

## SELECTION OF THE PROGRAMME TOPIC

### 1.1. Developing programme Briefs Objectives, Contents, Duration

The production of documentary is similar to the production of soft news video package. The crew for documentary production is small, similar to the crew size for the soft news video packages. The person whom a documentary is usually conceived and created is the **producer**. A documentary producer can be a part of a larger organization such as the news department of a television newscast or may be simply an **independent producer** or **documentary freelancer**. The producer oversees all facets of the video production.

The camera operator has the responsibilities of listing, purchasing the necessary equipment and accessories. The camera operator may participate in the choice of videotapes also. His works include meeting early with the producer to review production and plan the needful. When the producer has completed the shot list, the camera operator begins pre production responsibilities by estimating and ordering videotapes stock for the video or documentary production. He will also be listing audio recording needs because audio recording on location will be responsibility of the videotape recorder operator.

### Writing the Proposal

The proposal is a document consisting essentially of the following items:

- **A treatment**
- **A proposed budget**
- **A video format or video script**
- **Proposed production schedule**

The more thorough the proposal, the better the chances of the documentary being approved. Yet before undertaking the proposal another step is required i.e. research.

### 1.2 Researching a Topic

Research usually mean good **library**. Currently with high tech computer searches for topics, research is easier and faster than ever, but good research is time-consuming. One of the best ways to do quality research is to **organize**. If a producer organizes the topic carefully from the beginning, the whole organization

of further research, the format or outline of the documentary, the pre-production script, and the order of videotaping the production will be created at the same time. **Quality research can also reveal potential locations for videotaping, available prerecorded videotape and film, the acquisition of still photographs, contact persons, and potential interviewees, besides the content nature of the topic itself.**

### **1.2.1. Scouting the Location Site**

Scouting out a location for production of a programme or at least searching out the place to interview the spokespeople should at least follow adequate research into the subject of the film or the documentary. A producer may have to pay for the scouting trip beforehand and recoup the expense later in the proposed budget.

### **1.2.2. Writing the Treatment**

The treatment portion of the proposal is a **verbal description of the suggested topic or subject of the documentary.** The content of the treatment should cover the topic and why it should be the focus of the documentary. It should also contain a proposed title, the proposed length, and the goals and objectives of the documentary. It is helpful to include the target audience and the reasons for targeting them and suggested production values to reach the audience. Once the producer has set goals and objectives for the documentary, a production statement

can be written to accurately define in an emotional or rational few words the rationale for the documentary.

### **1.2.3. Constructing a Budget**

Most budgets are a matter of organizing essential expenses both from producing personnel and from the projected costs of the production and postproduction. The basis for much equipment and facility costs can be obtained from a rate card, which most production facilities and equipment suppliers make available to the potential clients.

A story can be told in different ways depending upon the budget. Each variation will yield the same story, but it will be designed differently. To use an analogy, a house can be built with \$100,000 or \$1,000,000. Both variations will be a house, but the designs will be different based on budget constraints. The builder with \$100,000 can afford a modest house, while the builder with \$1,000,000 can afford a mansion with all the extras. Similarly, a documentary's budget defines how the story is told in terms of variables such as locations, characters, special effects, etc.

**Every Penny Must Go On Screen** - Traveling to locations, unloading equipment trucks, rigging lights, laying dolly track, organizing crowd scenes, etc. is time consuming and expensive. Most importantly, this work does not appear on screen per se. **In order to make a successful low budget documentary, you must put every penny on the screen.**

If a story can be told with 10 locations, why use 20? If it can be told with a cast of 6, why use 12? Are elaborate lighting setups and camera moves adding to the story or are they just burning up the budget and pulling down overall quality? You must ask these hard questions.

One reason filmmakers refuse to be economical in terms of equipment and story variables is that they fear a rough, low quality look. The truth is economy does not mean low quality. It means telling a story within one's means. This results in higher production values because every penny is put on the screen.

When you try to make a bigger movie than the budget can support, you spread resources too thin. As money runs out, you may take short cuts and foolish chances. This results in lower quality.

