sure the shoot runs smoothly.
- **Wrapping the previous day** – In addition to working on the current shoot and the next day's shoot, the production team is also busy closing out the previous day's shooting – equipment needs to be returned, rented props, and set dressing returned, and vehicles moved – just to name a few.

**The crew shoots
an exterior shot in
Burbank, California.**





Blocking Actors

THE ART OF BLOCKING

Blocking is the process of determining the actors' positions and movements around the set, affording the camera the most interesting angle, finding the most aesthetically pleasing part of the set to shoot, and factoring in lighting and sound requirements. As a result, the more experienced you are in how the technical aspects of production work, the more effective you will be at blocking a scene so it meets every department's requirements. Odds are this is the first time your cast and crew are seeing the set, and may have some ideas on how and when the actors and camera should move during the scene. Listen to their suggestions and feel free to make small changes in blocking, but keep in mind that major changes in blocking may

require additional time to light and can put you behind schedule. Aside from minor adjustments on set, most of this work should have been done during preproduction. When the cast and crew arrive on set, the day should be about carrying out the details of the plan, not figuring things out for the first time. The more time you spend preparing in preproduction, the more smoothly the shoot will go.

When you're planning the actor's blocking, ask yourself the following four questions:

- **WHY** is the actor moving?
- **WHERE** is the actor moving?
- **WHEN** is the actor moving?
- **HOW** does the actor move?

Determining these motivating factors will help you create realistic, organic blocking.

WHY is the Actor Moving?

The most important question to ask is why is a character should move. It sounds so simple, but the reasons why run deeply into what the character's thinking. On a simple level, a character can simply walk to the refrigerator to get the milk because the scene involves her making a milkshake. In a more complex scene, in which a wife has just learned her husband cheated on her, the husband wants to move closer to her as he tries to apologize. The wife, already positioned on the opposite side of the room, counters his move, always making sure something – a couch, a table – is in the way, prohibiting them from getting close to each other. By using the blocking to physically



separate the couple, you're tapping into the psychological distancing underscored in the context of the scene.

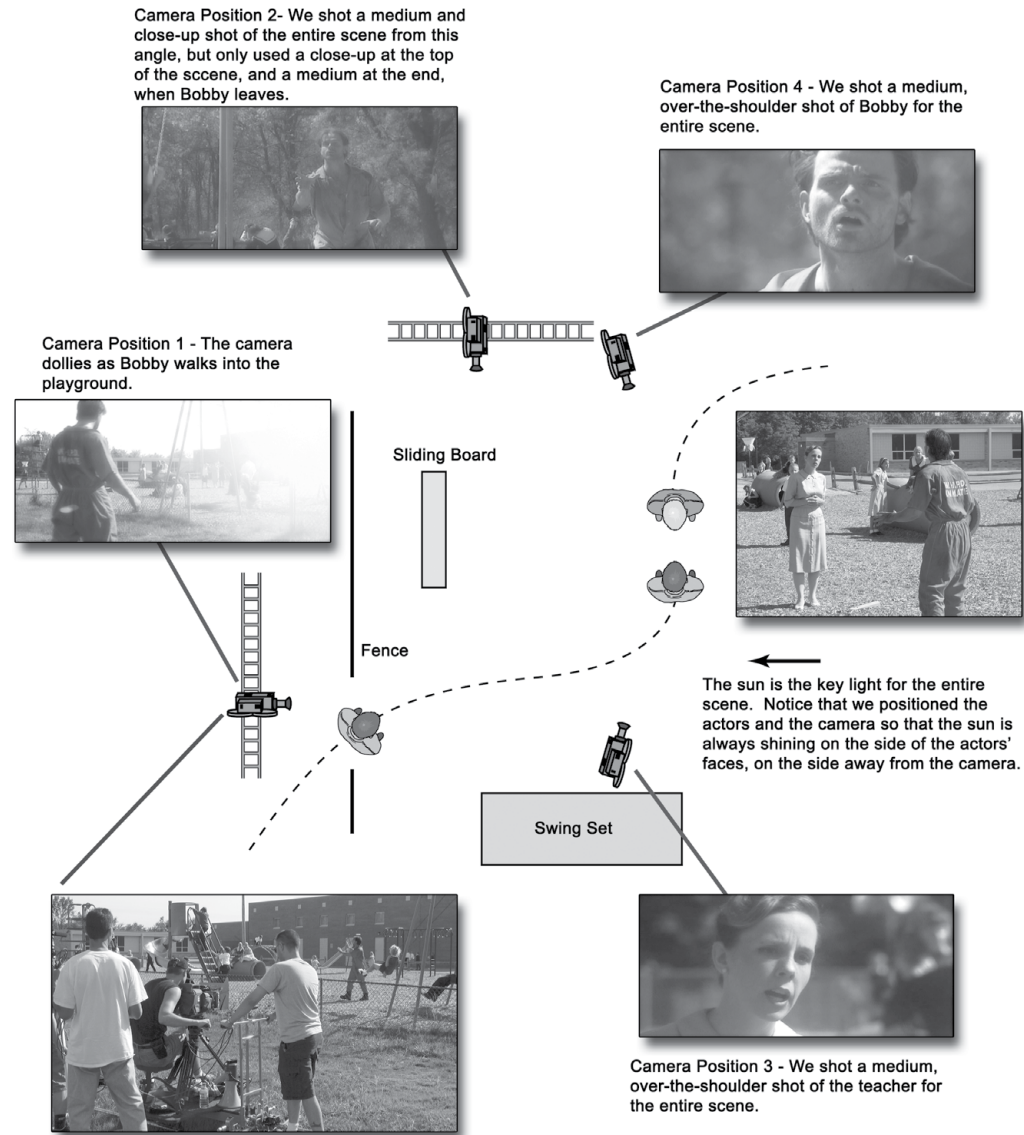
Blocking is all about how the actors move and how the camera moves on set.

