

IN THE FRAME

Association of Camera Operators



№26 - JUNE 2022

MARVEL STUDIOS

DOCTOR STRANGE
IN THE
MULTIVERSE OF MADNESS

IN CINEMAS SOON

IN Dolby Cinema, REAL D 3D AND IMAX

Peter Robertson Rodrigo Gutierrez
Paul Edwards Richard Philpott
Zoe Goodwin-Stuart Tony Kay
Ray Andrews Maiya Rose



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PRESIDENT'S POV

Peter Robertson - ACO

My photo for this edition of the newsletter is literally the ‘President’s POV’ or OTS of the director Joe Wright at work on ‘Cyrano’ with actors Peter Dinklage and Kelvin Harrison performing for the camera. It seemed such a rare occasion to record as I sat behind the camera with the director and the actors right next to me that I felt compelled to share it with my fellow Operators. We all know the horrors of the “black tent”, like a blight that has descended on our working experience. Muffled instructions hollered from the far side of a set and actors that look for reassurance and instruction at the end of a take are just a couple of the annoying consequences of a director that is glued to a monitor and a comfortable chair on the outer reaches of the stage or location. So it was with great pleasure that I share this picture with you and say, don’t despair. Directors like Joe Wright, although rare, still grace our film sets. How nice is it to be asked by the director in a quiet voice, “How was that for camera?.... Good, moving on.”

Maybe for our next newsletter you might want to send in stories of your “Black Tent” experiences?

It seems flippant, even obscene to bemoan anything in our working experience whilst a war rages on the borders of Europe. Daily reports from the front line of the battle relate grim stories far beyond the fantasy battles that we regularly shoot in our “action” movies and TV shows. However, awareness of this contradiction we face has not been forgotten or overlooked by the ACO. Through the generosity of our members, over £5000 has been raised to help the Safe and Sound Campaign fund communications systems for the Ukrainian struggle. This equipment, such as radios and walkies, is incredibly important for the fighting effectiveness of the Ukrainian forces, so our donations have a big and immediate impact. What has this to do with camera operating, some may ask. More than anything I think it’s a wonderful expression of the humanity that exists within our community which is something that surely helps make us better individuals, Operators, and a stronger Association.

The Association showed its strength again recently at the BSC Expo. Reports of a very well attended stand over the three days of the show reflects the growing interest in our organisation. It was also a great team effort with many lending their services to mind the stand and welcome the public, as well as creating merchandise, the newsletter and a showreel, so a big thanks to all who contributed. Next year we plan to get a bigger space so we can make an even bigger splash.

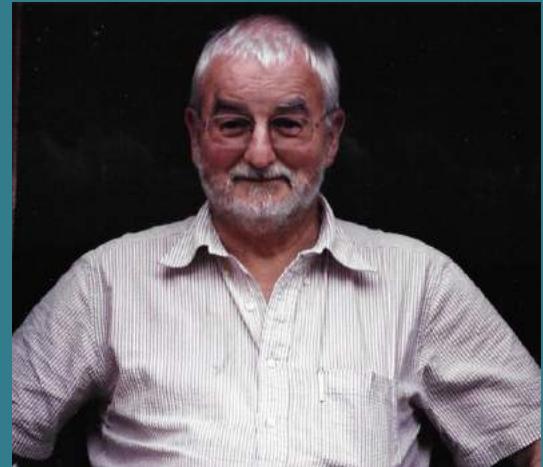
Community is a theme of another development I have witnessed recently. Increasingly “The Inn” has been used to share notifications of job vacancies with many members benefitting from the grapevine effect. Keep it coming. By using this very quick and direct way of notifying each other, we can ensure that we share the correct information on jobs, “unfiltered” by production offices.

Have a great summer everyone.

ACO REMEMBERS JOHN MASKELL

Associate BSC / GBCT Honorary Member
14.03.1944 – 12.05.2022

“A diamond looks best in its setting”



John was the dearest, much loved, admired and gentleman Camera Operator any budding technician could wish to meet. His polite persona and dry sense of humour often carried me and others around him through some extraordinary tricky shoots, often winning over everyone with his calmness and wit, usually ending up with tears of laughter.

John had the ability to crack a joke or observe something humorous just before a take, leaving his surrounding crew reaching for something to bite on to hide the hilarity. He wouldn't take his eye away from the viewfinder but just one shrug of his shoulder would indicate that he'd be crumpling with laughter inside his little TV world, still being able to create cinematic magic with tears blurring over the crosshairs.

As a young man, transfixed by programmes like *The Professionals*, *The Sweeney*, *Minder* & *Inspector Morse*, I could never have believed that the household name of John Maskall on the credit list, would eventually dine at my table, read at my wedding, and become my dearest friend and mentor during my later days as 1st AC and onto becoming a Camera Operator myself.

He never lost his temper, shouted at or belittled anyone. He might disappear behind a facilities truck and kick a tyre in frustration but was always the staunch professional a calm and composed yet wholly respected and extremely experienced technician with a twinkle in his eye.

John perhaps represented the older guard, the rare and more disciplined technician that amassed hundreds

of hours of TV drama, notably for Euston Films. His impressive list of feature films include; *Event Horizon*, *Empire of The Sun* & *Mandela*. I know he got a little disgruntled at how the industry was unfolding more recently yet still always remained thankful for his time and contribution. John had an extraordinary career being extremely talented and one of the most experienced and longest serving Camera Operators in the UK. I remember he once claimed that the late Dickie Lee – his regular grip in the earlier days – had tracked him around on the dolly hundreds of miles during their work together.

He was a very patient man and great mentor, often allowing me to take over on main camera sometimes, secretly allowing me to fail yet learn better from the experience. Such was his generosity and readiness to let go of the handles for his apprentice. His calmness and sensibility was always welcome when one could get frustrated with certain production personnel.

He had a saying that he encouraged us to remember and use when the time was appropriate, particularly with difficult actors in tricky situations: When one is trying to skirt around politics, lighting that cannot be moved, or a long time is being taken when composing a frame on an actor, politely remind said actor that “a diamond looks best in its setting” as this usually makes them think for a moment and take such friendly advice as constructive. “It always works for me”, he said and has done for myself on more occasions than I wish to mention.

Whilst shooting *A Touch of Frost* in Leeds for YTV, John and his wife

June, moved to Leathley in West Yorkshire, making a lovely home at the old Emmerdale Farm location. John would attend the ‘Friday Club’ with his YTV pals and June found a happy little job in a local shoe shop. Luckily, he was quite local to me so often my wife and I would pop over for wine, more wine and a long chat. John and June loved to chat.

When John and June moved back down south to Dorset, they were happy but I know he missed his beloved Yorkshire. He lived out his retirement days there with June and Monty, their adorable dog that brought them both many hours of pleasure, walking by the coast.

Dear John. He leaves a huge abyss in my heart and I will miss his wit, long phone chats and his inimitable way to capture hearts, make us laugh and talk about anything and make it sound interesting and engaging.

The industry has lost a gentleman whose mark upon the world cannot be condensed here, only properly understood by those who were fortunate to be caught in his wake. John knew his stuff yet never paraded with an ego or championed himself above anyone. He commanded great respect without needing to ask, he willingly imparted his wealth of technical prowess and guided those of us who were awed by his abilities and generosity. He leaves us with an impressive legacy, personal fond and happy memories. It's often said that “the Camera Operators seat is the best seat in the house”. John certainly had that.

Be at peace old friend.

Darren C Miller - ACO

ACO WELCOMES

FULL MEMBERS

STEVE MITCHELL
TOM LEBRARIC
JOHN "BUZZ" MOYER

UPGRADE TO FULL

MARTIN NEWSTEAD

ASSOC MEMBERS

DANIEL LOBO
MARTIN KITCHEN
KERRY ARTHUR
JAMES THOMAS
PETER BATESON

FIENDS OF THE ACO

ESTHER COLLINS
TAMIA DIAZ
DOMINIKA BESINSKA
MATT WINDON (MOVED FROM ASSOCIATE MEMBER)
ALASDAIR BOYCE
MICHELE ABRAMO PURICELLI
JOSE MARIA ROMERO RODRIGUEZ
JERMAIN EDWARDS
MAC HUGHES
KIM VINEGRAD





ARTEMIS 2 TRINITY 2

One modular system, two new stabilizers

ARRI introduces its second-generation camera stabilizers. Intuitive and easy to learn, the new modular system offers LBUS connectivity, enhanced user interface and balance, intelligent power management, and unprecedented creative camera moves. The purely mechanical ARTEMIS 2 can be quickly upgraded to the hybrid TRINITY 2, which adds electronic stabilization.

ARRI CAMERA STABILIZER SYSTEM. TRULY CINEMATIC.

INTO THE MADNESS

DOCTOR STRANGE IN THE MULTIVERSE OF MADNESS

"Collaboration – it not only allows you to focus on a specific element of the creative process, but it also brings a fresh set of eyes to a project"



Rodrigo Gutierrez
ACO/Assoc. BSC



As I sit here to write this article, this chance to reflect on my involvement working on the soon to be released MARVEL film, '*Doctor Strange in the Multiverse of Madness*', I am wondering if my perception of the experience is biased. On one hand, am I too filled with nostalgia and my strong sense of pride for all we achieved? But on the other hand, the shoot took over my life for 6 months and I can't recall any day that for one reason or another was not relatively challenging, but also equally enjoyable.