#### **1.2.4. Writing the Pre -Production Script**

With research completed and format for the production finished, a pre production script is not difficult to write at this stage. It is to be kept in mind that a script at this stage is only a pre production step and not a final production script. Yet with the advantage of research and information leads from research, a script is advantageous at this point. **Major elements** to be included in the pre production script are **topic lead, proposed interviewees, bridges between segments, proposed video, proposed cut-away, internal summaries and final summary.**

**Story is King** -Without name actors, a low budget movie must rely exclusively on the quality of its story to attract audiences. The story must be intriguing and must contain **unwavering conflict**. The conflict, whether physical or dramatic, must be intense, elevated, and memorable. When done right, this is what creates the word of mouth buzz that surrounds a movie.

### **1.3. Designing the Production Schedule**

With the pre production work completed, the producer can now design a production schedule on the basis of available locations and available interviewees and travel arrangements. Production schedule information should include the following:

- Dates of each individual videotape shoot
- Place for travel
- Transportation plans
- Crew accommodations
- Location sites
- Interviewee names and titles

### **Structuring a Programme**

Once the shoot has been done for the programme and the producer has the shoot tapes ready, the producer has the perform following duties to give a structure to the programme:

1. **Reviewing tapes and recording editing work sheets-** Even though location log sheets were kept during production, it is necessary for a producer to preview all tapes as a prelude to editing. This step allows the producer to study video and audio responses from location talent. This is the first step in the editing process deciding what might be used in the programme and what will not be used. It is also the beginning of the final script of the programme.

The editing work sheets are a listing of all video on the coded source tapes with notations of in-cues and out-cue; length of segments, some videotape recorder counter numbers or stopwatch time and some judgmental notations on the relative value of takes on the source tapes.

2. **Writing the final script for the documentary-** although the pre production script has served an important service, it gives way to the final script. It can still serve as a frame of reference and a basic framework for the final script, but with the dynamics of location shoot and interviewing, many elements first considered important give way to new elements of ten more important or creative.
3. **Coordinating editing cue sheets with the final production script-** after each tape has been reviewed, work sheets completed, and the final production script written, the producer can spend quality time apart from the tapes and video monitors and, with the final script.

4. **Editing or supervising the editing session-** with the majority of editing decisions already made on the editing cue sheets and with the editing work sheets to aid in swift recovery of videotape segments from the source tapes, editing can begin.
5. **Adding music and effects and mixing the audio channels-** after the master tape has been edited, and assuming the most synchronous audio bites are also edited with the video, the second audio track is ready for voice-over tracks, location ambience tracks, music or sound effects. This means that audio channel 1 dialogue track and audio channel 2 music and effects will have to be mixed down to one channel track.
6. **Adding titling and credits-**after the master tape is complete, and then titles and credits can be matted on the video. Some producers may matte the character generator copy in editing suite over the proper video images, as they are being edited master through a studio control room switcher. This can also be done while the two audio tracks are being mixed down.
7. **Final script transcription for the programme-**many documentaries sponsoring organizations may wish to have a transcribed copy of the final documentary for legal purposes in addition to a videotaped dub of the master. If the organization or some interviewee were granted editing rights in lieu of their participation in the documentary, then they would require a copy of the final audio text of the documentary from which to make corrections or revisions to the text of the documentary.

#### 1.4. . Storyboard and Script Designing

**Storyboards** are graphic organizers such as a series of illustrations or images displayed in sequence for the purpose of previsualizing a motion graphic or interactive media sequence

The storyboarding process, in the form it is known today, was developed at the Walt Disney studio during the early 1930s, after several years of similar processes being in use at Disney and other animation studios. Storyboarding became popular in live-action film production during the early 1940s.

A storyboard is essentially a large comic of the film or some section of the film produced beforehand to help film directors, cinematographers and television commercial advertising clients visualize the scenes and find potential problems before they occur. Often storyboards include arrows or instructions that indicate movement.

In creating a motion picture with any degree of fidelity to a script, a storyboard provides a visual layout of events as they are to be seen through the camera lens. In the storyboarding process, most technical details involved in crafting a film can be efficiently described either in picture, or in additional text.

Some live-action directors, storyboard extensively before taking the pitch to their funders, stating that it helps them get the figure they are looking for since they can show exactly where the money will be used. Other directors storyboard only certain scenes, or not at all. Animation directors are usually required to storyboard extensively, sometimes in place of doing a script.

