

Association of Camera Operators

# IN THE FRAME

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JOE RUSSELL ACO

## KILLING EVE

DAVID WORLEY ACO | JAMIE HARCOURT ACO | AL RAE ACO | EDD WRIGHT ACO | ROGER TOOLEY ACO | SVETLANA MIKO ACO | CHRIS PLEVIN ACO



*'I can't breathe.'*

#justiceforgeorgefloyd



**4** decades ago, Panavision supplied DOP Dougie Solcombe BSC and operators Chic Waterson and David Worley with camera equipment to go and follow one Harrison Ford on an epic adventure that would kick start a new wave of adventure movies, with Spielberg drawing audiences in with this incredible action movie.

'Fortune and Glory'

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## Presidents POV

I could never ever have imagined that the time between my previous President's POV and this one would be occupied by a global pandemic. The British film industry (the busiest it's been for decades) was unceremoniously shut down with hundreds of productions grinding to a halt and many shows preparing to start, forced to delay their plans. When I sat back and tried to take it all in I imagined the many different scenarios the ACO members would find themselves in: Some many miles from home with little chance of getting back; young families, homeschooling, money concerns and concerns that the industry they loved may never be the same again. I had been invited to join a support group started by the BSC. It was a place where the members could post humorous items, film clips and links to union and financial support.

We needed this at the ACO!

After board approval we launched 'The Inn @ the ACO.' You, the members immediately obliged with your own take on the pandemic: advice and jokes, but most importantly forming a bond between us all. A bond that made us all feel that however bad this period of time was going to be, we could survive it together, as a team. If I closed my eyes it felt at times like I was still sitting on the dolly in the middle of the film set listening to the chat and the gags of the camera department. There were times when the group would really open up and talk of the struggles they were experiencing and the fears that ran alongside that. At no point were they ever left alone with their worries—a member was always on hand to wrap a metaphorical arm around their shoulders and reassure them that there was light at the end of the tunnel. For this I'm very grateful and proud of you all.

The initiatives didn't stop there. A series of webinars were planned. The operators of the ACO now had a platform to discuss their skills, experiences, good days on set, bad days on set, techniques and oners. 'The primary aim of the Association is to celebrate and promote the technical and creative skills of the Camera Operator...' I believe these fantastic Q&As have contributed enormously to the profile of our Association and the archive value is priceless. At this stage, I must thank Edd Wright for his wonderful curation and all of the behind-the-scenes Q&A team. Great job! Also, with so many operators in one place, our Associate member Tom Wade approached the board with an idea. He wanted to ask ACO operators their thoughts on composition, technique, set etiquette, crane work, steadicam, camera assistants, DPs (the list goes on) so that he could compile a comprehensive archive of operating cornucopia. Tom has now interviewed many operators but he won't be stopping until you've all contributed so please sign up so that we can learn from all your diverse experiences. It feels like—and I truly hope—we have put much of this terrible virus behind us and my thoughts are with any of you that have lost friends or family during this extraordinary time. I hope we can look to a future full of hope and better times in our beloved industry and move forward again.

I believe we can.



# SEAN SAVAGE ACO





# whose shooting what?

## Lockdown with a Camera Operator

### *An open letter to my Other Half*

There's a Steadicam rig in our bedroom. It stands proud at the window (blinds closed of course—bit of a tricky one to explain to Bill and Ann over the road) and with its protective clear plastic sheet covering, it fills the room. You winced when I went up the stairs and you knew I was going to see it there for the first time. True to form, I groaned, grumbled, rolled my eyes. I'd thought maybe lockdown would bring a little respite from the bruised knees caused by walking into the sharp corners of shiny flight cases stacked in the hall, or constantly shouting 'don't touch!' to our two young boys. In 'normal' times, our work related conversations go along the lines of: 'What hours are you on?'

'Where are you filming?', 'What time will you be back?' and 'Are you working at the weekend?' I may occasionally ask what you had for lunch. I gave up asking if you'd be in for the kids' bedtime. We worry about money when you're not working. We're stressed and sad to be apart when you are. Now you're here, all day every day. How weird that must be for you! It's not easy to find a balance, but I think we are getting there.

- You have spent hours and hours working on your showreel. How amazing to have the time to closely observe and reflect on what you have achieved! How amazing for us to see what you have created and remember what it is you do all day/week!
- You have put on your vest and rig and done the 'steadicam dance' around the garden, filming the boys playing football; using everyday life to practise your art. (Dave next door is fascinated.) The boys think you're so strong and look like a Ghostbuster. They get to see what your work really looks like.
- You have run for miles and miles every week. It gives you some time to yourself. It clears your mind. But we know it is also because you are like an athlete, always training for the next time you are needed to race or perform.
- Watching TV shows and films is like being at the film school I never went to. We press pause repeatedly, we look at shots, we discuss how it might have been achieved. We watch every single credit run. (I sometimes prefer to go to bed and watch interior design programs on my own... but we all need to escape sometimes don't we?)



- Your phone pings and buzzes all day long as your friends and colleagues come together on the ACO WhatsApp and discuss how the post-Covid filming world might look, and generally keep each other amused and motivated. What a community to be part of!
- This one is my favourite: You have joined ACO seminars, chats and lessons on Zoom. The colleagues you have admired and aspired to for your whole career are now beamed live into our living room, or are providing the soundtrack to you washing the dishes! What a dream, what a joy! I really hope this continues as we can see the inspiration it gives you.

So I'm sorry for grumbling. I understand; being a Camera Operator is not a job you can pack away into a box in the back of the cupboard and get back out again when it's time to go back to set. It'd be like asking an artist to lock up their paintbrushes because they can't sell their work for a while, or asking a dancer to not dance because nobody will be watching.

I am grateful to see the Steadicam built there in our bedroom. I am grateful for lockdown reminding both of us, and our children, that your work is not just a job; it's your passion. As we fumble our way through homeschooling, we need to see this as one of the greatest lessons we can ever give our boys.

I look forward to waving you off back to work, to return to some form of normality. But we've loved having you at home... most of the time.

ROBYN WILLIAMS

(WIFE OF THOMAS WILLIAMS ACO)



Aga Szeliga ACO  
Tree Hugging





# whose shooting what?

In 2017, my brother Ben—an anthropology lecturer at the University of Durham—invited me to travel with him to the Langtang Valley in northern Nepal to document a project he had been commissioned to make, regarding the construction of a bio-gas generation system powered by Yak dung, in conjunction with a senior lecturer in engineering at Newcastle University. The specific aim was to develop a sustainable fuel source for local cheese manufacturers who were being forbidden from harvesting any more firewood from the national forests. The trip lasted two weeks, and I was just able to fit it in before starting work on *Outlaw King* in August 2017. I was a 'one-man-band' on a no-budget, 'for the love of it' production (my bro simply covered all travel and living costs) and my main tools were my trusty old Canon 5D, a couple of Nikkor lenses and a Zoom audio recorder I had bought a few years previously for another project.

I came back with about 24 hours of footage, which I have had little chance to deal with, until now! As such, during this lockdown I have been able to 'escape' back to the Himalayas by doing a thorough review of the material, with a view to putting together some kind of an edit. This includes interviews with various players in Kathmandu, from the political, industrial, development and academic sectors, but more importantly with the herdsman, cheesemakers and villagers in the mountains, who are mostly from the Tamang ethnic group. As you might recall, Nepal suffered devastating earthquakes in 2015 and one thing I hope any finished film I produce will show, is to what an incredible degree the Tamang people—who at the best of times live a hand-to-mouth existence—were able, within two years of death and destruction, to move on, adapt, reconcile themselves to the new situation, rebuild and start enjoying life again.

All the best  
Cosmo Campbell ACO

I'm still relatively new to the UK. As a result, for the 2 years I've been here I've gone with the flow of where and when jobs have taken me, thoroughly enjoying the experience and transient lifestyle. That said, it was a new experience in March, when waiting to depart for a 4-month job overseas—and therefore without a place to call home in the UK—things changed in a way none of us had seen before. So with the job (and its accommodation) no longer happening and London very quickly locking down, I scrambled to find a place to 'ride it out.'

The chaos of the whole situation was quite amazing. Looking back now I can see through the stress and reflect on the bright side of things. As they tend to do, things worked out, and with all the terrible situations others are going through it keeps my 'problems' in perspective. Back in Australia, the film industry can be very inconsistent so I'm no stranger to the uncertainty of the business.

Despite being as new as I am around here, the sense of community has been really encouraging. I've really enjoyed the discussions and online chats. They remind me that we're all in the same boat with this virus, but I'm optimistic that there's some smoother sailing on the horizon.

Jonathan Tyler Assoc. ACO

It's been great joining up as a friend of the ACO and keeping up with industry happenings (or lack of) since work abruptly stopped in prep at ARRI on March 13th and lockdown began shortly after.

Days have been taken up with entertaining a 1-year-old and a 4-year-old, and wondering how your wife does this every day. It will sure make going back to work seem like a holiday after weeks of mediating fights in dinosaur worlds. It's been great spending time with the kids though, and helped by leaving London last year for country life and a bit more space.

After finally getting round to the jobs that would never have gotten done around the house and garden, and building numerous raised beds for the excess of veg, we are now growing to feed the 5000 and getting obsessed with cutting the grass twice a week. You get back to Monday morning again and wonder how long this will last until you are able to do your job again. I feel it's given me a new-found appreciation of our industry by being able to take stock. And I've really enjoyed partaking in the various chats, webinars and news goings-on day to day.

I then wonder when will we be back at it again? Under a stronger and more unified British Film industry. But until then... better stock the wine fridge up!

Tommy Holman 1st AC - Friend of the 'ACO'

Pace of life, as for so many others, has completely changed. My wife Annie is still working so I have become accustomed to the life of a stay-at-home dad. I have two boys: Louis aged 10 and Benjamin aged 1. During the day we are busy with homeschooling (a painful struggle at times) and entertaining and running after a little person who has just discovered the art of walking. I still find it hard to comprehend how often the house needs to be cleaned. I am running a lot, which is great for a short escape. I also enjoy taking Louis for long bike rides. My steadicam rig gets thrown around at times, though probably not often enough. Early evening I often disappear into my office and listen to the various webinars available. There are some great interviews and conversations, and having been involved in one of the webinars, I really hope they will continue in some form once we get back to work. Music fills our house throughout the day and books are being devoured. Unfortunately my guitar playing hasn't really improved and neither has my Spanish. We are catching up on TV boxsets and movies, but find that we often just want to sit outside and chat. This is a crazy time in so many ways and of course there is much to think about and discuss. I've never spent so much time at home, hanging out with my wee family and Zooming or Housepartying with others.

I'll look back at these moments fondly as I sweat at work in my hazmat suit and face mask, trying to feel normal operating a camera in surgical gloves. I look forward to that day.

Tony Kay ACO



Speaking as someone who has self-isolated nearly every winter for the past 25-30 years, I found it somewhat galling that (like gluten free diets, veganism, global warming etc) all of a sudden everyone was at it! I live out in the sticks, so 'lockdown' was never going to be quite as bad for me as those in the towns and cities, other than the local 'home guard' counting you in and out of your home each day. Govt. schemes for financial aid were announced, and like so many, not a single penny came my way, but then I work in the 'Great British film industry' and am so fucking rich I don't need any help thank you! Funnily enough, considering I am unemployed, with little prospect of work turning up this year, I have never been so busy. Here at Shipsey Towers a frenzy of painting and decorating ensued using every last old tin of paint in the garage. Those who follow me on my YouTube channel 'Bobs Logs' will have seen the transformation of a pile of old decking and sub frames into a replica Jacobian three-piece garden suite with table—the only purchase being one pack of screws. I watch the ACO zooms, which are always entertaining and 'educational' (what else?) and pick up the 'click & collect' weekly shop at 6am each Saturday. (It's a well known fact that Covid-19 likes to have a lie in at the weekend.) I've filled a pot-hole in the road that the council refused to do as it 'isn't a major road' (Wickes, cold-lay tarmac, £7), repaired & painted the fence, re-fitted the cutlery drawer, broken the cafetière .... I have managed to fall out (Big time) with my neighbour (mainly because he's a Twat!) but we have since made up and now politely nod at each other when our paths cross (he is still a Twat though). I don't sleep that well at night worrying about whether the full stop goes before or after the bracket - (please help.). Other than the above I don't think 'lockdown' is affecting me too much.

Yours sincerely, Bob x



# whose shooting what?



During these uncertain times, I felt compelled to find something to do to make a small difference. Having applied for various financial support for myself, I wanted to try to help my local community. Living in The Cotswolds, many people live in isolated, rural areas. Not only that but they are self-isolating due to medical advice, their age, or because they don't have any local family.

A letter drop from my local parish council led me to apply for the local volunteering service and then this led to me being put in touch with Cotswold Friends. They were spreading their network of volunteers in the area. So now, whether its doing their weekly shop, picking up prescriptions or driving them to hospital appointments, I'm on standby with both of these organisations, which keeps my week varied. I've even done some gardening for a lovely lady who was struggling with her overgrown garden.

I've been provided with PPE and take it extremely seriously. The reality is, I'm the only person that these people have contact with so I'm responsible for keeping them safe. Keeping a safe distance and adhering to the guidelines is essential. I've found the whole experience extremely humbling and have become really attached to the people I help. They are so grateful, it's nice to feel helpful and it keeps me busy.

I shall definitely continue volunteering even after the pandemic is over. I think that the way communities have come together is a real testament to the kindness and wonderful spirit that has been shown during the outbreak.

Long may it continue. I'm very pleased to share this photograph with you all. Didn't realise at the time I was wearing my ACO t-shirt!

Zoe Goodwin-Stuart ACO

Quarantine is interesting but challenging, and a lot of new things have come out of it that I wasn't expecting. As I sit here in the garden in the sun with beautiful countryside around, I notice there are less planes in the sky and an abundance of birds and natural life. On the one hand, I'm enjoying this time because it's allowing me to catch up and meet people through Zoom that I otherwise might not have done. It's also enabled me to start new hobbies. And importantly, it's given me the time to step back and reflect in ways that have been impossible in a busy working life.

On the other hand, I'm missing work and looking forward to being back on set, but the uncertainty of not knowing when we're going to go back to work is quite hard. I'm realising no one really knows how we're going to move forward and how things are going to be different. I'm taking the approach of not really taking anything on until things become more concrete.

At the moment I'm taking advantage of this time to focus on my fitness, for instance going for walks and bike rides. I'm also learning about things that I never realised I would be any good at or enjoy, like dancing and cooking, to name a couple. It's really opened up a whole new world of cuisine and encouraged me to stop and think about what I eat and how I cook. I've even made some ice cream! I've also loved watching—and been inspired by—the beautiful documentary series *Chef's Table* on Netflix.

At the same time, I'm reading up about kit and really enjoying all the amazing webinars that are going on, as none of my family work in film so I can't talk in detail about work at home. These webinars give me a chance to learn from other people about kit and also how different DPs and operators work. It gives me the opportunity to think and talk about work, which is really important for me. I've been having quite a few days where I wake up in the morning feeling like I'm losing the will to live and feeling quite negative about life. I'm not someone who suffers from depression so I am able to pick myself up and go and do something that makes me feel happy, like photography, but it's quite hard, especially not being able to meet up with friends. However I'm lucky to have family around so I'm able to talk about these feelings, which lightens my mind.

Best Wishes, Theo Spearman - Friend of The ACO

Having the chance to see our two young boys every single day for the last 11 weeks, and watch them change before our eyes has been (marginally) more incredible than it has been exhausting. Thankfully they occupy so much of our time, energy and mental capacity that there's precious little room left for the worries that would doubtless be occupying our minds otherwise. I miss work and friends—the two go hand in hand. I miss the rest of my family of course. I try and remain optimistic about the future when I do have a moment to put my mind to it. I feel so so lucky to be surrounded by loved ones in a safe space when I know there are thousands out there whose worlds are truly coming apart at the seams, and perhaps already were even before the virus took hold. My blessings are too many to count.

Joe Russell ACO

Lockdown has brought our profession to a halt. To be working on a movie that is suddenly shut down due to a global pandemic has been very strange and worrying to say the least. Like many of us, I have been using the time to spend with family—something we camera operators rarely get a chance to do.

We had our second child at the start of lockdown and in some ways (as long as our industry picks up again) it has been a blessing to be able to help my wife, do some gardening (yes, I jumped on the bandwagon also and built a play area outside), see more of my two children and even play video games. I've also used the time to take a breath and watch many of the films I have been so eager to see, so there have been some up-sides but I'm ready to return!

Ossie McClean ACO



# whose shooting what?



*The Robertson family waiting for the tide to turn in North London*

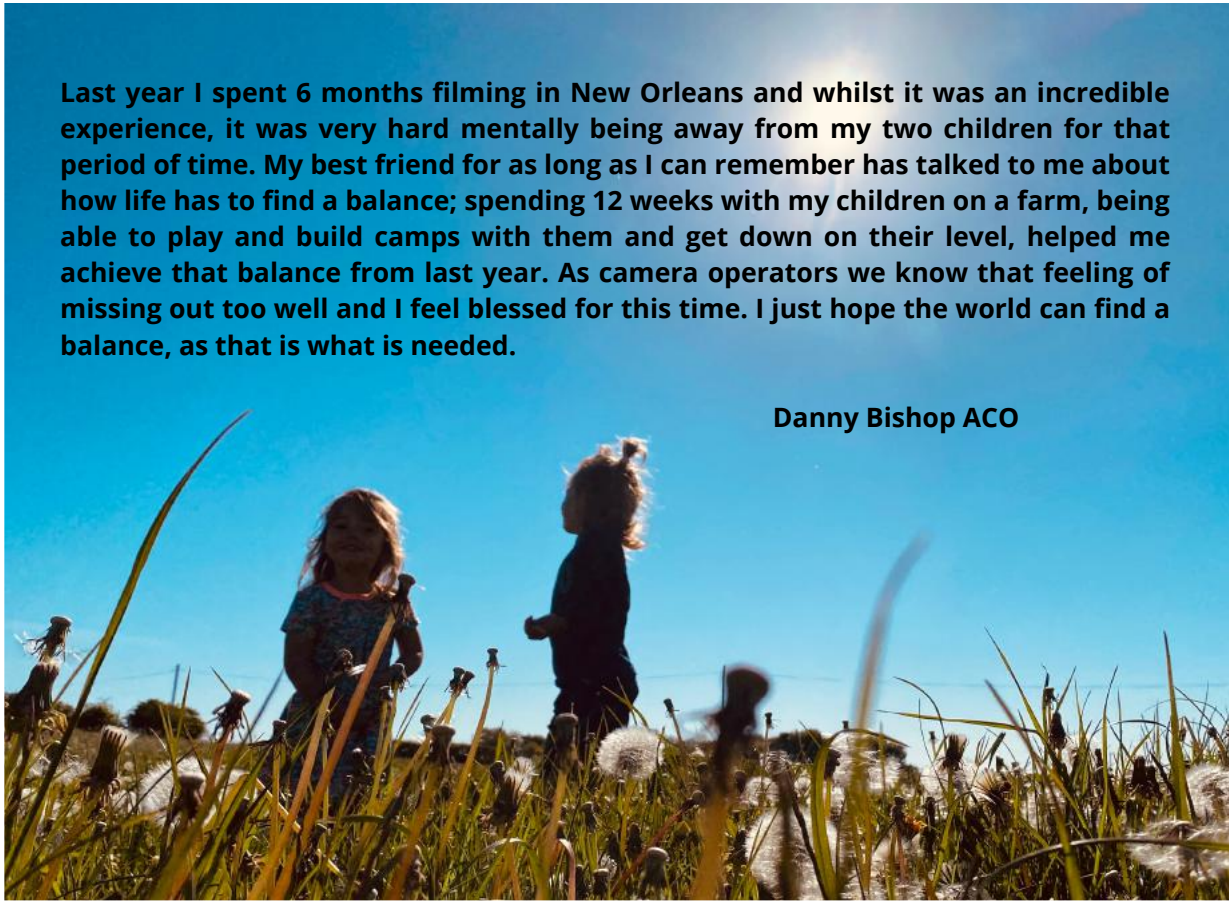
## *Locked Down in Cape Town*

I was on a show called *The Wheel of Time* (a fantastic fantasy series that is to bring the books of Robert Jordan to life on the Teli) when suddenly I was handed a ticket to return to South Africa. No, this was no P45 as so many Grips in the UK had warned me about after getting them to lay countless track in the Scottish Mud. It was time to close down *The Wheel of Time* and hunker down until this virus blows over.