WHERE is the Actor Moving?

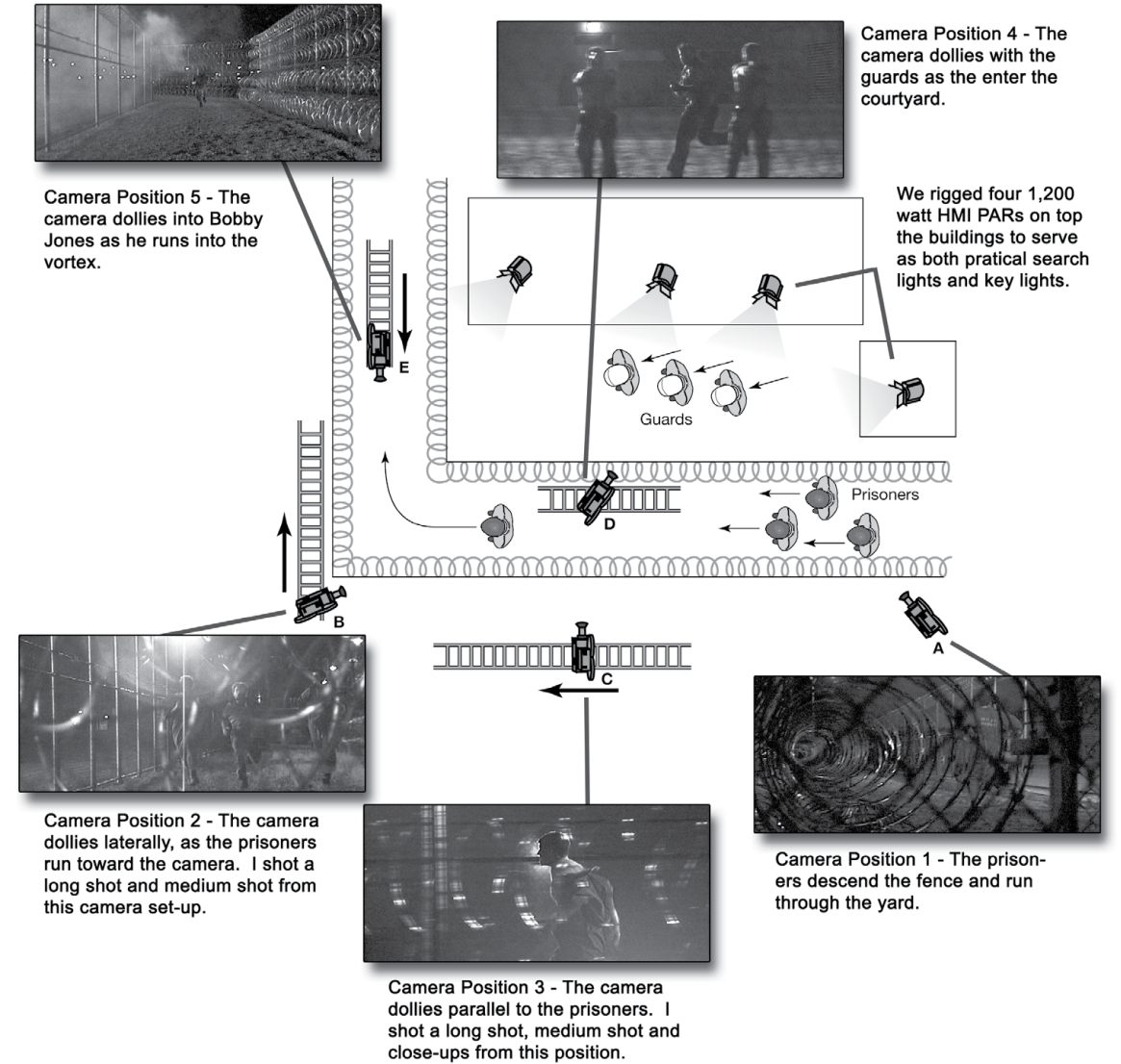
Once you establish why the blocking is motivated, the next step is to determine where the actors move in the actual physical space of the set. Every time an actor stops and starts, a mark is placed on the floor, to help ensure the actors stop at the same place every time for framing, lighting, and focus. When determining the actor's marks, a good director not only considers the actor's motivation, but a number of other technical and aesthetic factors.