It was early March 2020 when I received a phone call from John Mathieson BSC, enquiring my availability for a project that was coming his way starting May/ June– the year the covid pandemic hit the world. With the country's lockdowns delaying the schedule by 5 months, by late September that year the project was finally back on track, and now we had a starting date of November 2020.

John had asked me to be his "A" Camera Operator on the project. The last time we had collaborated in this manner had been 20 years previously. Although we had worked together many times in between, it was a privilege to be asked– to be at the front.

During early camera tests, the scale of the project began to dawn on me. One of the early challenges I was made aware of was that due to the COVID restrictions, I was required to use a remote head as my main tool as much as possible. The thinking was that the crew's presence on set had to be minimal, thus reducing the possible COVID exposure to the cast. Although I love operating remote heads, for me at the time, this request felt like an imposition. I have always preferred to be able to choose the right tool for the job at hand– mind you, a remote head on a crane is hard to beat. For me at least, being right behind the camera, looking through the eye piece, talking to the cast and working alongside my grip, is what it's all about.

There was no "Prep" as such for me, I wasn't invited to attend any recce's or production meetings before the beginning of principal photography and I met our director briefly only

once before. I didn't have a script or access to the pre-viz. (Marvel was very strict on who had access to this material at the time.) Luckily after a couple of weeks into principal photography, our producer Jamie Christopher, managed to open all the information for me. During those early days, our esteemed Script Supervisor Jo Beckett would answer all my numerous questions, every morning.

John Mathieson, during his pre-production schedule, had worked out all the requirements for the camera and grip equipment with David Appleby and Lewis Hume. This happened weeks before I came on board. For some scenes, John had very specific ideas, but I only received this information scene by scene.

And so, finally, principal photography started in two stints, one before a hiatus for Christmas, and then a final stint from January to April 2021. During the first stint, we managed to create a working pattern between myself and my reliable grip, Gary Romain. Trust and total communication between us were key to making it work, as sometimes I couldn't physically be on set that much or not close enough to the action anyway. He became my ears and eyes. Anything that happened on set, I was made aware of straight away, so we could respond quickly and efficiently. It is amazing what you can achieve when you work as a team. Obviously as we advanced on the schedule and the sets became larger, shooting became easier and all we had to do was maintain our sharp co-ordination.

Conversations with the cast were kept minimal, and I must admit I felt uncertain, not being able to operate amid the action, or really understand the project in full; it all felt weird and impersonal. It helped that I have a good relationship with John, and I knew how he likes to work. Also, in the past I have had experience working on this type of productions, and so I was able to pick up the information quickly. I managed to view the 1st *Dr Strange* film a couple of times, to understand the nature and style of this part of the Marvel Universe.

John Mathieson would discuss the work with Sam Raimi, they would

determine the visual narrative and I would seek information on the film's continuity from Jo. Also, we would perhaps look at the relevant pre-viz or any other reference to the Marvel Universe to give us a basic idea and, have a quick chat with Janek Sirrs VFX Supervisor, in case I had to include within my frame some visual element, (I had worked with Janek before and his input on the timing of the moves or framing was invaluable.) Sometimes the cast directly influenced the camera as they had an amazing visual sense (and Sam Raimi welcomed their input). Then we created a move that incorporated all the elements and presented Sam with a shot for his approval.

Very often, these shots had some degree of challenge. I always prioritised and made sure, we had time for proper rehearsals, and was able to finesse the shots quickly, especially allowing Sam to add more detail if he felt it was needed. It was inevitable sometimes that we didn't get it right for whatever reason and we just went again. No fuss.

I recall one difficult shot we had to do: it was in the New York set when Dr Strange comes out of a shop window that has been blown out and stands on the bonnet of a car. The camera had to travel at full speed towards him and rotate 180° around him about 3ft from his face, ending looking back up the street over his shoulder. The 50ft Technocrane had to travel all the way out and the move of course had to finish on a perfect frame. The problem being was the gap between Benedict's head and the wall of the window frame in the building he had just come out of; this gap between artist and building was just big enough for the camera to 'squeeze' through. Unfortunately, we could not move the cars position to facilitate the move. It took about five apprehensive rehearsals and once we were all coordinating together, it only took four takes for performance to get it right.

Another shot that comes to mind involves the camera travelling towards Dr Strange as he turns and decides to meet the Scarlet Witch in mid-air, over the main temple. As the camera moves towards him, he starts walking towards the camera, gaining speed as he passes camera left, and I had to follow his movement on a

whip pan as he ascends. At this point he was about 4 feet from camera on a close up shot. The grips had to raise the crane arm with him, keeping the composition correct. It meant we had to coordinate with the stunt team controlling the lifting wires precisely.

We were lucky, to have a director that gave us confidence to explore the boundaries, and a DoP guiding the vision, having trust in our technical ability to deliver, it makes life much easier.

The VFX Team was incredibly helpful and, although we followed the pre-viz as much as we could, we were allowed to work freely for most of the shoot. They were always clear in their instructions when very precise work was asked for. On a film this big, the VFX budgets are considerably large and until the film is really edited, things for them can change drastically and be very different to the original idea we had worked with on set.

At the end a film is a magical collaboration between many like-minded individuals. I must give recognition to some of them, first to our director Sam Raimi. He encouraged our collaboration, was always appreciative of the crew, and always had time to make things better. He shared his love for growing apples, his desire to cultivate English apples in his Californian orchard (unfortunately the weather is too hot and arid where he lives). His gentle encouragement to technically push us to the limit. Sam never raised his voice or complained if something didn't work; he trusted the crew. A real joy to work under his leadership!

John Mathieson was uncompromising and always came up with a better suggestion - a true film visionary, (Sam loved working with him.) John inspired us and then allowed us free range to get results.

To the amazing camera crew: Lewis Hume 1st AC and Archie Muller 2nd AC with me on 'A' Camera. I was privileged to work with them, for their support and friendship. Also Paul Edwards Steadicam/'B' Camera with Leigh Gold 1st AC and Filipo Masi 2nd AC. I loved seeing Paul setting a Steadicam shot with real artistry, strength and, solidity, but at the same time fluid and organic. Richard Philpott 'C' Camera with

Keith McNamara 1st AC and Ross McNamara 2nd AC - Richard's elegance and precision either on a crane, handheld, or a dolly track, was amazing. Finally, Freddie FitzHerbert, our esteemed Central Loader.

The concentration from all operators not just on the task at hand, but knowing exactly what each camera was doing, helped to complement each other's shots, it was amazing. Real teamwork!

Our Key Grip David Appleby, and 'A' Camera grip Crane/Dolly Gary Romaine, (without Gary, my job would have been harder to achieve), Duncan Steven Grip and Josh Milne Libra Tech.

Most of the 24 weeks scheduled (except for a few days on location), were based at Longcross Studios. Massive sets were constructed to create New York City, Ancient Temples, and the Multiverse.

John Mathieson's Gaffer Chuck Finch and his electrical crew, always at hand, were kept very busy, creating all the different moods and looks as Doctor Strange travelled through the Multiverse of Madness. No easy undertaking.

Although the underlying story is about love, ultimately *Dr Strange* is an action film and no action film should ever underestimate the massive contribution provided by the 2nd unit; I am a great fan of the amazing work these guys do, to make a film exciting. Hats off to them.

Special mention for John Gamble 2nd Unit Dop, Stefan Stankowski 2nd Unit 'A' Camera, with Harry Gamble 1st AC and Oli Squire 2nd AC. Dan Gamble 'B' Camera with Alan Hall 1st AC and Max McGechan 2nd AC, Central Loader Amy Alicea, Trainee Daisy Gamble. Mark Moriarty 'C' Camera, with Nick Crew 1st AC and Hannah Jell 2nd AC, Callan Mathews Trainee. Alex Frazer 2nd Unit Key Grip.

If at any time in my career, I felt luck was on my side it was on the Multiverse of Madness, not just because I was backed by the best of the best, but John Mathieson and Director Sam Raimi were a joy to work for.

I hope you all enjoy the film.

INTO THE MADNESS

Dr. Strange in the Multiverse of Madness

PAUL EDWARDS - ACO

It is now over two years since I was asked by John Mathieson BSC to be the B Camera and Steadicam Operator for Doctor Strange in the Multiverse of Madness. I've worked with John on many projects, either full time on films or just guesting and it is always a thoroughly pleasurable experience. He consistently assembles such a superb crew around him and becomes a proper Captain of the ship.

My first day on *Doctor Strange* was a test day at Longcross Studios in early March 2020. Covid hadn't quite arrived but it was clearly on the way and was the constant talking point in between shooting various costume setups. There was definitely a storm coming. As the pandemic arrived, it was clear that we weren't going to make our June start date and 2 weeks after that test day, the UK was completely locked down.