Storyboards were adapted from the film industry to business, purportedly by Howard Hughes of Hughes Aircraft. Today they are used by industry for planning ad campaigns, commercials, a proposal or other projects intended to convince or compel to action.

A "quality storyboard" is a tool to help facilitate the introduction of a quality improvement process into an organization.

More recently the term "storyboard" has been used in the fields of web development, software development and instructional design to present and describe interactive events as well as motion on user interfaces, electronic pages and presentation screens.

One advantage of using storyboards is that it allows in film and business the user to experiment with changes in the storyline to evoke stronger reaction or interest.

Flashbacks, for instance, are often the result of sorting storyboards out of chronological order to help build suspense and interest.

The process of visual thinking and planning allows a group of people to brainstorm together, placing their ideas on storyboards and then arranging the storyboards on the wall. This fosters more ideas and generates consensus inside the group.

A storyboard is an extremely valuable tool, if you have time to make one. If you don't make a storyboard, at the very least you need to create a shot list — a version of the script that breaks down the story into a series of shots, and describes each in simple notation of scale and subject.

The shot list included here uses arrows down the right side to indicate nonconsecutive shots that can and should be filmed in continuous takes — that is, the director plans to cutaway briefly to a reaction and then return to the same image, so there's no reason to stop the camera. The parenthesis indicates the cutaways that are bracketed by the continuous shots.

The function of the shot list during the shoot is that it allows the filmmaker to quickly place the particular shot being recorded into the larger narrative context of the production.

Since it is extremely inefficient to shoot a story in the order the shots appear in the final production — if a dialogue scene cuts back and forth between two people, you'd have to keep resetting the tripod and lighting over and over, repeating all your tech labor after each little snippet — films are always shot out of sequence, organized in a way to get as many of the same kind of shot in a single setup as possible. Do all the shots from one side of scene at once; do all the shots in the same location at once, no matter if some come at the very beginning of the story and some at the very end. This requires pre-planning: the goal being to arrange the shoot so that it requires the least amount of repetitive labor — a big make-up change is more complicated than a camera set-up, so that would take priority, and so on.

The plan for exactly what gets shot in what order is called the **shooting schedule**. As you go through the shooting schedule, check off each shot as you complete a satisfactory take — then check it off on the shot list too. Just having a shooting schedule is not enough, because you quickly lose the sense of what's really supposed to be happening in the shot when you look at all the notations out of sequence.

The shot list and shooting schedule examples here contain the minimal amount of information you'd want such documents to contain. On the one hand, you want to keep them compact, using as few sheets of paper as possible, so you can keep the paperwork organized amidst any chaos on the set. On the other hand, more detailed notes can help you avoid potential problems more readily.

One thing that is recommended, is adding to the info shown in these examples, a note about continuity — how you get will need to get into or out of a shot in editing. Indicate where you may have a **Match-On-Action** planned by noting

'**MOA**'; make notes on where the screen direction of eye lines, exits/entrances should be at the beginning and end of shots. All of these things are very easy to forget if they're not written down.

### 1.5. Script Designing

It usually depends on the type of the programme. **The normal format for a programme shooting script is essentially a two-column affair, which breaks down each sequence into its component shots.** The left-hand side shows the type of the shot (long shots, close-up etc), a description of the subject matter plus any instructions regarding movement of the camcorder. The right-hand side of the script covers sound, i.e. narrative, dialogue and special sound effects.

**Pre-planning and scripting will undoubtedly assist in making a good documentary** but don't be too hidebound. If, during the shoot, you think of something better, or an unexpected relevant event occurs, then use your common sense and accommodate changes.

**Pre-location planning-** one element of video work, which is sometimes overlooked with embarrassing results, is logistical planning. Dependent upon the type and scale of the documentary the logistics can cover a multitude of things like:

- **Location-** any required permissions should have been sought prior to or at the research stage but where applicable, confirm with the appropriate persons that a specific time is O.K. A reconnaissance exploring will also help to establish the best camera positions and whether there are likely to be any lighting, sound or power problems, which will need to be overcome. Where necessary and possible, take some trial shots.
- **Personnel-** make sure that all concerned, be they crew or cast, are fully conversant with where the shoot is to take place, their personal time of arrival and how long it is likely to last. With a dramatized documentary, try to avoid having the cast standing around for too long waiting for their scenes to be shot. It is a sure way to soon kill enthusiasm.
- **Sustenance-** thought must also be given to refreshments and food, the cheapest option being to suggest that all personnel bring their food. Sometimes with a large-scale project catering responsibilities are also allocated.

