

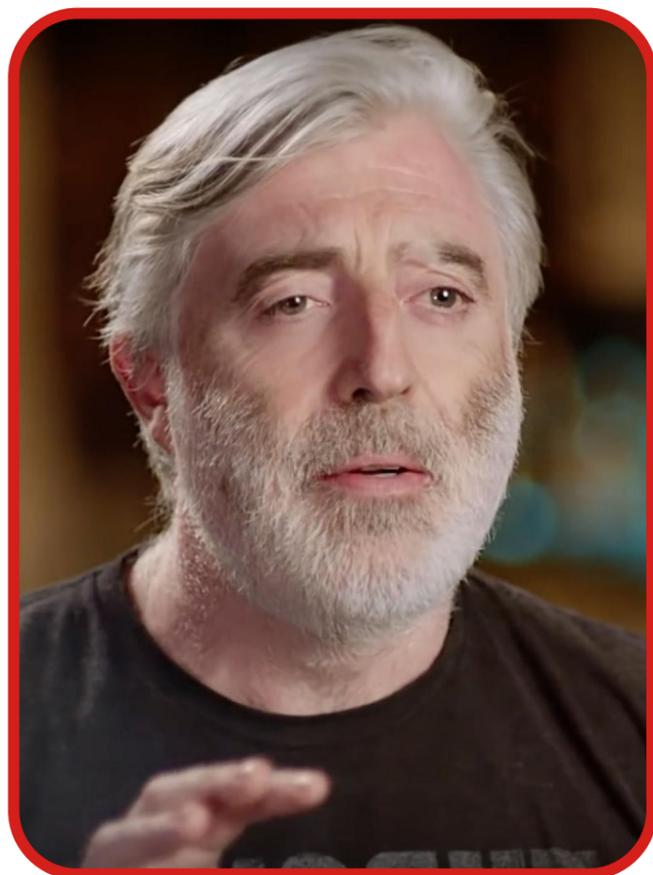
Association of Camera Operators

IN THE FRAME

www.theaco.net
No 23 | MARCH 2021

**ILANA GARRARD ACO
IS AWARDED ASSOC BSC**





PRESIDENT'S POV

"Two and a half years have passed since I was approached by the board... "would I consider taking on the role of President of the Association of Camera Operators?" Little did I know then what an extraordinary term it would turn out to be. The wisest of us couldn't have even started to predict what was on the horizon. Webinars, Zoom, lockdown, substantial meals, sourdough!!!

It began with plans for our 10th anniversary, a true milestone in the ACO's history. We'd reached double figures and the word "established" seemed appropriate. Other grander film societies and associations were recognising our efforts and therefore the importance of the role of the camera operator—our core intention at the heart of our conception. With this establishment came other responsibilities: creating a far more diverse and inclusive association. I believe in this respect, we've made huge inroads but this is a journey we must continue on. The ACO in this time has combined initiatives with the newly created "Women Behind the Camera" and I hope this relationship continues to strengthen. As of our recent AGM, we now have three female board members—progress indeed. And on that note, I cannot thank Lucy Bristow, Agnieszka Szeliga, Ilana Garrard and Zoe Goodwin Stuart enough for their unfailing enthusiasm and passion to see more female operators come through.

Next came something that no one could possibly have foreseen: a global pandemic. The UK Film and TV scene was at an all-time high. Streaming had changed the demand for content like never before. The Coronavirus however, was oblivious to this and set about disrupting our lives, threatening the health of our loved ones and causing our beloved industry to judder to a grinding halt. Of course, the ACO could do absolutely nothing to stop this juggernaut but it could take a moment to consider the fears and concerns of its members. A WhatsApp group was formed—its mission not to discuss Steadicams and cranes necessarily, but to create a caring community; a shoulder to cry on, so to speak. The response was huge and I genuinely feel that it has brought our members closer together. Thank you everyone who contributed and indeed to those whose shoulders were cried on.

Other positives that emerged from this time included Edd Wright's masterful webinars instigated by Chris Plevin that were so educational and enlightening and something the ACO will have forever. Also, Tom Wade took advantage of his captive audience to archive the advice and enormous experiences of a number of ACO operators. I really hope this continues and we hear from a great deal more of the membership in the future. Thank you to all.

Myself and the ACO attended two Bsc Expos; the Aesthetica Film festival; Camerimage; a tenth anniversary summer party; many lovely patron-lead evenings at the Cleveland Arms; plus many ACO, BSC and SOC webinars—all very fulfilling experiences. When we emerge from this difficult time, my great hope is that we can continue to take advantage of our wonderful sense of camaraderie, and meet in person—maybe a late summer party and the reintroduction of our popular operating courses. At the very beginning of my term I was handed a huge advantage over previous Presidents: the employment of an association administrator who has now become our ACO Secretary. Sham Whittaker, I cannot thank you enough for your support, advice, time, dedication and friendship.

Also, thank you to all my board members for your wisdom and patience as I learnt the ropes. There is an unbelievable amount of work and time spent just to keep the ACO cogs turning. Special thanks go to Pete Cavacuitti, for his patient guidance through some of the trickier issues, and to Rodrigo Gutteruez for his tireless dedication to the Operators Awards. I would like to wish Peter Robertson and Joe Russell all the best in their future endeavours as President and Vice President. You'll both be amazing.

A huge thank you must go to all our fantastic patrons whose unconditional support is so important to the ACO, especially their unwavering commitment during such difficult times.

Thank you to Hamish Doyne Ditmas, my Vice President, who has stood down with me.

My term as President has been a huge honour. To have had the privilege of being the voice of such a passionate and inspiring group has been humbling. Thank you to each and every one of you for this. Here's to the exciting future for the ACO and all its members. "

**SEAN SAVAGE, ASSOC BSC, ACO, SOC
OUTGOING ACO PRESIDENT**



THE ACO IS VERY EXCITED TO ANNOUNCE THE NEW PRESIDENT AND VICE PRESIDENT IN 2021.



PETER ROBERTSON ASSOC BSC, ACO, SOC NEW ACO PRESIDENT

As the new ACO president I must applaud Sean for his fantastic work in steering our association through some very difficult times. As film technicians and individuals, our members and their families have been challenged probably more than any of us can remember in our careers. It is testament to the efforts and contributions of our members, no matter how great or small, under the assured guidance of Sean and the board that the association has grown in stature during these times. Although we are not out of the woods yet I hope I can take all the positives gained during his presidency and build an even stronger association.

Sean has mentioned the big gains that have been made in areas of diversity, webinars, the newsletter and festival attendance. For the contributions of those involved I also add my applause.

It's also my pleasure to be working alongside Joe Russell, who will be joining me as vice president. Joe is an accomplished operator as well as a committed board member so his collaboration will be invaluable. We will be aided in our efforts by Zoe Goodwin-Stuart, who I welcome as a new volunteer to the board and the presidents committee.

In the ten years of the ACO's existence, I have seen the reputation of the organisation grow and the confidence of our members grow in step. This reputation is also truly international as the number of membership applications from abroad indicates. With the interest that the ACO has created has come invites to attend festivals, seminars, webinars, trade shows and demos to talk about the work of the camera operator. We have also gained recognition from most of the Studios and TV companies to have ACO after the name of any full member on their credits. As camera operators, we are not natural public speakers; our work is visual and we let our work do the talking but with the raising of our profile has come the need to develop our own voice. This has taken many forms, from leading equipment or technique workshops, to sending photos and videos for use on our website or newsletter. All of these contributions are important and help our profile. Volunteering time and information is key to keeping this going, as well as supporting the work of our dedicated board members.

Despite our growing association, we can't forget how fragile our status remains. The debate is still bubbling away about the relevance of the camera operator in contemporary film and TV production so we need to continue to fight our corner. At the forefront of the fight is The Operators' Awards. Voting for and presenting awards is not just about the glory of winning or being nominated but a way of advertising how importantly we value our craft and the pride we have in it. It's important that we make serious efforts to vote for these awards and support the work of our members and supporters who put in a lot of work in their own time to promote the excellent technical and creative achievements of all camera operators.

Finally, I would like to say how heartened I've been logging on to 'The Inn' over these last few months. Although we are an organisation dedicated to technical and creative achievement, 'The Inn at the ACO' was set up to form a point of contact during times of COVID—a peer garden for everyone to meet and chew the cud. It has shown through its widely varied topics of conversation....and the odd rant, what an interesting and thoughtful group of individuals the ACO is, as well as accomplished camera operators and marmalade makers. It will be an honour to be the president.

What an honour it is to have been asked to take over from Hamish in the role of vice president of this great association, and to serve alongside Pete and the rest of the

board in helping to take it further down the new paths it has been forging during Sean's leadership.

There hasn't been many a silver lining to be found during these last 12 months, and the pandemic will doubtless have hit some members harder than others, but I think it's fair to say that the ACO, thanks to a lot of hard work and dedication behind the scenes, is emerging from the ashes of 2020 a stronger and more close-knit community, even if the light at the end of this tunnel still seems some way off.

Our industry is able to thrive thanks to the passing down of experience and knowledge from one generation to the next, and yet it is often so hard on set to find the time or the right moment to help people to step up. It's only through practical involvement that you can really begin to learn and find your own voice, so for me, one of the most important roles the ACO has to play going forward is in helping to share its collective and diverse wisdoms to those coming up through the ranks,

via workshops, mentorship, and simple one-on-one conversation. I know from my own experience that this can be so inspiring. And it is also our duty to make sure that this net is cast as wide as possible, and we should be encouraging everyone from all walks of life to get involved.

I think we are in a great position to make the ACO not only an association that promotes the art of the operator and helps recognise its contribution to great film and TV productions, but also one that can proudly say it is doing its part to make sure there will be an even more amazing crop of talent to choose from in a fairer and more equal future.



JOE RUSSELL NEW ACO VICE PRESIDENT

NEW KOMODO 6K S35 CAMERA SYSTEM
NOW AVAILABLE FROM RED DIGITAL CINEMA



RED DIGITAL CINEMA®'s new KOMODO™ 6K camera system is now available to order. The highly anticipated KOMODO 6K comes to market after extensive engineering to incorporate production-tested innovations, including a breakthrough global shutter sensor (27.03mm x 14.26mm) that maintains RED's high standard of image quality and dynamic range. The camera is packaged in a small 4-cubic-inch (101.6 mm) form factor and weighs only 2.1 pounds (0.95 kgs). Joining RED's product lineup in its own category, KOMODO includes an enviable list of features designed for professional filmmakers and content creators who want high-end visuals in an easy-to-use, compact, and versatile camera.

"KOMODO has turned into quite the beast," says Jarred Land, President of RED Digital Cinema. "This tiny chameleon of a camera packs in amazing resolution, dynamic range and image quality with a global shutter that has allowed filmmakers to capture footage in ways never thought possible.

"KOMODO captures 6K at 40 fps, 6K WS at 50 fps, and 4K at 60 fps. Highlights of the camera include an RF mount for users to leverage adaptors for EF, PL and other lens systems, including anamorphic lenses, for maximum creative flexibility; a phase-detect based autofocus control on the integrated, color LED touchscreen display that simplifies monitoring and menu navigation; and new streamlined REDCODE® RAW settings (HQ, MQ, and LQ compression options) enhancing the user experience for various shooting needs. Additional features include compatibility with CFAST 2.0 recording media, 4K SDI output, built-in wireless capabilities, and connectivity via the all new RED Control app, which is available now for iOS devices and coming soon on Android.