So here I am under lockdown in South Africa. My steadicam made it back safely from Prague where we were shooting the show and I often look at it and wonder if I will in fact shoot something this year with her. I have gone through an array of emotions; having the year before me planned out to now having it ripped away from me. But what I can see and say, as I observe from a land far away from most of the members is that there is a community of operators in the same boat with similar tragic stories and it's forced us to stop and look to each other, laugh about times on set, talk through problems, raise questions, look back on how hard we were working and now we can learn new things. I know for me I can think of some of you greats, whose work I have admired for years... I have now even seen your kitchens and dining rooms on zoom meetings and heard your hardships of operating in difficult conditions or for difficult personalities and it's inspired me more. It's given me the courage to look at myself and the mistakes I have made, and made me encourage younger operators and technicians alike in these uncomfortable times.

So even though here in South Africa I wouldn't even be able to raise a glass of booze and say cheers to you all, as that is a story for another time, I can honestly say that every single member on WhatsApp, Instagram and Zoom, and part of The ACO has given me courage. So thank you and God bless you and when this is over let's keep encouraging each other all over the world—we're all going to need it!!

Michael Carstensen ACO



Danny Bishop ACO

Hello friends and colleagues,

Last year, I decided after 50 years in the film industry, to retire.



My wife and I had plans to travel extensively, maybe visit some of the wonderful locations which I worked in but—on the one day off—didn't get the chance to explore. (Couldn't get out of the bar.) Ironically, because of the lockdown, the furthest places we've travelled to are the local park and Sainsbury's! My day consists of getting up late (10 ish), which still feels odd after years of 5:30 alarm calls.

Then I take the dog to the park (he's a 'King Shit'— a cross between a King Charles and a Shih-Tzu), come home and make breakfast. The wife has just about surfaced by now. After this I have an hour learning the guitar (at 67 years old, it's not so easy). I've subscribed to an app called 'Yousician', which I'm pleased with. We then take the dog to Trent Park, which is beautiful—miles of woods, lakes and playing fields. During this lovely weather, I've been having a lot of barbecues (which is great) and spend the afternoon reading—Wilbur Smith currently. Lots of FaceTime with the kids; Because of the lockdown, we aren't getting to see our 4 grandchildren, so FaceTime has been invaluable.

We're a bit quizzed-out, I have to say. A snack in the evening, and then a 'Walter Presents' European drama. It's a bit like Groundhog Day and has been for our 10 weeks of isolation. We are normally in Turkey at this time of year but on the positive side, we get to see all our roses bloom! I'm lucky, because at least I'm getting my pensions every month. My heart goes out to all of my freelance colleagues, not getting any income coming in.

Things will improve, keep strong, stay safe.

Best, Dave Morgan ACO



# whose shooting what?

## Carrying On in the Coronavirus Pandemic

June time and summer is here. Rewind to only 7 months ago and it was a great time to have a break, take some time off, explore new countries and new traditions, and have some family bonding time. We had sold our house, so me and my young family, including our newborn baby, all crammed into an old VW, with every nook and cranny stuffed with kids stuff, weetabix and Le Creuset pans. We set off to Italy for a winter away, basing ourselves in Puglia, southern Italy— a winter amongst the olive trees. It was easy to fly back for the occasional job. February though, brought an unsettling shift with the virus, so we decided to continue the road trip further south and head to Malta to possibly wait out the virus there. After all, it was only really affecting northern Italy at that point, right? Two hours after our arrival in Malta, Italy closed its borders.

Suddenly things moved quickly in so many countries, except for the UK that is. Malta imposed a quarantine so we ended up spending the next 10 days confined indoors. Fines of 10,000 euros per person were imposed for anyone caught breaking quarantine. After advice from the British consulate we decided to fly back to the UK, which we did just 2 days before Malta closed all its airport on the 21 March. We had to abandon our beloved VW in Malta, parked in on a side street, still packed full of kids things and Le Creuset pans. The Weetabix had long been devoured.

Gatwick airport was a joy—no queues and no people. We eventually managed to get a hire car, although most of the hire companies had closed up then and we sat near the M3 trying to work out what we should do. An uncle came to the rescue and offered us his small holiday place on the Gower, in south Wales. We have spent the last 2 months living in a small space but with the beauty of the beach on our doorstep. The kids have loved it. Home schooling has turned into identifying crabs and sea creatures. Next we need to find somewhere to live...

The last few months, we probably all have been through the process of trying to anticipate how things might change in our industry. I spend most of my evenings working with the geared head simulator, catching up on the webinar talks and trying to accept the changes that are still being shaped. I do see the positive spirit of our community and the willingness to accept changes which is a good feeling and feels hopeful.

Svetlana Miko ACO

Lockdown

It's a Mad Mad Mad Mad Mad World.  
Stanley Kramer 1963. Perfect Comedy.

It's been my go to movie and the perfect antidote to the past 3 months. I am fascinated by the emotional journey that I have experienced in some ways like this film in 3 acts. We are all certainly not in the same boat. Going Forward lets be loving the world has become too devisive. Common Sense is vital. The overall arc of the past 12 weeks has been rediscovering the simpler parts to one's life. Living alone but having weekends with the Ex has had its challenges! My Cooking Skills have increased dramatically, I am reading more full form novels discovered Podcasts on Spotify and even started to tinker in the garden. Probably drunk a bit too much wine as well on occasion. I am however like many looking forward to getting back to work.We all belong to an amazing craft. Full of Beautiful people who took a chance. That is not to be underestimated Be kind to yourself.

Hamish Doyne-Ditmas

Way back in 1999, Denis Crossan had booked me for a couple of weeks Steadicam and Second Camera on a film he was shooting called *Clandestine Marriage*, staring Nigel Hawthorne and Joan Collins, directed by Christopher Miles. The shoot was taking place in a beautiful Jacobean Manor named Stanway House, not far from Cheltenham, or 'Nam' as Denis named it.

So on a Monday morning I packed my kit into my trusty T4, and off I went on the M40 to the Cotswolds. It was a beautiful sunny day, a couple of hours drive— beautiful.

I arrived and had just been parked up on the location when I saw Denis, Nick Ray our Grip, and 'Willy Wands' (Willy sadly recently deceased) 30 or 40 yards away and standing about 30 yards in front of a large grass mound. They were talking in their group to Nigel Hawthorne and Joan Collins. Who could mistake them?

So I quickly jumped out of the van—as I was keen to impress—and strode over to Denis. As I walked over, Denis, the Director Christopher Miles ( who I had yet to meet ) and Willy started walking backwards. Also, I had never met or worked with Nigel or Joan. Roz Naylor 1st AC & Tammo Van Horn our Loader, were standing by the mound.

Nigel and Joan walked towards Denis, Christopher and Mr Wands, with Nick behind Denis. This was clearly a Steadicam shot so I needed to be there!

I rushed over and joined the group, now moving backwards at a pace—a quick hello to Denis, Nick and Willy as I joined the group. I meant business! We gathered a bit more pace. Denis, Nick and the Director slowed a little and I kept going as Nigel and Joan closed on me, then *blam!*

I went hurtling into that unseen grass mound, my feet flew up above my head and thump! I body-planted into the ground, landing with my arms and legs akimbo!! Then a second of silence, followed by raucous laughter from Denis, Willy, Roz, Nick and Tammo, our Director looking down very confusedly at me. Then while I am still flailing on the ground, I see Nigel Hawthorne walking towards me and he bends over me with his hand out-stretched, shakes my hand and with his perfect comic timing of course, says (remember I have NEVER met him) 'Ah you must be Peter the Steadicam Operator, nice to meet you' and turns and walks off. More raucous laughter! I thought to myself: 'why couldn't I just have waited until they had finished the rehearsal or just fallen into a hole?!

That was not the end of the off-screen drama on this production. I had arrived a week or two into shooting and while I was there the wages were not paid and the crew naturally became worried, so the producer held a meeting informing the cast crew that the production was in financial difficulty. Oh dear.

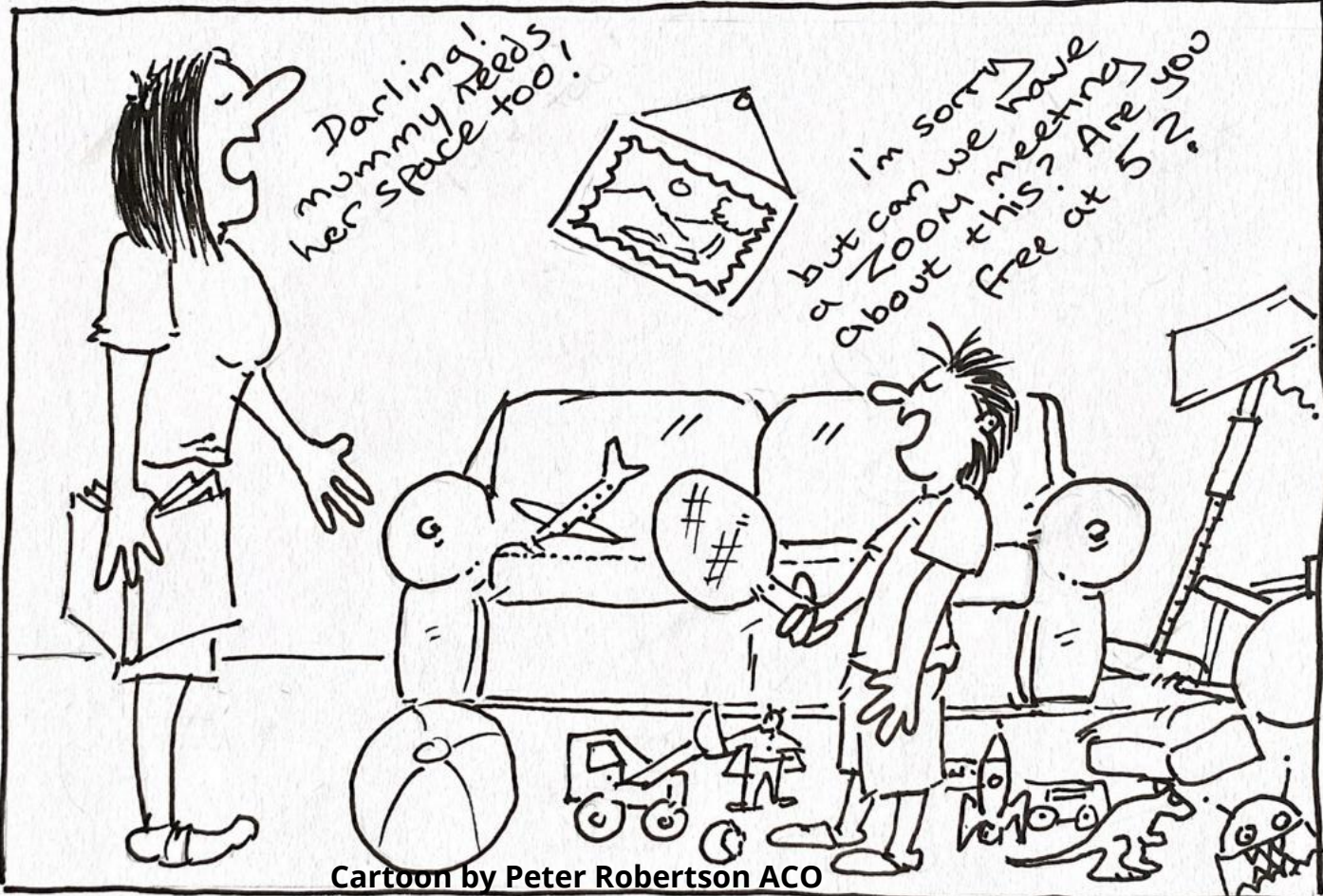
So with a time limit set by the crew, off he went to resolve the issue. His work was made easy as from what I understand, Nigel and Joan bailed the film out. Nigel Hawthorne was a joy to work with, along with Joan. Poor Nigel passed away only a couple of years later—great actor and a kind man.

Christopher Miles has a website dedicated to the film for those interested.

[http://www.christophermiles.info/Films/Clandestine\\_Marriage/comments.html](http://www.christophermiles.info/Films/Clandestine_Marriage/comments.html)

The moral of the story is of course 'Look where you are going.'

Peter Cavaciuti ACO



Cartoon by Peter Robertson ACO



# whose shooting what?

Julia—who many of you know—and I came to New Zealand for a three-week holiday on March 4th to see her family. We're still here. What was supposed to be a short 'end of NZ summer' break, turned into a life experience that I most likely would never have had, had it not been for Covid. As freelancers we wouldn't have given ourselves the time required to actually 'live' in another country. Just before Jacinda Ardern's now legendary response, and three weeks into a camper van trip, we found ourselves in Queenstown, Otago, nestled between Lake Wakatipu and a wall of mountains. After the announcement, we had two days to find an AirBnB. We found one with a view, negotiated a long-term discount and moved in the following day.

We bought the essentials and two downhill mountain bikes—ex-rental in great nick. We had only been together about 4 months, so being locked up together for the next two was going to be make or break. We did pretty well. I think I have been privy to seeing Queenstown in a way that most people will never see. Normally a bustling tourist town, it was absolutely deserted and perhaps in a state as close to what it must have been like for the early gold panners of the Shotover river as is possible nowadays. I would ride my bike about 20kms every other day. I could use the middle of the road, knowing that there was no chance a car would come the other way. Lockdown in NZ was hard, fast and very strict; no driving except to the supermarket. The second half of the ride took me along the side of the lake on a dirt path, through the forest and native bush. The sheer mountains of the 'Remarkables' range provide the most awesome backdrop with crystal sharp air and the sound of Tuis echoing through. If you've never heard a Tui, do look on YouTube. Yet the thing I noticed the most, once the initial novelty of lockdown had worn off,

was just how much the mountains change around you every day—something I would never have had the time or headspace to notice. Millions of years old, yet every day so different. Bright, sunny skies bleaching them to yellow-green; low clouds flattening the light and removing the contours; evening sunsets cutting deep black grooves with shadows on the amber walls; and long white clouds floating low over the lake. The Maori name for New Zealand, 'Aotearoa', means 'Land of the long white cloud'—makes sense. It brought the landscape to life.



City living disconnects me from nature, and I am a country boy. I now feel a connection again to the living world around me that I haven't felt since moving to London. I started to take the same photograph every day. A panorama of the lake and mountains made from around 120 images that shows the changing of the seasons. I'd stitch them together most evenings and see what had come out. It's not the world's best landscape shot but it was the only shot I could get from our balcony.

I am slowly getting around to making a strip/collage of the images throughout the lockdown—the same one every day. It'll take me ages and who knows if it'll be any good, but it will be a constant reminder of one of the most remarkable experiences I, and probably most of us, will ever go through.



James Layton ACO



I was about to start shooting a movie in the UK and Turkey when things all started to crumble around us. We were one of the last productions to get told we were definitely on hiatus. Not long after that, I started to feel exhausted and under the weather. A few days later, I totally lost my taste and smell. I was experimenting with chillis and copious amounts of garlic to see if I could taste any of it, to no avail; anosmia had buried it's way into me and my partner didn't want to be anywhere near me for the garlic exuding from me. I didn't get a test, but I think I had the virus.

About 3 weeks into lockdown, my mum became quite unwell. She had all the symptoms of Covid-19 but it took many phone calls and a lot of begging to get her a test. The day she got her results—positive—her mum died. I thought my inability to enjoy a coffee had been quite bad until that point, but I think it's safe to say that that was the worst day in lockdown. My grandma had contracted the virus in the home she had been living in and passed peacefully in her sleep. About 17 others died the following week in the home. My grandma was a real fighter and survivor throughout her life; she had been a refugee in Germany during the second world war. I miss her a lot. My mum is still suffering somewhat from the virus, but she too is a fighter and has managed to pick herself back up. I still don't fully have my taste and smell back, but I think I'll be quite happy about that when I'm back on set, needing to head to the honeywagon.

Ilana Garrard ACO



# whose shooting what?



When this whole thing started, I was 2 weeks into a job in Bristol—home turf. I had had a busy year and had just finished a shoot in London. I really wanted a few weeks off to spend some time at home with the family and recharge, but the prospect of 20 weeks in Bristol and my own bed every night was obviously far too good to turn down. After the first week on what was looking like a fun shoot with some great people, it became obvious that we were going to be stood down at some point soon. The last few days were very weird; not quite knowing if we would make it to the following day. When the inevitable did happen, we were initially told we'd be off for 8 weeks—if only! That sounded good to me: a couple of weeks to recharge, Easter with the kids at home and then crack on with the enormous list of DIY and jobs that needed to be done around the house and garden before heading back in June.

Obviously that was not to be. September has been mooted for a return, but even that is optimistic I think. Lockdown has not been too bad really. I'm pretty pragmatic, and both the wife and I have settled into lockdown life quite well so far. The first couple of weeks were interesting as we had to get to grips with home schooling. We have two kids: 10 and 8. Thank god I married an ex-teacher who now works as a child psychologist! She's all about routine with the school stuff, so after a bit of Joe Wicks, it's heads down in the classroom for a couple of hours of academic stuff, then art in the afternoon and various outdoor activities. We've had the odd meltdown here and there, and the inevitable sibling scraps but we're in a bit of a groove now and I can even say I'm enjoying the teaching.

So far, apart from financially, we and our extended families have thankfully been untouched by the virus itself. Staying at home seems a small price to pay for that. We are lucky where we live; we have lovely, people-free countryside outside the front door and a decent sized garden for the kids to blow off steam. I struggle to think how young families in flats are coping. I take my hat off to them.

Apart from the financial worries, I think we are all enjoying this prolonged period of family time. Usually at this time of year I'd be working away and miss out on so much stuff at home, not least seeing the garden come into its own. Weekends when working are usually spent ferrying kids to various clubs, then the usual chores. There is always a job to do and there always seems little time to be together and spend some 'quality time.' Now that is literally all we have. Apart from the PlayStation, Netflix and FaceTime with mates, (screen time rules have gone out the window) the kids are loving gardening and the veggie patch. Obviously the weather has helped. We've been monitoring the comings and goings of the various birds nests around the house and have a couple of wildlife camera traps set up, hoping to get some footage of the elusive hedgehog which has been soiling the lawn. So far we've seen mice, a stoat!, rabbits, very cute baby rabbits and rats—sadly no hedgehog yet. It's been really good fun every morning picking the cameras up to see if we've had any nocturnal visitors. My son has found a love for a 100mm macro I have for an SLR. He's been enjoying photographing the flowers and any bugs he can find. It's been great to actually spend some proper time doing stuff like that with the kids.

Facetime etc. has been amazing for us all for keeping in touch with family, friends etc. The kids have been doing a comedy news cast for the Grandparents, which keeps my hand in as the 'Camera Guy'.

My list of DIY and jobs hasn't really shrunk too much, I have to say. I find myself actually sitting down, watching the world go by, pottering about in the garden, reading the paper properly or talking rubbish with the wife and kids rather than starting on a job. It's nice.

I miss work, I miss the people as well as the job, and hopefully we'll all be able to get back to it soon. When we do we'll be back to the long days, time away from home and years that just seem to fly by before we know it. This will be a weird bubble of time which will be a distant memory before too long.

So whilst we are in this weird bubble, I'm going to sit back, do as little as possible and try and enjoy these extra few weeks with the family as much as possible.

James Leigh ACO



Having spent a large portion of last year away shooting in India, I was looking forward to spending some time at home. Who knew it would end up being so long?

Lockdown came two weeks before I was due to start shooting and like many of us, it has been surreal and often difficult to adjust to all this time away from doing what we know and love. Having this time to reflect on things and having more time to connect with friends and family more often than before has been great, even if we've all had enough quizzes to last a lifetime. It's also been good getting involved to help develop the associations diversity committee, something that feels increasingly important now.

I've also been mastering Zelda on the Nintendo switch!!

Tom Walden ACO

During my homeschool days, I've tried to do some fun activities with my 7-year-old daughter and one of those has been photography. I dusted off my old Nikon D80 and handed it to her to see what she came up with, as she had shown an interest prior. It turns out she has an amazing eye and is conscious of framing too. She took some amazing pictures in our garden of flowers and still life, including some macro photography. While we are all apprehensive about the future and what it may have in store for our industry, it's important to pay attention to the little things and what we take for granted.

Rich Cornelius ACO



# KILLING EVE

JOE RUSSELL ACO



**I could** tell straight away that *Killing Eve* had the potential to be a great project. Reading the opening scene of the first episode, I was instantly hooked, and as I read on I realised it could really be something special. It's not often you get that feeling on the first read of a script, so when I was asked to come on board, I didn't think twice...