- **Equipment**-prepare a checklist of all the equipment likely to be needed, including, safe main power leads, and batteries for camcorders and other equipments, microphones, tripod, lights, reflector and enclosed headphones etc. don't forget props.

## 1.6. Script Layout

### **Screenplay has to be formatted:**

**So it's easy to read.** It may be OK to have a scruffy looking script if you are the only one who will use it, but to allow your cast and crew to make sense of it applying a few rules of formatting makes it easier to read.

**There are two main types of fictional screenplay** - the spec script and the shooting script. The spec script is what gets sent out to producers and actors, but we can probably forget about that as we are going to pick up a camera ourselves, so we can write a shooting script.

### **Layout**

- Scripts are best typed on only one side of the paper in 12-point courier.
- Double spacing between lines allows you to read the script easier.
- Leave good borders around the script.

Keep to the above tips and you will have a well laid out script. This can help you time your script, as now one page of screenplay will equal one minute of screen time.

**Slug Lines**- the scene heading/slug line. Consists of either INT. Interior – e.g. in a room or EXT. Exterior e .g. on the street, the location e .g. CITY STREET.

NEW YORK followed by either DAY or NIGHT Forget about morning/afternoon/sunset etc. as it makes no difference when it is being filmed - no one is going to shoot you for filming in the afternoon and pretending it is the morning. Here are a few examples to give you a rough idea.

**INT. MORTUARY - NIGHT**

## **EXT. RACE TRACK - DAY**

Scenes inside cars are Interiors despite the fact that the car is outside. You may occasionally see EXT/INT or INT/EXT on a script. This occurs when the camera is in one location and the action is happening in another. For example:

## **INT/EXT. HOTEL LOBBY/CITY STREET - DAY**

The camera or a character is watching the action occurring outside)

## **EXT/INT. CAR/APARTMENT - NIGHT**

The camera or character is sitting in a car watching something happening through an apartment's window. Hey, maybe they're on a stakeout or something!)

**The Business:** The scene direction/business. This tells the reader what is going on. Clear, concise. Always showing rather than telling. Don't say that:

DAVID is suffering inner torment because of his wife's kidnapping.

...show us!

DAVID runs his hands through his hair. Picks up a shot of bourbon, tastes it and winces. He throws the glass across the room, hitting the mirror, which SHATTERS. Write in the present tense. It gives events and action much more immediacy, like they are really happening, which is what you want.

## **Dialogue**

Dialogue appears in a column down the center of the page indented from the business. It's in the form:

NAME

Direction

Hey, this is what your character says.

**The name** is straightforward right? It goes in Upper Case.

**The direction** isn't always given, in fact in a spec script you would provide hardly any - telling an actor how to act is as bad as telling a director how to direct! The only occasion you might put some in would be if dialogue was directed specifically at another character e.g. To Albert or if it has to be said in a particular style Whispering.

And finally **the dialogue** itself. Try to keep it to a minimum, no long speeches here. That way there is less for your actors to remember and less for them to muck up. Good actors will always make the best of what you have written for them and can provide so much more with their intonation and body language, which you simply cannot write. I'm sure I read somewhere that only 20% of communication is speech.

**Avoid exposition** that's when you character explains something in detail - try and show rather than tell. Keep it simple and remember 'Good dialogue is dialogue that illuminates what the characters are not saying'.

## **Character Names**

When a character first appears their name in the scene direction should be in CAPITALS. After that their name is in lower case.

Try to avoid giving minor characters names like THUG 4 as its pretty demeaning to have to play such a lowly character - 'Hey, I'm not even playing THUG 2'. You needn't go to extremes and give them a full name unless the character is named by another character), just spice it up, so that when you offer the part to your friend, rather than being the fourth thug they could be a MEAN THUG or a TATTOED THUG.