For example, do you need to consider the direction of the light source when planning the blocking? If you're shooting outside and the sun

Blocking Diagram Playground Scene



Blocking Diagram Prison Break Scene





Always block the actors first so the crew knows what to light.

is low in the sky, do you want to block the actors so the sun always works as a rim light? Or perhaps on a set with a wall of windows, do you want to block the action so the light from the windows serves as the key light?

Secondly, how will the background look in the frame? Will the blocking of the actor afford you the best view of the location or set? Do you need to modify the blocking if you need to shoot around undesirable elements on the set? What if the set simply isn't that big? How can you frame the set to tell the story?

- Assist the actors in finding their marks by using gaffer's tape to set T-marks on the floor to identify specific starting and stopping points for actors.
- Set marks on the floor to determining where the camera should stop and start if a dolly or crane is being used – This helps the camera operator correctly frame the shot consistently in each take, the 1st AC pulls focus to keep the actors sharp, and the dolly grip times the speed and stopping position of the dolly with ease.

Mary Lou Belli

Emmy-winning Director, "Monk," "Charles in Charge," "The Hughleys", and "Major Dad"

When I come to a location, especially one that the actors have not seen before... I have in mind exactly how that's going to be blocked, in a television schedule there's not a lot of extra time to fumble with 3, 4, 5 different ways to shooting something. If it's a poker table, I'm telling them where they are sitting. If it's a dinner table, first of all, I know if it's a dinner table they've sat at before, and if it is, I've done my homework and know where they usually sit.



Blocking for the Set

Thirdly, how does the blocking work for camera coverage? For example, in a television show shot on a limited schedule, the director may want two actors to walk around each other to add visual interest to the scene. When the actors change position, they remain on the same axis, so the cameras and lighting don't have to change.

Many directors will figure out the blocking of a scene using a floor-plan of the set or location on which to draw the movements of the actors and camera.

- **Consider how you will block a scene when scouting a location, even using your accompanying crew members as stand-ins** – Before you commit to a location, it's important to ensure it works for the actors' movements, the camera and lighting

Angela Nicholas

Lifetime Member of The Actors Studio, Actor, "Deadwood," "Washed," "Always Faithful," and "No Sunlight"



Of course the director is going to have an idea in his head how he thinks the actors are going to move within the space, because he has been a part of the set design, where the furniture is placed, and that stuff. But I think it's a good idea to put the characters in the space and see how they move in the space and how the tensions of the scene dictate their movements and where they move. Explore that a couple of times before you lock it in.

placement, and all other technical and aesthetic needs of the scene. Although there are small refinements on the day of the shoot, the rough blocking should have been determined early in the preproduction phase.

Starting Mark

When you begin the scene, your first job is to decide where the characters start. What is their starting mark. To help determine where this starting mark is, look at the script. Are there any clues? In many instances, the answer is obvious - INT. FRED'S APARTMENT - DAY - Fred and Vinnie walk in with bags of groceries. It's clear that the scene should start with Fred and Vinnie entering the front

Bethany Rooney

Critically Acclaimed Director, "Brothers and Sisters", "Grey's Anatomy", "Desperate Housewives", and "Private Practice"

We will always do a full rehearsal of the blocking and of the scene if we are getting ready to shoot the master. I may do that a couple of times if I feel like the actors not really quite ready to shoot, but when we go in for coverage, if there is movement yes we will rehearse the whole thing, but if we've been doing this scene now for an hour or two or three, generally I'll just ask them to stand in a check positions and we'll shoot it without a rehearsal.



door. Other times, you may need to look at the contextual clues to determine where the character is coming from in the moments before the scene takes place.

WHEN Does an Actor Move?