The project came my way after a conversation in the early summer of 2017 with Julian Court BSC, who had already been involved for a while prepping the project with director Harry Bradbeer, and spoke really enthusiastically about it to me over the phone. We hadn't worked together before but he was keen to collaborate. I got the sense that he would be someone who'd really appreciate what a dedicated operator could bring to the table, helping to free up much needed head space for the myriad challenges and obstacles that, as a DP, he would be facing on a daily basis. He knew that we'd be using Steadicam as a key tool in telling the story of these two women whose lives begin to revolve around one another in ever decreasing circles, with the rest of the characters existing within their orbit. He wanted the camera to remain up close and personal with the two leads, helping to draw the audience into their worlds, while still giving them the chance to move freely around set, with the camera being reactive rather than too prescriptive.

The shoot kicked off with a week in Sienna. Not only had I not worked with Julian before, but I'd also never worked with key grip Warwick Drucker or 1st AC Richard Bradbury (who went on to step up and

operate the B Cam with real style and grace on series 2 and 3) so it felt like we were all getting to know one another in the heat of battle, so to speak. In spite of the beautiful Italian sunshine, the first morning's low loader work had more than it's fair share of teething problems, to say the least, which 3 series later we still all look back on with an icy shudder! Yet the plan for the afternoon was to shoot the opening sequence with Villanelle in the ice cream parlour—the scene which had me instantly hooked on the first read of the script—so we knew we needed to do it justice. Thankfully by the end of the day we felt that we'd shot a great scene. The team was really beginning to gel and we were well underway on what was going to be a tough but rewarding journey.

*'One of the most important relationships while filming for me as an actor is the relationship with the camera operator. It's intimate. They are the first person who witnesses you. It demands skill and strength, but more importantly intuition. Because it's a dance. It is an exercise in trust with the actor through a sense of timing, a sense of space, and intuiting emotion. I have to trust they will be there to catch what I'm doing—the magic and spontaneity of the moment.'*  
**Sandra Oh**

One thing that Julian was really keen to explore from the outset was maybe carrying a stabilised gimbal with us, as a tool to open up the creative possibilities of the show. After a day testing a Movi at Fava Rental, we could see where its strengths and weaknesses lay. Even though it provided us with a rock solid horizon, we felt it lacked the responsiveness and intuitive feel of the Steadicam sled, with a slight bounce from the operator's footsteps seeming inherent in the system when hand-holding the rig, especially on slower moves with little action happening in the frame. Granted, we didn't have the time or resources during testing to fully explore the various vests and tools available to assist the operator in this respect, but it seemed like we would have been barking up the wrong tree here anyway, given that a Steadicam sled would always be with us on the truck.

Where we felt it excelled was as a really lightweight and versatile stabilised remote head, with a multitude of rigging possibilities, and once the shoot was underway it really started to come into its own.



One way in which we regularly used it was rigged to a basic flatbed dolly with big pneumatic wheels and the Flowcine Black Arm for added stabilisation (pic outside nightclub) or just directly underslung on the dolly. Provided the ground wasn't too uneven, this meant that the whole filming space was effectively turned into a dance floor, with the camera just inches off the deck. We would often start off a scene with a "floor scraper" wide like this, on a 24 or 18mm lens, before moving in for closer coverage on the Steadicam.







Having that locked, rock solid frame was a real benefit, especially if a move finished and then held for the rest of the scene on a long, static shot, or involved a slow, creeping push in—neither of which are much fun to do in low mode Steadicam, especially outdoors on a windy day.

We also carried with us a small GF-Jib, and the Movi would often find itself on the end of that, strapped to the back of a flatbed truck in order to lend a bit of excitement to car travelling shots in Berlin, or squeezed into tight sets such as the operating theatre where “Fat Panda” is killed. We used the same jib on the tiny Cobra dolly in order to achieve the iconic top-shot of Eve and Villanelle lying next to one another in bed in the final scene, and had the Movi/Black Arm attached to a quad in Romania to capture Villanelle speeding away on the back of a motorbike, to end the great scene of her escaping from the Russian prison van on a real high note.

More often than not we would just use it underslung on a twin tube mount, in order to float the camera into awkward corners and over obstacles, or very close to the actors' faces during intimate or emotional scenes, where having the operator away from the performers and out of their eyelines was of real benefit. One of the few times we used the Movi in handheld mode was to capture first Konstantin, and then Villanelle, running full tilt towards us down a narrow wooden walkway. And it was a real success. For various reasons a rickshaw wasn't going to be suitable, so we decided if we just stripped it back to its most lightweight mode, I could run holding the rig out to my side with the camera facing backwards, and B Cam operator Justin Hawkins could finesse the frame remotely at the wheels. The tricky thing was trying to keep my feet from kicking up into the edge of frame on the wide lens, but we got there eventually!

Having the Movi with us every day on set without doubt helped the production punch above its weight, from the point of view of being able to respond to what we saw happening in front of us during rehearsals, and imagining then and there what could be possible to achieve. It was a real breath of fresh air for all of us. For season 2 and 3 we switched out for the slightly more robust DJI Ronin 2, and carried on using it in a very similar way with brilliant key grip Craig Atkinson being equally adept as Warwick in finding inventive ways in which to rig it. It's funny how quickly new technology is assimilated into the industry. Back in 2017, we all felt like we were feeling our way and working out what worked and what didn't, and now in 2020, having a stabilised gimbal on set is a pretty common practice. What's nice is that all this technology is feeding back into the analogue steadicam system and creating great hybrids of the two, with new tools such as the Volt and Trinity really starting to change the game all over again.

There was no doubt that *Killing Eve* was going to involve incredible organisation and efficiency across the camera and grip department, as it was clear from day one that cameras would be constantly leapfrogging between different modes and rigs. And although the aim was for a slick, bold and graphic style, we were never too dogmatic in our approach; we would never shy away from throwing the camera on the shoulder when it felt right—mixing and matching many different ingredients, even within scenes. A great example of this would be in the Berlin nightclub scene from series 1 (a 3 hour, 4am pre-call for grips I think—hats off to them!) which starts extremely close on the DJ's mixing booth and sweeps across it to reveal the whole club. We had a 30' Technocrane three floors underground at Fabric nightclub; Steadicam; longer lens work, handheld in amongst the sweaty ravers; and even a shot using the boroscope/periscope lens that director John East and block 2 DP Tim Palmer BSC put to great use, on pretty much a daily basis throughout their eps. We would regularly need to think on our feet in order to achieve shots that had been conjured up at the very last minute. I remember once hard-mounting the sled in low mode to a bazooka base lashed to the electricians sack barrow in the last 20 minutes of the day, in fading light on a pivotal confrontation scene, just because it was the closest thing to hand with wheels! It wasn't perfect but we got the shot rather than having to compromise. The ethos was always that whatever felt right was worth trying, and to never be shy in coming forward with ideas.

One piece of kit that always really earns its money on any job I do is the slider. I've always been a big advocate of sliders, as my background is in documentary and lower budget tv, where you work more as a one-man band doing all your own gripping and focusing. In fact, it was quite a few years into my career before I ever worked with a dedicated grip and focus puller and it was a bit of an eye-opening experience! So as much as I love operating with remote heads on cranes or using an Arrihead from time to time, my default would always be a fluid head with a slider. Even if I end up locking it for the take, I still love to know I've got the option to explore the frame an inch or two left or right if I wanted. (I guess it's just a habit I can't shake!) And there is always the time where the space you're working in means it's not possible to lay a track at quite the right angle to get the start and finish frame where you need it to be, and that's where the slider can come into its own. It's great fun working in harmony with your grip to get the slider and dolly move in-sync with one another, and also good to know that if the director suddenly decides they'd like a little emphatic push in at the end of your parallel track for example, you're in a good place to instantly offer up the shot.

The GFM 6' slider was especially useful throughout *Killing Eve* where we'd often find ourselves in very tiny sets and locations where you could perhaps squeeze a dolly but only if you didn't want to move it more than a foot and a half during the take! The 6' was ideal on so many occasions, the only downside being the lack of any ability to jib. I have a Betz Wave, which I'd bought for my steadicam



## THE FILMING OF KILLING EVE – THE THINKING BEHIND THE CAMERA.

*I began work on Series 1 of Killing Eve in early 2017. There was steerage from the writer, execs. and director Harry Bradbeer that the main characters experience / POV should guide us. I knew before we filmed tha the camera needed to be free to travel with Eve and Villanelle and I wanted to work physically close to the actors, close to the action. In general the camera would be framing from my preferred 'hip height' for wider shots and 'chest high' when closer. I knew we'd work on shorter focal length lenses and with a shallow depth of field. we learned as we filmed that it was the collaborative evolution on set which brought us to 'a way of doing things'. Quickly Joe and I found the 35mm and 50mm lenses were on the 'A' camera most of the time (as they have been in series 2 and 3).*

*We hunted for second camera positions wherever we could and would often set these on sliders, usually moving slowly into the action. Joe was a diligent overseer of B' camera setups, helping 'step up' operator Justin Hawkins to finesse his frame. Justin did an incredible job and Joe ensured it all joined up. From the beginning Steadicam was a key tool for staying in close. We opted for Alexa SXT as our main cameras and an Alexa Mini to help ease of movement and flexible rigging. My long term colleague and focus puller Richard Bradbury and I had also been talking about using 'Movi' on the series. Neither of us had experience, nor as it turned out did anyone else in the team! Patrick at Fava Rentals was kind enough to give us a day with the necessary kit. Joe, Richard Bradbury, Justin Hawkins, Warwick Drucker (Grip) and I spent happy hours making horrible shots, rapidly learning strengths and weaknesses. Any travel in a straight line was great, around corners, not so much. We collectively decided to give it a go with a strong hunch it would bring some magic to the shot making. In 2020 it's a familiar tool, but at the time it gave us confidence to attempt shots which usually came with bigger budgets.*

JULIAN COURT BSC







We were very lucky as well on this show to have had two dedicated camera operators throughout. This setup worked brilliantly for Julian as he was really able to spend time finessing the images with his gaffer at the monitor, as he pursued his quest for ever softer and more natural lighting. He would constantly be able to make slight adjustments to the stop throughout each take on both cameras, as he was really keen to get his dailies as close to the finished look as possible. The other DPs throughout the series—Tim Palmer, Damian Bromley and Carlos Catalan—all happily adopted this set up. Without having to be on the B Camera themselves meant that the 2nd camera was a much more versatile entity, able to jump on ahead to another set if it wasn’t needed in a scene, or have the time to really explore the odd and interesting angles that can make operating B so much fun. Both Justin Hawkins in series 1 and Richard Bradbury in 2 and 3 were both great at finding frames that were sensitive to the lighting and sound and that really helped the scenes come alive in the final cut, and their crack camera and grip teams were brilliant at sneaking themselves in, often at the last minute. Operating the 2nd camera and walking that fine line of being vocal enough to make your voice heard when you know you’ve a killer shot to offer, while at the same time maybe keeping yourself just an inch or two below the radar is a real art unto itself and can often be really under-appreciated until the edit.

One of the most challenging yet interesting things you face as an operator working across the entirety of a series is constantly having to adjust, often very quickly, to different directors and DPs, who obviously bring with them their own personalities and distinct ways of working. You have to be a bit chameleon-like in your abilities to adapt to their colours, and still retain something of your own taste and judgement, as often you may be the one constant throughout the show and can be relied upon to help maintain something of the ‘feel’ that is established early on.

The three directors of series 1 for example, were all very different, with Harry Bradbeer—who kicked off the series—bringing a really fun and slightly chaotic energy to proceedings. 2nd block director John East had a much more forensic and planned approach, which perfectly suited his three episodes as he had some big set piece scenes to deal with, such as the Berlin nightclub kill, the car chase in the Surrey Hills and the epic 10 page confrontation between the two leads in Eve’s front room. This scene in particular required a surprising amount of planning and blocking in what was a very tight and tricky little space, in order to keep it alive and visually interesting over its long duration, while still completing the even tighter and trickier schedule on time! Damon Thomas—director of the final 3 episodes—was probably sat somewhere in between the two extremes. He finished the first series off with real class and along with Julian has been instrumental in defining the look and style of the show as it has progressed into the later series. In fact it was Damon who came up with the idea of kicking off the beginning of series 2 with a one shot pre-credit sequence, designed to plunge the audience straight back into the action and really get the adrenaline going from the outset. The scene wasn’t written with this in

but never really fell in love with, and would tend to only use on really windy days or perhaps when hard-mounting on tracking vehicles. I was thinking about maybe selling it when I realised it could be put to good use if I rigged the slider at an angle in order to achieve a “jib”. By seating the Wave between the head and the camera, it maintains the horizon as you pan, so I was no longer compromising camera height at one end of the shot—sometimes a bit tricky to operate but definitely worth it.

Series 1 was shot on 3 Alexa Minis, with the 3rd body being a dedicated gimbal camera. Julian’s lenses of choice were an old set of Canon K35s, which we had alongside a set of Cooke Speed Panchros in the first series and Arri DNAs in the 2nd and 3rd. By the end of series 1 though, the Canon 35mm and 50mm had pretty much become the workhorse lenses for the A Camera, and this remained the case into the next 2 series, even as the sensor size increased to the larger LF. There was a quality I particularly liked about lenses around the 35mm field of view on the larger format camera, especially for mid-shots, where you really noticed the extra drop off in focus helping bring the characters out from their environment, without turning the background and great production design into an indistinct blur. Eve looked fantastic close-up on the 50mm, with Villanelle often meriting the 35mm in close, bringing to the fore her more cartoonish, mischievous personality.

With that larger format comes even trickier focus pulling, so special mention needs to be made to the incredible 1st ACs on series 2 and 3. On camera with me, Jules Ogden and Sam Smith respectively, and on B Cam with Richard were Alice Canty, Steve Smith and Theo Barman. It’s hard to overstate just how hard their job has become, with ever shallower depth of field showing no signs of going out of fashion any time soon; bigger sensors; busier schedules; plus more and more kit to wrap their heads around and be responsible for (lightweight remote stabilised heads being the main offender here!) Knowing that a focus puller is going to be responding instinctively with every move you make can make the world of difference to the way you approach your operating, and is really liberating. The same of course is true of a great grip. Having the confidence to suggest shots to a director or DP, knowing your crew will pull out all the stops to make it happen quickly and in style, is a constant blessing.



Left to right: Jack Jackson, B Cam grip (in flat cap); above him Kriss Dalimore, B Cam focus; Joe Russell; Damon Thomas, director; Julian Court, DOP; Justin Hawkins, B Cam Operator. (Photo from series 1—Russian tea room scene.)

mind, but Damon felt with a few tweaks it could work really well and not feel like we were putting the cart before the horse in order just to show off. It was always driven by the story, and by the notion established from day one that the camera would stick to either Eve or Villanelle like glue so as to help us really engage in their experience of the world as it begins to collapse around the pair of them.

Until now, the Steadicam had principally been used because of its flexibility in allowing the actors their freedom, and in allowing me to be responsive to their instincts. More complex, choreographed takes were a bit more of a rarity, as is often the case in TV drama, where any beat that isn’t moving the story on somehow is likely not to see the light of day outside the first cut, however noble the directors intentions! I’ll frequently find myself wearing the rig for extremely long and exhausting takes, but that’s more often than not just down to the length of the dialogue or directors trying to get a second take in “on the bounce”, rather than executing a long and beautifully orchestrated set piece, the likes of which *1917*, *Birdman*, *Victoria* and *The Revenant* are thrilling audiences with in the cinema. So needless to say, I was really happy when Damon set the challenge of the shot on the Paris apartment stairwell.

We were lucky enough to have the chance to spend a few hours in the early days of prep at the Paris location, as we realised it might need a bit more discussion than usual between the key players than we’d have time for on the tech recce. Damon talked through his idea for the scene and we started to roughly block it through ourselves, recording a few takes with the Artemis app on my phone set to 35mm, after Damon soon conceded his initial instinct for the 50 was probably a bit too tight for the action we were hoping to contain. The scene involved Eve running up and down the spiral stairs, hiding in a cupboard to avoid being seen by three “cleaners” who arrive, and then witnessing a murder before making her own escape and having to field a phone call in the process.



Part of this process involved working out exactly what tool would be the right one for the job, but I sensed with all the tilting up and down required, and the narrow width of the stairwell where cast had to squeeze past the camera, that Steadicam would be the right choice. Even without wearing any kind of vest to support you with the weight of the rig, handholding the Ronin out in front of your body leaves you with a very big footprint. The only reason we were really considering it was that Damon was keen to begin the shot very close to the ground, but I managed to talk him into a different, only slightly higher opening frame! Julian was also keen to shoot with the full size LF rather than the Alexa Mini since it was the opening shot of the show (S2 was pre-Mini LF days, and so we were carrying two full size LF's and one Alexa Mini as the gimbal camera). So Steadicam it was!

On the day, we managed to build the rig into as short a mode as possible in spite of the relative weight of the LF, but still I was always a hair's breadth away from hitting either the wall or the actors as anyone passed in front of me or for any of the tilts up and down. I think we maybe did 8 or 9 takes on a very hot July day, with a few rehearsals of course, and I definitely remember getting a bit sweaty! The key to the shot, as with all these type of shots, was in the timing, and thankfully Steve Robinson—the 1st AD—did a fantastic job of working closely with me and adjusting the queuing of the supporting artists, whose actions were very much motivating a lot of the camera moves. Sandra Oh, who plays Eve, was also a godsend at this point, because her camera awareness and sense of timing made all the difference to the success of the shot. She knew instinctively that if she fumbled with her phone at the moment near the end of the shot where the camera has to catch up and overtake her, it would build in a natural deceleration which could then ramp up again when the camera had passed, all totally believable and in-character. In fact, that's one of the real joys of being involved over an entire series and beyond—being able to have a shorthand with the regular cast and an understanding of one another is really beneficial both to their craft and to yours!



*"Joe is a holistic operator and what I mean by that is that you always get the sense that not only does he have a practical focus on the visual, the mechanics of the shot and the willingness to capture it but that he is aware of the space of the players' need to let magic happen. He always has an overall sense of the piece. Joe Russell has been absolutely instrumental in setting the look for Killing Eve. He brings all of himself to the work and you can see it on screen. It's been a privilege to observe him help evolve that look through all 3 seasons. I have always trusted Joe to be there to catch me." Sandra Oh*

Link to S2 opening shot <https://vimeo.com/manage/383387515/general>

I am proud to say that the show has been one of the most collaborative I have ever worked on, where it really felt as though everybody was working in harmony towards one common aim, across all 3 series. Solutions would always be arrived at through discussion and consideration, which was such a nice way to work. A great end result was achieved through a genuine team spirit and a sense that we were making something worthy of the effort. And the fact that it was one of the most enjoyable experiences I've had on a set in a long time is real testament to that.



stills c/oRobert Viglasky

# STEPPING UP

## BY RICHARD BRADBURY

My journey from Focus Puller to Camera Operator began on the second series of *Killing Eve*, in the summer of 2018. Joe Russell and I met during the first series, where I focused his camera for lead DP Julian Court BSC, who I have worked closely with for many years. Without the support and guidance of those two people in particular, I'm not sure I would have had the confidence to step up. Thank you both. Two years—and nearly three hundred days—looking through the lens, down the line I'm only just starting to feel comfortable calling myself an Operator.

Nobody can prepare you for your first days as an Operator. You have stepped out from the shadows, and suddenly every tiny decision you make is right there on every monitor on the set, in front of every set of questioning eyes. No matter how much you think you know about composition, movement and light, as an Operator the first thing I realised I had to learn was how to read a script and watch a rehearsal: What story is being told; what the actors do with their eyes and their hands, as well as their bodies; where the director and DP stand; what the physical space allows; how much of the day there is left... Ultimately you have to be confident in your own mind that your camera is in exactly the right place, moving in exactly the right way, at exactly the right moment. I can only imagine that comes with years of experience and the support of many brilliant people, since every day is still a heady mix of exhilaration and anxiety for me. *Killing Eve* is a brilliant show to operate a camera on. The production design is impeccable, the locations are beautiful and the performances are so often breathtaking. The world that we try to create in the photography has a heightened reality about it, so the B Camera can often look for really unusual shots.



The camera is often right on the floor, or jammed against the ceiling, and B Camera grip Jack Jackson takes a lot of credit for his ingenuity in getting the camera in the impossible places we line up shots. I'm given the freedom to offer up extreme short sided frames, dutch angles, tilt focus lenses and loads of other tricks to tell the internal stories of Villanelle and Eve, Carolyn and Konstantin.

I was lucky enough to take on a significant amount of A Camera duties during season 3 in Barcelona and Romania, which brought with it a whole new level of pressure and reward. I have enormous respect and admiration for the brilliant Camera Operators in the ACO, and now I really understand why people call it the best seat in the house.