## **Sound**

You can put important sounds in CAPITALS, so that monsters SHRIEK and cars EXPLODE, but this is up to you. Some people like to, others don't. If you do put sounds in upper case try not to overdo it. You see the word OVER used in scripts.

This means that there is an important sound OVER the normal soundtrack e.g. music.

## Camera Directions

As this is a shooting script we can add camera and actor directions to the script - in a spec script you wouldn't do this - just like you wouldn't turn round to Coppola and say 'Do a Close Up here'. But as this is our show we get to play director. There are several abbreviations to speed the writing and reading along.

**C/U** - Close-up

**MS** - Medium Shot

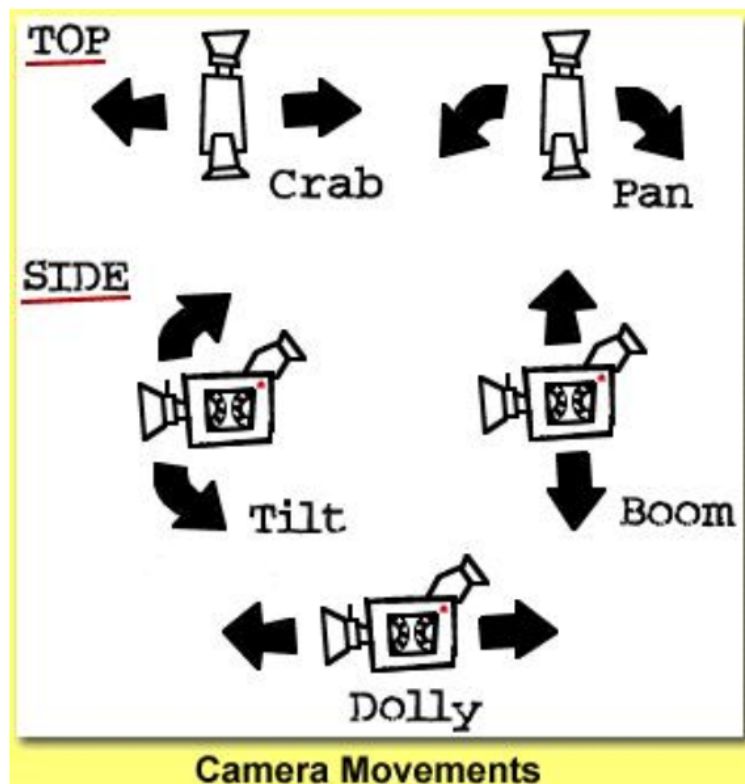
**LS** - Long Shot

**Two-Shot** - Shot of two characters in the same picture

**V.O.** - voiceover

**O.S.** - off screen

**P.O.V.** - Point of view e.g. one of those wobbly cameras they use when someone is breaking into an apartment in a horror movie.



**M.O.S.** - without sound. Apparently comes from "Mit out sound" which some German director used to shout or something. Great for when your characters are staking out some joint, watching the bad guys pull off some drug deal and they can't hear what they are saying.

### **Camera Movements**

**CRAB** - camera moves completely to the left/right

**PAN** - camera pivots left or right

**TILT** - camera pivots up or down

**BOOM** - camera moves up or down.

**DOLLY** - camera moves in/out from subject

**ZOOM** - camera zooms in/out from subject not strictly a camera movement because its the lens that's moving not the camera)

### **Transitions**

These are how you change from one scene to another. They always sit over to the right of your script and on the whole you will find yourself using:-

**CUT TO:** which is a straight change of picture from one scene to the next.

There are some other transitions available but be careful, they have different connotations to the viewer.

**DISSOLVE TO:** The final shot of the previous scenes fades into the first shot of the next scene. This can be used to suggest the passing of time. And you will need a three-machine edit suite or a non-linear computer editing system to achieve this.

**FADE IN:** Usually used at the start of films, with **FADE OUT** used to end the movie. You can also use **CUT TO BLACK** and **CUT FROM BLACK/CUT IN**. You can use these transitions together to alter the mood and pace. For example:

NICK grins at ALBERT.

NICK: 'You're even uglier than I remember'.

Albert scratches his head, thinking, before pulling his fists back and hitting Nick full on in the face.

Lecture five

**CUT TO BLACK:**

**FADE IN:**

**INT. BEDROOM - DAY.**