When we eventually started principal photography towards the end of the year, it was a brave new world of social distancing, bubbles and people who I naively assumed were medics of some kind, in plastic gowns and masks, pushing swabs down our throats and up our noses. We couldn't even get on site at Longcross Studios without a quick temperature check at the outside carpark. Throughout shooting we had extremely strict Covid protocols with PCR testing 3 times a week wearing masks and face shields at all times. This was particularly restrictive when out on the cold exterior sets where your breath would instantly fog up your visor – not so great when running with the Steadicam! But it worked and we kept on going with everyone doing their best to adapt to this unwelcome but necessary transformation to our familiar workplace.

We started off cautiously on an interior set, shooting a scene from the start of the film where Strange wakes up from his dream. One camera, one artist. In general, to minimise the number of crew on set, we started off with both A and B Cameras on dollies with remote heads, although this slowly segued into a more flexible approach. If B Camera had a position which was sufficiently away from the action then I might operate on a standard dolly and fluid head setup. It was about just making a safe and sensible judgement and being respectful to the actors.

We shot in Strange's Sanctuary for the first few days and slowly got into the familiar rhythm as everyone got used to each other. Most of the cast were new to me but I had worked with Benedict Cumberbatch on and

off ever since his days on '*Sherlock*' so I was looking forward to seeing him again. He's always a pleasure to work with although I think it was actually the second day before he saw me and recognised me behind my mask! Sam Raimi on the other hand, I only knew from his amazing reputation and the fact that he scared the hell out of me when I went to see '*The Evil Dead*' way back when! You couldn't imagine a nicer human being to work for and I don't think you can get an on-set sense of humour any drier than his... "so Paul are you planning to do it better next time?"

As you'd imagine on a film of this scale, we got to work on some amazingly expansive sets such as the roof tops of Kamar-Taj and the New York streets set. Most things were "pre-vized" and we relied heavily on our Script Supervisor, Jo Beckett, who was excellent in keeping us up to date with anything which had changed or wasn't clear. She was such a great help. We moved along at quite a pace and with the interiors, it felt that every time we finished with a set it would immediately get transformed, redressed and reused. Some of this was in the nature of the "multiverse" story but there was also just good old efficient and creative reuse of resources. Hats off to the whole Art Department! We spent a fair amount of time out on the New York City backlot set which was beautifully detailed and redressed for the different universes. There was obviously always a point where CGI would take over from the physical and so it was extremely useful when the large printed photo-renditions were brought onto the set for us to see.

Although we shot mostly on the stages and backlot at Longcross Studios, we did get out on location occasionally: Greenwich for the wedding scene at the start of the film, a couple of days in central London for certain interiors and then down to Somerset right at the end of the shoot, to film the orchard scene.

Before *Doctor Strange*, I'd never worked on a Marvel film and apart from the crazy layers of security, the only real difference I can think of was the requirement to shoot plates for every shot. It didn't matter what the shot was, once it was in the can, you would always repeat it without the actors so that all future bases were covered. It wasn't until I saw the final film that I realised how useful these plate shots were, allowing at a later date, extra dialogue to seamlessly be inserted.

As a Steadicam specialist, I'm always

happiest when operating "in the rig" and so those are the shots which I tend to remember. I recall a couple of tricky shots during the face-off between Wanda and Strange when they're firing spells at each other. We were on a raised set on a perspex-floored section (to allow light in from below) and the Steadicam was effectively the POV of the energy as it was projected, blocked and then reflected back. It involved me running as fast as I could at Strange and Wanda in turn, whilst rotating the Steadicam sled clockwise or anticlockwise so that the cuts would work in terms of rotation. As well as trying to perform the correct twist while moving at speed, I was stopping very sharply right in front of each actor and so was very mindful of the consequences of slipping as I came to a stop!

I also recall a Steadicam shot on the New York set: I was following our Strange and Christine doubles as they walk along the snow covered street. Dotted along the road we had cars suspended on cranes floating and rotating above. People would run out from their hiding places to twist the cars around and then run and hide as we turned over. The idea of the shot was to skim as close as possible to the cars and also to capture the blaring headlights as they swept across the lens. With all the CGI in the film, it was such an amazing sight to see this done practically. I survived with my no-claims bonus intact!

Looking back, shooting a film of this size in a global pandemic was the strangest of experiences. You realise just how important the social aspect of our working lives is and how much of a handicap it is to not see people's faces and only hear them, muffled through a mask. People think that we are privileged to work in such an industry. They are of course right but a much greater privilege is to be able to work surrounded by such amazing people, whatever the industry.

Our camera and grips, along with the rest of the cast and crew, fought hard and succeeded to make it all work and more importantly, managed to keep up the banter and keep us all sane. Particular thanks must go to my fellow operator, Rodrigo and his incredible talent, patience and good humour throughout the film and to 'my guys'; Leigh Gold (1st AC), Filippo Maso (2nd AC), Jack Flemming (B camera grip) and to Freddie Fitzherbert and Nicola Braid (Central Loader and Trainee respectively).





Into The Madness

“DR. STRANGE IN THE MULTIVERSE OF MADNESS”



RICHARD PHILPOTT

ACO

In September 2020 I had a call from John Mathieson who asked if I was doing anything in November and did I want to operate ‘C’ Camera for him on *‘Dr Strange’*. Pete Cavaciuti had recommended me to John the previous year to do ‘B’ Camera on a short film project with him and we’d got on really well so when this offer came up I said I would love to do it. John told me that Rodrigo Gutierrez and Paul Edwards were already on board to operate the ‘A’ and ‘B’ Cameras and that ‘C’ Camera was now being added for the whole shoot rather than just for dailies. This was so we could be in the Covid bubble for the duration. The pandemic had also forced the production to rethink its plans and so now all of the UK shoot would be at Longcross Studios barring a few days out on location. My 1st AC was Keith MacNamara and his son Ross was the 2nd AC. We’d worked together before on the aforementioned short film and so knew each other well.

The original plan was for ‘C’ Camera to split its time between Main Unit and 2nd Unit and to also act as a Splinter unit for inserts and pick-ups, which would be lit by me. During the prep at Longcross I met up with John Gamble (2nd Unit DoP) and Lorne Raimi –Sam’s son- who was going to direct the Splinter Unit, to discuss how this idea might work. Once principal photography got underway however, the crossover between Main and 2nd Units didn’t last too long as it quickly became apparent that we were going to be needed on Main Unit for more days than originally envisaged. Meanwhile Splinter Unit became its own entity after a few weeks with Katie Swain as DoP.

At this point I was going to include a short anecdote about the first shot I did on *‘Dr Strange’* but since that scene didn’t make the final cut I decided not to bother. All I will say is that I enjoyed making it and learnt a few things. Everyday’s a school day! It was a great crew, the cast were easy to work with and we had a lot of laughs.

So, a few recollections of working on *‘Dr Strange’*: What a nice guy Sam Raimi is and how appreciative he is of the work of his camera team; Meeting up with Rod and Paul every morning on the tailgate of the camera truck for a cuppa to discuss anything and everything; We were a team of Operators and we all played our part in making *‘Dr Strange’*. It was very much a collaboration between the three of us and our excellent team of A/Cs; The work done by Dave Appleby and his team of grips to put the cameras where they needed to be to achieve some of Sam’s wilder ideas for shots; How cold the backlot was in January shooting on the “New York street” set in its various incarnations;

When I said goodbye to Sam on the last day of principal photography and how much I’d enjoyed working with him he said to me “Thank you Richard. You have a great eye for a frame”.

As an Operator you couldn’t ask for a better compliment!

ICONIC MOMENTS

RAY ANDREWS ACO REFLECTS ON HIS LEGENDARY CAREER

For over 65 years, legendary Camera Operator Ray Andrew ACO has been at the inception of several iconic moments in film history, including *Das Boot*, *The Shining* and *The Princess Bride*. So Dan Evans paid him a visit at his home in South-East London for a chat and a beer to learn more about his years of experience behind the lens.



What are you doing to keep busy these days?

One day this week I went out and did some film extra work, something I've actually been doing for quite a few years. Originally I was asked to appear in shot as a camera tech and word got around the industry and suddenly agents were ringing asking if I would do more!

I recently heard a story about you being dressed as a vicar and operating a shot?

Yes, at Luton Airport. I was an extra and they were doing a complicated crane shot. The cameraman on the job had only ever used a slip-head and hadn't used handles. He was hoping that the hot-head they'd got on this crane had a joy-stick, but it didn't. So when he didn't know how to use it, one of the guys said "Oh Ray will take over. The vicar knows!"

Oh dear, the Operator must have blushed when he realised one of the extras could do his job better!

Oh yes, and that's happened a few times actually, with a cameraman going ill or whatever. To be honest, when I was 65, I decided I was going to retire and I got to a point where after a couple of weeks I thought "I can't do this". I was missing the buzz of the industry and so I decided that I'd get back in. So I started doing more and more background work, because if I hadn't gotten back in I'd have been at home here, never meeting up with people, and it's all part of me. I'm 82 in September, so I'll have been in the industry then for 67 years.

What can you tell us about your early memories, especially relating to camera work?