## Some years ago

I remember seeing a natural history documentary which showed ants fighting to survive in a flood. They clung together along with bits of wood, reeds and other debris and formed a raft. Once they found a bigger object they would swarm onto it and use it as a place of safety, forming a tower to keep as many of them out of the water as possible.

This seemed to me a remarkable survival mechanism based on cooperation between individuals forming a group.

The image came to mind when the pandemic flooded over us in March this year. One by one, productions stopped or shut down and we were all at home wondering what our future held. Supermarkets greeted us with empty shelves and desperate people wheeling trolleys full of tins of beans and toilet rolls. Finding a supermarket delivery slot was like winning the lottery. Item rationing became the norm. Netflix, Amazon and catchup TV became our cinema substitutes.

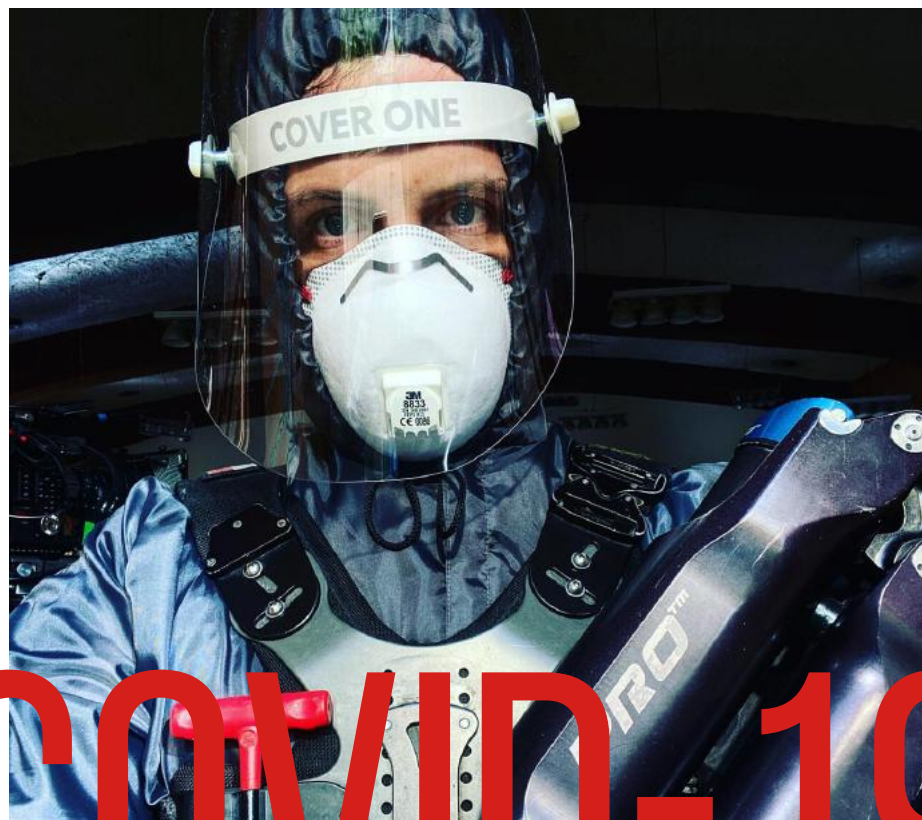
As time went on though, various survival mechanisms appeared; the BSC and then the ACO established WhatsApp groups for members and then began using Zoom for meetings. We saw the rise of the webinar. People who initially felt isolated and alone found each other and shared days checking emails and WhatsApp groups, and attending long Zoom meetings from afar.

The ACO WhatsApp group was mooted by a few Board members and in spite of some doubts, was started on 27th March with the sobering title of 'ACO COVID-19 Support Group'. Initially we thought it would be a good way of getting information and news we had found online to the membership, and I posted everything to the group that I thought might be relevant. This sparked various discussions and comment, and inevitably a certain wry cynicism crept into the tone of the group. I felt that what was really needed was a pub atmosphere to lighten the mood and we renamed the group 'The Inn at the ACO.' This released some inhibition and led to a certain amount of virtual drunken behaviour, but it helped immensely to foster an atmosphere of animated discussion about almost anything, coronavirus related or not, and illustrated our need to socialise. It seemed to me a bit like a 21st century version of whispered communication between prison cells that I'd seen in *Shawshank* and all those other prison movies—you could hear the voices but not see the prisoners!

As a Board member of the ACO; an Associate Member representative on the BSC Board; a representative of operators on BECTU Camera Branch; and joined up to several social media groups, I could see everyone's confusion over the contradictory, uneven advice and guidelines appearing online, in the press, and by hearsay. Some connecting tissue seemed to be needed and along with some others, notably Jon Howard, I started to cross-post information and articles across different groups. This was picked up and passed on by others and a kind of protocol seemed to form, where all would contribute to the raft of information and knowledge keeping us somewhat afloat and together in the torrent. I was able to feed back information from the 'Inn' to the Camera Branch of BECTU, where we had a whole list of issues to tackle after the 'support' for the self-employed was announced, highlighting how ill thought-out it was as most of us dropped through the cracks. PAYE freelancer? No support unless you can get furloughed. Sole trader earning over 50k? No support—you obviously don't need it, unlike your permanently employed counterparts earning a lot more. Limited company? Sorry, your income is from dividends and that doesn't count.

BECTU and the associations started to push the Government and Treasury to live up to their promise that no one would be left behind. Some victories were won, but it seemed like a Sisyphean task. The information flowed though, between the Camera Branch, the ACO and BSC WhatsApp groups, and at least we all knew how difficult it was, and how hard people were trying.

We were also engaged in discussions around safe working practices for an eventual return to work. There were several ongoing initiatives and BECTU had engaged with the British Film Commission, who had contacted various 'stakeholders' to put together a working set of guidelines for such an eventuality. We were concerned about the potential lack of protection for the crew—not just physical but in terms of liability. What would happen to you if you got sick? Many hours were spent trying to shape a policy. Much of what we input went into the BFC document, although watered down by such phraseology as 'where possible' and 'if appropriate.'



# COVID-19

The daily news was frightening as death tolls climbed to horrifying levels, and those with underlying health problems, advancing years and/or of black or Asian ethnic origin were shown to be more vulnerable to severe attacks. Governments showed complacency, ignorance, arrogance and indifference in their pronouncements, with only a few adopting pragmatism, concern and efficiency in their approach.

Information and rumour were debated in WhatsApp and consensus reached. People opened up with their fears and emotions and were reassured by other members of the group. We saw Jamie's garden, Bob's bench, Zoë shopping, as well as countless domestic backgrounds of bookshelves, pictures on the wall, gardens, family. I particularly remember an ACO Board Zoom meeting with one of Danny Bishop's kids staging a melodramatic and attention-grabbing collapse to the floor behind him which had us all in stitches!

So paradoxically, the lockdown, whilst isolating us physically, has brought us all much closer together. And now the callous killing of George Floyd and the resulting protests across the US and the globe have awakened a real desire for change and everywhere there is discussion through these new channels of communication on how to achieve it.

The communication links and newly formed emotional bonds between us, created by the shared repression of normal life by the lockdown, are being used for passionate discussion of changing our industry to better represent everyone, with mentoring and training initiatives supported by the ACO, BSC, GBCT, BECTU, Screenskills, the BFI and many others. BECTU is building a model for a different way of working for freelancers called the 'New Deal' which hopes to reduce hours and establish a better work/life balance. As freelancers, why do we work such long hours? Why is there no sick pay when you can't work? Is it right that you can be sacked with two weeks notice at any time, with no right of appeal?

Of course these are not problems wholly unique to the film industry, but does the pursuit of profit and a constant increase in GDP justify any of this? Workers are classified as PAYE, Schedule D, sole traders or limited companies and it is often forgotten that they are all people with shared human problems. Is it right that inequality continues to rise as wages fall further behind inflation?

Average FTSE 100 chief executive pay is now 145 times that of the average worker. Average wages in Britain in 2020, adjusted for inflation, are below the level seen before the financial crisis in 2008.

In the US, three men—Jeff Bezos, Bill Gates and Warren Buffet—hold combined fortunes worth more than the total wealth of the poorest half of Americans. In the US, the imprisonment rate for African Americans is five times that of whites. In the UK, 51% of young offenders are BAME males, although people from BAME backgrounds only constitute 14% of the population. The median Black family in the US owns just 2% of the wealth of the median White family.

Do we want this state of affairs to continue? And do we really not care if it gets worse? If the answer is no then we should all hope that when the pandemic subsides, we don't return to the old ways, but keep our newfound sense of camaraderie and resolve, and continue to work to change things together, for all of us.

'No justice, no peace.'

## CHRIS PLEVIN ACO | ASSOC BSC



# A CAR COMMERCIAL DURING COVID

**June somewhere...** The rusty cogs of my depleting bank account were lubricated earlier than expected by my being one of the first back to work during the pandemic. It was a 3-day car commercial, a two camera shoot. I was a bit apprehensive and wasn't convinced by the way the authorities had been handling the crisis. If they told me it's safe to go back to work, I didn't necessarily believe them. I had to make my own judgement. The first good point was that the DP was the excellent human being that is Ed Rutherford. Also, it was pretty much all exterior—that helped from a safety POV. Again, I was working with a great camera crew that I knew very well. Total number of crew was only 50.

The first and only document I had to sign was an APA COVID-19 Health Declaration Form, amongst other things, stating that I had not been in contact with anyone who was COVID-19 positive in the last 14 days. Everyone had to sign that. The production company were very experienced and took their responsibilities seriously. They provided masks, eyewear and hand gel. And the H&S Officer was of course 'COVID trained.'

Social distancing was recommended/suggested/encouraged. Some people took heed while some people quickly forgot about it. The Production Manager thought the 2m rule was difficult to manage and maintain. Because of that, masks had to be worn at all times—we used 320 over 3 days.



Ed Rutherford—even DPs have to salute somebody!



1st AC Sam Smith in charge of keeping everyone going

The H&S Officer would come round and ask people to put their masks back up if he saw a culprit. But he could only do so much and as all this seemed to be advisory, we relied on each other to use our collective common sense—not always a commodity in plentiful supply. Otherwise people just forgot, or they had the mask below their nose because it's easier to breathe! As a camera department, we did have to remind each other a couple of times but good practice resulted from that. I wasn't alone in bringing my own PPE.

I had various masks, visors, my own hand gel, thermometer, oximeter and other goodies. The only thing I didn't have was my own medic. Although the production company were great, I felt it important not to rely on them. Likewise with food, I bought my own and so did a couple of other people. Apparently the hot boxed catering was excellent but at that moment I preferred to be cautious.

Overall I felt safe; exteriors make it safer and I swerved anyone who wasn't covered. If it was an interior—a small space with atmos pumping in—maybe I wouldn't have felt comfortable. From a shooting POV it didn't really feel any different than usual although PPE is a barrier to our ability to function as well as to the virus. Masks and goggles are without doubt awkward to work in. It's so easy to pull the protection off and forget that you've done that. We have to get into new good habits. Shooting equipment was a Steadicam, Dolly, etc, and for one day a Russian Arm.

The Steadicam work was quick, simple and effective. It was a good choice under the circumstances. For the Russian Arm, perspex dividers was the original plan but that didn't work out so it was a SOCO suit, mask, goggles, visor, gloves. Opening the windows a little gave a healthy flow of air.

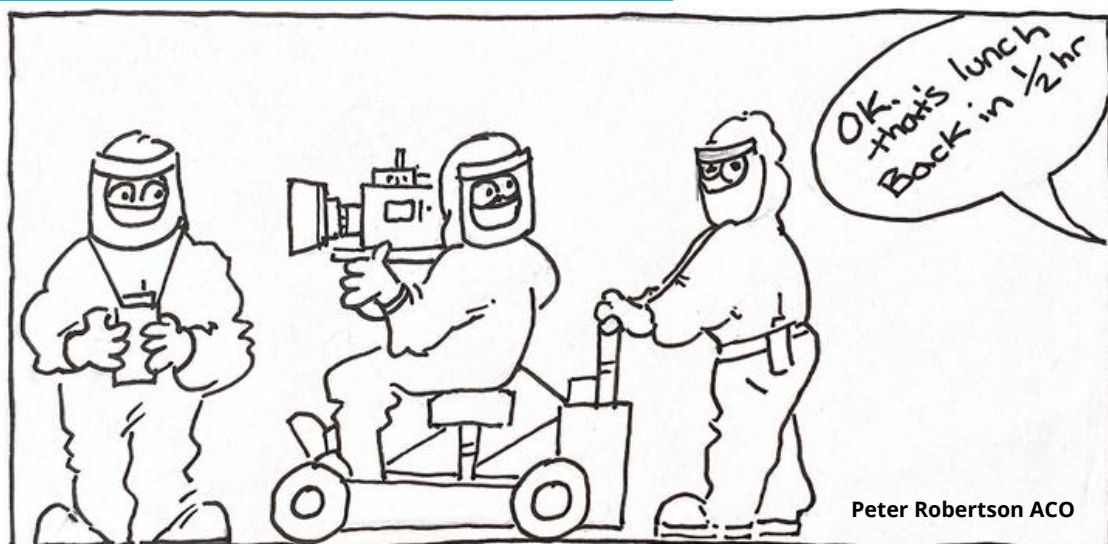
That was it really; no big drama in the end. It was a good project to start with—plenty of space and not a huge crew—we were able to work at our usual blistering speed.



Camera Team: Piotrek Pelinski, Sam Smith, Mat Treacy, Roger Tooley and The Sankey Family. No idea who's who!

Apparently everyone is happy with our performance.

The only disappointment for me came at the end of the day; I couldn't give my good buddies the hugs and affection that I would have done. A wave or a thumbs up from 2m away doesn't tell the story. To be continued...



## ROGER TOOLEY ACO





IT was in 2018 that the call went out from Anthony Dod Mantle DFF BSC ASC to his far-flung, itinerant band of cohorts to assemble themselves in Budapest for the shooting of *Radioactive*, under the exotic guidance of Iranian-born French Director Marjane Satrapi, for a film of a biographical nature concerning the life and work of Marie Curie. The movie *Radioactive* is an interesting one, attempting to profile both Marie Curie and her discovery itself: the phenomenon of radioactivity.

Anthony's long-time collaborators—gaffer Thomas Neivelt from Sweden and 1st AC Telfer Barnes from Cape Town—were supported by a splendid gang from Budapest, including 1st AC Chris Summers and Key Grip Atilla Szuchs with his crew from The Mob Grip Company.

Amongst the Hungarian crew were many friendly faces from past campaigns and one of those faces was that of Krystóf Párdányi, 2nd AC, with whom I had worked previously on John Madden's *The Debt*. In that film, an exciting scene takes place at a large railway station with many platforms connected by a series of bridges. To accomplish our scenes, several trains were under our control and could chunter about back and forth on cue. As we began shooting on a platform in the centre of the station, two of our trains were lined up on adjacent tracks with their doors next to each other so that magliners, lighting equipment and all the paraphernalia could cross the tracks through the trains rather than being hauled up, over and down the bridges. Once the scenes in the central platforms were complete, John Madden, Ben Davis BSC and I moved to one of the outlying platforms to set up the final scene of the day and asked Krystóf to get the lenses and finder over to us as soon as possible. As usual time was pressing and in the kerfuffle of relocating, Krystóf determined that the fastest way to accomplish his mission would be through the trains as previously mentioned. No sooner had he boarded the first carriage with his precious cargo than a whistle sounded, the doors closed, and the locomotive pulled out of the station. We could only wave, thunderstruck as Krystóf looked forlornly out of the window, the driver having been told that we no longer required his train and he was wrapped.

I had long wanted to work with Anthony and in 2007/8 the chance at last presented itself on Kevin McDonald's Romans-in-Britain story *The Eagle*. Since then I have been part of his team on many projects and with a varied roster of first-class directors including two films with Danny Boyle, two with Ron Howard, and most recently, prior to the shutdown, with Justin Kurzel in India and Australia. Anthony is a generous guv'nor and working with him as an operator, one is always in the happy position of feeling like a collaborator with room for experimentation, without fear and with the freedom to follow one's instincts. An example of this can be seen in the accompanying ice cream eating photograph; I had been sent off to shoot 'impressionistic' images of the glorious lamp of heaven and had tried many things involving vaseline, rain effects, reflections, etc. until finally striking gold by putting the top part of a water-cooler where the lens should be.



In addition to narrating the life and work of Marie Curie, the *Radioactive* script contained several vignettes depicting future events resulting from the discoveries of the Polish-French scientist and her husband Pierre. One such took place in the cockpit of the Enola Gay—chillingly recreated by Production Designer Michael Carlin—as it flew its terrible cargo to Hiroshima at the end of the Second World War. In early February we drove through blizzards to the set which recreated First World War battlefield conditions where Marie Curie's innovative mobile X-ray vehicles saved many lives and limbs.

On *Radioactive* we had a lovely troupe of actors with us, headed by Rosamund Pike and Sam Riley. On a two-handed scene in a dark and narrow corridor, the camera on Steadicam began as Sam's POV behind Rosamund, before passing her to look back the way we had come to reveal Sam following behind. Sounds simple enough until you consider all the other personnel involved with microphones, fishing rods, etc. not to mention the poor focus puller trying to do his trickiest work at the very moment when he himself was dodging under the lens. Our thespians assisted our endeavours and managed to keep their faces straight despite Rosamund being covered with layers of prosthetic make-up to age her into her seventies. Rosamund's parents were visitors to set that day and found it quite disconcerting to confront their daughter looking older than themselves.

Another occasion which tested Rosamund's ability to keep a straight face involved my having to precede her down a precipitous spiral staircase, in the dark naturally, and with the 65mm Alexa aboard the Steadicam. In the grip of the pandemic, such recollections seem like regressions to a past life under hypnosis. I hope that by the time you read these words, the road back to that world we all cherish will have begun to reveal itself.

AL RAE ACO







**Jason Ewart ACO operates on B25**  
***No Time to Die* Scarab MB44 Scorpio Stabilised Head.**



# MEMBERSHIP NEWS

## LIFETIME MEMBERS



- **Leo Bund**
- **Scott Milton**
- **Will Lyte**
- **Doug Walshe**
- **Jonathan Tyler**
- **Guillermo Morena**
- **Tim Battersby**
- **Thomas Walden**

- **Barney Piercy**
- **Christopher Kechichian**
- **John Bailie**

- **James Friend**
- **Tommy Holman**
- **Tobias Eedy**
- **Cenay Said**
- **Dora Krolikowska**
- **Sam Irwin**
- **Beth Trinder**
- **Guido Cavaciuti**
- **Theo Spearman**
- **Hannah Jell**



As cameras roll again in the British Film and TV industry producers announced that baking and woodworking facilities would be provided for those crew members who need them.



# David Harcourt Assoc BSC

## Camera Operator 1915 - 2013

by Jamie Harcourt | ACO | GBCT | Assoc. BSC



**DAVID HARCOURT 35'**

In 1941/42, David found himself in a rather unsettling situation one day on the film *The Young Mr Pitt*. His sister Jo was the continuity girl and his father James had a small part playing the prime minister's butler, Bellamy. He had a line to play as he brought in supper on a tray, but it was a bit of a tongue twister and it took seven excruciating takes to get it right, in front of his two children.

Dad was called up into the 'Army Kinematograph Service' during the war, helping to make training and propaganda films. He got caught out on one occasion when the camera shutter had been left fully closed by a previous unit. For one week, Dad's crew waited for an air raid so they could photograph the new radar screens in action. The next day the C/O called Dad in and demanded an explanation as to why there was absolutely nothing exposed! He was given a disciplinary mark on his record, which was withdrawn a few days later when he saved Wembley Studios' roof by extinguishing an incendiary bomb during a night of the London Blitz.

At the end of the war, Dad was stationed in Bombay and met my mother (a wren in the navy) at a party to celebrate the end of the Japanese war, just a few days after the atomic bombs destroyed Nagasaki and Hiroshima. He married my mother six weeks later so that they could return to Blighty together by ship, after a honeymoon on Juhu beach, Bombay. (Where I worked 34 years later on a 2nd Unit on *Gandhi*.) Dad was re-employed by Gainsborough Pictures again, now housed at Shepherd's Bush Studios, at Lime Grove. He was by now working as a camera operator and in 1947, on *Christopher Columbus*, he was given three days to learn how to use the new 'geared head'—required to take the weight and torque of the massive soundproofed Technicolor 'three-strip' system cameras.