KOMODO comes to market after extensive testing by many of the industry's leading creatives, among them, renowned filmmaker Michael Bay, avid storyteller and artist Jason Momoa, and Emmy-nominated cinematographer Erik Messerschmidt, ASC.

*"The sensor is beautiful," says Bay.
"I always wanted something this small, this sophisticated in terms of a high-quality image. It's very lightweight; very handheld."*



ENOLA HOLMES

PAUL EDWARDS ACO PRESENTS

Enola Holmes is a witty and fun family film—a terrifically enjoyable romp. It was simply a pleasure to be a part of it. Originally lined up for an August 2020 cinematic release, it was released on (and had amazing success with) the Netflix platform, holding the number one slot in all of Netflix's 78 territories around the world for weeks. It was a shame that we didn't get to see *Enola* on the big screen but there is no denying that Netflix allowed it to find its global audience.

For those who haven't seen it yet, the film stars Millie Bobby Brown as Sherlock's rebellious, clever and imaginative younger sister, who sets off to find her missing mother in Victorian England and proves to be quite the sleuth in her own right.

Before *Enola Holmes*, I had had the pleasure of working with both Harry Bradbeer and Giles Nuttgens BSC—

Enola's director and DOP respectively—on just one occasion each. I worked Steadicam dailies on Harry's TV series *Fleabag* and I had worked with Giles on the 2018 film *Colette* (starring Keira Knightly and Dominic West). So, it was a lovely surprise when Giles phoned, almost a year later, asking if I would be interested in operating Steadicam and B camera on *Enola Holmes*. It was great to catch up with Giles, who ran me through the basic premise and setup of the film, with its strong *Harry Potter* alumni and the potential for a franchise based on the series of books by Nancy Springer. Working with Giles on *Colette* was a great experience and he of course shot the brilliant *Hell or High Water*—one of my favourite films of recent years—so of course I jumped at the opportunity. I

was engaged as the B camera/Steadicam operator, with Giles operating the A camera.

From an operating point of view, *Enola Holmes* is very unusual in the way it was filmed; using the Steadicam as the main camera production tool. I remember Giles saying to me, during our test days, "you're going to shoot this movie." At the time I assumed he was joking, but he wasn't! I was certainly up for the challenge and embraced this extraordinary opportunity to show what Steadicam can deliver. The film is essentially a road movie and it was clear from the beginning that Harry very much wanted the camera to travel with Enola on her journey.

Using Steadicam certainly made sense, but I wasn't quite prepared for how much it was going to replace the dolly, even when shooting traditional 3 or 4-page dialogue sequences!

Over the 10 weeks of our filming period, the Steadicam was used extensively to create movement and impart a sense of energy to the story. This allowed me a fair amount of flexibility and it was a privilege that Giles and Harry gave me the freedom they did. As in *Fleabag*, our main character is allowed to break the fourth wall and address us directly. We are Enola's imaginary friend, so having the camera there to turn to (literally and metaphorically) felt quite natural and it's evident that Millie definitely had fun with this. We would also occasionally shoot wall-breaking and non wall-breaking versions to allow for later editing decisions. What I enjoyed most was that ability the Steadicam gives you to make organic, on-the-fly adjustments.



"From an operating point of view, Enola Holmes is very unusual in the way it was filmed; using the Steadicam as the main camera production tool. I remember Giles saying to me, during our test days, 'you're going to shoot this movie'. At the time I assumed he was joking, but he wasn't!"

You are locked into the actor's performance, and it feels as if you, in some way, become an extra performer on the set. You are, of course, fundamentally there to repeat what you did in the rehearsal but you must also be free to react to those nuanced deviations in space and timing which are always there with any performance; you need to instantly and instinctively react. Harry was charming, calm and focused. He was a delight to work for. He embraced the Steadicam's ability to be incredibly flexible, especially in terms of quickly trying something to see how it felt. This was mostly as part of the rehearsal process but we did get the occasional last minute change as we turned over, with me and Ray (Meere, on focus) quickly exchanging a "hang on for a bumpy ride" look.

"Of course, there was also the time-saving element that Steadicam enabled. We didn't have a big budget or—at 10 weeks—an especially generous shooting schedule, particularly for the film's ambition. So everything had to be pretty tightly run and we kept moving at quite a pace. I must say that it was a pleasure to work alongside Giles, who was never anything other than fully supportive and sympathetic to what was being asked of me and was indeed always appreciative of everyone's hard work."



It's difficult to single out particular days from the film, as they were all so busy, but a couple come to mind. We started the main shoot with two 'pre-shoot' days at the end of our prep week. It was the first week of July 2019 and we were bathed in some gloriously hot summer sunshine, on location on the Ashridge Estate, just North of Berkhamsted. We spent a busy couple of days filming Enola (Millie Bobby Brown) and Tewkesbury (Louis Partridge), including hurtling downhill on a multi-position bicycle rig on the Bickers Trojan tracking vehicle. Things had gone pretty smoothly when we finally got to our last setup of the day, just needing to get the beautiful profile-wide backlit tracking shot of Tewkesbury and Enola walking in the countryside, together for the first time. The sun was dropping low so we had to move quickly. Unfortunately, the perfect spot was in the middle of a large patch of healthy looking nettles, poised to do what they do best—sting! It was hot, so of course everyone was wearing shorts but suddenly wished they weren't! I was the only one with covered legs so I plowed ahead of the team, using the Steadicam as both shield and scythe against the waist-high nettles. We finally got the shot (which in the film is flipped to maintain screen direction) and gingerly picked

At least I knew I would get a couple of shots off towards the end of the day. The plan from the recce was to end the day covering Millie Bobby Brown from a camera rig mounted on our beautiful old steam train, as she leans out of the window and the train departs. However, time was against us so I ended up running along side the train, both preceding and chasing Millie until I couldn't keep up any more! When I finally did hang up my very sweaty Steadicam vest, my Garmin fitness band read 7.1 miles!

Throughout the shoot, I was always acutely aware that I had a duty to be precise, to give the focus pullers (Ray Meere on A and Spencer Murray on B) a chance. Ray was usually with me on the Steadicam but obviously both Ray and Spencer did a fantastic job, especially in the more cramped interior sets. The train carriage and Enola's lodgings were particularly challenging. The lodgings looked terrific but were pretty small, especially the narrow staircase and Enola's room (where Giles somehow managed to squeeze in two cameras!) Most of the time, we had to forget about docking the rig and use an apple box instead.

Typically we would use the 29mm for the wides and 35mm for the overs. Also, on our train carriage set, we did spend quite a bit of time tracking up and down the carriage corridor, chasing or preceding Millie, Louis and Burn Gorman.

"Shooting with the Steadicam in these sets was very helpful in maintaining movement and we used every part of the set, usually with an inch or two to spare between the rig and the wall. It allowed us to shoot very efficiently, mastering the scenes and shooting coverage each way, without having to use up time flying out walls etc."

our way back to the pad-base to de-rig and sort out the equipment. There was one final surprise to top off the day: As I was de-rigging, pretty dehydrated and slightly dazzled by the low sun, I stood up quickly, too close to my Steadicam and succeeded in taking a dizzying blow to the top of the head from the unyielding docking bracket and suddenly there was blood everywhere!

Having triumphed over the nettles, I was defeated by my own rig! Our fantastic unit nurse, Rachel, got the 'superglue' out and glued me back together. It was definitely time for the weekend and a rest! Our day of filming at Kidderminster station was a bit of a record breaker! Our amazing Art Department had transformed the station back in time to 1884 and the scene involved Enola, having just gone on the run, arriving at the train station and then boarding the train in order to make her escape. It was quite a big day for us as the scene introduced the Tewkesbury family, established our dangerous pursuer and was also our only day at that location. It was one of the hottest days of the year and apart from one high wide shot on the A camera, all the shots were on the Steadicam.





"My main Steadicam rig throughout the shoot was a 2 stage M-1, with a Volt fitted and a G70-X arm."

The corridor was built oversize to give us more room but when we first tried to travel at speed, it still proved to be not quite wide enough. The solution was to break out my trusty TB-6 green screen, which is narrower than the Transvideo LCD monitor. This gave us the extra couple of inches we needed but even then, it was so tight that we bent a couple of Preston motor brackets in collisions!

My main Steadicam rig throughout the shoot was a 2 stage M-1, with a Volt fitted and a G70-X arm. The mini LF wasn't yet available so both A and B cameras were the full size Alexa LFs with Signature Prime lenses, all supplied by Arri Rental.

For those who aren't familiar with the 'Volt', it's a new device developed by Tiffen for use with a variety of Steadicam rigs. It's a very clever piece of kit which fits around the gimbal and simply allows you to enjoy the benefits of having a stabilising 'drop time' on the sled, without any of the disadvantages. That 'drop time' can also be varied by turning a dial instead of having to move any masses around. The result is that it adds simplicity and stability and is great in windy conditions.

I used the Transvideo 6" monitor and also had the lightweight 'Starlite' as a second monitor, which I kept rigged on the sled to allow quick switches to low mode. Although not the brightest monitor, the 'Starlite'—with a velvet-lined sunshade—was the ideal solution and with a built in recorder, very useful for quickly checking playback.

It was a privilege to work with such a superb cast. I knew Henry from *The Man From U.N.C.L.E.* and remembered his dry sense of humour. Both Henry and Sam (Clafin, playing Mycroft) seemed perfectly happy having the Steadicam weaving around them. I hadn't worked with Louis (Partridge, playing Tewkesbury) before but he was great and nothing seemed to phase him. I had worked with Helena, Francis and Fiona in the *Harry Potter* days. Our number one on the callsheet, Millie Bobby Brown—the youngest of course and one of the producers of the film—was a special delight and brought along a sense of endless sparkle and fun.

Her youthful exuberance definitely kept us on our toes! She was nearly the same age as my daughter and very much on the same wavelength, so I felt that I understood 'how the cogs turned' in that bright mind. Millie would occasionally come onto set while we were getting ready for the next setup and relax on her bean bag in the corner of the room. On one of our Hatfield House days, while distractedly lining up a shot, I edged back into the darkness, just about to step on something underfoot. I heard a little squeak and I was mortified—it was Millie! I had never before stepped on the number one on the call sheet and the producer at the same time!



We all got together again in mid-February of 2020 for what turned out to be only four days of pickups. We took this as a good sign that everything was working with the film. It was great to catch up with everyone again and we were delighted to hear how happy Legendary were with the film. I look back now at the making of *Enola Holmes* with great fondness but also some poignancy as I wonder how long it will be before we are able to shoot again in that very social way.