I was born in 1940. When I was about 9, my father bought a TV set- black and white with a big magnifying glass in front of it. When one particular program finished they would put up a "Test Card C" and then the next program would start. The BBC at that time had 1 camera, so they'd do the first program with one camera, put test card C on, and then move the camera to another stage and re-plug it in, and so on for the rest of the evening! But one day, they said "We must show you, the BBC have now got a second camera!" and the camera suddenly panned over and there was this 8x4 sheet of ply with large wheels on each corner, a tripod, a seat and a man operating this other camera. And I thought "That's a nice job, I think I could do that". And that is what spurred me into wanting to be a Camera Operator.

We're both at opposite ends of our careers, so now reflecting on the beginning of your career, how do you see things being different?

It's never ever been easy getting into the camera department. When I started you couldn't even get in unless you were a member of the ACT, which is now BECTU. So to get into ACT you had to do your first movie, but you couldn't do a movie because you hadn't got a union ticket! When I left school in July '55, I got a job straight away as an office boy for a small documentary company called World Wide Pictures. One of their staff cameramen, Geoff, came back from a job and said he would take me under his wing. The next day he tells me he's been put on a Children's TV series and says he can teach me how to do Clapper Boy and load the rushes. It came to the weekend, and on the Saturday, Geoff died, for no particular reason, at 67. They didn't have any spare cameramen in the office, so they phoned around, and managed to get hold of a guy called Skeets Kelly (inventor of the Kelly Calculator). He said to me: "I desperately need a Clapper Boy to start on my next film. Would you like to come with me?" And that was the beginnings of *Moby Dick*.

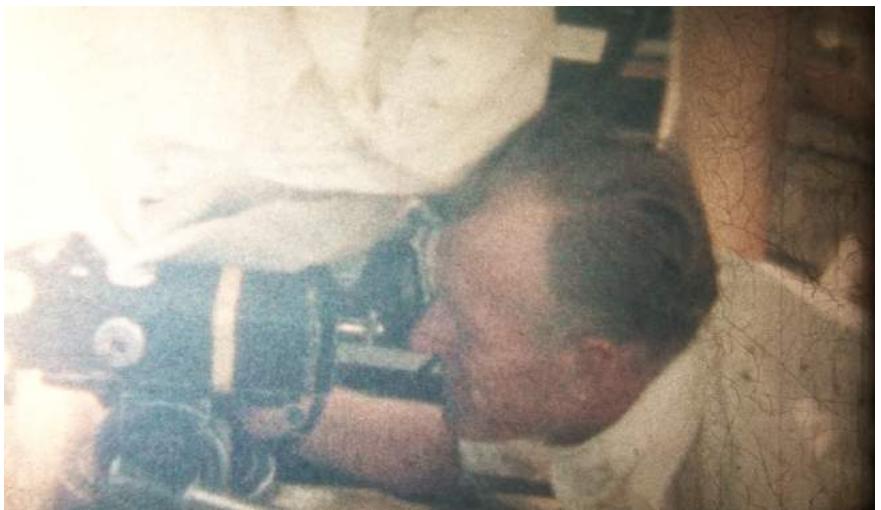
Right, so I saw your first credit was *Moby Dick* but then I was thinking because your parents weren't in the

.....
And I thought 'That's a nice job, I think I could do that' And that is what spurred me into wanting to be a camera operator.



industry you somehow rocketed right up to a feature like that?

And there was a problem for me; I didn't have a union ticket. Skeets told me 'that's no problem whatsoever' and he rang ACT and he said "I can't get a Clapper Boy for love nor money, I've got a guy who can work with me, can we give him a ticket?" and they said yes straight away!



Where did you go after that? Did you carry on with Skeet?

I did about eleven jobs with Skeets in the end. Sometimes he was very dangerous. He always shot second unit and if he decided on a shot, come hell or high water, he would go for it. On *Battle of Britain*, he tied himself to the wing of an aircraft, so that he could operate the camera from the wing. Then in 1970 on *Zeppelin*, he wanted a shot where he could pan off the pilot as it flew under a bridge and they caught the bridge side and that was it, that was the end of Skeets. So sad.

Wow, truly shocking! So you must have known a lot of people in the industry by the time it came to operating. Was the progression quite a natural one then?

It was a heavy decision that I'd pondered on for a couple of years, but one evening I was sitting here watching *Tomorrow's World* on television, when Joe Dunton suddenly appears, (of Joe Dunton Cameras) and they were talking about this new device that makes the camera float, even if you're running along, and I thought "Oh this is clever, I like the idea". But I also liked the idea because I thought if I could learn to use that piece of equipment, then maybe I can offer myself up to do

productions with that. And so I contacted Joe the next day, and he said to me "Ray, all the Operators in the business at the moment are all elderly, and those that are younger have enormous great beer bellies". So he said come in and have a couple of days with it, and so I went in and taught myself how to use it.



So how did Joe end up with Garrett Browns Mark 1 rig?

Garrett had contacted Stanley Kubrick to talk about possibly using his rig, but he wasn't interested. So Garrett went back to the states to set up the Steadicam mark 2, leaving the mark 1 with Joe. Then Garrett came back again and said to Stanley

"right, do you want to have a look at this?" and Stanley said "you know what, it's the perfect thing for my film *The Shining*". So Garrett started to do the first 3 months, of the 22 month schedule, and Stanley loved the shots so much he said "Any chance you can stay on?" and Garrett said "I can't, I've got to go to America to do *Rocky II* but there is a young Operator here that has been using it on a couple of TV commercials". And so I got a phone call saying would I go and present myself to Stanley, and so all the rest turned out to be history!

How did you find those first few days on the mark 1? We all know how particular Kubrick was!

Stanley wanted this feeling of things whisking by us, so we shot everything on an 18mm lens. And with the 18mm, you're alright if you're looking straight ahead, but you slightly tilt up and the walls all bow out, and you tilt down and they bow in, so it had to be dead straight ahead all the time. But my biggest problem doing all that stuff was that there came a point in the maze where Shelly and Danny would turn right, but Stanley didn't want me to cut the corner at all, so as they turned right and walked forwards, I had to walk along then turn like they had done. So you're walking forwards and panning right, then turning your own body and following them. Very very tricky.

And there's the famous stair scene isn't there?

That's the biggest number of takes we did. It was 127 takes.

And that was all you on Steadicam?

It was basically Steadicam, but there came a point where Stanley wanted to be close up, head and shoulders on both of them and there's no way that you can be, that slowly, walking up the stairs, and keep it floating in a continuous diagonal line. So what Stanley had made was a track built on an incline on the stairs and then a pulley system that went out over the top of the set, and a concrete counter balance for the dolly. Because I'm sure you can appreciate, with a Steadicam that weighs 94lbs, and walking backwards up stairs, you are using muscles in the backs of your legs that you didn't know existed, and I did that for 3 days, and it was a killer.

How did you keep your cool during all of that? Because on top of that, Stanley's relationship with Shelley was famously tense, right?

Well it was tense with Shelley but she was contracted to do it, so she had to put up with Stanley. She had an amazing character to portray and I think she did extremely well under the circumstances, but Jack played Jack! He didn't have to create a character, he just played himself- that's Jack. What you see on *The Shining*, if you met him on the street, he'd be exactly the same!

Hopefully without the axe though! But for Shelly, she does an amazing job because, perhaps it's method acting, but you certainly get a lot of that anxious energy that they get from the hotel itself, don't they?

Yes, she did an incredible job. About 3 years ago we had a gathering to celebrate 35 years of *The Shining* and the organisers contacted Shelley and they said "If we paid all your expenses, would you come over for a week and meet all the crew again" and she said "I don't want to know anything about it whatsoever" and put the phone down!

And Garret credits you with developing another kind of rig on *The Shining* using a wheelchair, can you tell us more about that?

The only thing I developed in my time on the film was the low-mode cradle. Because the Steadicam was so new, it had only ever sat on the top of the centre post. So I said "you know Stanley, we might be able to shoot with the camera upside down, and we get the laboratories to put it right" and he said "oh no no, it cannot work like that". So I went to the engineering workshop at Elstree, and they helped me develop a cradle, which would go onto the camera mount and hold the camera in a low position. And of course, naturally, Stanley wanted to get so low that it would scrape the paint off the floor!

So towards the end of the gruelling 22 week schedule, what happened? Did you make it to the end?

I didn't. I was 2 weeks short. Jack was on overages, his contract had finished. So we did 2 weeks, constant, with very very long hours, in a tiny little maze set with artificial snow which was sprayed on with a mixture of urea formaldehyde and something else. The stench was awful. On the ground, Stanley had 8 inches of fine salt which came up in a dust that was floating in the air all the time. After 2 weeks of that, it got to a Saturday evening and Stanley wanted to work. I could see Danny was going to do more and more takes, and I just said "I'm sorry, I'm going to have to call a halt". I went back to the camera department and while I was there, a phone call came through telling me to go to the production office. So I went there and they said "you're fired". And that is why, on *The Shining*, after all that work, my name does not go on the credits. Anyway, so be it. As far as I'm concerned, I did it!



After that you went on to do some pretty big films, to say the least: An American Werewolf in London, Ghandi, and then Das Boot as an underwater Camera Operator?