**CHRISTOPHER COLUMBUS '47**  
**'BLIMPED' TECHNICOLOR 3 STRIP CAMERA**

My father's first job in the film industry was at BIP Studios, Elstree in 1934. His father (a well-respected actor) got him an introduction to the head of the camera department and he started the next day! Scared witless, as a young man fresh out of school, he asked his father what he should do on his first day. 'Make the best cup of tea,' was the advice. And so began a fantastic career.

He progressed well, aided by good cameramen and camera assistants. They could be tough days, sometimes working on more than one film at a time. There was no union then, and clandestine meetings were a sackable offence. Meetings sometimes took place in the toilets!

By 1936, David was working for Gainsborough Film Studios in Hackney for producer Michael Balcon and cameraman Jack Cox. This is the earliest shot of David with a movie camera at BIP/ABPC Studios (now Elstree Studios), April 1935 (left). Will Hay's 1936 comedy *Windbag the Sailor* was shot partially on location in Falmouth. Note three cameras: Dad with hand on focus knob on top right camera. *Oh, Mr. Porter!* (1937) was another classic Will Hay film on which he worked as camera assistant.

### 12 films in 22 years on which David operated camera with DoP Geoffrey Unsworth BSC OBE

- |                            |      |
|----------------------------|------|
| • Trio                     | 1950 |
| • The Planter's Wife       | 1952 |
| • Turn the Key Softly      | 1953 |
| • The Sword and the Rose   | 1954 |
| • The Seekers              | 1955 |
| • Passage Home             | 1957 |
| • Dangerous Exile          | 1957 |
| • A Night to Remember      | 1959 |
| • Whirlpool                | 1959 |
| • North West Frontier      | 1959 |
| • Genghis Khan             | 1965 |
| • Unman Wittering and Zigo | 1971 |



# I think

The Rank Organisation became involved with Gainsborough Pictures, and the camera and 'Boby' crane in here are from a film called *The Bad Lord Byron* (1949). Note David Harcourt's left hand on the pan bar on the left side of the Peerless Camera Company camera, and the very awkward position of the 'side-finder' viewfinder. No reflex cameras in those days! (Interesting to note the Bobby crane arm was built in Bury St. Edmunds—the home of Vinten heads and TV pedestals—now part of the Vitec-O'Connor Group. Maybe there's a connection?)

Oscar-winning Director Ken Annakin, who had also started his film industry in the Camera Department.

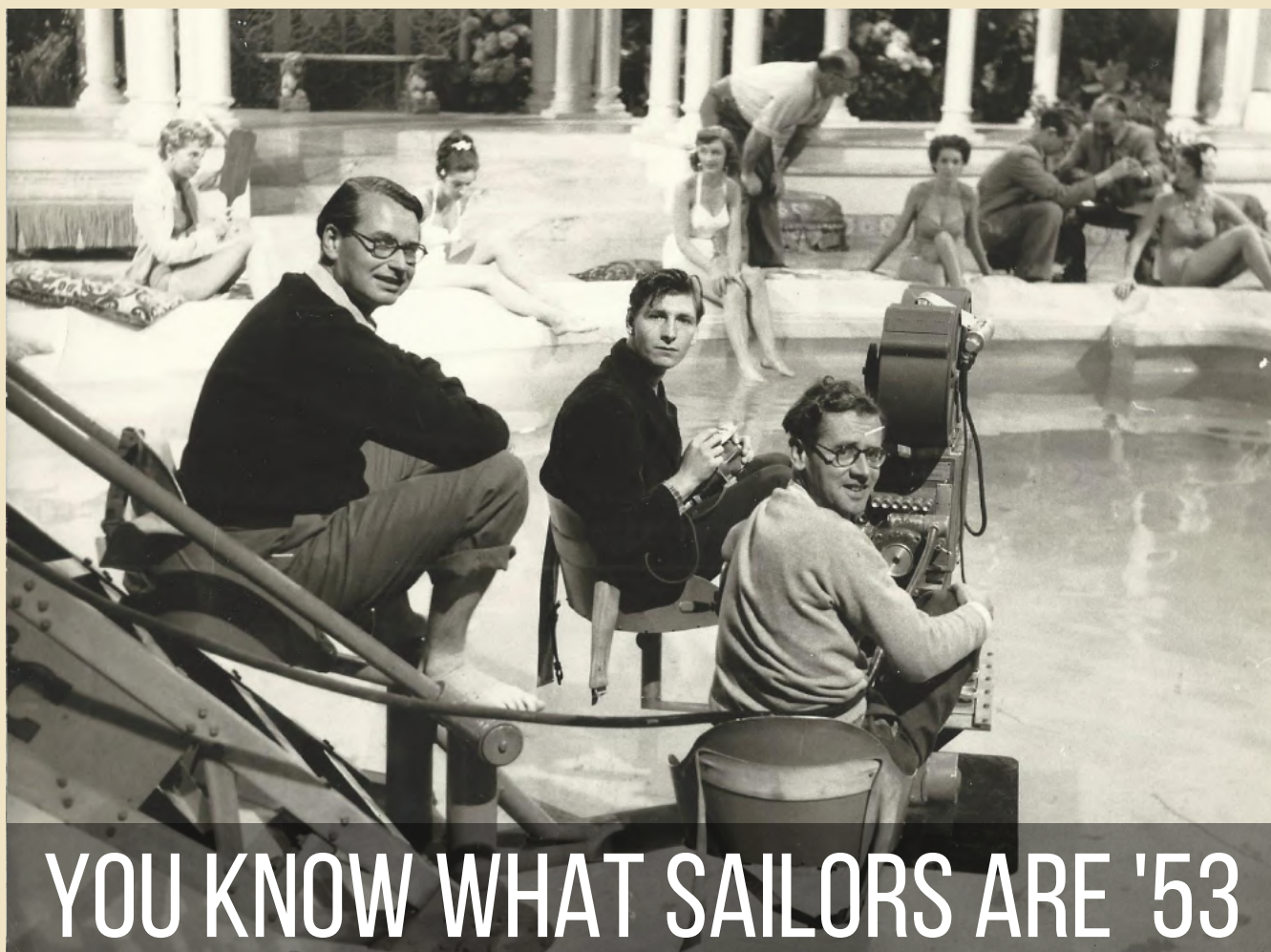
The middle picture here shows Ken Annakin OBE, Wally Fairweather and David Harcourt with a Technicolor 'three-strip' camera on a crane for the film *You Know What Sailors Are* (1953).

David also worked on thirteen films with the Cinematographer Geoffrey Unsworth BSC OBE (two Oscars, five BAFTAs and three BSC Awards for Cinematography). This association lasted for over twenty years. Films included *A Night To Remember* (1958), *North West Frontier* (1959) with John Alcott as Focus Puller, and *Genghis Khan* (1965).

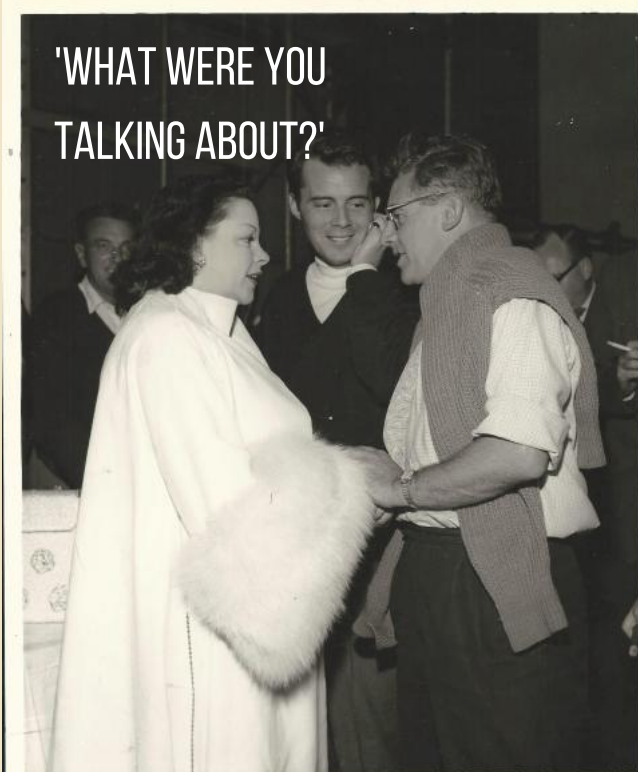
In the late 50s and early 60s, David was an employee (for nine years) of the Rank Organisation at Pinewood Studios. In 1960 he worked with the actor Dirk Bogarde and at the end of picture drinks, Bogarde introduced him to his friend Judy Garland, who was then working in London. The picture below shows this meeting. I asked Dad 'What were you talking about?', and he said the only thing I could think of to get the conversation started was to thank her for recording *The Trolley Song* from *Meet Me In St Louis*. Apparently he played it repeatedly on a gramophone record player when he was stationed in Bombay in 1945.



## THE BAD LORD BYRON '49

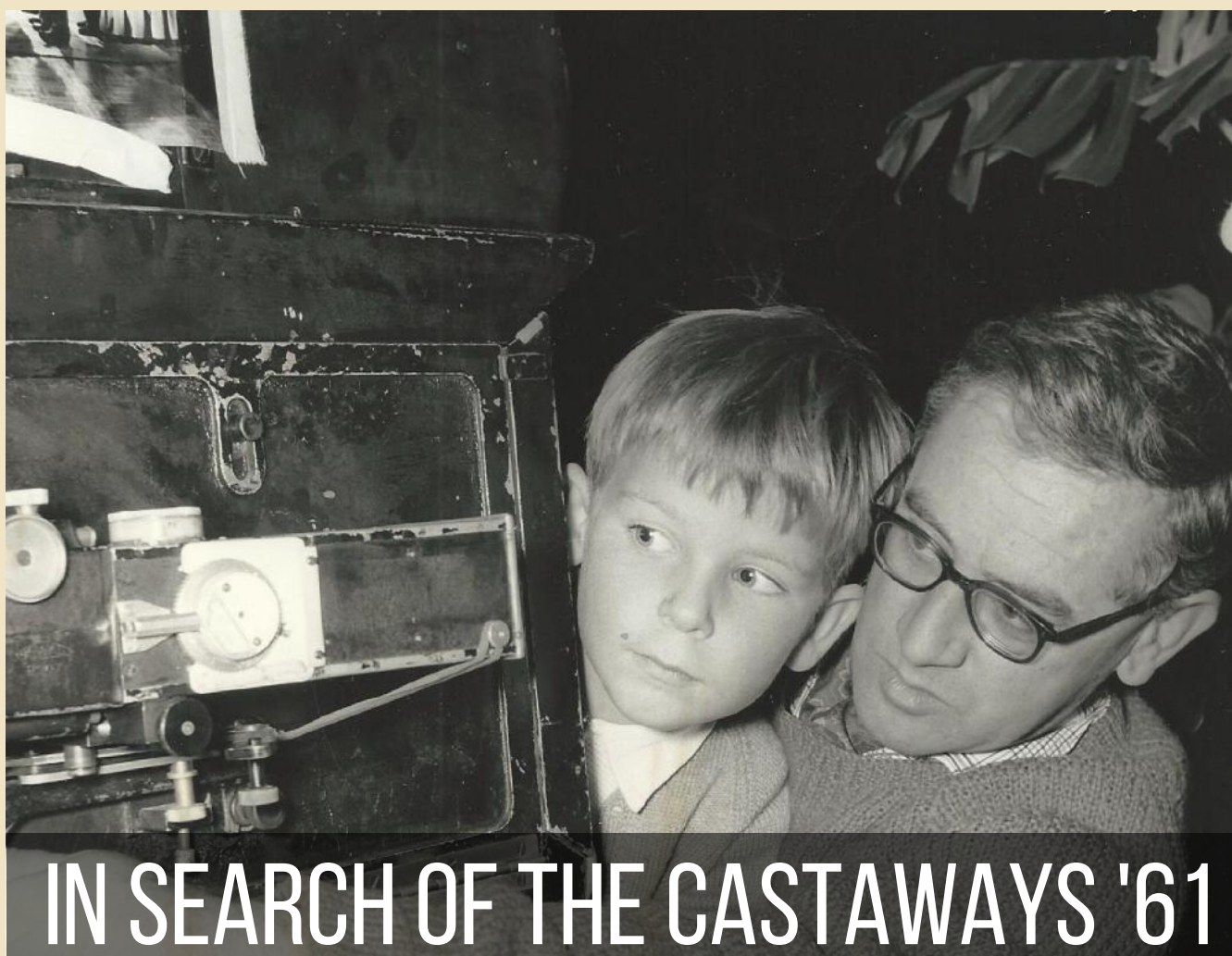


## YOU KNOW WHAT SAILORS ARE '53



'WHAT WERE YOU TALKING ABOUT?'

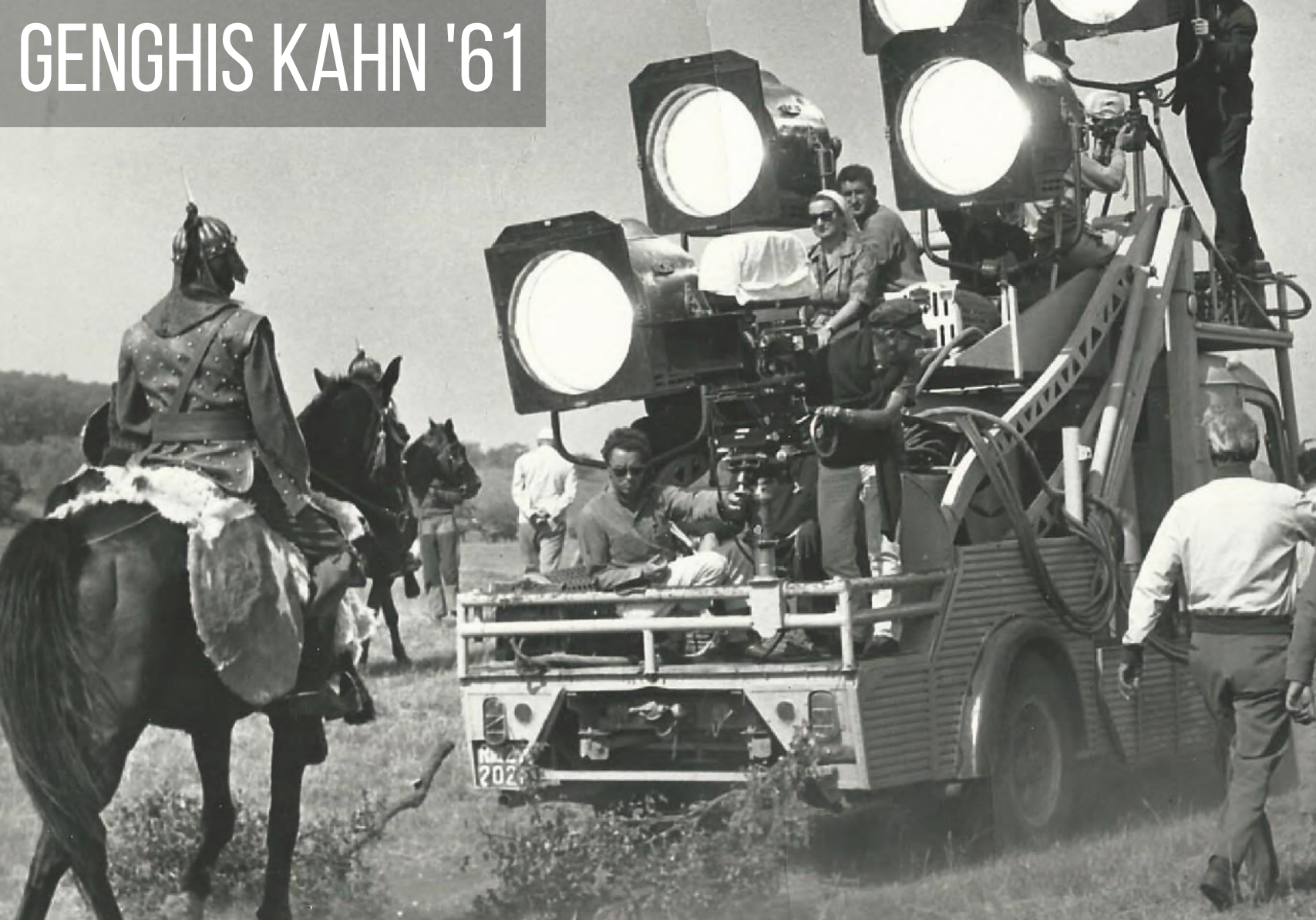
My first visit to Pinewood Studios was in 1961 when Dad was operating on one of a series of Walt Disney live action films, *In Search of the Castaways*, photographed by Paul Beeson BSC. It was here that I got my first introduction to the job of a camera operator, listening to Dad as he explained how the side viewfinder and parallax system worked on a non-reflex camera. This was where he'd given me a taste of my future. Just below the viewfinder was a twin rail 'cam' that changed the angle of the viewfinder as you pulled focus. If you were doing extreme close-ups—beyond the capability of the cam viewfinder—you would have to check through the lens with the film movement 'racked over', so that you had the correct composition for the film plane. Then, you'd see where the centre-cross of the parallax side finder was pointing (maybe at the actor's ear lobe). So, when you were shooting and did the track in to the big close up, you had to aim your composition for the ear lobe. It wasn't until you saw 'rushes' before shooting the next morning that you knew if you had got it right! With no video monitors, the operator's skill and honesty were absolutely vital. If you knew you had got it wrong you had to ask for another take, or you'd look a fool at the rushes showing.



## IN SEARCH OF THE CASTAWAYS '61

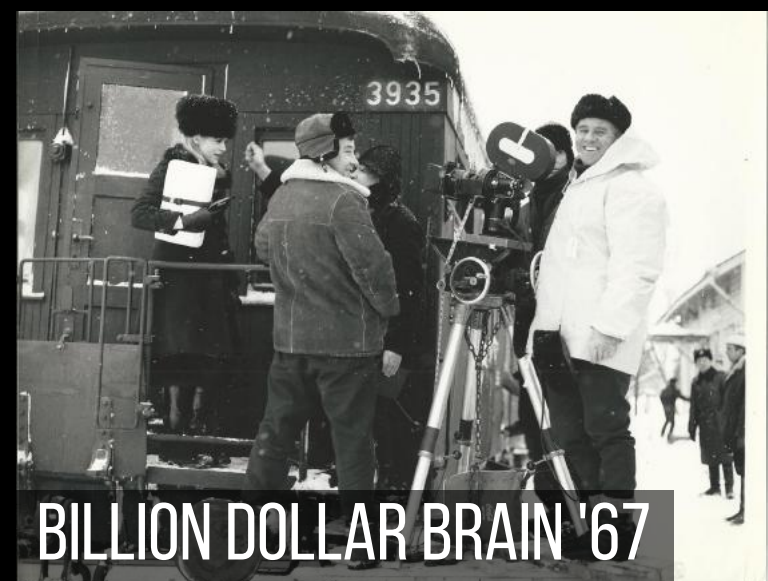


# GENGHIS KAHN '61

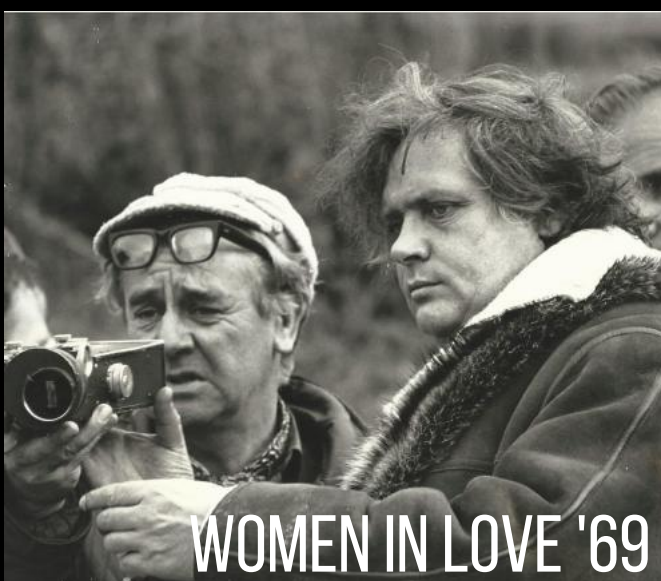


In the 1960s, with air transport improving and cameras beginning to look less like chest freezers, location filming increased. The film stocks were still relatively 'slow', and exterior shots in bright sunlight needed a considerable amount of 'fill' light. This picture shows Geoff Unsworth's answer on *Genghis Khan* (1965) in Yugoslavia (now Serbia). Dad is looking over his shoulder checking out something and John Alcott, his focus puller in the dark glasses, is hanging on to the bazooka. This shot was used as the cover photo for the BSC's 'Collection of Outstanding Stills' in 2005, a book of member's pictures.