Halfway through the film I had to disappear to New York for a few days as I had a long standing East Coast / West Coast family reunion. Giles and Production kindly allowed me to step away for those few days and I'd like to thank John Ferguson for covering for me. His excellent work seamlessly slots into the film. Big thanks to *Enola Holmes*' hard working camera team (including B camera grip John Morris, who had my back throughout the film) and a special thank you to Alex Bailey for the amazing BTS pictures. The Steadicam being such an integral part of a film's storytelling was incredibly challenging, exhausting and enjoyable all at the same time!

THANKS, PAUL EDWARDS ACO



Mark Milsome Inquest Verdict & Andra Milsome Statement

Mark Milsome Verdict

The Mark Milsome Foundation is grateful to the coroner for his diligent consideration. The coroner will be writing a pre- Prevention Of Future Deaths Report letter to various industry bodies including PACT, BECTU, BFC, BBC and the British Stunt Register.

Verdict:

Mark Milsome died an accidental death. Shortly before the execution of the stunt, the risk of Mr Milsome being harmed or fatally injured was not effectively recognised, assessed, communicated or managed. (Mr Chinyere Inyama, Senior Coroner at West London Coroners Court Office, 23rd October 2020)

Andra Milsome Statement

"Obviously I'm happy that this horrible 3-year ordeal is somewhat over. It's upsetting to me that Heads of Department seemed unwilling to take responsibility for their parts in Mark's death during the straightforward stunt that night. They had an obligation to their personnel to make sure there was appropriate equipment there that night. There was a lack of communication from production. Risk assessment guidelines were ignored. Mark should never ever have been manning a camera in the trajectory of a moving vehicle. With Mark's extensive experience as a cameraman, I know he would have suggested a remote head. We never received a clear answer as to why this didn't materialize. I am delighted that the Coroner is considering a Prevention of Future Deaths Report, as no crew member should ever feel that they can't air their concerns on set. Yes means yes. No means no. Maybe means no. As you may be aware, after Mark was killed I set up the Mark Milsome Foundation. One of our main aims is to heighten the awareness of the current Health & Safety conditions within the Film & TV industry. If Mark's death has to be the guiding light to lead us to safer working practices, that would be a meaningful legacy. No one should ever die for the sake of shot."

Andra Milsome, 23rd October 2020

Dear ACO

The Mark Milsome Foundation are in the process of producing an Online Health and Safety Course in conjunction with Media Safety Limited, we are hoping that this course will become an industry standard in the future. There's a long way to go and hurdles to jump, but we hoping to launch it sometime in the Autumn.

Several well known actors have already pledged their support and will appear in the course and help to guide anyone taking the course through it step by step. As part of this process we are trying to compile a list of accidents that have happened on set, as from our research there doesn't seem to be any record of these past tragic events.

Could I kindly request that ACO members, if you feel comfortable please send any details of any accident to myself and giving the following information:

- Approximate Date
- Type of Accident
- Who was hurt (obviously checking first that this person is happy for their name to be used)
- Did the accident lead to a career ending or long term issues.
- Any other information they feel relevant.

We are not proposing to apportion blame to anyone, just a simple record of incidents.

Wishing you all the very best

Philip Sindell

philip.sindall@btinternet.com



ACO MEMBERSHIP NEWS 2021



New full member 2020:

- Anthony Bowes
- Leo Bund
- Scott Milton
- Will Lyte
- Guillermo Moreno
- Paul Hill
- Jonathan Dennis
- Lionel Garrote Belizan
- Fares Corbani
- Kieron Jansch
- Sven Joukes
- Rick Woollard
- Barry Crocker
- Andrew Bainbridge

Upgrade from associate to full:

- Richard Bevan
- Rory Moles
- Thomas Walshe
- Jonathan Tyler
- Tim Battersby
- Tom Walden
- Robert Beck
- John Clarke
- Max Rijavec
- Adam Mendry
- James Poole
- James Burgess

Associate:

- Barney Piercy
- Christopher Kechichian
- John Bailie
- Spencer Franks
- Andy Banwell
- Martin Newstead
- Jasper Van Gheluwe
- Daniel Evans
- Jess Doxey
- Junior Agyeman-Oswusu
- Grant Sandy-Phillips
- Marc Hill

Lifetime:

- Philip Sindall
- David Morgan
- Ray Andrew
- Andrew Speller

Honorary:

- Rawdon Hayes
- John Jordan

Friends:

- Sarah Gardiner Munns
- Trevor Murphy
- James Friend
- Tommy Holman
- Tobias Eedy
- Cenay Said
- Dora Krolikowska
- Sam Irwin
- Beth Trinder
- Guido Cavaciuti
- Theo Spearman
- Hannah Jell
- Ryan Taggart
- Simon Dunn
- James Grandi
- Kayla Windsor
- Peter Demetris
- Lauren Heslop
- Chris McAleese
- Claire Pie
- Lisa Cottington
- James Thomas
- Gary Norman
- Amanpreet Sahota
- Kat Spencer
- Peter Field
- Junel Rahman
- Vana Karamanou
- Tom Ellacott
- Catharine Brown
- Jennifer Atcheson
- James Stier
- Julian Bucknall



association of camera operators

The ACO would like to congratulate Ilana Garrard on her Assoc BSC membership.

"It was a sunny day in Tottenham and I was happily heading to the marshes for a walk. Post-lockdown blues were lifting with sunshine and new freedoms. Our industry had been completely stopped in its tracks but hope was on the horizon for work in the pipeline. My meandering thoughts were gently interrupted when I received a call from Christopher Ross BSC. I was meant to start a film with him, before lockdown put the country on hold. To my complete surprise, he was phoning me to tell me that he wanted to put me forward for BSC associate membership. During this discussion we spoke about the fact that, if I were to be accepted, I would be the first woman in the history of the BSC to be an associate member. Being the youngest of 3 children, I was generally the last to do anything, so as I continued my walk, I felt excited that I was potentially going to be the first at something quite significant.

It was autumn when I got the call from Chris: I had in fact been accepted. The BSC board members had called it a historical moment. I felt deeply humbled and proud. What followed was an overwhelming response on social media, especially from my fellow ACO members on our 'Inn at the ACO' WhatsApp group. It highlighted the camaraderie the ACO has developed and the support and kindness within it.

Going forward, I can only hope that the industry carries on progressing towards equality for women and minorities. Being the first woman to be accepted as an associate member of the BSC is a real honour. My vision for the future is to have many of my female colleagues rightfully standing there with me."

ILANA GARRARD ACO | ASSOCIATE BSC

THE THIRD DAY

BY
DOUG WALSHE ACO



It was early July 2019 and I was one week away from wrapping *Avenue 5* and beginning *The Third Day* on B camera. That night, the large spaceship set in Leavesden studios burnt down, taking all my equipment with it, including my back-up rig. Vicious rumours circulated—my personal favourite being that the set-built chocolate fountain had spontaneously combusted, causing the fire.

I got a rental and began *The Third Day*, shot on DNAs paired with the Sony Venice, chosen by Mark Munden and Ben Kracun, my Director and DoP respectively. The camera build had some decent inertia to it, on the shoulder and on the rig. Predominantly shot on exterior locations, including Osea island, we had to deal with tough terrain: long grass, hedge tunnels, a lot of mud and tidal water on the causeway leading on and off the island. We got caught with our pants down on the causeway several times, trying to convey members of the cast trying to escape the island, attempting to photograph rising water at that mid-ankle point.

The grip team were heroes on this job. We were lead by key grip Neil Blakesley with Jonny Smith as my B cam grip, who supported me in any way possible, along with my focus puller Laura Dinnet. We used plenty of car rigs and grip solutions—my favourite: watching them rig a mini libra on a vibration isolator attached to a Mantis rickshaw, which I could operate half way down the beach remotely.

The day that stood out most for me was operating Steadicam and stepping onto a crane platform, with Jude Law then being lifted 20ft up in the air across a village square, lowered to the ground and then stepping off. This was to suggest the character's sensation of being high on acid and flying across the town centre while holding hands with Emily Watson.

To achieve the transition, I pushed in close as the pair meander through a chaotic festival, then push into a medium on Jude and swap places with Emily. Then Jude and I stepped onto the crane together and take off. As we were deployed on the other end of the town square, I'd pull back and Emily replaced my position next to Jude.

Another great day was travelling over the very bumpy causeway. I can't stress enough how bad the terrain was while moving around Naomi Harris's car, sat operating in the Julie tracking vehicle with a 20th hydroscope and flight head, which gave us some really iconic shots that were used in the show and also the TV trailer. I was amazed how well the kit performed here; it felt like a low passing helicopter shot.



Plenty of lo-fi solutions were utilised in tight spaces: like poking the Venice in Rialto mode on a set of monopods over Jonny Daglish's head, while dragging Jude down a stair case tied to a chair. Also, leading several cast members running through a tight prickly hedge tunnel with the camera on my shoulder facing backwards. The effect worked well but Neil and I knew this was a snatch and didn't want to set a trend. So we got a Ronin 2 in the second block, which I operated remotely (while being hand-bashed by the grips) for more action scenes, like running through forests. This was a first for me and proved very useful for quick, simple action sequences. Director Mark Munden really pushed for contrast in the camera operation by pairing super close, wide-angle handheld work with diopters and slow, considered Steadicam work. Dolly didn't come out much until the second block. Ben Kracun, the DOP, did a lot of the close handheld work (with me on standby watching and learning his movements) and would swap in occasionally after many, many takes.

I stayed on to complete the second block with David's Chizelet and Philipa Lowthorpe taking over as DOP and Director. The style intentionally changed from psychological thriller to action horror. This was reflected in the use of more classical camera work; a lot more Steadicam, (mainly to cover scenes with developing wides) tighter passes on each character and more developing shots on cranes. A and B cameras were utilised together on most scenes, rather than the single camera predominantly used on the first block, due to more scenes, more action and child actors. We wrapped in December and had watched Osea Island transform from summer through to winter, which was intended and reflected in the mood of the show.

Almost a year later, in late September 2020, I was invited back to the island to operate on the live episode of the show—12 hours and intended to appear as one continuous take. This was achieved using many stitches across three cameras, all in real time. We utilised Ronin 2 gimbles (hand-bashed by the grips and docked onto a 60ft moviebird on a scarab) and black arms (onto the Trojan 2 electric tracking vehicles) multiple times. Myself, James Layton ACO, John Ferguson ACO and George Geddis took turns operating the master wheels, which were strapped to our chests, allowing us to walk with the constant moving camera and to hop on and off the tracking vehicles. This was as much a test of endurance as it was a technical challenge. Luckily the same grip team were there—lead by Neil Blakesley again—who knew the island and all its quirks.

I go back as A camera on *Avenue 5* season 2. I won't be leaving my new rig anywhere near the chocolate fountain this time.