Yes, I started doing some work with a lovely underwater cameraman called Gil Woxholt. He taught me how to scuba dive and he invited me to Munich to work with him on *Das Boot*. And so I went out there as a focus puller (because this was before I was officially operating), and then I ended up operating second unit, and doing all the opening sequence shots with the miniature submarine. Gil was a well established underwater cameraman and had built his own stainless steel camera housing. It was a bit homemade but it worked!

So moving on to your live performances, was shooting live events something you intentionally moved into?



No. My brother Stan was a focus puller, and at one time he worked for Joe Dunton. His boss rang me about the Live Aid concert and said "I need to put a camera on the stage there. Do you want to operate it?" so I said "Yeah, I'd love to", not knowing of course that I'd be on set for 36 hours! But it was lovely. At one point, one had to get backstage to go to the toilets, and I stopped and looked around at all the famous faces and I thought: "you don't realise how many millions of pounds are sitting in this marquee." But again, it's like every film you go on; you're just so engrossed with

what you're doing, you don't see as to whether it's going to be a good film or not. All you see is "Oh golly, how are we going to get the track laid across there?"

And your brother Stan, is he still in the industry?

No he's not. Back then he worked for Kaleidoscope. He's very electronically minded and he thought "I wonder if I can build a device with handles where you can electronically pan and tilt?" Eventually he gets it up and running, and Stan said to his boss, "look, if I do this and this I can pan, tilt, etc", and his boss said "that's a great idea, what shall we call it? Let's call it the Gonga Head" and Stan said "no, I invented it, it's going to be called the 'Hothead'". "You can't call it a Hothead! I pay your wages, I'll decide about the marketing". So he took it all away from him, and he never got paid a penny. It's awful, and it destroyed him.

And as for the 1969 Beatles rooftop performance, what made you want to put on the screen for the ACO and BSC members?

I was contacted about 2 years ago by the Apple Corporation and they said "we're making a film about the whole event. Can we use your name in the credits?". And then more recently, I got another phone call from them saying "we're going to have a special showing in Leicester square and we'd like to invite you along". I was so impressed with what had been done with our footage because I'd never seen it. So a few days later I was talking to Peter Robertson, and he said to me "Ray, we should try and get an ACO showing of that", and with that I started getting enthused, as I do!

So what was your role in the filming of the event?

I went up there on the roof as a focus puller, and I was getting my camera set up when Tony Richmond, the cameraman, came to me and said "look Ray, it's all going to get a bit noisy, and because it's Saville Row, people aren't going to like it, so if needs be, are you able to whizz your camera down there?" and I said "yeah sure". And we'd been going for only 5 minutes when Tony came over and said "Ray, the police are banging on the door", so I shot down with a camera and lightweight tripod, and just filmed everything that was going on.

So was there a prebuilt booth in reception with one-way glass for you to hide behind?

No, it was a two sided booth in the corner, about 4 foot wide, and it had just a slit window. But you couldn't move in there. And I had all sorts of reflection problems with the glass because the light coming in was hitting my lens and then reflecting myself, so I abandoned that and quickly lept out of the booth and did all the shooting in front of it.

Bringing it up to the present, what was the last thing you operated on?

In 2010 I operated on *Black Book*, but bearing in mind that's operating for real. I still operate even now, aged nearly 82. I don't work on feature films any more- only corporates and documentaries. I'm very lucky; I have 2 friends who are producers that live in Blackheath and whenever they get jobs in, they say "Ray, come and do a camera for us". So I get my kicks out of that. Maybe 2 or 3 days a month. It's enough, it just keeps my hand in.

And I heard you made an appearance at the ACO's Steadicam workshop recently?

Yes, well because I'm "retired" for lack of a better word, I love to meet up with people who are coming up in the business. I can't teach them to suck eggs, but it is lovely to chat to people and if they want to know something, I'll give the best of my knowledge. It's just that I love to meet technicians that are like-minded I suppose.

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PREPPING

WITH TONY KAY - ACO



1 At what stage of the film/show's production are you as an A camera operator called for prep/ you could mention here if you think it's usually enough time or if not why.

This can vary depending on the job. I would normally be expected to attend the technical location recce's, production meetings and of course part of the gear preparation. Within this timescale are meetings with the DOP to discuss and break down the schedule and equipment requirements. I would normally expect at least 1 week, but 2 weeks are preferable. This can vary, depending on the size of the show.

I do find it frustrating, if doing multiple blocks on TV drama, not to be involved in prep for subsequent blocks. It's an impossible situation really, as once the show starts, you can't leave the set.

2 What are the things you consider during prep to make sure you are prepared? How do you approach script reading?

With regards to the script, I try to keep up with the various updated drafts. You can gain a good insight into the structure of the story and sometimes foresee where the changes will occur. The script needs a few reads in order to absorb the material, breaking it down and making notes along the way. All this makes for a better contribution and execution of the shots.

As a Steadicam and Trinity operator, I have to ensure my equipment is in good working order and fulfils the needs of the job. I might purchase new accessories or equipment for a particular job. If I know in advance that the job will be physically demanding, I'll step up my training regime. It's awful to be caught short on the physical side of shooting.

3 What are the type of discussions you have with the dop/director/other HoDs during prep?

The only time I would normally have with the director, prior to the shoot, is on tech recce's. Even then, it can be a bit of a whirlwind. I mostly listen and hopefully distil some idea of the style and how they intend to shoot.

I have many more conversations with the DOP and Grip, during the tech recce's. We'll discuss shot execution and equipment, the logistics of the locations and then develop this further, breaking down the schedule into daily equipment and crew requirements. Many discussions have been had with Production Designers, regarding the practical side to filming on their sets, locations and the use of certain props. I remember the grips on a TV Drama, Beecham House, which we shot mostly in Rajasthan, India. A lot of our locations were old forts. Given the age of these locations, the steps and walkways weren't always safe. Naturally, we ended up staging Steadicam sequences over them. The grips were constantly creating sweet ramps and walkways for me to safely execute the shots. Amazing teamwork.

4 Talk us through your prep process, your discussions with your crew? Perhaps giving an example from a current or previous project?

If possible, it's great to have a camera assistant on the tech recce's. This aids with the logistics of getting camera equipment in and out of locations. It's helpful during prep, to have mini meetings with the assistants and discuss our equipment needs for the job, location issues and other requirements. It's a great way for anyone to voice their concerns or raise some ideas.

On Britannia Series 3, one of the first shots discussed was a low push in across a lake, ending in a close up of one of the main characters. We discussed using a drone and wire rigs but the best solution, we felt, was a telescopic crane. A pontoon was required to be built, extending out into the lake. We figured that approx 30' would be workable, and once we calculated the angle from the shore, it was down to our Key Grip, Adrian Barry, to liaise with locations, riggers and production on what was needed to make a safe platform for the crane, plus track and essential crew. We chose a 32' Hydrascope in the end. Something longer would have been ideal but it simply wasn't possible, given the limited access. The shot had to be as linear as possible and as close to the water. This is tricky, of course, as the crane had to be swung, sucked in and sucked out whilst also tracking.

5 How does being involved in prep help both you as an operator and how can it benefit the production?

The more involved I am in prep, the better I understand the production needs and hopefully this is evident in the running of the set. All the details discussed above cannot be achieved without a generous prep time. A DOP has so much going on these days, it really helps to have an Operator contribute to the running as well as the look of the show.

THE RISING

ZOE GOODWIN-STUART ACO

In the spring/summer of 2021 I had the pleasure of shooting Sky Studios' first in-house drama series *The Rising* adapted from Belgian supernatural crime thriller *Hotel Beau Séjour*.

I was brought on board initially as B Camera for daily work by Director of Photography, Dale Elena McCready NZCS. However, it soon became apparent that a permanent second camera would be required. I jumped at the chance and as soon as I read the script, I realised it was unique. The story of teenage motocross biker Neve (Clara Rugaard), who emerges from a lake the morning after a party in the woods with no memory of how she got there. She makes her way home, but it quickly becomes apparent something is wrong, when we realise her family can't see or hear her.

Working with Dale and Director Ed Lilly on block 1 was an absolute dream for an Operator. The vision they had for the show was so well constructed, that from my point of view I could fit right in to finding complementary frames and shoot side by side with Dale on A Camera.

Incredible locations in the Lake District and North Yorkshire meant the characters enveloped their surroundings and we used it to our advantage when either letting scenes breathe with great vistas or by making these environments feel suffocating and threatening.

We shot on the Red Komodo and Monstro combined with Zeiss Radiance lenses at 6k. When shooting Neve, the central character, we pushed that to 8k. In terms of shooting kit. We had use of a gimbal at all times, which was a piece of kit I was familiar with but only when used as a stabilised head on cranes etc. Dale used her Movi as a wearable operated rig using the Easyrig with Flowcine's Serene spring adapter and the Puppeteer. My knowledge, understanding and respect for wearable gimbal rigs changed dramatically in Block 2 when my next DP Angus Mitchell asked me if I would be comfortable wearing and operating the Ronin R2. I love a challenge and relished the opportunity. I would say it was a tough first few days, getting the balance right, tweaking the settings and becoming comfortable with the rig. But, it was all made easier by having an amazing Ronin tech and B Camera 1st AC Steve Sinclair. He was integral in nailing down the settings I preferred and helping me become comfortable with the rig and its capabilities. Various locations offered different challenges as with most shoots, but the Ronin R2 when worn by the Operator definitely allows for complicated, intricate moves in any environment. Being up close with the actors is always one of my favourite things about the job we do. Working with them to devise the shots the directors want and require was a real joy. The cast were incredible and I found being up front with them an enjoyable experience.