In 1967, the Director Ken Russell hired Billy Williams BSC to photograph his first big budget movie *Billion Dollar Brain*, starring Michael Caine. As Dad had, by now, considerable experience shooting feature length movies with international casts, they asked him to join them as their camera operator.



BILLION DOLLAR BRAIN '67



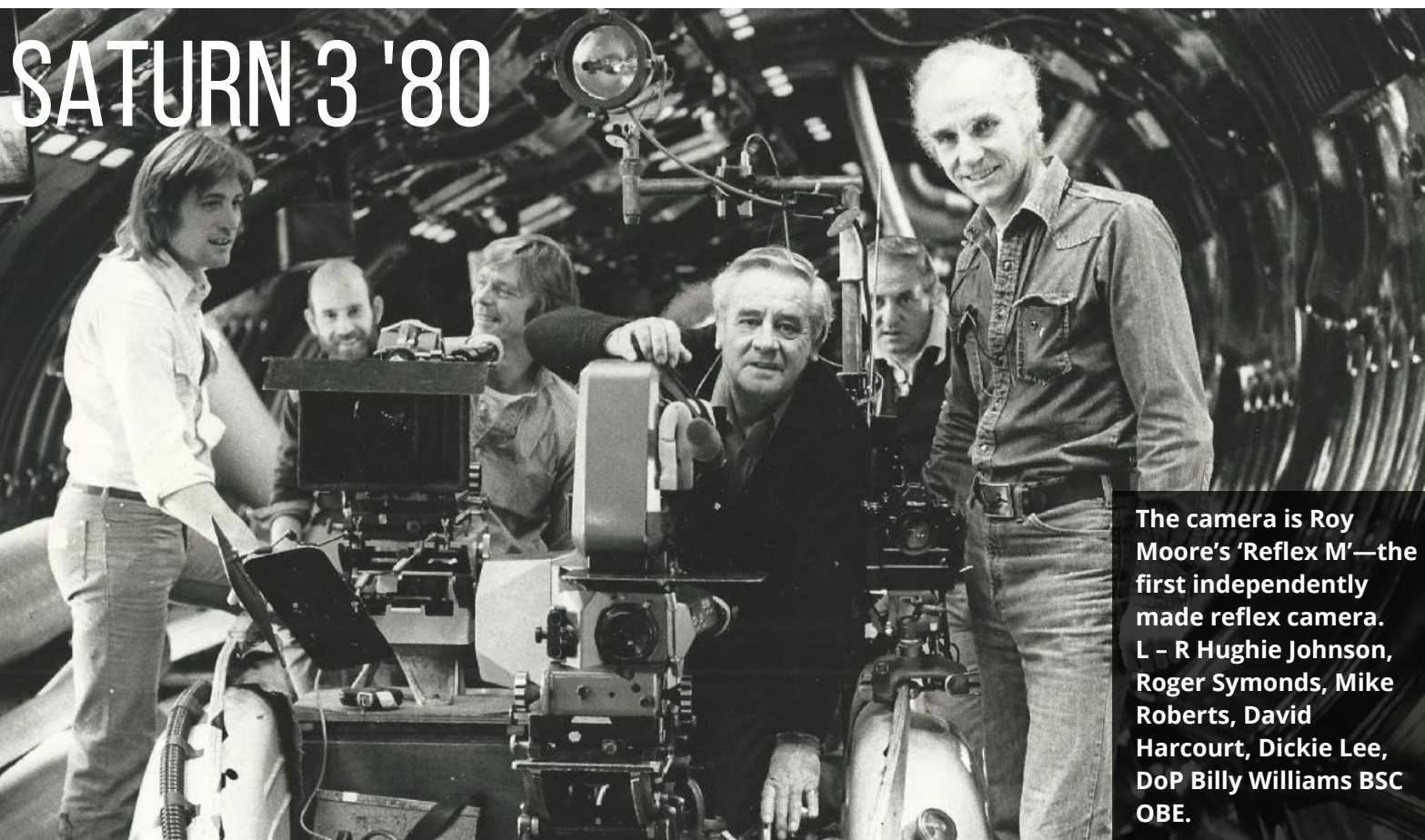
WOMEN IN LOVE '69



ZEE AND CO '72

This began a relationship that basically lasted until dad retired in 1980. They did eighteen films together (see the list below) that included Billy's Oscar-nominated *Women in Love* (1969) for which Glenda Jackson gained the Oscar for Best Actress (1971). (LEFT-RIGHT) You can see David operating an ARRI Ilc 'Wild' camera in Finland with Steve Claydon on focus. (Middle) David and Ken Russell, Director, line up a shot using the side finder from the BNC Camera as a viewfinder with Billy Williams BSC keeping a keen eye on proceedings over Ken's shoulder. (Right) David with Billy Williams BSC; Brian Hutton, Director; Danny Shelmerdine, clapper Loader; and Teddy Deason, Focus Puller. Dad's hand-held camera work for the naked firelit fight between Alan Bates and Oliver Reed became a classic. Also memorable was a beautiful panning shot of purple flowers and lovers' hands meeting, all done in slow motion with the camera on its side. Other great films include *Sunday Bloody Sunday* (1971), *The Wind and The Lion* (1975), *The Voyage of the Damned* (1976), and *Eagles Wing* (1979). Billy and David's final film together—having been brilliantly assisted throughout by focus puller Teddy Deason and Loader Danny Shelmerdine—was *Saturn 3* in 1979/80, after which Dad decided to hang up the handles and enjoy thirty-three years of retirement.

# SATURN 3 '80



The camera is Roy Moore's 'Reflex M'—the first independently made reflex camera. L - R Hughie Johnson, Roger Symonds, Mike Roberts, David Harcourt, Dickie Lee, DoP Billy Williams BSC OBE.

## 19 Films in 14 years on which David operated with DoP Billy Williams OBE

- Billion Dollar Brain 1967
- The Magus 1968
- Women in Love (Oscar nom) 1969
- Two Gentlemen Sharing 1969
- The Mind of Mr. Soames 1970
- (The Ballad of) Tam Lin 1970
- Sunday Bloody Sunday 1971
- Zee & Co. (X, Y and Z) 1972
- Pope Joan 1972
- The Optimists of Nine Elms 1973
- Night Watch 1973
- Kid Blue 1973
- The Wind and the Lion 1975
- Voyage of the Damned 1976
- The Devil's Advocate 1977
- The Silent Partner 1978
- Eagle's Wing 1979
- Saturn 3 1980





# Ronford-Baker

C A M E R A   S U P P O R T   T E C H N O L O G Y



Roger Deakins BSC | ASC using his Ronford Baker Atlas balanced Fluid Head on *The Goldfinch*.

*"We have a new development for our Atlas range of fluid heads. They can now be fitted with a new Snap & Go side-loading mechanism. This allows for fast mounting and easy adjustment of the camera slide plate."*

*This will also make the heads compatible with Arri Slide plates and O'Connor."*

Ryan Glater - Ronford - Baker

## CUT IT

### CREW-LED ACTION FOR THE CLIMATE CRISIS

Our mission is to effect a dramatic **reduction in CO2 emissions, material waste and associated ecological loss** within the UK's film and television industry.

In 2018 the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) reported that we had 12 years to limit environmental catastrophe. We, the film and television industry, are guilty of failing to act. In the pursuit of excellence in our craft, the bigger picture often gets forgotten. There will be no screen industry in a world that has become uninhabitable. Many of us have made changes in our personal lives, yet feel compelled to leave our values at the door when stepping on set. Yet, as crew, we are the workplace and we are the system. We can make change. CUT IT is bringing people together from every department, becoming a choir

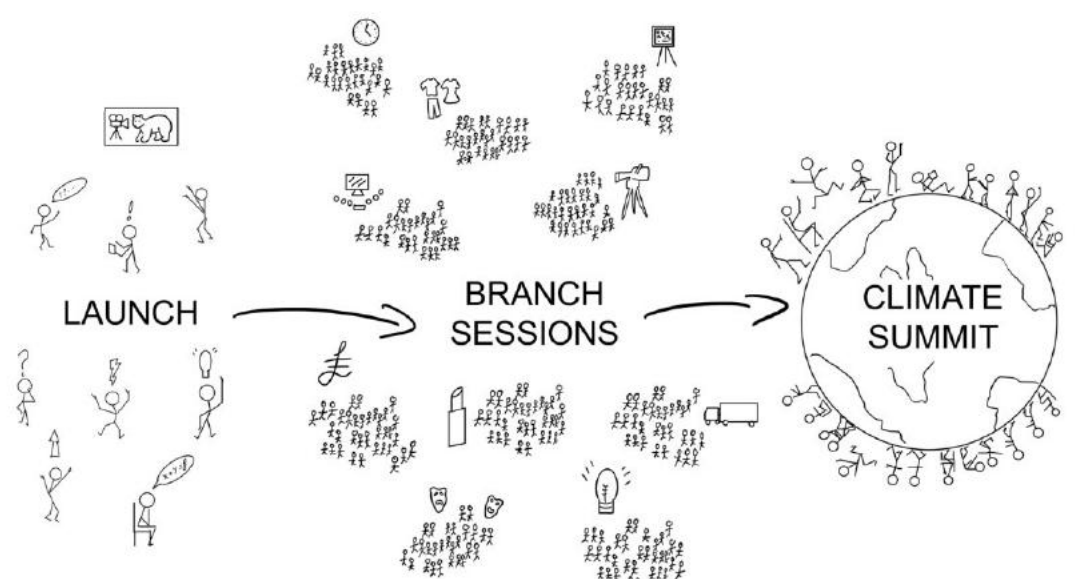
of voices calling for change. It starts with a launch, continues with serious brainstorming and culminates in a summit. The Goal: a set of self-regulating sustainable industry working practices, designed with the expertise of each department and endorsed by all.

CONTACT CUT IT via Email: [info@cutit.org.uk](mailto:info@cutit.org.uk) or check out Instagram: [Cutit.org.uk](https://www.instagram.com/cutit.org.uk)

*'I'm a fervent supporter of CUT IT and now is the time to talk about this. With the current lockdown we have a vision of possibility: a world with less pollution, less traffic, nature flocking back to our cities, and cleaner air. We should look at it, smell it, and grasp the nettle that's in front of us.'*

*'We're in a climate emergency, and if we don't do something, the next generation won't be able to. It's beyond our responsibility as filmmakers; it's incumbent upon us as human beings'*

Seamus McGarvey ASC | BSC | ISC | ACO (hon)







*Casualty* is a British institution. I remember watching it when I was growing up and it was always exciting, but at times particularly brutal. I remember one episode where two people are playing squash—here we go, something is going to happen. One of the players misses a shot, trips and then clatters into the wall, splitting his racket in two and subsequently stabbing himself in the neck. Horrific. The only problem was that in school I was a keen squash player and that sequence haunted me on the court! In its best moments *Casualty* has always attempted to shine a light on the NHS and tell stories about the brave people who protect and care for us. The subject matter can be hard-hitting and often timely. I filmed an episode where we portrayed an acid attack and I remember feeling uncomfortable participating in the process. However, the show has never shied away from taboo subject matter. It always attempts to hold a mirror up to the world.

My background is in soaps. I started out shooting high page counts while trying to keep the quality level as high as possible. It's difficult when you're shooting between 25-30 pages a day! Early in my career, a fellow Operator taught me how to protect your own mental state by letting go of a poorly executed shot. In an environment where completing a high page count every day is vital, dwelling on imperfect shots isn't helpful. I was brought onto the programme in 2013 by a Director called Steve Hughes, who has been a staunch supporter of my talents and on many occasions has fundamentally progressed my career. Being that *Casualty* is a two camera show, I started shooting on B. It's a great way to understand the culture and politics of the show and work your way in. I initially worked alongside A Camera Operator Ed Clark ACO and Director of Photography Stuart Biddlecombe. I was lucky to collaborate with both of them on several occasions and in the process learnt a great deal.

In terms of equipment for the show, both cameras are Alexa Classics with a full complement of Ultra Primes, Arri Alura 18-80mm and 45-250mm Wide and Long Zooms. A Camera is almost always mounted on a Chapman Super Peewee III Dolly and B Camera works off sticks and a Ronford slider. Nowadays, due to requirements for a smaller package, the show shares an Alexa Mini between the two working units which adds great versatility. Although it's possible to shoot entire episodes with this set-up, some scripts have requirements for additional equipment. On almost every block there will be some kind of a stunt. This can vary from someone tripping over to an entire warehouse exploding. Over the years, I've been involved with car and motorcycle stunts, helicopter stunts, fire work, explosions, stair falls, glass smashes, fight sequences, you name it. For an Operator, this is what makes *Casualty* so unique. This is the only TV show in the UK that consistently shoots stunt action all year round. Given this consistent exposure to high pressure situations it can only impact in a positive way on your operating ability. When you build up a catalogue of these set pieces, you have something to reach back and touch in terms of experience. It stands you in good stead if you're ever required to shoot larger action sequences on bigger budget TV shows or features.

As an Operator on *Casualty* you are included in the pre-production process. Usually you will attend a tech recce alongside the Director of Photography. If you have a good relationship that's built on trust, you can certainly have a huge level of creative input.

You can then collaborate with your DOP and Director in selecting and booking additional equipment through the show's production managers. This could come in the form of drone work (usually provided by Aerial Craft), Jimmy Jib Operators and very occasionally—if the budget allows—a Technocrane. We often use tracking vehicles, low loaders, a-frames and quad bikes provided by Martin Peters from Grip Services.

If there is a Steadicam sequence, I usually operate A Camera/ Steadicam using the show's Tiffen Ultra 2 Rig with my own Exo Vest. Beyond that, we have utilised many fixed rig systems, especially for stunts which began with GoPros and then progressed into mirrorless camera systems such as the Sony A7sii and the Panasonic GH4/5. Although to a degree this show may appear to have an 'in house' look, there is always so much scope for us to experiment. We shoot huge amounts of location work and therefore inevitably it encourages us to explore interesting aesthetics and experiment with the visual language.

I operated B Camera for a couple of years before stepping up to A Camera. I had acted in the position of A camera on previous shows, and although I had experience in blocking and artist communication, my knowledge of camera movement was very linear. So moving onto *Casualty* where the A camera is on a Dolly in a big studio, you quickly realise you're in a different league. This perpetual 'dance floor' approach where the camera can essentially go anywhere within a 3D space was naturally a daunting prospect. However, when I was working on B Camera I decided to not waste my downtime when it was a single camera scene. I started studying the process that begins with rehearsals.







I'd listen to the conversations between A Cam, DOP and Director, then repeatedly alternate between video village and the studio floor to learn how the process evolved. I particularly listened to the A Camera Operator's amendments made with the Grip, Focus Puller, Actors and 1st AD. After a while, I started to build up a better picture of the skills required to Operate A Camera on the show. It's not just about pointing the camera! Of course, the real education starts once you step onto the dolly but, as the saying goes, 'practice without theory is blind.'

At this point I'd like to mention the Operators I learnt from on this show: the aforementioned Ed Clark ACO, Jamie Harcourt ACO, Julian Barber and Rich Hines. I also found sharing my thoughts and experiences with my peers invaluable—Operators such as the talented Zoe Goodwin ACO who is cut from a similar mould. It's also worth mentioning the invaluable teachings of the following Steadicam operators: Mike Phaure, Rob Carter ACO, Nigel Clarkson, Martin Stephens ACO and Charlie Cowper. These Operators were extremely helpful and supportive when I expressed an interest in learning Steadicam. Most crucial of all in making the jump from B to A was the role of the Grip, and this really cannot be understated. The Grips on this programme are phenomenal. This unique style of dance floor work, day in day out, takes a level of skill and experience that can make or break a shot. There have been so many times I have leant on my grip when I've got stuck in tricky situations.

You can always draw upon their years of experience in order to achieve the optimum shot. In particular, I would like to mention Terry Potthurst, Paul O'Neil and Ryan Jarmin. I've dipped in and out of blocks of *Casualty* in the role of A Camera Operator for about 6 years now and it never fails to challenge me. We had this rather exciting and challenging handheld 'one-shot' sequence about a year ago, at the beginning of series 34. The sequence follows two emergency doctors arriving at the scene of a terrorist attack. In prep, director Steve Brett suggested the idea of the camera following the two doctors handheld throughout, which included them arriving in a vehicle. This immediately produced the challenge of the camera seamlessly entering and exiting the vehicle. So in advance we had the rear driver's side door removed for access. On the day, the sequence had evolved such that Steve wanted the shot to commence with a dazed and bloodied victim staggering out of the scene of the attack. Then as the doctors arrived, we needed to step into the car with them, take a short stretch of driving, then step back out of the car and into the scene of the attack. I decided on the day that the best method would be to employ a camera 'hand off' and so I discussed this with my B Camera Operator Sam Thomas. We decided that Sam would open the sequence by walking handheld with the victim, then during a staged police road block, he would crouch down and hand the camera across to me in the back seat. Prior to the hand off I was lying down in the backseat with the Grip Assistant like tinned sardines to avoid being seen—I won't mention the smell. I would then take the camera onto my shoulder as the car pulled away. Considering the vehicle was moving (albeit not fast), safety was vital and so Key Grip Terry Potthurst and Grip Assistant Jack Swann arranged a quick release system. We utilised the extremely versatile 'frog clip' attached to my body harness which could be unclipped as I left the vehicle. As the car stopped, I stepped out of the car with a lunge and a lift from my Key Grip. After multiple takes I could certainly feel it in my right hip! Subsequently, I followed the doctor towards the scene of the attack as more panicked victims spilled out of the building, accompanied with smoke and sparks provided by MTFX. Fun fact: On one of the takes, an SA tripped over and fell to the ground as she ran from the burning warehouse. She was fine but ultimately that was the take they used. These kinds of shots are fantastic to be involved with & simply not possible without an incredible team around us.

# EDD WRIGHT ACO



Firstly, with the conceptualisation, creative vision and openness to collaboration from Director Steve Brett, DOP Tom Hines allowed Sam Thomas and myself the freedom to work together in fine tuning the specifics of the shot, while he offered suggestions for improvement. My focus puller Sophie Richards never missed a beat on almost every single take. Finally, B Cam Focus Howard Colin, 2nd ACs Steve Brassington and Sy Turner, and Trainees Lewis Morgan and Matt Clark worked incredibly hard to set up and deploy a camera and video system that would work smoothly over such a long distance.

There is no question that the role of the A Camera Operator on this particular programme is a challenging one and that it's an excellent training ground to hone your skills. In the studio there can be infinite ways to shoot a particular scene, so the learning never stops. It expands your knowledge of camera coverage to dizzying heights with intricate eye line matching where you'd often shoot scenes with 7 or more cast members. It teaches you dynamic camera movement through working with your grip to enhance dramatic, tense or energetic moments in the script. It teaches you communication with actors, the subtle language to employ and how to collaborate with them to produce the shots that are required. It teaches you floor management and that the reality is, sometimes you need to become a General; In a studio full of actors, crew and supporting artists, you have to run the floor with the 1st AD to get things moving. And ultimately it teaches you to be creative. Given the opportunity and with the right combination of Director and DOP, you can push the style of the show in the direction of your own aesthetic tastes. Just because you are shooting continuing drama, doesn't mean you cannot have aspirations for something bigger budget and/or artistically experimental. I'm always keen to punch above my weight.

*Casualty* remains to be a popular programme for the BBC and it has a staunch, robust following. Certainly it gets a lot of bang for its buck since it's sometimes easy to forget it's a Primetime Saturday night TV show. The route through continuing drama is a well trodden path and continues to produce excellent Operators who are quick thinking, dynamic, flexible and great under pressure. To varying degrees, ACO members such as Joe Russell, Ed Clark, Rob Carter, Dave P. Morgan, James Leigh, John Piggott and Scott Milton have all traversed through this fantastic system and I'm proud to stand alongside them. Hopefully, this system will continue to produce the new wave and I'd recommend any rising talent to try it for themselves.