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DOODSTIL

BY
JASPER VAN GHELUWE ACO



This 4-episode series was written and directed by Willem Gerritsen. It is based on the character Luther, of the series *Penoza* (2010-2017). *Doodstil* follows how Andreas becomes a gangster and how he copes with his past. Two years ago, I worked with Willem on a fashion short. Full of passion, he told me about this series he was working on and how he wanted it to look like something never seen before on Dutch television. We planned to shoot in May 2020, but obviously the whole pandemic started and the Netherlands went into an "intelligent lockdown", so all film productions were postponed or cancelled. In July, I was happy to receive a call from Willem saying the production was going to start in August. We had to adapt to certain rules though: trying to keep a distance between the crew, wearing masks and limiting how many people were allowed on set. It was not always easy to remember these rules while working, so we were very happy we had a Covid-19 manager on set who reminded us to keep distance and wear our masks. We were happy we could shoot at least. The DP and main operator was Martijn Melis, a young and upcoming talent. He knew exactly what was needed where, and really tried to get everything out of the production that was possible. Everything was shot on the good old ARRI Amira, with Sigma Primes. Some of the exterior night scenes were shot on the Varicam LT, because of the crazy low-light quality it gave us.



'he cinematography was built up with certain principles; a lot of the editing needed to happen in the shot, so if we wanted to go to a close-up from a wide, we were not cutting away from the shot, but blocked the shot so we could do a push in, or let the actor walk closer to the camera. Secondly, body language was very important; the director didn't want to go too close to faces, hands or B-roll. He wanted the tension of the body to do a lot of the talking.

It was amazing to really block the scenes with these ideas, as it gave us certain rules to play with. This resulted in beautifully choreographed scenes with lots of tension and emotion. Some action scenes will have some cuts of course, but there are others that will stay as planned in one shot. There's this one scene shot handheld by Martijn: our main character Luther is shot from within the forest, hides behind logs and runs behind a car. He starts the car so it slowly starts to drive and he can move away from the firing line. In this scene, the camera stays with him. As the viewer, you feel his tension and his fear of the unknown shooter.

At the start of the lockdown, I had just invested in the ARRI Trinity and got my training from Sebastien Joly at Optical Support. I introduced the system to Martijn and he was intrigued with the new possibilities it brought to the table. It was both a creative tool and a problem-solver. This system gave us the possibility and speed to put the camera in multiple positions without having to rebuild from low to high mode, or to other rigs. Often, the ideal position of the camera is right above the hip—the position where we used to hold our Hasselblad-camera—and one of those frustrating heights for the Steadicam. So again, that's where the Trinity came into play. To achieve this height, Martijn also used the Easyrig for handheld operating.

As it wasn't a high-budget production, we didn't have big cranes and dollies, so the versatility of the ARRI Trinity system was actually very efficient and we could still have a high production value. There were several moments when I saw Willem and Martijn discussing a shot on set, frowning in frustration with how they could put the camera somewhere (like over a car, a push-in over a table etc.) and when I came to them, listening to their problem, the solution was often the Trinity. We ended shooting this 4-episode series in September and it will air in December in the Netherlands.





ZOE GOODWIN STUART

WHO IS OPERATING ON WHAT?



association of camera operators

ARRI CREW – COURTESY OF KATE COLLIER

Iain Mackay ACO assoc BSC is operating Pistol for Anthony Dodd Mantle BSC and director Danny Boyle—based on Steve Jones' autobiography *Lonely Boy* about the Sex Pistols. **Shaun Cobley ACO** is currently operating B-camera with additional Steadicam on *Mission Impossible 7* with DoP Fraser Taggart and director Christopher McQuarrie—the film has been on location in Norway, Rome, Venice and Abu Dhabi. **Richard Philpott ACO** is shooting with main unit on *Dr Strange in the Multiverse of Madness*. **Paul Edwards ACO** is B-camera and Steadicam at Longcross Studios with director Sam Raimi and DoP John Mathieson BSC. At present, **Pete Batten ACO** is on the B-camera of the Netflix second season of *The Witcher*. **Ossie McLean ACO** is currently operating the A-camera and Steadicam on *Tetris* with DoP Alwin Kuchler BSC. **Derek Walker ACO/GBCT** has been gainfully employed since the first Lockdown by Netflix, shooting A-camera and Steadicam up in Scotland. **Matt Poynter ACO** is 2nd Unit DoP/B-camera on *Save the Cinema*, a feature with DoP Hamish Doyne-Ditmas based in Carmarthen. After finishing on *The Northman* in Belfast just before Christmas, **Chris Plevin ACO** is operating on an untitled Guy Ritchie Project in sunny Turkey until March, with DoP Alan Stewart, supported by **Andy Banwell** on B-camera and Guy Bennett as key grip. **Jason Ewart ACO** is the A-camera and Steadicam operator on *The Batman* for DoP Greig Fraser. **Jeremy Hiles ACO** has just wrapped on Season 3 of *A Discovery of Witches* for Badwolf and Sky where he has been operating A-camera and Steadicam with DoPs Chas Bain and Catherine Goldschmidt, and directors Jamie Donoughue and Debs Patterson. **Iain Struthers ACO** is currently operating on Disney's *Andor*, the prequel to *Rogue One* (telling the story of Cassian Andor) shooting at Pinewood Studios, Marlow, Scotland and other locations, led by DOP Adriano Goldman ASC BSC and further episodes by Damian Garcia and Frank Lamm. **Peter Cavaciuti ACO** spent a wonderful month in and around Vilnius on *Stranger Things* with the Duffer Brothers directing and Lachlan Milne DoP—a dream job.



Fabrizio Sciarra ACO



IAIN MACKAY
ON THE NEVERS

SCHNEIDER ENTERTAINMENT AGENCY

Chris McGuire ACO is currently on the *Ms. Marvel* series for Marvel/Disney+. **Mike Heathcote ACO** is currently on the series *Y: The Last Man*, for FX. **Andrew Fletcher ACO** just completed *Loki* Season 1 for Marvel/Disney+.

PRINCESTONE CLIENTS :

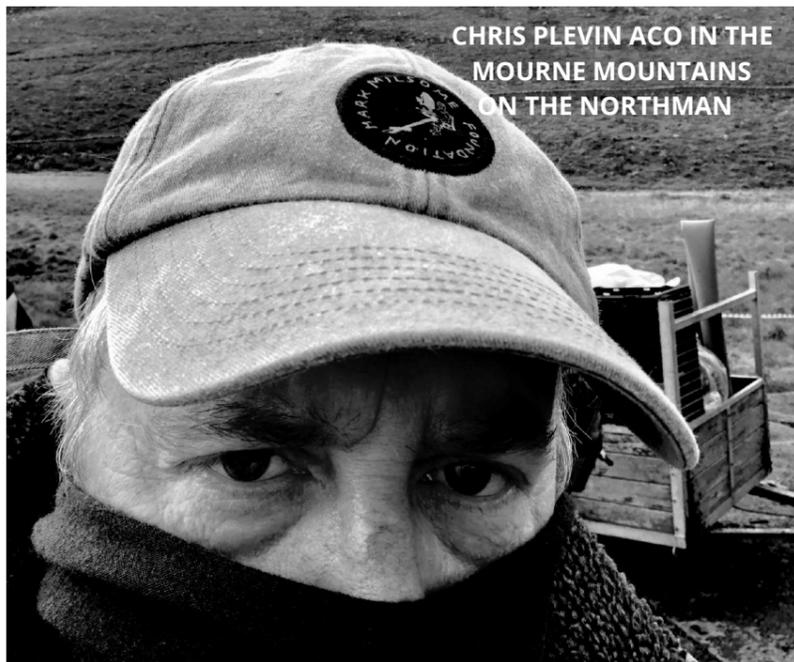
Simon Baker ACO Camera and Steadicam Operator is filming *Splinter / 2nd Unit* on *The Witcher* series 2—a fantasy drama about a solitary monster hunter created by Lauren Schmidt. The cast includes Henry Cavill, Freya Allan and Basil Eidenbenz. The cinematographers are Gavin Struthers and Jean-Phillipe Gossart. He is about to start prep, shooting A camera and Steadicam on *Downton Abbey* with DOP Andrew Dunn BSC. **Cosmo Campbell ACO** Camera and Steadicam operator is shooting *The Power* for Amazon Studios, with DoPs Felix Wiedemann and Carlos Catalan, based at Ealing Studios. **Matt Fisher ACO** Camera, Steadicam and AR Operator is A camera operator and Steadicam for *See* Series 2 for Apple TV. The drama is set in a Dystopian future where the human race has lost the sense of sight. **Rob Hart ACO** Camera and Steadicam Operator has recently finished shooting A camera on *Ridley Road*, a four-part thriller based on the book by Joe Bloom, with director Lisa Mulchaly. Shooting in Manchester, the cast includes Rory Kinnear, Danny Hatchard and Eddie Marsan. **Tony Kay ACO** Camera and Steadicam operator is shooting *Annika*. The series is directed by Philip John and Fiona Walton and the DOP is Nic Lawson. **James Layton ACO** Camera and Steadicam Operator is shooting A camera and Steadicam on the second series of *The Great*, a series for Hulu, with director Colin Bucksey and cinematographer John Brawley. The series stars Elle Fanning, Nicholas Hoult and Phoebe Fox. **Dan Nightingale ACO** Camera and Steadicam Operator is shooting B camera and steadicam on *Wolfe*. They are filming in Manchester with director Adrian Shergold and DoP Tony Slater Ling BSC. **Peter Robertson ASSOC. BSC/ ACO** Camera and Steadicam Operator has just finished filming Little Island/Apple TV's production *Invasion / Ray James*, a TV Series inspired by HG Wells' *War of the Worlds*. He has gone into prep for *The Little Mermaid*, a remake of the 1989 animated Disney movie, shooting A camera and Steadicam. The director is Rob Marshall and the DoP is Dion Beebe. **Joe Russell ACO** Camera and Steadicam Operator will be going into prep on *Red Gun*, the prequel to *Game of Thrones*, shooting A camera and steadicam. The series is being shot at Leavesden Studios and the DoP is Fabian Wagner. **Sean Savage Assoc BSC, ACO & SOC ACO President** Camera and Steadicam operator has recently finished filming A camera and Steadicam on *The Witcher* series 2, a fantasy series created by Lauren Schmidt, starring Henry Cavill. He is about to start work on *Citadel*, shooting at Bray Studios. **Fabrizio Sciarra SOC /ASSOC. BSC / GBCT/ ACO** Camera and Steadicam Operator is about to start prep on *Dungeons & Dragons*. The feature—based on the popular fantasy role-playing game—is shooting in Belfast and stars Chris Pine. The directors are John Francis Daley and Jonathon Goldstein, with DOP Barry Peterson. **Peter Wignall ACO** Camera and Steadicam Operator is filming A camera and Steadicam on *Save the Cinema*, starring Samantha Morton and Tom Felton.

SARA PUTT ASSOICATES

Andrei Austin ACO, Associate BSC, SOC is prepping on *The Bubble*, a new Judd Apatow film with DoP Ben Smithard. **Jon Beacham ACO** has been busy working dailies on *Suspicion*, which stars Uma Thurman. **Danny Bishop ACO, Associate BSC, SOC** is in prep on the remake of the anti-war movie *All Quiet on the Western Front*, on location in Czech Republic with James Friend BSC ASC. **ED Clark ACO** has started prep on *SAS Rogue Heroes* for Kudos Productions with Director Tom Shankland. **James Frater ACO, SOC** is busy operating on the second series of *The Witcher*. **Zoe Goodwin-Stuart ACO:** "We're very excited to announce that Zoe has recently become a client. She is currently working dailies on *A Discovery of Witches*." **Ilana Garrard ACO** is working on Netflix's *Anatomy of a Scandal* with DoP Balazs Bolygo and Director SJ Clarkson. **James Leigh ACO** is still working on Stephen Merchant's series *The Offenders* for Big Talk and Amazon. **Will Lyte ACO** has started on a block of *Sex Education*. **Vince McGahon ACO, Associate BSC** is Operator/Steadicam Operator on *Embankment*, which stars Gary Oldman. **Julian Morson ACO, Associate BSC, GBCT** continues on *The Batman*. **Alastair Rae ACO, Associate BSC** is working on *State of the Union 2*.