From that point, we pushed on as a team and used the Ronin R2 for work on running shots with an electric tracking vehicle and, the Black Arm for some of the motocross chase work and for complicated hand off sequences plus crane work. The ability to use it on the dolly was also great as dancefloor dolly work using the wheels offers another great way of getting the shot.

By my 3rd and final block, I had stepped into the role of A Camera predominantly as DP Craig Feather asked me and to enable him to light and jump in on B Camera when required. It was a blessing to also have A Camera 1st AC Sam Smithard by my side and together along with the rest of the camera team we negotiated extremely challenging locations and weather conditions. Much of the work on this block was Ronin R2 or handheld with the added use of fantastic drone work by the IronBird team.

As with most shoots things don't always go to plan. High winds meant that we could not use the crane of the clifftop scene with Neve and Alex (Nenda Neururer), so we improvised. I donned a harness and in the capable hands of the legendary stunt wire rigger Kevin Welch I was hoisted handheld over the side of the rockface. This worked really well and the Director of block 3, Paul Walker, got the shots he wanted and some he hadn't thought possible.

Learning new ways of working and new kit is such a great way to hone your craft. Choosing the right equipment for a job is so important and I'm glad it worked out so well on this one. One of the things I love about being an Operator is our ability to problem solve and react to situations. A core team of great people creates a work environment that enables everyone to feel part of something special. This then creates a great end product. I think this shows in *The Rising* and it's something every member of every department can be proud of. Ultimately, isn't that what we all want from a job?

The Rising available now on Now TV and Sky Max





ACO Steadicam Operating COURSE

On March 26th, the ACO organised an Introductory Steadicam Day, in support of the next generation of camera operators. The event was held at Optical Support in London. The day was led by Peter Robertson (ACO) and Ilana Garrard (ACO), supported by Max Rijavec and Jasper Van Gheluwe. Ray Andrew and Fabrizio Sciarra joined for some parts of the day. A special mention should go to Mike and Chris from Optical for letting us use their gear and facility, as well as Shift4 for making cameras available.

Aimed at participants at varying levels of experience in their career, ranging from trainees to operators, the day consisted of both a theoretical and a hands-on part. The morning was an introduction to Steadicam, its components and basic setup. The group was shown different types and brands of sleds (some with a Volt installed), arms and vests. Next they were split in two, and led by Pete and Ilana they each created a shot which they all had to try and achieve themselves. There was a horror zombie movie exterior and an interior office scene. Both shots were designed to give the participants a general feeling of what they can expect in the future on a real set: from getting marks down, to tricky directors (Ilana very convincingly taking on the role of a director with 'a strong vision') and complex blocking.

Speaking to Ilana afterwards, she explains that she volunteers for this kind of event because she loves teaching and seeing students progress through the day, seeing that "aha!" moment when the rig suddenly doesn't feel quite so alien anymore. It also helps to remind her of how she actually works as well as learning how other people do it.

BSC EXPO 2022

At the start of April, the BSC expo was back at Battersea Evolution, London, after taking a year off due to the pandemic. Mostly those in attendance were happy just to be seeing old friends and colleagues again, while enjoying a free beer, and having a good old catch up. The ACO stand was, as usual, a hotspot for socialising, and was generating a lot of interest, possibly thanks to its location next to the coffee stand!

Besides the ACO stand, there was also a special buzz around the Arri Trinity 2 system and Optical Supports new Steadicam rig, the Dragonfly. Both launched their new systems at the show, and attracted a lot of attention. Optical support were showing off their UK built system, with a 3 stage post and 4 batteries on the rig, which allows for easy dynamic balance and low mode configuration. While Arri's upgraded Trinity system now allows for 360 degree camera rotation, with enhanced monitoring, a new powerful control interface and easy on-the-fly adjustments.

A special thanks goes to Jay Coates, Max Rijavec and Jasper Van Gheluwe for doing a brilliant job of setting up the stand, Canny Earl for donating the delicious beer, Shift 4 for loaning the monitor for the excellent ACO members showreel, and to all the other dedicated ACO members who manned the stand and represented the ACO so well.



WHO'S OPERATING WHAT?

Arricrew

Chris Plevin is currently working as A Camera Operator on the Netflix film The Union with Alan Stewart DP, Julian Farino directing. **Ossie McLean** joins him on B Camera, having recently finished operating for John Mathieson BSC on Batgirl. **Pete Batten** is operating the A Camera on Barbie 2nd Unit with John Sorapure DoP & Director, having recently finished Disney's Disenchanted UK shoot with DP George Richmond. **Barney Piercy** has been doing dailies on Straight Shooter and Embankment and has now joined Netflix series You (working title: Loveless) as B Camera & Steadicam with DPs Stijn Van Der Veken and Milos Moore.

Kat Spencer has been juggling dailies on Apple TV's Wool with DP Mark Patten BSC and 2nd Unit Disenchanted addt'nl photography with DP Oliver Loncraine. **Iain Mackay** is operating A Camera & Steadicam on Damsel, a Netflix film with DP Larry Fong ASC and **Hannah Jell** operating on B Camera. **Richard Philpott** has recently finished a short film for Disney+ called The Shepherd with John Mathieson BSC, having just wrapped on Stephen Soderbergh's Magic Mike's Last Dance with the support of a fabulous crew. **Derek Walker** is enjoying a bit of freedom before the next one. After a busy couple of weeks, **Tom Wade** is back operating the B Camera on Fast 10 with DP Steve Windon ASC, ACS. **Dora Krolikowska** has just finished on B Camera for the 2nd Unit of Spiral and **Jason Ewart** is still on the A Camera of Disney's Snow White.

Primestone

Junior Agyeman has just finished filming pilot Both Sides Now for DP Nick Martin and Sky Studios. **Simon Baker** has now completed The Crown Series 5, directed by Benjamin Carron for Netflix. Simon is also shooting dailies on Napoleon, an Apple TV+ drama directed by Ridley Scott, with DP Dariusz Wolski. **Michael Carstensen** has completed shooting Red Gun, the prequel to Game of Thrones. He is now filming A Camera & Steadicam for DP Scott Winig on The Witcher at Longcross Studios. **Matt Fisher** is now shooting A Camera & Steadicam on In the Land of Saints & Sinners, with DP Tom Stern ASC, AFC for director Robert Lorenz. **Rob Hart** is filming A Camera & Steadicam on Rain Dogs with DPs Carlos Catalan and Wojciech Szepel, and directors Richard Laxton and Jenifer Perrott. **Tony Jackson** is currently shooting dailies on Wool with DP Hagen Bogdanski. Tony is also shooting dailies as Steadicam Op on The Kitchen, a feature for Netflix. **Tony Kay** is shooting Camera, Steadicam and Trinity on the 2nd series of Invasion - Kanji, with DP Baz Irvine BSC, ISC and director Brad Anderson. **James Layton** is shooting the Apple TV+ series Wool with DP Hagen Bogdanski. **Nic Milner** is filming The Continental, directed by Albert Hughes. **Dan Nightingale** has recently finished shooting in Bristol on Sid Gentle/BBC/HBO series Rain Dogs with DP Carlos Catalan and is now in pre-production with DP Sam Care on Nolly. **Peter Robertson** is shooting A Camera & Steadicam on Apartment 7A with DP Arnau Valls Colomer and director Natalie Erika James. **Joe Russell** is prepping the Netflix series The Diplomat with DP Julian Court BSC. **Sean Savage** is filming as A Camera Operator & Steadicam on the sci-fi blockbuster for Netflix Straight Shooter. DPs are Jonathan Freeman ASC and PJ Dillon ASC. **Fabrizio Sciarra** has finished Wednesday, The TV series directed by Tim Burton and is shooting dailies on Anansi Boys, with DPs Neville Kidd and John Lee. **Peter Wignall** is shooting A Camera Operator/Steadicam on The Interpreter in Spain with DP Ed Wild BSC. **Tom Wilkinson** is shooting additional photography on the TV series Brussels for DP Peter Levy and director Stephen Hopkins.

Sara Putt

Andrei Austin has just wrapped as A Camera / Steadicam on the hotly tipped Anansi Boys. **Andrew Bainbridge** has been doing dailies on series 3 of Ted Lasso. **Jon Beacham** continues on A Town Called Malice out in Tenerife. **Danny Bishop** has been doing Steadicam dailies on the Feature Film Matilda. **Ed Clark** is busy working as A Camera / Steadicam on Red Book for Broke & Bones. **James Frater** continues shooting in South Africa on the new series of Invasion. **Ilana Garrard** has been on location in Spain working on The Gold with Stuart Bentley. **Zoe Goodwin-Stuart** continues as B Camera on the new series of The Witcher for Netflix. **James Leigh** is on location in Cornwall operating on the new series of Doc Martin. **Will Lyte** is back in the UK after filming Greatest Days out in Athens & has been confirmed on Project IV. **Tanya Marar** recently finished operating B Camera on House of the Dragon for HBO and is currently shooting a documentary in Jordan and prepping for a feature in Morocco in July. **Vince McGahon** has been doing dailies on Augustus and will start prepping for the new series of Slow Horses in July. **Julian Morson** wraps on Kraven the Hunter later this month. **Aga Szeliga** has recently been confirmed as B Camera on the new series of Loki. **Tom Walden** has started on the Ballad of Renegade Nell for Lookout Point and Disney. **Rick Woppard** has been busy working across a number of commercials for Academy, Holmes Production & Arts & Sciences.