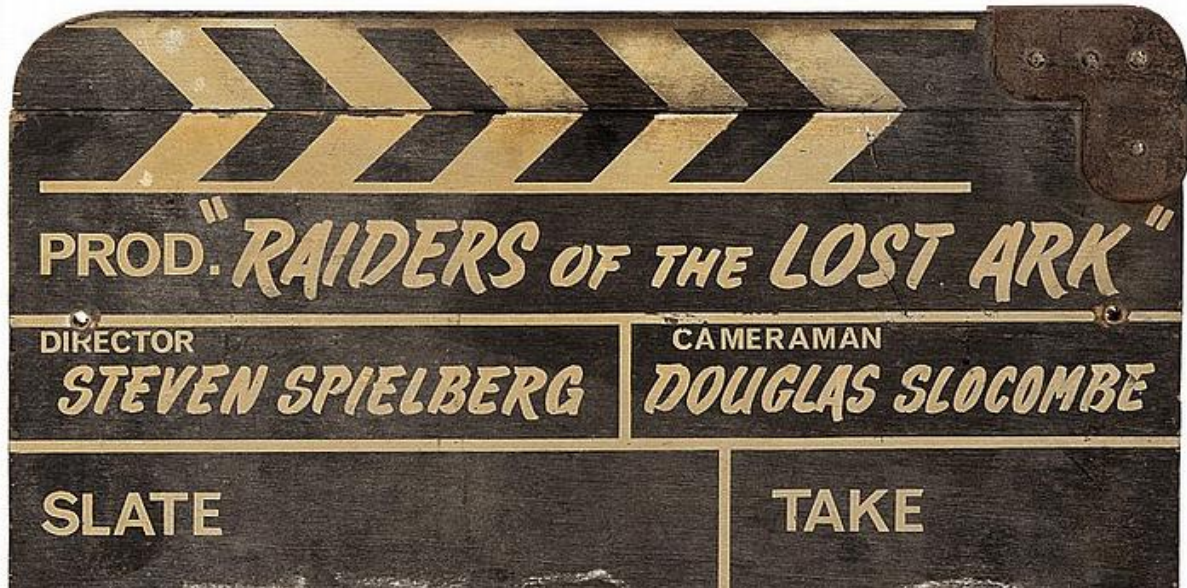


# 40YRS

ago this month, in 1980, Spielberg

shot one of the greatest action hero movies of all time - a story we all came to know so well. He was very much the new kid on the block; Fresh from shooting movies such as *Duel*, *Close Encounters* and of course, *Jaws* in 1976, Spielberg felt he wanted to do Bond. George Lucas famously convinced him in Hawaii that he had a story, with a central figure that would fight the Nazis, and the rest is history. So where do I come in? The year was 1982. There was no streaming or downloading. I vividly remember waiting until Christmas for one movie—it was the only time I could see this film on TV as I just didn't have access to it. I couldn't wait to hear the music and see the action, including the incredible opening sequence as an unidentifiable figure walks through the jungle, backlit by the sun and smoke in the air, then the big reveal as he steps into the light—Indiana Jones.

I think back to all the things I love about the movie: the truck chase (unparalleled at the time), the sunset shot of Indy digging for the ark and the fight around the plane with Pat Roach, which ends with him being killed by the propeller - or the metaphor of Indy bending the Mercedes logo off the truck as he's hanging off of it... I just remember watching it over and over on VHS when we could finally own a recorder from Radio Rentals. Who can forget the beautiful ghosts at the end that become monsters and then the soldiers faces melting? I was 4!! Even with no understanding of the process, I knew this was a special movie. Then as I got older,



I found out that the DOP is the much loved Dougie Slocombe BSC (*The Italian Job* & *The Lavender Hill Mob* to name just two movies outside the Indy trilogy he photographed). It was Indy walking into that bar in Nepal and being introduced to us by his shadow on the wall by Dougie that made me start to love the process of drama. This film was the beginning for me, so much so that I named my son Indy. Being in lockdown gave me time to research and look at the movie further, finding out about the operator for main unit Chic Waterson. His credits are staggering and well worth having a look at—*Superman*, *The Young Ones*, *The Great Gatsby*, *The Italian Job*, *Never Say Never Again*, the list goes on. He obviously formed a relationship with Slocombe, like we all do with DOP's, it's just Chic ended up operating on my favourite film and working with one of the biggest directors of all time.



Chic & Spielberg, eyeing the shot on the plane sequence

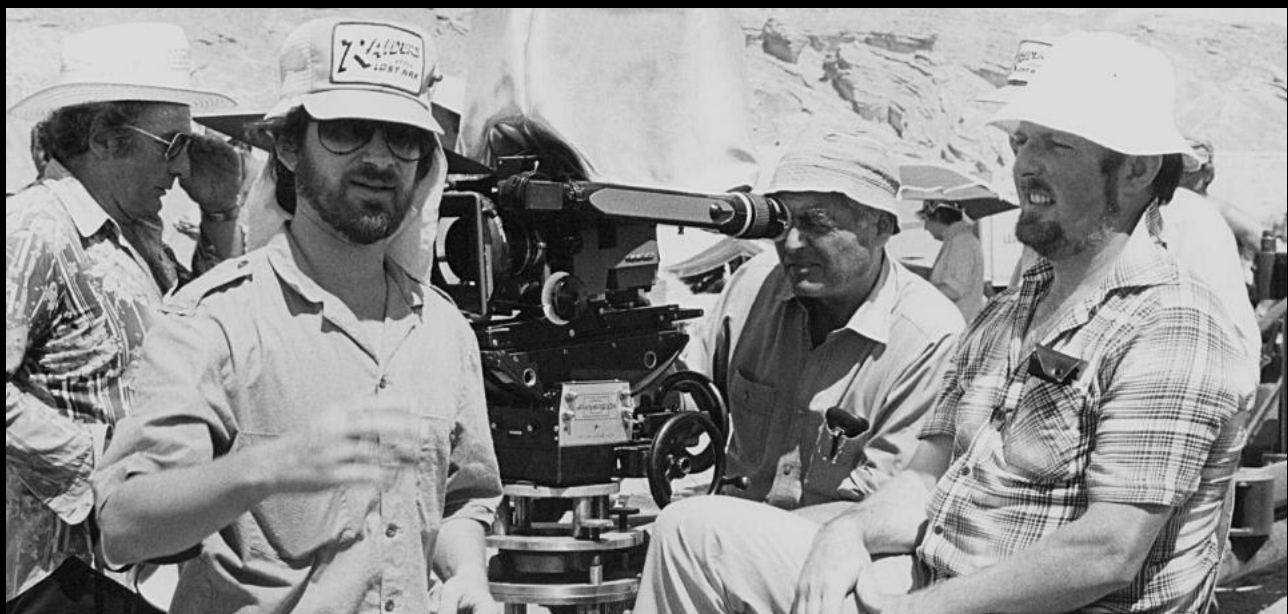
*'My first choice as Director of Photography, of course, and the first person I hired, was Douglas Slocombe [BSC]. Having worked with Douglas for the two weeks of prep and shooting on the 'Close Encounters' India sequence, I met camera operator Chic Waterson and assistant cameraman Robin Vidgeon and Dougie in India for the first time, and that's quite a place to get to know somebody. We sort of gave each other shelter from the culture shock of working on the outskirts of India and got to know each other very well over the 12 days that we were there.'* Spielberg - (ASC Magazine)

Sadly, Chic is no longer with us. He died in 1997, so I approached Robin Vidgeon BSC to help write something about operating on *Raiders* on behalf of Chic. It was fascinating listening to him explain their time on this movie (what a fantastic memory!) and explaining how they approached shooting 4 decades ago. Of course, I have to mention second unit and David Worley ACO who at the time was stepping up and walked into operating the truck action sequence that set the bar for action sequences. Everyone was so happy to talk about working on this movie and has such fond memories of it. As an operator I am envious of them being there. So much of the movie I have stored in my brain and Chic's framing of central characters is something that is so imprinted in my mind that I do think about in my own work, and that's how we all find our styles, right? *'It's not the years, it's the mileage.'*

BY DANIEL BISHOP ACO



Pamela Mann— script supervisor on all three Indy movies. These are her original storyboards of the iconic action.



## SPIELBERG, CHIC AND ROBIN, LINE UP THE SHOT

*'When I went to England on my first "recce", I discovered a well-oiled Star Wars machine of technicians and artisans who have been working on the Star Wars series now since 1976. They were very used to working together and we all, in concert, decided to get the same team that made 'Star Wars: The Empire Strikes Back' and also, by coincidence, 'Superman.' They were very accustomed to difficult locations, spectacular sets and eccentric special effects, so it came as no surprise to them when they first heard news that the script was going to take place in four countries on three continents with seven massive scenic structures and many physical and optical special effects. They had been there before.'* Spielberg ASC MAGAZINE



# IN

1979 I spent six months in Libya and four weeks in Rome on *Lion of the Desert* as A Camera Focus Puller for Jack Hildyard BSC, and there were several opportunities to operate a third camera, especially during battle scenes. Then in early 1980, I was Focus Puller on *Hawk the Slayer* for Paul Beeson BSC and when Bob Kindred—who was operating—put his back out, I took over for a couple of days. A few months later, I had the call from Paul to join the 2nd unit of *Raiders of the Lost Ark* in Tunisia, as B Camera operator, which I was very happy about. Incidentally, Paul had also given me my focus break nine years earlier on *Kidnapped*.

So I was soon on my way to Tunis with Martin Grace, who had been doubling Harrison Ford at Elstree Studios, and Vic Armstrong who was going as 'A.N. Other stuntman' but that's the start of another story. Wally Byatt was the A Camera Operator with Chris Tanner: Focus, Eamonn O'Keefe: Loading and Jim Kane: Gripping. Ian Henderson was with me on B Camera. The lenses and cameras came via the Panavision department at Samuelsons—Arri 35 IIC's and C series anamorphics. Heads, legs etc. were supplied by EMI Elstree camera dept. I don't recall us having much in the way of back-up equipment but we did have Norman 'Nobby' Godden with us—a very experienced camera maintenance man who I first met in Morocco on *The Message* in 1974 and had been on every sizeable production abroad with me since then. He was also there, of course, to service the main unit who would be arriving later. We were based in Tozeur on the edge of the Sahara and, when we began shooting, we worked from 6am to 1pm straight through but, when the main unit started, we had to conform to normal hours with a lunch break. Our mission was to shoot the lorry chase sequence with Michael 'Mickey' Moore, the veteran 2nd Unit Director (*Butch Cassidy*, *Patton* and many more). This had been storyboarded and we worked exactly to that for 4-5 weeks with Indy doubled by American stuntman, Terry Leonard. The main unit would be filming Harrison's material later on. On day one I was really nervous; it's one thing to operate when you're upgraded with no real responsibility but another entirely when you're actually employed to do it in your own right!

***'I had never used a second unit director before and I only agreed to use the second unit director for the truck chase because it was a very extensive pursuit and covered a lot of different locations. The second unit began shooting the truck chase a week before we came to Tunisia, so they were well into it when we arrived at Nefta. I directed all the sequences involving principals in the truck chase; everything involving Harrison. Everything involving wider shots using doubles, Mickey did. It was really the only way to make the chase exciting without adding an extra 15 days to the 73 I scheduled.'***

**Spielberg ASC Magazine**

Anyway, I soon calmed down and during that first week we shot the piece of action where the truck, driven by Indy, crashes through some scaffolding, sending extras flying. I was shooting through the windscreen, over Terry's shoulder (not used!) when he suddenly screamed 'No!' He thought he had run over a boy who'd shot out in front of us. Everyone was shocked and nobody was more upset than Mickey. Fortunately the truck had only glanced the young extra and his only injury was a broken collar bone. But it was a sobering moment. Later in the schedule the boy came back on set with his father and he was presented with a bicycle that the crew and the production had chipped in for.



Chic in the hat and David on B cam, shoot Indy coming into frame on the passenger door



Chic, Dougie, Paul Beeson (2nd Unit DOP), Indy and David Worley ACO (smoking) taking some down time.

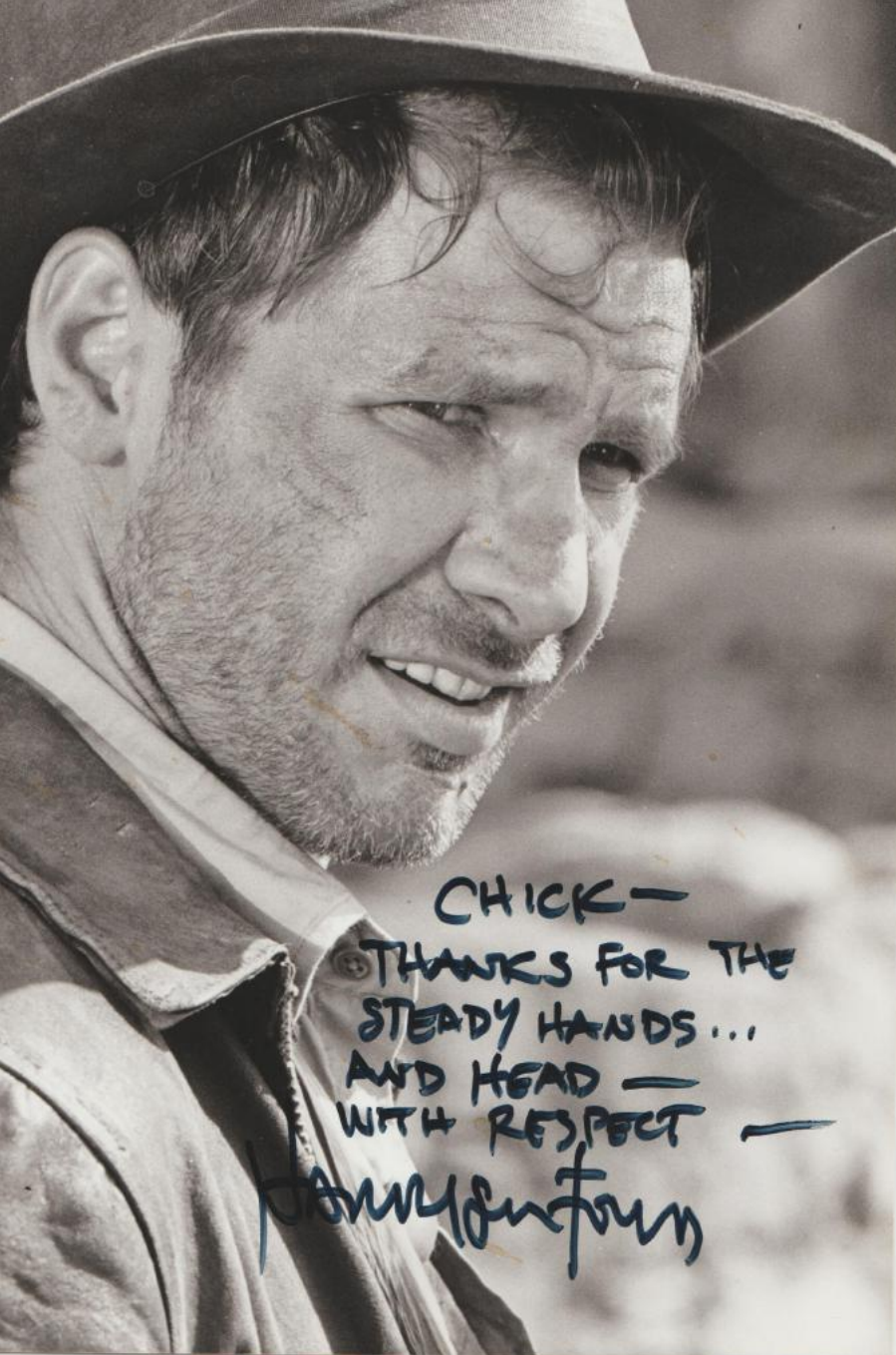
Most of the shooting was from the tracking car. That was reasonably straightforward as there were many mounting points from which to pinpoint the most appropriate angles. Looking at the unit photographs now, there seems to be a distinct lack of health and safety precautions, although it didn't bother us at the time and indeed it was a different time in health and safety. Probably the most dangerous stunt was when Indy travels underneath the truck from front to back. A shallow trench was dug to allow Terry Leonard sufficient clearance but it could easily have gone wrong. He had insisted that a plane was standing by to fly him to Tunis should there have been an accident. He had recently been injured on *The Lone Ranger*.



I first encountered Steven Spielberg when I was dispatched to the main unit to shoot a long lens shot of Indy and Marion running away from the burning aeroplane, amidst big explosions, just prior to the lorry chase in story order. That seemed to go OK. I was back with the 2nd unit within an hour. The next occasion was when the 2nd unit was winding down. Mickey Moore was seriously ill and flown to hospital, the main unit was on the move to Sousse and I was sent with Ian Henderson to join them as their B Camera for the last few days. That was really the first time that I had worked with Dougie Slocombe and Chic Waterson, apart from the shot by the plane. We shot for about a week, mainly the scenes in the marketplace with the giant baskets and the black knight sequence which was initially quite involved in terms of action. It was on a Saturday afternoon. Everyone was tired, suffering from the heat, looking forward to the rest day and Harrison had dysentery. At one point Steven said, 'I'm probably going to shorten all this. In fact, Harrison, why don't you just shoot the knight?' So that's how one of the most memorable moments in the film happened! Having worked together on so many productions, Dougie and Chic seemed to have in-built communication; neither said very much to the other, just went along with whatever Steven was proposing. Quite often Steven would take over Chic's camera and operate one or several takes. You could tell by Chic's demeanour that he hated it, but he would always allow Chic to do at least one take 'in case I've screwed up!' All this, of course, was relatively early in Spielberg's career but he had the confidence to know when he'd got what he wanted—some might say a rare quality—and the ability to work quickly, sometimes changing tack mid-stream, thwarting the plans of David Tomblin, the 1st AD. The hours tended not to be too long but, while you were there, there was little let-up. He was one of the new breed of young American directors and no one knew then what a phenomenon *Raiders of the Lost Ark* would become or what a stellar career lay ahead for Steven Spielberg.

# DAVID WORLEY ACO





# ‘EYES OF AN EAGLE’...

Something Dougie had once said about Chic in a documentary about him, summed up very well by the DOP whom he once had such a close relationship with. We all worked together for over 25 years and

I was so fortunate to work as their 1st Assistant. There are so many highlights from that period of my life—sometimes I wonder: where do I start? Is it the beautiful close ups of Mia Farrow on the *Great Gatsby*, *Never Say Never Again* with Sean Connery or was it the futuristic dystopia of *Roller Ball*? We had the highs and lows of any camera team trotting around the globe—it's just that I got to do it with Dougie and his endless energy, and with Chic Waterson, one of the top camera operators in the UK, who certainly contributed to cinema history in the last 5 decades. Of all the films I worked on, I can honestly say hand on heart that the Indy productions were the happiest movies to work on and the best experience as a 1st AC.

So how did we end up working on these movies? Well we were working in the UK and we had been working on a movie called *Julia* with Jane Fonda in 1977 when Dougie had a phone call from Hollywood about shooting second unit picks ups/reshoots in India where the Indians point to the sky on *Close Encounters*

*of the Third Kind*, which of course we now know in retrospect is one of Spielberg's masterpieces. All of his American crew were on other pictures, so there we were, sat in first class on a flight to India. I vividly remember sitting with Chic and Dougie and seeing how excited Spielberg was. Almost grilling Dougie as he was such a big fan of his lighting. It was a week's shoot, about three hours

drive from Bombay in the desert. It was roasting hot and absolutely crazy and I think that Spielberg liked the approach to work of the English crew and how we just got on with

*'Everybody worked very quickly. They just ran around. Dougie Slocombe, who is in his mid-sixties, ran faster than everybody. When I said, "I'd like the third camera on the hill", I'd turn around and Dougie would be on the hill with a third camera two minutes after I had spoken. I found that rather amazing. Dougie would walk around—he's never fallen off a cliff or off of a camera car—but throughout the shooting of Raiders of the Lost Ark, there were dozens of cliffhangers all involving Dougie Slocombe and a sense of balance. Dougie would have his eye screwed into his contrast glass, looking up at the sun and the clouds, walking backwards and, sure enough, there would be a 350-foot drop and, sure enough, Robin or Chic, who have worked with Dougie for an average of 25 years as a team, would reach a hand out and keep Dougie from falling into Roadrunner and Coyote oblivion.'* — Spielberg ASC MAGAZINE

it and supported him through the madness of shooting in India and the heat. Spielberg sparked up a good relationship with both Dougie and Chic and anyone who works with Spielberg knows he likes to work fast and efficiently. He promised us all that he'd be back and shoot some more movies with us and sure enough he kept to his word. That's how we ended up being employed on *Raiders* and *Doom*, two movies that would come to be some of our trios best work and definitely was a change in direction from the genres we had been doing—especially what Dougie was known for—which is incredible when you think at the time he was in 70s. It's also worth mentioning Colin Manning (key Grip), Eamonn O'Keeffe (loader 2nd unit) and Danny Shelmerdine (Loader), whom we had also worked on many pictures together with and whom we had forged strong relationships with, as one does in the movie business.