RA AGENCY

Svetlana Miko ACO, Trinity Camera Operator: "This year started with more great projects, working with likes of cinematographers Neus Ollé BSC AEC on *Too Close*; Ed Moore BSC on *Britannia* Series 3; Kate Reid BSC on Ghost Light feature *Before We Die*, with Seppe Van Grieken SBC; whilst returning for more on *The Batman*, on the main unit with Grieg Fraser ASC ACS."



CHRIS PLEVIN ACO IN THE
MOURNE MOUNTAINS
ON THE NORTHMAN

Steve Krasznai is currently shooting a film for Legendary Entertainment, [details listed below](#). Thanks. Called Fresh. **Mark McQuiod** is shooting on *Doctor Who* series 13 right now, with Phil Wood as DOP. **Daniele Massaccesi** is shooting *Gucci* with Ridley Scott. **Darren Miller** has been doing aerial drone work on the 2nd series of *Gentleman Jack* in Yorkshire. **Scott Milton** is about to restart on an Apple TV series in Rickmansworth this April. Its working title is *Project Iron*, a family/children's show which resumes principal photography the first week of April. **Guillermo Moreno, ACO** just flew to Madrid to start a film as B camera/ Steadicam with the Spanish title *Las niñas de cristal*. It's a Netflix Spain production. **Martin Newstead** is currently A camera/Steadicam op on *Guilt* series 2 for DoP Carolyn Bridges, shooting in Glasgow and Edinburgh. The production company is Expectation/ Happy Tramp North. **Rupert Powell B Cam & Steadicam** has recently been working dailies on *Hansel and Gretel: After Ever After*, *Whitstable Pearl* and *Grantchester* season 6. **Bob Shipsey's** first job this year was covering for the main unit crew on *Essex* (working title) for Netflix, who had all been sent on an involuntary sabbatical for 10 days of "Splendid Isolation." It was directed via Zoom, with an on-set director and video feed: "five nights in the freezing rain, snow and mud with a brilliant crew. (It's almost as though the main unit had seen the schedule?) Thanks to 1st AC Tom Taylor, who put my name forward & thanks also to the Netflix Covid team who proved that you don't have to ram that swab quite so far up the nose." **Gary Spratling** is picking up dailies on *The Batman* at the moment, "until Mid March when I might have something more substantial." **Roger Tooley ACO, Ass BSC** is itching to start operating B Cam/Steadicam on *This Sceptred Isle* for Michael Winterbottom. "Kenneth Branagh stars as Prime Minister Boris Johnson—the Country, the government, the pandemic. Say no more!"



JAMES LEIGH ACO CAMERA STAND OFF

John Bailie ACO: "Today I finish a ten-week shoot on series 2 of *Tribal* in Calgary. It's for Canada's Indigenous network called APTN and is a cop show about a Tribal police force." **Tim Battersby ACO** is operating A camera on *What's love got to do with it?* with DP Remi Adefarasin and director Shekhar Kapur. **Marc Bénoliel AFCS ACO** is about to work on a couple of commercials and projects at the end of the month. "Apart from that, nothing really big. I am waiting for the spring for feature films and tv series, hopefully." **Peter Berglund ACO:** "I'm up for shooting a small horror flick that's set in a pub on the Yorkshire Moors but looks like we're going to shoot it in Canada, just outside Toronto. The producers tell me that you can't tell the difference but I get the feeling that none of them have ever been to Yorkshire..." **Richard Bevan ACO** has worked on some additional Photography/2nd Unit chasing floods for *Silent Witness*. **Richard Bradbury ACO:** "Joe Russell and I are both shooting *Suspicion* for Apple TV. DoPs are Adam Suschitzky BSC and Gavin Finney BSC. **Fares Corbani, SOC, ACO:** "For this month, I have worked on several tv commercials. I can state the following: Pepsi, Nissan, Volkswagen, Reebok, L'Oréal." **Michael Carstensen ACO SOC:** "I am busy working on *Outlander* Season 6 in Scotland at the moment." **Ian Clark ACO** is on *The Last Kingdom* season 5 in Budapest until June. **Rich Cornelius ACO/GBCT** is currently shooting the second series of *Ted Lasso* for Apple TV + until June. **Barny Crocker** is also on *Ted Lasso* season 2 with DPs John Sorapure, David Rom and Ryan Kernaghan. **Barney Davis** has been doing dailies since Christmas on *Tailspin / Suspicion*. **Paul Donachie** will starting shooting *Better Call Saul* in New Mexico as DoP in early March. **Dan Edwards** is currently shooting the latest series of *Silent Witness* as Camera Operator and Steadicam with DoP Tony Coldwell and directors Delyth Thomas, Paulette Randall and Lawrence Till. **Jason Ellis** is working as DoP on feature film *Alice, Through the Looking*, in post-production for Director Adam Donen, 12th Battalion Productions; operator on commercials for Radical Media, Kaleda, ITV, Tender Nights and Bold, with DPs Will Bex and Nick Bennett. **Ian Fox** will be starting principal photography April 6 on a Netflix film called *School for Good and Evil*. **John Ferguson** is currently working on *Fantastic Beasts 3* as 2nd Unit A Camera and Steadicam, with director Stephen Woolfenden and DoP Tim Wooster. **Lionel Garrote** is currently in Bristol, shooting a TV series for Sky called *Extinction*, with director Marco Kreuzpaintner and DoP Philipp Haberlandt. **Chris Hutchinson** is presently working as A cam/Steadicam on the BBC/HBO series *Gentleman Jack* with DPs Carlos Catalan, Nick Dance BSC, Nicola Daley ACS and Johann Perry. **Sven Joukes ACO SOC** is shooting the last 2 days of *Soil* for Netflix (directed by Adil El Arbi/Bilall Fallah/Mathieu Mortelmans, with DoP Maximiliaan Dierckx) which started shooting last July. **Aga Szeliga** has wrapped on *A Discovery Of Witches 3*. **Dan Nightingale** is on A cam and Steadicam on *Wolfe* for Abbotvision and Sky One. The director is Adrian Shergold and DoP is Tony Slater-Ling BSC. **Jonathan Tyler ACO SOC** is A camera/Steadicam on Searchlight film *Untitled Murder Mystery* (working title). B camera is fellow ACO alum Tom Wade! **Jasper Van Gheluwe:** "I'm shooting music-videos and commercials at the moment. Other than that, I'm doing pretty fine, working quite a lot and still healthy." **Tom Wade:** "I'm currently B Cam on *Untitled Murder Mystery* with Jonno Tylor on A Cam. It's a nice job and going well..." **Des Whelan** is about to start on *Dungeons and Dragons* for Paramount. **Tom Wilkinson** was working on a spy thriller for Amazon called *All the Old Knives*, starring Chris Pine and Thandie Newton, with DOP Charlotte Bruus Christensen, and is now off to Budapest to begin 7 months of *Jack Ryan* Season 3. **Thomas Williams ACO** has been working on Series 2 of *COBRA* for New Pictures/Sky as A Camera & Steadicam Operator for DoP Jan Richter-Friis and Director Sallie Aprahamian. **Max Rijavec** is making the best light BNCs known to man.



PETER WIGNALL ACO

As we try and adjust to "the new normal", it is very interesting to see what can be done regards shooting in a "Covid friendly way", and to this end, Arri have come up with a few ideas.

We were only at the demo for just under two hours, so apologies if a bit sketchy in facts. For more details, it is best to check out the Arri website:

<https://www.arri.com/en/camera-systems/camera-stabilizer-systems/stabilized-remote-heads>. Arri had rather fantastically supplied a simple set and had it constructed and lit.

The lighting rig itself was panels and the new Orbiter, the whole lot being remotely controlled using a touch screen. Colour temperature, intensity, source etc could be changed at the touch of a button (minimising numbers on set).

Two cameras were rigged up; one on a dolly and track, the other on an electronic slider on legs/wheels (more to reposition than physically move in shot).

Regarding the Remote Heads on display (controllable by cables or wirelessly):

What stood out is the SRH-3(60), which in this instance was sitting on a Ronford Baker Electronic Slider (available in lengths ranging from 25 to 96 inches).

To highlight the minimal handling/time/ simplicity around the cameras, all had zooms with motors attached to all three axis. With everything in one unit, regarding both the head and camera, all can be controlled from the one place. This comes with a variety of options: zoom, focus/iris/head roll, etc, as well as slider control (all customisable) and two basic versions: the DRW (Digital Remote Wheels) with the option of bolting on the third axis, or DEH, (Digital Encoder Head) a fluid head with pan bar attachments. I believe Cartoni had a hand in design.

The only criticism perhaps, is whether it is too much for one person to control, thereby two or three wanting to stand in the same place. The great thing is this head has a small footprint and could be attached on or in a car/crane/ whatever. (Jamie Harcourt had been in the previous week with one attached to an Agito, remote modular dolly.)

Slightly smaller/lesser is the Maxima QL—more of a gimbal. This was sitting on a dolly on a rail, but obviously the same applies, in that this will attach to anything, as well as handheld. In this instance, everything on the camera was being controlled on a computer/laptop with the Maxima controlled on a joystick, all remotely. In summary, a quick but extremely useful insight into what can be done, budgets/attitudes willing.

On behalf of all of us there on Tuesday morning, and others of you who made it down, many thanks to Milan, Dave, Tom and Siobhan at Arri CT for having us all along, throughout the week, and twice a day at times!

I strongly recommend you try and have a look for yourself in November, when hopefully a few more days may be available.



Richard Bevan ACO/GBCT

ARRI

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David Lutwyche

Steven Owen Testing Firecrest Cinema Diffusion



FORMATT HITECH



It was shortly after the third anniversary of the passing of our dear friend and colleague Mark Milsome in November, that I found myself shooting on the slopes of Mt Etna, feeling fortunate to be working again during Covid times. I was thinking over how well we had done as a production to avoid serious infections, when a sudden turn of events demonstrated how we can never take our safety on set for granted.

My camera position was dug into the soft volcanic ash that forms a large part of Etna's landscape. It was about 6ft away from a similar position dug for one of our main actors, Kelvin Harrison. We were lining up a shot of him sleeping in a foxhole on a battlefield scene. I had my eye to the eyepiece, doing final checks before shooting, when I heard the crew around me shouting my name. I thought I was about to kick my coffee cup over but judging by the volume of the warning, it was obviously much more serious than that. Just as I pulled my eye away from the eyepiece, I felt a very heavy weight and sharp pain on my shoulder and then I was spun around from my kneeling position by the force of the weight. What had happened was that a very large piece of volcanic rock had been dislodged by a crew member working out of sight of my camera position, further up the mountain. The rocks—as we very quickly learned on the first day of our shoot—although large and solid, were just perched on the very fine ash and took hardly any force to start them rolling down the mountainside. They might as well have been on ball bearings.