Mike Heathcote is working on Flint Strong for Universal Pictures. **Andrew Fletcher** ACO is booked to shoot Loki Season 2 for Marvel. **Christopher McGuire** is shooting Blue Beetle for Warner Bros. **James Anderson** started last week doing A Camera/ Steadicam on a new Netflix series called The F**k It Bucket. Nick Morris is the DP on the first block. **Kerry Arthur** is currently doing B Camera Dailies on an Untitled project for New pictures in Leeds with DOP Ed Rutherford and Director Lewis Arnold, and C Camera Dailies on Outlander in Scotland with DOP Ali Walker and Director Lisa Clarke. **John Ballie** is heavily NDA'd right now. **Richard Bellon** recently completed all 4 blocks of the second season of Industry (HBO/Bad Wolf) and starts 2nd unit on The Witcher season 3. **Marc Benoliel** is covering dailies on The Three Body Problem as B-Cam with Sean Savage and finishing off Block 2 on Invasion season 2 as B Camera with Tony Kay. **Richard Bevan** is doing B Cam and some 2nd unit DoP on Firebrand with Helene Louvart ASC as DP. Karim Ainoux is Director. **Ciaran Barry** is shooting in Italy on the Netflix Series Brigandi. **Leo Bund** is currently shooting A Cam & Steadicam on a Netflix Show in Budapest with DP David Higgs. **Stephen Brand** is working on VFX background plates for DrivingPlates on Disney's Culprits (London, Essex) and BBC Happy Valley S3 (car stunt - Halifax). **Richard Bradbury** is currently working on Debora Cahn's new series for Netflix, The Diplomat. **James Burgess** is doing dailies on TV Drama Invasion S2 with DP Baz Irvine & Bristol Based TV Drama Flatshare with DPs Laura Bellingham & Suzanne Salavati. **Mike Carling** is currently out in Nazca Peru shooting Nazca Lines for Discovery. **James Chesterton** is finishing up Flatshare as Camera and Steadicam Operator with DPs Laura Bellingham and Suzanne Salavati. **Richard Cornelius** is on Ted Lasso Season 3. **Alexis Castagna** has just finished a commercial in Australia. **Jess Doxey** is in Jamaica on Millie Black as B Cam and Steadicam with Shabier Kritchner DP. **Ashlea Downes** has been doing dailies as steadicam and operating B Camera on Amazon's Anansi Boys up in Scotland for DOP John Lee, as well as Steadicam and B Camera days on the Dr Who 60th Anniversary special with DOP Matt Gray. She recently worked on a docuseries featuring Cara Delevigne– Planet Sex with DP Alice Millar. **Kate Eccarius** has been covering dailies on The Three Body Problem as B-Cam with Sean Savage and finishing off Block 2 on Invasion Season 2 as B-Camera with Tony Kay. **Dan Edwards** is currently shooting The Pact, a six part thriller for BBC / Lionsgate, operating A Camera and Steadicam for DPs Sergio Delgado, James Swift and Director Christiana Ebohon-Green. **Simon Finney** is working as B Cam on the main unit of Barbie. **Dan Evans** is shooting second unit on Christmas on Mistletoe Farm with DP Sean Van Hales and Watcher Unit on Wool as well as Steadicam on a range of short films and promos. **Paul Hill** is currently prepping as B Camera/Steadicam Operator on A Christmas Carol with DP Pete Rowe. **Sven Joukes** is in Morocco, shooting Lonely Planet for Netflix with DP Ben Smithard BSC. **Piers Leigh** is doing a shadow day with Casualty, and operating Steadicam on some short films. **Christopher Kechichian**

is shooting commercials for local and international brands. **Piers Lello** is working on Vera for ITV on B Cam, and then travelling down to Devon and Cornwall to do B Cam on Mallory Towers. **Catherine Leathers** is on dailies on Call The Midwife and with Kibwe Tavares (dir) and Daniel Kalaaya (writer) on The Kitchen. **Junior Lucano** is on a feature in China. **Martin Newstead** is on A Cam/Steadicam on a show called The Elect for ITV, DP is Mattias Nyberg BSC. **Guillermo Moreno** is operating A Camera and Steadicam in the DB unit of a Netflix series called Smiley. **Christopher McGuire** finished Guardians 3 and now is A Camera / Steadicam on DC's Blue Beetle with DP Pawel Pogorzelski. **Adam Mendry** is currently working on a new Netflix series called Infamy as A Camera. **Scott Milton's** work on Lovely Little Farm is finally being released on June 10th. **Darren Miller** has been providing aerial services as DOP/Operator on several projects. **John Buzz Moyer:** "I am honoured to be included in your community of talented Camera Operators. I am currently finishing a project titled Coyote vs. Acme filming in Albuquerque New Mexico. As the title suggests, the story revolves around Wile Coyote of Warner Brothers cartoon fame, deciding to sue Acme corporation for years of selling faulty products. The challenges include framing for characters not yet in the frame, and Director Dave Green's shot design. Brandon Trost (Director of photography) is keen to the difficulty and we share in solving the puzzle for executing the shots. It seems the simplest shots are the hardest to do, as usual, and finding the right nuance in slight tilts and pans to adjust for body language of 'to be added later' animation. With the help of David Barclay, Puppeteer extraordinaire, I can find the right 'feel' based on his reference passes with a full size puppet. This subject is something I find dear to my heart, as a child before moving outside, I would sit munching on cereal, cross legged on the floor watching Saturday morning cartoons. Great fun!" **Martin Newstead** is currently A Cam/Cteadicam on a show called The Elect for ITV with DP Mattias Nyberg BSC. **Juan Matias Ramos Mora** is doing A Camera/Steadicam on A Friend of the Family. **Rupert Peddle** recently wrapped as A Camera / Steadicam Operator on indie period feature Can You Hear Me?, directed by Simon Hunter with DP August Jakobsson IKS. **John Piggot** is finishing on Treason for Netflix with DP JP Gossart. **Rupert Power** is doing B Camera and Steadicam on The Boys in the Boat (with DP Martin Ruhe, and Dir George Clooney). **Jem Rayner** has been busy on several dailies including House of the Dragon, Great Expectations and Jewels, and will be moving house soon. **Dale Rodkin** is currently shooting on The Woman King with Director Gina Prince-Bythewood and Cinematographer Polly Morgan ASC as A Camera. **Grant Sandy-Phillips** is currently working on a feature film for Netflix called The Kitchen as A-Cam Operator with DP Wyatt Garfield and Director Kibwe Tavares. **Bob Shipsey** is currently working on You S4, (WT: Loveless) for Netflix with DP Milos Moore and Stijn Der Veken, and is enjoying the catering very much while **Roger Tooley** is enjoying himself on a large number of dailies up and down the country. **James Thomas** has been working on various promos and commercials since the start of the year and after spending a few weeks covering B Camera on People We Hate at the Wedding. **Laura Van De Hel** has operated and lit a short film called Burning Shores, shot in France for Jurgen Lisse on Supermodels, and DPd her first feature with Ben Eeley as Steadicam Operator. **Adi Visser** is on "Project Panda" aka One Piece, which is a live action animé, as B Camera / Trinity Operator and will be jumping on to Halo S2. **Peter Wilke** is currently working for Stephen Windon ACS ASC on Fast 10. **Tom Williams** finished The Reckoning with DOP Ashely Rowe BSC, went on to do Steadicam & operating for the 2nd Unit on Apple TV's Foundation, and is currently doing Steadicam dailies on an untitled drama about the Yorkshire Ripper with Director Lewis Arnold and DP Ed Rutherford. **Des Whelan** was on Disclosure for Apple TV with DP Bruno Delbonnel and Chivo Lubezki. **Edd Wright** is currently operating on Outlander S7 as A Camera/Steadicam- in bonnie Scotland.

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Rexy Wheels Are Here!

ROB PORTUS



Ever wish you could practise operating with hand wheels from the comfort of your own home? Turns out you're not alone.

I've been working as a Libra technician for over 10 years, and during that time I've had the privilege of working alongside a whole range of camera operators, from seasoned veterans to those who are just stepping up. The one thing they all want is a way to fine tune their operating skills with no-one watching.

Let's face it, spinning wheels is really fun and satisfying, but it has remained an elusive skill that few people get a chance to master. It's quite common for camera assistants to ask to have a

go on the wheels, but it's not very often you have a camera mounted on the Libra when there's an interesting subject matter around.