A scene is shot multiple times, from different angles usually with only one camera. Edited together later, these shots must appear seamless as though the event occurred once and was captured by multiple cameras. To sell this temporal continuity, the actors must perform the same movements dozens of times for each camera set-up. One way to do this is to give the actors cues in the scene as to when to move. This cue can be a line of dialogue, a word, or an action occurring in the scene.

Mary Lou Belli

Emmy-winning Director, "Monk," "Charles in Charge," "The Hughleys", and "Major Dad"



Before I allow any crew to watch an actor's work, we will have a private rehearsal. A place where they know they are safe, that they will feel that they can try something and not look foolish because basically what an actor does is get naked, and if I haven't given them a private place to be naked before they expose themselves to the hundreds of people watching on a crew, I've really robbed them of their artistry.

- **Give the actors blocking cues** – For example, "Stand up when you say 'I thought you already took care of that.' Your cue to stand is on the word 'care.'" Work with the script supervisor to ensure the actors maintain continuity with their blocking and dialogue.

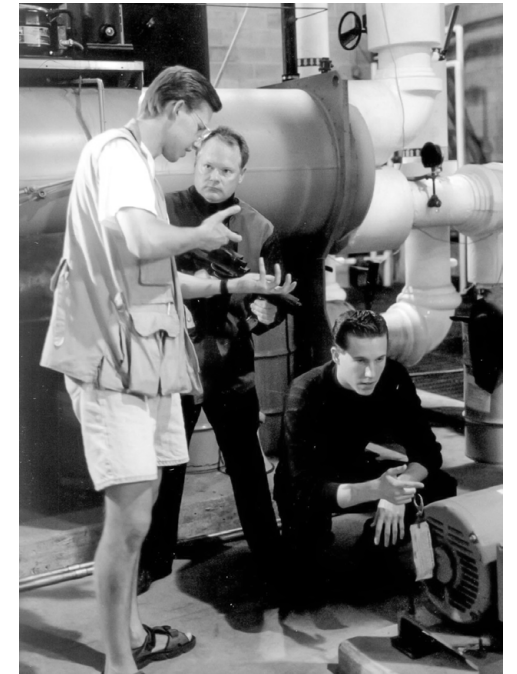
Once the blocking has been established on set, the 2nd assistant camera will put colored tape marks on the floor so actors know where to stop.

HOW Does an Actor Move?

The fourth component of good blocking is to determine how an actor moves from one point to the next. Look for contextual cues in the story – is the character anxious, happy, pensive, concerned – determining the emotional content will give you the tools to guide the actor's movements.

MACROBLOCKING VS. MICROBLOCKING

We can look at blocking in two ways – the first, macroblocking, is the broad movements of a character – he enters through the far door and sits on the couch, across from his wife. Microblocking, are all the small moments that happen inside the macroblocking – when he walks in the door, he may throw his wallet and keys on the table – the way he does this will give the audience clues as to what he's feeling in the moment. He takes off his jacket and throws it on the back of the couch as he walks to it. When he hits down, he grabs a newspaper to shield himself from his wife. A wise director will



Always know the reason why characters are moving. What are they moving towards, or away from? What is motivating the action?



The director finesses through the blocking while the rest of the crew preps for the shot.

direct the macroblocking for the sake of story, camera coverage and lighting, but allow the actor to develop the microblocking for his or her own character.

Ultimately, good blocking feels kinetic and real – all while addressing the technical needs of the production. Work closely with the actors, the director of photography and the 1st assistant director to find a balance between performance and the technicalities of shooting the performance within the allotted time frame.

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Learn more techniques for working with actors to get the performance you need.

- Blocking Actors

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Telling the Story With Actors and the Camera

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DIRECTOR'S CRAFT takes you through every step of the directing process, including:

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- The Language of Acting
- Directing Actors on Set
- Directing Extras
- The Visual Story
- How to Shoot a Scene
- Blocking Actors
- Camera Coverage
- Storyboarding
- Continuity
- Shot Lists
- Directing the Crew
- Building the World

There are no wasted words in Tomaric's tome, which concisely summarizes each facet of the director's craft. It's difficult to think of a step in the process that Tomaric fails to address.

- Jim Hemphill, American Cinematographer



About the Author:

Jason J. Tomaric is an Emmy, Telly, and CINE Award-winning director and cinematographer. With dozens of commercials, feature films, documentaries, and music videos on the market, Tomaric has worked in over 20 countries. Tomaric has taught at some of the most prestigious film schools in the nation, and has developed FilmSkills – the largest online film school that services over 50 universities and has trained thousands of aspiring filmmakers.

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