Unfortunately, I was in the pathway of one of these giant cannonballs. I was lucky that my body position over the camera presented my shoulder and not my head to the rock, which deflected off my shoulder rather than bouncing on top of it. Had I been in a different position, the outcome could have been very different, as the rock had been dislodged quite a way up the mountain and was travelling with some momentum. Even worse could have been the damage it caused to Kelvin, our actor (as can be seen from the photograph) if the trajectory was slightly different. He was completely oblivious to the incident as he was in his 'acting asleep' position.

Nobody saw this coming... least of all me, although I did wonder why all of our mountain safety people were wearing helmets when I turned up for work. The very next day, safety hats were available on request for all crew working around camera, but this could so easily have been a "closing the stable door" situation. As operators, we are ultimately responsible for our own safety. Keep your eyes peeled and if anything concerns you, flag it up immediately, no matter how small an issue it seems.



PETER ROBERTSON ACO



BY WILL LYTE ACO

From start to finish, the script for *Till Death* had me hooked. It brilliantly creates an initial air of apprehension, that progresses and builds to a nail-biting crescendo. Without doubt, I knew I couldn't wait to be a part of this. *Till Death* is a thriller directed by S.K Dale, starring Megan Fox (Emma) alongside Jack Roth (Jimmy) and Callan Mulvey (Bobby Ray).

I was first contacted about the film back in February (before we really had any idea of the impact the pandemic would soon have) by Jamie Cairney (DOP) who I had previously worked with as B Camera/ Steadicam on *Sex Education* Series 2 and Dailies on the BBC feature drama *Anthony*. Working with Jamie was—and still is—one of the most valuable and educational moments in my career. The opportunity to come on board *Till Death* as B Camera/Steadicam was a no brainer. The filming would all take place in Sofia, Bulgaria, at the impressive Nu Boyana Studios, with a few days out on location. The studio itself is very well facilitated with 10 fully equipped sound stages, and a modern water tank, surrounded by different backlot standing sets. Everything was progressing swiftly; I was due to fly out at the end of the month, but unfortunately lockdown set us back. Thankfully the project picked up a few months later and we began prep at the studio in July. After Isolating for 3 days and a second PCR test, we could begin prep.

I couldn't have asked for a better experience during our camera prep; A Cam 1st AC (Paula Nenova) and B Cam 1st AC (Ivaylo Tsvetkov) did an incredible job of breaking down the schedule with myself and Jamie, helping to organise all of our additional camera days, including crash housings, extra local camera teams and lenses etc.

Equally so, our excellent Key Grip (Desislav Dimitrov) spent a generous amount of time with us to make sure we were fully prepared. Working with Jamie in the past, I've learnt to appreciate how he is always pushing the boundaries of conventionality. I'm constantly inspired by the complex, elaborate, and impressively choreographed camera movements he applies to his work and I knew this film would be no exception. Prior to principal photography and during our discussions on how to approach the film from a camera perspective, we decided to use the MK-V Omega AR2 for the majority of our Steadicam work.

Omega AR2 System does not suffer from the restrictions of a standard Steadicam rig, in the sense that it allows the operator to transition from a camera height inches from the ground, to above eye-line high angles, in one take.

This proved to be particularly useful during many of our interior set builds, where we would often be leading or following either Emma, Jimmy or Bobby Ray—jibbing above furniture, tables and other elements of the set. The AR's low to high ability really shone in one particular scene where Jack is nervously approaching the boat-shed, walking through heavy snow. We created an atmosphere of suspense in a relatively simple but effective developing tracking low mode profile shot, that then transitions to a 3/4 profile at eyeline level. One of the more under appreciated advantages of the AR2 is the Ability to position the camera at any height, level to the set. Often the downside to conventional Steadicam is when you are caught between low and high mode—the necessity to tilt either up or down to maintain your frame's composition thus compromising the aesthetics of the scene's verticals when keystoneing occurs.

In regard to how we approached the framing: we rarely utilised handheld and adopted a more cinematic approach with bold and empowering low angles, mainly centre-framing for 2.39:1. For the majority, we shot two cameras, with myself floating between Studio and Steadicam mode.

The A Camera, operated by Jamie, predominately used the dolly and often utilised a small GF-Jib on a flatbed and track coupled with a Mo-Sys Lambda 2 Axis Remote Head for a host of intricate, developing shots.

With only 5 weeks to shoot a 28 day schedule, we knew that efficiency and speed would be essential, often finding ourselves switching between various camera setups throughout the day. One particularly impressive day consisted of transitioning from the Moviebird 45' rig to a Nautica underwater housing, followed by a tricky tracking shot with the vantage century periscope lens, back to the Omega AR2 whilst also rigging an additional 3 camera bodies. We were spoilt; every crew member and technician on set was incredibly proficient.

"The Omega AR2 System does not suffer from the restrictions of a standard steadicam rig."





This really became apparent on one of our stunt days, involving a precise vehicle crash and roll sequence. The SUV vehicle—rigged discreetly via a chain system—would be dragged and flipped into a large boat shed. Huge credit to our highly skilled Stunt Co-Ordinator Teodor Tzolov for not only this, but a whole host of impressive action sequences throughout the film. Realistically, with one take at our disposal, we were armed to the teeth for coverage. This consisted of 3 x Alexa Minis, 2x GH5 SLR Cameras in crash housings, plus 2 x RED cameras for good measure.

With myself on a 45' MovieBird, Jamie on Dolly and track, and the other cameras rigged throughout various points of the set, the sequence came off beautifully thanks to our exceptional crew. With much of the focus on the technicalities, style and aesthetics of the film, I'd be remiss not to mention the other hugely important and often most rewarding feature and privilege of being a camera operator: the relationship of working with incredible actors, with this film being no exception, particularly evident through the collaboration when executing choreographed, complex Steadicam sequences. There is that moment whilst blocking though a scene when you're confronted with an obstacle (be it physical or timing related) that could jeopardise the execution of the shot. There is a degree to which I feel as though you can ask too much of any actor to accommodate—be it with positioning, delayed line delivery or any other obstruction. Again, I was spoilt rotten on this shoot; all three of our main cast couldn't be more accommodating, often offering up (before I had a chance to even subtly furrow my brow with apprehension when confronted with said obstacle) a generous offer to "should I delay my move so you can..." or "Will, does it help if I do this instead?"

I'll be forever grateful for these moments, hoping that I never take them for granted in the future. A final note on this film: I don't consider this to be an exaggerated opinion when I say that this film will be one of the most significant experiences of my career, based on a unique aspect. What I mean by this is the fact that during lockdown, I truly had a sudden and extremely sobering moment where a huge passion, creative expression and overall love had been denied with no indication of a positive return. I'm of course referencing the privilege and honour to be working in such a rewarding career. Returning to work on this film truly made me appreciate just how fortunate we all are to be a part of this wonderful industry.



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Live for the story_



MEDITERRÁNEO



It seems like some time ago now as so many things have changed, that we were shooting *Mediterráneo*, during August and September 2020 in Athens, in the beautiful Greek sunshine.

In addition to COVID 19, we had some very big challenges on this project. The true story is about Óscar Camps—a Catalan lifeguard, entrepreneur and activist—who travelled to Greece to see for himself the real situation with the refugees crossing the Mediterranean from Turkey's shores to the Island of Lesbos.

Lesvos was the first choice as main location but some problems with the local radicals made production change their minds. That was a clever decision, because as we found out later, some journalists started to be attacked by those groups. That decision forced us to improvise in many ways, but the hardest choice was about the locations. Camera-wise, we needed to be very clever with the decisions because we had to be very fast changing camera positions and rigs. It was hard to deal with the inconvenience of being inside the water in a scuba or splash bag and in a few minutes have to shoot with a hot head on a boat.

DOP Kiko de la Rica decided to shoot with mini Alexa with Arri Zeiss Ultra Prime lenses which fitted in all rigs very easily. It was a hard shoot with great people, but an important story to tell.

BY LIONEL GARROTE ACO

FUJIFILM

Fujifilm launches FUJINON Premista 19-45mm T2.9

A new wide-angle zoom lens, compatible with Large Format cinema cameras, which delivers a natural image with little distortion throughout the entire zoom range

LONDON, January 14, 2021— FUJIFILM UK Ltd is pleased to announce that the "Premista 19-45mm T2.9", a wide-angle zoom covering focal lengths from 19mm to 45mm, will be released on the 28th January 2021 as the third model to join the Premista Series of cinema zoom lenses along with the Premista 28-100mm T2.9 and the Premista 80-250mm T2.9-3.5.

The Premista 19-45mm covers Large-Format sensors*1 and delivers outstanding high resolution, natural and beautiful bokeh, and rich tonality.

The Premista 19-45mm is a compact and premium-quality wide-angle zoom lens, developed with Fujifilm's optical technology nurtured over many years. It effectively controls distortion*2 to deliver natural images with little distortion across the entire zoom range.

Fujifilm continues to support high-quality movie production by widening the range of focal lengths covered by the Premista series to 19-250mm.

*1 Large image sensors and film that measure between 43.2-46.3mm diagonally
*2 Image distortion that tends to occur when shooting at wide-angle focal lengths.

Large Format shooting on the rise

In recent years, there has been an increased uptake of cinema cameras equipped with Large-Format sensors capable of capturing high-quality and richly-expressive images. Many productions choose to shoot with Prime lenses for many reasons, one of which is the outstanding optical performance. However, when shooting with prime lenses, it is often necessary to pause shooting in order to change the focal length. Therefore there is a growing demand for zoom lenses to help complement, and in some cases even replace, prime lenses without compromising image quality or cinematic character.

In 2019, Fujifilm released both a standard and telephoto zoom lenses as part of the Premista Series of zoom lenses for Large-Format cameras. The series has been praised by cinematographers for its natural colour reproduction, strong contrast, beautiful bokeh and gentle focus fall-off throughout all focal lengths, as well as the wide range of focal lengths itself.



Compact design and excellent robustness

- The use of proprietary optical simulation technology and mechanical design technology enables a compact yet robust lens body measuring 228mm / 9" and weighing 3.3kg / 7.3lb that can withstand harsh professional shooting conditions.

Excellent operability

- The Premista 19-45mm shares the same front diameter and gear position for the focus, zoom and iris operating rings as the other two Premista zooms. This allows the shared use of accessories such as matte boxes and follow-focus systems, without the need to re-adjust accessory positions when swapping lenses.
- It features a Flange Focal Distance adjustment mechanism*5, allowing technicians to easily adjust the flange focal distance by unlocking and rotating a ring on the lens barrel to correct shifts in the flange focal distance sometimes caused by rapid temperature changes.
- The focus ring has a wide rotation angle of 280 degrees and gives smooth torque during rotation for precise focusing and excellent operability. Fluorescent paint is applied to index marks on the focus, zoom and iris rings so that these settings can be visibly checked even at night or in a dark room.