The traditional way of learning has always been to borrow a geared head and put a laser on it, but that is quite limiting and gets boring quickly. What you really need is an unpredictable target to fix the crosshairs on. I always thought it would be great to play computer games with hand wheels, but it's such a niche market that no-one has developed any games just for wheels.

During the lock-down of 2020 I had a bit of time on my hands and started to think of ways to make this happen.

After a few days of tinkering in my shed I had a basic prototype. It was based around an old computer mouse driven by rubber bands attached to wooden wheels. It looked like something off scrap-heap challenge, but it did the job. I could connect it to a computer and it allowed me to move the cursor and click buttons. Over the next few months I found various games that worked really well, and once I started to show it to other people I knew the idea had potential. All I needed to do was make it look professional, which was easier said than done.



That was a year ago, and it's been a long hard journey since then. I have produced countless prototypes along the way, and invested thousands of pounds. I have joined forces with my father-in-law John Brazier, who is a retired computer programmer. He has designed the circuit boards and written all the code, and it's fair to say this project would never have left the starting blocks without him.

The product we have created is Rexy Wheels, short for Remote X/Y. It is the first set of professional-grade hand wheels made exclusively for playing computer games. They connect to a computer like a USB mouse, and feature a selection of switch inputs that act as mouse or keyboard buttons.

The design itself was driven by what I wanted from a set of wheels. It was important to me that the wheels had the same feel as Libra hand wheels, because that's what I know and love. It's also in my own interests if

the next generation of operators learn their skill on heavy hand wheels, because then they will always prefer to use a Libra head.

The hardest part was integrating the buttons into the handles. It was crucial to be able to press the buttons without it affecting your operating. I know that everyone likes to hold the handles in their own way, so I had to make them adaptable to all different operating styles. They now have patent-pending status as the first hand wheels with integrated buttons for playing games.



The other key feature is the modular housing that can be easily upgraded. I plan to release a range of accessories and add-ons, and I want them all to be backwards compatible with the early versions.

I feel that I have met all my key objectives, and have produced a unit that sells at a reasonable price. A set of Rexy Wheels currently retails at £600 including VAT. I'm hoping this makes it accessible to all, so that anyone can experience the joy of gaming with hand wheels.

In terms of the games that are available, I have found a good variety on both PC and Mac.

I have divided these games into four main categories to cover all kinds of game play. Shooting games, casual games, maze games and cooperative games. These different types of games help you develop a wide range of skills. For instance, shooting games are great for improving your reactions, whereas maze games teach you hand discipline and muscle memory. Casual games are great for getting in the zone, and co-operative games teach you about communication and team work.

The one thing I have noticed when most people start using Rexy Wheels is that having experience with gaming seems to be more advantageous than having experience with operating. Even if you've operated with hand wheels for years, that doesn't necessarily translate to being a master at these

kind of computer games. Gaming is often about paying attention to things around the screen, like prioritising the various enemies coming from different directions, remembering to use your secondary weapons at the right time, and saving health and power-ups until later in the game. Anyone who has grown up with computer games will be very familiar with these things.

Therefore being good at operating doesn't automatically make you a good Rexy Gamer. But it's equally true that being good at playing games with hand wheels does not make you an operator, much like learning to drive a car does not make you

a rally driver. Operating cameras, whether it's with hand wheels, fluid head, joystick or Steadicam, is much harder. You need to know about framing and composition, and communication with your focus puller and grips, and then bring them all together consistently and reliably in a high-pressure environment. Playing with Rexy Wheels alone will not teach you any of this, but it will improve your muscle memory, discipline and instincts so that you are better prepared for the real thing.

Visit www.rexygaming.com or [instagram @rexywheels](https://www.instagram.com/rexywheels/) for more information.

ACO Asks

MAIYA ROSE

1

What is it that got you into operating?

I came up through the traditional route, of Trainee, 2nd AC, 1st AC, and one of my first jobs operating was through Morgan Spencer, who put me forward to shoot a small commercial that was looking for female crew. Although being a DP wasn't something that I was looking to do, it was a chance to practice operating. The commercial was for a new production company that heavily utilised social media to reach their audience. I piggy backed on their online campaign to show the world that I was trying my hand at operating. From this, the word spread and fortunately the work started to trickle in. As divided as people may be about social media, it can be a very effective tool for putting yourself out there in this day and age.

2

What 3 films inspired you when you were younger to pursue a career as a camera operator?

The first films that made me want to understand filmmaking were Se7en, Fightclub and Jar Head. To me, they are completely captivating and perfect examples of story telling.

However, to answer the question most honestly... it was people in camera who inspired me to operate, rather than specific films. For the first 8 years of being an assistant I must have worked with two female operators (though I had heard of others). Resultantly, operating didn't feel like an attainable career option, and so I spent many years not knowing what to do next.

Things have changed since then and watching two of the first people I ever worked with, Tasha Back and Rachel Clark, like so many others, striving for and achieving more, gave me the hope that I could follow in their footsteps



3

What do you enjoy most about being an operator?

Not having to load the truck at the end of the day is a nice change...(!)

Everything. It's the most fun job I've ever had the privilege of doing.

4

What was Apple's 'Masters of the Air' like to work on?

I spent almost the entire time 30' in the air, alone, in small sections of replica WWII planes, Clambering after stunt men as they ran around and jumped out of the hatches. This was a rather unique situation, so there was a lot of learning on the spot. I also had not been A camera yet on a unit, which was a new experience. Due to the size constraints, the camera was always in Rialto mode, which was a very different way of holding weight, entirely in your forearms, all day long. Ouch.

5

Tell us about the DoP/Director and operator dynamic?

The dynamic for an operator with the DOP and director changes depending on if the DOP is operating a camera too, if its a single camera shoot, or multiple cameras. In the end, the dynamic relies on everyone trying to lift up and improve each shot and idea, with each person using their experiences and world view to shape that. The dynamic will change with different crew, who work in different ways, and adapting the way that you communicate, and doing so with confidence, is an important part of it.

6

Can you tell us about a memorable scene/ shot you did and how you approached it?

On Masters we built a one shot sequence of a stunt man during a crash, making calls on a radio, strapping on a parachute, climbing through the aircraft and bailing out of the hatch. It involved numerous rehearsals, audio and visual cues, and many fine-tuning adjustments from the stunt co-ordinator and director, for all the timings to work.

7

What else have you been working on recently?

In the last month I have been jumping between dailies as additional camera on 'Ted Lasso' S3 through Vanessa Whyte, and the B camera days on Patrick Meller's 'I Hate Suzie' S2.



8

What is the best advice given to you as an operator?

I was told by a more experienced operator to learn the names of the 3rd AD and the Standby Art team/ props, straight away. It goes without saying you should know the grips and camera...but when a lamp is growing out of someone's head or a supporting artist keeps staring down the lens, it's very useful to know who to go to, sometimes in the last moments, to sort these things out, so that what's within the frame you have chosen, doesn't tell the wrong story.

RED Continues Momentum in 2022 With Launch of Power of RED Campaign and New V-RAPTOR Production Pack.

On May 23rd, RED Digital Cinema launched the next evolution of their global integrated marketing campaign entitled Power of RED. The campaign remains focused on its three main pillars: Resolution, REDCODE, and Reliability—but in its updated form, brings in additional benefits of shooting on RED, such as frame rate performance, dynamic range, colour matching, and a new Beyond Cinema section that showcases RED in scenarios such as virtual production, live events, broadcast, wildlife, and commercial work.



The campaign will come to life through digital, social media, and retail channels with new and impactful messaging, content, testimonials, and more. The campaign is live on <https://www.red.com/power-of-red> and will continue throughout the rest of 2022 with additional content, testimonials, and stories to go live on RED.com and RED's social channels throughout the year.

In addition to the launch of the Power of RED campaign, RED has also announced the availability of the V-RAPTOR Production Pack starting on May 24th.

The Production pack is the perfect pre-bundled package to optimise the high-performance V-RAPTOR system for work in high-end studio, commercial, and production scenarios. The pack includes batteries, media, the DSMC3™ RED® Touch 7" LCD, V-RAPTOR™ Expander Blade, and V-RAPTOR™ Quick Release Platform Pack; plus all new products like the V-RAPTOR™ Tactical Top Plate w/ Battery Adapter and RED Production Grips. Learn about the all-new V-RAPTOR Production Pack and buy it now at RED.com.





ACO EDITOR

Tanya Marar

I wanted to take this opportunity to thank Daniel Bishop for his tireless work with the newsletter over the last 5 years, and for entrusting me with the next editions, as well as his continued support along with the ACO. When Danny told me it is as great of a challenge as it is rewarding, he wasn't lying. I am also extremely grateful to the team -- Akhilesh, Sven, Dan, Sham and Rosanna- who have given their energy and effort and helped put this all together. And to all the contributors who generously and without hesitation gave their time to write about their experiences and share their knowledge. It's not always easy encapsulating your work in a few paragraphs, especially during the precious time off we have from and in between jobs, and without these contributions, the newsletter would not be what it is. It's great to be part of a community with so many talented and wonderful Operators. It's been a pleasure putting this together and I hope our first edition lives up to its history.

**IN
THE
FRAME**

Association of Camera Operators