We prepped our camera kit from Samuelson's in London, which was the Panavision Branch. We had the C series lenses 30/35/40/50/60/75/100/150mm and 2 Panavision sound cameras and a Panaflex X which was not sound-proofed. I had a brief conversation with Danny Shelmerdine (the camera loader) and we think that we used approximately over 1/2 million feet of film on *Raiders*. Dougie would always work at T4 and famously never used a light meter.

Our first week of filming, we flew out to La Rochelle, France and it was the sequence where Indy's boat gets boarded and he swims across the ocean to the U Boat. (Incidentally the same model U-Boat that was used on the massive German movie *Das Boot*.) I don't recall either myself or Chic being nervous about working with Spielberg at the time as technically, he was just making his name however, we had the first week nerves, as one does. Like any job, you just have to turn up and start shooting. It's always nice to start on big sequences on boats in the ocean—it's classic film making, starting on an Egyptian steamer and a real submarine pen that still had the scars of war dotted about in the walls.



L-R: Chic in cool leather Jacket; Robin, focus; Spielberg behind the camera; Dougie; Danny Shelmerdine; Jack Dearlove, Harrison stand-in; and Indy.



## CHIC, SPIELBERG AND DOUGIE DISCUSSING THE FRAME



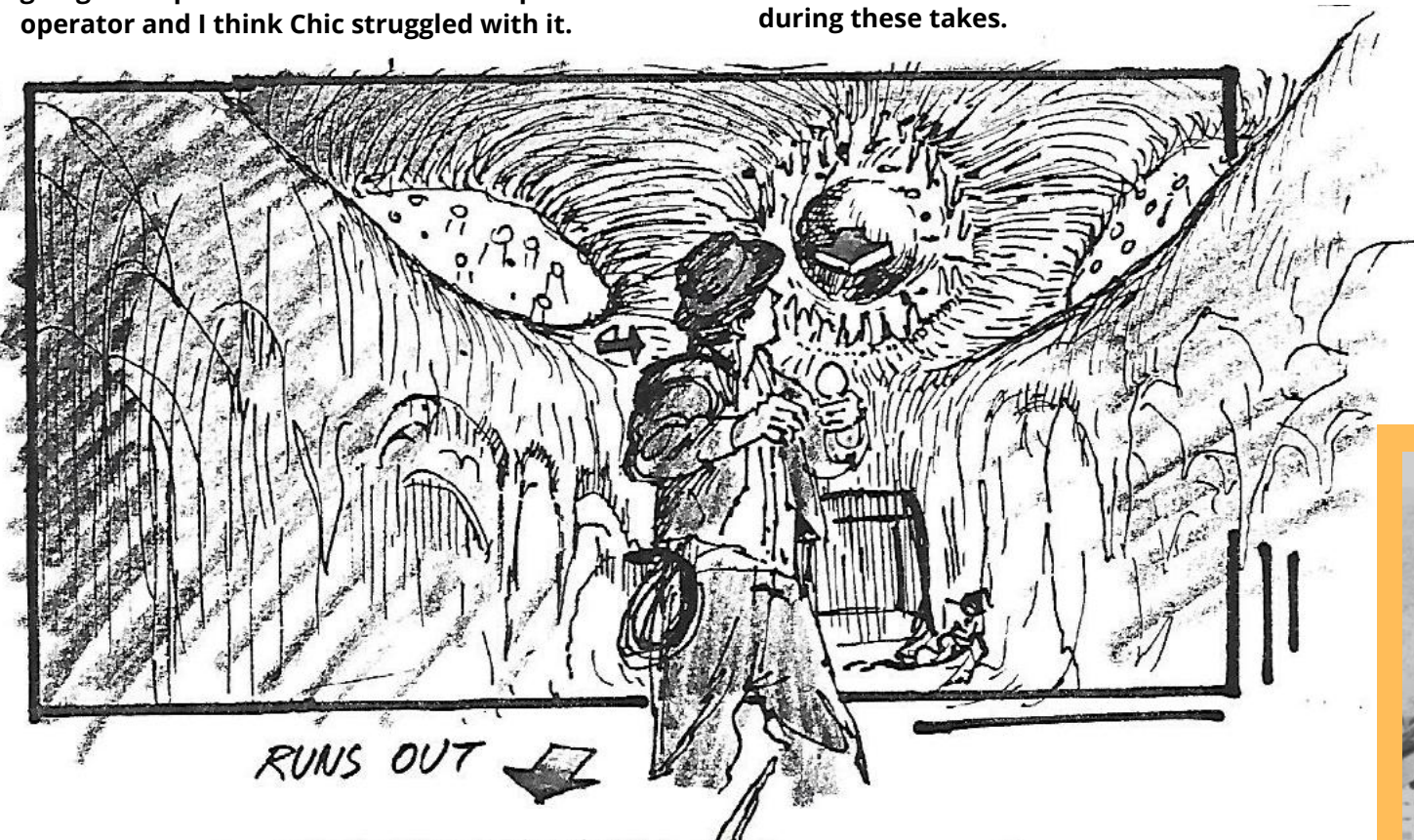
Chic was very much one of the old school operators; he turned up and did his job well. He was very professional and polite and got on very well with the crew and actors. The actors always had a fantastic relationship with him and he always worked closely with them and got a lot out of them. Chic wasn't the kind of operator who would help you lug boxes up to the top of the hill, but everyone loved working with him because of his persona. He was just always so locked into the shot, focused and ready. The interesting dynamic between DOP/director and operator on *Raiders* is quite an interesting story: Spielberg was incredibly organised and had shot-listed the entire movie. It's documented that Spielberg had 3 people do the storyboards until they were right—This was due to budget and speed, to bring the movie in on time. Every morning Chic and myself would turn up on-set and were handed the day's storyboards, from the bible that listed all the incredibly accurate shots, which was rare at the time. There was wiggle room for Chic to suggest variations or ideas, but as a whole we shot the storyboards and Chic gave Spielberg what he wanted. One thing to remember in that time was of course that there were no HD video taps and people didn't sit around watching the take. This meant that Spielberg liked to always watch the rehearsal through the viewfinder and mostly operate the first take. Chic found this incredibly frustrating—as any operator would—since the rehearsal is where you work out how you are going to operate the shot. It's important to an operator and I think Chic struggled with it.



## SPIELBERG LINES UP AS CHIC WATCHES ON

It's obviously a long time ago now and I don't remember every scene as accurately as one might like. But if you take the opening sequence where Indy runs from the Ball—we shot this on a stage in Elstree over the best part of a week, not including the second unit pick-ups. In the ASC magazine Spielberg mentions that we did it 10 times from 5 different angles, therefore, two takes at each camera position. These were all with Ford running away from the giant ball. This was because the camera needed to see Harrison's face, so any second unit shot would see Harrison's head down. I don't remember feeling particularly tense during these takes.

What I do remember was that we needed to get the shot right. Chic needed to operate perfectly on each take and I needed to get it sharp. These kinds of scenes are always the most fun to shoot, aren't they? Fast camera moves and hard pulls. Most importantly, Chic was such a fantastic operator that working in these kind of situations didn't faze him—he just kept his nerve and gave Spielberg what he wanted, which is why I think Spielberg loved working with Dougie and Chic so much. That triangle is always so important, as we all know.



Perhaps one of my favourite anecdotes to mention is when we were in the markets in Marrakech, following Indy as he chased after Marion. It was a particularly gruelling part of the shoot due to the heat and the sand and we were constantly moving as we followed him around the market, as well as second unit being involved. In one beat of the story, Indy comes running straight up to the camera on the 50mm.



We were working fast and had I recall 2 takes. Shots like this are never easy for the operator or focus puller. Indy was running from 50ft to 15 inches. Chic had to operate the shot perfectly and get Harrison's eyes in the perfect position with the right amount of room and I had to keep it sharp. Harrison would run into the close up, nobody moved and Chic would move out the way and I would

check eye sharps through the viewfinder just to make sure I was happy, with Harrison holding his breath to stay still so I could check. Chic was an incredible operator and his CV is a testament to that. After *Temple of Doom* I had started to light and operate on my own jobs, so no longer worked with him. It was after this time Chic would only go on to do 3 more films, as sadly he had Parkinson's and found it hard to work. Even now, Chic and Dougie are still in my mind—after all, 25 years working with them, they were my other family. x

## ROBIN VIDGEON BSC



The ACO editorial would like to thank everyone who has been incredibly helpful with this article: Chic Waterson's family and his daughter Lynee Bispham; also to David Worley, Robin Vidgeon and Pamlela Mann's daughter Suzanna Charlton; Brandon Alinger for some photos and the ASC Magazine for letting us use their article from the 80s. Finally we'd like to thank Lucas Film for permission to use the photos and agreeing to let us write this article.



# FUJIFILM

## Fujifilm GFX100 now supports 4K 16:9 RAW video output via HDMI to Atomos Ninja V\*1

LONDON, UK 30th June 2020 - FUJIFILM Corporation is pleased to announce that new firmware version 2.0 has been released that will enable the Fujifilm GFX100 to output 4K RAW video up to 29.97p via HDMI to an Atomos Ninja V 5" HDR monitor-recorder. This footage is then encoded into 12-bit Apple ProRes RAW for compatibility with a wide range of grading and editing software. Thanks to the successful collaboration between Fujifilm Corporate and Atomos, the GFX100 and Ninja V combination will become the world's first Medium Format sensor digital camera system to record 4K RAW footage that is available to own.

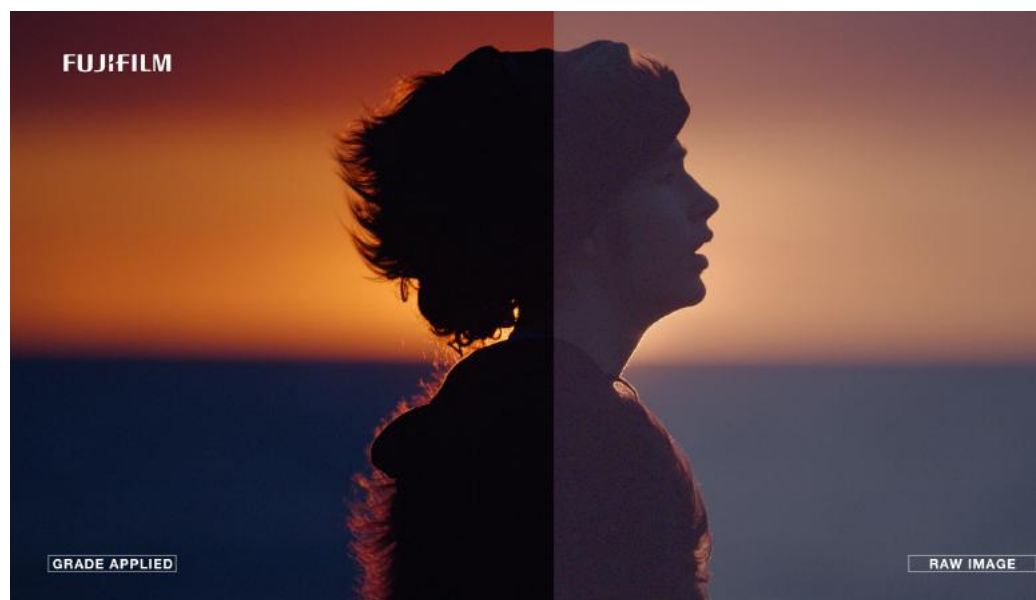
The GFX100 boasts a 100MP 4:3 ratio Medium Format CMOS sensor that is 44mm x 33mm in size (Ø54.78mm) and can record 4K video at up to 29.97p using the following imager sizes:

- UHD 4K 16:9 (43.6mm x 24.6mm, Ø 50.06mm)
- DCI 4K 17:9 (43.6mm x 23.1mm, Ø 49.37mm).

Both shooting modes can use 29.97p, 25p and 24p frame rates and a choice of 400Mbps, 200Mbps, 100Mbps bit rates. Currently only UHD 4K 16:9 output will support RAW output.



The look of large format video has become very popular in high-end production, allowing longer focal lengths to be used to retain the same angle of view therefore changing image perspective and narrowing depth of field. This gives cinematographers further control over their creative expression, as well as the ability to use excellent lenses such as the [FUJINON Premista large format cinema zoom lenses](#). The GFX100 sensor is larger than any current "large format" cinema cameras as well as classic Vista Vision motion picture film. Coupled with the Atomos Ninja V and Apple ProRes RAW, this system gives filmmakers a whole new way to shoot. By harnessing the power of RAW, the resulting images have amazing depth, detail for post-production - ideal for HDR finishing or to give greater flexibility in Rec 709 SDR. Simultaneous output of RAW via HDMI while recording Film Simulation / F-Log / Hybrid Log Gamma (HLG) internally is also available.



The GFX100 and Ninja V create a simple to use large format camera system with In-Built Image Stabilization that is small and light enough to hand hold, place in tight corners or mount onto gimbals or drones. When coupled with compatible gimbals or drones, users can start / stop recording, specify exposure settings, and make focus adjustments remotely.

TV drama, indie films, corporate productions, documentaries and even motion pictures can now utilise the GFX100 and Ninja V to get the distinctive "larger than full frame" look.

The [Atomos Ninja V](#) features an accurate 5" 1000nit HDR high brightness screen that will allow users to view the GFX100 RAW signal in HDR in a choice of HLG and PQ (HDR10) formats. The monitor also offers touchscreen access to tools like waveforms, magnify or engage peaking check focus for each angle and make any adjustments to get the perfect shot. A free AtomOS update to enable GFX100 compatibility will be available from Atomos in July 2020.

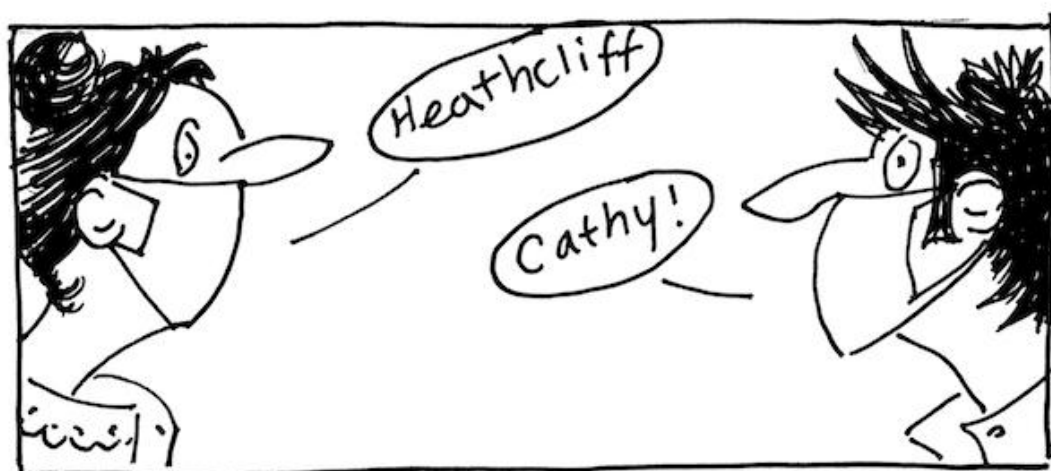
### VIDEO AND STILLS

Example footage:

Test film by Swedish DP Jallo Faber:  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jUKWXQz034E>

BTS of Jallo Faber film:  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NVTuEgT3sXo>

Test footage by Jake Polonsky BSC  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SKDbjeUlxqE>



Moviemaking in the time of coronavirus

by Peter robertson ACO





# MAGNIFICENT 8

8 Questions to Svetlana Miko ACO

*Bridgerton*

## 1. What made you choose to become an operator?

Becoming a camera operator wasn't necessarily a childhood dream, although the path to it was a very natural self-discovery. I have always been drawn to stories and human nature as well as a natural love of tools and gadgets. The combination of creativity and tech is great—it's like making a cake and eating it at the same time.

## 2. What three movies have inspired you the most?

As I grew up in the soviet era in Moldova, I only had access to state-controlled Russian cinema. This was primarily a combination of traditional slapstick comedy and action films. I still love comedies, although my world cinema explorations are still expanding and I'm making up for lost time. I like films with a good balance of three ingredients: the visual, the story and the talent. I love the visual madness treat of *Delicatessen*—

probably one of the first films that made me think more about the medium of film. I like the visual revelations of *Amour* and I love *Mad Max* which started me on a journey of admiration for sci-fi films.

## 3. What do you enjoy the most about being an operator?

I enjoy the physicality and demands of being an operator and I love every moment of it. I really like the 'head-calm' that I go into when I'm working; of being in the zone. I like being a translator between a director's idea and its visual capture. I also operate Steadicam and Trinity and I love the combination of having that instant spatial flexibility to capture a moment from any angle, even if the action suddenly changes.

There's nothing like the buzz on set when everyone comes together. I like the big family feel. There is something special about working in our industry with the close and often intricate inter-departmental collaborations to achieve the goal to tell a story. The rush and noise of prep then suddenly everyone is quiet and attention is at the max—the thrill of getting the shot is at its peak.

## 4. What was *Bridgerton* like to work on?

*Bridgerton* is a Netflix series that I worked on, due to be aired soon. A drama series of wealth, lust and betrayal set in a backdrop of Regency England. I joined them part way through episode 1. It was interesting to work on this as they had been using the AR a lot and I came in to use Trinity and Steadicam, as well as to operate B Camera. I was replacing the talented Rob McGregor, and later Leo Bund took over the reins from me.

We were spoilt by having amazing locations and lavish costumes. Of course, beautiful locations do have their downsides and sometimes come at a price when the crew are buried in mud from head to toe, or you have the smallest space to turn with a Steadicam, in a room in a small Georgian shop with low ceilings and 5 ladies inside with large voluptuous gowns.





5. Introduce us to your team and talk us through the dynamic of DoP/Director and Operator.

The dynamic between our Director Julie Anne Robinson, Cinematographer Jeffrey Jur ASC, and myself was great. Julie would often rehearse for quite a long period to make sure everything was working well, especially on our big scenes. Jeffrey needed to be ahead of the game with lighting as the schedule had quite a fast pace and he also operated A Camera. We used a lot of Steadicam and also conventional dolly work. We had the Executives on set that were part of the creative decision-making process, which added an extra dynamic. It was interesting for me as I had not experienced this before on a drama. We often had the second unit working near us covering details as these were a big part of the scenes.

My camera team were: Elhein De Wet, Focus Puller; Drew Marsden, Clapper Loader; and Sasha Imani, Trainee. Key Grip was Dave Rankin and we also had Dylan Saville and Aaron Shields in the team. We had some big scenes, lots of extras, crowds and animals, and a tight schedule—it was crucial to have a smooth and well organised team, which we did.

6. Can you tell us about a memorable scene from *Bridgerton* and your approach?

The world of *Bridgerton* is set in high Regency society in lavish surroundings combined with romance and drama. One of the biggest scenes at the start of the season was the ballroom scene. Anne the Director wanted to take inspiration and capture the feel from similar scenes on film, in particular *War and Peace*.

Trinity gave us greater flexibility and creativity to follow characters but also gave us the advantage of allowing different and more creative angles during the dance scenes.

I liked to be able to float between dancers with only minimal disruption to the background artists' flow.



7. What else have you been working on recently?

Just before the lockdown, I had the great pleasure to help out Greig Fraser ASC ACS as an operator on the main unit for *Batman*. Before that, I worked with Mike Eley BSC on *The Dig* and also with Ben Davis BSC on *Eternals*. More Cinematographers are taking a pro-active approach to widen and diversify their talent pool on large-scale productions, which has allowed people like me coming from a TV drama background to work on features, which is refreshing and inspiring.

I work on many different productions either as an extra operator or because of Steadicam/Trinity requirements for a project. I think anyone doing dailies will agree it is always a challenge as you have to learn the story, continue the look, fit in with the existing team and earn respect quickly. You also get to meet lots of people too which is always good fun.

8. What have you been doing during this Covid-19 lockdown and what would you like to do next?

Like lots of us, I have had a good chunk of time with my family (we have three young kids at home). I feel lucky to have had my family safe and sound when others have not been so lucky. After our travels were cut short by the pandemic, we got lucky and ended up by a beach on the Gower coast. It has been so quiet during lockdown, the kids thought it was their own private beach!

The ACO and other bodies have been great at keeping us all connected with webinars and there have been lots of zoom discussion groups too. I've tried to catch up with my DOPs and teams—it's been great to see how creative people have been during this difficult time. Also, I am working on a web-based project as a specialist resource and hub for UK and international operators, so watch this space. I'd like to work on a comedy next as I think we could all do with a good laugh.