Matching front diameter size and control ring locations

*5 Also known as Back Focus, this function can adjust the lens's image-forming plane to the optimum position according to each camera's flange focal distance (the distance from the lens's mounting reference plane to the image sensor).

Compatible with the ZEISS eXtended Data

- Along with the 28-100 and 80-250 lenses, the 19-45 lens also supports "ZEISS eXtended Data", developed by Carl Zeiss in compliance with the "/i@ Technology*6" communication protocol. This allows users to record metadata during video shooting, including lens distortion and shading fall-off, thereby reducing video-editing workload in post-production and facilitating efficient video production.

*6 /i is a trademark or registered trademark of Cooke Optics Limited.

Compatible with Large-Format sensors to deliver outstanding high resolution, natural and beautiful bokeh and rich tonality

- By featuring large-diameter aspherical lens elements polished to ultimate precision and Fujifilm's unique zooming system, the Premista 19-45mm effectively corrects chromatic aberration to create images with impressive sharpness and clarity.
- The lens effectively reduces distortion, which tends to occur when shooting at wide-angle focal lengths, to achieve natural scenes regardless of the subject distance.
- The 13-blade iris design forms a near-perfect circular aperture that produces natural and beautiful bokeh with gentle focus fall-off
- The use of cutting-edge optical design and Fujifilm's unique coating process allows minimal ghosts, controllable and cinematic flares and excellent black levels for SDR and HDR workflows.

Wide-angle zoom covering focal lengths from 19mm to 45mm

- The Premista 19-45mm covers strategic focal lengths equivalent to five prime lenses*3, thereby reducing the need to change a lens for fast and efficient shooting with no re-balancing. The intentional focal length overlap with the Premista 28-100 allows this lens to be more than just a wide lens – it becomes the go-to close up lens for many hand-held stabilised shooting setups..
- At 19mm, when used on an ARRI Alexa LF/Mini LF*4, it gives approximately the same horizontal angle of view that a 13mm lens would give on Super-35 3-perf film.
- The Premista 19-45 allows for a constant T-stop value of 2.9 across its focal length range.
- The lens can form a kit with the Premista Series' standard and telephoto zooms to cover focal lengths from 19mm to 250mm.

*3 Five prime lenses for cinema cameras compatible with Large-Format sensors with focal lengths of 21mm, 25mm, 29mm, 35mm, and 40mm

*4 The ARRI Alexa LF sensor has a width of 35.9mm. Super-35 3-perf has a width of 24.9mm. Other Large Format cinema cameras have different width sensors therefore will show a slightly different horizontal angle of view



FUJINON



ROAD KILL

JAMES LEIGH ACO

I have been very fortunate to have operated on *Road kill*. It is a political thriller written by Sir David Hare and Directed by Michael Keillor, with Cinematography by Wojciech Szepel. It's a story about a sleazy Tory politician who makes his way to the top. There is a superb cast, with Hugh Laurie playing the lead. I got on the job thanks to recommendations from two focus pullers I have worked with who have done a few jobs with Wojciech. Wojciech was looking for an operator and my CV had arrived in his inbox. He made some calls to ask about me and then gave me a call. He said my CV told him I could operate, and that I came highly recommended, but before he could offer me the job he needed to meet me and look me in the eye! He said it was a Polish thing. We did meet up and got on brilliantly and that was that. We had a great camera department on *Roadkill*.

The shoot was predominately handheld and as is so often the way, with little or no rehearsals. We shot mostly wide open on master primes, so having Jamie Phillips on focus was great. He was the first person on Wojciech's list. Apart from being brilliant with the sharps, he runs a good team, ably assisted by Scott Jamison and Gerard Mckee, who Jamie had previously worked with on *Game of Thrones*. Matt Budd was my grip, and hand held is obviously never the grip's favourite, but he or his assistant Josh were always on hand to take the weight after each take. We did have some crane days and a few huge tracks to keep them occupied.

It was mainly a single camera shoot, but on the days where the 2nd camera did come out, I had the help of ACO members Bob Shipsey, Richard Philpott, Josh Lee and Gareth Hughes. It was a gruelling shoot but we had a lot of laughs along the way.

It was the first time I had worked with both Wojciech and Michael. They had worked together on a number of projects before and so already had a great understanding of how each other worked. Wojciech and I had had a number of conversations before we recce'd, about style, framing etc. I had revisited a number of films where Michael had picked out specific scenes as ideas for style, so when I joined up I felt I was on the same page straight away. The recces were invaluable to get to know both Michael and Wojciech personally. They both welcomed my ideas and contributions. Very quickly, I felt trusted and valued as part of the team. That dynamic continued on the shoot; Michael was always very well prepped and would always come with a plan for each scene but would always be open to new ideas. Wojciech had very specific ideas about framing which were similar to mine. Very quickly we were on the same wavelength.

Being a political thriller, there were quite a few dialogue-heavy scenes, with static actors sitting around tables. Michael, Wojciech and myself spent a lot of time choosing interesting frames. (It was very much a three-way conversation.) In terms of style it was predominately handheld with some Steadicam,



dolly work and cranes thrown into the mix. We didn't do unmotivated moves. Michael was keen to hold a frame in a scene as long as possible and let the actors work within it. One of Michael's main points of reference was *The Insider*; he loved the handheld sequences, and so a lot of the scenes were shot handheld. Hand holding "static" frames over a few pages of dialogue for repeated takes became the norm. We shot on the Venice with Master Primes. It isn't the most ergonomically designed camera (with handheld in mind) or the lightest, but you soon get used to it. Apart from the physical nature of the handheld and Steadicam, it was a tough shoot.

The locations were all over the place and a typical week might see us in Croydon one day, Dagenham the next, and Hemel Hemstead or Brighton by the end of the week. There was a lot of travel either side of the working day. A few memorable scenes spring to mind but my favourite scene was probably a night scene in London, which we shot in the City Social Restaurant in Tower 42 in the heart of the city. It was a simple scene with two men playing a game of chess, both physically and metaphorically. The location at night is visually stunning with amazing views out over the city and lots of reflective surfaces. It was lit beautifully and was one of those scenes where the frames just fall onto the camera. I can't wait to see that one.





VIGIL: MARTIN NEWSTEAD ACO

Vigil is a heady tale of murder and espionage, set onboard a British trident submarine on patrol. Much of the story (and filming) unfolds on a huge, impressive submarine set, designed by Tom Sayer, that fills nearly the whole 18,000 square foot studio space. With intricate features and weaving corridors, with a myriad of adjoining rooms, it is accurate to the finest detail. Huge watertight doors crafted from wood look like they weigh several tons, but can be moved by a finger. Scores of electronic panels light up in the submarine's control room, there are hundreds of metres of pipes lining the walls of the corridors and even a huge missile deck which houses life-size trident launching tubes. Having filmed several years ago in a real nuclear sub for an episode of *Time Team*, the set really did feel as close to reality as possible. It is genuinely claustrophobic, with narrow and cramped corridors and an attention to detail that means all it is really missing is the unnerving sloping feeling while lying in a bunk as it descends.

Out with the set, housed at the BBC's Dumbarton Studios, location shooting took place in and around Glasgow city centre, Cumbernauld Airport and an old coaling station at Millport which doubled as our fictional Dunloch Naval Base. The stellar cast included Suranne Jones, Rose Leslie, Patterson Joseph, Shaun Evans and Adam James. The first block of eight weeks (filmed over seven months taking into account the COVID hiatus) was Directed and Executive Produced by James Strong, with Matt Gray BSC as DoP. The second block, done under full COVID filming restrictions, was Directed by Isabel Sieb, with Ruari O'Brien ISC as DoP. I was B Cam and Steadicam across both blocks, gaining me a front row seat on a production dealing with the full brunt of COVID.

Filming began on the 3rd February in the main studio set, with other sets located around the lot, including a replica submarine conning tower. We shot two cameras where possible and the Steadicam quite quickly came to be relied on daily, to get us in and out of the corridors and off-shoot rooms of the submarine. The vast, maze-like set was entirely enclosed, adding to the claustrophobic atmosphere. In some rooms, like the gallery and wardroom, filming was only possible with camera traps. Parts of the roof were removable for overhead shots and the lighting rig was built-in and controllable remotely.

Pre-COVID, we would often have several SAs pushing past the cast on our many corridor shots. Shoehorning the Steadicam in as well could have caused a bottleneck, but with meticulous planning we created the right balance of getting the shot, and replicating life on a submarine. Everything about the show was designed, directed and shot to reflect the constraining and restricted nature of life on board a submarine. We were just two weeks away from finishing the first block of filming when on the 16th of March, like every production across the country, the crew were told we were shutting down as the UK headed into lockdown. What was hoped would be a few weeks of hiatus rolled into months. It was a worrying time; rumours abounded on when, or even if, any production would be able to start back up. There were huge question marks over whether close quarter filming—which was essentially our day-to-day on the submarine set—would be possible at all.

TECHNICAL NOTES:

- 2X ARRI ALEXA LF MINIS WITH TOKINA VISTA PRIMES AND ARRI MASTER ANAMORPHICS
- SHOOTING 4.5K - 2:1 RATIO.
- CHAPMAN PEEWEE MK3 DOLLY, 6,4 AND 3 FOOT RONFORD SLIDERS, O'CONNOR 2575 HEADS,
- GF 9 CRANE FOR OVERHEAD SHOTS.
- SUPERTECHNOCRANE 50'
- STEADICAM M1 VOLT, GPI PRO ARM.

The company kept in touch, reassuringly talking about when we would get back to production, not if. Likewise, the crew were in regular contact with each other, with the HoDs in consultation throughout lockdown to work out how we could finish production safely. In the weeks before we returned to set, there were COVID briefings for crew; health declarations for all crew; formations of team bubbles; and strict guidelines issued for PPE and distancing rules during filming. Once filming finally recommenced on the 17th of August, it was a very different environment to the one we had left:

The numbers on set were stripped back to the absolute minimum, with a one-way system in the studio; hand-wash stations had been installed; temperatures were checked every day on arrival; and masks were mandatory at all times, with visors to be worn when in close-quarters with the cast. Key crew and cast were tested twice a week by the on-site nurse, and a COVID supervisor was on hand to ensure we kept a safe distance.





Aside from the uncomfortable and unpleasant nature of COVID testing, operating A camera or Steadicam with a mask and visor is not the easiest of tasks. Alcohol wipes will keep the goggles clear for a good bit—you just have to remember to keep doing it. It is however, all a very small price to pay to be able to get back to production and do it safely. In truth, it pales in comparison to the efforts of the NHS, who are living in full PPE on a daily basis. Remarkably, and undoubtedly due to the careful pre-planning, the new restrictions did not hugely impact our schedule.

Organisation was key, especially when working in the submarine set which had some pretty tight spaces. The director rehearsed, then a small crew show for cameras, sound and grips—only the bare minimum attend. We would decide where the cameras should go and prep anything we needed off-set, as much as possible. I found using my iPhone with the Artemis app to lock down lenses and frames on each setup incredibly useful. Once we had set, the cast were cleared to a safe distance and any set dressing that was needed was done, followed by lighting, then cameras—each department clearing before the next one rolls in. Was it ideal? No, not always, but all of the crew went above and beyond to make it work and the one upside was a lot less chaotic than usual!

As production ramped back up and we had several quite big logistical set-ups to get through to finish, the first block of filming started way back in February, one of which was at Cumbernauld Airport and involved a ten tonne Sea King helicopter hovering above us. Sitting on the ground beneath over 55 feet of metal, with the roar from the Rolls-Royce turboshaft engines and the smell of the petrol fumes was exhilarating, if not a little nerve-racking. It was a final shot at the end of two days with an amazing team of ex-Navy pilots flying the Sea King for us. We also had to replicate sending our lead, Suranne Jones, down a helicopter winch (attached to a telehandler)

on to our submarine conning tower. This was a real piece of precision work using a 50ft techno crane (supplied by Panavision London) to follow Suranne travelling down a tether on a green screen backdrop, and asking her to hit a mark at the bottom with little wiggle room either side.

With block one finally completed after seven long months, we moved on to block two and back into studio with DoP Ruari O'Brien, ISC, and Director Isabel Sieb. Our busy schedule included a hair-raising chase sequence though a darkened missile deck involving handheld and Steadicam. My grip, Ronan Devlin, had been watching my back since day one, guiding me through the confines of the tight corridors. The shot requested involved starting tight on a watertight door as it swings back, pushing tight in on our protagonist as he stalks down the corridor, then a fast run backwards across a steel grated floor and

around a corner, then ultimately having to stop rock solid on Suranne Jones' face. It was a precision shot that could only be done with the solid hands of the grip team, who were fantastic on this job, and the addition of the M1 Volt to my Steadicam. It was an invaluable accessory that everywhere you looked on set there were vertical lines, missile tubes, pipes, cables and watertight doors to walk through with steps either side. This was the first production I had used the device and though it takes some time to get used to its peculiarities, it allowed me to pull off shots with a great deal more precision. My first option was a Betz Wave—a solid piece of equipment as well—but it would have made the rig too tall to fit through some of the spaces, because yes it really is that tight!

As I write this, we are on the last week of filming and back out on location. Despite all the hard work, long days and COVID bumps along the way, it has been a great production and a great experience. Today was spent belted on to a quad bike, with the Steadicam strapped to me and our key grip David Clarke keeping us just ahead of Rose Leslie and Reuban Joseph as they chased Sam Redford through the streets of East Glasgow. The crew took bets at the start of the day as to who would be the fastest. (FYI, Reuban literally outran the quad.) Every job feels like you are part of a filming family by the end, but this one more than most as we have weathered the storm of COVID together. We started this production back in February and the initial four-month filming block will have taken just shy of nine months to complete. To have made it through the difficulties of COVID gives me high hopes for our craft and our industry. We have an exceptional amount of talent in this country and the equipment at our disposal is perhaps the best it has ever been. People at home are devouring content in much higher numbers than before and the industry has shown it can find innovative ways to get over just about any hurdle, even a global pandemic.



MAGNIFICENT 8

BY KAT SPENCER
FRIEND OF THE ACO



1) What was it that got you into operating?

I feel like a spectator in most situations in life because I take a step back to observe and be present, so I can respond to the space and light, the forms and the bodies. I like visually deconstructing people and places to sense and absorb their energies and environments—that is why I love to take photos and record images. I found my voice though taking photographs. At college I studied media and film studies. We filmed gigs and created a live TV show. We used pedestal cameras, made it up as we went along and that's when it clicked for me; the documenting and framing. I knew it was important for me to be able to create, capture and story-tell through photography.

2) What do you feel has been influential in your life to the way you work?

I grew up with designer and artist parents and generations of engineers, architects and carers in my family. My family are a mix of Jamaican, Chinese, British, Maltese and Australian. We had an unusual family and upbringing. I am very influenced by family, both visually and technically, which is probably why I find camera work, problem-solving and building camera rigs so rewarding.

I am from a film family; my parents met on set in the 70s. My mother is an artist working with oils and gouache and sometimes she infuriates herself by challenging herself to using watercolours. Her portraits are striking in the way they capture a personality. She trained as a SFX make-up artist at the BBC and worked on *Top Of The Pops* and films like *The Life of Brian*.

My father was a Production Designer working in features and commercials, mostly with RSA Films for Ridley and Tony Scott in the 70s, 80s and 90s. We grew up with props and crazy art in our house, visited America and travelled to some amazing locations. Dad was very ahead of the times so our home was like no other. We were introduced to his love of design and grew up on a cocktail of repeat screenings of Humphrey Bogart films and films by Orson Welles, Stanley Kubrick, Ridley and Tony Scott and Sergio Leone, as well as A LOT of superb advertising reels from the 80s. For lighter viewing pleasure, some *Die Hard*, *Kuffs*, *Road Runner* and *Tom and Jerry*. Films such as *Alien* and *Legend* aren't suited to small children but he wanted to educate and inspire us always. I think I have a keen eye and my dream as a teenager was to become a camera operator at the Formula 1, which narrowly overtook my childhood ideas of becoming fighter pilot.

3) Walk us through your career, please.

I started in commercials, as a receptionist and runner at RSA. During that time, I lost my father to cancer and that impacted and stunted my path, life and career. I eventually got work experience on commercials, becoming a trainee in 2007 on 35 and 16mm in features and TV dramas with DoP Ben Davis, focus puller Sam Renton, loader Lewis Hume, DoP Balazs Bolygo, focus puller Sam Barnes and loader Tobias Marshall. I stepped up at a time when digital cameras were coming out and had work in commercials

working with a large number of focus pullers regularly. I was flat-out for many years, having to stay up late downloading manuals to learn the new digital camera system's intricate menus and the personalities of each new format for the next job. I transitioned back into features through 2nd and splinter units like *Tarzan*, *Mission: Impossible 5*, *Kingsman 2*, *Wonder Woman*, *Assassin's Creed* and *Beauty and the Beast*. I loved being a part of these films—working with the bespoke rigs, endless fight sequences, explosions and vehicle chases and crashes. In recent years I have done A camera 2nd ACing whilst trying to build on Steadicam practise and camera operating jobs. It's a really tough juggling act and through lockdown I have realised I have too high an expectation of myself, my time and my energies. There is always something to learn and I love being inspired by my colleagues. I was given opportunities to cover some shots as an operator on *The Good Liar* by Tobias Schliessler and also on *Da 5 Bloods* by Tom Sigel. Both a shock and terrifying but the support from focus pullers David Churchyard and Peter Byrne was great and allowed me to throw off the AC belt and radio and delve in. It was an intimidating position to be thrown into but unless you let people know what you want to do, you will never get those opportunities.

4) What have you been working on recently?

My most recent projects as an A camera/key 2nd AC have been for Robert Richardson on *Venom 2* and *A Private War* (operators Shaun Cobby and Vince McGahon); Steve Windon on *Fast and Furious 9* (operators Geoff Haley and Matt Windon); Tom Sigel on Spike Lee's *Da 5 Bloods* (operators Ari Robbins and Pithai Smithsuth); and Mark Patten on *Pennyworth* (the Pilot to Episode 3 of Season 1 with operators Sean Savage and Matt Windon).

4) What do you feel marks your continued success and working through the industry?

I think my success in major motion features as an A camera 2nd AC comes from being resolute, observant, conscientious and intuitive; proactive rather than reactive. It's interesting that you can't really identify my gender through my words or CV but you could assume I am male. I'm not and I am also an ethnic minority.



Despite not having any female heads of the camera department to influence, mentor and guide me, I am where I am. I learnt my skills under the guidance of many legendary male camera crew and I evolved to become my own version of what I believe an AC needs to be. If there had been a female role model, would I have overcome and achieved things quicker, and gained a stronger sense of my future, my abilities and self-confidence?

I will never know, but my sadness is that in 12 years on set, the scenery hasn't changed. Women do not yet seem to share the same status as leaders in the camera department. We have scratched the surface of diversity with symbolic moves. Now we need to invest in the seasoned individuals to create that change. In the words of Marian Wright Edelman: "You can't be what you can't see."

5) Tell us about operating on *How to Stop a Recurring Dream*

This was my first job operating on a feature or TV drama. I had a meeting with cinematographer Ivan Bird and producer Polly du Plessis about a project with the working title of *The Banana Dream*: their collaboration with director Ed Morris and *Rattling Stick* at the end of 2018.

Ivan gave me the opportunity to operate the B camera and we needed to hit the ground running and work quickly. The approach and style needed to show tension and isolation—someone becoming unhinged—and be layered and dynamic, following a teenager who is transforming and experiencing so much. Handheld, monopods and a Ziyun Crane 2 helped achieve this. He trusted my eye and I was given freedom to roam.

I was on the B camera, a Canon 1D rig with Canon CN-E primes that he could cut in with his A camera Alexa Mini footage. I loved being on the longer primes with my tidy, small and lightweight set-up that allowed me to jump in last minute and get the shots in small sets on location and in vehicles. The budget was extremely tight and I was on my own with no grip or focus-puller but with backup from the A camera team: Mark Gee (1st AC) and Giles Taylor (2nd AC).



6) What was the approach?

Having not operated on a feature before, I was very excited to get to grips with the characters and get to learn them. I wanted to get inside their psyche by reading the script multiple times, first for enjoyment, then to start making notes about the characters and building an understanding and base to know the dynamic and energy of a scene.

I hope to be able to translate that into how I frame—making choices on what I could get to support the story and the A camera. I connected with the characters and loved the story. It is an enticing drama about a teenager's reaction to her family separation, resulting in an abduction that draws on the character's desire for the world beyond their chaos and turmoil.

7) Have you done any courses?

Sean Cobby encouraged me to take the GBCT Steadicam Course with tutors Pete Robertson and Fabrizio Sciarra in 2018 and that was the first time that I had felt the confidence to pursue my dreams. I want to be an A camera operator and having Steadicam as a tool is something to help me achieve that, as well as enhancing my use and understanding of camera movement. It's a huge challenge and commitment, and the transition will be scary. I have had many dailies, focus pulling on shorts, commercials and *Wonder Woman* 2nd unit but it's not a role I want to pursue.

I enjoy the collaboration with my focus pullers. Working with Pete Byrne and Spencer Murray for many years, I was trusted with watching their monitor for them while they pull focus on digital as they do on film. I would recommend to any trainee or 2nd AC to pay close attention to how and why a focus puller makes choices, what they are dealing with and how they achieve their job.

8) How do you plan to step up?

My work has allowed me to pay close attention to my operators and study what and how they are doing their job. I plan to invest in a Steadicam rig and keep working as a 2nd AC, to practise and get to a level where I am happy to start charging for my services. Balance whilst shooting and working towards moving up is my priority.



I am incredibly fortunate to be working now on a TV drama until next year; I am on the B camera which should afford me some space and respite from being buried under the pressures of A camera responsibilities. It's a huge privilege to be on the books of Kate Collier at ArriCrew and guided by her wisdom and encouragement. I am also volunteering with the 'Women Behind The Camera' organisation as it's important to me to make female technicians and operators far more visible to future generations.

Kat Spencer